

CRABBE'S VIEW OF LIFE.

DOES THE POET OVERDRAW IN THE PICTURE HE GIVES?

Some of the Places that Crabbe's Genius Has Consecrated—The Poet's Happy Marriage—The Second Period of His Fame—Where He Passed His Days.

Turning to Crabbe, from almost any poetic contemporary, one is shocked and saddened by the transition; but with Campbell the contrast is too great. There is a lack of enthusiasm, that seems like heartlessness, in this grey bodden Pope. The glow and glamor are all gone; the world is haggard and desolate; insignificant objects and neutral tints prevail. Campbell made it radiant, like a youthful poet's heart, with a perpetual morning; here in Crabbe, it goes like a creeping November evening, settling due over some form of unlovely eld. Squalor, and misery, and crime, in all their loathsome details, come painfully before us. We are told of "man's inhumanity to man," without the passionate indignation of Burns;—we feel we must resign ourselves to the hopeless woe we contemplate; where we should pity we revolt; where the heart should sympathize, it sickens. Yet these lines of disillusion are drawn with a hand of power; otherwise they could not survive, by reason of their defects of taste. The poet draws us on, where the subject and its treatment would otherwise repel. Here, with all that may be objected, is the grip of a man who has somewhat to say, who holds his auditor, and the cunning of a hand that paints some things as they were never painted before. Isaac Ashwood lives, to touch the pride of England's poorest peasantry. Phoebe Dawson at each succeeding "Lammas Fair," still crosses the green as gaily.

"In haste to see, and happy to be seen," and then perishes like a blossom, trodden into the marsh, her beauty turned to loathsomeness, and her love to despair. The condemned felon still starts from his midnight horror, and his morning dream of bliss, when the sudden call of the watchman

"Let's in—truth, terror, and the day." Having once been evoked by genius, who can bid these living forms depart? They are not unreal, though more awful than spectres. Good and noble as even Isaac Ashford is, he only escapes the workhouse by dying suddenly at his gate. The poet dips his brush in midnight and paints madness and despair, till you feel your blood run chill in his poem of "Sir Eustace Gray." His genius fastens on the forlorn and abject, as some industrious bee might suck a rank flower, till the very honey it makes is better. For one of his strangest effects in his own peculiar line of description take a few lines from his account of the Parish Workhouse in The Village.

"There is a house that do the parish poor, Whose walls of mud scarce bears the broken door, There, where the putrid vapors, flagging, play, And the dull wheel hangs doleful, through the day; There children dwell who know no parents' care; Parents who know no children's love, dwell there; Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed, Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed; Dejected widows with unheeding tears; And crippled age with more than childhood's fears; The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they! The moping idiot and the madman gay."

You see, the only touch of gaiety is associated with madness!

"Here, too, the sick their final doom receive, Here brought amid the scenes of grief, to grieve, Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow, Mixed with the clamors of the crowd below; Here sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan, And the cold charities of man to man. Whose laws indeed for ruined age provide, And strong compulsion plucks the scraps from pride; But soon that scrap is bought with many a sigh, And pride embitters what it can't deny."

Truly the note of truth is here; this is what we need to see and know, that such inhumanities may cease. And this could indeed be borne in a brief, pointed poem, like Burns' "Brigs," or "Two Dogs." But who can endure this poignant misery through interminable pages. The result of this tedium is abridged influence. Crabbe is not read. How differently does Burns deal with kindred themes! How he lights up the darkest scenes with gleams of his heart, playful humors, and philosophies of consolation! The fact is, a healthy heart flies a monumental misery; and the conviction grows upon us that Crabbe is too true,—that he overdraws,—and that life is rarely so abject and hopeless in its misery as he uniformly pictures it. Then the vehicle through which this massive woe is presented, mark the metallic clang of the Pope's stanza,—the chain rolling uniformly on its revolving wheel; but the links are now iron, without the semblance of gold; or they are run in a mould so even as that of the elder poet. This is a form which in any hand but that of a supreme artist, and one whose eye is on his art, runs speedily to prose.

One wonders at this tendency to look on life's seamy side, remembering the good fortune that attended his prolonged life, and that the darkest of these pictures were elaborated in his later years; but we remember that Crabbe's impressions endure the latest, and our thoughts are tinged with more with what we have felt than with what we now feel. His youth was passed amid no Arcadian pleasures; and whereas it should have been the buoyant season of hope and courage, it was the season of his deepest pain and sorrow. Irrascibility and gloom awaited him when he came home; and when he went abroad the landscape itself was melancholy, and around him was a "jealous amphibious race," sullen and full of wildness, disdaining such pursuits and studies as give amenity to life. Wherever he was the dark letters of Alborough distinguished themselves on the palimpsest of his mind. Then the pitiable humiliations and struggles of that London year had

burned themselves into him, and though they did not in him, as in Johnson, develop melancholy, these secret emotions found an outlet in his verse, and overdarkened his forceful originality.

Crabbe, after having found in Sirab Elmy a friend and inspirer in the period of his trial, found in her also a congenial, affectionate companion, to be cherished in the time of his success. He brought her a bride to chamber in Belvoir castle; but being unable to endure the greater measure of insolence to which he found himself subjected by the absence of the Ducal family in Ireland, he removed shortly to the parsonage at Stathern, and took up the duties of a curate. Here he could enjoy the Relvair domain, without enduring from the menials at the castle, slighting bitter to feel, but difficult to complain of.

Our poet was one of the most fortunate of men in all his subsequent domestic and social life; and the period of Stathern is described as of the happiest. In these five years of residence, his sons George and John were born and also the daughter, who did not survive her infancy. Open to his feet were all the walks in the rich woods of Belvoir, and with his wife he could come and go unmolested. He could alternate a parish with some added lines to his poem, "The Newspaper," or an hour of quiet or of exercise in his garden.

His beautiful domestic life was not interrupted by the removal to the Muston rectory in 1789. The country was not so inviting, but he could still batten and geologise. He was on the borders of Leicestershire, and had two "livings," as they are called—the other being Allington in Lincolnshire. "Here," according to his son "were no groves, nor dry green lawns, nor gravel roads" to tempt the pedestrian in all weather; but still the parsonage and its premises formed a pretty oasis in the clayey desert. Our front windows full on the church-yard, by no means like the common for-bidding receptacles of the dead, but truly ornamental ground; for some fine elms partially concealed the small beautiful church and its spire, while the eye travelled through their stems, and rested on the banks of a stream, and a picturesque old bridge. The garden enclosed the other two sides of the churchyard; but the crown of the whole was a gothic archway, cut through a thick hedge and many boughs, for through the opening, as in the deep frame of a picture, appeared, in the centre of the aerial canvas, the unrivalled Belvoir.

Very pleasant reading is that son's account of the home-life at Muston. None of the bitter past seems to have crept in there; it is not often given to poet to be so happy. It is from the pen of one whose heart glowed in the remembrance of what to him had been a child's elysium: "Always visibly happy in the happiness of others, especially of children, our father entered into all our pleasures, and soothed and cheered us in all our little griefs, with such overflowing tenderness, that it was no wonder we almost worshipped him. My first recollection of him is of his carrying me up to his private room for prayer, in the summer evenings, about sunset, and rewarding my silence and attention afterwards with a view of the flower garden through his prism. Then I recall the delight it was to me to be permitted to sleep with him during a confinement of my mother's—how I longed for the morning, because then he would be sure to tell me some fairy tale of his own invention, all sparkling with gold and diamonds, magic fountains and enchanted princess. In the eye of memory I can still see him as he was at this period of his life; his tattered countenance, unmingled with any of the less lovable expressions that, in too many faces, obscure that character—but pre-eminently fatherly; conveying the ideas of kindness, intellect and purity; his manners grave, manly, and cheerful, in unison with his high and open forehead; his very attitudes, whether he sat absorbed in the arrangements of his materials, shells and insect, or as he labored in his garden until his naturally pale complexion, acquired a tinge of fresh healthy red, or as coming lightly toward us with some unexpected present, his smile of indescribable benevolence spoke exultation in the foretaste of our rapture.

"But I think even earlier than these are my first recollections of my mother. I think the very earliest is of her combing my hair one evening, by the light of the fire, which hardly broke the long shadows of the room, and singing the plaintive air of 'Kitty Tell,' till, though I could not be more than two or three years old, my tears dropped profusely." We could quote whole pages of such delightful reminiscence, that showed a happiness too real and sincere to require any borrowed lights of fancy to brighten it, when the poet exercised his function; and that, by its very radiance, made the dark things his pen depicted all the heavier in their lines of grimness and gloom.

DECORATION DON'TS.

Don't use a table lamp of herculean proportions on a small table or in a small room. Give the eye space as well as the lungs. Space in the centre of the room is as precious as the most costly piece of furniture, for it enriches all the furnishings.

Don't put extra heavy drapery in small rooms.

Don't overload your rooms with furniture and bric-a-brac.

Don't place an easel with a large picture thereon in the middle of the parlor floor.

Don't place a large wooden pedestal with a group of statuary between the easel and the further corner.—New York World.

HOW TO CHOOSE HUSBANDS.

The best husbands do not belong to one profession or another, or to one nation. The qualification is an individual one, and the saying that a good son makes a good husband is very true, for a man judges a woman by the standard of his mother, and it is her early training that makes him what he is. I think the best husbands are generally members of a large family. Habits of unselfishness are taught early, and boys having had to give up when they are young are less exacting in manhood than those who have always had everything their own way.

The great wall of China has been carried across rivers, through the deepest valleys, over the highest mountains, and in fact, every natural obstacle that stood in the way of its progress. It is 1,250 miles in length. The total height of the wall, including a parapet of five feet, is twenty feet. Its thickness at the base is twenty-five feet, and at the top fifteen feet.

FOR GOOD OR BAD LUCK.

CURIOUS SUPERSTITIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT DAYS.

Birds Which Have Protection Because of a Belief in Their Sacred Character—Queer Ideas of Some of the People in Parts of Continental Europe.

There are, says Archbishop Whately, in his Commonplace Book many popular superstitions, do not deserve the name, not being, like image worship, connected with any misdirected religious feeling, but purely fanciful and groundless notions leading to absurd practice, such as the supposed unlikelihood of spilling salt or sitting down thirteen to a table, which no one would reckon a sin against any supposed superhuman being. Some of the superstitions, however, may perhaps have had their first origin in some religious error which has since been forgotten. But of most of them it is difficult or impossible to trace the origin. Salt was certainly accounted by the ancients as having something of a sacred character, probably on account of its antiseptic quality. And the unlikelihood of thirteen at table has been thought by some to have originated in the narrative of the Last Supper, in which Judas formed a thirteenth.

The sacred character attributed in England to the redbreast and the swallow (which it is thought unlucky to destroy,) and on the Continent to the stork, which usually builds on the house-tops, may be attributed to their placing themselves under man's protection. In Ireland, on the contrary, the swallow is called the devil's bird by the vulgar, who hold that there is a certain hair on everyone's head, which if a swallow can pick off the man is doomed to certain perdition. This superstition is hardly to be accounted for, neither is that which exists in many countries relative to the magpie, a mischievous bird, very destructive to eggs and young poultry—yet in many parts of the Continent no one dares to kill one.

An English traveller in Sweden saw a whole flock of magpies devouring the pigs' food, and having a gun with him offered to shoot some, which he did, and the farmer thanked him heartily for the service, with an earnest hope that no evil might befall him in consequence.

In England the rustics account the sight of one magpie unlucky, but if two or more a good omen. According to the well-known rhyme:—

One for sorrow, two for mirth;
Three a wedding, four a birth;

But some of them hold that the evil omen of seeing a single magpie may be averted by making nine bows to it.

In England the wren is considered almost as sacred a bird as the redbreast. In Ireland, on the contrary, wrens are hunted down and killed on St. Stephen's day by boys, who afterwards carry round the dead birds and solicit contributions.

The superstitious dread of a raven's croak arose probably merely from its being a bird that feeds on dead carcasses, and which was therefore supposed to be calling for its prey. The owl, again, is supposed to be ominous when flying against the windows of a sick chamber, attracted doubtless by the light, as moths are.

In many parts of England the ignorant account it very unlucky to transplant parsley. A gentleman's garden in Yorkshire being desired to do so, insisted on sowing a bed instead, assuring his master that nothing would thrive with him if he planted it.

With many it is considered unlucky to see the new moon for the first time through glass. A knife or other cutting instrument must never be given, which would be an omen, they think, of the severance of friendship; some money, no matter how small a sum, must always be paid for it. A hive of bees, again, must never be bought, or they will come to no good, but if given or stolen they will thrive very well.

There are several other very curious superstitions relating to bees. It is popularly believed that an angry dispute carried on near the bee-hive will cause the bees to perish or to go away. And the like, it is thought, will happen if any remarkable event occurring in the family, such as a marriage, birth, or death, is not formally announced to them. A peasant will gravely go to a bee-hive and say: "My father (or my wife) is dead," and will thereupon put them in mourning by putting a piece of black crape on each hive. Again, many, even educated persons, cannot bear to leave an egg-shell with one end unbroken, lest a witch should make use of it as a boat.

In Spain, if anyone should go into a baker's shop and ask him for a bit of the leaven which he is about to raise his bread, he would kick him out with indignation. They have a full belief that any malicious person getting hold of a small piece of the leaven can, by performing certain magical ceremonies, infect the remainder and spoil the whole batch of bread. If some leaven is wanted for a poultice, which is sometimes prescribed (as yeast is with us), the family sent to the baker they deal with, and humbly ask him for a piece of leaven, assuring him that no improper use shall be made of it.

In some parts of England it is believed that if in a house infested with rats one is caught alive, and released with a note tied round his neck directed to some neighbor's house, he will repair thither and be followed by all the rest.

It is counted unlucky to pass by a piece of old iron which one meets with; it should be picked up and carried home. If it be a horse-shoe this is great luck; a horse-shoe also is often nailed to the threshold of a door or to a ship's mast to keep away witches. To fling an old shoe after a person who is going out on any business is supposed to bring him good luck. It is also lucky to put on one of your stockings the wrong side outwards, provided it be done unobserved and that you let it remain so.

Referring to some other superstitious remedies for ailments, the Archbishop says that the touch of a hanged man's hand is very generally esteemed a cure for a wen. It is probable that this and also the Royal touch for scrofula have sometimes really had an effect, because a very strong

feeling of awe or of horror is known to act sometimes on the absorbents.

The Archbishop speaks of a curious remedy in high repute for rupture in an infant: An opening is made by means of wedges through the stem of a young tree, and the infant is passed a certain number of times to and fro through the opening; the tree is then carefully banded, and if its wound heals the child will recover. The Archbishop states that in the garden of his former rectory, Halesworth, in Suffolk, there were several trees that had undergone this operation. In some of them the cleft had healed up, in others not.

ADVENTURE OF A CAT.

The Strange Facts of Its First and Only Ride on a Dumb Waiter.

Mr. David Baillie, formerly of Edinburgh, has two Maltese cats, Punch and Dynamite. Dynamite, as might be inferred from his name, is alert and acrobatic. Punch has a soporific temperament and spends most of his time finding soft and cosy places and lying in them. Mr. Baillie, who speaks Maltese almost as well as he does Gaelic, and is therefore somewhat familiar with the emotions of the cats, says they are the most remarkable pair of felines in New York. Other folks with animal pets and babies have been known to express the same sentiment about them.

Since an adventure several weeks ago Punch has not been so sleepy as he used to be. He saw the door of the dumb waiter shaft open, with the waiter itself, looking particularly snug and inviting, standing at the door. He decided that the waiter was just the proper size for a luxurious cat's bedchamber, so he leaped softly in and went to sleep as quick as Dickens's fat boy. That was about an hour before daylight. An early and vigorous butcher boy came into the basement and gave the dumb waiter rope a yank that startled Punch out of his slumber and set him quivering with fear as the dumb waiter bumped and rattled down the shaft. Punch was never so wide awake in his life. He had gone down three floors, or from the fifth to the second, when he noticed a stream of light. It came from the open shaft door of the kitchen on the second floor. Punch made a blind wild leap for the light.

It happened that an Irish servant girl was sitting on a chair with her back to the dumb waiter wiping the sleep out of her eyes. Punch did not see her when he made his frantic leap for liberty. He landed in her back hair, and she emitted a yell that frightened Punch more than his experience in the dumb waiter. He let go the girl's hair in a jiffy and dashed through the flat like a mad cat, waking everybody in his flight. When he reached the parlor he crouched in a corner and waited for developments. As the house did not tumble down he began to recover his composure and to meditate on the uncertainty of dumb waiters and servant girls. He was discovered later in the morning by the mistress of the flat, who recognized him as one of Mr. Baillie's Maltese pets, and sent him upstairs.

Punch cannot be persuaded now to go near the dumb waiter. When he hears the grocer boy or the butcher boy rattling the rope he retires to the parlor. He is now very careful about the places he selects to take a nap in.—N. Y. Sun.

HANDS OF MURDERERS.

Chiropractors lay down the following rules for telling a murderer or one likely to commit murder upon the slightest provocation: The thumb has a round bulbous appearance. It is also short; the nail is abbreviated and deeply buried in the flesh, which rises on either side and extends much above the service. There is a remarkable or abnormal development of the "Mount of Mars," which, plainly speaking, means a thickening of the outside edge of the hand. Chiropractors say that persons with this mark, when in a passion, have rushes of blood to the brain which causes them to "see red." He has "the scaffold sign"—a violent and abrupt cutting off of the "line of the head" (the one running across the palm) by the line running toward the fingers from the wrist. There are but three lines in the palm (these are occasionally reduced to two), and they are always of a bright scarlet.

THE ASCENDER.

"Heaven save us!" says George Davis when he was about to "leave" us. In his hand his travelling sack. To the Junction with companion He did exercise the function Of his feet upon the track.

Off by rail on Boston mail To escape a term in jail, In a Sunday night he flew— Left behind, good and kind Friends who now feel mighty blue.

George, dear George, why did you force? Don't you know you must disgorge Should they bring you back again; What you got was dearly bought When you took the midnight train.

BUTLER'S JOURNAL.

"For Years,"

Says CARIE E. STOCKWELL, of Chesterfield, N. H., "I was afflicted with an extremely severe pain in the lower part of the chest. The feeling was as if a ton weight was laid on a spot the size of my hand. During the attacks, the perspiration would stand in drops on my face, and it was agony for me to make sufficient effort even to whisper. They came suddenly, at any hour of the day or night, lasting from thirty minutes to half a day, leaving as suddenly; but, for several days after, I was quite prostrated and sore. Sometimes the attacks were almost daily, then less frequent. After about four years of this suffering, I was taken down with bilious typhoid fever, and when I began to recover, I had the worst attack of my old trouble I ever experienced. At the first of the fever, my mother gave me Ayer's Pills, my doctor recommending them as being better than anything he could prepare. I continued taking these Pills, and so great was the benefit derived that during nearly thirty years I have had but one attack of my former trouble, which yielded readily to the same remedy."

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Marie Tempest.

That stage fright is a malady which afflicts the most experienced and capable actors as well as beginners, is the unanimous verdict of the profession.

Miss Marie Tempest, whose many successes upon the English and American stage have placed her in the front rank of operatic stars, admitted frankly upon a recent occasion that she is frequently attacked by stage fright. Miss Tempest combines a voice of extraordinary pitch and sweetness with the dramatic fervor of an emotional actress to a greater degree probably than any other prima donna now upon the modern stage, and the statement will be a surprise to thousands of her admirers whom she has impressed as the personification of supreme confidence and self-control.

It is interesting to note that this great prima donna strongly advocates the use of Paine's Celery Compound for nervous excitability, which always results from a too close application to any pursuit. Regarding the subject of "stage fright," she says:

"The sensation is one of utter collapse; it is truly an awful feeling and is nearer to seasickness than anything else I know of. Players with a highly nervous organization are sure to be attacked by it when approaching the climax of an important part, or when appearing for the first time in a new play. Those playing emotional roles are more susceptible to stage than others, because the individual capable of portraying those parts successfully is necessarily possessed of a highly nervous and impressionable temperament.

"In one respect a highly developed nervous organization is indispensable to success, as without a proper conception and feeling of the part to be acted are impossible. You know an actress must not only understand her part, but be so absorbed in it that she forgets her own personality, and for the time being lives in her assumed character."

"Then great nervous excitability is a decided advantage to an actress?"

"In the way I have described, yes; as a general proposition, no. The mental

strain, the intense application necessary to a proper realization of the part, the apprehension that the audience may be criticizing you adversely, and the constant study of new roles, undermines the health and often cuts short the career of the conscientious and ambitious actress. At the close of last season I was completely prostrated by nervous excitement and over-work. My nerves were so unstrung that the slightest sounds startled me, and I became sleepless, melancholy, and irritable. Sick and disheartened, I sought the aid of an old and dear friend, who immediately advised me to use a brain and nerve food of which I had heard much but knew comparatively little. I would have taken anything she chose to give me but I liked the taste of the preparation and continued its use. I had not consumed one bottle when I found that my nervous system had resumed its normal tone. I no longer jumped at shadows, my appetite came back, each night brought sound and refreshing sleep, and I am now in perfect health and vigor, through a systematic use of Paine's Celery Compound."

The present season has been the most successful and therefore the most exciting, of my career, but the invaluable remedy which restored my health has also preserved it. I have recommended it to numbers of my friends, and in every case with most fortunate results."

The beautiful prima donna looked the picture of health as she spoke. Her large blue eyes sparkled with animation and her countenance lit up with an expressive smile that enhanced the charming vivacity of her manner as she remarked:

"I have found that devotion to a chosen pursuit is not incompatible with good health. If all the men and women, the clergymen, teachers, merchants and lawyers in this busy country, whose overtaxed brains cry out in protest against the heavy burdens laid upon them, were to use Paine's Celery Compound, I am sure there would be a marked decrease in that terrible disease, nervous prostration, which seems fast becoming a national one with Canadians and Americans. Success is, indeed, a glorious thing, but believe me, health is better."

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