

## HE HAD A GENTLE HEART

MORE ABOUT THE LIFE AND WORK OF MONTGOMERY.

Incidents of His Life at Sheffield—Points in Which His Nature Was Like that of Cowper—Both Had Great Traits—Montgomery's Poetry.

For many years James Montgomery resided at Sheffield, editing his *Irish News*, while writing, and from time to time, publishing his poems, and growing more and more in the affection and esteem of his townsmen, and of mankind, wherever his fame extended. He was the witness of great social disturbances, resulting in the final advancement of important social interests. He heard the mad outcries of men driven to despair by the most oppressive of laws, and the hardest of social and industrial conditions; and saw the frequent outbreaks, the exhibitions of mob passion and sallies of desperate resistance. But in the midst of this turbulence, and amid the opposing classes he stood, a reconciling angel, the message of love and peace ever upon his lips, the light of a benignant spirit ever tempering a certain pensiveness in his face. A purer reputation, a deeper or more grateful affection, amid his countrymen, poet never enjoyed; while even those formerly concerned in his legal persecution became his life-long friends; enjoying far more than his forgiveness. The part of Sheffield, where for so long time he resided, and from which he sent forth poetry and politics, known as the Hartshead, is described as "a sort of cul-de-sac, having no carriage road throughout only one into it, and that not from the main street. The shop which used to be the Iris office is of an odd ogee shape, at the end of a row of buildings, it has huge ogee-shaped windows, with great, dark green shutters. The door is at the corner, making it a three-cornered shop." The neighborhood has degenerated since the poet's time, and is more of a haunt of beer shop frequenters and pettifoggish lawyers than it used to be; and where once the poet preached justice and religion from the press, are now "encouraged scenes destructive of every vestige of virtue or morality."

Montgomery afterward resided "at the Mount, on the Glossop road, the west end of Sheffield... at least a mile and a half from the old Iris office, and is one regular ascent all the way. The situation is lovely, lying high; and there are many pleasant villas built on the sides of the hill in their ample pleasure grounds, the abodes of the wealthy manufacturers. The Mount, par-

excellence, is the house, or rather terrace, where Montgomery lived. It is a large building, with a noble portico of six fine Ionic columns, so that it looks a residence fit for a prince. It stands in ample pleasure grounds, and looks over a splendid scene of hills and valleys. The rooms enjoy this fine prospect over the valley of the Sheaf and the Porter, which, however, are sometimes obscured with the smoke blowing from the town."

As a tribute to his character and a description of his person, we can select nothing preferable to this by a fellow-townsmen of James Montgomery: "It may be said, that nature never intus into a human composition a greater portion of kindness and general philanthropy. A heart more sensibly alive to every better as well as every finer feeling, never beat in a human bosom. Perhaps no two individuals, in manners, pursuits, character, and composition, ever more exactly corresponded with each other, than Montgomery and Cowper. The same benevolence of heart, the same modes of deportment, the same purity of life, the same attachment to literary pursuits, the same fondness for solitude and retirement from the public haunts of men; and to complete the picture, the same ardent feeling in the cause of religion, and the same disposition to gloom and melancholy. His person, which was rather below the middle stature, was neatly formed; his features had the general expression of simplicity and benevolence, rendered more interesting by a hue of melancholy that pervaded them. When animated by conversation, his eye was uncommonly brilliant, and his whole countenance was full of intelligence. He possessed great command of language; his observations were those of an acute and penetrating mind, and his expressions were frequently strikingly metaphorical and eloquent. By all who saw and conversed with him he was esteemed; by all who knew him he was beloved."

It remains to observe briefly upon his poetry. It does not, like that of Elliott smack of the soil, or associate itself with the scenes amid which he lived: the exquisite passion for dear, dear earth is not there; but, rather, what George Elliott would term, the passion of "other worldliness." His principal poetic writings fill us with high esteem for the writer's talents and character; but, as poems, they do not deeply impress, and we do not care often to recur to them. No poem, which is not truly epical in conception and power—a poem which is not, so to speak, volcanic and mountainous, carved with mines of gold, and gems, and lifted into the region of the thunder and sun,—no poem that is not the very greatest, should ever be long. The Bickersteths and Percivals have made a grand mistake, and the Southseys are more talked about than read. "If the muse of Homer sometimes nods at the long session, who shall save our yawns when the Youngs and Pollocks take up the strain?"

Indeed, did not Poe affirm, in his essay on "The Poetic Principle," that, by the very laws of sensation, there is, and can be, no such thing as a long poem; but a succession of episodes. The duration of psychological excitement at its maximum is so brief, the exquisite taste of the spiritual palate so soon dulled, that no man can hold out to the end, even of the book or canto; and a poem must be measured by the capable reader's capacity of enjoyment, and consequent appreciation. Col. Ingersoll—as keen as he is perverse—said in a recent lecture on Burns,—"All poems are short. There cannot be a long poem any more than there can be a long joke." This is just within its proper limitations. A song can not be long; it is an outburst of the heart. A lyric must be brief and pregnant with melody and fire. But these critics ignore the law of the Epic. The greatest and most clear sighted men do not argue so. There is such a thing as epical and dramatic unity, in a great work of the poet's art. It may not be at once entirely enjoyed, or comprehended,—it would not be great if it could be; but, studied in its parts, on successive occasions, it grows on the student-lover, as on the beholder the total effect of a complex, grand cathedral, which for some time may have been studied in detail, until the relations of its exquisite parts more certainly appear, and the mind dilates with a sudden sense of what was before only suspected, or only dimly seen. Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, Goethe, and the Greek dramatists respond to this test largely, and Milton in a degree scarcely inferior; but to such a test Montgomery can not respond at all, for his works are not in any eminent degree works of the imagination. Taste and chastity of feeling may be claimed, but qualities no higher. Highly imaginative poets, like Wordsworth even, not having the width of comprehension and requisite power of combination, appear to better advantage in lyrical flights, and in episodes of their more extended poems. We think this true of Montgomery. We like him best in his occasional tender, musical and heart-felt strains, such as "The Common Lot," "The Grave," "The Mole-hill," "The Peak Mountains," and the exquisite tribute to Burns, whom he would fain have taken to his heart without reserve, but for the spots so plain on that fallen angel's wings. Montgomery was never strong enough in his poetic vision, nor clear enough in his poetic vision to excel in any venture beyond the lyric; and upon him was also the handicap of a melancholic temperament, confirmed and warped by the austerity of his Fulneck training, beside the hampering notions, imposed by his religion, as to historic verity, which acted with fatal restraint upon his imagination. Any view of Montgomery's poetry would be incomplete that ignored his hymns; for it is as a Christian hymnist that the conspicuously shines. His hymns are catholic, and free from sectarian bias, and breathe a fervent and simple spirit of devotion. What collection of Hymnody does not embrace such favorites, as, "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire," "Servant of God, well done," "Forever with the Lord," "Hark! the song of Jubilee," "Oh, where shall rest be found," "Angels from the realms of glory,"

O God! thou art my God alone;" "Hail to the Lord's Anointed;" with others of equal merit, that might be named. There is one of these lyrics, in particular, endeared to us by home voices sounding sweetly in the far-away days, which never loses its familiar charm. Our heart is responsive whenever we listen to the strains of, "A poor way-faring man of grief;" it has the poetic facility and quaintness of Henry Vaughan, or of Quarles, or Herbert, stripped of all their archaic conceits. We put it side by side with Wesley's,—"Come, O thou traveler unknown," in our loving estimation.

This gentle and godly man attained his final rest, in his eighty-third year,—April 30th, 1854. His soul has "entered the joy of his Lord." His body lies in the cemetery at Sheffield; and over his grave, surmounting a granite pedestal, stands a life-size statue of the poet, in bronze, designed by John Bell. A popular demonstration at the time of its inauguration testified to the loving reverence in which his memory is held.

PASTOR FELIX.

Didn't See The Joke.

A north of England lawyer, having had occasion to summon an abusive cabman, was surprised one morning when his clerk informed him that the cabby, not recognizing him, had called to know whether or not he would take his defence.

"Oh, certainly," was the reply with a smile of amusement; "tell him to get off for a guinea."

It was the cabman's turn to be surprised, however, on the action being withdrawn and his recognizing the plaintiff and the solicitor as one and the same person.

"Why, hang me if that ain't the cove I gave a guinea to," he remarked, failing to see anything particularly humorous about the matter.

Good Way to Keep Accounts.

Tattooing is still a favorite personal decoration with some of the natives of Samoa, though not so fashionable there as formerly. Those who practice the art have an effective way of securing their pay.

The color extends from the waist to the knees, no other part of the body being marked. In the small of the back the design shades off to a point, which is never finished by the tattooer till his bill has been paid.

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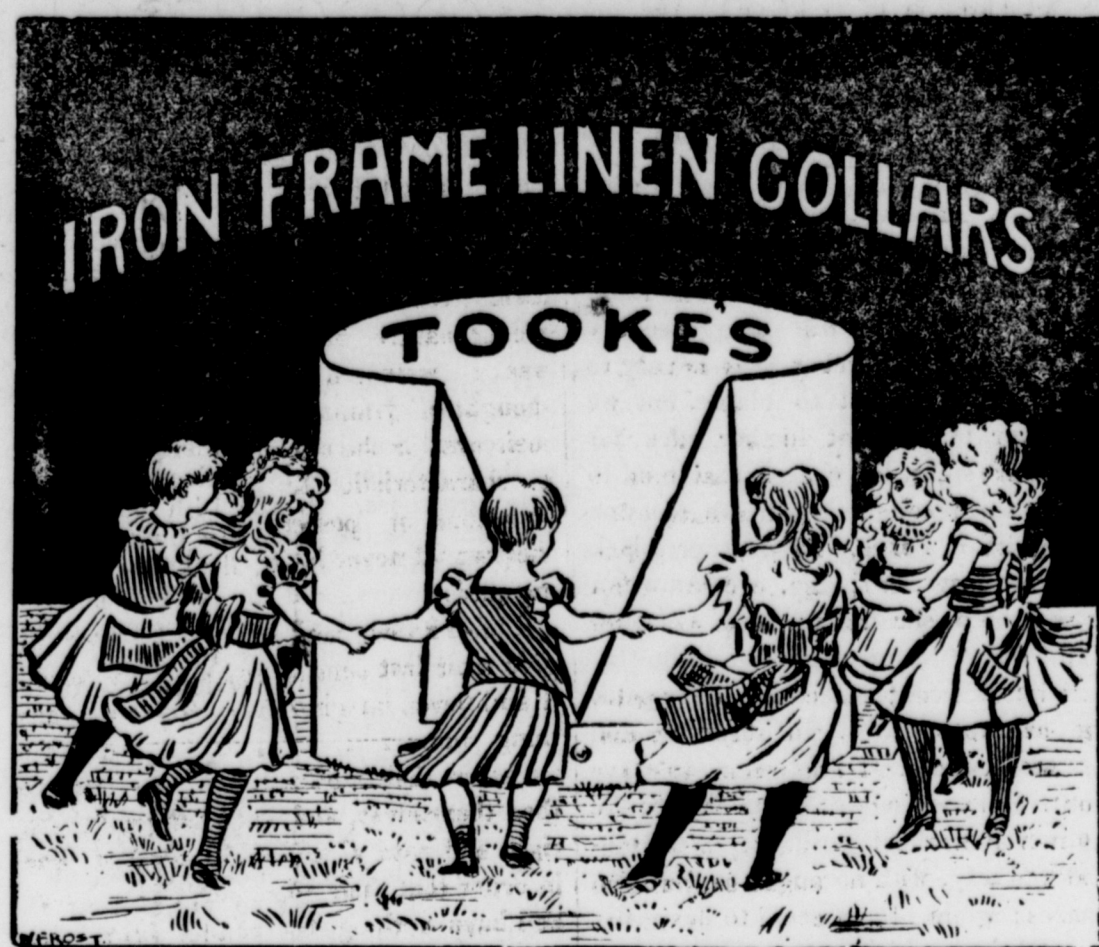
He Found Mr. Spriggins.

"Did you find Mr. Spriggins, Patrick?" "I did, sorr." "What did he say?" "Niver a worruld, sorr." "Not a word?" "Not a worruld, sorr." "Why no, Patrick?" "Because he was out." "O! I thought you said you found him?" "I did, sorr; I found him out."

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