

Notches on The Stick

We have already alluded to Coleridge's Continental experiences, and will not dwell on them longer, interesting as the reader might find them to be. He quitted Stowey in 1798; and, as his wealthy friends the Wedgwoods, had settled on him an annuity, the £150 enabled him to travel with Wordsworth and his sister, and linger at the seats of learning and centres of literature. The elder Wedgwood died long before Coleridge, and with him his part of the annuity ceased; but the £75 was paid by Joseph Wedgwood punctually till the day of his death.

Among the results of his German residence, was a more thorough acquirement of the language, and a closer acquaintance with the literature and philosophy of that cognitive and phlegmatic race. The deep Kantian tinge of his mind, was afterwards particularly noticeable, perhaps to the prejudice of his poetry. Yet—to some at least,—a more important result is his most sustained poetical performance,—the translation of the "Wallenstein,"—which, indeed is something more than a translation, as we commonly understand that term; his being the solitary instance in which the so-called translation is finer than the original. There is an amplitude of style—a flowing musical diction, with here and there such improving originalities, as mark the work that of Coleridge full as much as of Schiller. The literalist, jealous for the integrity of the German, may object to such a process; yet critics of the larger view will be found, who know that it is true in literature, as in religion, that the mere letter killeth, while it is the spirit that giveth life.

This work indicates of what Coleridge might have been capable in the way of original composition, had it not been for his fastidiousness of taste, and his dependence on extraordinary moods, as well as his constitutional indolence. It was published, after his return to England and settlement in London. The Longmans handled it, on condition that his English and Schuller's German should appear simultaneously. He now became a regular contributor, on literature and politics, to the Morning Post, which employed the pens of Southey, Wordsworth, and Lamb. The man of dreams was not without pungency in his dealing with current affairs, and the great leaders of the time. Mr. Fox himself recoiled from the sharpness of his criticism; and it is affirmed that "his strictness on Buonaparte occasioned that tyrant to select him for one of the objects of his vengeance, and to issue an order for his arrest when in Italy." At the end of his engagement in the Post, he went to reside at Returick, in the Lake District, to be near his friends, Southey and Wordsworth.

One of the most beautiful things in the life of this variously-gifted man was his aptness for confiding friendship; and, in particular, his life long affection for Charles Lamb—who returned it with equal constancy and ardor. A delightful familiarity marked their intercourse, and the great dissimilarity of their minds formed no bar to their mutual appreciation. From their school-days till the date of Coleridge's death there was never any serious disturbance of temper between them; and that portion of Lamb's correspondence which was directed to him, exhibits the gentle essayist at his best. The fire-side jest and laughter of the wit, at the expense of the prophet, never diminished that reverence the jester deeply entertained; and the dreamy poet's—"Now Charles!" marked the extent of deprecation or displeasure he was entertaining with respect to his early companion and long-time friend. They had mutual enjoyment of each other, and of the literary products of each; a thought of envy was as remote as a star, and the flowers were not nearer or sweeter than their sens of appreciation. Not that the critical judgment was inoperative, or in abeyance; they were Mentors of each other. Lamb was exceedingly plain and free-spoken, and knew the literary and personal foibles of his friend. "Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge," is his admonition; and, again,—"you have been straining your faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike;" and, "I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans of life veering about from this hope to the other, and settling nowhere." Yet on, the whole, Lamb was, perhaps more indebted to Coleridge than to any other person with whom he associated; and there are few things in literature more pathetic than the expression of his sorrow—the low, musing expression, uttered again and again,—which attested his loneliness, when "the brooding poet with the heavenly eyes" had become a memory and a dream.

After Coleridge had removed to Keswick (1802), he drew Lamb to visit him.

After vacillating for a little time [between the homes of Southey and Wordsworth, the decision was made by the poet to set up a home of his own. His neighbor, Mr. Jackson, had finished up a cottage, in which he lived, till he became convinced that the dampness of the place, so near the lakes and mountains, startling and impressive at first, never became so congenial to his heart as the cottage at Enfield, or his favorite nooks in London. The unexpectedness of the impression was, Proctor tells us, much like that "made by the first sight of the Alps upon Leigh Hunt, who had heretofore always maintained that there were merely great heaps of earth ought to have no effect on a properly constituted mind; but he freely confessed afterwards, that he had been mistaken. Lamb had been more than once invited to visit the romantic Lake country. He had no desire to inspect the Ural chain, where the malachite is hidden, nor the silver regions of Potoise; but he was all at once affected by a desire of 'visiting remote regions'. It was a sudden irritability, which could only be quieted by travel. Charles and his sister therefore went, without giving any notice to Coleridge, who, however, received them very kindly, and gave up all his time in order to show them the wonders of the neighborhood."

It was evening when they reached the house, on a slight eminence, at Keswick, in which Coleridge dwelt. A "gorgeous sunset" was melting down the mountains, and filling the vales with splendor; and it seemed to them they were entering an enchanted region,—or as Lamb afterwards wrote to Manning, had got fairly "into fairy-land." In all the days of their sojourn they saw no evening so pellucid and resplendent. "We entered Coleridge's study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight, nor do I suppose I ever can again. Glorious creatures, Skiddaw, E. I shall never forget how ye lay about that night like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed, for the night."

What pleasant greetings! And what delightful discourse, after they had gone into the house, and the "large, antique ill shaped room," where were ranged on shelves those precious "scattered folios;" where was the "old organ,"—at which, perhaps Coleridge played no morning or evening voluntaries, Milton-like,—and the "Eolian harp," whose sweet sounds may often have soothed the ear of the poet and his Sara! How pleasant to go over to Wordsworth's cottage and spend a night under its roof; even in the absence of the sweet singer had left their entertainment to those "good hospitable people" the Clarksons. It was something to meet their old friend Lloyd. How they clambered over the rugged sides to the very top of Skiddaw, "and went over to Grassmere, Ambleside, Ullswater, and over the middle of Helvellyn." The home of Coleridge was quite "enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains." Lamb could not easily rid himself of such impressions; and it must have been difficult to readjust himself to metropolitan scenery and ways,—for we find him writing to his late host in an enamored strain: "I feel I shall remember your mountains to the last day of my life. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the lady."

Long after Coleridge had left his home in Stowey,—and, indeed, after he was no more among men,—Howitt came thither a reverential pilgrim, to inspect the place, and note "The melancholy sense of rapid change and swift decay, we have upon visiting scenes we have formerly known, from which our friends have departed. "There," he says, "is the little town, there ascend beyond it the green slopes and airy range of the Quantock hills, scattered with masses of woodland, which give a feeling of deep solitude. But where is the poet who used here to live, and there to wander and think? Where is his friend, Poole? All are gone, and village and country are again resigned to the use of simple and little informed people, who take poets for spies and dark traitors. The little town is vastly like a continental one. It consists of one street, which at an old market cross diverges into two others, exactly forming an old fashioned letter Y. The houses are like continental ones, white, and down the street rolls a little full stream, quite in the fashion of a foreign village, with broad flags laid across to get at the houses. It stands in a particularly agreeable, rich, and well-wooded country, with the range of the Quantock hills, at some half mile distance, and from them a fine view of the sea and the Welsh coast, on the other side of the British channel. The house in which Thomas Poole (Coleridge's friend) used to live is about in the centre

of the village. It is a large, old-fashioned house, with pleasant garden, and ample farm-yard, with paddocks behind." The inmates showed him the garden of the good bachelor and magistrate, and the room over-looking it "where so many remarkable men used to assemble. It is said he was known in Stowey as an upright, benevolent man. "On his monument in the church is inscribed, that he was the friend of Coleridge and Southey."

"The cottage inhabited by Coleridge is the last on the left hand going out toward Allfoxden. It is now, according to the very odd and common fate of poet's cottages, a Tom and Jerry shop. Moore's native abode is a whiskey shop; Burns' native cottage is a little public house; Shelley's house at Great Marlowe is a beer-shop; it is said that a public house has been built on the spot where Scott was born, since I was in that city; Coleridge's house here is a beer shop. Its rent was but £7 a year, and it could not be expected to be very superb. It stands close to the road, and has nothing to distinguish it from any pot-house. Where Coleridge sat penning the 'Ode to the Nightingale," with its

Jug, Jug, Jug,
And that low note more sweet than all;
which the printer, by a very natural association, but to his infinite consternation, converted into

Jug, Jug, Jug,
And that low note more sweet than all;

sate, when I entered, a number of country fellows, and thought their ale more sweet than any poet's or nightingale's low notes. Behind the house, however, there were traces of the past pleasantness, two good large gardens, and the old orchard where Coleridge sate on the apple tree, 'crooked earthward;' and while Charles Lamb and his sister went to ascend the hills and gaze on the sea, himself detained by an accident, wrote his beautiful lines, 'This Lime tree Bower my prison,' including this magnificent picture:—

"Yes, they wander on
In gladness all; but thee, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hungered after nature, many a year;
In the great city pent, winning thy way,
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain,
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink,
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath flowers! richer beam, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue ocean! So my friend,
Struck with deep joy, may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.

"The woman in the house,—her husband was out in the fields,—and her sister, had neither of them heard of such a thing as a poet. When I asked leave to see the house and garden on account of a gentleman who had once lived there. 'Yes,' said the landlady, quite a young woman, 'a gentleman called one day' some time ago, and said he wished to drink a glass of ale in this house, because a great man had lived in it.'

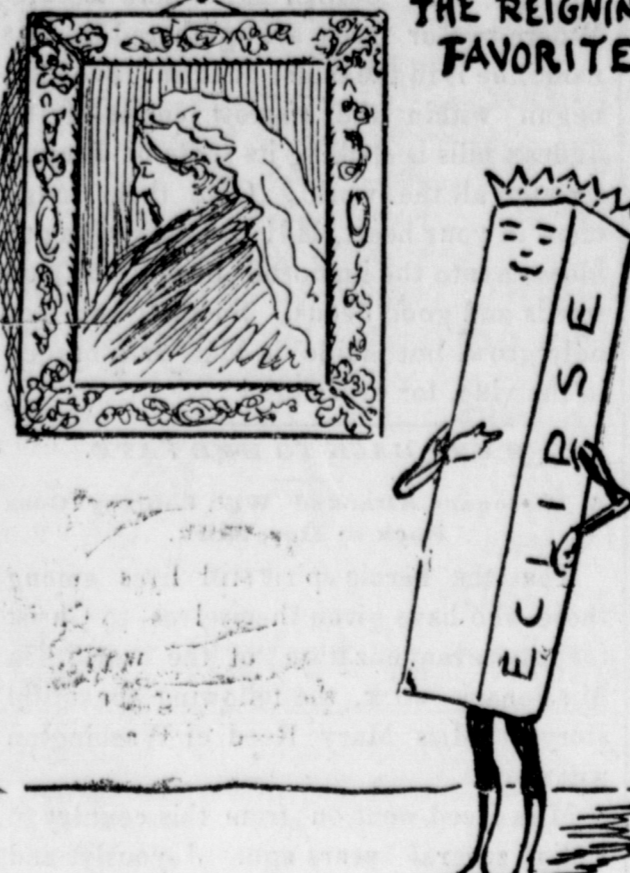
"A great man did he say? Why, he was a poet." "A poet, sir, what is that?" "Don't you know what a ballad-singer is?" "But you know what a ballad-singer is?" "O yes; to be sure." "Well, a poet makes ballads and songs, and things of that kind. 'Oh, lauks-o-me! why the gentleman said it was a great man.' 'Well, he was just what I tell you—a poet—a ballad maker, and all that. Nothing more, I assure you.' 'Good lauk-a-me! how could the gentleman say it was a great man! Is it the same man you mean, think you?' 'Oh! no doubt of it. But let me see your garden.'

"The sister went to show it to me. There were, as I have said, two gardens, lying high above the house, so that you could see over part of the town, and, in the other direction the uplands slopes and hills. Behind the garden was still the orchard, in which Coleridge had so often mused. Returning towards the house, the remains of a fine bay tree caught my attention, amid the ruins of the garden near the house, now defaced with weeds, and scattered with old tubs and empty beer barrels. 'That,' said I, 'was once a fine bay tree.' 'Ay, that was here when we came.' No doubt of it. The poet planted it, as such as it is there. That is just one of those people's tricks. Where they go they will be always planting that tree.' 'Good Lord, do they? what odd men they must be!' said the young woman."

A daughter of Nathaniel Parker Willis is

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still living; she is the "Imogen," to whom in her infancy he dedicated his "Rural Letters." She is now Mrs. Imogen Willis Eddy. She has a daughter residing in Pittsburg, whom she has recently visited.

Mrs. Sophie Almon Hensley has recently been re-elected as one of the Board of Managers of the Author's Guild at New York. Among her associates on the Board are Edw. O. Flagg and Gen. James Grant Wilson.
PASTOR FELIX.

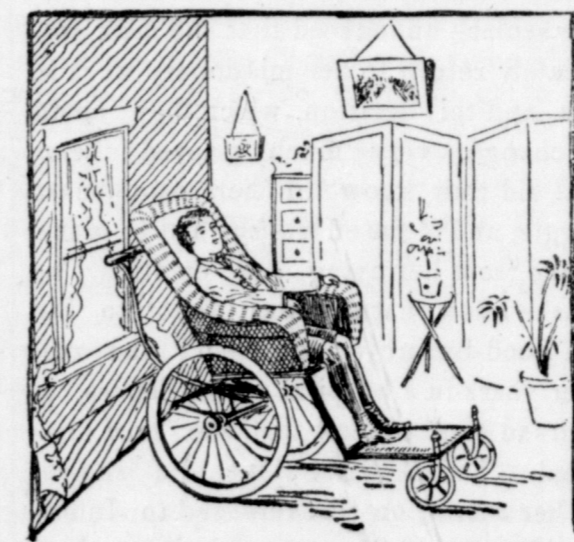
A BOY'S SUFFERINGS.

ATTACKED WITH INFLAMMATORY RHEUMATISM AT AN EARLY AGE.

Each Successive Year Brought Fresh Attacks With Increasing Severity Until He Was a Physical Wreck.

From the Sun, Belleville.

Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Kelly are people who are deeply grateful for a kind intervention of Providence whereby the life, health and happiness of their twelve year old son, Master Harry, has been restored and preserved. Mr. Kelly is one of the best known conductors on the Midland division of the G. T. R., and is now residing in this city. A Sun reporter having heard of the cure of the little fellow and the joy of his parents, called at their home and was met by Mrs. Kelly, who on being informed of the object of his visit, at once told the story of the cure and how the results were attained. We were living in Madoc when our boy was about five years of age and in the spring I went to call him one morning. He replied to my call by saying he could not rise. I at once went to him and found that he was unable to walk. Medical aid being summoned we discovered that inflammatory rheumatism had our little boy in its grasp. All that attention and doctors could do was done and the attack passed off, but the following spring while in Peterboro he was again seized with the dread disease and again we were in terrible dread of losing the child. When the warm weather came again he rallied, but was very weak and only a shadow of his former self.



Despite all we could do he was again attacked in the next spring. You can imagine the fear and dread with which we watched these recurring attacks, each one more severe than the last, and each one leaving our boy in a worse condition than those that went before. His last attack confined him to bed for three months, and his heart was dangerously affected. His sufferings were terrible, and it was pitiful to see him trying to carry food to his mouth. His nervous system was shattered that a form of St. Vitus' dance had effected him, and his hand and arm trembled so that he could not feed or aid himself. Some friends advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and recommended them so highly that my husband and myself decided to try them. We gave them to Harry for several months and when the spring came watched anxiously, fearing a return of the trouble, but were thankful and delighted to see no symptoms of it, nor has he been troubled for the past three years. "What is the condition of his health at present?" asked the reporter. "He is as sturdy and as healthy a boy as parents could wish for. I attribute his recovery and present health to nothing but Pink Pills, and I cheerfully recommend them to all."

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CHEAP BED TAPE.

Some Ridiculous Situations to Which It Leads up.

Americans are constantly bearing testimony to the cast-iron regulations of all official life in Germany. Sometimes this unyielding paternalism is beneficent and desirable; again it becomes funny. A writer in Harper's Weekly says that, when he was sailing his American canoe up the Havel, he came to a lock, and was told that he could not pass through until he had had an interview with the lock superintendent. This was the conversation that ensued:

"I beg to announce," said the American, "that I have a pleasure-boat here."

"Show me your certificate," returned the officer.

"I have no certificate."

"Yes, you have. You must have one, I tell you. You could not pass the Spandau lock without one."

"But I did pass that lock. I carried my boat round."

"That," said the officer, looking severe, "was contrary to regulations. I must make you out a new certificate, and you will have to pay for it."

"But if I did not pay at the last lock, why should I pay here?"

"It is according to 17, chapter 97, section 45."

He pulled down a big book, and began thumbing it.

"Don't look any more. I would rather pay the fine than waste time for the wind is favorable."

The officer then filled out two printed forms, entering the American as master of a ship, and asked: "How many in the crew?"

"I have no crew, only a little daughter of twelve."

The daughter was entered as a crew, and then came the question:

"What is your tonnage?"

"There is no tonnage. The boat weighs but eighty pounds."

But I tell you there must be tonnage! The official report calls for tonnage, and I can only tax you by tonnage. I shall put you down as five tons."

"But that is not true. The Caribee does not measure five tons."

"I can't help that. Officially there is no barge less than five tons, and you must pass as five tons, or not at all."

"Very well, then. Rather than go to jail, I'll call it five tons."

The lockmaster made out two formidable-looking documents. His name and that of the American were signed in duplicate; then both papers were stamped, one to be retained by government, and the other given to the American as a receipt for the amount he was to pay. Then the sum in question was solemnly announced, while the American almost held his breath, lest it should mean too great an inroad on his small quantity of ready silver: "One pennig: one-fifth of a cent!"

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