

## Notches on The Stick

Mary being gone, Jean snatched from him, and with the scourge of society at his back, the unhappy bard meditates flight from his native country. He craves the remembrance of his companions at Tarbolton,—

"Dear brethren of the mystic tie,"—when he shall be afar. He goes over the moors at evening, singing his farewell song to Caledonia,—in musical memory

"Pursuing past unhappy loves."

Already a tossing world of waters is in his eye, and the doom of that "fatal deadly shore," which, please Heaven, he shall never see! Fancy Robert Burns, the Poet of Freedom, a slave driver at the Line! If Moore's soul was vexed by the lazy Bermudian solitude, what uneasy soul will fret itself away from Jamaica, should the poet ever live to reach that island! Let such a business, in such a climate, be delegated to Mr. McShore; and Burns will be better off riding over Ayrshire hills and Galloway moors, "searching auld wives' barrels." His heart at least, will be at home. We kiss again the hand of Fate—dealer of so many untoward things—and bless the propriety of that combination of circumstances which saved him from so palpable an absurdity.

But how near he came to taking the step! He went so far as to engage his passage in the steerage of a vessel soon to leave the Clyde. But before he can do this he must be "master of nine guineas." And where shall he find "nine guineas"? Poetry is sometimes a golden lode, but not always. Burns, however, has written real poems, and he happens to have friends who apprehend this, and who advise him to collect and publish them, and who will subscribe liberally; so "Wee Johnnie" of Kilmarnock is engaged to print six hundred precious copies, that with the product thereof Scotland's greatest poet may be able to go and bury himself! In a most wretched frame of mind and amid the most distracting circumstances, the poet reads his proofs and superintends the publication. At last the work is complete, and the poems are out. That book became the step-ladder to fame! Coila was there at the poet's shoulder, (vide "The Vision,") and motioned him to ascend:

"And wear thou this! 'tis solemn said,  
And bound the Holly round my head;  
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,  
Did rustling play;  
And, like a passing thought, she flid  
In light away."

Drummond—Dunbar—Ramsay—Ferguson,—you have done your best; but I never book of yours was like this one, done at Kilmarnock! Like fire among whin bushes or dried heather on the moors, so spread the flame his genius had enkindled. His was at once a song of such repute that the laird and lady in their castle, the minister in his manse, the philosopher and litterateur in his study, the herdsman and plowman on the hills, the servant-girl in the kitchen,—all, and all classes,—seized eagerly on that wonderful book, thankful to get it for three shillings, and to pore upon it forgetful of else, by the hour. Burns now has fame,—he has also money. But subsequently "Wee Johnnie" refused to renege to renew the edition without the gold in his fist first,—so doubtful did he seem of the poet's success, after all,—and finally got the following bit for his pains: (Alas! John Wilson, "douce honest man!")

"Hic jacet wee Johnnie"  
Whoe'er thou art, O reader, know  
That Death has murder'd Johnny!  
An' here his body lies fu' low—  
E For saul he ne'er had ony."

What next? Of course he shall hear from good and worthy Dr. Blacklock! Of course "old Coila's" hills and dales' reclaim him; while mounted on a steed furnished at his hand, and en route for Edinburgh, his is a triumphal progress all the way!

We might dwell on his astonishing career in that city, but Jean does not figure there. She is in humiliation and obscurity. Meanwhile, her lover for a time seems to cast a lustre on the street as he walks, and the young Jeffreys of the time are gazing after him. He sits with the magnates and drains their wine, while they beam upon the prodigy; and when he opens his lips in speech or song they behold their own Scotland, as Mirza beheld the valley of Bagdat when enchanted by the present genius. Alas! when he was gone they were some pursuers of the next butterfly whim, and some only drinkers and diners and kneaders of life's common clay, just the same! Then, the glamor gone, the gold became dim,—his fine eyes and bold bright speech no longer a novelty,—he may retreat a social step or two, and finally subside to the pothouse; the more, since, in their view, he seems to have for that station some affinity. And what is our station in life? Is it not that

where unto we were born, or into which we are cast—sometimes with little seeming respect to our fitness therefor? But as to the pothouse, which caught the shimmer of his matchless verse, would that open door to death could have been closed to him, and that the rich and great had beguiled him away from the place where his self-control was finally broken down. He was bowing with the weary burden of a youth that had wrenched his nerves and stooped his shoulders; and what heavy weights, alas! each successive year should lay there! We sorrow to think how his life was preyed upon and frittered away. Are our brethren of the flesh set so to waste us? Is it true, as the wise Goethe said, that we must be either sledge or anvil? Is there no middle ground of security for the weak, the gentle, or the non-committal nature,—though Burns was not wholly of these? Must creation be abolished, indeed, before that part of it that preys upon other can be done away? It is a disheartening question, if we wait for the answer.

Clarinda, the new "mistress of the soul" over whom he languished in Edinburgh,—another of his half-ideal and wholly mistaken loves,—cannot detain us. Whatever may be said of the real depth and sincerity of that attachment on the poet's part, (the devotion of poor Agnes cannot be dubious,) it occasioned that singular self revelation of the weakness and strength of Burns, read nowhere so clearly as in the "Sylvander" letters; yea, and moreover, some of the sweetest, saddest songs in any language. But it was an episode, and soon over. Burns destined to immortality and the tomb; Agnes with her voluptuous beauty, to wear into wrinkled age, and to make the tearful record of the sixth December, 1831,——"This day I never can forget. Parted with Robert Burns in the year 1791, never more to meet in this world. Oh, may we meet in Heaven!" Amen! love there may be no wrong.

Think you that must have been a proud, if not a glad day, when the young man,—who had carried duchesses off their feet by the stroke of his eloquent lips, and turned their heads with his unacquainted brilliancy,—set his face away from the city, where he had gathered and worn his ripest laurels, toward that cottage of the west where those who loved him first still struggled with their poverty. Not prouder will he be to greet them all, than will be that fond, and forgiving mother—on whose knee sits that little daughter of his whose coming had been with shadow—to see her boy again, with the smiles of Edinburgh yet reflected from his face. God bless that mother's memory! Untroubled be her rest at Bolton churchyard in the vale of Tyne, who sung the music into her poet's soul, and who should now be sleeping by the side of William Burns, near the auld Kirk at Alloway. But Burns, with his five hundred pounds sterling from publisher Creech, may come home to Moss-gill, help to lift Gilbert's burdens, and give cheer to all about him;—for what a change to his worldly affairs and prospects the past few months have brought!

The same stroke of fortune that brought him competence and fame, put him in popular favor at home, blotted out all wrongs, and restored to him his Jean,—whom all the while he loved, and whom he now married in right good earnest. Armour is now complacent and interposes no barrier. So much does he seem to be in the truckling subservient humor that Burns in disgust holds coldly aloof for a time, but love and his generosity brings the poet round at length. And quite human and natural it was, doubtless, as Stoddard regards it for, Armour now to open his door to give Burns his hand, and to encourage Jean to act her pleasure. We are not unwilling to see Demos placated by some borrowed regard for the singing shepherds and the course of true love, so coldly checked, running free and smooth again. Wrath cannot burn forever even in a stone.

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man's bosom; and, after all, is not the Burns of old, erring, penitent and impecunious, a scandal to the country-side, stealing kisses and making mock marriages one sort of person, and the Burns of to day, triumphant, belauded, independent and replenished, quite another? Certainly. At least, nine out of every ten persons will think so, when they come to the question of marrying and giving in marriage.

Tennyson wrote of Wellington: "Whatever record leap to life he never shall be shamed." This is true of himself. His Biography, put forth by the son of the poet, more ennoble the man. It shows his life in its more secret parts, and discovers the processes of genius, labor and experience, by which his poems were evolved. They who have blamed him hitherto, may take notice that though raised to a peerage, he was not greedy of such honor, and for a time he resisted it.

Among recent books from the press of Houghton Mifflin and Co., are the "Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edited by Annie Fields"; "The Story of Christ," by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps; a reprint of "Evangeline, A Tale of Acadia," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, with Illustrations by Violet Oakley and Jessie Wilcox Smith; and the "Complete Works of Robert Burns, Cambridge Edition.

The Philadelphia Ledger properly remarks upon the course of Mark Twain in his recent book, "Following The Equator." To make fun of "The Vicar of Wakefield" is not a passport to the favor of lovers of good—nay, the best—literature. "Not long ago he held Fennimore Cooper up to ridicule," says the Ledger, in somewhat the same way. This sort of thing is not calculated to increase the sympathy and affection for Mark Twain which his recent financial misfortunes so generally aroused."

Justin McCarthy has in preparation a work of undoubted interest. "The Story of Gladstone's Life," involves so much of our age's history, and so many of its celebrated men, that, told as Mr. McCarthy must tell it, a ready public cannot be wanting. MacMillans are to be the publishers.

Admirers of Robert Louis Stevenson in America are invited to unite with those in Britain for the erection of a suitable memorial to that gifted Scotchman at Edinburgh. The promoters of the scheme are headed by Lord Roseberry, Sidney Colvin, George Meredith and J. M. Barrie. Charles Fairchild, at No. 38 Union Sq. New York, the chairman at the American committee, will receive and forward subscriptions.

PASTOR FELIX.

### FORTUNE HID IN A COIN.

If you Have a Franc Piece cut It Open; It may Contain Wealth.

If you happen to have in your possession the particular French coin known as five-franc piece you may, unwittingly, be a millionaire. Such at least is the belief shared by hundreds of credulous Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, many of whom spend most of their spare time destroying quantities of five-franc pieces in the hope of realizing a fortune.

Dr. Marco Leonardo Nardex, the well-known numismatist, and one of the recognized authorities on coin lore, speaking of this curious condition of affairs, said: "It is quite true that half of France still believes in the existence of great wealth hidden in five-franc pieces, although many numismatists hold that the fortune in question was long ago discovered and appropriated by one of the Rothschild family.

The story of the strange five-franc fortune legend may be briefly told. A five-franc piece, to begin with, is a silver coin, and is worth about \$1. Napoleon I, was very anxious to make the coin a popular one, and with this end in view he caused it to be circulated everywhere throughout France that he had inserted in one of the silver pieces before it left the mint a bank note or order for 1,000,000 of these same five-francs—i. e., for \$1,000,000. Whether he really did this or not I cannot say for certain, but the weight of evidence would seem to show that it was done. In the manuscript memoirs of the Duc de Feltief Napoleon's Minister of War, it is expressly stated that the Emperor enclosed a note on the Bank of France, duly signed by the governors of that institution, in a split five franc piece; that the halves were then welded together, partially reminted, and thrown in a heap of similar coins, which the Emperor mixed with his own hands. These coins Napoleon took with him in a bag when he went to Boulogne, and distributed lavishly en route, even dropping some of them out of his carriage windows. In this way it was impossible to keep track of the lucky coin.

The news of this odd lottery spread far and wide, and this five-franc piece leaped into immediate favor. From that day to

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this mutilation of the coin has been common in France, Switzerland, Belgium and elsewhere. Every year the Bank of France is requested to make good scores of pieces split in a vain search for the five-million-franc bank note.

There are many stories dealing with reputed finds of the fortune. Indeed, when a man becomes suddenly rich in France, it is common to hear people whisper: "Tiens! \* \* \* He must have found Napoleon's famous coin! Some assert that the Emperor kept the coin himself, but this hardly agrees with Napoleon's character. Still it is a current theory that some of the money which enabled Napoleon III. to reach the imperial throne was found in the lucky silver piece, which his mother, Queen Hortense, had wheeled out of her brother-in-law. It was also common talk that Gen Boulanger had acquired the famous coin, until the discovery that his money supplies came from the Duchess d'Uzes set that belief at rest.

The most likely explanation as to why the five-franc piece fails to turn up is that Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, a French member of the great Jewish banking house secured it. This account states that Baron de Rothschild, having investigated the tradition and found sufficient proof of its truth, deliberately set to work to locate the \$1,000,000 note. He quietly bought in and collected every five-franc piece he could get, and his agents were notified to preserve and forward to Paris every five franc piece which reached them in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America. In his office the Baron kept three trusty men hard at work bisecting the coins. Some say that he had invented a plan for welding them together again, so far as to defy detection; others maintain that he melted down the silver and sold it to the Government en bloc. The work was colossal; but in the end the baron's system is said to have conquered. He found the note for 5,000,000 francs, having spent nearly a million to obtain it. The order was duly presented at the Bank of France, and, says the tradition, cashed by that institution.

Plausible as the narration may seem, the great mass of Frenchmen refuse to credit it and go on, year after year, splitting open their five-franc pieces to look for Napoleon's note. It is certainly a tantalizing thought that somewhere in the world a check for \$1,000,000 is knocking about, hidden in an ordinary silver coin worth barely \$1. By possessing and opening that coin the man worth just five francs may in a moment become a millionaire.

### THE GREAT SALT LAKE.

Clogging of the Salt Rocks Causes a Loss of Saline Strength.

The Great Salt Lake is two feet lower to day than ever before known in the history of Utah, and according to competent observers it is rapidly changing its chief characteristic and turning into an inland sea of fresh water. Every fall the lake is several feet lower than in the spring, but this year the waters have subsided to such an extent that many of the bathing pavilions and bathhouses are left high and dry upon the beach. It has always been believed by experts that the lake had an underground, outlet, but no explorer has yet been fortunate enough to discover any. It is supposed, however, that outlets exist, and that during the last six months they have gained noticeably upon the springs which supply the lake.

On the northern slopes of the lake's shores and down the western border are numberless springs which have always run pure brine into the inland sea. These springs evidently came through immense rocks of salt in the earth, and by washing through them they make the spring water intensely briny by the time it reaches the surface. There have been signs of a change in these springs in recent years. Several times they have ceased to flow as rapidly as usual, and the water they poured up appeared fresher. They have now become partly choked up either with rocks or salt and they no longer give the same supply

of salt water as they did years ago. In several other places—notably on East An-telope, within fifteen feet of the brimming lake basin—there are many fresh water springs that gush up at all seasons of the year and pour into the lake. These fresh water springs have become "larger and more powerful since the salt water springs became clogged up, and it is supposed the underground reservoir of water, diverted from its usual course, is now seeking an adequate outlet through the springs where no salt rocks exist.

If this theory is correct, the Great Salt Lake will gradually turn to fresh water, and the surface will continue to fall until the winter and spring freshets from the mountains fill it again. This additional water will add no salt to the great sea, but make it fresher than ever. It has been well known for many years that the Great Salt Lake is fresher in the early spring than in the summer, and the phenomenon is probably caused by the addition of great quantities of water from the snows and streams of the mountains. Those engaged in manufacturing salt on the lake say that it takes six gallons of water to make one gallon of salt in the summer and fall, but that in early spring it often takes seven and even eight gallons to make the same quantity.

There are three large streams emptying into the Great Salt Lake—the Bear, Weber, and Jordan Rivers—but they make no appreciable difference in the saltiness of the lake, except early in the spring, when they carry the melting snows of the mountains down to the lake. So long as the underground springs of salt continued to pour their brine into the lake it required an immense volume of fresh water to neutralize them.

The Great Salt Lake is seventy miles long and fifty miles across in its widest part, and it has an area of 2,000 square miles. Another peculiar change that has taken place in the lake is the gradual upheaval of the bottom. In recent years its greatest depth has not exceeded forty feet, while the average depth is only from twelve to twenty. Fifty years ago the bottom could not be sounded in places, and lines 100 feet long failed to strike bottom.

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### Had Honors Enough.

Captain of Foot-ball Team (as he is borne off the field in triumph)—"Dear me! If my good old mother could see me now it would break her heart!"  
Half-back—"Why?"  
Captain—"She has always prophesied that I would some day be President of the United States; but, if she could see me now, she would realize that I could never really care for that office."—Puck.

### A Country Without Pets.

How much the boys and girls of Japan must miss! They have no pets, not a tabby cat, nor a dog, nor a pink-eyed rabbit, nor a lambkin. In fact, Japan is almost wholly without tame animals. The inhabitants of Japan neither eat beef nor drink milk, and consequently the cow is of no use in their domestic economy.

At a small seaside English resort a spirited and generous townsman has presented a number of free seats for the promenade, each adorned with an iron label stating that "Mr. Jones, of this town, presented these seats for the public use.

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