

Notches on The Stick

When murmurs are in the air of dissent from appreciations of contemporary authors which are not in the proper sense criticism it gratifies us to meet in the pages of a journal, at least respectable, (The Methodist Bimonthly Review) a specimen of the species objected to, in reference to an author against whose work considerable criticism has been directed. We deem it worthy the graceful, poetical pen of Dr. Kelly. The book dealt with is, "Behind The Arras. A Book of the Unseen," by Bliss Carman:

"Two poems much alike in theme are the first and the twelfth, 'Behind the Arras,' and 'Beyond the Gamut.' Under the figure of the first events and people of this life seem to this poet's fancy like scenes and figures woven on suspended tapestry, all plain enough to see and touch. On this marvelous tapestry of the visible he beholds many strange things 'degraded shapes and splendid seraph forms.'

And beings with hair,
And moving eyes in the face,
And white bone teeth and hideous grins, who race
From place to place.

They build great temples to their John-a-nod,
And fane and plod
To deck themselves with gold
And paint themselves like chattels to be sold;
Then turn to mold.

But the tapestry which holds the figures many and various, is swayed by windlike forces from the farther side, stirs often as if some one went to and fro behind it brushing against or pushing it with hands. Seeing which the poet falls a-wondering what is "Behind the Arras," suspects foot-falls and voices almost audible, and hunts to find some peep-hole in the curtain. In "Beyond the Gamut" the same general theme is treated under a different figure. The violinist feeling his dear instrument thrill as it nestles between chin and shoulder, asks what reason any find to doubt that past the seven notes, both up and down, are notes and music further and additional, could we but hear. There might be hearing so acute that the motions of the spider's loom would roar like a tornado. That little pearl and coral couch shell which we call the ear is not the measure of the sea of sound. Through realms of manifold music 'Beyond the Gamut' Carman's fancy listens, and through fourteen pages reports more or less of what it thinks it hears; report which is secure in one advantage—no man living can well contradict it. It is expected that in life's later, larger, loftier rooms man will develop new senses of soul, it not of body senses, now unknown, if not undreamed of. Had we the powers of court or legislature we would decree a change of name; it should hereafter be Bliss Carman, because, in large degree and in undertone, when not in dominant note, his poetry is a song of bliss. He knows reasons why each new morn that stands a tiptoe on the mountain top is a joyous day. It is happily safe to float on the roll of his rhythm, for there are no treacherous currents, no dangerous eddies sucking faith under, no deadly sea-puss sticking his claws into the swimmer; no monster of the slime reaching up its clammy tentacles to seize and drag the soul down in the dark and be devoured in the ooze. The joy of life is full and strong in Carman; above the world's gray tears he marks the sun's gold glees; but his test for all things, low or high, is what they impart to the soul. He holds that the joys of earth are journey-aids to heaven; and as for ills, sufferings and privations, dangers and hardships—without them there would be among men no touch of pathos, or of daring, none of the unquenchable valor of the overcomer, none of the patience which endures, nor the unflinching loyalties of love.

"He calls evil a false note; is of opinion it will not persist but die away, and at last, far on be whelmed in God's triumphant harmony so that heartening down his deep, wide universe he will here not one discordant note. The poet seldom argues; he affirms or hints. Neither science nor logic dictates his forms. He is no professed philosopher, bound to explain things. He no more binds himself to complete statement than a piano player promises to strike all the keys at once. When he says that Shakespeare's people are 'sweet and elemental and serene' he means that some of them are. 'Good is impetus to Godward; evil, but one ignorance of laws,' he omits to make his semicircle whole by a supplementary statement that evil as it exists in the human world includes a vast amount of deliberate or passionate defiance and stubborn disobedience of laws which are as painfully well known as they are clearly revealed and solemnly sanctioned.

A finely discriminating article on Prof. Henry Drummond is that of Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) in "The North American Review." He says of Drummond's personal presence: "No man could be double or base or mean or impure before that eye. His influence, more than that of any man I have ever met, was mesmerizing." Of his writing he affirms that to many readers they have "given a new vision of the beauty of life and the graciousness of law."

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In the claims and conquests of The Good, Carman has an assured confidence; earth's brief twilight dirges shall melt in Te Deums. Through his verse breathes such faith and hope and trust, as might enable an aging or failing man to say to friends or to the stripped and friendless years,—

Slowly, therefore, and softly,
With more memories than tongue can tell
Lower me down the slope of life and leave me,
Knowing the hereafter will be well.

"In 'The Cruise of the Galleon' he pictures an old battered and laboring galleon, lettered on its stern, Tellus, the earth, 'laden deep and rolling hard,' but bound to weather the storms, clear the reefs, and at last, beyond the zones of sorrow, go 'bowling down an open bee line for the latitudes of joy.' Carman's poetry is not hard to interpret; mostly its meaning can be caught on the fly. The two poems first mentioned in this notice are somewhat more subtle than the rest. Among those whose message is most obvious are, 'The Lodger,' 'The Juggler,' and 'The Night Express.' The Lodger signs his name, Spiritus; a mysterious tenant, biding a while in a house of tinted clay; biding and hiding, a silent guest who minds his own affairs in a very private fashion, goes softly in and out; mostly keeps himself upstairs. No Paul Pry at his keyhole ever sees him; but

The light under his door
Is glory enough;
It outshines any star
That I know of;

and 'his presence is worse to miss than the sun's best shine.' In most of these verses we meet God and the soul or overhear them pretty much everywhere and all the time; a God not feared and trusted, a soul buoyant, eager, believing, affirming. The conception in 'The Juggler' is finely written out in fourteen verses, easy, beautiful, charming. The Juggler is God; the world are his golden balls; he throws them up and up; there is never one that swerves. His hand never hurries nor halts; he forgets not the time of their return; he sees just where they are; he knows them all like a book; they will return home to his grasp at last; and

Likely enough, when the show is done
And the balls are all back in his hand
He'll tell us why he is smiling so,
And we shall understand.

'The Night Express' is one on-rushing life, in which 'we are travelling safe and warm, with our little baggage of cares,' because the Driver of iron nerve handles the trolley-bar and gathers the track in his smile:

For he of the sleepless hand
Will drive till the night is done—
Will watch till morning springs from the sea
And the rails stand gold in the sun;
Then he will slow to a stop
The tread of the driving-rod,
When the night express rolls into the dawn;
For the Driver's name is God.

"Just as we close Bliss Carman's little book we catch the picture of a river wandering fast and far 'through a gate in the mountain left ajar,' and the Delaware Water Gate flashes into mental view. To save someone else the need of saying it, we remark that this book notice is an appreciation rather than a literary criticism; and we beg leave to add apologetically that to enjoy may be as judicious as to find fault."

No memorial to her has yet been erected at Liverpool, England, though Mrs. Felicia Hemans was born in that city, lived in its vicinity, and wrote many of her poems there. Mr. McKenzie Bell has proposed that something be done in this direction, which, it is thought, may take the form of a prize for lyric poetry in the university college Liverpool. This seems next to nothing and not liable to be productive of much good; since the best inducement to the production of good lyric poetry is the impulse within the heart, and not the bait of a glittering temptation.

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Mr. William B. Chisholm in an article in

The Home Journal on "The Blessings of Critical Severity," says: "Lord Jeffrey had to do some disagreeable things in his day; so did Gifford and Edgar A. Poe." Of Jeffrey it may be said, he did some things more disagreeable than necessary. We fail to see the usefulness of exasperating Scott, and harrying Wordsworth. As to Gifford, whom Shelley in his great thre-mody compared to a beaten hound,"—we well know him as the mangler of Keats. Some of Poe's criticisms did the author more injury than they did good to the persons assailed. We do not see the reason for a return to that style of criticism.

Among degrees recently conferred by Yale, is that of M. A. upon the artist, Edwin A. Abbey; that of D. D. upon Rev. John Watson, (Ian Maclaren); and that of L. L. D. upon Capt. Alfred Mahan, the naval writer.

In the Russian town of Orel, the birth-place of the novelist Turgenyev, a monument is to be erected. Prince Constantine, Constantinovitch, president of the academy of sciences is at the head of the committee at St. Petersburg which will collect and disburse funds for this purpose.

A statue of Washington is to be presented to France by America, at the instigation of the women. For several years the work of collecting funds has gone quietly on, until \$22,000 out of the \$35,000 have been raised. The year 1900 being the named time limit for the erection the enterprise is being pushed onward, and much interest is being excited. The figure to be a bronze, life-size, will be executed by Daniel French.

The ex-librarian of the Congressional Library, who is retained in a subordinate position, found in his advanced years and failing health the pressure too great for him. The journalist, John Russell Young ex minister to China, has been appointed to the position of librarian.

PASTOR FELIX.

HERMANN'S STRANGE PETS.

The Power Which the Great Magician Had Over all Animals.

Perhaps in no way was the late great and only Herrmann more truly the wizard than in his absolute power over every kind of animal. He was never known to approach one that did not instantly recognize and love him as a friend; and so devoted was he to 'pets,' that he never travelled without a retinue of dogs, birds, monkeys, etc. Mrs. Herrmann was not a whit behind the great magician in her fondness for and power over animals and if there was room in their private car for General, Sandow and Lola (Mr. Herrmann's Danish hound, monkey and macaw) it was only upon condition that they remained upon good terms with Fidget, a black and tan puppy, a mocking bird, and Rutie, a parrot—the especial pets of Mrs. Herrmann.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the magnificent Herrmann manor at Whitestone, L. I., with its broad acres has long been the home, not only of some of the finest bred horses and dogs in America, but of deer, goats, ganders, ducks, doves, monkeys, magpies, parrots—in fact, every manner of living things. When Mr. Herrmann was at home it was always his custom to have his morning coffee and roll in bed and this was a grand hour for the dogs, as one and all were allowed to go to his room and assist at the function and it was thus, surrounded by a dozen or more huge hounds and St. Bernards, each clamoring for a friendly word, that this almost supernaturally delicate man best enjoyed his breakfast.

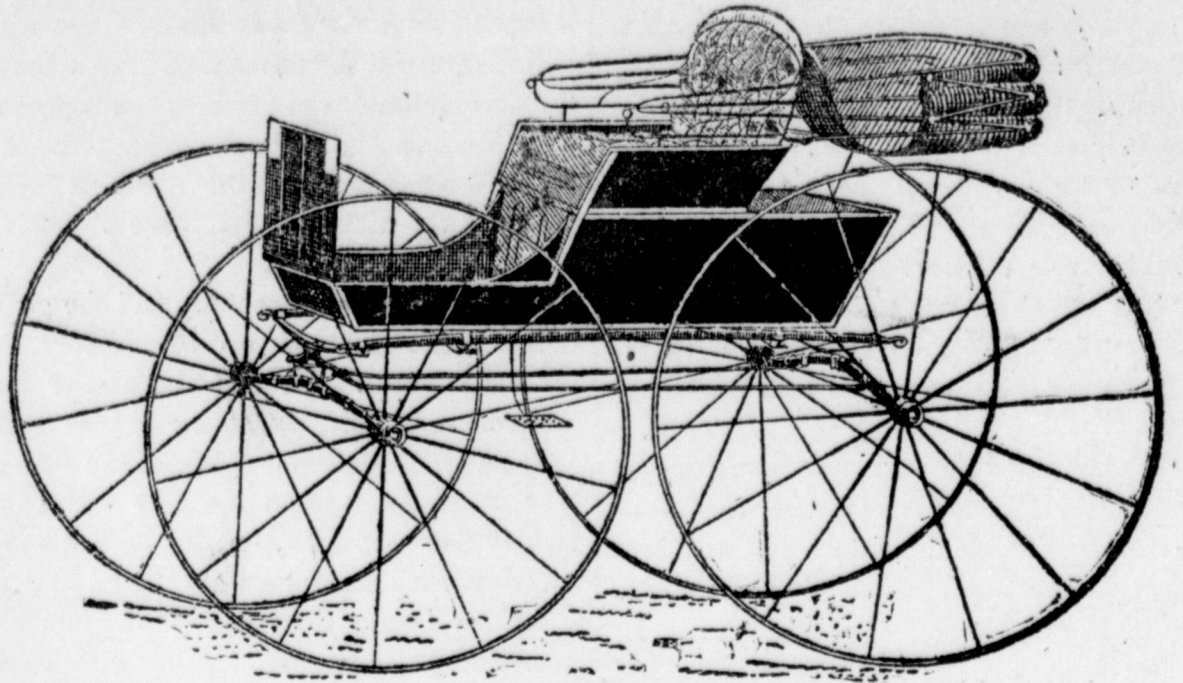
Some of these great St. Bernards, by the way, enjoyed a very unique sort of protection during their puppyhood, though they have doubtless forgotten all about it by this time. Thirteen of them are born at one litter—a quite unusual thing—and formed of course a most picturesque and interesting group. It chanced that Mr. Herrmann's favorite pet at this time was a brilliant macaw that he had brought from Central America. These birds are sometimes a shimmering cadet blue with golden wings, but this one was a bright scarlet with black beak that only seemed the black

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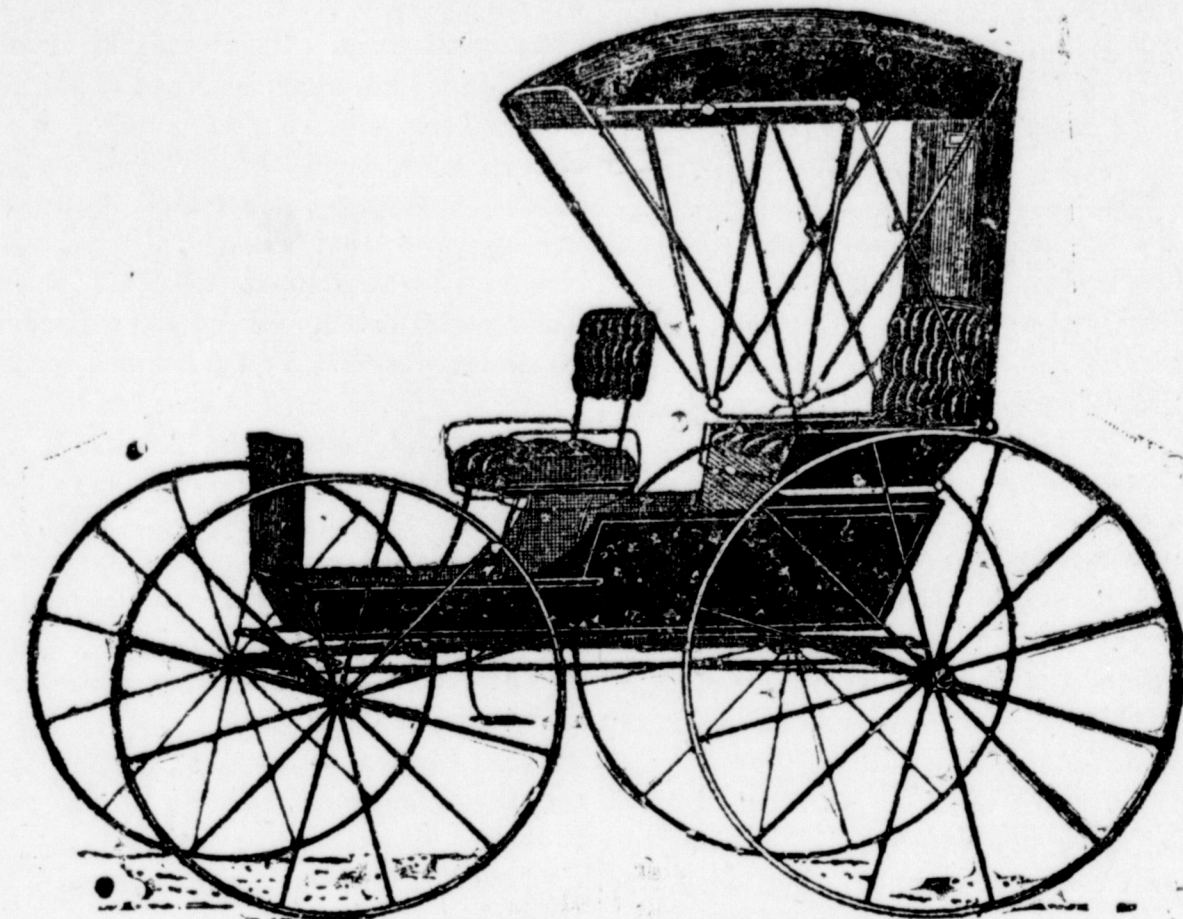
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er from its striking setting of snow white feathers. This gorgeous bird measured 1 1/2 yards from beak to tip of tail, and in addition to its great beauty was a very clever talker. One day Mr. Herrmann put this beautiful macaw into the monkey cage, which he placed on top of the kennel containing the thirteen young St. Bernards. Later in the day the family were aghast at discovering that Miss Lola had used her sharp bill to good purpose, for she had bitten a great hole in the cage, thereby obtaining her freedom. Search was made for her everywhere, but all in vain.

Sad at heart, Mr. and Mrs. Herrmann strolled out to take a look at the puppies by way of consolation, when to their great surprise, there in their midst stood Miss Lola, having the most beautiful time in the world. She had evidently got upon the most intimate terms with her four-legged neighbors; one was licking her beak, another her wing, still others contented themselves with her back and beautiful tail feathers each and all doing her homage in their own clumsy puppy fashion, and Miss Lola, a truly feminine creature was enjoying all this devotion in every feather of her being. Presently the mother appeared and the hungry and ungrateful little puppies one by one deserted their brilliant guest, who was by no means pleased at the turn affairs had taken. Now, Lola could be very vicious if she chose, and when she marched in a dignified manner over to Mrs. St. Bernard, planted herself firmly in front of her and began to wink at her in a very wicked way, both Mr. and Mrs. Herrmann were on the alert to see that she didn't pick out her rival's eyes. However, after winking and deliberating—deliberating and winking, she looked squarely into the eyes of the mother dog, and in a coarse, gruff voice ejaculated, 'Hullo!'

From this time on she constituted herself the mistress of the dog kennel, grudgingly allowing the mother to come in when occasion required, but never ceased to be fiercely jealous of her. Sometimes Lola would fly into a tree and refuse all entreaties to come down until some one would stand under the tree with

a puppy in his arms, when she would fly down at once. Unfortunately, this beautiful pet developed such a habit of biting or nibbling at every thing within sight, especially wood, that Mr. Herrmann could not take her on his last trip, fearing that in time she might eat up the car. He therefore placed her in Central park and, curiously enough, she dropped dead from her perch on the very day that her beloved master so suddenly expired.

Nearly every one is familiar with Herrmann's 'Noah's ark' trick, where he shows the audience an empty box, and for further verification of its emptiness has buckets of water poured into it. Then he begins to take out animals by the wholesale. First comes a squealing pig, then a pet gander, and so on. Now, for some reason or other, the gander suddenly developed a strange jealousy of the pig, and every night would seize its poor little tail in its sharp beak, causing it to run about the stage squealing furiously, to the great amusement of the audience. Mrs. Herrmann, however, had much too soft a heart to let this go on, and one day cleverly fitted a piece of kid glove over piggie's tail. That evening the gander, discovering this device, and not willing to let the little beast go scot free, caught him by the ear, and the audience was as much amused as ever. The next day Mrs. Herrmann made a red flannel cap, tying under the chin and perfectly fitting the ears of the little victim. When Mr. Herrmann drew him out of the ark that night so attired he was almost more paralyzed than the gander, who, however, never molested piggie again. All the trick animals were as tame as possible, and seemed to greatly enjoy their public appearances. A trick duck in particular was so devoted to one of the maids that it would persist in following her all over the theater.

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