

## Notches on The Stick

In the year 1794 the Terror was at its height in Paris; but the fever-madness—the bloody thirst, was beginning to wear itself away. The prisons of the city were continually filling and emptying; every day the tumbrils rolled through the streets, bearing the newly devoted groups of pale-faced victims to their pitiless doom. Many a fair and noble head had fallen;—from that of an innocent, beautiful Lamballe, and the majestic Roland, to that of the gifted and passionate-hearted Andre Chenier. Suspicion stalked abroad, or lurked in mysterious guise; injustice sat enthroned, dealing in the mockery of justice; the malign and animal passions heated the popular spirit to a dread insanity; meanwhile the timid shrank within their homes, dwelling with foreboding in solitude, while the bolder hearts, rendered desperate by long-continued excesses, courted their fate and rushed upon it.

The sons of genius exercise a fascination upon us, when they shine like stars out of an unclouded sky; but when, involved in a midnight of storm and sorrow, we see their faces between rifts of the driving cloud, they draw us apart from the ordinary ways of men. We can hardly criticise them, as we might do if we saw them plodding in the commonplace paths of life, and holding their manuscripts as merchandise in the markets of the world. Young Korner dies, with the halo of battle on his brow, and his Hymn has all the sacredness of the tomb. The boy, Chatterton, seems just out of touch, by the mystery of genius conjoined with fate; and the ethereal, yet passionate spirit of Shelley eludes us. But among the faces that look out to us through a golden mist of romance, none are more bewitching to our sober reason than the young man whose lyre could not charm away the spectres of death, though it ceased not its vibrations till the foot of the scaffold was reached. It matters not now that he was but the child of promise, since even such a master of praise as Sainte-Beuve crowns his brow with laurel, and Hugo drops a tear of melodious pity over the fate of Andre Chenier.

A poet he should have been, by the conjunction of all appropriate planets. With a Cypriote Greek, of noble birth and enthusiastic spirit for a mother, (Mademoiselle Santi-l'Homaka,) who nourished him from his cradle in the love of letters; sired by a cultivated Languedocian gentleman, in the diplomatic service of France at Constantinople; born under Oriental skies and amid scenes long loved and praised by poets; nursed on classicism, till his was the instinct of perfection in literary form, and drinking in the Greek Anthology with mother's milk,—it is no marvel that his should have been, the gift and passion of song, and that it should have been his ambition to enlarge the domain of lyric and idyllic poetry. The circumstances of his youth favored the development of his aesthetic talent. His residence at the College of Navarre; his visits, at holiday seasons to the splendid country-houses of his friends, by whom his tastes were encouraged; his visit to Italy in the company of the brothers Trulaine; his pleasure when in England with the works of Milton,—their majestic harmonies and suggestions of learning; his arrival at manhood in what then seemed to many the dawn of universal liberty upon the earth when it was "bliss to be alive, but to be young was very heaven!"—all contributed to the result, and made him for a time one of the most hopeful and joyous of mankind. No wonder if he projected schemes of greatness, and like Coleridge and De-Quincy, planned larger works than he would have time or power to execute.

Quickly the shadows began to fall. As Milton hastened from Italy at the outbreak of civil strife in England, deeming his country's van the patriot's place; so from the land of Milton, at the first tocsin of the Revolution, came Andre Chenier. His ardent faith was soon chilled; he revolted from the horror and excess; he looked into the eyes of the boasted Goddess of Liberty, and saw a brazen strumpet in her anger. He assisted in the defence of the King. Henceforth his doom was sealed. He was apprehended at the house of a friend, M. Pastoret, at Passy, where he had gone to warn the family of their danger, and incarcerated in the Luxembourg prison. From that, on account of its overcrowded condition, he was removed, 8th. March, 1794 to the prison of St. Lazare. Frantic with dread, the father, whose hope and ambition centred in his children, exerted himself to obtain the release of his unhappy son. In vain: he was put aside with hypocritical evasions. Soon another of his sons had joined the

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crowd huddled in the Concergerie prison. There was no hope of release.

"When we think of Andre Chenier," writes Katharine Hillard, "We see a youthful figure among a crowd of fellow-prisoners, the light of genius in his eyes, the dark shadow of impending death already enveloping him and climbing slowly upwards, as the midst of the Highland second sight rises higher as death draws near. The pathetic character of his fate touches the heart, and disposes us to judge the poems he wrote with that bias of personal interest which is so apt to warp the verdict of the critical mind." Yes, we see him there with his friends about him,—the Trudiner, "the charming young Duchess of Fleury," Madame Pourrat, and her daughters, the Countess Hocquart and Madame Laurant Lecoulteaux, to whom under the name of Fanny, he addressed some of the most charming of his verses. Yes, we see him there, with his strongly marked features, "as Lacretelle described him nearly half a century later; 'his athletic though not lofty stature, his dark complexion, his glowing eyes, enforcing and illuminating his words,—Demosthenes, as well as Pindar, the object of his study.' We see him talking, while 'the most decided and the most eloquently expressed opinions' come freely from his lips. We see him writing verses on stray bits of paper, that were smuggled out to the publishers, with stanzas of gallantry and compliment, or words of burning passion in protest against tyranny, and the excesses of the time; or splendid odes, like that on his friend David's picture of the deputies taking their famous oath at Versailles, in the Hall of the Jeu de Paume.

The following pathetic piece was written in Lazare, inspired by the tender regrets of the young and beautiful Duchess of Fleury:

**The Young Captive.**  
"The corn in peace fills out its golden ear;  
Thro' the long summer days the flowers without a fear  
Drink in the strength of noon.  
And I, a flower like them, as young, as fair, as pure,  
Thought at the present hour some trouble I endure,  
I would not die so soon.  
"No, let the stoic heart call upon Death as kind!  
For me, I weep and hope; before the bitter wind  
I bend like some like palm.  
If there be long, sad days, others are bright and fleet;  
Alas! what honeyed draught holds nothing but the sweet?  
What sea is ever calm?  
"And still within my breast nestles illusion bright;  
In vain these prison walls shut out the noonday light;  
Fair Hope has lent me wings.  
So from the fowler's net again set free to fly,  
More swift, more joyous thro' the summer sky,  
Philomel soars and sings  
"Is it my lot to die? In peace I lay me down,  
In peace awake again, a peace nor care doth drown,  
Nor fell remorse destroy.  
My welcome shines from every morning face,  
And to those downcast souls my presence in this place  
Almost restores their joy.  
"The voyage of life is but begun for me,  
And of the landmarks I must pass, I see  
So few behind me stand.  
At life's long banquet now before me set,  
My lips have hardly touched the cup as yet  
Still brimming in my hand.  
"I only know the spring; I would see autumn brown;  
Like the bright sun, that all the seasons crown,  
I would round out my year.  
A tender flower, the sunny garden's boast,  
I have but seen the fires of morning's host;  
Would eve might find me here!

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"O Death, canst thou not wait? Depart from me and go  
To comfort those sad hearts whom pale despair and woe,  
And shame, perchance have wrung.  
For me the woods still offer verdant ways,  
The Loves their kisses, and the Muses praise?  
I could not die so young!"

Thus, captive too, and sad, my lyre none the less,  
Woke at the plaint of one who breathed its own distress,  
Youth in a prison cell;  
And throwing off the yoke that weighed upon me too,  
I strove in all the sweet and tender words I knew  
Her gentle grief to tell.

Melodious witness of my captive days.  
Those rhymes shall make some lover of my lays  
Seek the maid I have sung.  
Grace sit upon her brow, and all shall share,  
Who see her charms, her grief and her despair,  
Thy too "must die so young!"

On the morning of the 25th July, 1794, he was brought to the tribunal, and, with twenty-five other victims, underwent the mockery of a trial. I will not sully my page with the lying slanders that were trumped against him. He was speedily condemned, and the sentence was executed on the evening of that day at the Barriere de Vincennes. It is said that as he descended the steps of the prison he remarked to his brother-poet Roucher, stroking his forehead at the first word of the second sentence,—"Jensairien fait pour la posterite, Pourtant j'avais quelque chose la." With him in the tumbril, beside Roucher, were Tronck, and the Counts de Montalembert and de Crequi. According to one account the two poets beguiled the fateful journey with recitations of the Andromaque; but another declares that, while Roucher declaimed and was "noisily vaillant," "Chenier was mute and thoughtful." Soon, alas! their hearts were still and their voices silent. So perished in his strong ambitious manhood, Andre-Marie de Chenier, in the thirty-second year of his age. Ah, why could fate not have delayed her footsteps! In three days the head of monstrous Robespierre fell from the same scaffold, and the Reign of Terror was at an end.

The latest accepted pronunciation of the great Polish novelist's name is Hynrek Shain-ka! veetch. So says Mr. Everard J. Appleton, a critic in The Cincinnati Commercial Tribune; and he further advises us speedily to the dentist to secure the filling of our teeth, since we are soon to be deluged with "a Polish craze," and the unpronounceable will be flying all abroad. He also advises the public on a matter of vital interest, as follows:

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A correspondent in the West commands the Portland Transcript: "The Transcript is an old and reliable paper, fair, accurate, and judicious. It stands high all over the country, is ably edited, and pure in tone." To this we can give our cordial assent. We have known it under the management of the late Edward Ellwell, and of Samuel T. Pickard,—both accomplished literary gentlemen,—as well as under its present able editor, a nephew, we understand, of the last named; and during all these years we have esteemed it foremost in rank among the journals of Maine, for purity, tastefulness, and instructiveness. It aims to be interesting without sensationalism, and succeeds in that, as far as may be possible in the present time. Many well-known names have been associated with it, and it represents the varied talent of several of the New England States, and especially of that in which it exists, and to which it is in a particular way devoted.

A literary friend and generous lover of books, who has no mean poetic gift, writes: "Alas! the fires of poetry have died out of my prosaic life. I have become a real shirk, and lost even interest in writing anything; but I have not lost interest in reading what my friends write, and in watching with a pride of friendship their successes." That is the best of all. To be a genuine lover of the beautiful in art and literature, and of whatever, may be excellent anywhere, without bitterness of envy, but with a warmth of enthusiastic emulation,—as if the successes of another were indeed our own,—this is a happier possession than genius itself. I am sure it is true of the author of the foregoing sentiment. Another, in a similar strain declares,—"A new book infuses new life into me,—it exhilarates me—it makes me feel rich as a king."

Mr. Rudyard Kipling's "Recessional" appears to be a very popular, as it is unquestionably a very strong and impressive poem. We would not surrender it for a dozen of his best "Barrack-room Ballads," nor the most sonorous he has written of the

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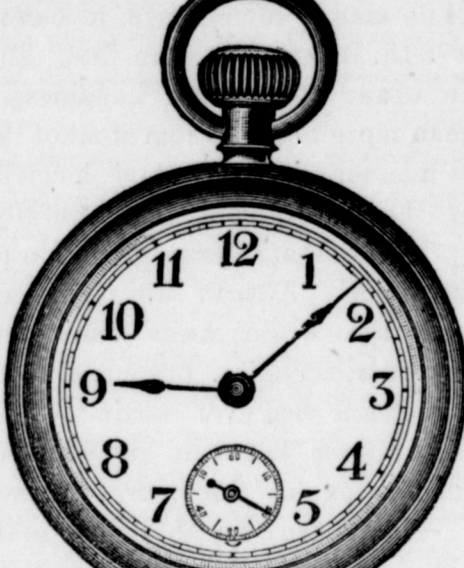
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seas. It is pure straight forward English, fit to be a classic for all time. It is said that in England the supply of copies can hardly keep pace with the demand; and there, as well as in the country, it is issued with artistic illustration, in attractive ornamental forms. The musical composer, also, has it in hand, on both sides of the Atlantic; and, when set to the strains of Sir Arthur Sullivan and Reginald De Koven, it may be sung to our heart's content,—or better, our hearts' admonition—"let us forget."

The following is a choice specimen of humor from the modern paragrapher: "The Critic said recently: Mr. Henry James has purchased a house in the picturesque town of Rye, England, where he intends to make his home. One of his neighbors is Miss Ellen Terry, whose house, though a mile away, at Winchelsea, is in plain sight from Mr. James' gate, the road is so level and straight between them. This is interesting, but a paradoxical question presents itself at once. Supposing Miss Terry feels blue some day and desires to have—er—well, a wee sma' drop? Contrary to the statements given by the prohibitionists, she will find it easy to get to Rye by going down the 'straight and level road.' Strange, passing strange!"

**Cuba.**  
Hear, O my brothers! hear the cry of woe,  
That deepens ever on the Southern breeze!  
Still Cuba weeps, and still the coral seas  
Redden and sigh to feel her overthrow.  
Irene's and Armenia's doom they know,  
To whose starved lips our bread is sweet but wine  
Is Freedom, that we prize and cherish so.  
Cruel Hispan! what though, trampling still  
Our Island sister, thou on us should'st frown,  
Yet can't Columbia turn her eyes away;  
And, thy rapacious pleasure to fulfil,  
Leave our own kind for thee to trample down,—  
In lustful wrath to famish and to slay.

PASTOR FELIX.  
Hampden Corner, Me., March 19, 1898.

**Preparatory Food.**  
While Sherman was 'out in the air,' between Atlanta and the sea, rations sometimes got a little short, says an exchange; but the men were good natured about it. One day an officer found a soldier eating a persimmon that he had picked up, and cried out to him, 'Don't eat that! It's not good for you!' 'I'm not eatin' it because it's good,' was the reply. 'I'm tryin' to puker up my stomach so as to fit the size of the rations Uncle Billy Sherman's a-givin' us.'

**White Man's Mysteries.**  
Mr. Francis Fox, a recent visitor to Bulawayo, says that a Matabele there made some very interesting remarks on the locomotive. This was his manner of describing it: "It is a huge animal belonging to the white man. It has only one eye. It feeds on fire and hates work. When the white man pumps it to make it work, it screams. It comes from somewhere, but no one knows where. But the engine in its normal state was as nothing compared with the creature when it was being oiled. 'It is a huge animal which has the fever very badly,' said the Matabele. 'We know, because the white man pours medicine into so many parts of its body.'

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**A Born Diplomat.**  
He—Miss Willing—Clara—I never loved anyone but you. Will you be mine?  
She—But you have proposed to three other girls within a week. I've been told.  
He—True, darling; but that was simply for practice that I might not appear ridiculous when I proposed to you.

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