

Notches on The Stick

As a thunder storm, especially when it occurs at night, is among the sublimest of natural phenomena; so the passages of our literature descriptive of an electrical storm are among the most majestic. In some instances the poets are surpassingly magnificent, as, for instance, is Byron, in his well known description of the passing of a thunder-storm among the Alps. Following the exquisite picture of the setting in of evening, comes the tempest in a burst of exultation. You can almost hear the crash and roll of the thunder:

"Not from one lone cloud,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud,"

But Browning is even more magnificent in the passage in "The Ring and the Book," which Mr. William Sharp terms "the high water mark of modern blank verse:"

"I stood at Naples once, a night so dark
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth
Anywhere, sky, or sea, or world at all;
But the night's black was burnt through by a blaze—
Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore

Through her whole length of mountain visible;
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,
And, like a ghost dis-shrouded, white the sea."

But surely not less noble, and even more vivid, are the oft-quoted lines in "Pippa Passes:"

"Buried in the woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned through the pine-tree roof, here burst and there,
As if God's messenger through the close wood screen

Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me; then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead.

But these can scarcely surpass the rapid lines in which Burns describes the ride of Tam O' Shanter through the midnight storm. Byron's lines are spirited, but fire and motion spin through the Scottish bard's galloping syllables:

"The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattlin' showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed.
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed."

Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars through the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When glimmering through the groaning trees,
Kirk-Aldwony seemed in a breeze."

We do not marvel if Burns got excited over that? It will be some time yet before its excellence is surpassed. Is it by any resemblance that one's thought is suddenly transferred to poor demented Lear and his unsheltered misery:

"Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts, and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drenched our steeples, drown'd the cocks!

You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Sing my white head: And thou, all shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ungrateful man!"

Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain I never
Remember to have heard."

Shakespeare is master yet. And again:
Was this a face
To be expos'd against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning.

Then in the "Tempest" we have, once more a magnificent description of a sea storm in the tropics, and behold

"Jove's lightning's the precursors
O' the dreadful thunder claps more momentary
And sight out-unning were not; the fire, and crackles
Of sulphurous roaring, the most mighty Neptune
Seem'd to besiege, and make his bold waves
tremble,
Yea, his dread trident shake."



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Longfellow may in general be behind his fellow bards in rendering the magnificent in nature,—the "storm-cloud lurid with lightning;" but there is one passage in "The Ballad of Carmilhan," that we may not forbear to quote:

"Eight bell! and suddenly ahaft,
With a great rush of rain,
Making the ocean white with spume,
In darkness like the day of doom,
On came the hurricane.
"The lightning flash'd from cloud to cloud,
And tore the dark in two,
A ragged flame, a single jet
Of white fire, like a bayonet,
That pierced his eyeballs through."

So Shelley in that splendid opening of "The Revolt of Islam:

"Sudden the firm earth was shaken,
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.
So as I stood one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far perils along the waveless deep . . .
Hark! 'tis the rushing of the wind that sweeps
Earth and the ocean! See! the lightnings yawn
Deluging heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps
Whitter and boil beneath."

Tennyson shows us a picture of the future day of aerial navigation, "With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder storm"; and Milton wakes the echoes with the thunder rolling "through the dark aerial hall." Kirke White gives us one sounding stanza:

"His voice sublime is heard afar;
In distant peals it dies;
He yokes the whirlwind to his car,
And sweeps the howling skies."

Thompson expands a like conception in blank verse:

"'Tis listening fear and dumb amazement all:
When to the startled eye the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud:
And following slower, in explosion vast,
The thunder raises his tremendous voice.
At first, heard solemn o'er the verge of heaven,
The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and mere
The noise astounds—till over head a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide, then shuts
And opens wider, shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.
Follows the loosened aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling, peal on peal
Crash'd horrible, convulsing heaven and earth."

The reader will be able from his own memory to supply many more examples

We are not displeas'd to find Dr. Theodore H. Rand expressing sentiments agreeable to those conveyed in our "Notches" of last week. To him "the war is a forward movement," and does not mean a backward step in history; but it is indeed painful to know some of its processes, or those leading to it. But there is an overruling power, and it would seem as if something were needed to show our American friends that Great Britain is the mother of liberal institutions and their defender, and that the unwise desire of so many Americans in the past to have the United States forever hostile in feeling toward her is inimical to the welfare of humanity. It is the outcome of the war, as it seems highly probable, one giant step forward will have been taken, and the world will enter on a new era. For nothing is clearer than that the nations of Continental Europe are hostile to free governments, and the day is hastening when they will try conclusions with the Mother of us all. Poor Spain is a fit object for sympathy, with all her faults, and I have nothing but disdain for the methods of jingoism wherever availed of.

The Second Edition of Dr. Rand's book, "At Minas Basin," is selling at a lively rate, which indicates the Canadian public are learning to appreciate good things. Several new works by Canadian authors are heralded. "Roberts, I learn, is to bring out this season the second of his trilogy (of which 'The Forge in the Forest' was the first)—the 'Sister of Evangeline.'—Miss Marshall Saunders has an Acadian French Novel (modern) in press at Boston,—'Roza a Charlotte.' I believe it will appear in England and Canada also. I have read the Ms. It is an interesting and faithful picture of the Acadian life of to-day,—history touched with romance. It is bright, full of life. The book will sell.—Herbin has a Ms. which he publishes this summer, I believe,—a sketch of the French occupation about the Minas Basin. It is written from a sympathetic view-point with the French, as the outcome of Richard's book. His primary purpose is to supply a book for the numerous summer travellers; but I have reason to think that the results of

his study will by and by find expression in verse."

It is to be regretted that the fraternity of authors cannot derive more benefit from public association with the members of their craft. A greater esprit de corps, a deeper feeling and conviction of the dignity and importance of their art and vocation, would result from such contact; while the author would lose the sense of isolation and obscurity that too frequently, and to a very great degree, handicaps and depresses him. Editors have their guilds, and their annual or semi-annual conventions; as do the workers along social and religious lines, and much good work, privately executed has its initial impulse from such assemblies. The trade and art guilds enjoy the pleasures and benefits of federation and intercommunion; nor is it the least of their felicities when groups of authors, like those of Cambridge or Concord, are permitted to associate frequently with each other. But in Canada, and in the State of Maine, exist groups of select and gifted spirits, if they could be brought together, who enjoy and respect each other, scattered and isolated as they are. Yet they have never met, and there seems no pre-arranged occasion or opportunity for such meeting. It they could meet in an annual convention, to commune and compare notes who will question the result in a general improvement in literary work, and a heightened esteem for the literary calling and its votaries.

Mr. Henry J. Morgan's Handbook of Biography "The Canadian Men and Women of the Time," is winning golden opinions. The Earl of Aberdeen, in a letter to the author, writes: "A glance at its pages is sufficient to reveal that the volume is the result of much careful and patient work. The book cannot fail, I think, to be of much practical value, supplying a real want." The Montreal Star says:—"To test its excellence the book must be carefully examined by individual critics. That it will stand the test of examination we have thoroughly convinced ourselves."

Maurice Thompson very appropriately discourses, in the Methodist Review, (May-June) on the prevailing flood of alleged dialect, in poetry and fiction, under the caption, "The Triumph of Jargon." He points out that certain sorts of literary gibberish called dialects, are not such when properly understood. He asserts that our literary art is being debauched by the dialect mongers, and does not hesitate to lay violent hands on Kipling. He points out the fact that in all classic works, in all poems or novels approved by time, in which any sort of argot or dialects occurs, it exists as an incident, as necessary to perfect local fidelity or the completeness of character, never for the sake of dragging it in, to pleasure a vulgar taste, and with all possible excess and exaggeration. To his words we wish to add our emphatic, Amen! "The literary man who has a contempt for classical studies, models, triumphs, aims, is a failure from the ground up. He may have his little day and his little pot of money, but in the long run he will drop out and be lost. The muses do not recognize him. What is called 'local color' is certainly an important factor in literary art; but the tendency to sacrifice the substance to the more superficial tints is like painting the lichens of a ruin and leaving out the ruin, or like taking chlorophyll for spring. Ungrammatical talk and horseplay language are admissible in literature only where necessary to the perfection of a picture. They are discords which emphasize the

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harmony. The moment the dialect becomes the artist's aim, or his sole means, his work is doomed, no matter what triumph may momentarily crown it."

A sequel to "Sentimental Tommy," now engaging the pen of Mr. J. M. Barrie, is making rapid progress. It is to appear in Scribner's, but not before January 1899.—The Kipling's "Captain Courageous" is now in its thirtieth thousand, though it has been before the public only five months. He has the justification of extraordinary success—Olva Schreiner now resides at Kimberley in South Africa.—The Scribner's will soon bring out a new edition of Mr. Thomas Nelson Page's "Pastime Stories." There are some twenty in number, dealing chiefly with Virginia life. They appeared originally in Harper's Magazine.—Cassell & Co. have enlarged their imprint, and it is now expressed in the cosmopolitan terms of "London, Paris, New York and Melbourne"—Benjamin Kidd's "Social Evolution" in a new edition, with the author's additions and corrections, is announced for early publication by the Macmillan Co.

"Glimpses of Charles Dickens" is a souvenir publication by E. S. Williamson, of Toronto. It is printed on tinted paper and is attractively illustrated, and has white embossed covers. The edition is an autograph one, of 250 copies. It is a neat collection of Dickensiana, accumulated during a period of about six years,—or some account, rather, of such a collection,—which may be seen at Mr. Williamson's home, 118 Spencer Avenue, Toronto. There are portraits and pictures and interesting ana, which render to this immaculate souvenir a charm beyond that of a dry catalogue.

Our friend, George Martin awakens regret: "Have you heard of Lampman's illness? I learn that he is seriously threatened by heart-disease. It would be sad to know him cut him off in the prime of manhood. He has written many exquisite pastorals. He has no equal in the line that was chosen by him at the outset."

"A Treasury of American Verse," Edited by Walter Learned, is the latest of American Anthologies; containing specimens from one hundred and fourteen authors. Here are things new and old, and something for every mood.

PASTOR FELIX.

THE TIGER WAS PLEASED.

And the Cossack Had No Idea of His Dangerous Task.

A good story has been copied in the papers from La France du Nord about a Cossack, ignorant of the French language and equally ignorant of fear, who was hired at Moscow by the lion-tamer, Pezon, to clean the cages of his wild beasts. Their understanding or misunderstanding was arranged by means of gestures and dumb show, as that unfortunate Tower of Babel hindered intelligible speech between the Frenchman and the Cossack; and Pezon thought that the man thoroughly understood what he had to do.

The next morning the Tartar began his new duties by entering, with bucket, sponge, and broom, not the cage of a tame beast as his master had done, but of a splendid untamed tiger, which lay asleep upon the floor. The fierce animal awoke and fixed his eyes upon the man, who calmly proceeded to wet his large sponge, and unterrified, to approach the tiger. At this moment Pezon appeared upon the scene, and was struck with horror. Any sound or motion upon his part would intensify the danger, of the situation by rousing the beast to fury; so he quietly waited till the need should arise to rush to the man's assistance.

The moujik, sponge in hand, approached the animal, and, perfectly fearless, proceeded to rub him down, as if he had been a horse or dog; while the tiger, apparently delighted by the application of cold water, rolled over on its back, stretched out its paws, and, purring, offered every part of its body to the Cossack, who washed him

as complacently as a mother bathes her infant. Then he left the cage, and would have repeated the hazardous experiment upon another savage from the desert, had not Pezon drawn him off with difficulty.—Lippincott's.

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United by Cable.

He wanted to ask her to be his ownest own, but the conventional words he had studied up so carefully failed him. She guessed his purpose, but saw no chance to help him out.

"Did you read about the Manila cable?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "It's cut."
There was a long silence.

"What do they do with cables that are cut?" she softly asked.

"Splice 'em," he answered.
She gave him a timid sidelong glance.
He woke up.

"Let's get spliced?" he hastily cried.

"Let's," she gently answered.

And the ordeal which had worried him for many weeks was suddenly forgotten.

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Sale of Chinese Children.

In the poorer regions of China many old women make a living by buying children at \$1 to \$2 apiece, and afterward selling them into a life of slavery or vice.

Mr. Skribbens (to new boy)—"I suppose you understand what your duties are here?" New Boy—"Sure. The super said that all I had to do was to hustle when old Skribbens was looking, and it would be all right."

Bacon—"Is that man Crimsombeak in favor of war?" Egbert—"No, indeed! Every night he's out late he takes home oysters or something to his wife. I think he's for peace at any price."—Yonkers Statesman.

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