

Notches on The Stick

"To write a simple song that, springing out of the heart of one, shall touch the affection and linger in the memory of many, is no inconsiderable achievement, and one worthy of applause. It is seldom the lot of even good rhymers to accomplish this; and, when it is done, it is often with complete unconsciousness on the part of the author of having produced anything worthy of especial recognition. No poet has said, 'Go to, let us write an immortal song of the home affections.' Or, if so, has he succeeded? Nay; but Payne, heart-hungry, as instinctively as a singing bird, voiced a world's universal longing. Had Key any thought save to express his mood of patriotic exultation? But a nation goes on singing 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'"

"These are my sons—the sons of Maine!" So exults Ellen Hamlin Butler. Maine has her sons, of whom she is proud, in all the departments of power and service. Poets she has such as Longfellow, Neal and Willis. She has also her singing daughters. A list of note-worthy names occurs to us, of women of the Pine Tree State, who have given us sentiment woven with melody in forms now permanent and familiar. We think of Florence Percy, [Elizabeth Akers Allen,] and her exquisite song, the sweetest of tributes of departed motherhood:

"Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,
Make me a child again just for to-night!
Mother, come back from the echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore."

We think of Francis Laughton Mace, whose girlhood's hymn, "Only Waiting," the world insists on remembering; of Elizabeth Payson Prentiss, who led us "Stepping Heavenward," with her prayer in song, devoutly tender,—

"More love to Thee, O Christ,
More love to Thee;"

of Elizabeth Oakes Smith, and her, "The Same Old Song:"

"Mothers out of the mother-heart
Fashion a song both sweet and low—
Always the same dear mother art,
Rocking the baby to and fro;
Always the lazy, loving croon
Hummed in a dreamy undertone."

We think of Harriet Prescott Spofford, and her song of "Old Glory," of Anna Averill and her woodland melodies of thrush and song-sparrow; of Ella Maude Moore, and her "Rock of Ages," that floats namelessly the world of newspaperdom around; of Elizabeth Cavazza, and her "Slumber Song;" of Celia Thaxter, and her "Little Beach Bird;" of Hannah Augusta Moore, and her "Calling the Cows;" and Caroline Dana-Howe with her score of melodies.

"So long as leaf by leaf the roses fall," writes Mrs. Beedy, "Maine will cherish in loving remembrance the name of Caroline Dana Howe. Through the law of recompense

"Many are cradled into poetry by wrong,
And learn in suffering what they teach in song."

Mrs. Howe says of "Leaf by Leaf the Roses Fall." "It was written in Boston in 1856, while under the shadow of a great affliction." The inspiration came to her as she watched the dropping of the rose petals in her friend's garden. Lying mouldering in the flower-bed they were suggestive only of decay; but Mrs. Howe's prophetic eye saw that which seemed decay was transition. The fallen rose leaves were enriching the soil for a brighter bloom. Out of the ashes of her own heart there flamed up—

"We shall find some hope that lies
Like a silent germ apart,
Hidden far from careless eyes
In the garden of the heart;"

and thus was ushered in one of the best songs that will never die. In its appeal to other hearts it will ring on adown the ages, awaking

"Some sweet hope that breathes of spring,
Through the weary weary time,
Budding for its blossoming
In the spirit's silent clime."

Caroline Dana was born, more than half

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a century ago, in one of the pleasantest rural sections of Maine, and in one of its most beautiful villages—that of Fryeburg. To her eyes there is no dearer, lovelier spot on earth than that she apostrophizes caressingly.

While yet in early childhood her parents went to the city of Portland, where her father kept a provision store; yet in the summer seasons, returning to their home beside the Saco, they kept their love for the place, and ever renewed their delight in its delicious scenery. But Mrs. Howe has also a deep attachment to the city by the sea, where the greater part of her life has been passed. "She has for many years been identified with the literary work of the city. Her ready pen, intelligent criticism, keen wit, and kindly heart, make her a favorite with all circles. Young writers find in her a helpful friend. Mrs. Howe is much sought after by her lady friends, in the vicinity of Portland, who often claim her for a week, making their homes centres for literary gatherings during her visit. Many happy groups have been entertained and instructed by the vivid and interesting recitals of her own experiences. Boys can have no more delightful entertainment than Mrs. Howe's personal reminiscences of army life. She was one of the only party of women allowed to go to the front during the late war. Mrs. Howe is a busy woman; has written much more than she has published. Many of her songs have been set to music. She cherishes among her personal friends many of the literary people of America. She was presented with the favorite pen of Whittier, as a testimony of the friendship between them." Mrs. Howe's regard for the "city of her love," may be determined from these opening stanzas of one of her poems:

"The heavens unfold to Casco's lifted wave
Their richest gems of amethyst and gold,
Where blazoned like some grand old architect,
The broad horizon bounds its realms untold."

"O sunny bay! upon thy sheltered breast,
Whose depths unknown are sobbing evermore,
Swift sails are borne like white-winged birds, to test
Yon broad Atlantic rides, from shore to shore."

"O'er arched with glory from resplendent skies,
Brazen and Murjoy, as twin-sentinels,
May overlook our growing enterprise
From east to west, and hear our sweet-toned bells."

"One sunny slope is fresh with mountain air;
And one lies broad to islands manifold,
Where Nature hangs her summer pictures rare,
Framed round in sunshine, as with burnished gold."

Her earliest contributions were to the Portland Transcript; and though the children of her brain have been sent far and wide among others, this journal has continued her frequent and particular medium of communication with the public. A story for boys, a volume of some 200 pages, from her pen, passed through several editions, and attained to a considerable popularity. In 1885 a volume of her collected pieces, under the title, "Ashes For Flame and Other Poems," was issued at Portland and had a kindly reception by press and public. In the department of song there is perhaps no writer more familiarly known than Mrs. Howe, many of whose hymns and briefer lyrics have been set to music by Kotschmar and other composers. She has written much for special social and benevolent occasions, and these occasional pieces, if not her happiest, are characterized by elevation of tone and elegance of diction.

Early in the present season we received from this gifted and genial lady a little souvenir in silver and gold, which was soon after followed by these words of explanation:

"I had known that some day I should seek you out, though still a stranger, with a small gift in my hand bearing most unquestionable stamp of your ownership beyond all others I had known. I will give you its history, as far as realized."

My father during my childhood kept a grocery and drygoods store combined, as was then the custom here. When I was some ten or twelve years old a new customer, evidently a lady by birth and education as my father believed, came into the store for provisions—the simplest only. He learned from those living near that she occupied but two rooms, had a husband of doubtful habits who was seldom seen at home, and who evidently made her life

wretched. She kept her own counsel, however, and won the regard and pity of all about her; none doubted her worth and evident superiority. One day she came to the store in great trouble, and with tears asked my father if he would let her have some articles she named, and take as security a small article she brought until she could pay him; when she drew forth this small scent box (as we afterward called it). He at first declined taking it, saying she might have the provisions without security; but she insisted upon his retaining it until the bill was paid. She said, amid her tears, that it came to her as a heritage from her father, having been held by his ancestors—the Lockharts—for nearly a hundred years. I can well believe that, for it must have been a dainty treasure in those early days, being the purest of metal throughout.—I have had it tested. She added that they were much in fashion among the nobility; and this one had contained a fragrant pod of some tropic growth, which had been lost. She did not call it a 'scent box,' however, but by some Scottish name, long forgotten by me, but which you may be able to recover. He took the box, gave her the provisions, and with these a written pledge that she might redeem it at any time.

"Immediately after we went on our summer vacation to my birth place, the lovely Fryeburg. But on our return she was gone—none knew whither, nor did we learn more, ever. But my father never ceased to feel confidence in her honesty, only regretting that he had not done more for her, and that he could not restore the heirloom, evidently so treasured. There were not so many rich keepsakes then as are now afforded, and this was a delight to me—a thing of silver and gold, too precious for me to have in keeping until some years had passed. Then it was given in trust to my keeping, and nothing I ever possessed has held just the peculiar value of this.

"Let me say that I am frequently called upon to appear before our clubs, (in the city, and out, as well,) and often asked to take my treasures' along;—such as dear Mr. Whittier's favorite pen, that came to me, his letters, and various other valuable relics; the rebel bullet, for instance, that didn't kill me at City Point, in war-time, though it scorched my left ear in passing, as if it meant destruction. But, with all these mementoes, and various others, often went the little silver box, with its history, and bearing the Lockhart name, (than which there is none more euphonious.

"Does this all seem childish to you, perhaps? Well, to me there is a sacredness about it that I can only feel, but not explain; and who knows but that sorrowful lady, once possessor of this, will know it has come into the family keeping once more? For—belonging to me since girlhood's years—no one living has any valid right or title to its possession save what I may bestow. . . ."

The years hasten us away, with our possessions, and often before them; but may it yet be long before No. 353 Cumberland St. shall be bereft of an inmate who brings so much honor to the city of her residence and to her native State of Maine.

PASTOR FELIX.

Destruction of a Legend.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway, in the Athenaeum, writes on a historical topic of no minor importance. In a recent letter to the London Times, where an interview with Bismarck is printed, this is what the chancellor is reported to have said: "Frederick the Great was the first European sovereign who recognized the independence of the United States." Mr. Moncure D. Conway declares this to be an amazing statement. He writes: "While Louis XV. not only recognized American independence, but allied himself with it, and sent over the officers, money and ships without which that independence might have remained a paper declaration, Frederick the Great

never uttered a word of sympathy with Washington or with his cause, but Hessian troops were sent over with Frederick's tacit consent to crush independence. Vain efforts were made by d'Alembert to elicit from Frederick some opinion about the American revolution." Did Bismarck, asks Mr. Conway, believe in that legend that Frederick sent a sword to Washington with the message: 'From the oldest general in the world to the greatest.' The conclusion of the note is striking: "There was no such word or message. I once asked Carlyle if he knew of anything said or written by Frederick out of which the legend might have grown. He replied: 'Nothing whatever. There is not the slightest foundation for it.'"

NO USE FOR A BAROMETRE.

Not If You Have Red Ants and Watch Them Says a Man From Steuben.

"If you have any red ants about your premises," said a veracious county man, "you won't need any barometre to tell you whether its going to rain or not—not if you keep your eye on the red ants. I found that out long, long ago. A colony of these lively and persistent little insects settled in my back yard, where they made their nest in the ground and proceeded to carry out whatever mission they had. One day I noticed them scurrying up out of the hole in the ground where they lived, each ant carrying a little white thing in its mouth, which I soon discovered was one of the colony's supply of ants' eggs.

The weather had been very dry for weeks, and there was at that moment no more sign of the long drought being broken than there was that an earthquake was going to set things tumbling. I noticed that the ants went in a steady stream toward the house, which was only a few feet away, where they climbed on the back porch, disappeared beneath an old trunk that was there, came out without the eggs and hurried back to the nest after another lot. This curious transfer of eggs from the nest to the hiding place beneath the trunk on the porch occupied nearly all day. It was a puzzling me not a little when an old friend of mine from the town of Woodhull, where they know everything, happened to drop in to see me, and I mentioned the singular action of the ants to him.

"That's the best news I've heard this year!" said he. "It'll rain before morning and it'll be a soaker, too! Those ants know it and they've just moved their eggs from the nest to save 'em from being drowned out. That's all. They'll always do it just before an old soaker of a rain, like the one that'll be here some time to-night. Red ants know a heap about the weather."

"I didn't take much stock in my friend's explanation of the ant movement, although he did come from Woodhull, but I was waked up some long time in the night by the noise of about the hardest downpour of rain that I had almost ever heard. It rained right along for two days, and it wasn't an old soaker then I don't know what an old soaker is."

"Red ants and Woodhull against all creation!" said I, after thinking the matter over.

"The weather came on nice and bright after the rain, and everything was dried off in the course of a day. Then what did those ants of mine do not note all of those eggs from the shelter of the trunk on the porch back to the nest in the ground and deposit them in their subterranean cells again, all in fine shape and condition for hatching a future colony, which they wouldn't have been of their custodians hadn't been boss weather prognosticators and put them out of the way of the coming flood. After that I kept my eye on my red ants, and they never failed to warn me during their season of the approach of a hard rainstorm, much to my profit. Watch your red ants, if you've got any, and throw away your barometre!"

Getting Accommodation Free.

"I can't say that everything in your English hotel system is quite up-to-date," said an American waiter at a large London hotel, "but there is one advantage your hotel managers have over ours. Everybody who uses your hotels has to pay for it." "Why certainly," said the writer, in some surprise; "People do not expect to be accommodated at hotels for nothing."

"Ah, you do not understand," said the Yankee. "We have in America what are called 'hotel loafers.' They are generally men in good position; but they will walk into a hotel, use the smoking-room, and other apartments, write their letters on the hotel stationery, and have their correspondence addressed there, and all without spending a halfpenny in the place."

"We're obliged to put up with it, for it has grown into a recognized custom, although our hotel managers don't approve of it. I can quite understand that with your English notions of hotel-keeping it must strike you as singular."

Often Changed.

"You are always changing your carvers," remarked a guest at a big restaurant recently. "Fresh men I often see here, and then the old ones seem to come back again. The manager smiled.

"It is easily explained," said he. "The

men earn good wages. taking four or five shillings a day for about the four hours they are at work. Sometimes they get special employment at big houses, or for important dinners, or maybe they want a little holiday. Then they stay away and send one of their colleagues instead.

"Being a superior, expert lot of men, this arrangement doesn't cause us the slightest inconvenience. If one man stops away, another equally useful, is certain to appear in time to take his place, and so, often see a fresh face, this involves no trouble at all to us. I only wish other classes worked on the same lines."

The average age at marriage of the Queen's daughters and granddaughters was a little over 21. The Princess Royal, who who married at 18, was the youngest bride and Princess Beatrice, who waited until 28 the eldest. The Queen's sons exceed this average by 6 years, and kept their freedom until they reached the age of 27.

With the possible exception of Mr. Bryce, there is no finer linguist in the House of Commons than Professor Jebb, M. P. for Cambridge University. Even Mr. Gladstone had to yield the palm to Professor Jebb, who can converse as fluently in Greek and Latin as in his own tongue.

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