

Notches on The Stick

Mr. John Reade, under his caption, "Old and New," in the Montreal Gazette, writes agreeably of the work of a brother minstrel, John Hunter Duvar:

"In literature we owe much to the lyric genius of Provence—that meeting ground of all the Latin peoples.

"Ah! dear Provence! Ah! Happy troubadours. And that sweet mellow antique song of thine!"

sings a poet of our day, enraptured to find in Petrarch's haunts much more than an echo of the old music, than a reflection of the old grace and glow. The troubadour was gone with the society that he represented, but the troubadour's art was still cultivated, and for sweet poesie's sake the new world poet was cordially welcomed. Ten years later, he sent an Embassy to Provence—an act that recalled Troubadour days and ways—and as the pilgrim entered the land of his desire, it was hardly strange that he should have thought of another pilgrim, Geoffrey Rudel, and his voyage to Tripoli. For, it might be recalled, the fame of the Countess of Tripoli had reached the land where every night was a poet and every lady had a lover ready to die for her. Geoffrey had not long to live, but his passion for the princess of his worship made him forget his weakness and he hoped that if he made haste he might see that adorable lady before he died. So he took ship and sailed to the Levant and though little strength was left him when the sailors told him that the great sea walls of the Syrian city were in sight, his love yearning sustained him and he saw the lady of his love before he closed his eyes in that strange land. Lieut-Col. John Hunter Duvar, of Prince Edward Island, author of "Roberval: a Drama," "The Enamorado," also dramatic, "Annals of the Court of Oberon," "The Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages," and other works has told the story of Geoffrey Rudel in an unpublished poem of much grace and delicacy, which was read some time ago before a literary society in this city.

John A Var who accompanied Geoffrey on his voyage relates what happened to a Princess of Provence:

Land be to Love! though love doth doleful be;
Like worm in scorn of the mossy cup
It gnaweth in the core and eateth up.
And leaves a void though outside fair to see.
For love is worship. Even I
Have lightly worshipped in my time
And lightly passed my idol by
And sung our loves in pleasant rhyme.

Yet that was love but in the name,
True love is terrible and strong
An all-consuming piercing flame
That mortal life can bear not long.
You seek whence I the knowledge had;
That I the force of love can tell,
I loved a sick and gentle lad—
I loved my poor Geoffrey Rudel.

He was a sweet and gentle knave,
The fire of genius in him burned,
And in his eyes so deep and grave
You saw a spirit there inured,
That struggled to be free away,
And masterfully strove and spurned,
The tenure of his delicate clay.
We thoughtless minstrels shook the head
And said, "Our Geoffrey is not strong;
His overture will soon be played—
Doubts if his days be overlong.
Kind women with their loving care
Would fain have soothed his fevered pair,
But say he cried, "No maiden fair—
God's blessing on their gentle hands!—
Can call my young life back again;
Nor stay the swiftly running sands;
No love have I."

Yet felt he need of one to love
As all must feel."

John A Var then tells, not without hesitations, for he felt the delicacy of mentioning to such an audience his friend's preference for a foreign beauty—how in the shrine of Geoffrey's heart he had enthroned "The fairest maid in all the world."

At these words there are signs of protest and John A Var skillfully deprecates the wrath of Queen Jeanne and her ladies:

"But how can competition be
"Tween Christendom and Paynimrie?
"I would puzzle be—I give it up—
But I would say the Red Rose she
And thou the shapely tulip cup."

He then described the growth of Geoffrey's desire to see "the Moslem Maiden Sweet" till it became resistless, and the couple of friends set sail. On the way, as he questions John as to the nearness of the Cape of Tripoli, John suggests the

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solace of song, and they sang in turn:—

"I give the closing stanza of each song.
John A Var sings:

"Hope on, hope ever on, on Christ relying;
While life remains, give up no hope for lost;
Life's voyage is not o'er though Boreas blows,
And many a ship returns, though tempest-tost,"
Rudel sings:

"My life is love; my life oppresseth me
With anguish'd joy and therefore it is sweet
I lay it down all grateful at her feet,
For though she love not, yet my love is she."

At last they reach Tripoli, and Rudel, his desire accomplished, has gone to his rest,

"With rights of Christian sepulchre."

The poem closes with these lines:
"The Moslems all with bended heads
Kept silent as the course went past,
And women veiled up on the leads

Buds of white roses on him cast;
The soldier's lancers grounded spears
And drooped their pennons to the boy,
And thus it was with many tears
We buried there my poor Geoffrey.

My friend lay dead beyond the sea:
Then took I ship to whence I came,
And brought this home—truth home with me
All are not dogs who bear the name."

The few extracts given above will enable the reader to appreciate the quaintness, delicacy and southern feeling of Mr. Duvar's poem. It is only by an effort of the cultivated imagination that one can approach the scenes depicted with a realizing sympathy. It is hardly fair to Mr. Duvar to offer his fine poem piecemeal, but I have no authority to print it all. I hope, however, to see it published in worthy form before long.

We have been asked the purport, in our use of them, of the words, "Notches on the stick." The reader of DeFoe's Robinson Crusoe will remember that hero's method of chronicling time. Our use of the above phrase was suggested by the following birth-day lines, addressed to us by Dr. Benjamin F. Leggett:

When dear old Crusoe, prince of boyhood's prime,
Kept his lone outlook from his island shore,
He scored the weary years of passing time
Upon a rude post by his cabin door.

And so, O friend, lest you forget this day,
And miss its glory in your northern clime,
Nor know the coming of the smile of May,
I notch your door-post with this friendly rhyme!"

So, in these columns, I notch or score a record of such productions and events as during the current week reach and impress me.

Virginia Vaughan writes, in The Home Journal, N. Y.; for July 27, a finely appreciative article on N. P. Willis, entitled, "The Master of Idlewild." She gives a graphic picture of that romantic country-seat, with its deep glen and forest shaded brook, and the gifted and genial man whose memory makes the scene doubly interesting. She comments on his taste and his exquisite fancy in reshaping local nomenclature. "Thus Murderer's Creek he rechristened Moodna Creek. Moodna! There could be no more perfect name for a rivulet. It seems to tell of all the ever-changing aspects of the little stream, now frolicking in the sunshine, and again emerging from some gloomy copse,—in the words of the poet, 'like a veiled nun out of the dark porch of a cathedral.' He also changed the name of Butter Hill—an absurd cognomen—to 'Storm King,'—the appropriate name by which this gatherer of mists and clouds is still known.

These strong, expressive lines, quite characteristic and noble, are the finest we have seen on Gladstone. They are quoted from a poem by Stephen Phillips, published in the London Daily Chronicle:

The saint and poet dwell apart; but thou
Wast holy in the furious press of men,
And choral in the central rush of life.
Yet didst thou love old branches and a book,
And Roman verses on an English lawn.

Thy voice had all the roaring of the wave,
And hoarse magnificence of rushing stones;
It had the murmur of Ionian bees,
And the persuading sweetness of a shower.
Clarion of God! thy ringing peal is o'er!

Thou gav'st to party strife the epic note,
And to debate the thunder of the Lord;
To meaneast issues fire of the Most High.
Hence eyes that ne'er beheld thee now are dim,
And alien men on alien shores lament.

The Bookman quotes these lines, with approbation. They deserve it.

The full correspondence of Robert Burns with Mrs. Dunlop is now published by

Dodd Mead & Co., and to it elucidations are given by William Wallace, editor of Robert Chambers' "Life and Works of Robert Burns." This is something the lovers of the poet, and all interested in his singularly romantic history, will hasten to read,—or would, but for that unfortunate deterrent with many, the price. There are two volumes, which retail at \$5.00. This correspondence of Burns with Mrs. Dunlop is more voluminous than that which he held with any other, and extends over a wider period of his life. He poured out his s lecturest thought to this good lady and her responses—alas! that we have them not!—elicited his purest conceptions and his worthiest expressions in prose. It is said these letters, many of which appear in these volumes for the first time, make clearer some dubious events of his later years. They "indicate among other things that a serious effort was made to secure for him a position as a professor in the university of Edinburgh, [though this appears to us as absurd.] They likewise state Burns' view upon religion with a precision which is not to be found in his letters that have hitherto been published. They also put in a new and unexpected light the 'dejection' of Burns by his correspondent."

We find the following lines in The Bookman for August:

At the Equinox.
While light and darkness hold the scales in starry equipoise,
And south winds wake in greening vales the Spring-tides budding j's,
The wood-thrush answers tenderly the blue-birds liquid trills,
The marsh-frogs pipe a note of glee in hollows of the hills,
Above the growing twilight blush the cry of wild geese rings
Far sailing o'er the valley's hush with sunlight in their wings.

BENJAMIN F. LEGGETT.

In "Appleton's Canadian Guide Book," Charles G. D. Roberts presents what is described as a "convenient and delightful guide to Eastern Canada, and also supplementary chapters which guide the tourist through Western Canada, across the plains to Manitoba, through the beautiful scenery of the Canadian Rockies and British Columbia to Vancouver and Victoria. The complete volume furnishes a useful and comprehensive study of the great empire of Canada as a whole, which will be indispensable for any one interested in the subject." Prof. Roberts lends to the details of history and topography the charms of his poetic spirit and of his picturesque style.

Of all the verse writers in the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States, we know no one who expresses more effectively the very genius and spirit of old time Methodism than Rev. Alfred J. Hough of the Vermont Conference. A volume of his ringing lyrics should preserve his memory to other years. In a memorial piece, entitled, "Mantle and Spirit," read recently at the Epworth League Convention in Vermont, and since issued in a pamphlet, he hearkens back to the felicities of an earlier day:

"Bring us back the Amen Corner that has long been frozen out,
For nothing scares the devil like a grand old Methodist shout,
Bring back the faith of the fathers, its spinal column and grip.
In place of the limp, loose wriggler of a Higher-Critic-ship,
Bring back the hot experience, that an angel might rehearse,
For that sigh in the swaddling bands of a little threadbare verse.
Bring back the cross as a refuge from Sinai, lighting scarred,
Conversion through deep conviction, and not through signing a card.
Bring back a full salvation, the flower of perfect love,
Till the church is filled with the fragrance of Paradise above.
Bring back for us, Epworth Leaguers, whatever we have lost,
The might, the joy, the abandon, of fiery Pentecost."

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"I had Salt Rheum of the worst kind, as our family doctor called it,

and could not get anything to cure me. I read of Burdock Blood Bitters, and determined to try it. I got one bottle and before I used half of it I could tell it was doing me good, and after taking six bottles I was perfectly cured, and to-day am a happy woman at being cured of that terrible disease." MRS. MAGDALENA VOIGT, Rhineland, Ont.

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But is easier to sing or paint the past, than in fact to restore it.

Capt. Deloncle, of the ill-fated steamer, La Bourgogne, is said to have been a poet. Perhaps this was the reason why the sisters with the shears were after him, and his prudence and skill does not appear distinctly in his office as commander. A volume of his verse may soon be published. It seems he was a contributor to *La Figaro* and a sonnet recently published there, entitled, "La Nuit en Mer" lies before us.

The Bookman gives some specimens from the pen of Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch, the Cornish novelist (essayist and poet, which are somewhat amusing to the literary student. These are parodies of Poe, Cowper, Bret Harte, Browning, Whitman, Swinburne and Tennyson, in which he has in each case caught the trick of style in each author, and reiterated in an absurd manner some of his favorite phrases—particularly happy he is in setting off Whitman and Tennyson. The author's name according to his own authority, should be pronounced "Cooch," though it is said he can prevail on only a few friends (out side of Cornwall) to believe in it.

A volume compiled and edited by Andrew Lang, is to be published by Longmans Green & Co. It is entitled "Selections from Coleridge." It will be brought out in an addition uniform with its authors "Selections From Wordsworth" issued last year.

Maarten Maartens has a new novel in progress entitled, "Her Memory." It is now appearing serially in Temple Bar, and may appear in book form later in the year.

Some bitter rhymers has vented himself on the eminently shrewd converters of seawater to gold, who suddenly remembered it was time for vacation. It is a pity to depreciate such talent.

"Electrolytic."

O sigh no more for the lost Mr. Jernigan,
Since he has departed and will not return again,
Nor yet be a vain, inconsiderate wisher
For manes of the late evanescent fraud—Fisher;
With a great gulph, no doubt that dark cavern mephitic
Hath swallowed them up and their scheme "electrolytic!"
But cherish the wrath that yet sullenly smoulders
Since your rogues' omnipresent, ye anxious stockholders!

On your sad, lonely pathway I now fain would drop a light
By which you may detect the next shrewd cosmopolitan,
Who changes his point with adroit transmigration,
Safe under the shield of this or that nation,
Till he gets to the shore where a swift extradition
Shall pass him along to his well-earned perdition,
Then search not for them, nor grow faint when you hear of 'em,
Fate's detective's abroad, and he soon will take care of 'em;
But nuff said the rogue who just now is approaching
Who will soon on your faith and your purse be encroaching;

Let not your wits be wanting, while his head is level
Who 'neath the cloak of the Lord does the work of the devil.

Let him who would make some profit at the expense of his neighbor consider the force of the word—Compensation! A man who cheats his neighbor cheats himself most bitterly. A man must give something or suffer poverty in himself; for there is no one so unhappy as he who gets all, and gives none. I dare say you will smile;—there are many who smile sagely in face of the truth, and there is many a folly exalted to wisdom's post of authority by a majority's consent. I have, however, a maxim which may be taken at its value: The business of trade, and all trade, comes to be an accursed thing, however complacently men may regard and follow it as their ideal. There may be no question about integrity, but we certainly need generosity in trade, as well as in war, and a generosity that does not wholly consist in soft and polite phrases.

PASTOR FELIX.

Review of the Medical Record.

Few of us can refrain from turning the pages of a medical journal when it comes to our hand. There is something attractive even in the mystifying array of technical phrases that pursue each other so trippingly. There is something exhilarating in following the mental gymnastics where, by, for instance a cramp in the foot is described as 'a painful affection of the fourth metatarsal-phalangeal articulation, anterior metatarsalgia.' We are given something to think about when we are told in a breath that 'cases of Graves disease may be cured by operative measures' but that 'sudden death may occur in the course of, or soon after operation, 'and has not yet received a satisfactory explanation.' When we read of a baby that at birth weighed only two and a half pounds we wonder whether it will live to become a great man; there is no irreverence in the smile that follows the statement that the diet of Prince Bismark when very seriously ill consisted of ham, caviare, eggs, beer and champagne, but that he had foregone his favorite pickled pigs feet; and we are moved to pity at the tale of a poor Massachusetts volunteer who actually died of homesickness at Santiago. In short we know that the pages of a medical journal cannot fail to contain something of interest for us because in writing them the doctors have been writing about ourselves, and, surely, it is no idle curiosity, that prompts us to learn if we can, what they have to say about us.

In the current number of the Medical Record are five original communications of special interest to physicians. Dr. J. Arthur Booth contributes an illustrated article on the results obtained by the operation of partial removal of the thyroid gland in eight cases of Graves' disease. Dr. Wolfred Nelson concludes his paper, begun last week, on the Yellow fever of the Tropics, and Dr. Carl Beck indicates another use for the X-ray in diagnosis.

Dr. Shady has an editorial dealing sharply with unpleasant and unnecessary incidents of the Cuban campaign. He says, "The dreadful fact stares every one in the face that the poor soldiers, who had a right to expect everything from a country for which they were willing to sacrifice their lives, really did not receive as good treatment as would have been given to ordinary cattle," and urges a rigid investigation to bring home the responsibility and punishment to the negligent and incompetent officers. The editorials, four in number are timely and of general interest.

Two pages are given up to the medical news of the week and are followed by a description of the hospital ship "Relief" illustrated by photographs. The usual society reports, London correspondence and contagious diseases and health reports make a most excellent number.

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