

Notches on The Stick

The Western Christian Advocate (Cincinnati) contains in its number for April 5th, a tender appreciation of Archibald Lampman. We find it in the editorial columns, though signed "G. M. H." The editor is Dr. David H. Moore. Our readers will enjoy this generous and judicious praise of one who loved nature so well and celebrated her with such exquisite art:

Archibald Lampman, Poet.

For the past fifteen years readers of American magazines, sensitive to the grace of poetry, have noted with deepening delight the verse of Archibald Lampman. The Atlantic Monthly for March contains one of his most ambitious poems. Readers, attracted by his name and eager for each new production of his genius, will regret to learn that its author is dead—dead at thirty-seven, after many years' fight with disease of the heart and a lost battle with pneumonia. With William D. Howells, who has written one of his most beautiful appreciations in Literature, we may hope that his death may be the signal of an simpler, more enduring recognition of his rare, singular charm.

Mr. Lampman was akin to our own poet, Edward Rowland Sill—a man of an admirable and complete culture endowed with love of nature, but held down to uncongenial pursuit, and harassed by ill-health. He seems to have been freed from the agonies of unutilized faith, but there are intimations that he was a social critic, brooding over ills of civic life and economic conditions.

Born at Morpeth, Ontario, Canada, his earliest environments were religious—his father being rector of the Church there—and his destiny, opportunity, led him, in fit time, to Trinity College, Toronto and thence, when only twenty-two years old, into Government service at Ottawa. His clerical functions, undisturbed, gave him sufficient income, and enabled him to conserve his health; but he had a most ardent longing for the open air and the glories of life among the lakes of his native land. His poems are perfect in their portrait of the world that passes, fishermen, hunters, woodsmen know—the world of Burroughs, Thoreau, Jeffries; but his sense was deeper than theirs, and he knew how to write a perfect verse-picture—all the more poetic, that it is true to every note of nature.

He craved, as he said:

"To hear at eve the bleating of far flocks,
The mud-hen's whistle from the marsh at morn;
To skit, with deafened ears and brain overborne,
Some foam-filled rapid charging down its rocks
With iron roar of waters; far away
Across wide-reefed mires, pensive with noon,
To hear the querulous outcry of the loon;
To lie among deep rocks, and watch all day,
On liquid heights, the snowy clouds melt by,
Or hear from wood-capped mountain-brows the joy
Pierce the bright morning with his jibing cry.
To feast on summer sounds; the jolted wains,
The thrasher busking from the farm near by,
The prattling cricket's intermittent cry,
The locust's rattle from the sultry lanes;
Or in the shadow of some oaken spray,
To watch, as through a mist of light and dreams,
The far-off hay fields, where the daisy teams
Drive 'round and 'round the lessening squares of
hay.
And hear the wind, now loud, now low;
With drowsy cadence half a summer's day,
As clatter of the reapers come and go."

It is pathetic to read that, bound to his desk and its routine, he made the most of the beauties of his city, taking rides across the terry, walking out beyond the city's limits, and even haunting lumber-yards, that he might breathe the scent of the forests.

By death his body has been absorbed into the world that he loved with pure, patient passion; perhaps his spirit has a keener sense in its freedom, and he has attained the heritage of the larger life, thus realizing his dreams. His two little books, "Among the Millet" and "Lyrics of Earth," will be all the dearer to his admirers; and we will turn with new love to the scattered fragments of his work.

G. M. H.

A printed circular has been issued, a copy of which lies before us, bearing the names of S. E. Dawson, Lit. D., F. R. S.

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C., William D. Le Sueur, and Duncan Campbell Scott, and embodying a prospectus of the projected Memorial Edition of the Works of Archibald Lampman. We reproduce its appeal to the Canadian public:

OTTAWA, 27TH MARCH, 1899.

"DEAR SIR OR MADAM:—You have no doubt, heard of the death of Archibald Lampman, for it was very widely noticed by the press, and the leading newspapers in all parts of Canada gave expression in their editorial columns to the prevailing feeling of regret and sympathy—of regret that the country had lost one in the very foremost rank of her men of letters, and sympathy for the young widow and children so sadly bereaved. Mr. Lampman's position as a junior official in the Civil Service of the Dominion did not permit much provision to be made against his early death, and it is needless to dwell upon the trite observation that the pursuit of literature in Canada is not remunerative in a pecuniary sense. Nevertheless, the born poet is like a song-bird, and must utter his melody whether listened to or not. In reality, we all profit by every true poetic utterance, for it is through the works of poets and other literary men that the community gains its rank in the world of letters; and when they demonstrate abroad the ability of Canadians to wield with power the resources of their mother tongue, every Canadian shares the lustre of their labours and their triumph.

"We have had, and we still have, writers who have brought to us from the motherland results of training acquired there, and of natural gifts which are the outcome of different conditions. For these writers, and for their labours amongst us, we ought to be and we are, sincerely grateful. But Archibald Lampman is one of our very own, born among us, trained in our schools, familiar with our ways, and intimate with every aspect of our skies, woods, and waters. The historic land of his forefathers he never saw with his outward eyes, but this, our own land, he knew by heart in all its marvellous variety of changing moods. In his poems he has described it with vivid and loving appreciation in every phase, from its resting time under the white coverlet faintly tinted with reflections of blue and rosy skies, through the brilliant outburst of spring and the sultry summer, to the dreamy and lingering autumn.

"Lampman's reputation as a writer was not merely local. Many probably who are not otherwise familiar with his work, have from time to time seen and admired his contributions to such magazines as the Atlantic Monthly, The Century, Scribner's, Harper's, Blackwood, &c. Oat of a large number of notices of his work which have appeared in English and United States journals, a few are subjoined."

"Is it not possible now to do anything for him whom we have lost. In his life he was simple and unobtrusive, but his gentle presence and quiet voice will be only the more missed by his intimate friends. To borrow a poet's words on a like occasion:

"He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely. He doth bear
His part, while the One Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull, dense world."

"We still, however, possess the poems which express his quiet, meditative soul; and it is open to us to express our appreciation of his work, and testify our sympathy with those who have been deprived of his support, by adding to our libraries a copy of the memorial edition of his collected poems. The object of this letter is to explain what is being done for the production of such an edition, and to bespeak for it the interest of all cultivated readers.

"There is now being prepared, and will be published for the sole benefit of the widow, a collected edition of Archibald Lampman's poems. It will be one volume of 400 to 500 pages, and will be printed in excellent style and on good paper. The volume will be edited by the late poet's most intimate friend, Mr. Duncan Campbell Scott, and will contain a portrait of Lampman and also a short biographical sketch. It will include, in addition to the work which Mr. Lampman published in his lifetime, a careful selection from a quantity of unpublished work, all, in fact, which there is reason to believe he would himself have eventually published. A facsimile of a sonnet in his own hand will also be included. The price of the volume has been fixed at \$2.25.

"This somewhat unusual method of direct application has been adopted in order to secure to the widow the full and entire return without deduction or discount of any kind whatever. The undersigned are attending to this work solely as a tribute to the memory of a departed friend and in aid of his family. There are friends also concerned who wish to be named, but it is necessary that some names should appear as responsible for the undertaking. It will not be possible to employ can-

vassers to solicit subscriptions. Those who have taken the initiative in the matter feel confident that there are many who 'strictly meditate the thankless muse,' who will assist in sending in subscribers' names, and they believe there are many men busily engaged in important undertakings and reaping the well-earned rewards of more remunerative callings, who have the love of letters at heart, and will not grudge the few moments necessary to fill up the enclosed form for copies, not only for themselves, but for their friends.

"In this hope we make our appeal, trusting that the response will be prompt and generous, and that a lasting memorial may be established of one who name, highly honored as it is to-day, is destined, we believe, to greater honor in the future."

"A page of the circular is occupied by tributes showing how well our poet is known and appreciated throughout the world of English letters. The London Spectator finds him 'at his best in his fine pictures of Canadian scenery, which are almost Wordsworthian in the genuineness of the passionate delight in the beauty of the summer and winter scenery of Canada.' We find the Spectator in agreement with ourselves in finding a special delight in such a poem as 'Before the Rapids,' which is described as 'a Canadian boatman's song, which has somehow the flavor in it of Clough's exquisite poem on the Swiss girl driving her cows home through the storm while musing on her distant lover. W. D. Howells, who gives a generous hail to whatever is distinctive in current literature, says: 'To me he has a greater charm than any poet of this continent, since the great ones of New England went.' The N. Y. Independent cites Lampman's poem, 'The Comfort of the Fields,' as 'in its faithfulness to nature, its simplicity, its wisdom, its serenity worthy of Keats himself.' 'Every page,' says the Editor of Harper's Magazine, 'has some charm of phrase, some exquisite diction of beauty, some happily suggested truth.' And Hamlin Garland completes the tale of admiring comment with these words: 'In all I wrote was deep insight and pure nature lore. At his best he sang in faultless form the themes suggested to him by his too infrequent escapes from confining toil into the country. He had the painter's eye for color, and he heard too the music in nature's commonest sound.'"

Subscriptions should be sent at once to Mr. W. D. Le Sueur, 155 MacLaren St., Ottawa, Canada. The volume is almost ready to be sent to press.

Archibald Lampman.

How fair once in his eyes, thou orb of glory
That through my lonely window shines,
Dappling my walls again with splendours hoary!
Yet not with his time ancient fire declines.

Fair, then sweet Eve, with twilight touch so tender
With rising stars and falling dew;
Fair, tranquil Moon, thou queen of milder splendor,
Remnant o'er skies that charmed his pensive view.

And thou, beloved Earth, thy face adorning
With mother smiles he may not see!
Once would he hail thy pomp of purple morning,
And throbbed for him each flower besprinkled sea.

For when his heart was lifted to thy mountains,
To hear their piny harps at play,
Who heard so well? But, ah, ye hills, ye founts—
Others shall list the mystic words ye say!

He heard your voice, O Sea! His soul did borrow
From moaning waves the symbol of a sorrow,
The haunting accent, the eternal sigh.

Tears fill their eyes, by his majestic river,
Where walked in love, the poets twain;
Others shall sing our songs, but he may never
Charm us with the old witchery again.

And well he loved you, friends, whose fond reply—
To love, oft gave assurance new;
Ye mourn a bard beloved, whose song undying
Shall charm the land where late he said, Adieu!

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But Love and Song with him are still victorious:
On that white shore his music sweet
Soundeth to Beauty, showing ever glorious
The state of ystopping of her radiant feet.

There look for him, O weeping wife and mother!
Ye little children, in your tears;
Ye Poets, lonely left without your brother—
The Minstrel's memory more his song endears.

'Farewell,' he sighs, 'ye hope I once would cherish,
Whose heart was light, and fancy now;
Ye dreams, like gorgeous flowers that bloom to perish,
Ye lingering loves, a fond and last adieu!'

—Pastor Felix

Dr. John D. Ross has made another contribution to the already voluminous literature on Burns, in his recent "Brief Addresses," some of which are not especially brief, though excellent in their kind. Such are, —Beecher's well known tribute, spoken at the New York Burns club, January 25th 1859; Lord Rosebery's Dunfries and Glasgow addresses, July 21st 1896; Col. Ingersoll's Chicago Address, Jan. 23rd 1893; Geo. W. Curtis at the unveiling of the Burns statue in Central Park N. Y. Oct. 2, 1880; Rev. Prof. H. Collyer, at Albany, Aug. 30th, 1888; Prof. John Wilson, on the occasion of Colonel Burns' Return from India Aug. 6th, 1844; Mr. Andrew Lang at the Edinburgh Burns Club, Jan. 25th, 1892; and Mr. Wallace Bruce, at the Ayr Burns Club, Jan. 25th, 1896, and at the Ninety Burns Club, Jan. 25th, 1897. There are others in the list well worthy of mention. The book is published by William Hodge & Co. Glasgow and Edinburgh, 1899.

Tribute.

Better, a single spray, address
To War's hot and warm living breast,
Than a whole year's belated bloom
On the cold marble of the tomb.

PASTOR FELIX.

A SKELETON IN A CLOSET.

Revenge of a Californian Whose Friend was Murdered in War Times.

'Morning, Colonel.'

'Morning, sir,' replied the man who was leaning over the fence.

He was a short, thickset man, with a clear and piercing eye, his face shaved smooth, with not a suggestion of a wrinkle yet his hair was white as snow. He had a slight Southern accent, and his hearty manner of inviting the visitors in and his cordial hospitality were wholly Southern. One of the visitors knew him, and had told the other that here was a man with a bona-fide skeleton in his closet and that the skeleton had a story. It did not require any persuasion to obtain a glimpse of the skeleton. The owner presently led the way to an outhouse and opening the door displayed the skeleton of a man, badly fastened together, and hanging to the wall by the neck. The Missourian did not object to telling the story.

'That fellow,' he said, motioning with his thumb to the skeleton, 'was once an acquaintance of mine, and I liked him so well—this with a laugh—that I have kept him by me ever since, so that I can come out and stir him up whenever I feel disposed, and he gave the skeleton a dig in the ribs. 'It was his way,' he continued, closing the door on his acquaintance. 'During the war I lived in one of the Southern States where I was about the only Northern man. They took nearly everything that I had, as time went on; killed my stock, killed some of my people, and finally announced that they were going to kill me. Nearly all the country was terrorized at that time by a good-for-nothing chap whom we will call Jim Conner; that was not his name, but it will do—one name is as good as another now.

'When the war broke out he started in as a sort of independent guerrilla and began a system of looting and killing. I knew him well, and he sent me word that he was coming my way and was going to burn my house and hang me to the trees in the yard. I sent word back that I was ready for him. We heard of him all around—men shot, niggers killed, houses burned—so that the name of Jim Conner became a thing to scare children, not to speak of men. I was always trying to help Northern men and one time, had two or three with me, passing them on as occasion offered. I had not heard from Conner or his raids for some weeks when one day he rode into the yard and swore that he was going to burn the house. We had no means of protecting ourselves except by using a rifle, and with that I tried to pick him off from the top story; but he had picked up one of my friends who had been in the field, and they put him on a horse and stood behind him and shot at the windows of the house, at the same time gathering brush with which they said to burn the house.

'But no one dared to approach the house, as I was a sure shot. I supposed that they would wait until night and then creep up and burn me out. I kept out of sight, and could not believe that they would murder a man in cold blood. But

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bearing a shout, I glided through a bullet hole in the shutter and saw them driving my friend's horse up to a tree—a fine old tree that I had planted as a boy. One of the limbs crossed the drive and to this they fastened the rope and drove the horse away, leaving my friend dangling there, and I watching the operation totally helpless, while they were looking on. Some United States troops finally came along and drove them off and cut the body down, and we joined in the chase. I hunted the gang for weeks; then gave it up, as it was evident that they had given up the slip. After the war I moved to California and came here. I soon heard of a curious character who lived up in one of the canons the life of a hermit. I never connected his name with Conner, it being more or less common; but when he died one day the story was that he had had a bad record back in Missouri—that he had been a murderer, &c.—and it occurred to me that it might be my old enemy, the man I had been after for so many years.

'I can't say that I have a particularly revengeful disposition,' said the skeleton owner, 'but he had murdered my friend, and I had never given up the hope of finding him and was always on the lookout. The old fellow was alone and homeless, it seems with no friends, and they had buried him by the side of his hut. I heard of it a few days later and employed some men to aid me in the investigation. Conner had a bad stab wound across the face, by which no one could ever fail to recognize him, and when we opened the grave there was the man, while papers which he left showed that he was Conner. I had found him too late to turn him over to the law, so I proposed to hang him where I could keep an eye on him for the rest of my life and in my will I propose to leave instructions that he shall be left hanging, dangling in the wind, just as he hung my friend. I had his skeleton prepared, as no one claimed him, and hung him up as a warning to any of his seed that might follow in his footsteps.'

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Scene: Barber's shop.
Tonsorial Artist (surveying his victim): 'Your hair is getting very thin, sir.'
Victim: 'Yes, I've been treating it with anti-fat. I never liked stout hair.'
Artist: 'You really should put something on it.'
Victim: 'So I do—every morning.'
Artist: 'May I ask what?'
Victim: 'My hat.'
The rest was silence.

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