

Notches on The Stick

During the years in which Edmund Clarence Stedman has been engaged with literary history and criticism, in which work he has accomplished so much and so well, he has devoted little time and care to his own proper gift. Poems have indeed appeared from time to time, as occasion or some special emotion gave birth to them; but their author has not paused to collect and arrange them for publication in a volume, until the close of the year 1898. As Mr. Stedman has made no frequent demand on the verse loving public, and as his work makes appeal to all readers of refined taste, who enjoy elevated sentiment dressed in its appropriate garb, it may be expected that "Poems Now First Collected," will not be suffered to fall into neglect. He makes no appeal to the spirit of song, that he had long, yet not wilfully neglected:—

Return and be thou kind, bright Spirit of Song,
Thou whom I yet loved most, loved most of all
Even when I left thee—I, so long stayed
From thy beholding! And renewed, renewed,
Thy gift to me, faint clinging to thy robe!

If the Muse had become peevish, such petition might touch her to relenting. "The Hand of Lincoln" is a worthy and congenial theme. The hand that is said to indicate character as much of the face, might well have poetic interest when it is that of one of the lovers and saviors humanity. That hand was laid to some of our humblest and to some of our most unusual and noblest tasks. That hand reached out of darkness might in itself have features to impress—"Washington's hands," writes Dr. Kelly, for so Lafayette attests, "were the largest he had ever seen on any human being; and the bronze cast of Lincoln's hand, which inspired Stedman's poem, shows its large mould, big-boned, knotted with cords and veins. Two sons of Anak held the helm of this nation with giant hands in the two great crises of its history." The poem is worthy its subject. The poet's admiration for another great American is expressed in his poem "On the Death of an Invincible Soldier." These and other pieces show Stedman to be a dealer of judicious praise. Helen Keller is a "living poem"—a woman of a wonderful soul, strangely shut up, and as strangely penetrating or overleaping all barriers of sense; and so it is not unfit that her grand example should be made the subject of song, as it is here. In his "Mors Benefica" the poet expresses a wish common to strong and earnest souls, to whom so much of the value of life consists in the power to achieve, and who dread to survive their usefulness. He would be taken away by a sudden unexpected stroke, or go down like some old Norse Captain on the deck of his foundering ship,—

With no cry in vain,
No ministrant beside to ward and weep
Hand upon helm I would my quittance gain
In some wild tarmoil of the waters deep,
And sink content into a dreamless sleep
(Spared grave and shroud) below the sacred main.

Attention has been of late so much directed to events in the principal islands of the Caribbean Sea, and to their characteristics and races, it happens that a section of Stedman's volume falls into that trend of thought. "The poems go singing in many keys to the Bahamas, bleak San Salvador, the Windward passage, the Pelican Shoal, Cape Haytien, Port-au-Prince, the green and watered and bloomy island of Jamaica, and Port Rique, and Martinique. The cracked bells of Panama clanging in the two old cathedral towers seem to the poet to be still saying as of yore, 'Come out! Come out! There's a heretic to sing to-day. In the Caribbean Sea, 'adrift on tropic wave,' Stedman sings in 1892 the last poem in this volume, 'Ariel,' which is a tribute to the poet Shelley a century from his birth. Shelley is 'Nature's prodigal,' the 'boy divine,'—

The incarnate child of song,
Who gazes as if astray,
From some uncharted stellar way
With eyes of wonder at our world of grief and song."

Stedman may claim for his muse no lofty ranges of passion or imagination. To charm, to rouse, to astonish are not so much his function as to instruct and to please. He is irreproachable in the quali-

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ties of taste and propriety. "What he has written," says a recent writer commenting on this volume, is marked by beauty, grace and finish, by pure diction and well nigh perfect measure, by a happy spirit, feeling felicitously expressed, and smooth musical utterance." He who has literary fashions and virtues such as these need never despair of an audience. There will be some to take pleasure in his art and to heed his song.

We present our readers with the poem on Burns, by Robert Reid (Rob Warlock) of Montreal, to which we have previously referred. It deserves attention as one of the best examples of its author's verse:

Robert Burns on His Death-Bed.
(By Robert Reid, Montreal.)

(Prize poem of 1899, to which the Kinross Silver Wreath has just been awarded by the North American United Canadian Association.)

Life's day draws near the gloaming,
The weary darg o' the pune,
And a' its dear delusions
I maun relinquish sune;
Sune will auld Mither Scot and
The bard that I'es her tyne,
And hear her loves and praises sung
Byither tongues than mine.

Land o' the sturdily this le,
And winsome heather bell,
Thou wants no qu'ring minstrel
Thy pith and pride to t'ly;
But strong within his bosom
The tide of song should flow
Who dares to vice thy doughty deeds
And dreams of long ago!

So well'd in mine the music
That broke in waves of fire,
When in the flush of manhood
I swept the patriot lyre;
And though my falling fingers
Now feeble echo's wa'e,
Fain would their himnist effort be
For dear auld Scotland's sake.

O dinna stee that shutter
And keep the light awa;
But owe me in its glory
Let ilka sunbeam fa'!
For in the miksme chamber
Where I see true man be,
The bonnie heartsome simmer sun
Will shine nae mair for me.

Bithe hie I been to see him
Come ower the hills at morn,
Or in the e'ning, glidin'
Wi' liquid gowd, the corn:
When neath his hand I cras-
sies
Dams' Nature beand wi' joy,
And ilka thing that breath'd was glad,
And nae mair glad than I.

Then, rapt in poet ardour,
Enchanted grued I tred,
As in my heart, sweet-si' gin,
I heard the voice of god;
His warks were a' about me,
I sang whate'er I saw,
For man and beast, and flow'r and stream
I lo'd them, aye an' a'!

Noo, like a want of winter
That comes afore its time,
The world's breath has chilled me,
And killed me in my prime;
Dark clouds obscure the visio's
Gar'd a' my being thrill,
And in my call and flatterin' breast
The heavenly voice is still.

O talents lightly cared for,
And noo a'out rec'd,
How, like a reckless spendthrift
I've cust my waltz awa!
What can I gie for answer
When the dread Voice I hear
Thro' my thitless stewardship
In t'under-toes'll spier?

*Sweet lass, whose step like music
Slips the low chamber thro',
Whase touch is like an angel's
Upon my tunin' broo,—
O trace the paths of virtue
N'er let that footstep stray,
And for a heavenly light to guide
This heart will ever pray.

And bairns—my blessings on ye!
Ye'll sune be let your lane,
Wi' life's sair darg afore ye—
In God's name—act like Men!
Abune a' fame or fortune
For this my bosom yearns,
That man for honest worth should priz'
The sons of Robert Burns!

Dear Jean, the night grows eerie
I wat I'll slumber sune;
O lay your loof in mine, hure,
As ye see it hae dune;
And on that ilka' bosom
Let this worn cheek recline,
That for a heart-beat I may pree
The raptures o' lang syne.

O bonnie was the burnside,
And fair the sy van scene,
Where, neath the budding hawthorn,
I tryed wi' my Jean;
And as I fondly clasp'd her—
A bliss beyond compare—
I trow the mair licht never shone
On sic a happy pair!

Sinsyne, I've tried her sairly,
But gude and true she's been;
And for a' that's come and gane yet
She's still my Bonnie Jean!
There's nae in a' braid Scotland

That's half sae dear to me,
And ne'er a hand but this dear hand
Shall close my weary e'e.

Then fare ye weel, my ain Jean,
My first joy and my last,
Through ilka renk in Scotland,
Our names entwint'd hae pass'd;
And think na that she slights us,
Or sune so got we'll be—
A hunder year will but increase
Her pride in you and me!

But now on Life's illusions
Maun close these ee'n o' mine,
And to the Fount it sprang frae
My saul I maun resign;
Great Being! in whose presence
Ere morning I my stand,
Reach from the dark to guide me through
Thine everlasting Hand!

*Miss Jessie Lewars.

Miss Louise Imogen Guiney describes Harold Frederic in The Book Buyer as follows:

"Frederic was not handsome, though he looked almost that, when for some time he chose to wear a beard; but he was, rather, in a phrase of Carlyle's, a 'big, brotherly, restful man,' whose smile was very boyish, and whose broad hand was good to grasp. He was tall, blond, muscular, fairly brisk, and strong as a tower. In a face somewhat immobile, his eyes had the look which often survives a shy and stubborn childhood. It was the face, as I have just said, of one who is afraid of nothing. He went down to Marseilles in 1884, when it was reeking with cholera; he went to Russia in 1891, to investigate the abominable persecution of the Jews there, and to record recklessly his own scorching protest against it. He would have been an ideal war correspondent, in these days when war correspondents have set so splendidly high the standards by which we are to measure them. He was a great talker; the quality of his talk was equal to the quantity—and that is saying much. Frederic had an off-hand, mock heroic, chaffing flow of speech, which, again, is exclusively American. In his indignations there was a fine Niagara freeness of words, which the late Mr. Macaulay could barely hope to rival. And he told a story as well as he wrote one."

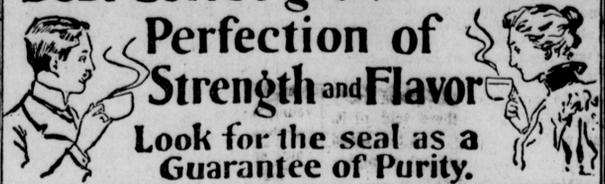
Our correspondent, Mrs. Hannah M. Bryan, who has been teaching school among the Sangre de Christo mountains, in Colorado—quite remote, as it would seem, from libraries—has resorted to her inventive mind as the source of literary material, when the "Chico District, No. 24 is," as she declares, "in the throes of an entertainment." For a specimen of her product, as an incitement to any in a similar situation, we give the following:

The Young Cattle Men.
(Two Boys of Seven Years, Looking Up.)
PAT—How wide and far the sky is spread,
JIM—How thick the stars are overhead.
PAT—I wish the sky was pasture-ground,
And all that pasture mine.
TIM—I wish that all the stars were cows,
And all the cows were mine.
PAT—Where would they graze? Ye've not a foot
Of land, as I can see.
TIM—In your sky-pasture, Pat, me boy,—
No bigger could there be.
PAT—Not much,—they won't no hoof of yours
Tread in my pasture high;
I'll have some cattle of my own,
And graze them on the sky.
TIM—Ye stinky tyke! If I see fit
I'll graze my cattle there.
PAT—Ye won't though; net ore little bit!
Turn in ye're cattle if ye dare!
[Curtains fall, with boys shaking fists in each others' faces.]

The attention of a world concentrated upon the illness of Rudyard Kipling at New York, is a sufficient witness to his great popularity, and the importance of the position he is understood to hold in the literature of the time. Some pass who have done creditably, and their going seems to be the concern of the few; but the masses seem to hear in Kipling a voice of the time, and to see in him an incarnation of the age spirit. One who is wide awake to what is done and written to-day writes: "And so Duvar and Lampman are gone; and Kipling is fighting for his life, like his Danny Deever! Well, God knows how to run his world, no doubt, but it is tremendous to think how small his respect for genius is. He mows them down in their prime like the grass of the fields.... I am sorry Lampman has gone, because he had a true spark. But Kipling would be the greatest loss in letters of any man now writing English. That seems, perhaps, extravagant, but it is not mere personal opinion. I hope he will live. It is the fashion in some quarters to call Kipling's the row-to-wow style, and there is a certain robustness of vigor in him. But do not forget that strength is the basis of all virtue, poetic and other. For vigor, versa-

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tility and fecundity, how amazing Kipling is!

The Doves.
From Theophile Gautier.
Where graves are on yon hillside made
A palm tree lifts its slumber shade;
With head erect, like a green g'ume,
It stands, sole guardian of the tomb.
When evening comes the doves will fly
Under its shelter silently:
For all the night 'tis their soft lair;
They cluster close and nestle there.
Like a white necklace, spreading wide
They flutter out at morning tide;
They seek some roost or turret high,
Or scatter in the broad blue sky.
My soul is like that shivering tree:
Swarms of mad visions come to me;
They fall from heaven a close of day,
And fly with mor's first beam away.

The publishing firm of George N. Morang & Co., limited, have recently installed themselves in commodious premises at No. 90 Wellington St. West, near York St. The enterprising firm produce in an artistic form the best works that are issued in Canada, England and the United States. Every month they produce, in the "Florin Series," a new work of fiction, the best on the market, at the moderate price of 50 cents.

By the favor of C. C. James, Esq., of the Agricultural Department, Toronto, we have a copy of the "Report of the Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes of the Province of Ontario," for 1897-8. It is a book of much interest to the intelligent farmer, and there are many articles of use to the horticulturist and flower-grower. Ornithological students will turn with interest to the engravings representing Canadian birds, with the notes appended thereto.

Edmund Gosse has completed a life of Donne, the English poet, to be published by Heinemann in the summer. This accomplished essayist and poet has recently received the degree of L. L. D., honorary, from St. Andrews University.

Among literary men now reported ill are Blackmore, the author of "Lorna Doone," and George Macdonald. The latter is at Bordighera and the first named in the vicinity of London. These illustrious men must soon pass from among us, but their genius will continue to be a delight.
PASTOR FELIX

DISEASE OF THE SPINE.

A Malady That Makes Life Almost Unbearable—A Nova Scotia Lady Tells How to Cure it.

Mrs. Frank Minard, of Milton, N. S., is a lady who possesses the confidence of a large circle of friends. Mrs. Minard has been a sufferer from spinal disease and attendant complications, and to a reporter she recently gave the particulars of her cure. She said:—"As a result of the trouble I suffered terribly. At times the pain would be confined to my back, and at other times it seemed to affect every nerve in my body, from the top of my head to my toes. As a result I was reduced greatly in strength, and was unable to stand upon my feet long enough to attend to my household work. When doing any kind of work which required a standing position I had to provide myself with a high chair as a means of support. The medicine which the doctor prescribed for me did not seem to afford me more than temporary relief from the pain and I was gradually growing weaker and weaker. Finally the doctors suggested that I should use Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and acting on his advice I began to take them. I had only used a few boxes when the agony I had suffered for months began to abate, and I began to regain my strength. I continued using the pills for a short time longer, and was again in full possession of my health and strength, and able to do my household work. I have never enjoyed better health than I am doing at present."

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Credit Shopping Notifications.

A New Orleans business man in an interview told a reporter that its no uncommon thing for retail merchants to receive private instruction from the heads of families not to credit some female member of the household, and such cases are mighty ticklish to handle. As a rule the lady in point is a good customer, and if we tell her, no matter how diplomatically, of our orders, we are almost certain to lose her future trade. Chagrin, if nothing else, will keep her out of the house, and she will go to some store that was not the scene of so mortifying an episode. If, on the other hand, we say nothing, we run the risk of losing the bill. That, however, is generally the course I pursue. I trust to luck and to her ability to wheedle the indignant gentleman into footing the account. As a rule he is simply exasperated over some extravagance of the hour, and when he cools off there is no further trouble. All the same, I wish to heaven that men would run their domestic affairs themselves without calling on the merchants to give them assistance. I never receive a credit-stopping notification but I have a sigh and make a few remarks that wouldn't sound well at a prayer meeting.

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Miss (angrily): "See, Bridget, I can write my name in the dust on the mat-piece."
Bridget (admiringly): "There's nothing like eddication, after all is there mum?"