

A postal card from Mr. Duvar contains the following bit of scepticism, which, being so exposed to the public eye, must have been public property from the outset:

"Friend Edison may think 'twas he invented
The greatest marvel of this wondrous age;
But, when I see the Phonograph indented
On rites of Isis and Pharaonic page,
I doubt the fact!—and so, say I, the bard,
The Age's Wonder is the POSTAL CARD,

and so I avail myself of it to say —."

* * *

So long ago as the days of the *Maritime Monthly*, a book of song, by the above author, entitled "John a' Var, His Lays," was heralded in its pages; but, so far as we are concerned, it became a dream and expectation, with the pleasing exception of a few fragments, which, by the poet's permission, are here presented. "A' Var (Du Var?) was a troubadour, with all the quaint traits of his profession, who went to the second Crusade and wound up by becoming a monk. The book gives the lyrics he sung. Had I lived in those days (the author writes privately what is here published) I, too, would have been a troubadour and gone to the second Crusade, and not unlikely ended by becoming a monk. Enclosed is an incident that occurred at A' Var's installation (never, I think, published,) that will be as appropriate *now* to me as *then* to him."

LXIV.

A shoal of gruesome troubadours and knights
With not much reverence pictured on their faces,
Kept crowding round the white-robed acolytes
And kept a coil while jostling them for places,—
Their unwonted presence at those sacred rites
Was not accounted for by new born graces,
But the new monk for whom was sung *Te Deum*
Was *John a' Var*, and they had come to see him.

* * * LXIX, *et al.*

When called to renounce his worldly goods, he drew forth
a purse with gold, a hawk's bells, spurs, a jacques knife,
divers love tokens and sundries,

All which he reverent on the altar laid.

LXXVI.

Therefore it was before that curious crowd
He stood in monkish stole. His youth had flown,
His minstrelsy, of which he once was proud,
Was over; he must turn his heart to stone,
Forgetting all loves but his latest-vowed,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel,—she alone
To serve and love and worship. It might be
This was the subject of his reverie;

LXXVII.

For, with a sudden stride he reached his lyre
And dashed his fingers fiercely o'er the strings,
Which rang out wildly with impetuous fire,
Waking the echoes like a hundred wings
Away up in the rafters of the choir,
Then died in low pathetic mutterings;—
The clergy were a good deal scandalized,
But then a convert such as he was prized.

LXXVIII.

So none forbade him when, with chastened look
His voice chimed piteously to match the strain,
And, both together twining, shed and shook
Soft falling whispers as of summer rain;
But wilder rose and louder as he strook
The quivering chords, that moaned and cried amain.
A passionate outburst. 'Twas the soul of song
In its last agony, but dying strong:—

Take not from me my lute!
There is a spirit caught among its wires
That sentient thrill as if with living fires,—
Freres! let me keep my lute.

It may not be? ah, well,—
Once more e'er yet thou diest, O breathing string!
That plainest like the heart of lost sea-shell,
And talk'st to me with voice of living thing,
Sad now art thou and I,
Loved lute. Ring out, ring out, ere yet we die!

Ring out the clash of swords!
The meeting shock! ring out the victor's strain;
Or dirge when peasants tramp o'er knights and lords,—
Jarring when the war-trumpet blows amain,
And scattered all afield
The shivered lance-shaft and the shattered shield.

Ring out to ladies' eyes!
To love's wild ecstasy of joy and woe,
To morning's mantling blush, to passionate sighs
That heave the rose-tipped mamalon's of snow,
To gage d'armor, I ween,
That wakes the rapturous thoughts of—once hath been.

Ring out the words of fire!

'Gainst pride, and hate, and tyranny the strong,
'Gainst proud man's contumely and poor man's ire,
And all the lusts that work the world wrong,
'Gainst envy, lie, and ill

Ring out protest once more, and then be still.

Wake gently softer themes!

Of white-frosted children dead on cottage floors,
Of dances 'neath the jasmine-clustered beams,
Of greybeards drinking at the trellised doors,
Of immortelles in graves,
Of red-cheeked lasses where the ripe corn waves.

This world hath been so fair,
So full of joyousness. Then what am I
That I should vow to shun God's blessed air,
And veil my lids against the sunshine-sky?
But that is idle breath,—
Life may be joyous, even if life in death.

Dying as echo dies

Faint and more faint, O lute! expires my lay,
They say there is a short cut to the skies,
But ye', methinks, with thee I best could pray.
Our mission now is o'er.—
O Soul of Song! fly free! No more! No more!

To lute, farewell. Farewell, with other things;
But, though for me, I henceforth am the Lord's,
No meaner hand shall ever touch the chords,—
Thus — thus — I rive its strings!

The spirit and beauty of this lyric requires no word of mine, which, if the rather prosaic phrase—"a short cut to the skies"—were amended, would give full satisfaction. A brief commentary to the poem is contained in the confession that, "in Canada, composition purely literary is so dishearteningly unsatisfactory as a pursuit that I have determined to sin no more in that way and to abandon Poe-y. As I said to our friend, M——, 'write me down as a dead poetaster.'" We trust, however, this abandonment of the Muse by one of her chief followers in Canada, is only temporary, and because of his exclusive engagement in another direction,—as his letter explains: "I think I mentioned, about April last, that on the invitation of a London, G.B., publisher, I proposed writing '*A Popular Treatise on Early Archaeology. Stone, Bronze, Iron,*' with many illustrations. This occupied me closely at my desk for six months, (as I myself drew all the 'cuts,'—187 of them,) and I confess my hopes that it would pass muster when the manuscript was submitted to English criticism (written, as the book was, from libraries,) were not sanguine; but I appreciate your friendship so much that I feel almost sure (not vainly) you will be glad to hear that it has been accepted without alteration of text, and that copyright papers have been exchanged. The book will be issued in England for the English (not Canadian) market. Moreover, the publishers (Messrs. Swan, Schennenschein & Co., Paternoster Square,) say that if it proves a success they will take another work on 'Ethnology,'—a more abstruse subject, requiring profounder thought. I have always had a latent taste for rummaging among dead men's bones, and when I come to throw into shape the ghoulish information accumulated through long years I find it full of interest when refreshed by systematic study."

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A different style and taste has another of our poets,—as charming in his letters as he is bewitching in verse,—who says: "I would only sing at my leisure. It is only the dirty little English sparrows that chip as they forage on the paving. And yet!—I wonder if I ever was an English sparrow? If I had my way I would be a wandering Tern, after I have teased this body to death. But there is no telling. . . . Joubert said well that a thought should be kept in mind until it shines. . . . As for Browning, he was stubborn; and it is a pity he had no friend to beat him daily with a thick stick when he persisted in writing his enormous English. He is at once the vilest and dimmest of artists. . . . I loathe the snuffy and Puritanical ceremonies of the dead,—one of the few dissipations allowed to our New England ancestors. Blake in the Book of Thel teaches me better thoughts of burial; still I would rather be burned when it is time to 'flit' (as they say on May-day in Scotland). Note the poem by Barry Straton in this week's *Independent*. He has the true insight into the heart of the great Mother, and is often fine in his lyrical expression. How splendidly sincere some of these lines are! Who knows the voice well enough to guess who is speaking?"

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Now let Brazil build the tomb of the gentle, gracious spirit, her former Emperor,—the patron of the amenities, of science and poetry,—whose misfortune it was to be born to

imperialism and a dying monarchy, and who has been compelled to fulfil in these later days the doom of Aristides and Dante. The humane part of the world would have respected and sympathized with the new Republic, but that it meted to this liberty-loving soul the doom of tyrants. Broken-hearted, he turned his home-sick eyes to his country, and her sons did not call him back. Ingrates! How can ye hope to prosper! Now build high his monument, and record with his glory the shame of certain patriots—if truly to be known for such. Inscribe thereon: "He loved his country; but his title was Emperor, which Envy could not endure. Therefore, he died an exile, longing for her shores. *Sprete injuria gloria.*" Beware the revenges of injured worth; if the people are to rule, let it be in honour.

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Our rural sketch is of an old-time Democrat, in which one side of his character is given by David Barker in his "First Courtship."

SHUBAEL GRANT.

Some traits I liked of Shubael Grant's:
He played well on his drum and fife,
And though he wore blue drilling pants,
Was true and clever to his wife.

And though he had a rattle head,
At things Divine he wouldn't scoff;
And, though he went half choked, 'tis said
He never took his well-crank off.

He never changed nor flopped about;
And now, wherever Grant may be,
In any world, I have no doubt
He writes *God* with a little *g*;

And is, as he was here in Maine,
Dead set against each liquor law,—
"Haint got no nigger on the brain,"
And always takes his whiskey raw.

If in the roaring pit beneath,
He'll fight in lava to the knees,
Each sulphurous imp who dares to breathe
One word against Divine decrees!

That blessed wheat, mixed in with tares,
That pious mother's humble prayers,
And love you harbor for her daughter,
You know will often make you stand
More lies, and brags, and drunks and cheats,
From her old father than you ought *ter*.
And so, through prayers, and rum and all,
I toughed it out at Grant's that fall.

The disposition to "write *God* with a little *g*," which was Grant's illiterate failing, seems one which even the learned world has not entirely outgrown.

PASTOR FELIX.

Lamb's Cottage.

Although it is now nearly sixty years since Charles Lamb died, the little cottage in which he and his sister resided at Edmonton shows but slight evidence of any external change. Situated a few yards from the railway station, the house, with its gable facing the roadway, its red-tiled roof and whitened walls, its narrow doorway and small-paned windows, gives the impression of Old-World comfort and seclusion. A rowan tree, on the branches of which hang clusters of red berries, stands at the gateway, and its autumnal appearance imparts just now a pictorial attractiveness to the interesting building, which is still known as "Lamb's Cottage."—*Full Mall Gazette*.

The military article in *Outing* for January is "The Active Militia of Canada," by Lieut. John H. Woodside, in which the author treats of the Northern Lake Forces. The article is profusely illustrated from photos.

All interested in the teaching of young children will be glad to read Mrs. Mary Alling Aber's account of "An Experiment in Education," in the forthcoming January *Popular Science Monthly*. It is a sample of the sporadic efforts to introduce little children to real knowledge, which promise valuable results in the near future.

An Irish journal has this gem in answer to a correspondent: "We decline to acknowledge the receipt of your post-card." Which is very much like the Corkonian who travelled into Kerry to an insulting enemy to "tell him to his face that he would treat him with silent contempt."