

Notes and Queries.

All Communications intended for this Column must be addressed to the Editor, and endorsed "Notes and Queries."

THE TRUE SWORD OF WALLACE.—Sir,—In your Notes and Queries of March 22, in an article from *Land and Water*, it is stated that Wallace's sword preserved at Dumbarton, is not genuine.

A report to that effect went the rounds a few months ago, when I addressed the following note to the Editor of the *Globe*, showing conclusively that it is no modern fiction but a tradition of antiquity that the blade in question is really that of the Scottish hero, for, more than three centuries ago, when two-handed swords were still used, this was called the Wallace sword, and was then, moreover, so old-fashioned, that it was deemed necessary to modernize it! It probably had originally the guard peculiar to the ancient Scottish sword, viz., two bars crossing both ways, such as those engraved in Wilson's *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, while it now has only a single cross-bar such as is usual on all but the ancient Scotch two-handed swords:

(To the Editor of the *Globe*.)

"Sir,—In your paper of yesterday you stated that the sword of Wallace preserved at Dumbarton was examined in 1825, by order of the Duke of Wellington, and it was then found to belong to the time of Edward IV.

"Every true Scot, however, will be happy to learn that the Duke's advisers were at fault, an error they were undoubtedly led into by Meyrick, who says it will be evident to anyone who compares the Dumbarton sword with the Sword of State of the Earldom of Chester that they were both of the time of Edward IV.

"There is undoubtedly a resemblance, and Meyrick was correct thus far; but, since his death, a charge has been discovered in the books of the Lord Treasurer of Scotland, dated 1505, when James IV. visited Dumbarton, for remounting the Wallace sword.

"The words are, 'For binding of Wallace sword with cordis of silk, and new hilt and pommel, new skabbard and new belt to the said sword.' This was only twenty-two years after the death of Edward IV., and Meyrick was right with regard to the hilt and pommel only, but not to the blade, which the above clearly proves was believed in 1505 to have been the sword of Wallace, who died exactly two centuries previous, and at the time of King James's visit the sword was then such an old-fashioned one that the Goths considered it necessary to modernize it.

"This sword now measures four feet eleven and a half inches, the blade alone being three feet nine inches, and weighs six pounds, but it has been broken and welded together again in two places, and is believed to have lost each time from six to eight inches in length.

"Meyrick seems to have considered many of the larger two-handed swords to have been swords of State, (and some later writers have followed in his train), but he was certainly mistaken. Two-handed swords were generally between five and six feet long, but I have one in my cabinet measuring seven feet, the blade alone being five feet two inches, and weighing fifteen pounds, which is evidently a fighting sword, and in the Dresden Armory is preserved a thirteenth century sword of a knight who died in 1240, and whose name, Konrad Schenck von Winterstetten, is inscribed on the blade. This measures eight feet two inches, the hilt being ten inches, which is not so long as the hilts of later date.

"Froissart, however, mentions a still longer sword, and Meyrick must have overlooked it or he would not have made the mistake of classing the larger swords as only for purposes of State.

"Under the year 1378, Froissart says of Sir Archibald Douglas 'when near to the English, he dismounted, and wielded before him an immense sword, whose blade alone was two ells long (*qui avoit d'alunelle deux aunes*), which scarcely another could have lifted from the ground, but he found no difficulty in handling it, and gave such terrible strokes, that all on whom they fell were struck to the ground.' This sword of seven and a half feet in the blade must have been from eight and a half to nine feet long!

"Hewitt (of the Tower of London) in his valuable work on Ancient Arms and Armour, quotes the above, but strangely enough omits the important words in the blade.

"B. H. D."

Nov 8, 1872.

The above will also tend to prove that the correspondent of *Land and Water* was hardly correct in considering the men of the days of chivalry as an inferior race, as shown by the suits of armour in various public museums.

It is true that few suits of ancient armour now in existence will fit men of the present day, and out of more than a dozen suits in my own collection one only would fit a man of five feet ten, and but two or three more would suit stout men of five feet eight, but it is evident they were not all men of that size, for no pigny could have wielded the sword of Archibald Douglas. He, as well as the German von Winterstetten, and the original owner of my longest sword, must have been both tall and powerful men—six footers at least.

Richard Cœur de Lion, instead of having been "only a light weight," was probably quite the contrary, for his favourite weapon was a very heavy battle axe, and Vinesauf, his companion in the Holy Land, extols him for his flexible limbs, his strength and length of arm.

As regards strength and skill, Giraldus Cambrensis says of the Irish (twelfth century) that their favourite weapon was a one-handed axe, excellently well steeled, "from which neither helmet can defend the head, nor the iron folds of armour the body; whence it has happened in our time that the whole thigh of a man, though cased in well-tempered armour, hath been lopped off by a single blow, the limb falling on one side of the horse, and the expiring body on the other."

And of the English, it is a fact recorded in the journal of Edward the Sixth (1547-53) that a hundred archers belonging to the King's guard shot at an inch board, singly, two arrows each, and afterwards all together. Some of these arrows passed through this, and into another board placed behind it, although the wood was extremely solid and firm. These bows would carry four hundred yards.

In 1351, at the famous battle of the Thirty, in Brittany,

Thomelin Belefert fought with a mallet or war-hammer, weighing twenty-five pounds.

The helmet, or rather, iron skull-cap, of Augustus the Strong, who died in 1733, is preserved in the Dresden Museum. I have had it on my head. It weighs twenty pounds, but the war-hat of the Great Elector of Brandenburg, preserved in the Berlin Museum, and which was worn by the Elector at the battle of Fehrbellin, in 1677, weighs twenty seven pounds.

I could extend this list but fear I have already trespassed too much upon your valuable space.

B. H. Dixon.

Toronto.

(Written for the *Canadian Illustrated News*.)

WHAT I THINK ABOUT IT.

OUR CHERISHED TRADITIONS.

I have just been reading an atrocious account of the decadence of men in ancient days. Queer way of putting it, perhaps, but that is just what the vile person who wrote the account made of it. He wanted me to believe that the

Men of giant stature, who could dance,
Equipped in battle mail from head to heel,

were not giants at all, but persons of inferior size, not at all to be compared to the burly fellows of our days of gymnastics and Indian clubs and dumb bells. He wanted me to believe that Cœur de Lion was but an ordinary person; that Wallace never could have wielded his sword, and that Godfrey of Bouillon was but a weakling after all. The ancient coats of mail he said would not fit the ordinary guardsmen of to-day. I think he was a monster, is a monster, that writer. What the dence does he want to make such havoc with my traditions, with everybody's traditions for? Can't he let well enough alone? These attempts to make the past so poor are iniquitous, and deserve to be repudiated by all lovers of romance. These Gradgrinds who stick so to their abominable facts, what a nuisance they are! They want to make the world barren of beauty. What is the use of having the "centuries behind us like a fruitful land" referring, if you are going to cut down the trees and uproot the flowers and use the streams to turn your horrible mills that grind out facts?

I can't give up my giants. I want to believe that Godfrey of Bouillon really did cleave, from head to throat, the skull of Ibrahim Pasha, and that he did it by main strength of a mighty arm, that awful afternoon at Antioch, when the crusaders flooded the streets with Moslem blood, and piled up barricades of Moslem dead. I want to believe that Richard the Lion-heart, Melech Ric, did really cleave that bar of iron in the presence of the astonished though more skilful Sultan Saladin. I want to believe it was true of old days that one Englishman was good in fight for three Frenchmen, (that was in the good old days when the food was washed down with great draughts of beer by the warriors) I want men to believe that Heliogabalus was a gormandizer, and that his dinners did really cost—well, ever so much money a meal. But then these Gradgrind critics come to me and say in so many words, he was "no such person."

I want to believe that Nero was a tyrant, and fiddled while Rome was burning; but the critics come along with their stories of flowers on his touns, and of his private kindnesses. But what would be the good of a decent hero? What would he be to us without his fiddle? What interest would he have to us without his murders and poisonings and several devilleries.

I hate these sceptics who want to disturb these traditions of ours. But they are increasing in number. Macaulay defies William the Third. Froude gives us a Henry the Eighth who is only a milksop compared to the men we used to know in old days before Froude came to disturb the deep foundations of our historical knowledge.

I have stood upon Achilles' Tomb
And heard Troy doubted—thus will I doubt of Rome,

says Byron. Doubt of Rome, indeed! Why, they doubt of Byron himself. Between Moore and the Guicciola and Mrs. Beecher Stowe, who knows the truth about Byron? It is an awfully sceptical age. But I will cling to mine ancient faith, and swear by mine ancient heroes. Godfrey, I salute thee in Antioch! Richard I hail you victor at Ascalon, you of the mighty arm. Who is it says he can wear your armour and wield your battle blade. William Tell, it is a lie they speak when they say you did not cleave the apple on your brave boy's head. Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York, I declare you were more beautiful than that puny and pale Rowena. Heroes of Cressy and Poitiers, you were brave men and strong, not weaklings and small. I will hate these critics forever more. Do you remember the anguish of the Roman Emperor, as he cried, "Varus, restore me my legions!" What was his anguish to mine, as I cry to the critics, "Restore me, and spare me my heroes of old days, my mighty men of arms!"

CONCERNING FANCY WORK.

"What I think about fancy work, my dear," I said to my wife this morning, as she asked me about the value of it; "I will tell you about it after dinner." And this is about what I told her: "What an enormous amount of social good fancy work has done during all the ages. What an untold quantity, not to be approached by figures of speech, of womanly anxiety and agony and pain and hopelessness has been worked into all the myriad forms of fancy work. What an amount of idleness it has saved. What listlessness it has chased away. What scandal it has saved. What beauty it has adorned the world with. While the Knights were away in far foreign lands on the tented fields, the fair ladies were gathered in the gardens or the halls stitching, weaving, working away nimble-fingered and sweet at their tapestries. Bayeux, Gobelin, Holyrood, what tales ye might tell of the heart-aches that were eased, and the anxieties that were forgotten, as the bright-coloured silks spread and spread into fine and fanciful shapes, taking form from lovely thoughts and colour from lovely eyes, that would have been dull enough in dreamingly looking into space for the coming of the lord and knight and master of manor or hall. Surely women should bless the kind heaven that gave them the taste for fancy work. Shall we men sneer at it, and call it idly-wasted time that is spent over the frames? No, my brothers, we will not; we know better. Don't we know that the women of all ages have had this

taste, and have thereby added much grace and beauty to the world and its many-millioned homes. Did you ever notice the difference between the houses in which there are no women fond of fancy work and those in which there are one or two? What a difference there is! The latter homes are full of grace and beauty, in little things that escape your eye in detail perhaps, but are full of effect in the general appearance of things. While the men are away at work in field or at desk, on the road or in the forest, in any of the many forms of labour, high and low, there are dainty, or skilful if not dainty, fingers working away at some little piece of beauty that is unappreciable by itself, but becomes important when put in the place for which it was intended, and thus the home becomes beautified little by little.

Do you remember Mr. Tennyson's poem of the Day Dream? He says:—

And would you have the dream I had,
And see the vision that I saw;
Then take the broidery frame and add
A crimson to the quaint macaw,
And I will tell it, turn your face,
Nor gaze with that too-earnest eye,
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,
And ordered words asunder fly.

There is another use for it, you see. What an amount of quiet flirting may be done under cover of the broidery frame. How many love tales have been forced out by sweet eyes glancing from behind those frames! How many bores have been quietly endured as the stitches were counted in the canvas, or the colours matched for the frame! I forbear the pursuit. Have I not said enough to prove that fancy work is valuable. All the same, however, for reasons not necessary here to be stated, I decline to think it is wise to give twenty dollars for a smoking cap at a bazaar! Bazaars! Ha, that will be the subject of my next chat with you, my dear.

ARTHUR PENDENNIS.

PARLIAMENTARY NOTES.

MONDAY, March 25.—The argument adjourned from Friday respecting the petition against the return of Mr. Wilkes for Centre Toronto was resumed, the Speaker finally giving it as his opinion that the petition should be received. The House then divided, the result being in favour of throwing out the petition. The vote stood 72 to 70. In reply to a question Sir John stated that the Government had decided not to establish a system of free postal delivery in towns and cities owing to the great additional expense that would be necessitated by taking such a step. Mr. Bodwell moved to send to a Special Committee the petitions for a prohibitory liquor law, and was followed by several members on different sides of the question. A formal step towards Supply having been taken the House adjourned until Wednesday, Tuesday being the Feast of the Annunciation.

During the early part of Wednesday's session Mr. Mitchell stated in reply to a question by Mr. Wilkes that steps had been taken to effect an arrangement with the United States Government for the interchange of weather reports, and that it was intended to ask a larger appropriation than had hitherto been voted for the establishment of signals on the coast. Mr. Pope stated that no Canadian commissioner would be sent to the Vienna Exhibition, the country being represented by the Imperial Commissioner. Mr. Langevin informed the House that the Government had decided to change the gauge of the Intercolonial Railroad to the width recently adopted by the Grand Trunk, viz., 4 ft 8½ in. In connection with the Grand Trunk Sir John A. Macdonald drew attention to the statement made by the London correspondent of the *Globe* to the effect that Mr. Potter had asserted that during his visit in Canada he had been importuned by the Premier and Sir Francis Hincks to use his influence to assist the Government at the elections, and had refused. Sir John denied that he had ever been in communication with Mr. Potter on the subject, and further read a telegram he had received from Mr. Potter, in which that gentleman states there is not a word of truth in the story, and authorizes the Premier to contradict it publicly. In reply to a question respecting extradition Sir John stated that communications were going on with the United States Government for the purpose of enlarging the provisions of the Treaty. The Muskoka Election case was then taken up, and the Returning Officer having been called to the bar was examined by the Speaker.

On Thursday the House sat for some time with closed doors and then continued the examination of the Returning Officer in the Muskoka Election case. Mr. Dorion offered a resolution to the effect that the Returning Officer had acted illegally in not returning Mr. Cockburn; but he did not desire to have him either punished or reprimanded, because he acted upon legal advice when he made a special return of the election. The matter was, however, allowed to stand over. Sir Francis Hincks, who had been absent the day before when Sir John made his denial of the statement of the *Globe's* London correspondent, made a similar contradiction. On Mr. Mill's motion for the second reading of the bill abolishing dual representation three amendments were made throwing out the bill, all of which were lost, and the motion carried on division.

A good deal of business was transacted on Friday. Mr. Tupper introduced an important measure for the regulation of weights and measures throughout the country. The assimilation he proposed was to the English standard. The bill was read a first time and referred to committee. A debate followed on Mr. Tupper's motion for the House to go into committee on the resolution to ratify the agreement made between the Government and the Allans for the conveyance of the mails. Mr. Mitchell's bill respecting the appointment of harbour-masters in the Maritime Provinces was read a first time. The Muskoka Election case was then taken up, Mr. Dorion withdrawing his resolution, and offering in its stead two motions, both of which were carried, the first declaring that the Returning Officer had acted illegally, but discharging him inasmuch as he had acted under legal advice; the second condemning the practice of obtaining legal advice by a Returning Officer through the intervention of one candidate. Mr. Bell, the Returning Officer, was called to the bar of the House and discharged from further attendance.

A Cambridge magazine has made its appearance in London. It is called *The Cantab*, and contains scientific articles, popular essays on topics of the day, fact and fiction, accounts and notices of Cambridge life and customs, boat races, &c.