

# An Hour with the Editor

## MAKING THE BEST OF IT

It is a fallacy to say that all men are born free and equal, because every person is to a certain extent bound by the environment of his birth, and scarcely any two individuals are equally well born. A healthy and honorable, right-living man marries a healthy and honorable, right-living girl. The man is called upon to put forward his best powers of mind or body, as the case may be, to make a living; the girl devotes the best qualities of her physical and mental nature to the perfecting of the home. Their children, unless by some trick of atavism they are made resemble some ancestor, who was physically, mentally or morally weak, ought to be well born; but this ideal is not reached in anything like the majority of cases, and even when it is, the handicap of environment may prevent the perfect development of the child. Hence as none of us, practically speaking, grows up in the enjoyment of the best there is, it seems to be our duty to make the best of what we have. How many of us do this? Take the case of the boy at school who learns his lessons more quickly than other boys. If he could be taught to make the best of this faculty, he might accomplish almost anything; but the chances are that he will stay just a little ahead of the plodders, going through school and college easier than they, but coming out knowing no more. Possibly he may not know so much, for it is true that what is easily learned is often easily forgotten. How many boys, who are clever at school, learn how to make the best use of their cleverness? What can we do for the lad who is so easily first in his class that he does not have to study? Every man of mature years knows that success in after life did not always follow the boys who were the most brilliant in school.

It is much easier to advise a dull boy how to make the best of his ability. We tell him to persevere, and perseverance is the stepping-stone to almost everything that is worth while. We tell him that his slowness of comprehension will have a tendency to make him more thorough, that the difficulty he has in acquiring will teach him the value of what he has and make him strive to retain it. The brilliant lad reaches results in a single dash; the other only by "painful steps and slow"; but when he gains ground he usually is able to hold it. Thus it often comes about that the lad, who is naturally quick at his lessons, falls behind slower boys in the race of life, because they make the best of what they have, while he does not make the best of what he has.

What is true in this respect of mental activity is true also of physical activity. Many men are old at fifty; but at fifty a man ought to be at his best mentally and physically. Those who make the best of their physical natures are at their best then. How many young men do you know who have satiated themselves with life before they are forty? Sometimes such young fellows will boast that they have "lived," when all that they have done is to run the gamut of vices. This is not living; it is dying, dying a lingering death, and there can be nothing much worse than to find as the years creep over us all capacity for rational pleasure becoming exhausted, to become physically soggy from having killed all the vitality in the yeast of life. We may not be quite sure who wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes, although it purports to have been written by Solomon, but it is certainly the production of a very wise man, who set down therein the results of his observations and experiences. It closes with these words: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Try to appreciate what is meant by this. It is not a prophecy of something to come, of a day of judgment, when we shall all be called upon to give an account of deeds done on this earth, and receive reward or punishment, as the case may be. It does not mean this at all. It is a statement of a law of Nature, which is as inescapable as the law of gravity. Our acts are brought into judgment because we can never wholly escape the consequences of them; even though we repent of them with the deepest sorrow. Perhaps the soreness may pass away, but the scar will remain. There is no ranker folly than to say that a young man must sow his wild oats. Come, young man, who comfort yourself with this delusion, what would you think if you met your sister or your sweetheart somewhere sowing her wild oats as you are sowing them? Would you be apt to ask the latter to be your wife and the mother of your children? You would require no argument to convince you that she was not making the best of her life. By what process of reasoning, then, are you able to persuade yourself that you are making the best of yours?

Make the best of your privileges as a citizen. Here the great majority of people fall very far short of their duty. Hence it is that in very many cases the administration of those things which promote the welfare of the state or the community fall into the hands of persons unfitted to discharge them or not above using their positions for their personal advantage and the public detriment. In time of war men will strive for the honor of putting forward the best that is in them for their country. In time of peace they are content to let others discharge public duties. It seems easier to die than to live for one's country. Many a man would charge against a battery of artillery and yet shrink from running for alderman. In the sphere of national politics we permit partisanship to blind us to what our reason and patriotism would show us to be our duty, if we permitted them to have sway.

In the development of our moral nature, how many of us make the best of things? The reference is not to the doing of wrongful acts,

but to the cultivation of high ideals, of charitable opinions, of kindly thoughts. A man may keep himself free from conspicuous actual wrongdoing, and yet the better part of his nature, the part that is lasting in this life and will endure if there is a future life, may be dwarfed, twisted and roughened. We may do a mean act today and may atone for it or forget it tomorrow; but that which we call our character or our disposition remains with us and we keep on adding to it as the years pass. Here, then, is something of which we should ever strive to make the best, so that when the evening of life comes, and physical weakness forbids the achievements and enjoyments of youth and manhood, and our thoughts must be our chief source of pleasure, we may be able to gather rich bouquets from the garden of memory and breathe the fragrance of vanished years.

## SCOTTISH HISTORY

Very little is known with certainty of Sir William Wallace. There is no doubt about the main facts of his career, but of his personality and the details of his life everything is uncertain. There are two Wallaces, the Wallace of the English chroniclers and the Wallace of the Scottish traditions. It is difficult to say which of them is nearer the real man. Naturally the affections of his fellow-countrymen surrounded his memory with a sort of halo, and equally naturally the people, who found him so redoubtable a foe, were inclined to attribute to him qualities far from heroic. To the one he was all that could be desired in chivalry; to the other he was a monster of cruelty. The truth probably lies between the two extremes. That he was a patriot none will venture to deny; that he loved freedom all the known facts show; that he was a splendid soldier his victories testify; but that he was not free from the vices of his times is quite probable. War is not a parlor game today; and it certainly was everything else in the days when the first Edward was king of England.

The exact date of the birth of Wallace is not known, but it was about the year 1274. His father is said to have been a Scottish knight. Tradition has endowed him with extraordinary physical qualities, gigantic stature and enormous strength being among them; but there are no historical reasons for believing that in these respects he was greatly different from his contemporaries. When young he was outlawed for having killed an Englishman in a casual fray, and he assembled a band of kindred spirits, who at the first seemed to have no other purpose than to be a law unto themselves. They soon began to make attacks upon the English, and being joined by Sir William Douglas and his followers, they at length became so formidable that King Edward sent an army against them. By this force the adherents of Wallace were temporarily dispersed, but they soon rallied, and at the battle of Stirling he completely routed the English forces, and made himself master of Scotland. He then invaded England, and the ravages of his soldiers were such that, to quote Sir Walter Scott, "they left nothing behind them but blood and ashes." On his return to Scotland he was proclaimed Guardian of the Kingdom. His position was weakened by the failure of many of the nobility to come to his support; nevertheless he was able to entroll a formidable army and prepare for the attack, which he knew King Edward would make as soon as the wars on the Continent would leave his hands free to advance upon Scotland. The attack soon came, and Edward, at the head of the finest army that ever entered Scotland advanced against Wallace. That leader adopted tactics that had been successfully employed on other occasions. He laid waste the country and retired into the centre of the kingdom; but Edward was not made of the stuff that is easily turned from his purpose, and amid perils that would have daunted a less determined man, he advanced as far as Kirkcaldy, in West Lothian. Here he halted, and was seriously debating whether he should advance or retire, when he learned that Wallace was at Falkirk. Edward resolved upon forcing a battle, and advancing rapidly he came up with the Scottish forces on July 22, 1298. The battle that ensued was splendidly contested, and though victory rested with the English, Edward was unable to follow up his success. The most important result was the resignation by Wallace of his office of Guardian. The Bishop of St. Andrew's, Bruce and Comyn were appointed in his stead, and they administered the affairs of the kingdom in the name of Balliol, who was at that time a prisoner in the hands of Edward. The Pope now appeared upon the scene, and personally indeed, but by the issuance of a Bull, in which he claimed Scotland as a dependency of Rome, and ordered Edward to submit his claims to him for adjudication. This Bull was laid before the English Parliament, and it was met with the famous reply, "that in temporalis the King of England is independent of Rome." This declaration closed with these remarkable words: "We neither do, will nor can permit our sovereign to do anything to the detriment of the constitution, which we are both sworn to and are determined to maintain."

Edward renewed the invasion of Scotland in 1301. The Scottish forces were led by Sir John Comyn and Sir Simon Fraser, and the English troops were severely defeated. Edward then took the field in person, and he was not long in subduing all opposition. A general amnesty was granted to the Scottish leaders, although some of them were fined and some were banished. Wallace was expressly exempted from the terms of the agreement reached between Edward and the Guardians.

He was offered the opportunity of surrendering himself unconditionally. This he declined to do, and his friends endeavored to negotiate terms with Edward. They were unsuccessful, and a price was put upon Wallace's head. The great hero retreated to the forest, where he was captured by Sir William Monteith, whom Sir Walter Scott describes as "his unworthy and apostate countryman." He was taken to London and tried for high treason. He denied the charge of treason, and indeed he could not properly be charged with it, for he had never acknowledged Edward as king. He was condemned and beheaded in 1305, his quarters being distributed throughout the kingdom. This done, Edward thought he had forever united Scotland to the English Crown, a belief doomed to speedy disappointment.

## THE EARTH

The Mississippi is hardly to be regarded as a river. It is a great system of drainage channels lying wholly within the United States and taking place to the sea the precipitation of nearly all the great region lying between the Appalachian and Rocky mountain ranges. At some remote period in geological time the sea extended from the present shore line of the Gulf of Mexico up as far as Girardeau, in Missouri, a distance of 1,100 miles. This long and somewhat narrow arm of the sea received the combined waters of what are now the Mississippi and Missouri from the north, the Ohio and minor streams from the east, the Arkansas, the Red and minor streams from the west. These rivers, carrying down silt from the mountains and lower lands, gradually drove back the sea, repeating on a vast scale what has taken place in many other parts of the world, so that at last all that was left of the long salt water way was the channel which the rivers kept open, and which today shifts its course often with destructive suddenness. In the lower Mississippi valley we see exactly what takes place along every roadside after a heavy rain, where the water runs off in crooked channels through the accumulated mud.

The name Mississippi is applied to the river, which flows in a general north and south direction. It is 3,150 miles long; but if length of course were the determining factor, the Missouri would be considered the main stream, and if the volume of water carried were considered, the premier place would have to be given to the Ohio. The Gulf of Mexico, from the source of the Ohio to the sea the distance is 2,383 miles. From the source of the Mississippi to its junction with the Ohio is 1,300 miles long; the upper Mississippi, which is the river above the junction with the Missouri, is 1,330 miles long. The Arkansas is 1,514 miles long, and the Red river 1,200 miles. (This latter must be distinguished from Lake Winnipeg.) From the head of navigation on the Missouri a steamer can sail down that river, then down the Mississippi, and then up the Ohio to the head of navigation of its tributary, the Allegheny, in New York, a distance of 4,000 miles. In all there are estimated to be 100,000 streams, large and small, in the Mississippi river system, and the total length of navigable water is placed at 15,700 miles. A striking feature of this great system is the absence of lakes of any importance. In the whole Mississippi drainage area, which contains more than 1,250,000 square miles, there is scarcely a lake large enough to be shown on the state maps of an ordinary atlas.

In the course of its source the Mississippi proper falls a distance of 1,535 feet. The springs in which the river rises are about 100 miles south of the Canadian Boundary. Line and within a short distance of the sources of tributaries of the Rainy river, flowing into Lake Superior. The Minnesota, a branch of the Mississippi, river within a very few miles of the source of the Red river, the waters of which find their way into Hudson Bay. The source of the Ohio is near the Delaware; that of the Missouri is near that of the tributaries of the Pend d'Oreille, which, as a tributary of the Columbia, sends its waters into the Pacific Ocean. Thus it will be seen that the water precipitated in central New York from a summer raincloud may find its way into the Atlantic or into the Gulf of Mexico; that from a similar cloud in Minnesota may reach the Gulf or Hudson Bay; and that from a cloud in Montana may flow either into the Gulf of the Pacific Ocean.

The other rivers flowing into the Gulf of Mexico from the north belong structurally to the Mississippi system, but have made their own courses to the sea instead of joining the greater stream. There is one very notable exception to this rule, namely, the Rio Grande, river is nearly two thousand miles long, and it has no connection structurally with the Mississippi system. It has its source in the mountains of southwestern Colorado, and forms the boundary between the United States and Mexico for much of its course.

Eddie Foy has a youngster who is at what the women call the "cute" age. The other day his mother looked all over for a comb, and finally discovered it in a basin of water. "Now," she said to Foy, junior, "what do you suppose that comb was doing in that water?"

Foy, junior, ignored the suspicion. "It 'us probly washin' its teeth," he replied—New York Telegraph.

## Some Famous Dramatists and their Master Pieces

(N. de Bertrand Lugin)

### JOHANN CHRISTOPH FREIDRICH SCHILLER

The pictures we have of this great poet show a beautiful face, full of lofty enthusiasm, and in his eyes a divine fire that bespeaks the truth of his ideals, though his life was by no means an easy one, for he experienced severe bodily suffering, the pangs of poverty and died from a grievous malady while he was still a young man.

He was born in 1759 at Marbach, a small town of Wurttemberg, and his parents, though worthy people enough were in no way distinguished, his father being a barber by trade. While still a young man, however, he entered the army and later rose to the rank of major. His mother was the daughter of an innkeeper, a comely, intelligent woman, deeply religious by nature. Johann was one of two children and the only son.

It was the earnest desire of his parents that he should enter the ministry when he became old enough, so it was with this end in view that his education was begun. The school which Schiller entered at the age of 14 was well known for the severity of its discipline, and the rigid regime was not conducive to the development of any latent genius its pupils might possess. Promiscuous reading was especially under the ban, and the youthful Schiller in order to gratify his love for poetry, and romances, felt justified in feigning illness many times in order to be granted the privacy of his own room where he might enjoy his clandestine pleasures which were surely not censurable ones. It was while at this school that he became familiar with the great poets of his own country, and also with Shakespeare through a rather imperfect translation. But his first contribution to the world of letters, "The Robbers," was not to appear until he had been some years out in the world, though he had written it while at school.

In the meantime he found it a difficult enough matter to earn a scanty livelihood, and often knew what it was to go without his dinner. Time and again he lost heart, and wept over the unkindness of fate, but an impelling genius prodded him into renewed activity, and imbued him with fresh hope. At odd moments he was at work remodelling his play. Night after night he sat in his cheerless garret room and by the dim light of his tallow candle read his manuscript with eyes that burned with his own eloquence, or coldly critical, corrected and rewrote until he felt that his work was as perfect as he could make it. Then torn between hope and fear he sent it to a publisher. It was returned to him. Again and again he tried publishing houses, with no better success, and finally convinced of the merit of his work, he succeeded in borrowing sufficient money to have the play printed.

And "The Robbers" met with an enthusiastic reception. It was translated into several languages, and brought the young writer a certain measure of fame at once, and also incurred the severe displeasure of the Duke of Wurttemberg, who had Schiller arrested and sent for two weeks to prison, on account of the sentiment voiced in the play, which showed only too plainly the young author's "hatred of the galling personal restraints and daily vexations he had suffered," through the unhappy social conditions then prevailing. Furthermore Schiller was forbidden by the Duke "henceforth and forever to compose comedies or anything of that sort."

So Schiller went to Bauerbach, hid himself, for a time, adopted the name of Doctor Ritter and continued to write with the greatest fervor. He produced several plays, all of them superior in artistic finish to his first work and showing a clearer and wiser judgment. "Cabal and Love" was a decided success. It is "a bold exposure of the selfish greed, corruption and cruelty of contemporary court life in Germany; and puts the Hessian landgrave (who sold his subjects to England as soldiers to fight against American independence, to get money to squander on his mistresses) in the pillory forever." The mass of the people frantically welcomed this daring bit of work which so strongly voiced their own sentiments.

It was shortly after the performance of this play that Schiller began the earnest study of history and philosophy, feeling himself deficient in these branches of learning. With the historical works which he produced we will not concern ourselves, except with those plays founded upon historical facts, which have brought to him so large a treasure of well-deserved fame. Wallenstein figures as the hero of three plays. In 1800 appeared "Marie Stuart," followed by the "Maid of Orleans," "The Bride of Messina," and "William Tell," the last veritable masterpiece of dramatic continuity, creative power, wonderful character study and marked contrasts of social conditions.

Schiller with all the ardour of his poetic temperament knew what it was to fall in love several times. He experienced transports of joy and sorrow, hope and despair, and finally in 1790 he married Charlotte von Lengefeld,

and by her had four children, two sons and two daughters.

In 1799 he settled permanently at Weimar, and two years later was raised to the nobility. Previous to this he had been made an honorary citizen of the French Republic, a distinction which he valued very highly. For all his popularity Schiller received very little pecuniary benefit and was obliged many times to accept aid from his friends, among whom during the last ten years of his life was the greater poet Goethe.

Schiller died in his 46th year from pulmonary trouble. His wife survived him 21 years.

Extract from "Wallenstein's Death."

Wallenstein—  
Soft cradled thee thy fortune will today;  
Thy duties thou could'st exercise in sport.  
Indulge all lovely instincts, act forever  
With undivided heart. It can remain  
No longer thus. Like enemies the roads  
Start from each other, duties strive with duties.  
Thou must needs choose thy party in the war  
Which is now kindling twixt thy friend and  
Him who is thy Emperor.

Max—  
War, is that the name?  
War is as frightful as Heaven's pestilence;  
Yet it is good, is it Heaven's will as that is.  
Is that a good war which against the Emperor  
Thou wastest with the Emperor's own army?  
O God of Heaven what a change is this.  
Beseech me to offer such persuasion  
To thee, who like the fixed star of the Pole,  
Wert all I gazed at on life's trackless ocean?  
O what a rent thou makest in my heart.  
The ingrained instinct of old reverence,  
The holy habit of obedience—  
Must I pluck life asunder from thy name?  
Nay, do not turn thy countenance upon me.  
It always was a god looking upon me.  
Duke Wallenstein its power is not departed;  
The senses still are in thy bonds; although  
Bleeding the soul hath freed itself.

### RUTH

By Thomas Hood.  
(1798-1845.)

She stood breast-high amid the corn,  
Clasped by the golden light of morn.  
Like the sweetheart of the sun,  
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,  
Deeply ripened; such a blush  
In the midst of brown was born,  
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,  
Which were blackest none could tell;  
But long lashes veiled a light  
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat with shady brim,  
Made her tressy forehead dim;  
Thus she stood amid the stooks,  
Praising God with sweetest looks.

Sure, I said, heaven did not mean  
Where I reap though shouldst but glean;  
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,  
Share my harvest and my home.

### "WHEN THE SWALLOWS"

When the swallows homeward fly,  
When the roses scattered lie,  
When from neither hill nor dell  
Chants the silvery nightingale;  
In these words my bleeding heart  
Would to thee its grief impart  
When I thus my image lose,  
Can I, ah, can I e'er know repose.

When the white swan southward roves,  
To seek at noon the orange groves,  
When the red tints of the west  
Prove the sun is gone to rest;  
In these words my bleeding heart  
Would to thee its grief impart;  
When I thus my image lose,  
Can I, ah, can I e'er know repose.

Hush, my heart, why thus complain,  
Thou must, too, thy woes contain;  
Though on earth no more we rose  
Loudly breathing vows of love,  
Though my heart must find relief  
Yielding to these words belief,  
I shall see thy form again,  
Though today we part in pain.

—Old Song.

### IMPERIAL MOTHER

Imperial Mother, from whose breasts  
We drank as babes the pride whereby  
We question ev'n thine own behests,  
And judge thee with no flinching eye—

Of slow to hear when thou dost call,  
Of vex with a divided will,  
When once a rival seeks thy fall,  
We are thy sons and daughters still.

The love that halts, the faith that veers,  
Are then deep-sunk as in the Sea;  
The Sea where thou must brook no peers,  
And halve with none thy sovereignty.  
—William Watson in London Times.

The rice production of Japan exceeds in quantity 260,000,000 bushels a year; tea nearly 60,000,000 a year, and silk more than 25,000,000 pounds a year.

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