

# SCOTLAND'S OWN BURNS; POET'S 147TH ANNIVERSARY THIS WEEK

The National Bard, His Life and Work—Sweet Singer Whose Memory is Dear to All His Countrymen—The Sad Story of Burns and His Highland Mary.

(By Arthur L. Dyar.)

On the twenty-fifth of this month the English speaking world will commemorate the 147th anniversary of the birth of the world's greatest lyric-poet, Robert Burns, Scotland's immortal bard. It is very gratifying indeed to the innumerable admirers of the great genius, that years have had but that glorious effect of increasing our admiration for him; his prophetic words to his "winnowing wife," while on his death bed, "I'll be more respected a hundred years after I am dead than I am at present," have been realized years ago, and even to this day, the tendency is that his fame and influence will continue to grow, with increasing vigor, to all parts of the world wherever the English language predominates and where his native land is remembered by the restless waters of the mighty Atlantic.

"Time but the impression deeper makes as streams their channels deeper wear." Before entering upon the subject, however, it may be well that I should premise some remarks by way of explanation. Owing to the numerous efforts made by the several branches of the St. Andrew's Society, throughout this province, to collect funds, by public subscription, for the express purpose of erecting a monument in the old city of Fredericton as a tribute to the memory of the great poet, an epitaphic biography of the poet, while but a very insignificant tribute to the anniversary of his birth, may nevertheless be of some advantage to the society, and of considerable interest to numerous readers.

**Burns at Home.**

In this short article I shall not, therefore, treat of his relation to other poets, nor his rank in the literary world; but I shall attempt to picture him among the magnificent banks and breezes of his native country, in his "auld day bairn"; by "Alloway's auld haunted Kirk"; at the glade or "Adown winding Nith"; where "Along the cool sequester'd vale of life, He kept the noisless tenor of his way."

Robert Burns was born on the 25th of January, 1733, in a small day cottage at Alloway, a small village near the town of Ayr.

"Auld Ayr whom ne'er a town surpasses For honest men and bonnie lasses."

His father, William Burns, was a gardener and farm overseer and was always stricken by poverty. His mother, formerly Agnes Brown, was a woman of fine character and a sunny disposition. She shared her husband's misfortunes, and bore the trials of poverty with a cheerful submission which inspired the poor careworn father with congenial hope. She was his guide, his rock of ages here below, and as some tenderly she "would herself into the ragged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting his drooping head and binding up his broken heart." The unbounded sympathy and encouragement had the desired effect of bringing out the finer qualities of her husband, who, even in the chains of poverty, strove to attain to the highest of earth; and who that has read and thoroughly understood that most beautiful poem, "The Cotter's Saturday Night," will find that picture of the happy fireside:

"His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,  
His clean hearthstone, his thriftie wife's  
smile,  
The lying infant, prattling on his knee,  
Does a' his weary cares beguile,  
And makes him quite forget his labor and  
his toil."

"The cheerful supper dune, wi' serious  
face,  
They round the ingle form a circle wide;  
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace,  
The big bon Bible, once his father's pride."

And still more beautiful that exquisite picture of faith and hope in that little cottage home among the beautiful hills of Scotland, beneath the heavenly rays of the silent moon, when the father and mother gather their little flock about them in prayer:

"Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,  
The saint, the father, and the husband  
prayer:  
That thus they all shall meet in future  
days;  
There ever last in uncreated years,  
No more to sin, no more to sorrow;  
Together hymning their Creator's praise,  
In such society, yet still more dear,  
While circling Time moves round in an  
eternal sphere."

Compared with this, how poor Religion's  
prize,  
In all the pomp of method and of art,  
When men display to congregations wide  
Devotion's every grace except the heart!  
The Power, increased, the peasant will desert.

The pompous strain, the sacred staid;  
But haply in some cottage far apart,  
My hear, well pleased, the language of  
the soul;  
And in His Book of life the inmates poor  
enroll."

This was the nature of the home which gave birth to the great genius who sounded the depths of the human heart; whose unbounded sympathy, genuine manliness and noble character rent the dark cloud of the humble peasant, and taught the world to look upon the lowly clay-built cot as the seat of human happiness.

"To make a happy fireside clime  
To weans and wife  
That's the true path and sublime  
of human life."

His faith in the marvellous influence of the "fireside clime" was practically unlimited. The "pomp of method and of art" and endless repetition error no other purpose than to gratify the mechanical churchman. Sectarianism, now fostered by all sects as a means of maintaining their individual existence, is but the outcome of a division not on a question of any real importance, not on the ultimate reality of the Divinity, but on the trans-



BURNS' MONUMENT  
Proposed Memorial to Be Erected by New Brunswickers.

ient question as to the means whereby that Divinity shall be worshipped.

**His First Poem.**

At the early age of fifteen the ingenious plowboy composed his first poem, "Hand-some Nell."

"O once I loved a bonnie lass  
Ah and I love her still,  
And whilst that virtue warms my breast,  
I love my handsome Nell."

"Tis this in Nellie pleases me,  
That she enchants my soul;  
For absolutely in love,  
She reigns without control."

This, which might be regarded as a turning point in the life of Burns, cannot be described in neater phrases than his own:

"She was a bonnie, sweet, sonnie lass,  
Tis she enchants my soul;  
In short, she altogether, unincapable  
to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion which, in spite of arid disappointment, ginsore prudence, and bookworm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; but I do not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind her when returning from our labors; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an aeolian harp, and especially why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettlestings and thistles."

At seventeen he went to Kilmarnock to learn mensuration and surveying, but he was soon overtaken by the charms of another young lady. He returned to Ayr and soon after wrote that charming song, "Westlin' Winds and Slaughterin' Guns Bring Autumn's Pleasant Weather."

The small farm at Ayr proved a failure. The family then moved to Lochlea, which was the scene of poverty and distress for seven years. Robert, however, who was a great reader, made excellent progress along intellectual lines. He sat at table with a spoon in one hand and a book in the other, and in this way he read and digested the English authors from Shakespeare to Gray. During this period he wrote some of his finest poems, among others the "Death and Dying Words of Poor Maillie," his pet lamb. Poor Maillie's dying words close with these excellent lines of advice to her two lambs:

"And now my lambs ye my last breath,  
I leave my blessing wi' you bairns;  
And when you think upon your mother,  
Mind to be kind to ane another."

Concerning these last two lines Andrew Carnegie wrote, by way of comment: "An sermon in two lines for every family in the world. If there be brothers and sisters at variance anywhere, who can withstand these lines and remain apart, heaven help them!"

**His Father's Death.**

On Feb. 13, 1781, when Robert was in his twenty-fifth year, his father died, leaving his affairs in utter ruin. The family took up a small farm at Mossy, but fared very poorly. Robert, however, had by this time won considerable reputation as a poet and in this and the following year he composed his finest poems, viz., "Cotter's Saturday Night," "Man Was Made to Mourn," "Address to the Deil," "Jolly Beggar," "Holy Willie's Prayer," "Scotch Drink," and "Lines to a Mountain Daisy."

The beautiful lines to a Mouse, on turning her up in her nest with his plough in November, 1783, are among the finest in the language:

"Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,  
Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!  
Thou needs start awa' ere I catch thee—  
Woe! bickering traitor!"

I was heath to rin and chase thee,  
Wi' bickering brattle!

"But, Mouse, thou art no thy lane,  
In proving foresight may be vain;

The best-laid schemes o' mice and men  
Gang aft agley,  
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain,  
For promised joy."

Again those characteristic lines to a Mountain Daisy, on turning one down with his plough in April, 1786:

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipp'd flower,  
Thou'rt met in an evil hour;  
For I maun crush amang the stoure  
Thy slender stem."

To spare thee now is past my power,  
Thou bonnie gem.

"E'en thou who mou'rt the Daisy's fate,  
That fate is thine—no distant date;  
Stern Rains's ploughshare drives, elate,  
Full on thy bloom."

Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight  
Thy life is o'er!

**Highland Mary.**

About this time occurred the romantic love affair with Highland Mary (Mary Campbell), undoubtedly the saddest incident in his whole life, from the effects of which he never recovered. His whole future is clouded and like the piercing ray of the silent moon, breaking through the battling clouds at midnight to guide the mariner over the darkening sea, she appears to him in his darkest hours as a divine messenger to console, comfort and guide him through the trials and perils of life.

"Eternity will not efface  
Those records dear of transports past,"

Mary was a handsome country lassie from Argyshire. Burns had known her for some time, and they met on the banks of the Ayr on Sunday, May 14, to "live one day of parting love." Standing one on either side of the stream, they exchanged Bibles, swearing eternal fidelity. They parted; Mary returned home to prepare for the marriage, while Burns, in October of the same year, soon before the marriage was to take place, Highland Mary died. This was a death blow to Burns. How beautiful these lines in "Afton Water" composed in commemoration of her:

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy  
green braes,  
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy  
praise;  
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,  
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her  
dream."

On the evening of the third anniversary of her death, Oct. 29, 1789, a year after he married Jean Armour, Burns wandered alone along the banks of the Nith, apparently very sad. Towards morning, his wife found him lying on a pile of straw on the sheltered side of a corn stack, gazing into a beautiful planet. She persuaded him to come in the cottage, when he immediately sat down and wrote that exquisite lyric, "To Mary in Heaven," admittedly the finest and most pathetic he ever wrote:

"Thou lingering star, with lessening ray,  
That lo'v'st to greet the early morn,  
Again thou usher'st in the day,  
My Mary from my bosom was torn."

"That sacred hour can I forget,  
Can I forget the hallowed grove,  
Where by the winding Ayr we met  
To live one day of parting love?  
Eternity will not efface  
Those records dear of transports past,  
Thy image at our last embrace—  
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last."

"Oft o'er these scenes my memory wakes  
And fondly broods with miser care;  
Time but th' impression deeper makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear."

The success of his first volume of poems published in 1786, the occasion of his intended departure for Jamaica, was immediate, and on receiving encouragement from Dr. Blacklock to try a second edi-

tion, he abandoned the idea of going to Jamaica and set out for Edinburgh. Here he was welcomed by all classes. The following year, at once established his fame. He was the "lion of the hour." Elated with his success, he set out with his young friend, Robert Ainslie, on a tour through the Lowlands. Crossing the Tweed, he knelt on the English side and recited his prayer for Scotland, as contained in the last stanza of the "Cotter's Saturday Night":

"O Scotia! my dear, my native soil,  
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent;  
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil  
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!  
And oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent  
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!  
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be sent,  
Blest amidst the plow and the harrow shall they dwell."

A virtuous populace may rise the while,  
And stand a wall of fire around their  
much-loved Isle."

"Oh! Thou! who poured the patriotic tide,  
That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,  
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,  
No nobly die, the second glorious part,  
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,  
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)"

Oh never, never, Scotia's realm desert;  
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,  
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard."

**At Bannockburn.**

He also visited Bannockburn, the scene of Bruce's glorious victory, during a mighty thunder storm:

"Loud, deep and long the thunders bel-  
lowed,  
The great, the wealthy fear the blow,  
From pomp and pleasures torn;  
But oh! a blessed relief to those,  
That weary laden mourn."

On this grand, old battlefield illuminated by its violent grandeur of nature the poet enveloped by patriotism and love of nature, composed that soul-stirring masterpiece, "Bruce's address to his army at Bannockburn":

Scots, who hae wi' Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has after led,  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to glorious victory!"

Lay the proud usurper low!  
Tyrants fall in every foe!  
Liberty in every blow!  
Forward! let us all be die!"

In the autumn of 1790, he composed his crowning glory, which has immortalized the "Auld Town o' Ayr." The old inn, "Alloway's auld haunted Kirk," and the "Brig o' Don," will stand for centuries as emblems of national pride and veneration. Burns understood his countrymen thoroughly, and he never wrote lines concerning an individual, which express the fear-fulness of his countrymen as neatly as those in "Tam O'Shanter."

"Wi' tippeny, we fear nae evil;  
Wi' usquebae we'll face the devil."  
In November, 1791, he again visited Edinburgh, and bade a long, last farewell to "Clarinda," whose acquaintance he made there his first visit. Soon after his return he wrote "Ae Fond Kiss," which Sir Walter Scott said was worth a thousand romances.

"Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;  
Ae farewell, and then we'll pledge  
Dew to heart-strings; and I'll pledge thee,  
Warning night, and glooms I'll wage thee."

I'll n'er blame my airtial fancy,  
Nothing could resist my Nancy;  
But to see her was to love her;  
Love but her, and love forever.

Had we never loved each kindly,  
Had we never loved each blindly,  
Never met, or never parted,  
We had never been broken hearted."

About this time he composed that grand old song, "Auld Lang Syne," which has been the favorite of mankind and welded the fragments of mankind into one birth, and will continue to do so forever.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to min'  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days o' lang syne?"

And here's a hand my trusty friend,  
And gie's a hand o' thine;  
And we'll tak a right gude willie-waught,  
For auld lang syne."

And lastly his famous Declaration of Independence, "A Man's a Man for a' That":

"Is there, for honest poverty  
That hangs his head, and a' that;  
The coward slave, we pass him by,  
We dare be poor for a' that!"

For a' that, and a' that;  
Our toils obscure, and a' that;  
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that!"

Then let us pray that come it may—  
As come it will for a' that—  
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,  
May bear the gree, and a' that!"

For a' that, and a' that,  
It's comin' yet, for a' that,  
That man to man, the world o'er,  
Shall brethren be for a' that!"

**Burns' Death.**

The poet's health, which was now failing very rapidly, was made considerably worse by a heavy cold which he caught when returning from the Globe Tavern one night in January. On the fourth of July he went to Brown, on the Solway, to try sea-baths, which proving of little avail, he returned to Dumfries on the eighteenth, weak and feeble, and after four days in delirium, he passed away on the 21st of July, 1796, to where "the hallowed and fire-shed do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his head."

"No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,  
Together hymning their Creator's praise  
In such society yet still more dear;  
While circling Time moves round in an  
eternal sphere."

sically nobler, gentler, and perhaps, greater soul, waiting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet.

"And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with emulgues and vintners, computing excise dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels. In such toils was that impulsive and sorrowful minstrel, and a hundred years may pass on before another such is given us to waste."

Scotland passed and asked in faltering tones: "Could not his modishness have been done to prolong that gifted life beyond thirty-seven?" But her immortal Burns slept in "his dark, shady mansion of sorrow."

**His Funeral.**

Allen Cunningham describes the funeral as follows: "The multitude who accompanied Burns to the grave went step by step with the chief mourners. They might amount to ten or twelve thousand. Not a voice was heard or seen men of all ranks and persuasions and opinions, mingling as brothers and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries, with the remains of him who had sung of their loves and joys and domestic endearments with a truth and tenderness which none perhaps have since equalled."

"I found myself at the brink of the poet's grave, into which he was about to descend forever. There was a pause among the mourners as if death to pass with his remains, and when he was at last lowered and the first shovelful of earth sounded on the coffin-lid, I looked up and saw tears on many cheeks whose tears were not usual."

Well has he written:  
"Oh death the poor man's dearest friend,  
The kindest and the best;  
Blest the hour my aged limbs  
Are laid within thy cold embrace,  
From pomp and pleasures torn;  
But oh! a blessed relief to those,  
That weary laden mourn."

**SOME THOUGHTS OF BURNS AND HIS WORK**

"The world owes much to its poets," and it is good that we should sometimes pause in this bustling age and think of those who have enriched the language with their stirring verses. Your great poet is a chameleon, and he is not content to any age or country, his verses are read with delight by all races and his sentiments find an answer in every human heart.

Among those world poets by common consent: Robert Burns, the Argyshire ploughman, occupies no mean place. The bloom of national pride and veneration Burns understood his countrymen thoroughly, and he never wrote lines concerning an individual, which express the fear-fulness of his countrymen as neatly as those in "Tam O'Shanter."

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**IF WOMEN ONLY KNEW**

Thousands of women suffer untold miseries every day with aching backs that really have no access to a woman's back wasn't made to ache. Under ordinary conditions it ought to be aching and ready to help her bear the burden of life.

It is hard to housework with an aching back. Hours of misery and leisure or work. If you only knew the cause, you would be able to get rid of it. Backache is simply the cry for help.

But it is not so simple. If more women were to know the cause of their backache, they would be able to get rid of it. Backache is simply the cry for help.

**DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS**

will help you. They're helping sick, over-worked kidneys—all over the world—making them strong, healthy and vigorous. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perch on his rock amid the melancholy main, presented to the reflecting mind such a spectacle of pity and fear as did this in-

ideas of his time nor perhaps with his circumstances. Burns' nature was a deeply religious one but his innate sense of freedom made him revolt against the narrow academic interpretations of his day. How bitterly he resented the narrowness and bigotry of the church courts any student of his works well knows. It is little short of marvellous to see the man battling against patronage and the varied forms of serfdom which are calculated to dwarf and deform a man's moral nature and which were so common in the age in which he lived as to excite no comment.

There is ever a lover of nature and this characteristic reached a glorious development in Burns. All forms of life were dear to him. The daisy which baser men would crush under their heels was a source of inspiration and the mouse scampering in terror from his presence an object of wondering admiration. He loved his "Afton Water" and "Bonnie Doon" with a consuming passion. Of one scene he sang:

"Green be your woods and fair your flowers,  
Your waters never drumble,  
Ye banks and braes and streams around  
The Castle o' Montgomery;  
There summer first unfurled your robe  
And there the longest tarry  
For there took the last farewell  
O' my sweet Highland Mary."

**His Highland Mary.**

The world is immeasurably richer because of the record of Burns' love for Highland Mary. The tender sweet pathos of the phrases used by him in singing of her are among the gems of the language. There is nothing coarse in this love, it is majestic as becomes the stature of the man. And when she died, the lyric in which Burns mourns her loss has perhaps no parallel in the English language.

"Thou lingering star with lessening ray  
That lo'v'st to greet the rising morn,  
Again thou usher'st in the day,  
My Mary from my bosom was torn."

My Mary dear departed shade  
Where is thy place of bi-lateral rest,  
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid  
Heard'st thou the sighs that rend his  
breast?"

Burns has done more than merely sing of the land of his birth. Belonging to the peasant class himself, he has portrayed for us in graphic verse the manners and customs, the superstitions and observances of his time. His "Cotter's Saturday Night" is an exquisite vignette of the family gathering at the close of the week and in the home of the poorer sort of tenant farmer. In conclusion it may be said that he who would understand the character of Burns must himself be a poet. His was a unique figure and a unique life of which the world may well be proud as it has been rendered the sweeter and the clearer for his presence. He was gifted with a playful humor gentle as the touch of the sun on his own mountain daisies and as illuminating, but for all forms of fraud and trickery he had nothing but the most bitter and unsparring sarcasm.

It is fitting that the bust of Robert Burns in Westminster Abbey should be next to that of Shakespeare, whose genius he emulated. On his right and left are the busts of Coleridge, Robert Southey, Thomas Campbell and James Thompson, while not far away are monuments to Garrick, Johnson, Dickens and Scott. The inscription on the bust of Burns is of the shortest:

"1733—Burns—1796."

It is lengthy enough, however, for Burns' memory lives in far more enduring monuments than marble or granite—it is cherished in the hearts of all mankind.

Scotland has had many notable poets. She has contributed her full share to the lyrics of the ages. It would be easy, perhaps, to name poets whose names in beauty and distinction surpass any of Burns' efforts, but it remained for him to create a national poetry for Scotland. The sweetness of his songs is not for one generation, not indeed for one country, but for all.

**BRIG ATALANTA, BOUND FROM ST. JOHN, LOST; CREW SAVED**

(Bangor Commercial, Jan. 19)

The brig Atalanta, a schooner on Seal Island, a total wreck. The brig was bound from St. John, N. B., for New York, with a million and a half of lard.

The Atalanta left Rockland harbor early Wednesday morning. There was a strong breeze blowing and the sea was rough and choppy outside. The brig made her way with difficulty outside of the harbor and when off No Man's Land, near Matinicus, struck on a sunken ledge.

The Atalanta was dismasted so great was the force with which she struck the rock and it was with difficulty that Capt. Corbett and the crew of six men were able to get ashore in boats. The dismasted brig finally drifted ashore on Seal Island, where she now lies.

Part of the cargo of lard will be saved, but the brig is a total loss. The Atalanta was built at Port Jefferson, N. Y., and is 370 gross tons and 320 tons net. She is owned in St. John, N. B., and valued at about \$70,000 and insured.

Capt. Butman of the steamer W. G. Butman sighted the Atalanta in her perilous position and taking a crew of fishermen from Matinicus went to the rescue of the brig. Before Capt. Butman could reach the vessel she had come off the rock and gone ashore on Seal Island.

The master, Capt. W. W. Corbett, remained by the brig in order to ascertain the extent of the vessel's cargo and messages to the owners informing them of the disaster were taken to Rockland by Capt. Butman.

**BLOOMFIELD MAN HURT IN SAWMILL**

A young man with his head bound up and his left arm in a sling attracted some attention in the Union depot yesterday. On enquiries being made it was learned that his name was Alva Williams and his home at Bloomfield. He has been working at Queens Lake, Queens Co. in a saw mill operated by W. J. Collett.

On Wednesday last he was engaged in some sawdust from one of the machines when his coat became entangled in the machinery, throwing him up over the pulleys. His head was quite badly cut and the arm sprained but otherwise he was not badly hurt and considers his escape from more serious injury as very fortunate. He was attended by Dr. Daulton of Hoy's station, and is improving rapidly.

**Sydney Man Found Dead.**

Sydney, C. B., Jan. 20—W. Grant Meyer, of this place, was found dead in a field at Northwest Arm last night, where he had gone yesterday to inspect some quarries of the Dominion Iron & Steel Co. Heart failure was the cause of death. He was sixty-one years of age, and had three children survive him.

## BRAVE SEA CAPTAIN AND THE WOMAN HE RESCUED

New York, Jan. 19.—While the Clyde liner Cherokee lies doomed to destruction in the sands of Brigantine Shoals, off Atlantic City, preparations are being made here to honor the heroism of the disaster who risked life and limb to save fellow men and women. The story of the heroic rescue by the fishing smack men under Captain Casto and of the bravery of the stewardess, Mrs. Alice E. Palmer, each of whom saved several lives, have been heralded from coast to coast as among the bravest deeds in the annals of heroism at sea.

Seldom has a body of men like those under Captain Casto voluntarily braved greater peril for the purpose of rescuing others. Through a trough of raging, swirling green water that threatened to engulf any kind of a craft which ventured to defy it, the little fishing smack com-

manded by Captain Casto was forced to land again until those who had given up hope on the Cherokee were placed safely on the land.

Mrs. Palmer's attitude since her arrival in this city has been one of extreme modesty, and at all times she has been any right to be called a heroine. In fact, she says it is her wish that Captain Casto and his men receive all the praise, as they rescued her life with the others on board.

To those who were among the passengers on the wrecked steamer, however, the stewardess is a most exceptional woman.

**CAPTAIN CASTO.**

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