

He rose, steady now and straight as an arrow, shaking his long grey hair fiercely off his forehead, and glaring with angry eyes at Trevor Gillingham.

"Come, come," he said; "you've had your fun out, boys; you've seen the humiliation of a ruined old man. You've gloated over them any one of you is or ever will be, if you live to be twice as old as Methuselah; and now you may go to your own rooms, and sleep your own silly debauch off at your leisure. I will go, too. I have learned that Edward Plantagenet's spirit isn't wholly dead or as broken as you thought it, and as he thought it, and I'm glad for my own sake Mr. Gillingham, to have learned it. Good-night, and good-bye to you all, young gentlemen. You won't have the chance to mock an old man's shame again, if I can help it. But go on as you've begun—go on as you've begun, my fine fellows, and your end will be ten thousand times worse than what mine is. Why, with a burst of withering indignation, 'when I was your age, you soulless, senseless, tipsy young reprobates, I'd have had too much sense of shame to get any passing amusement out of the pitiable degradation of a man who might fairly have been my grandfather!'

He walked to the door, upright, without flinching, and turned the handle, as sober for the minute as if he hadn't tasted a single glass of sherry.—From *Blood Royal*. By Grant Allen.

PET COONS.

Did you ever bring up a coon, or rather, two coons? If not you have lost no end of fun and saved yourself some trouble. Tip and Zip took kindly to civilization. Instead of sulking they greedily drank the first milk I gave them, and from that moment became my devoted friends. I never had a rival in their affections. Other members of the family who cared for them in my absence they treated in a friendly manner, but for me was reserved their warmest greetings. On the approach of strangers they would scramble up my legs and perch one on each shoulder, chattering in my ears noisy protests at the intruders. Everywhere they followed me like dogs, not forgetting to scold if I walked too fast for them; and if the way was too long it generally ended in my having to carry them home.

They never from the first showed any desire to leave me. Within a few days after finding them I took them into the woods where I was cutting firewood. For hours they played like two kittens, chasing each other among the leaves, along logs, and climbing trees. I stole from them unobserved and waited in the road some distance away. First I heard a chatter, and then a whimpering, which grew louder and louder, a floundering in the leaves, and Tip and Zip tumbled into the road, out of breath. After that they watched me closely.

It was the next day, I think, that they had their encounter with a drove of cattle. They were following me as usual when we met the cattle in a narrow roadway. I had passed by them a short distance, when I became aware that there was trouble behind me. The right of way was in dispute. Most of the cattle (cows and young ones) had given way, but one or two big oxen, with lowered heads, were making a stand. I hurried back to save my little friends, but they did not need my aid. With bristling hair and growls that would have done credit to small bull-dogs they started for the oxen. I saw the big coons had won the battle. Indeed Tip was inclined to follow the retreating enemy, but I called him off, and put him in my pocket until he became quiet.

The great joy of my coons was to go fishing with me. They lacked the sportsman's delicate sense of honour, I suppose, for they would eat all the small trout I gave them and tease me for more. In fact, I was never able to satisfy them, although trout were plentiful then. I concluded their capacity for eating was inexhaustible and gave it up.

I have hinted that my pets were sometimes troublesome. Well, if you were to let loose a dozen or two children in your house with permission for an hour to overhaul, hide, carry off, and generally demoralize everything it contained, I think they might possibly accomplish as much as Tip and Zip would in half the time. I say possibly, for to me it will always remain an open question. If caught in mischief by anyone else they would always come to me for protection, and, while I was pacifying the enraged party, they would probably steal every tool or portable thing I had been using. By all means, if you want to enliven your household, get two young coons. You will never know another dull moment.—*Forest and Stream*.

TENNYSON AND BROWNING.

There is a good fortune which has not infrequently befallen England. It is to have within her, living at the same time and growing together from youth to age, two great poets of such distinct powers, and of such different fashions of writing, that they illustrate even to the most unseeing eyes, something of the infinite range of the art of poetry. The immensity of the art they practice reveals itself in their variety; and this is the impression made on us when we look back on the lives of Tennyson and Browning, and remember that they began in 1830-33, and that their last books were published in 1890. They sang for sixty years together, each on his own peak of Parnassus, looking across the Muses' Valley with friendly eyes on each other. The god breathed his spirit into both, but they played on divers instruments, and sang so different a song, that each charmed the other and the world into wonder. However different they were in development, their poetry arose out of the same national excitement on political, social and religious subjects. The date of 1832 is as important in the history of English poetry, and as clearly the beginning of a new poetical wave as the date of 1789. The poetical excitement of 1832 is unrepresented, or only slightly represented, in the poetry of these two men, but the excitement itself kindled and increased the emotion with which they treated their own subjects. The social questions which then grew into clearer form, and were more widely taken up than in the previous years—the improvement of the condition of the poor, the position of women, education and labour—were not touched directly by these two poets; but the question how man may best live his life, do his work or practice his arts, so as to better humanity—the question of individual development for the sake of the whole—was wrought out by them at sundry times and in divers manners. It is the ground excitement of "Paracelsus," of "Sordello," of Browning's dramas from "Pippa Passes" onward, of a host of his later poems; of "Maud," of "The Princess," of the "Idylls of the King," and—to mention one of the latest of a number of Tennyson's minor poems—of "Locksley Hall, or Sixty Years After." The religious questions, both theological and metaphysical, which took in 1832 a double turn in the high-church and broad-church movements were vital elements in Tennyson and Browning. No poets have ever been more theological, not even Byron and Shelley. What original sin means, and what position man holds on account of it, lies at the root of half of Browning's poetry; and the greater part of his very simple metaphysics belongs to the solution of this question of the defect in man. The "Idylls of the King" Tennyson has himself declared to be an allegory of the soul on its way to God. I was sorry to hear it, but I have not the same objection to the theology of a poem like "In Memoriam," which plainly claims and has a religious aim. Both men were then moved by the same impulses; and long after these impulses in their original form had died, these poets continued to sing of them. In a changed world their main themes remained unchanged. Different, then, as they were from each other—and no two personalities were ever more distinct—there was yet a

far-off unity in this diversity. In all the various songs they made the same dominant themes recur. Along with this difference of personality and genius there was naturally a difference of development. The growth of Tennyson has been like that of an equal growing tree, steadily and nobly enlarging itself, without any breaks of continuity, from youth to middle age, and from that to old age. The growth of Browning was like that of a tree which should thrice at least change its manner of growing, not modified so much by circumstances as by a self-caused desire to shoot its branches forth into other directions where the light and air were new. He had what Tennyson had not—an insatiable curiosity. Had he been in the Garden of Eden he would have eaten the fruit even before the woman. He not only sought after and explored all the remote, subtle or simple phases of human nature which he could find when he penetrated it in one direction; he also changed his whole direction thrice, even four times, in his life. East, west, south and north he went, and wherever he went he frequently left the highroads and sought the strange, the fanciful places in the scenery of human nature. Nevertheless, there are certain permanent elements in his work, and there is always the same unmistakable, incisive, clear individuality persistent through all change.—Stopford A. Brooke, in *The Century*.

TO THE POINT.

Mr. John L. Blaikie made an excellent and pointed speech at the annual meeting of the North American Life Assurance Company, held recently.

Amongst other things he said: "When a shrewd business man makes up his mind to insure his life, and proceeds to consider the claims and relative merits of rival companies, to what ought he have principal regard? Surely the problem such an one has to solve is, 'Which company can do best for its policy-holders?'"

"Now, it by no means follows that the largest, or the oldest company, or one with many more millions of assets than another, can do the best for its policy-holders."

"I have before me a statement showing the percentage of surplus earned to mean assets for the year ending 31st December, 1891, based upon the last Government returns. It is extremely interesting."

"Take first four of the United States companies doing business in Canada. Then take four prominent Canadian companies."

"Thus you see that the percentage of surplus earned to mean assets for 1891, out of which alone all returns and dividend to policy-holders must come, is in the case of the North American Life more than double that of any of the four United States companies, and very much greater than that of the Canadian companies named."

"Nothing can be clearer than that the company making and accumulating the largest percentage of surplus is the one that will give the largest returns and best investment results to its policy-holders. Tried by this test, I am proud to say the North American Life stands in the very front rank."

"A wise and provident investment of the funds of a life insurance company is a most important factor in adding to the surplus, and in this respect our Company has been remarkably fortunate, the average rate of interest upon its investments being as high as any, and considerably higher than that of most companies, as will be readily seen by figures, compiled by the Insurance and Finance Chronicle, of Montreal, from the last Government returns."

"The Company, as you know, offer various kinds of attractive policies, suited to the different circumstances of all classes, which should make it an easy one for which to secure new business. To the agents, I venture to say that in the North American Life you represent a company that the report before you proves conclusively can do better for its policy-holders than most companies, that pays its losses promptly, and that deals honorably and liberally with all."