

NOTCHES ON THE STICK.

TALKS BY PATTEREX ON MEN AND THEIR LITERARY WORK.

Matthew Arnold and Some of His Ideas on What He Saw in America—A Tribute to Martin Butler, the Pedlar Poet—Other Notes and Comments of the Day.

The personal traits of celebrated writers unconsciously exhibited in their friendly and familiar letters, make their published correspondence a desirable thing to all who have recognized them only under the more dignified aspect which they have presented to the public. Accordingly, when a name has become canonized by the passage of time, we are tempted to expect the privilege denied us during his life, of entering behind the scenes and seeing him as he was before he had arrayed himself for a stranger's reception, and in the bosom of friends and intimates. Sometimes this revelation creates the man anew before us, by supplying phases unseen and unsuspected before; and may heighten or diminish our esteem and reliance according as these unguarded, spontaneous records of the spirit may be those of a Lamb or a Carlyle. Often a writer's published letters add little or nothing to our knowledge of his principles and opinions; but we are more than compensated by the livelier play of fancy and emotion, and that familiarity of style which seems to take the reader into confidence and accord to him the relation of a friend.

There are many, into whose life Matthew Arnold has entered as a force, who will seek to do more than satisfy an idle curiosity in the perusal of his letters. Here is the man of observation and opinion, the restrained and guarded man, who has no antics, even before his friend, and does not easily unbend save to the most familiar associates. We see him in no specially new or improving light. The nobler, more elevating traits are emphasized here, but we knew them before, and we cannot know too well "his faculty for keen enjoyment, his manly endurance of adverse fate buoyancy in breathing difficulties, unremitting solicitude for those nearest his heart, love of children, . . . laboriousness in a life of unremunerative drudgery, and his nature essentially religious." He is described as a Marcus Aurelius of our Century; a product of Christianity, moulded in spirit by that which, in its doctrinal statements and prevailing customs and ceremonies, he repudiated.

Erect and stately, and with reverence, he moves before us, and revives in his person all the dignity and self-possession that he found in the spirits whose product he courted and cherished. Why should he bow to the literary gods that are called such, while he had Bacon, Pindar, Sophocles, Thomas a Kempis and Ecclesiasticus. He comes to find much modern literature a sickening dose, and "not bracing or edifying in the least." He is quite wholehearted in his disapproval of nature alien in practice and principle from his own. To Mrs. Browning the Greek mythology was a dry ground out of which no living healing plant can grow, and she lamented a Schiller's wasted strength. Not as a dead thing would Arnold regard his own tragedy, "Meropé," but as possessing what Buddha called "the character of filly, that true sign of the law." So he would have a friend in Italy induce Robt. Browning to read it; and adds to the request his opinion of her whom her husband pronounced, "half angel and half bird." "As to his wife, I regard her as hopelessly confirmed in her aberration from health, nature, beauty, and truth." Burns is to him "a beast with splendid gleams," while the medium in which he lived, Scotch peasants, Scotch Presbyterianism, and Scotch drink, is repulsive. Nor does he greatly affect Burns' eulogist: "I never much liked Carlyle. He seemed to me to be carrying coals to Newcastle, preaching earnestness to a nation which had plenty of it by nature but was less abundantly supplied with several other useful things." Emerson, moonstrone to Carlyle, he regarded of more practical and helpful account. Tennyson is not to him a deep soul-commanding poet nor a great intellect; he is to him deficient in ideas, and inferior to Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron, in elemental poetic power. He excelled in art, however, and set the exquisite fashion. "I do not think Tennyson a grand or puissant spirit; and therefore I do not set much store by him, in spite of popularity. . . . The real truth is that Tennyson, with all his temperament and artistic skill, is deficient in intellectual power; and no modern poet can make very much of his business unless he is preeminently strong in this. Goethe owes his grandeur to his strength in this, although it even hurt his poetical operations by its immense predominance." Homer, "the thundrous, the intense," is to him the monarch of poets, rising even above Shakespeare in solitary grandeur, leaving him "behind as far as perfection leaves imperfection."

Traces of his presence in this country are discoverable in his correspondence, and of his impressions and opinions, frank and honest, whether relieving or not. He has an eye occasionally for American scenery. "The hills of the Ohio valley at Cincinnati are really picturesque, and the views from the park-like heights around were very fine. The river, with its wooded hills, had

a curve which bore a startling resemblance to Windermere, with its curve at the island, only the Ohio is much broader." A fragment of the old world, stranded in the new, enlisted his sympathy: "Quebec is the most interesting thing I have seen on this continent, and I think I would sooner be a poor priest in Quebec than a rich hog merchant in Chicago." He hears Henry Ward Beecher, and is struck by "his management of his voice" and his command of his "vast audience," but thought the sermon "poor." It is declared that Arnold had the faculty of lowering the temperature of a preacher, when it was known he was present; so Beecher may have been restrained, and have failed to exhibit that native fervor, which must have been taking with Arnold. His criticisms of American life and the American press are well known. Our civilization he sees as "distinctly inferior to that of Europe." In his view the "capital defect of life" in America is that, "compared with life in England, it is so uninteresting, so without savor, and without depth." Grant, among Americans, arrests his eye, and his praise: "Grant, as shown by this (his Memoirs), to be one of the most solid men they have had. I prefer him to Lincoln. Except Franklin I know hardly any one so self-standing, so broad and straightforward, as well as firm characterized, that they have had." Grant, presented to him the characteristics Arnold valued, and which he struggled to attain.

Can it be that the punster, that inconsiderate mortal who is bound more by sound than sense, will meddle with the miseries of the nations and wax merry over struggles of Cuba and Armenia? Yet it was but the other evening at the tea-table, a would-be wit, observed, that when the new military commander, arrived from Spain Cuba would need to be on her good behavior, or he would Weylor (whale her); and when asked, a few moments later, if he would have some curds; he replied, he would by no means desired such Kurds as the Armenians had been compelled to swallow. So hardened and incorrigible a case must be a revelation even to our friend, Hunter Duvar; and if he had again to write such a book as his "Annals of the Court of Oberon," he would make an arrow, in company with that rapid provoker of the fairy king, it was Dr. Johnson who would dom or banish the punster; and yet he averred: "If I were pun-ished for every pun I shed there would be left not a puny shred of my pun-ished head."

The wild stream beside which we sometime had our home, glimmering at us at evening through the willows and shrubbery that skirt its banks, and where we have done more or less of our musing, is having other poets to do it honor. We have a communication from the editor of "Butler's Journal," in which he says: "I, too, once in my life was beside the Narragansett, pretty well up towards its head, in the wilderness region of Maine, in the neighborhood of the Machias Lakes, and caught some of its inspiration in the few rude verses which I send you." We take pleasure in presenting these stanzas in praise of the river we learned to love, and also in commending them to the reader by reason of their merit:

The Narragansett.
Embowered in primal sylvan solitude
I saw thee, one bright morn in opening spring;
Thy crystal waters joyous overflowed,
And sprang in air as birds on blithe wing.
Unshackled from the winter's cold and frost,
Against the dark green hemlocks' tompest-toss'd.

A bird of passage I, from rock-girt hills,
Back to my home beside the limpid lake;
Oppressed with woe, with sorrow, fears and ill,
All desolate did I my pathway take:
Yet still, despite the cruel wrongs of man,
With merry laughter thy bright waters ran.

My heart took up the song: Thy music swayed
Each cord and fibre of my heart; the gleam
I caught—the radiance, and my tongue, long tied,
Sang blithe and gay as thou own gurgling stream,
Glad that the winter was overpast,
And sun and flower would yet be mine at last.

Thy promise was prophetic: Since that day
Though storm and cloud are day, hourly, near,
I never yet have lost the gladness ray
Of hope and faith, my lonely heart to cheer;
And flowers have blossomed in my rugged path,
Dark, ere that hour, with judgment and with wrath.

Bold hills of Maine, and streams that laughing run
In solitary path to the open sea;
Dark, sombre woods, obscuring noonday sun,
At last you've taught a lesson unto me;
Despite the iron hand of cruel Fate,
God walks the world, and peace will come, 'tho' late.

Mr. Butler has been a frequent rambler on foot through portions of Eastern and Northern Maine, and of New Brunswick, and has found much of his poetic and journalistic material on his travels. Wordsworth put inspired wisdom and exalted thought into the lips of a pack-pedlar whose feet were fit to hallow the ground he trod upon. What Wordsworth did in fancy Nature has done in fact; and the poet of "Maple Leaves and Hemlock Branches," and of "Wayside Warbles," who, with his pack, has been hailed at many a farmhouse on the Nashua and St. John by doctored honest men and matrons, and by gleesome children, is worthy of our respectful attention as one into whose heart the Delphian Apollo has dropped some of the celestial fire, and a soul that sees the beautiful, or makes it, wherever he goes.

He has had some hard struggles for his life; but sitting on a knoll at sunset, with some lovely scene before him, and a song bubbling from heart to lips, he can count

them all a part of his good fortune, or he can forget them all.

The reader of Burns' "Vision," will remember an extensive prospect in his native Kyle which he there describes; the whole being limned on Muse Coila's "mantle large of greenish hue," and presenting to his fond astonished eyes the features of "a well known land."

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were test;
Here, tumbling billows marked the coast;
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Arct's lofty boat,
The lordly dome.
Here, Doon pours down his far-fetched floods;
There, well did Irvine stately thade:
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds
With seeming roar.

Low in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient Borough reared her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race,
To every nobler virtue bred,
And polli'd grace,
By stately tow' or palace fair,
Or ruins pendant in the air,
Bold stems of Heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With features stern.

It is interesting to remark that the foregoing allusion to the sea-shore, and that which follows in "Dawn Second,"—
"I saw thee seek the sounding shore;
Delighted with the dashing roar;"—
are finest among the few references he has made to the "limit of the land," so attractive to other poets. It was a reflection that struck Wordsworth with surprise, when he visited Ayre, how Burns, living within reach and in the very presence of such splendid sea prospects, should not have been impressed so as to have made more of them in his verse. This is, however, beside our present subject. It is to call attention to a parallel picture in prose by Hew Ainslie, giving us the same magnificent sweep of landscape, that we set out; this we proceed to do, without further digression:

Having gained an eminence on the left bank of that valley in which the Irvine flows, our pilgrims found spread before them, all within eye reach,

"That place of Scotland's tale
That bears the name of 'Auld King Coil,' which
contains almost the whole earthly materials of
the 'Vision.' Before them, 'low in a sandy valley,' sat
the 'ancient Borough' by the edge of the blue firth,
building slowly into the quiet air its morning spire;
a little to the left the 'hermit Ayr' staw thro' his
woods; beyond which the woody tract of 'Bonnie
Doon' was seen hemming brown Carrick hill with
green; while here and there, castle standing and
not gleaming amongst the trees like 'a woman's' among
the grass. Summer that morn seemed to have done
her utmost for the scene. Heaven and earth mingled
beautifully their green and gold, and the drowsy
brezes loitered on the land as if afraid to disturb
their slumber; the fields on every hand spread forth
their blossoms to dry; the broom shook out its gift
tassels; and the gallant brier, bridegroom-like,
mounted its blushing cockade. Birds choired it
loudly in the brake, while their merry leader the
lark, 'in pride of song,' buried himself in the blue
of heaven.

The poetic traveller has a peculiar drawing to "the height of some o'erlooking hill," whence he can survey some various and ample scene, with every accessory light and shade that may soften and glorify it. We recall a passage of Lowell, in his essay upon Chaucer, which is apt to recur to us whenever we survey a spacious prospect, like that to which our eyes were early accustomed, or whenever we see the like "live in description or grow bright in song." It is fitting that with it these paragraphs should be concluded:

Where many a tower and to no man may't behold
That founded were in times of fathers old,
And many another delicate sight;
And Saluces this noble country light.
The Fre-Raphaelite style of landscape engages the eye among the obtrusive weeds and grasshedges of the foreground which, in looking at a real bit of scenery, we overlook; but what a sweep of vision is here! and what happy generalization in the sixth verse as the poet turns away to the business of his story! The whole is full of the open air!

The first stanza of the "Clerk's Tale" gives us a landscape whose sately choice of objects shows a skill in composition worthy of Claude, the last artist who painted nature epically:

"There at the west end of Italy,
Down at the foot of Vesuvius the colds,
A lusty plain abundant of vital!"

We have, by favor of our friend, Mr. Frank Walcott Hunt, a delicate booklet in parchment, pure as the driven snow. It contains little snatches and fragments from Keats, with here and there a longer passage. Scarcely any poet lends himself more readily to this sort of random quotation. The frequent luxurious felicity of his phrasing, the happy word that serves its master absolutely, the line or couplet in which a scene shines forth or a happy creature moves and breathes, all make Keats one of the most temptingly quotable

of poets. And here he is quoted just as the eye quotes him in reading:

The murmurous hum of flies on summer eves,
Gathering swallows (twitter in the skies,
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.
... Shepherds gone in old whose looks increased
The silvery setting of their mortal star.

Again I'll linger in a sloping mead
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed
Our idle sheep. . . .

Old ocean rolls a lengthen'd wave to the shore
Down whose green back the short lived foam, all
hoar,
Bursts gradual, with wayward indolence.

He who cannot see how perfectly the incoming of a wave is pictured in the last lines given might as well have been blind. The compilers of this little book (William Ordway Partridge, and Bernhard Berenson) have read Keats, just as ourselves, just as multitudes of loving dreamers have read him, with these self same lines standing out from the rest as if in raised letters of gold.

Sufficiently remote from Keats is a pamphlet—or a series of them—from the N. England Anti-Vivisection society; but this is the matter that comes up next. Least any one who knows us not should suspect us of so great a criminality, we hasten to protest and record ourself upon the side of mercy. We have no morbid desire for such scientific knowledge as must be twisted and wrung from the tortured nerves of a living creature, since we ourselves are a creature of God, and deem

"He prayeth best who loveth best:
All things, both great and small.

Here is a picture of a dog upon the rack of science. We have no inclination to prove how long Fido can survive the loss of a lung, or a lobe of his brain. Dogs we have seen, of such a plutonic breed or so incomplete in all that appertains to their doghood, that we have felt the impulse to finish them at a stroke; but we have said, mea culpa, veiled our face and passed on. It is a well-understood thing that the denizens of field and forest are to take no alarm at our approach. We have no intention here to be facetious; we share the horror of Mr. Ingersoll and Mr. Peabody, and come not near the table where a living subject is to be dissected. It is a surprise to learn that vivisection is so extensively practiced. We loath and denounce such "barbarism—the savagery of science." We are sure we could never be cordial with a practitioner of vivisection; we are persuaded he has not enough humanity to be cordial with anybody. We do not ask for his hand, nor will we present ours, except we see tears in his eyes, and know that he has repented. We do not want a hand that has blood on it and no blood in it. The principal among these documents is entitled, "Does Vivisection Pay?" After running through these pages we happily conclude that it does not.

Sidney Flower endows The Week with a poem extraordinary in the shape of a political assembly's doings reported in blank verse. We are reminded of old Father Harris' declaration, when asked if he liked apple pie made of thin slices of pumpkin soured in vinegar and sugar, that he wanted his "apple apple," his and "pumpkin punkin." We want our politics politics and our poetry poetry. It requires a genius to mix them.

PATEREX.

THE CASE OF TWO MCGREEVEY, M. F. AND URBAN SOULARD, OF ST. LOUIS, QUE.

Both in the Same Boat, and Like Measures Free Both.

The member in the House of Commons for Quebec—Mr. Thomas McGreevey—has in his lifetime found himself in more than one tight place, but with native shrewdness has been able to free himself. Among other things that have troubled him is catarrh, but in the use of Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder he has been able to rid himself of this difficulty. Mr. Urban Soulard, of St. Louis, Que., pronounces this remedy a "precious preparation," so effective is it in ridding the system of catarrhal trouble. It will give relief in 10 minutes, and cures a cold almost instantly. Beware of the many cheap imitations of this remedy. They are worthless, if not dangerous. Sold by druggists, or sent by mail, by S. G. Detchen, 44 Church St., Toronto, for 60 cents in stamps. Sold by H. Dick and S. McDiarmid.

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The tallest man in Maine is W. H. Kelley of Phillips. He is 6 feet 10 inches tall and of symmetrical build, weighing more than 200 pounds. He rides a bicycle, which he had to have made expressly for his own use, because of the length of his legs. He is leader of the local cornet band.

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CROSSED THE OCEAN TWICE.

Roundabout Trip of a Telegram from One Maine City to Another.

An episode of the recent flood in Maine was the long distance covered by an office message from Manager Bliss of the Western Union office at Bangor to Manager Livermore of the office at Portland. The Western Union wires going east were down at Gardiner, where the ancient toll bridge had been carried away by ice and logs coming down the Kennebec. Bangor was cut off by the fall of the bridge between Waterville and Benton. Wishing to tell Mr. Livermore where the break was, Mr. Bliss sent a message describing the trouble by the way of North Sydney to Cape Breton. From there it was sent to Heart's Content in Newfoundland to take a dip down under the Atlantic for a trip to Valentia in Ireland. Valentia sent it to Land's End, in England, from which place it was transmitted overland to Dover, where it again took to the water for a journey under the English Channel to France. Brest got it and hurried it along to St. Pierre Miquelon, from which place it was given to Duxbury, and Duxbury sent it to Boston. The last relay was over the "quad" to Portland, where it was looked upon as a curiosity.—N. Y. Paper.

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