

A SPRING SONNET.

Upland and dale from winter's clasp unbound,
Have burst, full-robed and palpitant with life
To fresh creation—sweet as flute or fife,
Bird-notes are blending with the far off sound
Of bleating flocks—All things—the verdured ground,
The budding hedgerows, soft south gales are rife
With breath of spring. Earth like a fruitful wife
Lies flushed and smiling with her new birth crowned.

Love! can it be so many years, and long,
Since we, with youth and spring, joined hands together?
And like all merry things, trilled out our song,
And tossed the future, far, as winds a feather?
Ah, could we hush some thoughts that swell and throng,
Our hearts were blither in this glad May weather.

M. J. W.

OUR REPRESENTATIVE IN BOSTON.

THE WOMAN'S PRESS MEETING.

The Parker House, Boston, was the scene of a merry gathering of lady newspaper writers and their friends of both sexes on the afternoon of May 21st. The large room in which the meeting took place was well filled, about two hundred members and guests being present. Through the courtesy one of the members of the Association, THE CRITIC's representative was enabled to enjoy the hospitality of the club, and to meet with many talented and earnest workers who have won name and fame in America.

The affair was quite informal. Those ladies who came from their homes to the meeting were attired, some of them, in demi toilet, square or V shaped neck with elbow sleeves, and those busy ones, who came direct from work, wore street costume. The gentlemen were nearly all in evening dress.

The meeting opened at 4 o'clock, Miss Catherine L. Conway in the chair, supported by Mrs. Sallie Joy White, President of the Association, at her right.

As the subject to be treated of was music, it was very appropriate that the first number on the programme should be a song, which was followed by a paper on "The influence of women in music," by Mr. Elson of the Conservatory of Music. Mr. Elson said that if he should attempt to speak of women as composers, his address would be very short, but that women as inspirers and interpreters of music had from the earliest ages of history been conspicuous. He spoke of Sappho as the earliest poet and musician, for in those days music and poetry were inseparable. Deborah, Miriam and other women of sacred history were also referred to, although he did not consider that they could be strictly called musicians. Coming down to more modern times, Mr. Elson told us stories of famous composers whose greatest works were inspired by some fair divinity, but he also took the romance out of many stories which have been believed by many to be authentic, although when looked into, one must admit that they have a highly improbable sound.

The troubadour of France and the minnesinger of Germany were pointed to as examples of the influence of women. The first named celebrated in detail the charms of the particular fair one, telling of her eyes, hair, lips, hands and feet etc., but the minnesinger praised in general the virtues of the female character, on a much loftier plane than that which the troubadour of France could aspire to. Here Mr. Elson illustrated the difference by rendering several songs, to which he played his own accompaniments. Mr. Elson thinks that with the more earnest attention now being given to music, for music's sake, and not merely for amusement or profit, by women, and a determination to learn all that can be learnt of the divine art, that we may yet produce great female composers, but of this the future holds the secret.

Mr. Elson's address took an hour to deliver, but so interesting was it, with songs agreeably sandwiched in, that no one could believe an hour had flown.

After two songs by a lady, the meeting again became informal and I was introduced to Mr. Elson, who told me he had never visited Halifax, but that he had had three pupils from there. I said I hoped for the credit of my country that they were good specimens, and he replied, "indeed they were," so I felt that if I could manage to conceal my own ignorance of musical matters, my country's credit would be all right.

I then had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Kate Tammatt Woods, the authoress, and writer of "Letters to Beth" in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and also Miss Newton, a bright young lady from New York, one of the officers of the famous woman's club, Sorosis.

Such a merry meeting as it was, every one seemed determined to make it pleasant for others, especially for the stranger within their gates. The meeting was adjourned to the corridors and another parlor, for the number of members and guests present made it necessary to divide them at tea time, which was very near, and the Parker house had so many entertainments going on that they were obliged to set the tables in the room we were in.

The bountiful high tea was done ample justice to, and after the inner man—and woman—were satisfied, we all proceeded to a larger room where the literary entertainment took place.

Mrs. Sallie Joy White presided in the happiest manner over this part of the entertainment, which was in the highest degree interesting. Poems were read by Miss Mary E. Blake, Miss Winslow, Mr. Oscar Fay Adams and Mr. Henry O'Meara. Miss Blake's and Miss Winslow's poems were on the same theme, but quite different in expression. They were both witty, and set forth very amusingly what would be done with the men in the sweet by-and-bye, when the fairer sex obtain their rights. Considering that "gentlemen's day" does not come very often, and that they were in the power of their hostesses, perhaps it was scarcely fair to seize the occasion to poke fun at them. Some of them looked rather blank as things struck them hard, but most of them joined in the laugh against themselves, which was of the most

good natured tone possible. The president made some witty and timely remarks on the situation, and said she had no idea that the destiny of the men was assuming such an alarming state, she had thought it was taking care of itself.

Mr. Adams' poem was in a minor strain, being suggested by the grave of Jane Walsh Carlyle, which he visited some little time ago. Mr. O'Meara's was also of the same kind, only he had chosen the grave of the mother of Washington to pour his libation on. It was rather singular that the ladies and the gentlemen had gone in pairs, as it were, and certainly without any fore-knowledge of each other's subjects. Several other readings and recitations were given, and Mr. Elson supplemented his kindness of the afternoon by singing a small group of folk songs, which delighted his hearers.

I have left to the last to tell of what was to me the most interesting feature of that delightful entertainment. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe spoke to us, and when she arose to speak the whole audience showed the love and respect in which she is held, by rising too. Mrs. Howe is a sweet faced elderly lady, and when her soft voice uttered such kind words of counsel to the young and active sisters all around her, and wished them every success in the wide field of usefulness open to press workers, there was deep silence in the room. Mrs. Howe compared the women writers to the Sibyl, taking the events which occur every day and weaving from them in the loom of thought a precious net, and she suggested to the Association that an effort be made to sift and preserve the most valuable articles from our newspapers and magazines. That many people do this for themselves is well known, but Mrs. Howe's suggestion if acted upon systematically would give to the public a unique collection of gems.

The entertainment was brought to a close at 9 o'clock by singing "Auld Lang Syne," led by Mr. Elson, and the members of the Press Association dispersed to their various offices or duties in connection with them.

I trust that CRITIC readers will be interested in this necessarily short and contracted account of what women, so near us, (little more than a day's journey by the S. S. *Halifax*) can do, and are doing. The work being done by these ladies is a most important one, they are foremost in doing good, and make all the use possible of their positions as writers to aid those whom misfortune has overtaken. Boston can point to them with pride and say they have done well. THE CRITIC's representative wishes the Woman's Press Association of New England to know that the kindness received at their hands is thoroughly appreciated, and thanks them heartily for the pleasant hours spent with them.

C. F.

THE BLOODY SHIRT.

A Phrase that may have sprung from an Incident in Scottish History.

A short time since my attention was attracted to an inquiry in the *Louisville Courier Journal* as to the origin of the popular phrase "The Bloody Shirt." The answer given to the query ascribes it to the recent period of reconstruction. Contrary to the prevailing belief, this political weapon was forged and effectively used long before any difference had arisen between certain portions of the United States, and before, in fact, a union of states existed.

The incident which gave the expression birth is to some extent legendary, and is related by Sir Walter Scott in the preface to his novel "Rob Roy," and briefly is as follows:—The clan MacGregor possessed lands and flocks which excited the cupidity of their less fortunate neighbors, who, by force and other methods, gradually despoiled them of their property, and drove them from their homes. The clan, thus impoverished, resisted the encroachments upon their rights, and in the frequent collisions that occurred used every temporary advantage they gained cruelly enough. Their conduct, which was perhaps not unnatural under the circumstances, was studiously represented at the capital as arising from an innate and untamable ferocity, for which the only remedy was extermination.

These suggestions resulted in the proscription of the clan by act of the privy council at Sterling, and permission was given certain powerful chieftains to pursue the MacGregors with fire and sword, and all persons were prohibited from affording them meat, drink or shelter. As might be expected, civilization progressed very slowly during this period, and the MacGregors, feeling all the severity of the law and none of its protection, became wilder and more lawless than ever. As the legend runs, two men of the clan MacGregor, overtaken by night, asked shelter from a dependent of the Colquhouns, and, on being refused, retired to an outhouse, seized a wedder from the fold, and supped frugally off the carcass, for which they offered payment. The laird of Luss, hearing of this enforced hospitality, caused the offenders to be apprehended and summarily executed.

To avenge this act the MacGregors assembled to the number of several hundred, and marched toward Luss. Sir Humphrey Colquhoun received early notice of the raid, and assembled an army of superior numbers to meet them. A battle took place in the valley of Glenfruin (Glen of Sorrow), where, encouraged by the prophecy of a seer, and aided by a superior position and skillful generalship, the MacGregors were victorious, pursuing the enemy furiously, and mercilessly slaughtering all who were unable to escape.

This battle and the fury of the proscribed clan were reported to King James VI in a manner most unfavorable to that unfortunate clan, and, more strongly to impress that impressionable monarch, the widows of the slain to the number of several score, dressed in mourning, riding on white palfreys, and each bearing her husband's bloody shirt upon the point of a spear, appeared before the king at Sterling, and demanded vengeance upon those who had made their homes desolate. By act of privy council A. D. 1613, the old acts against the clan were revived, and others of the greatest severity enacted. The bloody shirt had unquestionably accomplished its purpose.