

# Old - Time Reminiscences.

By a Special Correspondent.)

In the history of Canadian literature, in the chapter dedicated to poets and poetry, the name of Andrew Hill is not likely to ever find a place; yet Andy Hill was a poet and he wrote some exceptionally good poems. In the first place he was a Canadian by birth—and I was going to say by education, but I should be more exact in saying "by bringing up." His father was an Englishman and a member of the Church of England; his mother, Margaret Hogan, was an Irishwoman, and a Catholic. As his father died when Andy was in his third year, he very naturally followed his mother, especially in her religious convictions, for the balance of his life. He knew very little of schools and less of college; at the age of fourteen he was working on a farm to earn his own and his mother's livelihood. But he had a great love for books; and he was a regular devourer of scraps of paper, leaves from old periodicals, and, above all, pieces of verse. He knew nothing of the art of versification, and he cared very little for measure, as long as he had a rhyme, or a jingle at the end of each line. He would sit down, during the noon hour, in the field, under a cock of hay, and there dream such dreams as come only to poets.

Poor Andy Hill has gone to his reward, and his was a premature grave, for he could not have been more than six and twenty when the cold hand of consumption clutched his young life and snatched it away. I often thought that his poetic tendency was due to his ill-health and to a vague feeling that he was not long for this world. Yet he was not a melancholy poet; rather did his mind love to dwell upon the humorous side of life. He was a queer blending of the witty and melancholy, the frivolous and the religious, the refined and the uncultured. Some place or other amongst my undestroyed papers I possess a few of Andy's poems, but I cannot place my hand upon them at this moment. I have, however, a few snatches of his verse by heart—for many is the evening we walked along the dusty country road and listening while he recited his compositions for me. I will give a few brief quotations as samples of his style—if we can dignify it with that title. I only regret that all his works were not collected, for they contain, under the rude form of rustic verse some very noble sentiments.

I remember one poem, in imitation of a certain class of old Irish ballads, which he entitled "My Own Struggle." It began thus—

"The Greeks and Romans tell about  
Some men of mighty genius, sir,  
Who prayed from Babel's monument,  
To Jupiter and Venus, sir:

"With such as these I never shall  
My honest self compare, sir;  
I conquered not in Athens town,  
But at an Irish Fair, sir.

"Demosthenes could wield his tongue  
Midst crowds of learners, thick, sir;  
While I could swing above their  
heads,  
A black thorne Irish stick, sir."

The rest of it has escaped by memory; but this will suffice to show Andy Hill in one of his moods. One evening we were walking through a large meadow and contemplating the myriads of stars in the firmament, when Andy gave me a few lines—whether composed then and there, or at some previous time I do not know. They are of the devotional class, and run thus—

"There are stars of every size  
In the night vault of the skies,  
Bright as diamond in the regions  
airy;

But another star I know,  
Far surpassing them in glow,  
And our Lord has called that planet  
Mary."

"When the night is closing fast,  
And our day of hope is past,  
As we travel over life's great prairie  
In the whole immensity,  
The only star we see  
That can guide us is the planet  
Mary.

"In the azure of God's love.

All the clouds of earth above,  
Far beyond the fabled splendor of  
the Fairy,  
In the dome of endless bliss  
Will our eyes receive a kiss  
From the beams shed by the planet  
Mary."

After all, it seems to me that there is evidence of real poetic sentiment in these very simple lines, while there is a fund of religious devotion that is lacking in too many of the world's writers. I will now turn to another of Andy Hill's strange productions. It is on "The Pines."

"I love the pines,  
In their stately lines,  
So strong, and dark, and tall;  
Like lances high  
They pierce the sky,  
And tower o'er the forest all.

"The tempest comes  
with its booming drums,  
And its strill discordant notes;  
And when it stops  
On their bending tops,  
Their defiance backward floats.

"The first bright ray  
Of the downing day  
Is caught on their stately spears,  
And before the night  
The last beam of light  
Illumines these forest peers.

"Like so many priests  
In the storied East  
The pines bless their root-pierced sod  
And their fingers oft  
Paint the way aloft  
To where dwells their Lord,  
our  
God."

If I could only find the manuscript (and I possess it some place) of Andy Hill's address to Canada, a poem of some eighty lines, it would surprise not a few of the readers. It would furnish some statesmen with texts for a score of political speeches. It is a quaint piece of composition, and a mysterious one also; but under its hidden meaning there are tributes of patriotic worth that should not be lost to Canada.

This peculiar genius was as remarkable in prose as in verse. I remember once a young farm lad asked Andy to write a letter for him to his girl, who lived in the city. He wanted the letter to be brief and to the point. He had heard that since she went into town she had become friendly with a young city swell and was beginning to prove forgetful of her rustic swain. As he expected she would feel sad to think that he also was forgetful, he wished to have her understand that he thought no more about her. Andy's draft of the letter was prepared, it ran thus:

"Diar Maria,—Since you left the pure air of the country for the polluted atmosphere of the city, I am told that you have grown forgetful of your former friends, and myself in particular. I am sending you this letter to inform you that I have forgotten all about you, even the color of your hair, which I am informed you have bleached. As I expect you intend to abandon me at an early date I take advantage of this occasion to do my share of the abandoning before you have a chance to do yours. Now that all is over between us two, I don't want to part in anger or hard feeling; so if you get married and care to have me attend your wedding, I will extend to you an equally cordial invitation to attend mine; and if your young man should fail to be on hand and my girl should forget to be present, we are not like people who could not carry on a wedding by ourselves and for our own benefit. With these words of eternal adieu, I hope to hear from you at an early date and you can do as best suits you as far as the fixing of the date goes."

The last time that I met Andy Hill he told me that he was getting quite strong, and that he intended going on a trip to California. Some person had made him a good offer of a position out there, and as it was a good place for weak people, he hoped a sojourn there would build him up. He also talked a lot about poetry and the future poetic glories of Canada—a theme that he loved. This was in the month of July. In September, instead of going to California he went to Heaten—may his soul enjoy eternal glory there.

# Notes of His Holiness

ABOUT ASTRONOMERS.—One of the first cares of the Pope after his accession was to perfect the Papal Observatory in the old Leonine Towers in the Vatican Gardens. In 1891 he published a brief "De Vaticana Specula Astronomica Restituenda et Amplificanda," in which he wrote:—"We very gladly consent that the Vatican Observatory should take part with other illustrious astronomical institutes which have set before themselves the task of making an accurate photograph of the entire heaven as it appears when covered with numerous stars." Since then eighteen observatories in all parts of the world have been engaged in the immense work. When complete it will consist of 40,000 photographs each about a foot square. A few weeks ago the Pope received Father Lais, vice-director of the Vatican Observatory, who presented him with three photographs of the part of the heaven which comes under his observation. The three plates contain over 6,000 stars of the fourteenth magnitude. The vice-director informed the Pope that he was about to publish the rectilinear measurements of 20,000 stars which had been photographed separately.

ABOUT PRINTERS.—Rev. Luke Evers, rector of St. Andrew's Church in Duane street, New York, who returned from Rome recently, where he had been since last July, gives the following interesting particulars of an interview he had with Pope Leo XIII.: "It was on the 22nd of July that I was presented to the Holy Father," he said. "I had gone to Rome to make my first report on the results of the Early Mass, which I am permitted to celebrate through a special dispensation. As soon as Bishop O'Gorman, who was introducing members of our party, had told His Holiness who I was, the latter said to me: 'And how do the printers manage to get up so early in the morning?' 'They don't have to get up,' I replied, 'for they're already up.' 'Why?' he inquired. 'They work all night,' I explained, 'because they have to start on their work at 6 in the evening, and continue on duty until 2 in the morning. This seemed to surprise him very much. He wanted to know all about the way the Sunday papers were issued, and I told him. Evidently he had had the idea that the Sunday editions were printed on Saturday and then distributed Sunday morning. It took him several minutes to realize that my Mass could be attended by from 400 to 600 night workers, and he told me Italy had not so many men who had to labor while most folks were sleeping.

ARCHBISHOP  
OF  
GLASGOW  
ON  
THE  
POOR.

At a recent celebration held under the auspices of St. Mungo's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, His Grace Archbishop Maguire preached the sermon. He took for his text the words:

"Supporting one another in charity" (Ephesians iv.).

The Archbishop went on to say that they had to support one another whether they liked it or not. If they did not like it they could not help it. One class was allied with another all through the world. One class must support another, one individual must support another. Those above must support those below, and likewise, those below must support those above. Those who ruled depended for their maintenance on those who were ruled, and they, on the other hand, depended on those who ruled them for peace and tranquility, so that they might be able to go about their work. They had heard of producers and non-producers. This, so far as it applied to

those who govern, was simply nonsense. Without the system of law and order those who produce could not produce. Life would be a continual warfare. The workman bending at his toil looked with little respect on the policeman or the soldier, yet without them he could not do his work. Without them the workman would have to lay aside his tools and defend himself against enemies abroad and robbers at home. The husband, again, when he went out to his work on the cold mornings, thought that his wife had an easy time of it, yet without her help he could not do his work.

The taxpayer grumbled as he met his annual bill, yet if he did not support the power which caused that bill he would not be safe either by day or by night. They could not help it—they must support one another. And St. Paul tells them how to make it easier, "supporting one another in charity." Some they must do it, let them do it with grace, not struggling against it, but in charity. That is, in love—in the love by which they tried to love one another as they loved themselves, or, to put it more plainly, giving the same fair-play to others that they would like to be shown towards themselves. For they were not apt to think themselves useless. Some of them were foolish enough to think sometimes that the world could not do well without them. They sometimes thought that their particular trade was not overpaid, that those who gave them their wages were only giving them their due; or if they were in business they thought that their profits were not too big; if in any profession, they were satisfied that their place in the world was needed.

You will seldom hear a man (continued the Archbishop) speak of himself as incompetent, or of his business as one that consumes and does not produce, though you may hear him speak of other people's business in that strain. If we are satisfied that others should support us, why then should we not support them, though it may not be clear to us that they are as worthy of support as we are? In our work, if we have any common sense at all, we recognize that we are not always efficient nor always successful. The man who thinks that he always deserves success is, as a rule, not a very sensible man.

We do not like our failings and weaknesses to be hardly dealt with, and yet we know that we have them. Every one of us, you or I, have we never wasted our time, have we never put off till to-morrow that which could be done now? Have we never left aside our tools or our books a moment before the proper time? Is there one of us who can say we never made a mistake, that we never finished the work as it ought to have been finished? Not one of us, if we have common sense. And we are disappointed if people are too hard upon us, and are reasonably disappointed. Sometimes we are more industrious than at others, sometimes more energetic, sometimes our heads are clearer than at other times, and we expect our friends and masters to make allowance for it; and, if that is so, why do not we make the same allowances for other people? If we are masters we say hard things on the mistakes of our servants, and if we are servants we say hard things on the temper of our masters. It is no uncommon thing to find people ready to criticize everybody about them. This is not supporting in charity. If you are masters you should be charitable with the mistakes of your servants, and, if servants, charitable with the temper of your masters. All we require is to think that, after all, we are all servants of God, and to admit that we are not very profitable servants, even although we have loved God all our lives. Even though we have lived exemplary lives we know that we have failed in what we should have done. How often has our Master looked for better work? Why should we then be so hard on other undutiful servants, who have displayed much the same weakness, of which we have been guilty.

All classes are criticized, censured, lectured now-a-days. Much of the work of the Press of the present day consists in the censure of one man or another, of one class or another. Nobody, from the King down, escapes. But there is one class criticized more than all others—every one criticized them—and that is the poor, the very poor. Every one can criticize them and show how easily they fell into the state in which they were in. Some people could not give a penny to a poor person without giving also a sermon. How many dinners had to be waited for till once that sermon was over. When

people became very poor their house was no longer their castle. It was open to those who brought help, or promised help. Benevolent men or women invaded the house, always with a lecture, or a word in season, pointing out how much they were wanting in self-respect, cleanliness, and the other virtues possessed by the most of us. That was supporting, but was it supporting in charity, when we remembered that we were also servants. Shame should shut our mouths then, if we realized that it was not through our own doings or merits that we were not as poor as some of those we lectured. Some of them are idle. Have we never been idle? A man living on the verge of poverty a day or two of laziness is enough to ruin him, and yet in the eyes of God you are just as bad. The poor man is often thrifless with his money when he has it, and spends it too freely. Have we never done so, have we never spent on things we did not need? We are no better before God simply because we have more money.

The poor man drinks too much! Does the rich man not drink too much, the business man, or the professional man? But their position is such that it does not necessarily ruin them—at least, not immediately. When the poor man has a bout of intemperance it is immediate beggary. The poor man is stupid. He has no friends to get his faults overlooked. He shows himself incapable; his next step is dismissal and beggary. A general shows himself incapable. He retires on a pension. A statesman proves himself inefficient. He goes into the House of Lords. A Christian soldier was done to death in Egypt by the folly of a statesman and the lack of strategy in a general. Both showed incapacity. One of them now lies buried in Westminster Abbey, the other got a further chance of showing his incapacity. But on the very poor there is no mercy. Every one criticizes him, every one finds fault except two classes—those who flatter them, the other their true friends, who do not flatter. The false friend flatters, makes us believe we are without fault, that all our misfortunes are due to circumstances over which we have no control. It is only by throwing away class distinction that fair-play can be done.

No doubt much misery is done by distinctions amongst men, but it is due to the fact that these distinctions were used for private end. But there must be distinctions between rulers and ruled, or else there would be constant contention—one man against another. Place half-a-dozen men equally on a desert island, and within a month one of them will be leader. It may be by fair means, it may be by foul, but leader there will be. There are others who do not flatter, who show their sympathy with those who have failed. Some of us fail in the world. God has not given us all the same talents. We are not to conceal these people's faults, to say that it is a good thing to drink, to be idle, to be careless, but we must realize that some of these faults apply to ourselves, and so speak to these people in charity, giving them fair-play, making the same allowance for them that we make for ourselves.

This is done by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. They are poor because they cannot help it, and that others are poor through their own fault. If they follow the rule, they will speak in charity. The Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul are brothers not in name but in God. Those who know them best, and I know them well, know that they do not fall away from the rule. Now and again an individual brother may be less tender than he should be, but this is only consistent—he is like ourselves. The others try to live up to their rules. They do not help as if they were throwing a bone to a dog. As we support each other so we should do with the poor. They can give us nothing for our kindness, our benevolence, or our sympathy, but God can reward us. If these people are beggars before us we are beggars before God. If His grace is taken away from us we fall. No man holds such a position that he is not liable to fall into sin and deserve hell's fire. Then why should we grudge to them the kindly word which makes them feel there is some one in the world who care for them? I am pleased to see so many coming here to-night to help them. The winter is at hand, and in this part, as in every part of the town, there will be misery. Help the Brothers, then, in their work. Those of you who are young and strong help the Brothers by joining them. Those who cannot do this help them by your means. So, each of you will be supporting the other in charity, and may this reward be given you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.