

Now that we had an idea of the city as a whole, we descended to see the sights, and to wander up and down at will. We spent several hours in the Ducal Palace, admiring the pictures and other decorations; but of pictures I have nothing to say. We passed with a shudder the *bocca di leone*, or hole in the wall, where they used to throw in the secret denunciations that brought you before the terrible Ten, and entered the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio*, a hall 150 feet long and about half as wide, the walls of which are covered with frescoes commemorating the glorious deeds of the Republic. The frieze under the ceiling contains the portraits of seventy-six Doges, but where one of them ought to be a black tablet catches the eye with the words: "*Hic est locus Marini Falethri decapitati pro criminibus.*" Poor old Doge! His eighty years did not save his head from the block. Then we go down into the gloomy subterranean dungeons, into which whatever light and air get there have to pass through a narrow opening in the thick wall. The prisoner sat bound hand and foot, on a stone seat, with a rope round his neck, that passed through a hole in the wall and was fastened to a screw-jack in the corridor outside. You might sit there for days, for weeks, for months perhaps, until at last some fine morning you feel your hempen collar suddenly tighten. On the order of the inquisitor the jailor gives it a twist as he passes, and your troubles on earth are over. Nothing now remains but to take your body out under the *Ponte della Paglia*, which is close by the Bridge of Sighs, out beyond the *Grudecca*, to the thick, slimy water of the canal *Orfano*, that quickly devours its prey. In the palmy days of the Republic, fishermen were strictly forbidden to cast their nets there—the place was reserved.

But all this belongs to the past—up out of these gloomy *pozzi* or wells of unhappy memory, a dinner chosen from a generous bill of fare and eaten with a tourist's appetite, one more peep by gas-light at the glorious square and arcades before St. Mark's, filled with brilliant, easy-going, pleasure-loving Venetians, and we are off on the mid-night train for Florence, with the courteous gondoliers' *Buon Viaggio, Signori*, in our ears.

JAMES W. BELL.

Florence, Italy, May 11th, 1889.

SCOTTISH PROVERBS.

IN former ages, when few men read, and still fewer I wrote, and when history and poetry were mostly transmitted orally, proverbs became the channel by which a great deal of good, and sometimes bad, philosophy, experience and wisdom were handed down.

Many proverbs are substantially the same in all languages, not that nations have borrowed them from one another, but because the experiences that suggest them are the same to all the race. Others take their hue and form from the language, the country, the peculiarities of the race using them. Thus with the proverbs of Scotland. Some of them so smack of the heather that they could not have been invented anywhere else. It is rarely that anyone deliberately sits down to "invent" proverbs; yet there have been instances of it. Dr. Franklin must have done it in his "Poor Richard" series; Scott no doubt invented now and then a proverb to serve his purpose in the text, even as he invented an apt quotation from some "old play" to answer for a motto at the head of a chapter. And I imagine all Spurgeon's wise saws in "John Ploughman" were not natives of the clover fields of Essex, but were rather elaborated on the "Surrey side." Nay, as a certain proof of it, we ourselves constructed a few dozen Canadian proverbs a few years ago which, if it were not for the tell-tale periodical literature of the day, might ere now have been accepted as veritable antiquities of the backwoods.

But if proverbs could be traced, no doubt they would, in general, be found to owe their paternity individually to as many authors, and to have arisen out of special circumstances. How many of us remember some favorite saying of some old friend, peculiar to himself, and original with him? And if it was quaintly or wittily expressed, we had the material at once of a new proverb.

As to the form of a proverb, take that universally-known one, "Every dog has its day," which has been wittily answered (the age is apt in answering old accepted saws!), "Yes; a great consolation for puppies!" Much of the aptness of this proverb consists in the alliteration, "dog" and "day" coming "trippingly off the tongue"—alliteration again! Very many Scotch as well as other proverbs are alliterative, and good as a saw may be without it, it can always be made better with it. "A burnt child dreads the fire," say the English. "Burnt bairns dread the fire," say the Scotch: and it is better. Here is another alliterative one, "Better my friends think me fremit than fashious." Neither of the two Scotch words here have any connection with modern English. The first is found in old Saxon and modern German speech, the latter is French. But the proverb would not sound so well in English—"Better my friends think me distant than troublesome."

The Scotch say, "A bonnie bride is sune buskit, and a short horse is sune wispit." Kelly, a noted collector of "old saws," comments on it thus:—"For little adornment is required to set forth the bride's charms; and the smaller the horse, the sooner it is the 'wispit' or cleaned." But isn't there a large "wisp" of fun in the very expression, "a short horse?" as in the humorous (apocryphal) advertisement of a lazy "saddler," that "he had got in a side of leather, and was now prepared to take orders for harness for a short horse!" and shortness suggests

length. Henry Dundas once sent by a messenger a note to William Pitt, asking, in his Scotch way of wording it, "If he could let him have a horse the length of Highgate?" Pitt sent back a horse with the servant with this message, "I haven't a horse the length of Highgate, but I send you the longest horse I have got."

The English say, "A cat may look at a king," but the Scotch intensify it a little by an adjective, "A bawbee cat may look at a king." Some things, as water, air and mutual inspection, are common rights which no king nor kaiser can ever abridge. "A beggar's wallet is a mile to the bottom." It does not fit the modern tramp, whose modest ambition and interest it is to personate the honest labourer seeking employment, but it suited the old style "Gaberlunzie man," who rather gloried in his profession, and whose "meal pocks" were a standing curiosity, which nothing modern can ever equal except occasionally a schoolboy's trouser pocket!

"A blind man's wife needs nae painting"; not that any adornment would fail to make her prettier, but that the eyes for which the true wife busks herself are incapable of appreciating it. It is the voice, and the manner, and the sweetness of disposition, that in this case must be the charm. A friend told me of meeting an old but stately clergyman, nearly blind, leaning on the arm of his young and pretty wife. Some of his friends asked him how he came to marry so young a woman in his very old age? "Oh," he admiringly replied, "she has a voice like an angel!" Perhaps the self-satisfaction of a shallow brain was never better expressed than "A fool is happier thinking weel o' himself, than a wise man is o' others thinking weel o' him." And it is well that it is so; though, no doubt, the proverb is aimed at self-conceit; which even wiser men than fools sometimes display. While the Highlanders, in their rendering of English, almost invariably make the hard "s" soft, the Lowland Scotch do it with some words. One of those thus treated is, "wise" and "wiser." Thus, Hately Waddell, in his "Psalms o' David, out o' Hebrew intil Scotis," in a note to Ps. lx. 9, 10, says: "If God gangna' to the stoure, Kings wad be wysser at hame!" A salutary truth indeed; and well worth learning. Indeed, many of Waddell's expressions, in the two volumes he has issued, "Psalms" and "Isaiah," will doubtless (as they well deserve to be) become proverbial. Nothing could be finer than his heading to the twenty-third Psalm; "The Lord's sheep-keepin's kind and cannie, wi' a braw howf at the lung-last! Dauvid keeps his sheep; the Lord keeps Dauvid!" that is, "The Lord's sheep-keeping is kind and gentle; with a grand rendezvous at the last!"

A proverb is like an illustration; it does not necessarily prove anything, and may be fallacious or untrue. A mother-in-law has been made the subject of much cruel and ill-timed jesting: nor are the Scotch free of it. "A gude green turf," says the proverb, "is a gude gude-mither." *Per contra*, an old schoolfellow, whom I met again after many years, told me, in speaking of his family—I knew his wife was dead—"My mother-in-law keeps my house;" and added with much feeling, "I have a lovely mother-in-law!" The conceit of the race is well stated in the proverb, "A' complain o' want o' siller, but nane o' want o' sense." And a good excuse for natural infirmity, as well as a sly hit at ungracious behaviour, may be found in the Lowland proverb, "A crookit stick will thrav a crookit shadow!" The only difference is, that a man, unlike a stick, is generally responsible for his crookedness.

"As sure as death!" asseverates the Scotch boy; and that generally ends the matter. So firmly has it taken hold on the average "callant," that it would be worse than perjury to "go back" on such an objurcation, and many amusing anecdotes might be told of it: one must suffice. A little boy, a playmate of an old friend of mine, was in the occasional habit of inviting the other boys to a field his father rented to pasture some cows. The old man did not like his field trodden by boys playing ball, and would order them out. At last he began to suspect that Jimmy brought them there, and tried to catch him; but the boy was too nimble to be caught. He then tried diplomacy. "Here, Jimmy, my man!" he called out, in a wheedling tone, "here's a ha'penny for you!" putting his fingers in his waistcoat pocket. "Ye want to lick me!" said Jimmy. "No, I'll no lick ye; I just want to speak to ye," said the old man, who thought it was better merely to give Jimmy a "talking to," than miss the opportunity altogether. "Say, 'sure as death,' father!" demanded Jimmy. The assurance was given, and sacredly kept! and Jimmy got a bit of advice, instead of the rod his father intended for him!

"A horn spoon hands nae poison," say the Borderers: as much as to say, that among the humble poor treachery is little to be dreaded. What Scotchman doesn't remember the horn spoons his mother brought out on grand occasions, for "kail"; or once a year, some family-anniversary, for haggis? the humbler representatives being "cutties" used for the morning parritch. I once called at a gypsy's house in Yetholm, belonging to a professed and hereditary spoon-maker, to get a few of his finest spoons. I found the lazy fellow in bed. He told me he was "sick." I never heard the broad Scotch spoken with such a "burr." "I hae nae spunes enow," said he; "I canna get nae horrns to mak' them: an' I'm no weeleneuch to mak' them!" He told me he could make them of any pattern ordered—"the siller-spune paittern, or the fiddle paittern, or any paittern ye like it." I was sorry I did not get them. "Cast ye ower the house rigin'," said one Scotchman to another, "and ye'll fa' on your feet!" a tribute, if taken in good sense to the national thriftiness of the Scotch; but may also be applied to over-reaching and sharp dealing.

WILLIAM WYE SMITH.

TO ADA.

LITTLE lady Ada in thy lambent eyes,
Subtle-coloured fancies fall and rise—
Rise and fall on a brown ground rare,
Float and fade like the passing of a shade
Or the tremor of the sunlight in the air.

Fancies of the sky, fancies of the sea,
Gladness of the green grass, freedom of the tree,
Tossing all its glossy leaves and blowing branches bright,
Fancies of the heart, shining through in part,
Like a light behind the shoulders of the night.

Little lady Ada, be thy fancies green or gray,
Castles built of sunbeams or slighter dreams than they,
Holding thee in laughter or in tears,
Beneath it all, remember, true life lies low, an ember
That shall live in what comes after all the years.

Ottawa.

COLIN A. SCOTT.

ADJOINING FIELDS.

I.

My bosom, life-giving,
Yields toilers their bread.
I nourish the living,
My bosom life-giving,
Till weary of striving,
They envy the dead.
My bosom life-giving,
Yields toilers their bread.

II.

The weary, toil-laden
Lie down on my breast,
And find the lost Aiden,
The weary toil-laden;
Life's tree throws its shade on
This haven of rest.
The weary toil-laden
Lie down on my breast.

WILLIAM MCGILL.

A CANADIAN VIKING.

HE is not a dazzling personage. The sun falling in mid-summer brightness upon him does not glint on cap of burnished steel, nor ripple over gleaming hauberk, nor flame upon the edge of trenchant axe or lethal sword. The light is lost upon his sombre figure, save only for the dull gleam of the oilskin sou'wester which covers his head and the duller sheen of the well greased dreadnaughts which encase his legs halfway to the hip.

Yet, as he stands upon the verge of the little jetty, in sharp contrast with the foreground of light green waves, he is good to look at—a theme for a master's brush or chisel. Rolf Ganger himself had not among all his followers a warrior more heroically proportioned than this child of the sea. Beneath his closely-fitting, dark blue jersey are incomparable thews and sinews; biceps and deltoid, resembling more than aught else bunches of knotted cord; shoulders and neck invested with bands of supple steel. Such part of his face as is not concealed by the dark beard is the colour of "heart of oak." His eye is deep, vigilant, certain; unerring in following the changes of the most restless of all the elements; bold to dare without blinking the lash of the fiercest storm, and, in the white, of that pearly hue significant of a healthy body. Add to these details the stride of a Colossus, with the stature and bulk of a guardsman, and you have a picture, in no whit overdrawn, representative of perhaps the most virile and self-reliant of the factors which go to make up our national life; the hardy race which garners the harvest of our coast waters.

Within the bays and lesser inlets, breaking the continuity of our rock-bound Eastern coasts, are to be found as true specimens of the fisherman, and as perfect types of muscular humanity, as the world can produce. Trained from infancy in the use of the oar, upon waters that are never calm, they become perfectly inured to all the sudden perils and dangers of the deep. Pursuing their finny prey, they make daring flights seaward, in boats which, compared with those employed in the fisheries of the old country, seem the veriest cockle-shells. Alertness of sight, activity of body, prompt decisiveness of character, are prime necessities, and consciously exercised. Fear is practically an unknown quality, magnificent powers of effort and endurance are evolved, yet close intimacy with nature in its grandest aspects acts as a preservative from that coarseness of mental fibre so often associated with the highest development of the body. The possession of more than average strength seems, amid artificial surroundings, to exert a greater or less brutalizing effect. From this blemish, however, our fishermen are notably free. As a rule, they are charmingly unsophisticated, with a fine trait of manly tenderness and gentleness indescribably attractive to one accustomed to the rigorous conventionalities of inland life.

Such is Pierre, the subject of our sketch: a lineal descendant it may be of hardy Breton or Norman stock; in strength and manliness and faultless courage, peer of the noblest of his prototypes, sung by scald or celebrated in saga; in skilful and successful seamanship, more than their equal; in robust honesty, frugality, self-control, patient endurance of privation, and all the homelier virtues, far above them. Life-long use of ponderous ashen sweeps