



The Beacon



VOL. XXX

SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1919

NO. 31

COMIN' HAME

Clap your han's, my bonnie bairnie,
Clap your han's and caw,
Sing a song to welcome daddy—
Lang he's been awa'.

Noo, I see his boatie comin',
Ou' the snaw-white faem,
Clap your han's, my bonnie bairnie,
Daddy's comin' hame.

A' nicht lang, when you are sleepin',
Snaug in bed and warm,
Daddy's boat was tossin' sairly,
In the ragin' storm.

But you kent na' o' his danger,
Smilin' as you slept,
You were daffin' wi' the angels,
While your mammy wept.

Lang I watched for mornin' dawnin',
Thro' the winnock wee,
While the waters lood were rushin',
An' the winds were hie.

A' the time my he'd was prayin',
For your daddy dear,
That the Lord wad guide his boatie—
Guide it safely here.

Yon's my answer, bonnie bairnie,
Yon's your daddy's boat,
Sune into the peacefu' harbor,
It will safely float.

Sune you'll hear him owre the water
Cry his laddie's name;
Clap your han's my bonnie bairnie,
Daddy's comin' hame.

CANDLEMAS

FROM a very early, indeed unknown date in the Christian history, the 2nd of February has been held as the festival of the Purification of the Virgin, and it is still a holiday of the Church of England. From the coincidence of the time with that of the *Fébruation* or purification of the people in Pagan Rome, some consider this as a Christian festival engrafted upon a heathen one, in order to take advantage of the established habits of the people; but the idea is at least open to a good deal of doubt. The popular name *Candlemas* is derived from the ceremony which the Church of Rome dictates to be observed on this day; namely, a blessing of candles by the clergy, and a distribution of them amongst the people, by whom they are afterwards carried lighted in procession. The more important observances were of course given up in England at the Reformation; but it was still, about the close of the eighteenth century, customary in some places to light up churches with candles on this day.

At Rome, the Pope every year officiates at this festival in the beautiful chapel of the Quirinal. When he has blessed the candles, he distributes them with his own hand amongst those in the church, each of whom, going singly up to him, kneels to receive it. The cardinals go first; then follow the bishops, canons, priests, abbots, monks, &c., down to the sextons and the poorest of the people, who receive theirs. This ceremony over, the candles are lighted, the Pope is mounted in his chair and carried in procession, with hymns chanting, round the ante-chapel; the throne is stripped of its splendid hangings; the Pope and cardinals take off their gold and crimson dresses, put on their usual robes, and the usual mass of the morning is sung. Lady Morgan mentions that similar ceremonies take place in all the parish churches of Rome on this day.

It appears that in England, in Catholic times, a meaning was attached to the size of the candles, and the manner in which they were burned during the procession; that, moreover, the reserved parts of the candles were deemed to possess a strong supernatural virtue:

This done, each man his candle lighteth
Where chiefest seemeth he;
Whose taper greatest may be seen;
And fortunate to be,
Whose candle burneth clear and bright;
A wondrous force and might
Doth in these candles lie, which if
At any time they light,
They sure believe that neither storm
Nor tempest doth abide,
Nor thunders in the skies be heard,
Nor any devil's spite,
Nor hurts of frost or hail, &c.

The festival, at whatever date it took rise, has been designed to commemorate the churching or purification of Mary, and the candle-bearing is understood to refer to what Simeon said when he took the infant Jesus in his arms, and declared that he was a light to lighten the Gentiles. Thus literally to adopt and build upon metaphorical expressions, was a characteristic procedure of the middle ages. Apparently, in consequence of the celebration of Mary's purification by candle-bearing, it became customary for women to carry

candles with them, when, after recovery from child-birth, they went to be, as it was called, *churched*. A remarkable allusion to this custom occurs in English history. William the Conqueror, become, in his older days, fat and infirmly, was confined a considerable time by a sickness. "Methinks," said his enemy the King of France, "the King of England lies long in childbed." This being reported to William, he said, "When I am churched, there shall be a thousand lights in France! And he was as good as his word; for, as soon as he recovered, he ordered a great number of the French territory, which he wanted wherever he went with his army."

At the Reformation, the ceremonies of *churching* were not retained in honor. Henry VIII. proclaimed in 1534, "On Candlemas day it shall be declared, that the bearing of candles is done in memory of Christ, the spiritual light, whom Simeon did prophesy, as it is used in the church that day." It is curious to find it noticed as a custom down to the time of Charles II. that when lights were brought in at night, people would say—"God send us the light of heaven!" The amiable Herbert, who notices the custom, defends it as not superstitious. Somewhat before this time, we find Herrick alluding to the customs of *Candlemas*; and it appears that the plants put up in houses at Christmas were now removed.

'Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe;
Instead of holly now upraise
The greener box for show.

The holly hitherto did sway,
Let box now domineer,
Until the dancing Easter day
Or Easter's eve appear.

The youthful box, which now hath grace
Your houses to enve,
Grown old, surrender must his place
Unto the crisped yew.

When yew is out, then birch comes in,
And many flowers beside,
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,
To honor Whitsuntide.

Green rushes then, and sweetest bents,
With cooler calken boughs,
Come in for comely ornaments,
To re-adorn the house.

These things, which were once
do hold;
New things succeed, as former things
grow old.

The same poet elsewhere recommends very particular care in the thorough removal of the Christmas garnishings on this eve:

'That so the superstitious find
No one least branch left there behind,
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,
So many goblins you shall see.'

He also alludes to the reservation of part of the candles or torches, as calculated to have the effect of protecting from mischief:

'Kindle the Christmas brand, and then
Till sunset let it burn,
Which quenched, then lay it up again,
Till Christmas next return.

Part must be kept, wherewith to tend
The Christmas log next year,
'And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischief there.'

There is a curious custom of old standing in Scotland, in connection with *Candlemas* day. On that day it is, or lately was, a universal practice in that part of the island, for the children attending school to make small presents of money to their teachers. The master sits at his desk, or table, exchanging for the moment his usual authoritative look for one of bland civility, and each child goes up in turn and lays his offering down before him, the sum being generally proportioned to the abilities of the parents. Sarcasm and a shilling are the usual common terms in most schools; but some give half and whole crowns, and even more. The boy and girl who give most are respectively styled King and Queen. The children being then dismissed for a holiday, proceed along the streets in a confused procession, carrying the King and Queen in state, exalted upon their seat formed of crossed hands which, probably from this circumstance, is called the *King's Chair*. In some schools, it used to be customary for the teacher, on the conclusion of the offerings, to make a bowl of punch and regale each with a glass to drink the King and Queen's health, and a biscuit. The latter part of the day was usually devoted to what was called the *Candlemas Mass*, or Mass, namely, the conflagration of any piece of furze which might enter in their neighbourhood, or, were that wanting, of an artificial bonfire.

Another old popular custom in Scotland on *Candlemas* day was to hold a football match, the one end of a town against the west, the quarrelled men against the married, or one parish against another. The *Candlemas* Ball, as it was called, brought the whole community out in a

EVENING SONG

LOOK off, dear Love, across the shallow sands,
And mark you nothing of the sun and sea,
How long they lie in sight of all the lands,
Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red tinge melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra might drink all, 'Tis done,
Love, lay thine hand to mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer ye o'er waves, and the unlighted sands,
I might almost say, 'twere sky and air,
Nave! on the, but hark!

—SIBNEY LAMER.
(Born February 7, 1842; died September 7, 1881.)

THE DRY SEAS

WONDER why that Flying Dutchman never flies to-day
Swinging idly in the offing where his lost luggage stay,
Wonder would our jetties weaken, if he should appear,
If the gods should meet the goblin, wouldn't it be queer?

Wonder why that old sea serpent keeps himself so dark;
Heaving ash cans on his coils—that would be a task!
If our navy ever sights him, that old lobster called the kraken,
Bet a bomb he will be potted, or uncomely badly shaken.

Wonder if there is a reason why that saily humber vanished,
Why the mermaid and the merman and the Hollander are banished,
Was it grog that made 'em see things, 'twas the dry seas lost their wonder?
Did old Davy close his locker when John Barleycorn went under?

—Chicago Tribune

PREFACE TO THE FIRST CHEAP EDITION OF "PICKWICK PAPERS"

AN Author who has much to commiserate under this head, and expects to have it attended to, may be compared to a man who takes his friend by the button at a Theatre Door, and seeks to entertain him with a personal gossip before he goes in to the play.

Nevertheless, as Prefaces, though seldom read, are continually written, no doubt for the behoof of that so richly and so diversely endowed personage, Postscript (who will come into an immense fortune), I add my legacy to the general remembrance; the rather as ten years have elapsed since the *Pickwick Papers* appeared in a completed form, and nearly twelve since the first monthly part was published.

It was observed in the Preface to the original Edition, that they were designed for the introduction of diverting characters and incidents; that no ingenuity of plot was attempted, or even at that time considered very feasible by the Author in connexion with the desultory mode of publication adopted; and that the machinery of the Club, proving cumbersome in the management, was gradually abandoned as the work progressed. Although on one of these points, experience and study have since taught me something, and I could perhaps wish now that these chapters were strung together on a stronger thread of general interest, still, what they are they were designed to be.

In the course of the last dozen years, I have seen various accounts of the origin of these *Pickwick Papers*; which have, at all events, possessed—for me—the charm of perfect novelty. As I may infer, from the occasional appearance of such histories, that my readers have an interest in the matter, I will relate how they came into existence.

I was a young man of three-and-twenty, when the present publishers, attracted by some pieces I was at that time writing in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper (of which one series had lately been collected and published in two volumes, illustrated by my esteemed friend Mr. George Cruikshank), wrote upon me to propose a something that should be published in shilling numbers—then only known to me, or I believe, to anybody else, by a dim recollection of certain interminable novels in that form, which used, some five-and-twenty years ago, to be carried about the country by pedlars, and over some of which I remember to have shed innumerable tears, before I served my apprenticeship to Life.

When I opened my door in Furnival's Inn to the managing partner who represented the firm, I recognized in him the person from whose hands I had bought, two or three years previously, and whom I had never seen before or since, my first copy of the Magazine in which my first effusion—dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street—appeared in all the glory of print; on which occasion, by-the-by—how well I recollect it!—I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride, that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there. I told my visitor of the coincidence, which we both hailed as a good omen; and so fell to business.

The idea propounded to me was, that the monthly something should be executed by Mr. Seymour; and there was a notion, either on the part of that admirable humorous artist, or of my visitor (I forget which), that a "Ninrod Club," the members of which were to go out shooting, fishing, and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity, would be the best means of introducing these. I objected, on consideration, that although born and partly bred in the country I was no great sportsman, except in regard of all kinds of locomotion; that the idea was not novel, and had been already much used; that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I should like to take my own way, with a freer range of English scenes and people, and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at starting. My views being deferred to, I thought of Mr. Pickwick, and wrote the first number, from the proof sheets of which, Mr. Seymour made his drawing of the Club, and that happy portrait of its founder, by which he is always recognized, and which may be said to have made him a reality. I connected Mr. Pickwick with a club, because of the original suggestion, and I put in Mr. Winkle expressly for the use of Mr. Seymour. We started with a number of twenty-four pages instead of thirty-two, and four illustrations in lieu of a couple. Mr. Seymour's sudden and untimely death before the second number was pub-

state of high excitement. On one occasion, some years ago, when the sport took place in Jedburgh, the contending parties, after a struggle of two hours in the streets, transferred the contention to the bed of the river, and there fought it out amidst a scene of fearful splash and babblement, to the infinite amusement of a multitude looking on from the bridge.

Considering the importance attached to *Candlemas* day for so many ages, it is scarcely surprising that there is a universal superstition throughout Christendom, that good weather on this day indicates a long continuance of winter and a bad crop, and that its being foul is on the contrary, a good omen. Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Vulgar Errors*, quotes a Latin distich expressive of this idea:

'Si sol splendens, Maria purificante,
Major erit placus post festum quam fuit ante.'

which may be considered as well as translated in the popular Scottish rhyme:

If *Candlemas* day be dry and fair,
The half o' winter's to come and mair;
If *Candlemas* day be wet and foul,
The half o' winter's gane at Yule.

In Germany there are two proverbial expressions on this subject: 1. The shepherd would rather see the wolf enter his stable on *Candlemas* day than the sun. 2. The badger peeps out of his hole on *Candlemas* day, and when he finds snow, walks abroad; but if he sees the sun shining, he draws back into his hole. It is not improbable that these notions, like the festival of *Candlemas* itself, are derived from pagan times, and have existed since the very infancy of our race. So at least we may conjecture from a curious passage in Martin's *Description of Western Islands*. On *Candlemas* day, according to the following curious custom: "The mistress and servants of each family take a sheet of oats and dress it up in women's apparel, put it in a large basket, and lay a wooden club by it, and this they call *Brid's Bed*, and then the mistress and servants cry three times, "*Brid is come; Brid is welcome!*" This they do just before going to bed, and when they rise in the morning they look among the ashes, expecting to see the impression of *Brid's* club there; which, if they do, they reckon it a true presage of a good crop and a prosperous year, and the contrary they take as an ill omen."—*Chambers' Book of Days*.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER

P. McLaughlin, Esq., of St. George, who is now visiting his daughter in St. John, in renewing his subscription to *THE BEACON*, writes as follows:

"I have been a subscriber for *THE BEACON* for six years. I subscribed for A. W. Smith's paper, 'The Standard,' and for J. G. Lorimer's 'Bay Pilot,' and continued my subscription when J. S. Magee edited it, and when E. R. Armstrong took it over and renamed it 'THE BEACON.' I remained a subscriber, and am still keeping on, but it cannot be too long."

We sincerely hope that Mr. McLaughlin, who is so well known and so much esteemed in St. George and throughout Charlotte County, may be long spared to subscribe to *THE BEACON*, or whatever name the St. Andrews paper may be or whoever may edit it. It is such constant and appreciative subscribers as Mr. McLaughlin who gladden the heart of editors and give them the much needed encouragement and inspiration. May their numbers increase and their lives be greatly prolonged.

NEWS OF THE SEA

—Halifax, N. S., Jan. 25.—The bark *John*, of Newfoundland, which sailed from Cadiz, Spain, on December 13, was reported a derelict and a menace to navigation by the steamer *Hanington Court* to-day. The *John* was sighted on January 20, with mismanagement standing in latitude 46.29 north, longitude 48.40 west. The *Hanington Court*, twenty-three days out from Portland, England, arrived here last night. She encountered heavy weather and sustained some damage.

—Boston, Jan. 26.—The British steamer *Trinidad*, which arrived today from Calcutta and Colombo, reported the death of a Chinese sailor and injury to seven others of the crew, when a great

NON-INDURIOUS

"Do you think that cigarettes are injurious?"
"They have never hurt me."
"How many do you smoke a day?"
"None."

SHOWING UP HIS FAMILY

A grammar school teacher having asked for a short essay employing certain words ending with "ion," a pupil handed in this astonishing production:

"Father's habit is a collection; mother's one disposition; nature is an aggregation; brother's is a conflagration; and baby's is a promiscuous."

lished, brought about a quick decision upon a point already in agitation, the number became one of thirty-two pages with two illustrations, and remained so to the end. My friends told me it was a low, cheap form of publication, by which I should ruin all my rising hopes, and how right my friends turned out to be, every body now knows.

"Box," my signature in the *Morning Chronicle*, appended to the monthly cover of this book, and retained long afterwards, was the nickname of a pet child, a younger brother, whom I had dubbed Moses, in honor of the Vicar of Wakefield, which being facetiously pronounced through the nose, became Boses, and being shortened, became "Box" was a very familiar household word to me, long before I was an author, and so I came to adopt it.

It has been observed of Mr. Pickwick that there is a decided change in his character, as these pages proceed, and that he becomes more good and more sensible. I do not think this change will appear forced or unnatural to my readers, if they will reflect that in real life the peculiarities and oddities of a man who has anything whimsical about him, generally impress us first, and that it is not until we are better acquainted with him that we usually begin to look below these superficial traits, and to know the better part of him.

Let there should be any well-intentioned persons who do not perceive the difference (as some such could not, when *OLD MORRILLITY* was newly published) between religion and the cant of religion, piety and the pretence of piety, a humble reverence for the great truths of Scripture and an audacious and offensive obtrusion of its letter and not its spirit in the commonest discussions and meanest affairs of life, to the extraordinary confusion of ignorant minds, let them understand that it is always the latter, and never the former, which is satirized here. Further, that the latter is here satirized as being, according to all experience, inconsistent with the former, impossible of union with it, and one of the most evil and mischievous falsehoods existent in society—whether it establish its head-quarters, for the time being, in Exeter Hall, or Ebenezer Chapel, or both. It may appear unnecessary to offer a word of observation on so plain a head. But it is never out of season to protest against that coarse familiarity with sacred things which is busy on the lip, and idle in the heart; or against the confounding of Christianity with any class of persons who, in the words of SWIFT, have just enough religion to make them hate, and not enough to make them love, one another.

I have found it curious and interesting, looking over the sheets of this reprint, to mark what important social improvements have taken place about us, almost imperceptibly, even since they were originally written. The licence of Counsel, and the degree to which Juries are ingeniously bewildered, are yet susceptible of moderation; while an improvement in the mode of conducting Parliamentary Elections (especially for counties) is still within the bounds of possibility. But legal reforms have pared the claws of Messrs. Dodson and Pegg; a spirit of self-respect, mutual forbearance, education, and co-operation, for such good ends, has diffused itself among their clerks; places far apart are brought together, to the present convenience and advantage of the Public, and to the certain destruction, in time, of a host of petty jealousies, blindnesses, and prejudices, by which the Public alone have always been the sufferers; the laws relating to imprisonment for debt are altered; and the Fleet Prison is pulled down!

With such a retrospect, extending through so short a period, I shall cherish the hope that every volume of this Edition will afford me an opportunity of recording the extermination of some wrong or abuse set forth in it. Who knows, but by the time the series reaches its conclusion, it may be discovered that there are even magistrates in town and country, who should be taught to shake hands every day with Common-sense and Justice; that even Poor Laws may have mercy on the weak, the aged, and unfortunate; that Schools, on the broad principles of Christianity, are the best support for the length and breadth of this civilized land; that Prison doors should be barred on the outside, not less heavily and carefully than they are barred within; that the universal diffusion of common means of decency and health is, as much the duty of the poorest of the poor, as it is indispensable to the safety of the rich, and of the State; that a few petty boards and bodies—such as the Poor Law Board, and the Board of Health, which roam around them—are not to be despised; and that the most important of these are the Poor Law Board, and the Board of Health, which roam around them—are not to be despised; and that the most important of these are the Poor Law Board, and the Board of Health, which roam around them—are not to be despised.

And that *Chico's Literature* is not behind-hand with the Age, but holds its place, and strives to do its duty. I trust the series in itself may help much worthy creatures as their will, or always to keep their little address going, for a "Bance of Books."

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—London, 1837.
Dedicated to the Public.
First published in 1837.
Second Edition, 1850.
Third Edition, 1853.
Fourth Edition, 1856.
Fifth Edition, 1859.
Sixth Edition, 1862.
Seventh Edition, 1865.
Eighth Edition, 1868.
Ninth Edition, 1871.
Tenth Edition, 1874.
Eleventh Edition, 1877.
Twelfth Edition, 1880.
Thirteenth Edition, 1883.
Fourteenth Edition, 1886.
Fifteenth Edition, 1889.
Sixteenth Edition, 1892.
Seventeenth Edition, 1895.
Eighteenth Edition, 1898.
Nineteenth Edition, 1901.
Twentieth Edition, 1904.
Twenty-first Edition, 1907.
Twenty-second Edition, 1910.
Twenty-third Edition, 1913.
Twenty-fourth Edition, 1916.
Twenty-fifth Edition, 1919.