

NOTCHES ON THE STICK.

PATHEFEX AND HIS INTERESTING
CHAT ON VARIOUS WRITERS.

Ethelwyn Wetherald is a N. W. and Pleasant Canadian writer—Quotations from Her House of the Trees—What John G. Whit-
ter Thought of Spirituality.

When one has tried everything else with conspicuous success he may be advised to exercise himself as a prophet, and to commence with the exact date of the world's destruction, and a circumstantial account of the exact procession of events in that long-expected universal disruption. There need be no discouragement on account of such predecessors as Miller and kindred interpreters of the signs of the times and the beasts of Revelation; nor on account of Mother Ship-on, whose doggerel is a song the things of the kind most current and popular known. What an elaborate and detailed programme of events she devised!—concluding with the one which is to make father mundane developments impossible. One Arritini had long ago decided that all things should suffer wreck, somewhere from the first to the fifteenth of November, 1881. He, too, arranged an elaborate programme, as though he proposed to be master of ceremonies. The time came round, and the universe certainly underwent a very quiet and orderly demolition. The mode was too refined and rare for ordinary appreciation, and it may have been that the affair was strictly private. The Italian of the fifteenth or some other century, could not have devised a more agreeable style of disruption and dissolution than was then enjoyed. What agreeable gentlemen and ladies these prophets really were whom we vulgarly suppose to have been grisly ogres! What a long breath of satisfaction the world must have drawn when their predictions were so agreeably fulfilled! Dryden,—who loved the grandiose,—suggests a magnificent programme, in which the principal parts are musical, as you may find by reference to his odes:

When in mid-air the golden trumpet shall sound,
To raise the nations underground;
When in the valley of Jehoshaphat
The judging God shall close the book of Fate,
And there the last and last be kept
For those who wake and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly
From the four corners of the sky;
When shrouds o'er the skeletons are spread,
Tosses clothed with rib, and the inspired the dead
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
The foremost from the tomb shall bound,
For they are covered with the lightest ground;
And straight, with inborn vigor on the wing,
Like mourning lark, to the new morning sing.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blissful above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

'The poets shall come first for they are covered with the lightest ground,'—Dryden not being able to appear among them, seeing he has all of Westminster Abbey over him. We would not be found guilty of irreverence, nor of speaking lightly of that day of awe and wrath—

When fire
Shall to the battlements of heaven aspire—
the theme of seer sibyl and poet; but rather of the self-constituted prophets and visionaries, who pretend, against the scripture that as sure as that no man or angel knows the time, to tell us when that day will arrive. Their dark oracles may well be spoken unheeded.

Alfred Tennyson wrote.
How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thoughts would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shall thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience like a star at rest.

We can think of no eminent person of this century more fitted to hold communion with spiritual existences, by the purity of his heart and the soundness of his head, and the benignity and quietude of his inward life, than John Greenleaf Whittier. Yet this was the last theme on which he was disposed to dogmatize, or to profess an expert knowledge. He accepted with much caution and reserve the professions of the Spiritualists of his time, and did not look with favor upon seances and mediumship. We find him writing as follows in a letter to Annie Fields:

With regard to modern Spiritualism I have had a feeling that it was not safe or healthy for mind or body to yield itself to an influence the nature of which was unknown. There is a fascination in it, but the fascination is blended with doubt and repulsion. I am disgusted with the tricks and greed of these mediums; their pretended spiritual intercourse has none of the conditions which Tennyson's "In Memoriam" describes, and I do not know that I really need additional proof of the life hereafter. I think my loved ones are still living and awaiting me. And I trust and wait. And yet how glad and grateful I should be to know! I must believe that our friends are near us—that they still love and watch over us.

There are some things so fit and good as to challenge neither praise nor blame, but simple content and approval. They exist from the first by inherent right, and abide not our question. They delight and feed us, as the forms of nature do, and we think not to bring them to the standard of art. Like "Bonnie Doon" and "Annie

Lwrie," like the birds of the air, they are free, and it would be in us insensibility or ingratitude not to welcome them. Such a birth of music is the book, "The House of the Trees," which in its light green garb, and with its title-page in verde, and with the hue of a spring forest at the head of every page, seems to have been a gift from some dryad to him who, loving to haunt the tree in which she dwells, has fallen in to her good graces. As fit as the bird's nest is to the crotch of the tree where we find it, as fit as the glow-worm to its cradle of moss or grass by the wayside, so fit is this book for a pocket companion during a stroll under the arches of a grove, or sitting in some little sylvan nook where the sunlight comes strained through a sieve of green leaves and falls on the open page in arabesque of gold. You have the Interpreter with you in your House Beautiful and all the serene enjoyment that awaits you there she has felt and understood before you. You can do no better, by way of grace before such meat, than to utter her invocation:

Ope your doors and take me in,
Spirit of the wood;
Wash me clean of dust and din,
Clothe me in your mood.
Take me from the noisy light
To the sunless place,
Where at midday standeth night,
Singing tolls release.
All your dusky twilight stores
To my senses give;
Take me in and lock the doors.
Show me how to live.
Lift your leafy roof for me,
Part your yielding walls,
Let me wander lingeringly
Through your scented hall.
Ope your doors and take me in,
Spirit of the wood;
Take me—make me next of kin
To your leafy brood.

There is no Amen written at the close, but the spirit will turn him. Some of the best are appropriate to the season. We would like to quote all:

By Fields of Grass.
By fields of grass and wood and silence
The city's tumult is encamped around;
The jingling, clanging, shrieking bands of sound
Expire within the wide world-circling breeze.
The soul amid a multitude of trees,
Or grass enveloped on the fragrant ground,
Is lifted to its utmost starry round,
And listens to celestial harmonies.
From this unspokeable divine rebirth,
Its scord life returning shows through rifts
The purely spiritual, the low musical
The streams and breeze blowing across the earth,
How light the tree its trunkly load uplifts,
How easily the weed a beautiful.

And this may well be said, while our orchards are double bloomed, and the air is a sweetness:

Apple Blossoms.
Amid the young year's budding hopes,
When eager grasses wrap the earth,
I see on greenening orchard slopes
The blossoms trembling into birth.
They open wide their rosy palms
To feel the hesitating rain,
Or beg a longer-for golden aims
From skies that deep in clouds have lain.

They mingle with the blue bird's song,
And with the warm wind's reverie;
To sward and stream their snow belongs,
To neighboring pines in flocks they flee.
Oodly crowned, with breathing hopes
The branches bending down to earth,
That feel on greenening orchard slopes
Their blossoms trembling into birth.

Here is a sonnet, descriptive of the later season:

October.
Against the winter's heav'n of white the blood
Of earth runs very quick and hot today;
A storm of fiery leaves are out at play
Around the lingering sunset of the woods.
The roses of blackberries unmoored stand,
Run streams of ruddy color wildly gay;
The golden lane half dreaming picks its way
Through wheeling vines, as thro' a gleaming flood.

O warm, outspoken earth, a little space
Against thy beating heart my heart shall beat,
A little while they twain shall bleed and burn,
And then the cold touch and the gray gray face,
The frozen pale, the drifted winding-sheet,
The speechlessness, and the chill burial urn.

We have not selected these as the best of a writer who makes every reader in love with trees and birds and all the joys of country life, her admiring debtor, and she has many sympathetic readers and admirers both in the United States and in Canada. Miss Ethelwyn Wetherald is not a mocking-bird in songful versatility; but she has the sincere and constant clearness of the song-sparrow, in whose pure notes there is an unwavering sweetness. No false, or merely imitative, notes are heard; and, though you do not recall the brilliancy of this or that strain so readily as with some singers, yet the impression of the whole is more memorable and pleasing. In the uniformity of excellence her work may challenge comparison with any poetess in America today. Few can write a finer or more natural poem than that entitled—

Pine Needles.
Here where the pine tree to the ground
Lets slip its fragrant load,
My footsteps fall without a sound
Upon a velvet road,
O poet pine that turns thy gaze
Alone unto the sky,
How softly on earth's common ways
Thy sweet thoughts fall and lie!
So sweet so deep, seated by the sun,
And smitten by the rain,
They pierce the heart of every one
With fragrance keen as pain.
O if some pass nor heed their sweet
Nor feel their subtle dart,
Their softness still the noisy feet,
And still the noisy heart.
O poet pine, thy needles high
In starry light above,
And now for footsores passers-by
They make a velvet road.

Other favorites we should like to give, if we had time and space, such as, "The



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Sound of the Axe, 'The Sun on the Trees,' 'The Sky Path,' 'The Woodside Way,' 'The Visitors,' 'When Days Are Long,' 'The March Orchard,' 'The Blind Man,' 'A Slow Rain,' 'At Dawn,' 'Winter,' 'The Big Moon,' 'Come Back Again,' 'June Apples,' and 'The Wind of Memory.' Miss Wetherald, who is a native of Ontario, and is of Quaker parentage, has not confined herself to verse, nor done all her singing in sculpture, but has been active in the pursuits of journalism and fiction. Her name is of frequent occurrence in the pages of 'St. Nicholas,' 'The Youth's Companion,' and other American magazines. She has performed editorial service on the staff of the 'Toronto Globe,' and edited for some time the monthly called 'Wives and Daughters,' published at London, Ont.

A portrait adds grace to this delightful volume, disclosing a face of tender thoughtfulness, delicacy and beauty.

A correspondent to the Toronto Week contributes a list of words, made up from his reading of current Canadian periodicals which, making all due allowance for the errant typographer, indicate that the tyro and the socialist are abroad in the land. The complaint is given both with editorial endorsement, and is worthy of attention. Every writer for the press knows how certainly, in the necessary haste with which newspaper work is done, errors will appear; but when it comes to the production of the book or the magazine there is less excuse, for there should be skillful proof-reading and the author should scan his own pages. It cannot be doubted that many words are now used without due understanding, and misquotation is in order everywhere. Just now we fear of a leaf of our Columbia Bicycle Calendar and read the familiar stanza of Cowper as follows, giving the revised punctuation:

"How fleet is a glance of the wind,
Compared with the speed of its flight;
Where rove of blackberries unmoored stand,
Run streams of ruddy color wildly gay;
The golden lane half dreaming picks its way
Through wheeling vines, as thro' a gleaming flood."

Read that stanza as the poet wrote it, and judge what marvellous appreciation is here indicated!

The reader of The Presidential Address on "The Archives of Canada," delivered at the opening of the last Assembly of The Royal Society of Canada, by the President, James McPherson Lemoine, will recognize that grace of style which has the power to clothe with charm the subjects which by reason of baldness and dryness in other men's hands, may become unattractive. The greatness and importance of the work concerning which this pamphlet, now published and ready for general circulation, informs us, will also be apparent. A complete history is giving of the housing, arrangement and care of our public documents which has been finally accomplished, very largely through the valuable instrumentality of Mr. Douglas Brymner at present the able superintendent of Dominion Archives, at Ottawa.

We have before us the initial number of a new magazine published in Toronto, in evidence of the literary enterprise of that city, and of the Dominion. We intend more particular notice of it hereafter.

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SWIFT PIGEONS.

More Than a Million Made in a Recent Trial.

Aided by a southerly wind and a perfectly clear sky, the first test of the pigeons which are to represent the first Chicago Homing Club in the National Federation this year was a most notable success. It took place Saturday morning, May 9, and the trial was remarkable in more than one feature. Two hundred and eighty-one birds, the largest number which the club has ever liberated from one racing station, made the trip, and of that number every bird was replying peacefully in its loft by 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The time made by the first birds to arrive home was the fastest ever made over the course, and represents a speed of more than a mile a minute.

The birds were liberated at Monce, forty-two miles away from the nearest loft at 7.30 o'clock, and White Wings, owned by L. Versuren, stepped back in its loft at 8.14½. White Wings was closely followed by nearly half the flock, and fifty arrivals were reported between 8.15 and 8.17. Instantly as every bird spent at least five minutes in circling before starting on a line for home, the speed shown is materially more than a mile in each sixty seconds. The members of the club were delighted over the performance of their pets, and they write in saying that the club will be richer by several of the Federation racing diplomas before the season is over. As an illustration of how little even the best fanciers are able to judge of the merits of their own pets, it is interesting to note that White Wings had been considered almost worthless. Only a month ago he was flown from Sixty-first street, a distance of eight miles, to his loft, and took sixteen days to make the journey. That was his first trial, and he was sent to Monce Saturday quite as much in the hope that he would be lost as for any other reason.—Chicago Chronicle.

GLASS FOR SKYLIGHTS.

Glass has hitherto been the best material known for skylights, but it was forever cracking, breaking and leaking, owing to the effect on it of heat, cold, blows, storms, expansion, contraction, etc. To overcome these defects many and various forms of skylight frames have been invented, but the troubles are not materially lessened. The introduction of iron at steel in the construction of buildings has made matters worse for the glass skylight. The expansion and contraction of the metal frame work plays havoc with the glass, and the yearly cost of repairing is considerable. To meet this need for a more durable skylight material, a translucent wire cloth has been invented; which, when filled in with a semi-transparent, impervious substance, does all that glass can do, and a great deal more. While transmitting a large amount of light, it is strong, flexible, weather-proof, durable and practically unbreakable. The substance covering the wire cloth is composed almost entirely of boiled linseed oil, which is subjected to an oxidizing process. The material is claimed to be virtually fireproof, and to cost much less than glass skylights.

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Peculiar New Elements.

The recently discovered elements, argon and helium, the former of which has been found to be a constituent of air, appear to possess peculiar and anomalous electrical properties. The latest investigations recently submitted to the Royal Society seem to show a branch between them and what may be termed ordinary elements. For instance, helium acts at atmospheric pressure exactly like other gases do at exceedingly high exhaustions, such as are obtained in vacuum tubes. Another property is that of the enormous length of spark that is produced in helium and the unusually long, though less lengthy sparks in argon. Other experiments seem to show that in argon and helium we have elements the electro-chemical properties of which are decidedly anomalous.

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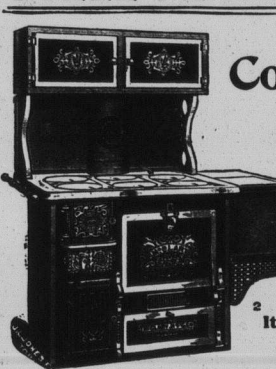
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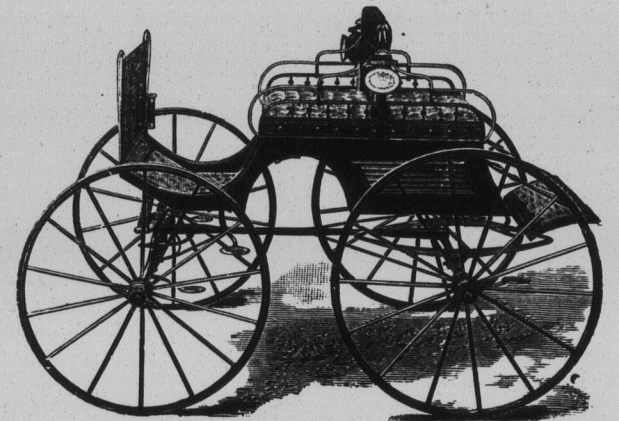
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