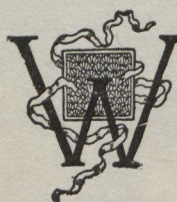


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My University Career.

BY ROBERT BARR.



WHAT a wonderful thing is a letter. It searches a man out like a detective. Here is one just opened from the Editor of VARSITY. It has been dropped into a post-box in Canada, and it comes to me in the pockets of a Highland gillie across the peat moss to the shores of Loch Gorm, near the western limits of Islay.

I have been whipping the lake for trout with four flies on the end of a string, and I have killed eight this far, but the sun comes out too strongly, so I ask the gillie to pull for the shore, and tramp three miles for the belated mail, that a Scottish paper two days old may tell me what is going on in the remote world. I lazily stretch out on the warm heather until he returns. Thus the Canadian letter comes to me, and all for two cents.

The nearest post-office is Bruichladdich, nine miles away, and the mail arrives at the farm house where I am staying once a day from Bruichladdich. This name, as you university people will be well aware, is Gaelic for the hill or "brae" on the shore. It seems to stagger my English correspondents, for they write it in various forms, one penning it "Ballachladdich" which also happens to be presentable Gaelic, "Ballach" meaning "boy," so that combination would signify "the boy on the shore," and it reminded me of a song I heard sung in Toronto last time I was there, whose refrain ran, "We left the baby on the shore."

The Canadian letter referred to asks me to write a short story for this publication. If there is one thing more than another that I don't want to do at the present moment, it is to write a short story. I am in the Highlands of Scotland, finishing a long book, with the completion of which the constant interruptions of London interfered. Besides, I have just refused a similar request from a similar periodical connected with the most notable university in Great Britain, but Toronto has a status all its own in my affections, as I gathered some smattering of knowledge within its precincts in my younger days, and though I will not write a story I shall give a reminiscence.

The University buildings of Toronto always seemed to me among the most beautiful of their kind. I thought this when I first saw them, knowing nothing of architecture, and in later days, after visiting many of the more notable edifices in the world, I have found no occasion to change my opinion. It was ever a delight to me to wander through those lofty and impressive halls, or to gaze at that noble front and well-proportioned tower from the park.

It is probably nowhere recorded that I was ever a student within its walls, yet such was the case. For one whole day I picked up various crumbs of information at that granary of knowledge.

It came about in this way. A railway was being run through our farm in western Ontario. I scraped acquaintance with the engineers who were surveying the line, and I learned with incredulous amazement the remuneration