

THE TRUE HISTORY OF WILLIAM TELL.

William Tell is very hard to kill. German writers in the last century demolish him over and over again, but to little purpose. He remained the Swiss hero, and what is far worse, those hideous statues at Altorf continue to assert their undying ugliness, and pretend to prove, by their presence there, the truth of the story. The giant has been recently slain once more as an impostor. Once more? Half a dozen times; and each slayer takes himself for the sole and original champion. Swiss professors even have been at the work of demolition. Three or four years ago Mr. Baring-Gould, in his "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," set up a dozen of those myths, and bowled them all down at one bowl; he proved, as others had done, that the legend of William Tell was "as fabulous as any other historical event." Mr. Baring-Gould, however, does more than some others have done. He traces the story as far back as it can be traced. This is the order of the tradition:

1. In the tenth century a tipsy, boasting, Danish soldier, named Toki, swore he could drive an arrow through an apple placed on the point of a stick at a great distance. King Harald Bluetooth told the boaster that the apple should be placed on his son's head, and if Toki did not send an arrow through it at the first attempt, his own head should pay the penalty. Toki performed the feat with perfect success; but Harald perceiving he had brought other arrows, demanded the reason thereof, and Toki replied that if he had injured his son he would have driven those other arrows into the king's body. The story was first related by Saxo Grammaticus in the twelfth century.

2. But in the eleventh century the above prototype of Tell had successors or imitators. King Olaf, the Saint of Norway, challenged Eindridi, among other things, to shoot with an arrow at a writing tablet on the head of Eindridi's son. Each was to have one shot. Olaf grazed the boy's head, whereupon the boy's mother interceded, and Eindridi was withdrawn from the contest. Olaf remarked that his competitor had a second arrow, which Eindridi confessed that he intended for his Majesty if anything very unpleasant had happened to the boy.

3. A year or two later in this 11th century, another Norse archer, Hemingr, had a match with a King Harold. Harold set a spear shaft for a mark in the ground. He then fired in the air: the arrow turned in its descent and pierced the spear haft. Hemingr followed suit, and split the king's arrow, which was perpendicularly fixed in the spear shaft. Then the king stuck a knife in an oak. His arrow went into the haft. Hemingr shot, and his arrow cleft the haft and went into the socket of the blade. The enraged king next fired at a tender twig, which his arrow pierced, but Hemingr's split a hazel nut growing upon it. "You shall put the nut on your brother Bjorn's head," said Harold, "and if you do not pierce it with your spear at the first attempt, your life shall be forfeited." Of course, the thing was done. Hemingr is supposed to have had his revenge by sending an arrow through Harold's trachea at the battle of Stamford Bridge, where he fought on the English side.

4. In the Faroe Isles, the above Harold is said to have had a swimming match with a certain Geyti, who not only beat him, but gave him a ducking. Harold condemned him to shoot a hazel nut off his brother's head under the usual penalty, and with the usual result.

5. The same story is told of one Puncher (suggestive name) with this difference, that the object aimed at was a coin.

6. In Finland, it is a son who shoots an apple off his father's head, for which feat some robbers who had captured his sire gave him up to the son.

7. In a Persian poem of the 12th century, a king in sport shoots an arrow at an apple on the head of his favourite page, who, though not hurt, died of the fright.

8. The story with a difference, is told of Egil, in the saga of Thidrik, of no particular date.

9. It is familiar to us in the English ballad of William of Cloudeley, chronological date of event uncertain.

10. Enter William Tell in the first decade of the fourteenth century. We need not tell his well-known tale again. It is only necessary to remark, by way of comment, that the Tell and Gesler legend was not set up till many years afterwards, and that in no contemporary record is any mention made of Tell, Gesler, or the apple incident. No Vogt named Gesler ever exercised authority for the Emperor in Switzerland; no family bearing the name of Tell can be traced in any part of that country.

11. And lastly. The hero's name was not Tell at all, but M'Leod, and he came from Braemar! Mr. Baring-Gould has quite overlooked him. Therefore is the new claimant's story here subjoined, in order to make the roll of legends complete. It is taken from "The Braemar Highlands; their Tales, Traditions and History," by Elizabeth Taylor. The king referred to is Malcolm Canmore:

"A young man named M'Leod had been hunting one day in the royal forest. A favourite hound of the king's having attacked M'Leod, was killed by him. The king soon heard of the slaughter of his favourite, and was exceedingly angry—so much so, that M'Leod was condemned to death. The gibbet was erected on Craig Choinnich, i. e., Kenneth's Craig. As there was less of justice than revenge in the sentence, little time was permitted ere it was carried into execution. The prisoner was led out by the north gate of the castle. The king, in great state, surrounded by a crowd of his nobles, followed in procession. Sorrowing crowds of the people came after, in wondering amazement. As they moved slowly on, an incident occurred which arrested universal attention. A young woman with a child in her arms came rushing through the crowd, and, throwing herself before the king, pleaded with him to spare her husband's life, though it should be at the expense of all they possessed. Her impassioned entreaties were met with silence. Malcolm was not to be moved from his purpose of death. Seeing that her efforts to move the king were useless, she made her way to her husband, and throwing her arms around him, declared that she would not leave him—she would go and die with him. Malcolm was somewhat moved by the touching scene. Allen Durward, noticing the favourable moment, ventured to put in the suggestion that it was a pity to hang such a splendid archer. 'A splendid archer, is he?' replied the king; 'then he shall have his skill tried.' So he ordered that M'Leod's wife and child should be placed on the opposite side of the river; something to serve as a mark was to be placed on the child's head. If M'Leod succeeded in hitting the mark without injuring his wife or child, his life was to be spared, otherwise the sentence was to be

carried into immediate execution. Accordingly (so the legend goes) the young wife and child were put across the river, and placed on Tomhainmheine; according to some, a little farther down the river, near where a boat-house once stood. The width of the Dee was to be the distance separating M'Leod from his mark. He asked for a bow and two arrows, and having examined each with the greatest care, he took his position. The eventful moment came, the people gathered round him, and he stood in profound silence. On the opposite side of the river his wife stood, the central figure of a crowd of eager bystanders, tears glistening on her cheeks as she gazed alternately at her husband and child in dumb emotion. M'Leod took aim; but his body shook like an aspen leaf in the evening breeze. This was a trial for him far harder than death. Again he placed himself in position; but he trembled to such a degree that he could not shoot, and turning to the king, who stood near, he said in a voice scarcely articulate in its suppressed agony, 'This is hard!' But the king relented not; so the third time he fell into the attitude, and as he did so almost roared, 'This is hard!' Then, as if all his nervousness had escaped the cry, he let the arrow fly, it struck the mark. The mother seized her child, and in a transport of joy, seemed to devour it with kisses; while the pent-up emotion of the crowd found vent through a loud cry of wonder and triumph, which repeated itself again and again as the echoes rolled slowly away among the neighbouring hills. The king now approached M'Leod, and, after confirming his pardon, inquired why he, so sure of hand and keen of sight, had asked for two arrows? 'Because,' replied M'Leod, 'had I missed the mark, or hurt my wife or child, I was determined not to miss you.' The king grew pale, and turned away as if undecided what to do. His better nature prevailed; so he again approached M'Leod and with kindly voice and manner told him that he would receive him into his body guard, and he would be well provided for. 'Never!' answered the undaunted Celt. 'After the painful proof to which you have just put my heart, I could never love you enough to serve you faithfully.' The king in amazement cried out, 'Thou art a Hardy! and as Hardy thou art, so Hardy thou shalt be.' From that time M'Leod went under the appellation of Hardy, while his descendants were termed the M'Hardy's, Mac being the Gaelic word for son. The date of the above is the 11th century, when the legend burst forth in several parts of the world. Here we have it in Scotland. Like many other legends it probably came originally from India.—Notes and Queries.

HER MAJESTY AT BALMORAL.

Her Majesty's habits at Balmoral are very simple. About seven she prepares for rising, breakfast at nine, after breakfast she has her despatches. Then follows private correspondence, a heavy item in the Queen's list of duties. Two special messengers convey the despatches to London, one to relieve the other, as they travel day and night. Luncheon is at two o'clock, and in the afternoon the Queen usually takes an airing in her carriage. On the lawn in front of the castle a picturesque white tent stands, and Her Majesty passes much of her time in that snug little corner. During meals the Queen's piper plays in front of the windows. Of pipers there are several, we believe; Ross, the Queen's piper, is chief, and it is a sight to see the handsome old Highlander in full costume, marching proudly to time as he plays a pibroch. The Queen dines at half-past eight; her own table is spread in the library. Since the Prince Consort's death, Her Majesty has not made personal use of the dining-room; the ladies and gentlemen of the Court dine there. The arrangements of the room are of the simplest character, even to the dinner-table. A very select party dines with Her Majesty, not even the Princess Beatrice, unless on an extra occasion. The Queen is very fond of the open air, and in all weathers she is to be seen abroad. A rainy day does not keep her within doors; in her waterproof and umbrella she defies the elements. It is quite a common occurrence to see her walking in the grounds under a drizzling rain. The weather, in fact, has no influence upon the Royal programme. So far as concerns Her Majesty's "constitutional airings," a good stout umbrella carries her bravely through a pelting rain or powdering snow-drift, whether on foot or seated in her open carriage, or trotting on her Highland pony. But there can be no doubt our Queen is a hardy woman, at least she has no "fine lady fancies" in the matter of constitutional delicacy. She does not bother with superfluous wrappings when she faces the "snell" mountain breeze; she dresses consistently with the climate and the weather, and in a comfortable plain jacket and broad-trimmed straw hat.—Court Journal.

A PRACTICAL REFORM.

A correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial, writing from London, gives the following account of the way in which an English clergyman reformed the morals of a community:—

"There has just come to my knowledge an instance of the moral effect which may be produced by making the Sunday attractive to the minds and tastes of the poor, which may interest some of your philanthropists. A clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. Frederick Silver, was appointed twenty-two years ago to a parish in Shropshire in Norton-in-Hales. The parish was noted for drunkenness, lawlessness, and every species of vice which is harvested from general ignorance. Being a man of some means, as well as of good sense, he determined to compete with the gin-shops for the interest of the roughs on Sundays. Sunday, he perceived, was the very worst day in the week, Satan always finding plenty of mischief to be done by the idle hands of the Nortonians on that day. How to deal with this matter? Some suggested prayer-meetings and other ritualistic entertainments. But the rector conceived another idea. For many weeks there were seen going up to his door large and peculiar boxes and cases, which greatly excited the curiosity of his neighbours.

"Then he purchased the largest suit of rooms he could get in the town. After the curious cases had been coming in for a month or two, lo! the people of Norton-in-Hales were one morning astounded by the appearance of placards on every wall and on the trees far away in the country, announcing that Mr. Silver had made up a museum, and that it would be open to the public the following Sunday afternoon! The dissenting parsons groaned; the deacons were dumb; the roughs rubbed their eyes. On Sunday they first crowded to hear the Rev. Frederick Silver preach. He modestly related how he had recognized, as he believed, the chief need of the town, and why he had resolved to collect a museum. In the afternoon they crowded to the museum. They saw there over one hun-

dred capital paintings, among them works by Carlo Dolce, Del Piombo, Caracci, Westall, Hogarth, N. Poussin, Wouvermans, Gainsborough, Landseer. They saw a model of the Alhambra, in Spain; specimens of cocoons at work, and the 136 colours silk can take; a fine model of an elephant, taken from a palace in Delhi during the mutiny; cases of English coins, from William the Conqueror to Queen Victoria; antique watches and jewellery; a case of remarkable autographs of great men; a noble ornithological collection, including 32 fine Austrian specimens; a whole room fitted with the costumes, boots and shoes, nets, implements, weapons, etc., of New Zealand, Madagascar, North America, Africa, China and India.

"They saw Cromwell's sword. But I must not try to give you Mr. Silver's catalogue, which implies that the good man had devoted his whole means to his project, and no doubt levied contributions upon important sources. Well, this thing has gone on for over 15 years; the result is not only that there is no seat in Mr. Silver's church unoccupied, but his museum has revolutionized the community in Norton-in-Hales. I saw not long ago a Shropshire paper which declares that the rector found that parish 'so lawless that its name had obtained a notoriety, and that it is now one of the happiest communities in England.' The cottages are so large and so handsome that travellers ask, 'Where do the labourers live in this village?' A school has arisen, a new medical dispensary, a library. The rector's church had to be rebuilt to hold the large crowd, and during the work he was in the habit of aiding it with his own hands. This is the way Sabbath-breaking has demoralized the Nortonians, who are so infatuated that they recently held a festival in honour of their rector, whom they declared by resolution 'the leader in every good work which could promote the intellectual and moral character of the people.' If all rectors were like Silver, we should hear little talk of disestablishment."

Miscellaneous.

Stanley has been offered the freedom of the City of London, through the medium of the Company of Turners.

The Pope has added to the list of Catholic saints the late Queen Maria Christina of Naples, Nicholas von der Flue, the French priest Jean d'Arc, and Pope Eugenius III.

The Khedive of Egypt has sent two officers to Copenhagen to report upon the industrial exhibition in that capital, and to establish, if suitable, commercial relations between Egypt and Scandinavia.

A Corinthian Column, crowned with the Angel of France, veiled and drawn sword in hand, is the design for a national monument to the French killed during the recent war. A model is now exhibiting in the Paris Opera House.

A new form of advertising has appeared in France; an advertiser constructs a van in the form of a giant, fashionably dressed; a boatmaker adopts the form of a boat; a shirtmaker that of a chemise. The idea draws attention and laughter.

The Austro-Indian War.—The history of the Austrian campaign in Italy in 1859 will be officially published by the end of November. The issue had been delayed by considerations of politics and propriety, although the work was ready for the press in 1864.

Coming events cast their shadow before. The Imperialloge at the Paris Opera has been let at last, after remaining unoccupied for two years; but the prudent manager stipulates that the lease shall be annulled if ever a monarch of any sort should claim the box.

At the close of the French and German war quantities of seed potatoes were sent from Great Britain to enable the half-starved French farmers, whose land had been overrun by the contending armies, to produce a crop for the ensuing year. Part of the second year's produce of those seed potatoes is now being shipped for the English market.

It is reported that a gambling table will be established at Valuz, the capital of the little principality between Switzerland and the Austrian Tyrol, which has never been meditated, owing to its geographical position being safe from any annexation. The reigning Prince is said to have interested a powerful railway company in the construction of a railway from Feldkirch and Bludenz to Lichtenstein, on the banks of the Swiss Rhine.

Mathieu Poupin is an insatiable ichthyologist, who frequents the Paris Halls Centrales, and lives on scraps of raw fish that the women amuse themselves by giving him. For a couple of sous he will swallow any amount of the flimsy tribe without troubling himself in the least about their staleness. He intends to go the round of the fairs next year to exhibit his voracious talent. If we are to believe certain "scientists" Mathieu ought to have a well-developed brain.

The Swiss Times tells us of a marvel of calligraphy executed by Quirico Carlo, the court engraver of the King of Italy, and presented to the German Emperor in honour of his recent victories. The Emperor accepted it, and sent back a handsome sum. The design represents not only the "Heroes of German Unity," as the heading styles it, but also gives the names of the most celebrated men in Germany in all branches of science and art, and is executed in more than one hundred different styles of hand-writing.

Several attempts have been made to introduce steamers between Panama and the minor Central American ports, but have proved failures. The objections of the natives to steam navigation are truly characteristic of a race to whom time is not money. "How can you expect us Spanish Americans to support such an imposition?" said a man from Chiriqui. "A sailing vessel takes a week from our place to Panama. During the whole of that time we are supplied with meat and drink, and pay only twenty-eight dollars; whilst the steamer goes in less than a day, gives us but two meals at most, and charges thirty dollars. If your own countrymen are silly enough to submit to such charges, they may do so; but we certainly shall not."

The Manchester Guardian says that a very funny illustration of the danger of exciting American susceptibilities has occurred at Cardiff. "Colonel" Davies, the United States Consul at that port, is also the owner of an estate near the town, and on Thursday he appeared in the County Court as defendant in an action for assault. The plaintiff was an old farmer who had been excluded by the Colonel from a path which he claimed to have the right to use. The Colonel's defence was that the old man had used "disrespectful language to the representative of 40,000,000 of people," and he furthermore informed the court that he had struck for freedom "beneath that broad and beautiful flag," the Stars and Stripes. The Judge of the County Court seems to have been so much affected by the magnificent figure which the defendant made that he was unable to give judgment at once.