Charles Dickens Among the Scots

(J. M. Sloan in T. P.'s Weekly.)

"Blessings on your kind heart, my dearest Dickens, for that, after all, is your great talisman, and the gift for which you will be not only most loved, but longest remembered." A sentence of prophecy which time tends to fulfil! It was the opening passage of a letter received by Charles Dickens from Lord Jeffrey in 1844. What puzzling contrasts are men! As editor of the Edinburgh Review, Jeffrey had poured the scorn of an implacable criticism upon Wordsworth and denounced the Lake poets for "a most formidable conspiracy against sound judgment in matters poetical." The same Boanerges of criticism, twenty years after, was completely fascinated by Dickens' early work. In the simplicity, directness, and cunning force of his style "Boz" appealed to Jeffrey, of whom Lord Holland remarked that he had lost his broad Scotch at Oxford, and only gained the narrow English.

The year 1841 found Jeffrey no longer wielding the tomahawk of criticism, but enjoying otium cum dignitate in the office of a judge of the court of session. Although he might not commend Dickens to the Scots in the magazines, he introduced him in the flesh to his then increasing throng of northern admirers. The old judge—he was 70 then—drove about in Edinburgh, it was said, telling everybody that literature had seen nothing "so good as Nell since Cordelia." He met Dickens in London, and informed him of a desire widespread among influential Scots that he should visit Edinburgh.

In Edinburgh.

Dickens accepted Jeffrey's invitation, and arranged to visit Edinburgh and make a considerable tour in Scotland at midsummer of the same year—1841. He was happy then in the earliest years of marriage. His Kate was by his side. Cradle and nursery were vocal with the childhood he loved. Accompanied by his wife, and with the eccentric Angus Fletcher, a wandering Scot, for his attendant, he left home for Edinburgh in June. Jeffrey had arranged a reception for him. Scotland was preoccupied with theological controversy and Whig versus Tory politics, for the Disruption was but two years ahead, and Dr. Chalmers was still at the zenith of his national fame and power. And so, when the Scots were in a fever of debate about Non-Intrusion and the Divine Headship in the Kirk as opposed to the human headship of the civil magistrate, when the Calvinist had the Arminian by the throat about Predestination; when the Whig would not accept a dram or a pinch of snuff from a Tory, Dickens, young, handsome, gentle, winsome, the wonder of the hour in letters, appeared like a golden moon in soft beauty, rebuking the menace of the clouds among the illuminati of the Scottish capital. A public banquet was organized in his honor. Jeffrey, the chief promoter of the movement, fell sick, and was unable to preside at the banquet; his place was taken by John Wilson, better known by his nom de guerre of "Christopher North." The banquet was an unqualified success. Seventy people were unable to procure seats. Nobody of consequence stayed away excepting certain small-souled Whig partisans who, much to Dickens' astonishment, suspected the Tories of the design to make party capital out of the event. Two hundred ladies of the Order of the Blue Stocking attended. A cloud darkened the sky. Just then the death of Sir John Wilkie was announced. Dickens charmed the Scots by his speech on Scottish literature, and by the melting pathos of his tribute to the memory of Wilkie. All Edinburgh worshipped the youthful hero. The town council, responsive to the popular excitement, bestowed upon Dickens the freedom of the city—an honor then rarely given to an Englishman.

"Barnaby Rudge."

On the occasion of that historical first visit, Dickens spent a month in Scotland, where at intervals he completed the writing of "Barnaby Rudge." He made an extensive tour in the Highlands, and explored the weird wilds of Glencoe. In the border country he stood with moist eyes by the grave of Scott in Dryburgh Abey. Although an admirer of the poetry of Burns, he returned to London without visiting the "auld clay biggin'" and "Alloway's auld haunted kirk" and the "auld brig o' Doon"; or any part of Burns' romantic Westlands. Future years saw Dickens increasingly appreciated by the Scots. He returned among them in 1847, when he opened the Glasgow Athenaeum, with an address of much eloquence and charm, in which he remarked: "We never tire of the friendships we form with books." Just then he crossed to Edinburgh, renewed his intercourse with Jeffrey, and on seeing the Scott Monument pronounced it a "failure." "It is like the spire of a Gothic church," he wrote, "taken off and stuck in the ground." Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, all welcomed him when he arrived later with readings from his own books. In 1858 his profits from readings in Scotland amounted to £500 after all expenses were paid. He received £600 for three evenings and one morning in Glasgow. Dickens loved the Scots, albeit he blundered by estimating the people of Dundee as "in respect of taste and intelligence below any other of his Scottish audiences." Longer acquaintance with Dundee would have convinced Dickens that George Gilfillan could not make all the people there windbags like himself, and that there are no such sharp wits, no such brilliant scholars, no such intelligent lovers of art, anywhere else in Scotland as may be found in the breezy estuary of the Tay.

Great Appreciations.

Jeffrey and Carlyle were contrasted Scottish types. Both great men appreciated the genius of Dickens. "I never can bless and love you enough," wrote Jeffrey to Dickens; and in another letter, "I want amazingly to see you rich." Carlyle was the Puritan modified by culture, and his idealism was of wider range than Dickens knew. Yet he too loved "Boz," whom he described at the death of the latter in 1870 as "the good, the gentle, the high-gifted, the ever-friendly, noble Dickens." Jeffrey discovered the utilitarian element in the Scot which "keeps the Sabbath, and anything else it can get its hands on," and, without renouncing theology and the Kirk, holds the man to be effectually called who discharges his duties with ability and success, while cultivating the pleasures of friendship, handing round the snuff or the dram, and passing with a smile or the sigh of Calvinist resignation from the wedding to the funeral. Both Jeffrey and Carlyle, also, agreed to glorify the genius of Burns, who combined many types in his amazing personality. Burns was the forerunner of Scott, and both prepared the way for that appreciation of Dickens everywhere between Berwick and Kirkdale which has made the man and woman of the English novels, hardly less familiar at the Scottish fireside than the man and woman of Burns.

RECALLS EARLY STRUGGLES

Continued from Page Seventeen.

which were photographed as he wished.

"Bell was in some respects an odd or peculiar man," Mr. Edy states. "In his appearance and disposition he was somewhat eccentric. The entire family of the Bells were great students, and all deeply scientific. Bell's father was a marvellous reader. The whole range of scientific knowledge formed his field.

A Fact About Camel's Hair.

"He was also an elocutionist, as were others of the family. When he was just commencing his experiments, I remember him coming into the studio one day with a smoked glass and a camel's hair, attached to a membrane, which vibrated when he spoke into a primitive form of transmitter.

"He had discovered that the camel's hair would trace identically the same markings on different pieces of smoked glass when he repeated the same words or sentences.

"Little by little he perfected his instrument. Although the farm was just across the river from the studio, he had to string about three miles of wire around the bend in the river to communicate with the city. For a time the wires were connected with a transmitter in a meeting house in the city, and the Bell family sat in the farmhouse and listened to the preaching and psalm-singing in the town kirk.

Half-Interest for $700.

"Bell realized the value of his invention, but he needed money badly to improve it, and bring it into general use. At one time he offered a half-interest in the invention to a London man for $700. But the latter delayed closing the bargain, and missed the opportunity of his lifetime. It is said, however, that one investor put $100 into the telephone and subsequently drew out $100,000."

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LONE CHILD SURVIVES

(Continued from Page Eighteen.)

out of the mountains. Then, lovingly, she combed our hair and helped us to dress quickly for the journey.

"When we were ready, except cloak and hood, she led us to the bedside and we took leave of father. The men helped us up the steps and stood us up on the snow. She came, put on our cloaks and hoods, saying, as if talking to herself, 'I may never see you again, but God will take care of you.'

"Frances was 6 years and 8 months old, and could trudge along quite bravely, but Georgia, who was little more than 5, and I, lacking a week of 4 years, could not do well on the heavy trail, and we were soon taken up and carried. After travelling some distance, then men left us sitting on a blanket upon the snow, and went ahead a short distance, where they stopped and talked earnestly, with many gesticulations. We watched them, trembling lest they leave us there to freeze. Then Frances said:

"'Don't feel afraid. If they go off and leave us, I can lead you back to mother by our footmarks on the snow.'

"After a seemingly long time, they returned, picked us up and took us on to one of the lake cabins, where, without a parting word, they left us."

Little Waif's Last Sight of a Sacrificing Mother.

"How long the storm had lasted we did not know, nor how many days we had been there. We were forlorn as children can possibly be, when Simon Murphy, who was older than Frances, climbed to his usual lookout on the snow above the cabin to see if any help were coming. He returned to us, stammering in his eagerness:

"'I seen—a woman—on snow shoes—coming from the other camp! She's a little woman—like Mrs. Donner. She is not looking this way—and may pass.'

"Hardly had he spoken her name before we had gathered around him and were imploring him to hurry back and call our mother. We were too excited to follow him up the steps.

"She came to us quickly, with all the tenderness and courage needed to lessen our troubles and soften our fears. Oh, how glad we were to see her, and how thankful she appeared to be with us once more! We heard it in her voice and saw it in her face, and when we begged her not to leave us she could not answer, but clasped us closer to her bosom, kissed us anew for father's sake, then told how the storm had distressed them.

"John Baptiste had promised to care for father in her absence. She left our tent in the morning as early as she could see the way. She must have stayed with us over night, for I went to sleep in her arms, and they were still around me when I awoke, and it seemed like a new day, for we had time for many cherished talks.

"She had parted from us and put us in charge of men who had risked much and come far to do a heroic deed. Later she had found us, abandoned by them in time of direst need and in danger of an awful death, and had warmed and cheered us back to hope and confidence. Now she was about to confide us to the care of a party whose leader swore either to save us or die with us on the trail. We listened to the sound of her voice, felt her good-by kisses and watched her hasten away to father, over the snow, through the pines and out of sight, and knew that we must not follow. But the influence of her last caress, last yearning look of love and abiding faith, will go with us through life."

Such was our author's last sight of her mother. It was the beginning of the end, too, of her experiences in wild adventuring. The rest of her interesting story deals, except for notes of her perished companions on the trail, with her life as a waif on the far coast.—New York World.

London, at 261 Dundas Street

THE RIGHT WAY TO READ

[By Ambassador Bryce.]

Mr. James Bryce, in his agreeable "Principles and Maxims for the Reading of Books," gives this bit of advice: "One should read in a critical, that is to say, a searching, testing spirit. Our spirit ought, no doubt, to be respectful to the author of the book if he happens to be a well-informed man; but respect is not the same thing as submission."

That word "well-informed" makes us think Mr. Bryce must be speaking of books that aim to give information, to supply facts, or to show the relations between facts. Books that do this, or that try to change the reader's mind, may of course safely be read in a searching, testing, critical spirit. But how about books that stir the feelings or set a lighted match to the imagination? Is it not true that reading such books in a critical spirit is almost the same as not reading them at all? That the only way to read them is to be temporarily submissive?

Take a particularly happy and greatly enjoying reader, like Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and listen to his account of the right way to read a poem by Goethe or Stefan George. He does not think he has read such a poem, he tells us, until he has lived it. Clearly he reads in almost a fury of submission. Living much among books he gets one of his acutest pleasures by surrendering himself for the time being to his author. Later, when he has cooled down, Herr Von Hofmannsthal can criticize with the best of them as his prose essays show.

Anybody who looks back across his reading year and picks out the fiction and the poetry that have really counted in his life, will find that in most cases he read them in his least critical spirit. They laid their spell upon him so strongly that his critical faculty was inhibited. Nor, if he is wise, will he be sorry that he once read them in this way.—New York Globe.

The quicker a cold is gotten rid of the less the danger from pneumonia and other serious diseases. Mr. B. W. L. Hall, of Waverly, Va., says: "I firmly believe Chamberlain's Cough Remedy to be absolutely the best preparation on the market for colds. I have recommended it to my friends and they all agree with me." For sale by all dealers. 1

Women Go to the Polls

The New Zealand women were the first to get the ballot. The following condensed table, taken from the New Zealand official year book, summarizes the vote at the principal elections held since women enjoyed the franchise:

	Men		Women	
	On Electoral Roll.	Actually Voted.	On Electoral Roll.	Actually Voted.
1893	193,536	123,792	109,461	90,290
1896	196,925	149,471	142,305	108,783
1899	210,529	159,780	162,315	119,550
1902	229,845	180,294	185,944	138,565
1905	263,597	221,611	212,876	175,946
1908	294,073	238,538	242,930	190,114

Notwithstanding the reports that the New Zealand women are politically indifferent, they have maintained almost uniform interest in the matters of legislation, and have cast as many votes in proportion to their numbers, as the men. This is said to be the case in Finland, where women are in the legislative body. In this country, however, women have not made so favorable a showing. In the light of the reported Los Angeles registration, it is to be doubted if many American women really want or appreciate the ballot.—Indianapolis News.

And many a man who believes in doing the greatest good to the greatest number regards number one as the greatest number.

AWAKENED BY A BEAR.

[Springfield Republican.]

John Gallant, a Berkshire street railway lineman, had a startling encounter with a big black bear at an early hour yesterday morning at the Navin cottage, half-way up October Mountain, on the Lee side.

About 12 o'clock he got sleepy, stowed himself in a sleeping bag and lay down on the floor. He was awakened some time later by being rolled over roughly. His first impression was that his comrades had returned and were having some fun with him. He called and was startled by a deep growl, and then thoroughly awake, he found a big black bear bending over him. He unbuckled the bag with all haste, and as he got out the animal ran into the cellar.

Gallant got a gun and started after him, only to find that the bear had gone out through the cellarway. In the morning tracks were found leading toward the Whitney swamp. Game Warden Chapel, on the Whitney preserve, says that he mistrusted that a large animal of some kind was in the neighborhood, as the moose appeared so restless.

Little drops of comfort, little grains of hope, fill the office seeker full of election dope.

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