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Miscellany.

Anecdotes of Scott.

No pleasant anecdote has been told of any man. These are generally well known, but I will trust that the following will be new to my readers. Mrs. John Ballantyne was just married. She was young, the beauty of Edinburgh, and half spoiled by flattery. She was to meet Sir Walter at dinner, and resolved to put on airs, and show the great lion of the time that she was not to be brought to fawn even at his feet. He asked her to take a glass of wine, and she affected not to hear him; but the great man, instead of noticing this girl's folly, proceeded to talk to her with such politeness that she speedily felt ashamed of herself. This lady related that once, at her own table, on the occasion of a large and ceremonious dinner-party, there was a scarcity of spoons, and what added to the awkwardness, at the precise moment when the servant was washing the spoons for further use a most determined pause in conversation occurred. The silence was so profound that no sound was to be heard save the whispers of the servants just without, and the washing of the spoons. At last the blushing lady's husband drank "Relief to all distress," which broke the spell, and set all laughing, while Mr. James Ballantyne called out, with a line of Shakespeare:—
"My lord, my lord, methinks you'd spare your spoons."

"Not I, indeed, my lord," responded Mrs. B., "for I have none to spare." "Not amiss," said Sir Walter, in genial recognition of the lady's hit. Next day a parcel came to her, directed in an unmistakable handwriting, containing a dozen of the least honest spoons that could be obtained in Edinburgh.

This same old lady relates a story which deserves to be told as one of the most singular among the curiosities of literature. She relates that once when her brother-in-law, James was reading to her, Scott entered, and told him to go on reading. As the reader proceeded, Scott at first nodded approbation, then said, "Good!" next, "Very good!" "Charming!" "Powerful!" until at last the upper lip began to elongate, and even to tremble, and the tears fell. Snatching his staff, he strode across the room, and looked over Mr. Ballantyne's shoulder to see what the volume was. It was "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." He was quite in raptures, dashed the tears indignantly from his eyes, uttered an impatient, "Pshaw!" and said, "God help me, James; I am losing my memory."

SCOTT'S LAST DAYS.—He is found in 1830 lying senseless on the floor of his dear Abbotsford under an apoplectic attack. This is not the worst. A mad political pamphlet warns his friends that the mental life has suffered also; and when he has written this last novel, "Count Robert of Paris," that same old friend Ballantyne, who once had to tell him that he must concede the palm in poetry to Byron, is forced to tell him that "Count Robert" is an utter failure. Most sad is the entry thereon in his diary: "The blow is a stunning one, I suppose, for I scarcely feel it. I am at sea in the dark, and the vessel leaky. I think, into the bargain, I have suffered terribly, that is the truth, rather in body than in mind; and I often wish I could lie down and sleep without waking. But I will fight it out if I can." Alas! such efforts to "fight it out" as "Castle Dangerous" only proved more plainly that the night had come, in which, as he at last sadly said, no man can work. In a ship placed at his disposal by the government he sails to the far south, and in sight of Pompeii he writes a new tale for his friends to suppress—"The Siege of Malta." He even begins another, but, now indeed the pen falls finally from his hand. To reach Abbotsford, that he may die there, is now the one task left him. By slow stages he is borne thither, and at last his old steward, Laidlaw, meets him at the porch. "Ha, Willie Laidlaw! Oh, man, how often have I thought of you!" In the effort to fondle the dogs that come about his knees he sinks to stuper. Slowly the weeks creep on; again and again he demands to be set up at his desk, only that his head may fall upon his breast, and the pen fall from his fingers. He will have the Bible and the church service read and re-read to him, listening with a serene light on his face in the intervals of his stupor. Until at last the slumber gently falls on his eyelids to be lifted no more. Of date September 21, 1832, is the brief note which Mr. Watson, of Edinburgh, showed me, written by William Laidlaw: "I have to inform you that Sir Walter Scott died an hour ago." What epitaph more fit and true for him than the last words he addressed to those who gathered around him: "I am drawing near the close of my career. I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day; and it is a comfort for me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principles, and that I have written nothing which on my death-

bed I should wish blotted."—From "The Scott Centenary at Edinburgh," by M. D. Conway, in Harper's Magazine for February.

Interesting Tale.

HOW I LOST MY WAGER.

It was a bright, sunny morn, one of the few that had gemmed the brow of that fearful April. The sky was as serenely blue as if it had never been darkened by storms; the flowers coqueted with roving butterflies, and gossiped with sober honey-bees, as gaily as if there were no such things in the future as nipping frosts or wintry winds. The odor-laden breeze stole softly through the open window, pressing cool kisses on my cheek, and sending an indescribable thrill of joy through my soul. What a beautiful day! I soliloquized. So I tied on my straw hat, and having bid mamma good-by, I set out on my way to the home of my dearest and most intimate friend, Annie Lyle, who lived about half a mile from the village.

I had often lamented over the distance that separated us, but this day I rather rejoiced at the long walk; so I tripped on with light heart, for my life, like the day, was in its morning; there were no clouds, all was sunshine and happiness.

As I left the precincts of the busy town, and heard around me no ruler sounds than the warble of birds, or the murmur of the stream that flowed along the road side, I felt as if I too must give vent to my wild happiness; and so I shouted forth a chorus in a style that would have greatly scandalized my music-master had he heard my performance.

Perhaps I was a little out of tune that memorable morning; any way my strain certainly provoked the contempt of a pair of jays; for they were quite enough until they heard my voice, when they derisively screamed out in a harsh manner. I stopped and gravely addressed them thus: "You insolent, ill-bred creatures, how dare you mimic me? To punish you, I'll have a peep at your nest, and so teach you to be more polite to strangers in future."

I turned toward the tree where those abominable birds still kept up their noisy clamor; but to reach the tree I must first cross the brook. There were no stepping stones, and the stream was pretty broad. I can leap over, I said to myself; and I did leap over, but as my feet touched the opposite bank, I slipped on the ground and fell. Oh! what a fall was there, my countrywomen! I heard a smothered laugh as I went down, and hastily springing to my feet, saw a young man approaching; a clump of bushes prevented me from seeing him sooner.

How glad I was that he did not get near enough to assist me before I arose from my recumbent position. Oh! how I despised him as I detected a suppressed smile lurking around the corners of his mouth. In a grave voice he inquired if I was hurt.

No, I was not hurt; but was intensely mortified. To be caught in the undignified act of leaping a brook was bad enough; but to have a stranger gentleman see me fall in the mud—it was shocking. These thoughts flashed through my mind as I received my work-basket from the stranger's hands, he having fished it out of the water.

I thanked him as well as I could in my confusion, and not daring another look at his face, I crept away, blaming those horrid birds for my mishap, and vowing eternal vengeance on the whole tribe.

Why, what is the matter, Belle? What makes you blush so furiously? And how did you contrive to get all that mud on your dress? asked Annie in great astonishment, as she met me at the door.

"Fell in the brook," was my curt reply. Well, come in my room, was the pleasant rejoinder, and I'll lend you one of my dresses.

Annie led the way to a cozy little room, where sat Irene May, another of my friends, and again I was questioned about my queer personal appearance.—Irene wished to know if I was masquerading in the disguise of an Indian?

I related my adventure, and when I had finished, my auditors burst into a merry peal of laughter.

You look out of humor, Belle, said Annie. I'm afraid your fall has dampened your spirits as well as your clothes.

And you don't know who the strange gentleman is that witnessed your fall? queried Irene. No, and I don't wish to know, either. I devoutly hope I shall never see him again, I answered crossly.

You'll be very likely to see him in a few hours, as he is staying here, said Annie quietly.

What! and I fairly start, you don't mean that he is—

"Frank Elliott," she continued, enjoying my surprise; "you have heard me speak of him. Mr. Elliott and his cousin, Arthur Gray, arrived last evening; Charlie has been expecting them some

time. But what did you think of Mr. Elliott?"

Why, I think he is tolerably good-looking."

"Good-looking!" echoed Irene, "why, I think he is very handsome. I wonder at you, Belle."

"And I wonder at you, Irene, for thinking any one handsome except the incomparable Charlie," I retorted.

Irene colored and was silent; she knew I was aware of her engagement with Charlie Lyle.

"I suspect you and Mr. Elliott will become fast friends, Belle," said Annie, coming to Irene's relief. "He is always leaping his horse over ditches and fences, especially when he knows there is a young lady looking on. True, I never heard of his falling; but I dare say he would fall if the lady happened to be near enough to catch him in her arms, as Frank did you. I know you will like him."

"I know that I shall hate him; I hate him now, and intend to hate him as long as I live," I replied, jerking the strings of my hat by way of emphasis.

"I think she'll change her mind when she becomes better acquainted with the gentleman; don't you, Irene?"

"Yes indeed, I expect shortly to hear her confess that she likes him hugely."

"Never! never! I shall not soon forget that he laughed when he saw me fall; no gentleman would have done so; besides, he hasn't those flashing eyes for nothing. I am sure he has a horrid temper."

Belle and Annie looked at me with a roughish look in their eyes. "I'll wager a photograph album against a pair of gloves, that in less than six months you will avow that you not only like, but that you devotedly love Frank Elliott."

"You are surely demented, Annie; but as I am certain to win, I accept your wager."

A month had glided quickly by since my first meeting with Mr. Elliott, and very hard did I try to dislike him; but he was so entertaining, so considerate of the comfort of others, that I first admired and then liked him.

"And so, Miss Belle," he said to me one evening, "and so it is decided that we are to be friends, is it not?"

"Yes; but I rather doubted it at one time."

"I know you did, and I determined to win your friendship, no less so."

"You have succeeded," was my reply; "but I am afraid your success will not pay you for your trouble."

"I think it will, even if it does no more than to secure me a pleasant companion to the 'fairs' to-morrow. Will you accompany me thither?"

"Certainly."

Early next morning we were cantering our horses toward the river. Leaving the village to our left, we turned into a smooth road leading through the forest in the direction of the falls.

Now let us race, and see who'll reach the falls, I cried, at the same time touching my horse with my whip.

Away we sped, the trees seemed to fly past us like shadows.

For a time we kept side by side, then he covered I was distancing. I'll win! I shouted.

Turn to the left, was the reply that the breeze bore faintly back.

I attempted to obey, but my steed had managed to get the bit between his teeth, and I could no longer control his movements.

He dashed straight on toward the river. I could see it glimmering through the foliage. I was not frightened; I was an experienced rider, and had no fear of losing my seat.

I thought my horse would probably stop when he reached the river bank, or if he does not, I said to myself a cold bath will not hurt either of us. The water is low, there is not a great deal of danger. Not for one instant did we pause on the bank, almost before I was aware my horse was struggling with the current, and now for the first time, I remembered that I was above instead of below the falls. I felt my heart grow cold as a stone; I knew I must expect no aid from Frank, for he had left him far behind, and that my safety depended on my own exertions.

I let go my hold upon the reins and clung to Arrow's long mane, that I might not check him. I patted his neck, shouted to him, called him my priceless Arrow, my noble steed, anything to encourage him, to let him hear the sound of my voice.

It was of no avail; we were drifting with the current the roar of the falls louder and louder.

I thought of my widowed mother, whose happiness was bound up in her wayward child. I thought of Frank Elliott—of my young life cut off so suddenly.

O God! have mercy! I moaned. And the prayer was answered. I saw, as a person sees in a dream, a man swimming rapidly towards me. I knew it was Frank, yet he seemed a great great way off. Presently I felt myself lifted from my saddle, and there all was dark; and I remember nothing more until I awoke to consciousness lying on the bank, my head supported by Frank's arms, and his anxious face bending above me.

I thank God you were not killed, was his fervent exclamation, as I opened my eyes.

You saved my life, Mr. Elliott; I can't thank you now, but I will when I am stronger, I said feebly.

It was your own brave courage that saved me, but you must not stay here in these wet clothes.

We went to a farm house near by where we borrowed dry clothing. (Frank said I was always borrowing other people's clothes.) Then we drove home in the farmer's buggy, and—

But I can not tell even you gentle reader what we said to one another during that drive. Suffice it to say, that the next week I told Annie of my betrothal to Frank Elliott.

How she did laugh and clap her little white hands! "I have won the gloves, Belle!" "So you have, Annie!"

Annie and Arthur Gray, Irene and Charlie were married the same day with Frank and myself.

Telegraphic Ticks.

Two young men, telegraph operators, board at one of our leading third-class hotels, and, being of a somewhat hilarious disposition, find great amusement in carrying on a conversation with each other at the table by ticking on the plates with knife, fork, or spoon. For the information of those not acquainted with telegraphy it may be well to state that a combination of sounds or ticks constitute the telegraphic alphabet, and persons familiar with these sounds can converse thereby as intelligently as with spoken words.

The young lightning-strikers, as already noted, were in the habit of indulging in table talk by this means whenever they desired to say anything private to each other. For instance, No. 1 would pick up his knife and tick off some such remarks as this to No. 2: "Why is this butter like the offence of Hamlet's uncle?" No. 2: "I give it up." No. 1: "Because it is rank and smells to heaven." Of course the joke is not appreciated by the landlady, who sits close by, because he doesn't understand telegraphic ticks, and probably he wouldn't appreciate it much if he did; but the jokers enjoy it immensely and laugh immoderately, while the other guests wonder what can be the occasion for this merriment, and naturally conclude that operators must be idiots.

A few days ago, while those fun-loving youths were seated at breakfast a stout-built young man entered the dining room with a handsome girl on his arm, whose blushing countenance showed her to be a bride. The couple had, in fact, been married but a day or two previously, and had come to San Francisco from their home in Oakland, or Mud Springs, or some other rural village, for the purpose of spending the honeymoon. The telegraphic tickers commenced as soon as the land and wife had seated themselves.

No. 1 opened the discourse as follows:—What a lovely little pigeon this is alongside of me—ain't she?

No. 2 Perfectly charming—looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. Just married, I guess; don't you think so?

No. 1 Yes, I should judge she was. What delicious lips she's got! It that country bumpkin beside her was out of the road, I'd give her a kiss just for luck.

No. 2 Suppose you try it anyhow. Give her a little nudge under the table with your knee.

There is no telling to what extent the impudent rascals might have gone but for an amazing and entirely unforeseen incident.—The bridegroom's face had flushed, and a dark scowl was on his brow during the progress of the tickling conversation but the operators were too much occupied to pay any attention to him. The reader may form some idea of the young men's consternation when the partner of the lady picked up his knife and ticked off the following terse but vigorous message:

This lady is my wife; as soon as she gets through with her breakfast I propose to wring both your necks—you insolent whelps!

The countenances of the operators fell very suddenly when this message commenced. By the time it had ended they had lost all appetite and appreciation of jokes, and slipped out of the dining room in a very rapid and unceremonious manner. It seems the bridegroom was a telegraph operator, and knew how it was himself.

There is nothing like mild and milky language, especially when you have to do with public characters. A newspaper in Maine does not venture to say to palm itching members of the Legislature "Don't steal!" or "Don't sell yourself!" or "Don't perjure yourself!" The Journalist thus sweetly insinuates his advice: "Members must resist the insidious approaches and golden arguments of the disciples of fraud!" We are really living in very delicate times. Though a man may have uttered falsehood until his face in color rivals the new of spades, it is a gross violation of the proprieties of life to tell him that he is "a liar." The word is handy, short and definite, but our

lips are forbidden to speak it, and our pens to write it. To be sure it's in the Bible, and there is a distinct statement there of the future residence of those who are economical of the truth, but even the name of that place must not be mentioned to ears polite.—Tribune.

Remarkable escape from being killed by a Bear.

The hilly country of Cole and Osage counties in Missouri, has been a favorite resort for game, and particularly for bears. Not long ago William Hamilton, residing near the Missouri Pacific Railroad, went into the woods about a mile off to shoot squirrels. Not returning in the evening, his family became alarmed, and as it was known bears had recently been seen in the neighborhood, fears were entertained for his safety. Nothing being heard of him all night, several neighbors the next morning went in search of him. About three o'clock in the evening they found him up a leaning tree, thirty feet from the ground, fast, and unable to extricate himself. After some trouble he was taken down, and it was seen that one foot and ankle were badly torn and bleeding. He said that three o'clock the previous day he came across a large black bear, and shot but missed him. The bear made at him with all his might. He ran, and finding the bear gaining on him, threw away his rifle, and partly climbed and partly ran up a leaning sycamore tree, with the bear following right at his heels. The top of this tree had been broken off and was hollow. He thrust one of his legs into the hole to keep himself from falling, but soon found that his leg was fast. He tried to extricate himself but could not. The bear in the mean time had torn his boot off, and was gnawing and eating the flesh from the foot and ankle. Mr. Hamilton took his pocket knife out and cut at the bear's eyes; but with one sweep of his paw, the bear struck the knife from his hand, with a part of two of his fingers.

Hamilton could now see no help, and gave up to die, expecting to be eaten up by the bear. But so on a happy thought struck him. That morning he had put some salt in his pocket to salt some cattle he had running in the woods. He took a small handful of salt and sprinkled it in the bear's eyes. It had the desired effect.—The bear shook his head growled and went down. He soon returned, however, but a little more salt drove him away the second time, and to Mr. Hamilton's inexhaustible delight he trotted off into the forest.

MANITOBA.

This Province was received into the Confederation by Act of Dominion Parliament, 1870. It comprises that part of Rupert's Land between 9° and 50° west long, and 45° S. boundary line and 50° 38' north latitude. Area 9,008,640 acres, equal to 360 townships of 36,000 acres each—with a reserve of 1,400,000 acres. These figures are exclusive of a very liberal allowance for roais. Population in 1871, by the Census which has just been taken, 11,945.

From a pamphlet on "Manitoba and the North West," &c. &c., by Mr. Thos. Spence, Clerk of the Legislative Council of that Province, and approved for "fidelity and practical correctness" by a Joint Committee of both Houses of the Manitoba Legislature, we extract some statements on the capabilities and resources of the Province:

"The S. is an alluvial, black, argillaceous mouth, rich in organic deposit, and resting on a depth of 2 to 4 feet, on a tenacious clay soil. The measures of heat are ample for the development of Indian Corn, considerably improving westward.

"Wheat is the leading staple of the upper belt of the temperate zone. The lime stone sub strata of this region with its rich deep calcareous loam and retentive clay subsoil, are always associated with a rich wheat development, while its hot and humid summers fulfill all the climatological conditions of a first rate wheat country. Some fields at Red River have been known to produce 20 successive crops of wheat without fallow or manure, the yield being frequently 50 to 60 bushels to the acre, 40 bushels is set down as the average crop, while Minnesota only gives 20, Wisconsin 14, Pennsylvania 13, and Massachusetts 10. This is spring wheat. Winter wheat has not been tried, but in one or two instances Mr. Spence, however, is of opinion that it can be successfully grown. He says, 'the success of winter wheat depends primarily in having a moderate and even covering of slight snow, not condensed by thaws, and packed close by warm winds. These are the decided characteristics of our winters.' "The group of sub-



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