

"Where's my son? Are ye there, Gibbie?" she heard his humph; and desired to have his hand. He gave it, with some reluctance.

"Its the last time," said she, "your mother's hand 'll be in yours. I aence thought as ye think, but a death-bed's opened my een." O Gibbie, Gibbie, my son, my son! Will ye promise to mind death, will ye promise to pray night and morning,—and read your Bible, and get claes and gang to the kirk? will ye promise that, and let me die in peace,—will ye, Gibbie, will ye?"

He answered the appeal by withdrawing his hand and uttering a dogged humph.

"Ye'll no promise then?" said the dying woman, clasping her hands. "O God, will ye count the blame mine; and soften his heart by the hammer and the fire o' thy spirit, that he may see what the world is, and grip by the Cross,—wilt thou, God! wilt thou?"

Her strength failed, and her heart filled, and she stopped, and sunk into a swoon. A neighbor applied some gruel to her lips, and bathed her temples, and she gradually recovered again. She seemed as if she wished to speak once more to her son, but utterance was denied; and in a short time she drew up her feet and went the way of all the earth. Scarcely was the breath out when Gibbie set off to the minister and lifted the money. To save expenses he made a coffin with his own hands, and blackened it with soot. Funeral services were then universal, and dredgies very common: but Gibbie had neither.

"It was a flinging away o' siller," he said, "for nae end; and if folk didna like to come to the burial, they might stay away."

On the day of the interment the chief mourner was in his customary dress, with a stripe of linen blackened with ink about his sheep-skin cap. Some of the neighbors gathered out for decency sake, and a few joined the procession in the town; but never had such a funeral been seen in the parish.

It wanted two months of the term, but Gibbie made it out, and went during the night and did what was necessary about the pendicle. He then took possession of it, and hired himself out for all kinds of work. His reputation was established as a good worker, and he got plenty to do. In the spring and harvest seasons it was no uncommon sight to see the miser sowing or reaping his ground in the night-time. He would often work during successive nights at home, to keep his day's wages entire.—Nothing that would sell, he eat or drank; and it was a mystery to many how he lived at all.

He was now a fully formed man of five-and-twenty, with muscles like ropes in his face and all over his body. The expression of his countenance was proverbially repulsive, with a hungry craving look in it. The neck stretched forward whether he walked or sat, and the eyes were continually seeking about in the socket, and now and then made a dead stand for a moment, and then quivered and glistened, and began their usual motion again.

I remember the first time I saw a hyena in his cage, that Gibbie's eyes occurred to me vividly. He was never known to shave but gave a sort of pruning occasionally to his beard and whiskers with a pair of scissors. His hair and skin were nearly of the same color; and it was said that his head at a little distance resembled a lump of dried pipe-clay. He was of that ambiguous look also, that strangers could not tell whether he was old or comparatively young. When he stood erect, he was fully six feet but the stoop in his shoulders gave him the appearance of a man of five feet nine. Many were the tales that were circulated about him, some false and some true, but few indeed in his favor. He fought once for a man who was ill-used at a market, and risked his own life to save a boy from drowning.

It was said his mother's ghost haunted him; and it was alleged he had bargained with the devil about his soul. My grandfather believed some of these extravagancies, and entered into these details with deep interest and awe. He had the times and places, and the witnesses' names at his finger ends; and used to make our flesh creep by their recital.

There was one circumstance, however, which illustrated Gibbie's character, of which there was no doubt. A heavy spate came down the water one Sabbath morning in autumn, which flooded and was carrying off a hay rick which belonged to the miser. It was his custom to lie long on that day; and when he arose about his usual time, he saw his hay moving slowly off. Out he ran, with only his trousers on, and plunged in after it. The water had reached his neck ere he reached the rick. He thrust in and twisted his hands about it as far up as he could reach, and made several desperate struggles to pull it towards the bank; but the river got the mastery, and bore them both down before it.

The alarm was soon given, and dozens of persons came running in all directions to see the strange spectacle. A few pitied, but most laughed, at the perilous situation of the miser.

"Let him drown," cried some. "His siller'll do somebody guid!" cried others. "It's a judgment on him," cried a third party. "Let Providence get it's will, and

the de'il his ain!" shouted a fourth. "He'll be bleezing down by in five minutes, and the hay'll help," exclaimed a drunken tailor from the town.

But a better spirit was manifested by others, who ran for ropes and flung them in to Gibbie; but some were too short and others missed their aim. Every one declared, however, that the infatuated man seemed more anxious to save his hay than himself.

"We'll maybe wile her into the holm," cried the miser, shivering with the cold; "for God's sake, help to get her into the holm."

By a strenuous effort on Gibbie's part and a favorable turn of the stream, into the holm, on the north side of the village, the rick went rolling about and its proprietor with it. He was soon in shallow water and came, pushing the hay before him, to the dry ground.

"Ye've had a narrow escape man," said James Paterson, the elder, "and I hope it'll do ye good."

"I'm cauld, ye now at ony rate," replied Gibbie, "but if I had been a minute langer, she was lost."

"It's neither your hay nor your body, man, I'm speaking about," interposed James; "it's your soul—your immortal soul, man; ye live like a brute!"

The miser gave a surly humph, and continued to push at the rick till it was fairly out of water. An incredibly small portion had been lost, for it was firmly thatched, and roped above, and the portion taken away by the current was wholly from beneath.

"It's safe enough, now," said a number of voices; "the water's going back—let it stand till morn."

"Let it stand till morn!" echoed Gibbie, with a look of utter astonishment; "the present is only ours—it's a work o' necessity. Will ony o' ye tak' up a backfu' and I'll gi' ye—I'll be obliged to ye?"

"Put your hand out at your peril man!" cried elder Paterson, in a tone of indignation and authority; "will ye break the Lord's day afore our very een? Gang down on your knees, man, and thank your maker for what he's done."

"There's a time for a' things," responded Gibbie, in a surly, resolute tone; "and the time just now is to save and not to destroy."

While he spoke he began to untie the thatch ropes, amidst the grumbling and rebukes of many around him. He made no further answer to their remonstrances, but set off with a burden which might have served any two men in the parish. On the dismissal of the church in the afternoon, the feeling rose so high that several stones were flung at him, and one of them hit him smartly on the cheek. His bent shoulders stood erect in a moment, his teeth sawed in his mouth, and the veins in his forehead became fearfully distinct. The crowd fell back, for they knew the strength and resoluteness of the man. No one had the hardihood to repeat the offence. James Paterson, however, began a new system of attack by reading aloud the law of Moses respecting the Sabbath; and the fate of the man who gathered sticks on that day, and many other appropriate passages in the prophets and the apostles. Gibbie humphed to them all, and wrought on.

"What can we expect from a sow but a grumph," said James at last, and angrily closed the book; "and wherefore should I cast pearls before swine! But I'll tell ye what, man, this day'll rise up against ye in judgment—the very hay 'll be a witness, and the water that's away to the sea'll come back to the judgment seat."

Shaking with emotion, the old elder left the spot, and a number followed him; and Gibbie proceeded with his labor as if nothing had happened. Back and back he came and went, and by nightfall he completed his task, in spite of every counsel or threat that was offered him.

TO BE CONTINUED.

PEN PHOTOGRAPHS.

BY DR. D. CLARKE, PRINCETON, ONT.

"AULD LANG SYNE."

I USED to watch, with great interest an "auld Auntie Kate," in an old arm chair, smoking a short clay pipe, black and strong. Its receptacle when not in use, was a worn-out cavity in the wall of the chimney. She would put her right elbow on the arm of the chair, and seize, daintily, the "nib" of the bowl between the forefinger and thumb. I see her yet, in memory, as the eyes are dreamily gazing as if they gazed not, into the fiery embers. Puff, puff, mechanically goes the white curling smoke over her clean and well-starched "mutch" in fantastic columns, pyramids, and canopies; but other scenes, other days, and other figures, than those I conjured up, were in her day dreams. Nothing but a fireside could be appropriate background to the picture, which would have but a Wilkie or a Hogarth, full of thought of domestic and street scenes, into ecstasy. The walls were adorned with the trophies of the chase, and with well-burnished implements of culinary use. The bedsteads knew not the turners' nor carver's art. The wind, in dancing weird down the yawning mouth of the chimney,

made as doleful music as the wizards' dying song. But no happy days could be seen in lordly halls or courtly palaces than in the cabin, and its blazing ruddy light of home. Uncle John never could argue on points of theology unless he had the giant tongs in his hand, wheeling them in the ashes, first on one leg and then on another; and as each section made its circle, you would almost see the arguments laid down one by one, in the furrow; but when he nailed his antagonist with some potent argument, down came the biped instrument with a thud on the forestick, which made the sparks fly in all directions like routed enemies. Women (forgive the good old English word) may show off their figures and graceful steps in the mazes of the giddy dance; but the good old fireplace was an excellent training school for those of "thirty years ago."

How nice the foot and ankle were set of near it, say, cooking a dinner! (Of course, that is now-a-days the work of *ladies*.) What ingenuity was necessary to take from the pendant chain, or swinging crane, the boiling potatoes, laughing all over, or the bubbling soup, with savory smell, or the singing and sputtering mush or porridge! What dexterity was needed in handling the rotund "spider" or the long stemmed frying-pan, with its striated sections of pork lying in military order, or when venison, which some juvenile Nimrod had shot in the woods, as the fruits of such future exploits, and which filled "but and ben" with its inviting perfume—almost wrote aroma! now deftly was the knife wielded to turn the browned morsels, and not even a slight of hand actor could turn such a complete somersault of pancakes, by edging them skillfully upon the rim of the pan; and then by a throw—a forward jerk and a backward catch—presto! the feat is done. It looked so easily accomplished, I challenged a trial—realt; a flabby, sticky pancake, seeking a north-west passage in an angle of the chimney, and by sheer gravitation burying itself in the hot ashes, a sad warning to confident amateurs. The stove has economic advantages, but cheerfulness and health are not ingredients in the sum total. No one, unless running over with music feels full of song over a stove. We may have exuberance from a reservoir of joy filled elsewhere. Go from its sable sides, in an autumn morning, and sniff the fresh air, and listen to the song of universal nature, and you feel intuitively like joining the chorus. Go from a hot and sickening room where no firelight is seen, and where the air is surcharged with thrice-heated air, into the cheering presence of a roaring fire, and no thermometer could rise quicker than do your spirits under its genial influence. These veteran houses never were cursed with modern bedrooms. They might be small, but that was compensated for by their breezy character. A stray snowflake might court destruction by sailing through a chink, or the spray from the rain-drop might dash upon the unturned faces of sleepers, but no pent up "dust and disease" could loiter along with "malice aforethought" in such an atmosphere. In well settled parts of Canada what a contrast! Septimus Jinks, Esq., is wealthy, and rejoices in a fine mansion. It is full of bedrooms of the seven feet by eight feet style. The bed is in one corner, the wash-stand occupies another, and a solitary chair is perched in another of the angles, with a dressing-table in the residue nook. The light is blown out, and you creep round the foot of the bed, lest the half-opened door slyly edges itself between you outstretched arms and impinges unceremoniously on the end of your nose. You make a flank movement by the side of the bed, but if you are out of Scylla you are stranded high on Charybdis, with abraded shins or bruised toes, or cracked knuckles. A beautiful dungeon it is. The window—a solitary sentinel of light—is, in the first place, covered with paper blinds adorned with paintings of a high style of art, in the centre. One may be some lonely castle about to fall to pieces into a placid lake, covered with monstrous fowls, second cousins to those which left the imprint of mammoth feet upon the petrified sands of time, and surrounded by rocks of approved pattern. Another is often a lonely milkmaid and a tender lamb; the former not all fashionable in dress, and seems to be seeking a lover, or a "babbling brook." Often she appears as one

"Who sits her pitcher underneath the spring, Musing on him that used to fill it for her. Hears and hears not, and lets it overflow."

These, and sundries like these, seemed to my youthful fancy wonderful works of art. After the paper blinds, those models of perspective skill, come the cloth ones then damask on the one side and lace on the other, or both in duplicate. On the outside are green Venetian blinds, and all to ornament or keep the blessed light out and the dampness in. The bed is unique so high, so new, so white, so soft, so clean, so downy, so mountainous, so needle-worked, and so musty. It may be the best furnished room in the house, but the doors of this miniature Bastille are kept constantly closed, except on state occasions. Then bonnets, and gloves, and muffs, and spare babies are deposited *pro tem* on this decayed and decaying mountain of feathers. It may have had no other occupant for weeks. The walls ooze moisture. The windows condense watery tears. The bedclothes imbibe the general contagion—

dampness. No such pest room could be found in the cabins and log-houses of the first settlers, but advancing civilization continues to keep in fine houses deadly miasma, and keep out the air, heat, and light of heaven. Can the elderly reader think of an old-fashioned log-house, and by the law of association, not conjure up in the imagination the two oxen, Buck and Bright also pioneers, in the dense wilderness; they were a queer representative couple, and seemed to appreciate each other's good qualities, and are well acquainted with each other's habits. Buck was of a metaphysical turn of mind. In chewing his cud, with his nose over the gate, he was always in a contemplative mood, and the dreamy eye showed a reverie, if not consecrated, at least profound. He had not a "crumbled horn," but in a Waterloo of former days, he had been disarmed of part of the left one, and the other had been twisted in a fantastic way, on the field of Mars, until its point was in closer proximity to an eye always watery, and seemingly in deep grief because of some bereavement. The other eye was bright in comparison, and had a roguish wink and twinkle about it, as if it had in its counterpart—its mind—eye—some practical joke in store. He was no believer in the conduct of an historic namesake, who was said to have starved to death between two bundles of hay of equal size and appearance, because, being guided solely by motives, and these being equally and exactly powerful, he could not move towards either, and heroically died. Buck, under such circumstances, would have showed a creditable spontaneity of will, and could have made decisions at once. It was only on such occasions he showed unusual activity. About noon, or evening, he seemed to cast a leer up the watery eye to "old Sol," as if taking the sun, and wondering at the tardiness of his chariot wheels. When the dinner-horn blew, he was impatient, and shook his ears and huge wooden yoke fitfully and savagely, and at the word of command what the "double quick" for home dragging his comrade almost at his heels, an equally willing, but less swift capture. A knowing ox was he. Bright was not so phlegmatic and stubborn. Such, when once aroused, perform prodigies of valor. He was nervous and irritable;—always on the *qui vive*. The least thing tickled his side—from a dragon-fly to a thistle down; and the least thing seemed to excite his fancy—from a tuft of grass in Bob's hand to a pinch of salt, in prospect, half a mile away. How similar in all these respects are man and beast! Bright had method in it all he did. He knew how to open the rustic garden-gate, and the exact spot between the bars to introduce his horn. No fence could withstand his attacks. The philosophic Buck would go at the fence with genius but not with tact, and *vi et armis* attempt its overthrow, and find it as difficult to storm as did the "red coats" at Badajos—sometimes being caught by the crooked horn, and sometimes by a sudden recoil, finding himself, to his amazement, on his haunches, contemplating the stars, with one from the blow, in his eye. Bright knew better than use "brute force." He would commence systematically, at the first, and send it flying over his back, then away went the stakes in utter discomfiture, and these followed by each rail, in succession, to the ground. He knew the salient angles of the fence, and never advanced upon them. He had strategy enough in his mind to know that the concavity was much easier to drive in than a convexity, and always "went for" the retiring recesses, coming out on the other side victorious. For him there was no "pent up Utica," if left to his own devices. His comrades soon learned this, and became a spectator of the various assaults, until a breach had been made, and in he came for a share of the plunder, without a struggle. He did not seem to have in his code of ethics the rule that "to the victors belong the spoils." The sly rogue might be four hundred yards away from his comrade, but no-sooner did the noise of falling rails reach his ears, than he rushed to the spot as if his motto was, "Deil tak' the hindmost." In the days we "went a gipsying," horses were not as plentiful as now. These bovine gentry were oft times "hitched up" to a sleigh to take a jolly load of jolly youths to a singing-school. The sleigh was none of your tricky bob-sleighs, which seem to seek out, in finnish glee, all the irregularities of the road, and dive nose first into all the valleys, and snappishly ride over the mainature mountains, as if bent on producing a catastrophe. Not so the old-fashioned long sleighs. There is grace in their movements. When they mount a hillock, they seem, at the top, to hesitate for a moment whether to retreat or advance, and then, with a parabolic curve forward, like a gallant ship over a mountain wave, they plunge bow first into the yielding snow. Their movements are not done by halves; nor is there a needless bracing of the riders to prepare for plunges leeway and forward, which never come; for with them "coming events cast their shadows before." See that old sleigh, which has almost "braved a thousand years" the battles of snow and storms drawn by oxen friends, loaded with a merry group of juveniles, on the rampage. Clean straw is on the bottom for seats. No box is there to keep the fidgetty cargo from spilling out. The four iron-wood stakes rise up above the heads of the pas-

sengers like jury-masts on a cast-away raft over the bleak sea; but no ship wrecked crew are they, for young and old, male and female, poor and rich, are making hills and valleys, woods and fields, vocal with melody and song. They seem to grin with satisfaction at the prospect. The road has a sharp turn in it, and, as it with common consent, and by one impulse, they "take to their heels," and crowding into one track, run the sleigh on a stump, and deposit the merry load in a mixed condition in the snow. After the debris has been collected, and an "omnium gatherum" has taken place, there were beautiful casts of limbs, arms, and bodies in the snow. The imprint of John's gignantic paws yonder—thumbs, fingers and wrists. Ned's outline from occiput to heels—not in bold relief, but in concave beauty, true as life. Joe's impression was a sort of melody: it was evident he fell in a heap, and then gathered up his legs, as if giving up the ghost. Women were there, with expansive hoops, the centres of great circles, and left no foot-prints, or any other prints, upon the snows of time (forgive the parody), except a good mother's scoopshovelled bonnet had, in its posterior part, left an indentation like that of a quart bowl in the snow. Abrasions of the cuticle, from noses, shins and elbows, by too close contact with somebody's heels—all forgiven trespasses—made the sum total of casualties; and none were put *hors de combat* in those blessed days of yore, when "telescoping," explosions, and such like evidences of progress, were for the coming race. Thus I wander on with these retrospects, and find an echo of approval in some reader's breast. He and I passed the spot, only the other day, where the log house stood; and it was a ploughed field, with not a vestige of it remaining. The crooked primitive woodside road has been obliterated, and Buck and Bright, by Darwin's law of selection, have given way to the noble horse. The joyous group is scattered "far and wide," from the quiet graveyard to the unknown sepulture of the distant battlefield—from the billowy winding sheet to the monumental tomb—and from the haunts of infamy to the pinnacles of fame.

"The days which are past, they come before me with all their deeds."

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