

Notches on The Stick

Leigh Hunt may not have been great, but he was certainly happy and influential in his poetry. The joyful ease, the perennial freshness, the light to glorify, essential to the man's nature, were not the elements to verify the species of poetry in which he was excellent. The heart leaps up with the "little vaulter in the sunny grass," and no wonder. Not strange was it if Keats followed his lead, and drank the spirit of "Rimini" when producing his "Isabella." "The graphic as well as dramatic power of Rimini," writes Howitt, "the landscape and scene-painting of that poem, are only exceeded by the force with which the progress of passion and evil is delineated. The scene in the gardens and the pavilion, where the lovers are reading Lancelot du Lac, is not surpassed by anything of the kind in the language. The sculptured scenes on the walls of this pavilion are all pictures living in every line:—

By girls and shepherds brought, with reverend eyes,
Of Sylvan drinks and foods, simple and sweet,
And goats with struggling horns and planted feet.
The opening of the poem, beginning,—
The sun is up, and 'tis a mourn of May
'Round old Ravenna's clear shown towers and bay'
all life, elasticity, and sunshine;—and the melancholy ending—
'The days were then at the close of Autumn—still,
A little rainy, and towards night fall chill:
There was a fulfilment all abroad;
And ever and anon over the road,
The last few leaves came fluttering from the trees,'
etc.

are passages of exquisite beauty, marking the change from joy to sorrow in one of the loveliest poems in the language. We have in it the genuine spirit of Chaucer, the rich nervous cadences of Dryden, with all the grace and life of modern English. But it is in vain here to attempt to speak of the poetic merits of Leigh Hunt. A host of fine compositions comes crowding on our consciousness. "The Legend of Florence," a noble tragedy; "The Palfrey," "Hero and Leander," "The Feast of the Poets," and "The Violets," numbers of delightful translations from the Italian, a literature in which Leigh Hunt has always revelled; and above all, "Captain Sword and Captain Pen." We would recommend everybody, just now that the war spirit is rising amongst us, to read that poem, and learn what horrors they are rejoicing over, and what the Christian spirit of the age demands of us. But we must praise the lyrics of the volume:—the pathos of the verses "To T. L. H., Six years old, during a sickness," and the playful humor of those "To J. H., four years old," call on us for notice; and then the fine blank verse poems, "Our Cottage," and "Reflections of a Dead Body," are equally important. If any one does not yet know what Leigh Hunt has done for the people and the age, let him get the pocket edition of his poems, and he will find himself growing in love with life, with his fellowmen, and with himself. The philosophy of Leigh Hunt is loving, cheerful, and confiding in the goodness that governs us all. And when we look back to what was the state of things when he began to write, and then look round and see what it is now, we must admit that he has a good foundation for so genial a faith.

Such was the appreciative view of one who wrote while the poet he praises was still living. But let it not be supposed that Hunt did not run the gauntlet of criticism. There were faults the sharp pens made the most of. His conceits, his archaisms, his foibles, his alleged cockneyisms, were laughed to scorn. They made these faults overshadow the virtues; the specs on the sun they made more prominent than its beams. His fanciful charm did not in-

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toxicate them. Yet, with all that can be fairly alleged, as to faults, that diminished more and more, the longer he wrote and thought, "I know of no more manly English, and chastely vigorous style than that of his poems in general." "Rimini" was rewritten, not to please himself, so much as the critics, who objected to the morale of the story; but it is not commonly allowed to have been improved, as to its artistic quality. The objection was not wisely taken, and the story as first told was so true to nature and reality that it could not easily have been recast without detriment.

We may pass from this consideration of Hunt's poetry by reference to Richard Garnett's not extravagant representation. Referring to the publication of "Rimini," he writes: "There is perhaps no other instance of a poem short of the highest excellence having produced so important and durable an effect in modifying the accepted standards of literary composition. The secret of Hunt's success consists less in superiority of genius than of taste. His refined critical perception had detected the superiority of Chaucer's versification, as adapted to the present state of our language by Dryden, over the sententious epigrammatic couplet of Pope which had superseded it. By a simple return to the old manner he affected, for English poetry in the comparatively restricted domain of metrical art what Wordsworth had already effected in the domain of nature; his is an achievement of the same class, though not of the same calibre. His poem is also a triumph in the art of pictorial narrative, abounds with verbal felicities, and is pervaded throughout by a free, cheerful, and animated spirit, notwithstanding the tragic nature of the subject. It has been remarked that it does not contain one hackneyed or conventional rhyme. Other characteristic traits are less commendable, and the writer's occasional flippancy and familiarity, not seldom degenerating into the ludicrous, made him a mark for ridicule and parody on the part of his opponents, whose animosity, however was rather political than literary. These faults were still more conspicuous in other pieces published by him about this date. Ere long, however, Keats's 'Lamia' and Shelley's 'Julian and Maddalo' manifested the deliverance which he had wrought for English narrative poetry.

Reference must be made to some localities with which Hunt was associated, both before and after his Italian visit. On his release from prison, he had gone to live in a house at Paddington, which narrowly escaped destruction by fire while he occupied it. In its book-walled study, over-looking fields stretching towards Wesbourne-green Byron sat one day, and, on another, Wordsworth. Afterward his quarters were in Marylebone, at 8 York Buildings, New Road. Of "a very happy Twelve; Night spent there," Hunt gives "a very charming account." Here must have passed some days of delightful intercourse. Here in commemoration of the event mentioned above, he "planted some young plane trees within the rails by the garden gate." Under these trees, he lived to see people shelter themselves from the rain; but they were long ago cut down. Here he first looked into the congenial face of Keats, and here Toscolio visited him. After this, as Howitt says, "he lived in Lisson-grove," and "at Hampstead, in the Vale of Health, where Keats wrote 'Sleep and Poetry.'"

We have before us an old print of this cottage, which must have been snug and inviting, surrounded by its close and over lowered with trees. There is a broad walk from the gate up to the porticoed door. It is a quaint, old fashioned, thoroughly English place. The fields look gray behind, in the picture, and in the distance behind the hills the tower of a church is seen. This was Hunt's last residence before his removal from England. A few years since S. C. Hall wrote an account of the place affirming that it still stood, and was but slightly altered. He speaks of another poet who afterward dwelt within these walls, to whom it was hallowed by his predecessor; we think it was Rossetti. Here Hazlitt, Lamb, Haydon, Keats, Proctor, Cowden Clarke, and all that charmed circle gathered about him. Here his friend Shelley used to visit him, "delighting in the natural broken ground, and in the fresh air of the

place, which used to give him an intoxication of animal spirits. Here he swam his paper boats in the pond, and played with children; and to that house Shelley brought at midnight a poor woman, a forlorn sister, whom he had found in a fit on the heath, and whom he thus saved from death." Ah, pleasant Hampstead! what an illustrious brotherhood thou couldst boast, and what congenial spirits, if any, must still hover about thee! Even now, while I look into the shady nook at the entrance to this cottage-close, and away into the distance of healthy hill and sky beyond, I seem to see "The choir invisible!"

After his return from Italy, with the light of the "sunny south" and the shadow of painful memory, he went to live in a cottage, near to that of Coleridge, at Highgate. "The Sylvan scenery of the London suburb refreshed him; he luxuriated in the natural wealth of the open heath, the adjacent meadows and the neighboring woods. The walks across the fields from Highgate to Hampstead, with ponds on the one side and Cumnor wood on the other, used to be one of the prettiest in England; and he says of the fairest scenes in Italy, 'I would quit them all for a walk over the fields from Hampstead.' He had, indeed, long loved the locality." He lived at one time at Woodcote-green near Arstead park, Surrey; it is there that he is said to have laid the scene of his romance, 'Sir Ralph Eshier.'

The following friendly tribute may be pardoned for wishing to share with our readers:

To Rev. and Mrs. A. J. Lockhart on the 25th anniversary of their wedding, May 12th 1898.

The silent years how swiftly sped;
A passing dream they seem to be,
Since "Earth and air were all divine
In old Saint Andrews by the sea."

With gleams of sun and wreaths of shade,
With love and care allied of old,
And joys that gladden heart and home,
The half of fifty years are told:

Today what thronging memories rise—
This day of days hitherforth to be;
Beyond the bloom of bridal wreath,
Lies fair Saint Andrews by the sea:

And though the soldier wears his blue,
And bride and groom in waiting stand,
You see the far horizon bend
Above Saint Andrews' rim of sand:

O joy of earth from Eden-land!
How barren all the world would be
If love held not in memory sweet
Its old Saint Andrews by the sea!

O love that set at Cana's feast
And poured His bounty manifold,
Thy blessing on their young hearts twin,
And make the new love like the old;—

O friends, who walk the winding path,
His presence near, thy household throng,
And love and faith and duty cheer,
And gladden all the way with song:

And when the fleeting years are done—
When care and pain and sorrow flee,
May that immortal land be nigh
Glimpsed in Saint Andrews by the sea.

BENJAMIN F. LEBGHT.

Ward, Del. Co., Pa.

The Rev. Elijah P. Brown, founder and editor of the "Ram's Horn," and the writer of its exceedingly spicy and pointed paragraphs, has withdrawn from that journal. He is preparing some of his writings for publication in book form, and will turn his attention to the lecture platform. We trust the Ram's Horn will not utter a less certain sound.

Mr. Mackenzie Bell, it is said, is collecting materials for a life of Jean Ingelow, or a memorial of her similar to that recently published concerning Christina Rossetti.

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COULY EXHIBITIONS

Bill for Killeag Critchdale's swimming pool in Holland

Edam, in Holland, where the Dutch cheese comes from, has just opened a museum of local antiquities, and among the not least interesting of the exhibits are the accounts of the municipal executions during the eighteenth century. One of these functionaries, by name, Vogel, presents a detailed bill, dated Dec. 19, 1713, in which he sets forth a claim for 6 florins for one decapitation and 3 florins each for a sword and winding sheet, with 3 florins, 14 cents for the coffin for the decapitated one. His charge for hanging a criminal was also 6 florins, with the further addition of 3 florins for "cutting down the impaling ditto." "Breaking a man on the wheel" was a costlier luxury and ran to 9 florins, while for supplying "nine new lashes for scourge" the charge was 27 florins.

On the whole, however, Mr. Vogel was a moderate man in his charges or the value of human life went up a good deal in the next fifty years, for in the no less circumstantial accounts of Johannes Ka, presented Aug. 1, 1764, we have a charge of 12 florins for "going on board the Hans and preparing instruments of torture," with a like charge for "torturing one person." But this must have been for the "lesser torture" only, as on Aug. 30 the same Johannes sends in a bill for "torturing three persons at 75 florins a head"—total, 225 florins, while a few days later no less than 600 florins is charged for "hanging four persons at 150 florins each," and for "flogging two persons and burning a third" he exacts 150 florins. Clearly considerations of economy, if not of humanity, must have tended toward the reform of the criminal code in Holland.—London Chronicle.

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INVENTOR OF LEAD PIPE.

The Interesting Life of Robert Seydell

There was born in Milton, Pa., in 1809 a man of wonderful genius, it is said. His name was Robert, and he died in 1847. Mr. Seydell was a coppersmith and was almost continuously working out some device connected with the machinery in his factory. To him, it is related by some of the oldest citizens of this place, belongs the discovery of the process of making lead pipe, and like many other inventors, the idea of making the same was stolen from him and further developed to its present form of manufacture.

It was in the latter part of the thirties that the idea suggested itself to him, and the following is the way he wrought it out: At first took a slug, or casting of lead, placing it on a mandrel, or rod of steel, about sixteen feet long and one inch in diameter; the mandrel was highly polished and upon this he drew or rolled out the lead to the full strength of the rod, thus giving him an inch bore, and the material was rolled, it is said, to a one-fourth inch, making a total diameter of one and one-half inches for the pipe. After completing several sections of the length of the mandrel, he soldered them together, making the pipe of whatever length he desired.

He put it to practical use by fastening it to pump heads and also running it from springs to connect watering troughs and spring houses in the country round about here. Being greatly pleased with his discovery, and receiving the most flattering of comments from his friends and neighbors in this section, he concluded to make his invention more widely known, and hence made a visit to Philadelphia, taking his device with him.

At the Franklin Institute in that city he gave his first exhibition to quite a number of inventors, artists and mechanics. As it is now related, all who witnessed it were more than delighted, and so expressed themselves in his immediate presence.

It was not long that he was allowed to remain in a condition of supreme happiness over his invention, for a short time

after he made a disclosure of his discovery, and while yet in Philadelphia, he found out that by the very persons to whom he had given an exhibition of the process of making lead pipe his idea had been used and improved upon.

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No Repentance in the Grave.

A Scotch divine entered the church-yard one day while the sexton was busily employed, neck deep in a grave, throwing up soil and bones to make room for a dead parishioner.

"Well, Saunders," said the minister, "that is a work well calculated to make an old man like you thoughtful. I wonder you do not repent of your evil ways and make resolves while so seriously occupied about another's grave to live a better life and prepare for your own." The old man, resting himself upon the edge of his spade, calmly replied, "I thought, sir, ye kent that there is no repentance in the grave."

He Tiptoes Now.

"What a quiet man your husband is, Mrs. Rizley, and it's surprising, too. Before he was married he was one of the noisiest young men I ever knew. How did you break him of it?" "I didn't break him of it. The baby did it. It didn't take him long to learn the value of silence after little Alfred came."

Giving Him a Strong Hint.

Visitor—"Is Miss Rose at home?"
Servant—"No, sir."
Visitor—"Why, she has just come in! I saw her."
Servant—"Yes, sir; and she saw you, too."

Thrilling.

He—That must be a very interesting book you are reading.
She—Oh, it's awfully exciting! The heroine changes her gown six times in the first chapter.

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