

Can't Help with the Editor

SCOTTISH HISTORY

In the spring of 1307, Robert Bruce resolved to return from Rahrin to his kingdom, landing near Turnberry Castle, where Sir Henry Percy was in command of an English garrison. The landing was made through mistake, an accidental blaze being mistaken for a signal fire, and the King hesitated about proceeding further, but his brother Edward, a man of absolute intrepidity, refused to re-embark, and the King, who was not lacking in courage, but only inspired by a great sense of responsibility, determined upon an attack. This proved successful, and Bruce found himself strengthened by the possession of an abundance of arms and other booty. Success followed success. His former followers flocked to his standard, and not even the capture and execution of his brothers, Thomas and Alexander, stayed his progress, although at times the pursuit of his small force by Earl Pembroke was so vigorous that everything seemed lost. After various minor actions and much marching to and fro, a battle was fought at Loudoun Hill by an express agreement between Bruce and Pembroke, when the latter was defeated. Operations were, however, conducted against Bruce with such vigor that he retreated into Northern Scotland, leaving Sir James Douglas in command in the South. Edward Bruce carried on operations in the West with his customary vigor and a very considerable measure of success. By the autumn of 1308 the King was in possession of a very large part of Scotland, and Edward II. offered a truce, but it was declined by the Scots unless they were granted a large sum of money. This Edward either would not or could not raise, and he made preparations for a final effort to subjugate the Northern kingdom. Meanwhile the Estates of Scotland were assembled, and a declaration was made to the effect that the award of the crown to John Balliol was illegal and that Bruce, grandfather of the King, was legally entitled to the throne. Thus Robert became undisputed Lord of Scotland, the clergy declaring the bull of excommunication, which had been launched against him, to be absolutely void.

Edward II. resolved to retrieve his failure, and sent a powerful expedition against Bruce; before which the latter retreated, laying waste the country behind him. When the English forces retired, the Scots followed them up and ravaged the border counties of England. Four English expeditions met with the same profitless results, and castle after castle fell into the hands of Bruce and his generals. There perhaps never was a more extraordinary series of campaigns than those which filled up the years between 1308 and 1314. No writer of fiction has ever invented incidents of greater daring than those which were almost everyday occurrences on the part of both contestants. Greater interest attaches to the exploits of the Scots than to those of the English; chiefly the former were inspired by a resolve to free their country of the invader, and because there were no leaders on the side of the latter who compared with the two Bruces, Robert and Edward, and such men as Douglas, Randolphe and Gray. These were the days of chivalry, and perhaps there never was a time when the rules of this cult were more brilliantly exemplified than in these stirring times. On the English side Sir Philip de Mowbray was perhaps the most distinguished of the commanders. He was besieged in Stirling Castle, and he made truce with Bruce, whereby it was agreed that operations should cease, on the understanding that the castle should be surrendered on the feast of St. John the Baptist, 1314, unless by that day he should be relieved. On the faith of this treaty de Mowbray went to London and consulted with the King as to the best means of defeating Bruce, returning to the castle and remaining there, bound by nothing but his promise, until the decisive battle of Bannockburn had been fought. Nothing better illustrates the spirit of chivalry than the fact that Bruce went on with his preparations for battle, trusting implicitly in de Mowbray's faith.

It is not necessary to tell here the story of Bannockburn, which took place on June 23 and 24, 1314. It was a spirited fight. The Scots were greatly outnumbered, the fighting men numbering only 30,000, although there were about 10,000 camp-followers, whose appearance near the close of the fight was taken by the English to mean the arrival of reinforcements, and precipitated the result. The English force numbered 100,000, of whom 30,000 were left dead upon the field. The Scots lost 8,000 men. Edward II. commanded his army in person and exhibited a great deal of personal courage. Bruce's victory was not due to the superior fighting quality of his men; for there seems to have been little to choose between the two armies in this respect, but to the superior skill shown by him in the disposition of his men. The result of the battle was to establish the Scottish monarchy on a firm foundation, and Bruce was able to devote himself to the internal affairs of his kingdom, which were sadly in need of attention. The war did not cease, but it was carried on only in a desultory fashion. The defeat of Bannockburn seems to have deprived the English of their national valor, and it was with difficulty that they could be brought to make a stand against the Scottish forces. In 1315 Edward Bruce set out to conquer Ireland for himself, but notwithstanding the fact that Robert went to his assistance, the expedition proved a failure, Edward being killed in battle.

Robert the Bruce died on June 7, 1329, when he was only fifty years of age. Through out nearly the whole of his career he was at war, for although a truce to last thirteen years

was concluded in 1323, it was not observed very long. No epitome can give anything like an accurate idea of the long-drawn-out conflict during the fifteen years between Bannockburn and the treaty of peace entered into in 1328. On the whole, the fourteen years were disastrous to the English arms, there being no single engagement of consequence in which the Scots were not victorious.

THE EARTH

XIII.

There are practically only two important river systems in South America, that of the Amazon and that of the La Plata. The Orinoco is usually regarded as a distinct river, but it is connected with the Amazon and may be regarded as a part of that great system. The Amazon rises in the Peruvian Andes and its length from its source to the sea is about 4,000 miles. It has many tributaries; about 200 meeting with the main stream. At least 100 of them are navigable, 17 of them are upwards of 1,000 miles in length and several of them exceed 2,000. Where the Amazon crosses the Peruvian frontier it is a mile wide; where it enters the ocean it is 120 miles in width, and it flows out beyond land for more than 100 miles in a defined course. So that vessels far out of sight of the coast are in fresh water. For 750 miles from the sea the river maintains a length, which is nowhere less than 60 fathoms, and for many miles further a depth of 10 to 12 fathoms is the rule. The effect of the tide is felt 400 miles from the sea, the tide entering the river in a series of from 10 to 15 feet in height, which follow each other with terrific force. The drainage basin of the Amazon is estimated at 3,000,000 square miles, and the length of the navigable waters is put at 16,000 miles although it is probably very much more. Most of the tributaries of the Amazon are within the confines of Brazil and lie between the eastern coast range of mountains and the Andes. This region has been described as a vast swamp with parallel drainage channels running through it to form the Amazon. The rainfall over that area is very great. The southeast trade winds sweep across the comparatively low coast range, depositing some of them on its eastern slope, but they are unable to lift any of it over the Andes, and result is a great precipitation, which makes Central Brazil one of the most remarkable regions in the world in respect to the diversity of vegetable growth and the number and size of the water courses. These all flow northward towards the equator and they are the only considerable streams of the world that do so. The mouth of the Amazon itself is exactly on the equator.

The Orinoco is 1,500 miles long and its drainage area is estimated at 368,000 square miles. It is united with the Rio Negro, a branch of the Amazon, by two channels. It is navigable for 870 miles. At 600 miles from the sea it is more than three miles wide. It enters the sea by a great number of mouths. The distance from the extreme easterly mouth to the extreme westerly being 165 miles. The Orinoco is subject to heavy floods at which time it is in some places more than 100 miles wide. Its course, which is wholly in Venezuela, as are most of its tributaries, is through what is described as the most luxuriant forests in the world. Flanking the forests are great plains, extending as far as the eye can reach and clad with marvellous verdure.

The Rio de la Plata is really only the estuary which receives the waters of the Panama and Uruguay rivers. It is 143 miles wide at its mouth and extends inland 190 miles. The Panama is 2,720 miles long, with a drainage area of about 1,000,000 square miles. Its source is only 60 miles from the west coast of the continent. It is navigable for the greater part of its length. The Paraguay, one of its tributaries, is 1,500 miles long, and is a very fine river. The Uruguay is upwards of 1,000 miles in length and is for the most part navigable. Including the estuary there are over 6,000 miles of main waterways in the La Plata river system. The quantity of water carried to the sea by these rivers is surpassed only by that which is borne by the Amazon.

There are several considerable rivers in South America other than those that have been named, and with the exception of the Guayaquil they all fall into the Atlantic. The Guayaquil, though of some local importance, is not to be regarded as one of the great structural rivers of the Western Hemisphere.

TIME

This is the first day of a new year, and as such it reminds us of what is known as the flight of time. The general conception of time has been expressed by the hymn writer, who described it as "an ever-flowing stream." We think of time as something, whereas in point of fact it is not a thing at all. It is no more a thing than length, breadth and thickness are things. It is simply a sequence of events, so that if nothing whatever occurred there would be no such thing as time. A question that used to be asked was: "If a tree should fall in the forest, where no living being was, would it make any noise?" Let us state the case another way. In the Antarctic solitudes there are lofty mountains, and down their sides great avalanches doubtless fall. They set the sound waves in motion and they reverberate from peak to peak, but all is absolute silence, as we understand silence, for sound of itself cannot be detected unless there is an ear

to hear it. So when we speak of the silence of Antarctic solitudes, it is absolute silence. Thus with what we call time. Without the sequence of events there can be no such thing as time. When we think of eternity, we have in mind an endless succession of incidents; but that is not eternity; it is simply time indefinitely prolonged. Eternity is the condition out of which time emerged, and into which it will again be absorbed. It is the Nirvana which the Buddhist philosophers endeavored to define, but which from its very nature must remain indefinable. An eternity of conscious existence seems to be a contradiction in terms.

Time is measured in many ways. The measure which we adopt is the day, from noon to noon. This is a natural and easily applied measure. If shadows are observed it is possible to tell with certainty when the Sun crosses the meridian of the place where we are, and thus we have a fixed and definite period constantly recurring with regularity. From noon to noon is the yardstick by which time is measured. The astronomical day begins at noon, and the day of navigators is even now understood as beginning then. In common parlance, and indeed in law, the day is understood as beginning at midnight, that is to say, when the Sun crosses our meridian on the other side of the globe. But whether we begin the day at noon, or midnight, the division is a natural one. The division of the day into hours, minutes and seconds is purely an arbitrary one. It does not appear to be based upon any natural reason, and we are unable, with such means as are at hand, to discover when the hour was first adopted as a measure of time. The use of the number twelve as a division of time, number and space is very ancient, although it is not what might be called a natural division. It may be presumed that primitive man employed the decimal system, as far as his limited calculations went. He had ten fingers, and hence to him 10 would be a convenient measure of number. But 10, while it has advantages from the standpoint of multiplication, has disadvantages from the standpoint of division. It is divisible only by 2 and 5. As civilization progressed, a better standard of calculation was found to be desirable, and 12 was chosen, which, as every one knows, is divisible by 2, 3, 4, 6 and 12, a multiple of 12, is divisible by 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8; 36, another multiple of 12, by 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9, and 72, another multiple of 12, by 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9. The Greeks at a very early day saw the advantage of 12 as a divisor, but long before their time, the custom of dividing the day into two periods of 12 hours each was adopted. The subdivision of hours into minutes and seconds was a much later invention. It is wholly arbitrary, but it also recognizes 12 as the most convenient division, for 5 times 12 are 60, and 60, as everyone knows, is the number of minutes in an hour and the number of seconds in a minute. There are no natural means of determining the length of hours, minutes or seconds. They can only be fixed by artificial methods.

While the recurring period from noon to noon is invariable, it is not always of exactly the same length, for there are slight variations in the Sun's apparent velocity, and also of the inclination of the Earth's axis. Hence an imaginary sun has been taken as the measure of time, which sun coincides very nearly with the real Sun. It is the apparent movement of this imaginary body that is indicated by clocks and watches. Therefore we do not in practice measure our time by the actual solar day, but the variations balance each other, so that the discrepancies between actual solar time and mean solar time are of no moment, except to navigators. On March 21 of every year the two times exactly coincide, and the greatest difference between them is slightly under four minutes.

The division of time into years is due to natural reasons. It had its origin a long time ago. The recurrence of the Solstices, that is, of the longest and shortest days, must have suggested to mankind at a very early period that there was a measure of time applicable to longer periods than those for which day could be conveniently used. There does not appear to be any record of the earliest use of the year for this purpose, and its employment indicates a very considerable advance in civilization, for it implies settled conditions of society. We know that many people low in the scale of civilization use the appearance of the New Moon as the measure of longer periods than days. It is a somewhat strange thing that the movements of the earth on its axis, of the Moon around the Earth and of the Earth around the Sun do not harmonize with the accuracy of machinery. One might suppose, for example, that the time occupied by the revolution around the Sun would be exactly a certain multiple of the time occupied by the revolution of the Earth on its axis, but it is not. It is not 365 days, but very nearly 365 1/4 days. To make up for this difference, an additional day is given to February in every fourth year, but this is rather too much. It would make the calendar year longer than the solar year by one day in every 128 years. To balance this difference, every centennial year that cannot be divided by 4 without a remainder, after taking off the last two ciphers, is a leap year; those that can be so divided are not leap years. Thus as 10 cannot be divided by 4 without a remainder, 1900 was a leap year; but 2000 will not be a leap year, because 20 can be so divided. By this means the calendar has been so regulated that the Equinoxes will always fall upon the same days of the month. In order to remove

the discrepancy, which had arisen from disregard of these small fractional parts of a day, it was found necessary in 1582 to reform the calendar by striking ten days from the year. This was termed the "New Style," and was adopted by all Christendom except that part where the Greek Church was recognized, namely, Russia.

Some Famous Dramatists and Their Master-Pieces

(N. de Bertrand Luyck)

JOOST VAN DER VONDEL

If for no other reason this poet would be worthy of note for inspiring Milton's "Paradise Lost." His greatest work, a tragedy, "Lucifer" by name, deals with the fall of this mighty arch-angel; and, as Milton, just prior to the composition of his masterpiece, had studied the Dutch language and in particular this drama of Vondel's, the supposition that it furnished him with subject matter for his poem may be accepted as correct, particularly as there are many similarities between the two plays, though the theme of "Paradise Lost" is the fall of Adam.

However, Vondel deserves recognition for a still better reason. He is accounted the greatest of Dutch poets, which is no mean distinction in the world of letters, for Holland has furnished some worthy representatives.

Joost van der Vondel was born in 1587 and lived to be more than ninety years of age, being one of the many splendid examples the history of literature affords us that life may be lengthened far beyond the span of three score and ten, if the ordinary laws regarding hygienic living be followed and the faculties not permitted to decay through lack of use.

Vondel's birthplace was Cologne and as his maternal grandfather had been accredited a poet of no little ability, his talent was to some extent the result of inheritance. Vondel's father and mother were Baptists and suffered no little persecution on account of their religion; it was as a result of this that they moved from place to place, and finally settled in Amsterdam, where they were permitted comparative freedom.

In the first place it was intended that Vondel should follow a trade, and with that end in view his literary powers were not encouraged to any great extent, but the lad knew his own capabilities, and even at an early age was eager to study, and more than this, able to discriminate among books and teachers. So we learn that he became an expert in the master-minds of the day, and encouraged by his instructors, he gave his natural talents full play. In 1612 when Vondel was 25 he wrote a drama in five acts, with choral interludes, entitled "Het Pascha," the subject of which was the exodus of the Children of Israel.

It was eight years before he produced another play, for he was slow, cautious and painstaking. All of his later work was infinitely superior to his early productions, and "Lucifer" is a masterpiece of eloquence, power and beauty of versification.

From "Lucifer."

The scene of the drama is laid throughout in Heaven. The actors are the angels. Lucifer has sent Apollyon to Eden to view the state. Apollyon thus describes Eve.

Search all our angel bands, in beauty well arrayed,
They will but monsters seem by the dawn-light of a maid.

Beelzebub—
It seems you burn in love for this new woman-kind.

Apollyon—
My great wing-feather in that amorous flame, I find I've singed. 'Twas hard indeed to soar up from below,

To sweep and reach the verge of Angel-borough so.

I parted, but with pain, and three times looked around;
There shines no seraph form in all the world. Like hers, whose hanging hair, in golden glory, seems

To rush down from her head in a torrent of sunbeams,
And flow along her back. So clad in light and grace,

Stately she treads, and charms the daylight with her face;
Let pearls and mother o' pearls their claims before her furl,

Her brightness passes far, the beauty of a pearl.
Beelzebub—
But what can profit man this beauty that must fade,

And wither like a flower, and shortly be decayed?
(Lucifer's jealousy of the new race being aroused, he then addresses the attendant angels):

Swift spirits, let us stay the chariot of the dawn.
For high enough in sooth God's morning star is drawn—

Yea, driven up high enough, 'tis time for my great car
To yield before the advent of this double star,
That rises from below, and seeks in sudden birth,

To tarnish Heaven's gold with splendor from the earth!

Embroider no more crowns on Lucifer's attire,
And gild his forehead not with eminent dawn-fire

Of the morning star enraged, that rapt arch-angels prize;
For see another blaze in the light of God arise!

The stars grow faint before the eyes of men below;
'Tis night with angels, and the Heavens forget to glow.

(The angels form themselves into an army. They fight against Michael and his host, and are conquered). Later, Gabriel enters, bearing the tidings of man's fall.)

Gabriel—
Alas! alas! alas! to adverse fortune bow!
What do ye here? In vain are songs of triumph now;

In vain of spoil of arms and gonfalons ye boast.
Michael—
What hear I, Gabriel?

Gabriel—
Oh, Adam is fallen and lost!
The father and the stock of all the human race,
Most grievously hath erred, and lies in piteous case.

(Michael sends Uriel to drive the guilty pair out of Eden, and then pronounces the doom of the rebel angels.)

THE RED BREAST OF THE ROBIN

Ap Irish Legend

Of all the merry little birds that live up in the tree,
And carol from the sycamore and chestnut,
The prettiest little gentleman that dearest is to me

Is the one in coat of brown and scarlet waist-coat.

It's cockit little Robin,
And his head he keeps abobbin!

Of all the other pretty fowls I'd choose him!
For he sings so sweetly still,
Through his tiny slender bill,

With a little patch of red upon his bosom.

When the frost is in the air and the snow upon the ground,
To other little birdies so bewildering,
Picking up the crumbs near the window he is found,

Singing Christmas stories to the children:
Of how two tender babes
Were left in woodland glades

By a cruel man who took 'em there to loose 'em,
But Bobby saw the crime,
(He was watching all the time),
And he blushed a perfect crimson on his bosom.

When the changing leaves of Autumn around us thickly fall,
And everything seems sorrowful and sad-dening,

Robin may be heard on the corner of a wall
Singing what is soiling and gladdening.
And sure, from what I've heard,
He's God's own little bird,

And sings to those in grief just to amuse 'em,
But once he sat forlorn
On a cruel crown of thorn,
And the blood it stained his pretty little bosom.

DID HIS BEST

The young politician was as obliging as possible, but there was a limit to his possibilities. When the reporter asked him what his wife would wear at the mayor's reception, he assumed a confidential air.

"I'll tell you just as much as I know myself," he said. "Last night she told me she would wear white; this morning at breakfast she said she'd decided on her rose-colored gown, and when I said goodbye to her she had spread a grey one beside the rose-colored one on a chair, and her black lace beside the white on another, and was taking something else out of the closet. If her hair hadn't caught on a hook as she turned round, I might have been able to tell you more."

A REUNION TASK

The two old friends met after a separation of ten years. "I declare you've kept your youthful looks to a surprising extent," said one.

"Thank you," said the other man. "You've done pretty well, too. You know you expected to be absolutely bald long before this, like your father, instead of which I really believe you've as much hair left as I have, if not more."

"Absurd!" said his friend. "It can't be. Let's count it!"

"The most amusing story of an American in France that I ever heard," said a recently appointed attaché to the French Embassy, "is this:

"A well-known French actor became involved in a discussion with an American, grew heated, drew his card from his pocket, threw it on the table with a tragic air, and stalked out.

"The American regarded the card for some moments then took out his fountain pen, wrote 'Admit bearer' above the engraved line, and went off to the theatre."

—Brooklyn Life.

"There is one time when you may be sure people are fishing for scandal."

"What is that?"

"When they are talking with bated breath."

—The Westerner.