

PRESERVING THE AULD BRIG O' AYR MADE FAMOUS BY BOBBIE BURNS

Eloquent Address by Lord Rosebery in Aid of the Fund for Re-constructing the Bridge—A Defense of the Barbarians and the Vandals—Scotchmen Responding to the Call.

The preservation and reconstruction of the "Auld Brig o' Ayr" is a project that appeals to Scotchmen the world over. The bridge, which has been immortalized in one of Burns' poems, was built six centuries ago, and was about to be condemned recently by the Town Council of Ayr, when Lord Rosebery, headed by Lord Rosebery, interviewed and undertook to raise a fund of £10,000 for its preservation. Over half of this sum has been subscribed. Scotchmen in Canada are asked to contribute, and subscriptions will be received in this city by Mr. John Mills, bookseller. Lord Rosebery addressed a great meeting in Ayr the other night in aid of the fund. His eloquent and witty speech is reproduced in part as follows:

Lord Rosebery, who was received with great enthusiasm, the audience singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," said:

My appearance here tonight almost compels me to break two solemn vows. One of these vows was never to say another word about Burns in public. I have unveiled so many statues of the poet, I have been present at so many celebrations, that I think I was justified in that vow of abstinence for the rest of my life. Well, if I break that vow tonight—and I hope I shall not—(laughter)—the guilt of my perjury will rest upon your heads and not on mine. Now, I took that vow about Burns not merely because of my many experiences that I have alluded to, but because of the fact that there is nothing new to say about Burns at all. All that has been exhausted at the Burns dinners and the Burns celebrations which are held with such uncommon frequency all over the world. It is no disparagement to Burns to say there is nothing new to be said about him. Suppose, after the death of Homer—if Homer ever did die or did live—(laughter)—his admirers had agreed to hold a dinner in his honor on his birthday for the rest of coming time. I think by this time that all that could be said about Homer would have been exhausted, and that there would be much more near to our own time than the Grecian bard, yet as dinners have been held so universally and so frequently—I suppose there are hundreds held on his birthday all over the world—that I do not think it is possible for anyone to say anything original or worth hearing about him. (Applause.) Well, that is the justification of my vow, and that vow I hope to keep tonight. (A laugh.) But, gentlemen, indeed the purpose of our meeting tonight is not to discuss about the merits of Burns, but about a very practical proposal to honor Burns' memory by preserving one of the monuments that have been consecrated by his poetry. (Applause.)

The question of the preservation of ancient monuments is not one to which any hard-and-fast principle can be applied. I suppose a man or a woman with the historic sense would like to preserve everything in the slightest degree characteristic of the past ages of our country. His example, we should like to see the London of Chaucer, or the London of "The Fortunes of Nigel," or even the London of Queen Anne, had it been possible to preserve

the city in that condition. I do not suppose we would wish very much to see the Ayr of Wallace, because that might not be particularly flattering to our national self-complacency. But, to turn to our own capital, should we not delight to see Edinburgh before the new town was thought of, when it mainly consisted of one fierce street reaching from Holyrood to the Castle, flanked by unnumbered recesses, from which at any moment might appear lawless mobs or dainty duchesses tripping to their balls. Should we not, indeed, if we might go further back in history, desire to see all the great scenes of the world in their full of glory and splendor, the glories of Babylon, the glories of Nineveh, of Constantinople, and Athens, and Rome at their best. Were it possible, had it been possible, to preserve all these historical shrines, how gladly would we visit them now. Why, sir, when you see the crowds that visit one obscure watering place on the slopes of Vesuvius, we can imagine the enthusiasm with which the present generation would consecrate and constantly visit the greater ruins of antiquity which have passed away forever. But all these are dreams. We cannot realize them. We can never realize them. Men will fight, and wars have destroyed many of the buildings of history. There are fires, and fires have been healthy fires where the old towns have been built of wood. There has been pestilence, which has desolated many a fair site. I myself have seen in the somewhat primeval forest of Goa two or three great cathedrals standing alone in the jungle, tenanted only by a few pale and shuddering monks—cathedrals that would have held thousands of inhabitants that once lived around them, but that were killed or driven away by the fevers inherent to the spot. I give that as an instance of what may have devastated, and has devastated, some of the choicest cities of which we have knowledge in history. Then there is time. Pestilence we can hope to exclude; wars, I believe, we are about, by a conference forever. (Applause.) But time and the barbarians we have always with us. (Laughter.) We cannot fight against time and the other elements to which I have alluded. They are always ready to assail the monuments of the past. When I speak of barbarians I do not mean any sense to the Town Council of Ayr. (Loud laughter.) I know how tortuous and mischievous critics are, and I think it right to utter that protest, because I believe the Town Council, wherever they have seen the chance of preserving the old bridge, have earnestly grasped it. (Applause.) On the other hand, I am not quite sure that we do not owe a certain debt to the barbarians of the eighteenth century, who, I think, were the worst of all. I think we owe a debt of gratitude to the barbarians of the past, because they have got rid of a great many buildings which, if they existed now, we should not have had the heart to get rid of, and perhaps it is well they disappeared. I regard the barbarians of the past very much as a landlord looks on his forester when the landlord has not been able to nix himself to cut down a fine tree, and the forester decides the question for him by cutting it down behind his back. (Laughter.)

INCONVENIENCES OF PRESERVATION.

I cannot help thinking that if we had preserved all the memorials that we in this age of preservation should be inclined to keep, we should find ourselves in a position of very great inconvenience from which the vandals of the past had delivered us. Suppose for example, the London of Chaucer were still to be in existence. There would be built round it an enormous city, numbering amongst its inhabitants millions of human beings, to whom the London of Chaucer would be an object of interest, but also a subject of very considerable inconvenience. They would be obliged two years ago, to appoint a Royal Commission on the communications of London, and the first article in that Royal Commission report would be to desire that the London of Chaucer should be altogether and radically swept away, in order to enable the greater and newer London to communicate with each other. Well, that would have been an agonizing choice to whole that we with our tender susceptibilities are not face to face with such choice as that. Take again Old London Bridge. I do not know if you have ever seen pictures of Old London Bridge. It was an old historical bridge, covered with houses and shops, and even had a church upon it. The shops were real shops. I have somewhere a silver cup and a clock and a book which were all produced on old London Bridge. Now if old London Bridge were standing in the midst of the great Metropolis of the Empire no one would allow it to be demolished. They would build two bridges, one on each side of it, to carry the traffic rather than demolish the old London Bridge. This seems very apposite to our subject tonight, and yet I suppose that if old London Bridge were in existence it would be an obstacle to the traffic. We should have to pull it down. If only we allow transit route to the rich freights carried in the steamboats of the London County Council. (Laughter.) Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am arguing against myself. (Laughter.) I am arguing, as it would appear, rather in favor of the destruction of old monuments. That is very far from my feeling or my wish. I am afraid if I had my way the preservation of ancient monuments would be carried much further than it is. I am glad that there have been the heart to destroy the inconveniences that I should wish to pre-

serve, but there is the great duty of civilization which has to be done—civilization—civilization with its attendant duties, commerce, communication, comfort, convenience—all these demand the gradual eradication of almost all that is past which is not absolutely historical and venerable. I suppose if we kept all that is historical that we wish to keep there would not be an adequate street in any old town. I suppose that if we could keep all that we wished to keep there would not be a habitable house in any old town, and so we must steel ourselves to the necessity. And when you come to think of all that was beautiful in the world which has disappeared we must feel that there is singularly little left for us to preserve. Now, gentlemen, how does this apply to our discussion tonight? I am happy to say that it has no application whatever. (Laughter.) I have only been thinking aloud to keep off the topic of Burns. (Laughter.)

A TRUE PRINCIPLE.

If I had been obliged to keep to my subject I should have found myself involved in perjury at once, and therefore I have treated you to what is an arid disquisition on the true principle of the preservation of historic monuments. That principle is that all should be preserved that is really historical where it does not conflict with the conveniences of civilization. (Applause.) But, ladies and gentlemen, the Ayr Auld Brig is subject to none of these disqualifications. It is not pretended for a moment that it conflicts with any modern convenience. It is an excellent bridge for pedestrians. I tested it today—(applause)—and it carried me quite safely. (Laughter and applause.) It is antiquity, not so old as extravagant eulogists would say, but quite as old as to make it respectable from the point of view of antiquity alone. Then it has been consecrated by the greatest of all Scotland's poets. (Applause.) There is not much remaining he has consecrated in that way except the vast scenes of nature. We have, at any rate, the Auld Brig, and I think we are bound to preserve it. (Loud applause.)

The whole question, as has been exposed in the luminous report of Mr. Oswald, is a mere question of cash—it is a mere question of funds—and therefore I do not doubt that when the situation is understood by those classes of the inhabitants of the world whom it mainly affects, the funds will be easily forthcoming. (Applause.) Now, sir, in the first place the responsibility lies on Ayrshire. (Applause.) I do not wish to harp too much on that point. I do not wish to exact a sort of blood money from the quiet and peaceful County of Ayr. But Ayrshire must remember that out of thirty-seven years of his life, Burns, I think, spent twenty-seven in Ayrshire, and Ayrshire is therefore the consecrated region of the poet, and bears a special responsibility in connection with his memory. (Applause.) I am not sure that I should say all this in Dumfries—(laughter)—and I trust what I have said will not chill the energies or the liberality of Dumfries. But, at any rate, the indisputable fact remains that for more than five-sevenths of his life Burns lived in Ayrshire. To pass from Ayrshire, then, the responsibility rests upon the people of Scotland. Now, sir, there, I take it, the responsibility cannot be put too strongly. Burns owes little to Scotland in the way of money. Scotland owes a great debt of money to Burns. (Applause.) I would have many of the innumerable pilgrims who come to Scotland from the great Republic of the West come there in the main urged and driven by an anxiety to realize the poems of Burns on the spot. That, to put it at its lowest, is a cash value which Scotland cannot neglect. But there is a higher interest that Scotland has in the man than this. She values two immortal reputations which have consecrated her soil in a single century—Robert Burns and Walter Scott. (Loud applause.) I do not think it can be doubted that to the heart of Scotland Robert Burns lies even nearer than Walter Scott. (Hear, hear.) I do not believe it possible that Scotland, when awake to the danger, will allow the Auld Brig of Ayr, which was so ex-quisitely built by Burns in his prime of life, that Scotland will allow the bridge for which he pleaded, to be wiped out of existence in this twentieth century of ours. (Applause.) If so, all I can say is this, that while with Burns will remain the glory of the poem and the plea, with Scotland will remain the irredeemable shame of having disregarded the poet. (Cheers.)

A WIDE APPEAL.

Sir, we may make a wider appeal than either to Ayrshire or to Scotland. We may make an appeal to all those worshippers of Burns who assemble in such numbers every year on his birthday, or, without assembling on his birthday, almost worship his memory and his poems, a class unlimited in numbers and spread all over the world. Sir, if every man who has attended a Burns dinner and shed tears over the memory of Burns, and made speeches about Burns, and drunk whisky in honor of Burns—(laughter)—if every one of these now living in the world would send a shilling or even sixpence to the central fund—why your offers would be overflowing, and you would have to gild the old bridge in order to expend your funds. (Laughter.) Are we really to believe that these Burns jubilees, of which we have had two, and these annual dinners, and orations, and libations—(laughter)—such unbounded enthusiasm, such breaking of the voices at the bare mention of the distresses of the poet—are we to suppose that all these are a sham, and that when a definite opportunity offers to reduce their professions to practice the money, the little money required, remains in the breeches' pockets of the worshippers? (Cheers.) I say that if this thing be possible, if it be conceivable that the Auld Brig shall perish for want of funds, one result must necessarily follow—that the Burns dinners must also cease, for every gentleman and every scotchman—and these are gentlemen—are gentlemen—would have too much reason behind their meek when they saw how empty all this adoration was. (Cheers.) Sir, I should like to make an appeal to a wider audience yet. I would appeal to those who honor the essential dignity of manual labor,

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(Cheers.) It is perhaps the fashion in these days not rightly to honor that form of toil, but no man who considers the life of Burns and who works with his hands, can fail to feel that his calling is raised and honored by the immortal husbandman, who was also a poet. (Cheers.) The other day I passed through that beautiful district of Scotland which ranges from Edinburgh to Peebles, and from Peebles to Galashiels and Selkirk, and so on to Hawick and to Langholm. There art and nature have almost equally divided a region which is exquisitely beautiful in itself, for while art has filled many of the valleys with the teeming hives of industries and the mills which provide so much employment for so many industrious artisans, the silent hills are left to be garrisoned by the lonely shepherd alone. There the shepherd lives in silent communion with nature, and when he emerges from his solitude he sometimes seems as if in that communion he had solved the problem and absorbed the beauties of life. (Applause.) And so it was with Burns. He was no shepherd, but he was a plowman. But who can doubt that as he trudged the steep clay behind his mechanical occupation, he, too, battled with the problems of life, and received the divine inspiration from nature. There is the story of a good man, John Bradford, who, when he had finished his day's work, when he emerged from his solitude he sometimes seems as if in that communion he had solved the problem and absorbed the beauties of life. (Applause.) And so it was with Burns. He was no shepherd, but he was a plowman. But who can doubt that as he trudged the steep clay behind his mechanical occupation, he, too, battled with the problems of life, and received the divine inspiration from nature. There is the story of a good man, John Bradford, who, when he had finished his day's work, when he emerged from his solitude he sometimes seems as if in that communion he had solved the problem and absorbed the beauties of life. (Applause.)

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STUTTERING.

[The Lancet.]

Of the etiology of stuttering we know nothing definite. Direct inheritance is rare, and possibly imitation is the chief factor when father and son are affected. There is usually a well-marked neurotic inheritance, others in the family having various forms of nervous complaints. But I have not been able to confirm Charcot's statement that stuttering and ordinary facial paralysis frequently occur in the same family. Shocks, frights and debility after some acute illness are the causes to which the onset is most frequently attributed by parents. Imitation is undoubtedly an occasional cause, children having often been known to start the habit when put in charge of a stuttering nursemaid. A friend of mine who was extremely fond of horses and was hardly to be kept out of the stables acquired a most obstinate stutter from the groom. Adenoid vegetations are often met with and are important as a predisposing cause. When present they should be removed as a preliminary measure, although it must not be expected that their removal will lead to a prompt cessation of the stuter.

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