ROBIN HOOD'S LAND.

The Charm Growing Out of Literary Identification.

Genial and Entertaining Paper on the Olden Haunts of Robin Hood and Friar Tuck Replete With Some Very Pleasing Legends, Poetry and Reminiscences.

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The longer one wanders in England, Scotland and Ireland, the more encompassing and impressive becomes that charm growing out of what may be termed literary identification.

Over there in Ireland what can be more fascinating than a silent ramble about slumberous old Youghal and up drowsy Kilcolman way? There Raleigh and Spenser lived, loved and wrought. Tramping from Killarney to Cahersiveen, one lingers lovingly at Carhan bridge; for beside it the great O'Connell was born. Who but a bigot can climb the Rock of Cashel without a subdued and reverential feeling from the historic and sacred surroundings; or who but an insensate shudders not at Boyne or Aughrim where the life of a nation broke in its last wild throb upon river and morass? Then, at Slane, who can fail of awe in the presence of prehistoric monuments rivaling the pyramids themselves? To stand on Tara's Hill, in Meath, and in fancy see St. Patrick, unmindful of the treachery planning his death, with his eight devoted followers, coming up the royal hill, chanting his prayer, "May the word of God render me eloquent!" to forever dim the fires of Belltaine with the sacred flame of Christianity through the conversion of King Laeghaire, and the overthrow of paganism in Ireland, is to come with startling tenderness close to an inspired career of one who lived but to bless nearly 1,500 years ago. Vague and far it was to you before. But you feel and know the story now.

So, too, how illimitable seem human cycles, yet how compact and little, when you are stumbling among the remains of that tremendous pagan stronghold, Dun Ængus, on the remotest precipice of Aranmore, the most desolate of all Ireland's islands. The great archæologist, Dr. Petrie, termed it "the most magnificent barbaric monument in Europe." The legend is that Dun Ængus and the five other great forts, or *duns*, of the Aran Islands were built from 1,000 to 1,500 years before the Christian era by the flying and fated Firbolgs. No matter about the legend. There they stand to-day, more weird, suggestive and awe-inspiring in their dread secrets of the people that were, than ever could lie in the silence of the Lybian Sphnix. And then, away in the North, over beyond old Derry, what a thrill flashes through one when standing alone upon the walls of the mighty Grianan of Aileach, whose existence can be definitely traced to the period 1053 before Christ! Grianan, the mighty Dun, of which we read in the Dinnsenchas:

Aileach-Firin, plat of the king-rath royal of the world;
Dun, to which led horse-roads, through five mighty ramparts.

So they did. You can trace them to this day as clearly as the paths in your own garden. On the crests of those circling mountains burned the signal-fires in the dim days, a tiara of flame, to wake the helots and their herds. Thither to the Grianan they streamed, those skin-clad hordes. Within those very ramparts huddled the affrighted women and the flocks. Within those very walls Kings watched over battles. There were the feasts of victory; the wailings and lamentations; the weird, wild rights; all a thousand years before barbarous man looked beyond the god of day to the one infinite God. But you did not sense this until your own feet had pressed the same earth theirs had trod, and your eyes had looked upon lone Errigal, like a cone of steel in the West, and through the grim, dark passes, to the purple mists above Armagh and Tyrone.

In all that can be read of the "Land o' Cakes" how the true feeling is lacking, until one weds presence and actuality with the toneless tales of words. To know the weird straths and glens of the North, to breathe their air, drink in their wild and gorgeous colorings, to listen to the roar of their gorgeous waterfalls, to sail over their silent lochs, to tremble in their mighty storms, is to come very close in thought and sympathy to that grand and noble race which all of the Roman legions could not conquer. Its desperate, fateful loyalty to the House of Stuart can never be fully understood until you have tramped from the Western Ocean to the German, and wandered on Culloden Moor. Macbeth, King Duncan and Malcolm Canmore are mere creatures of Shakespeare's fancy until you find in the musty old records of Inverness that they once walked its streets with all of your own passions, hope, ambition, and until you have stood on Tomnahaurich, by the Ness-side, you have never really known Hugh Miller, stonemason, great heart and sage. Despite Dr. Johnson's matchless apostrophe to Iona, the story of Columb's saintly isle, of the Christian enlightenment emanating from it to the British isles and the greater part of Europe, when nearly all the scenes lighted by the first fires of apostolic sacrifice had partially relapsed into superstitious barbarism, is as dreamful as the legends of the Holy Grail, until you have stood among the majestic ruins of Iona and wandered along its "Straid-na-Marbh," where lie countless chiefs, friars, abbots and kings. After you have passed an hour in the ancient churchyard of Greyfriars, in Edinburgh, you will begin to realize who were the Covenanters of Scotland, and what they endured for their consciences' sake. When you have come to the ruins of Lochmaben, Robert the Bruce, patriot king and warrior, first leaves the mists of legend and traditions, and welcomes you as a man of flesh and blood to his old home by the sedgy lake. Melrose, Dryburgh and all the grand monastic structures of the sunny, murmurous Tweed are poets' phantasms until you wander among their ruined cloisters and touch with your own hands the brave old stones of their majestic arches. Scott, the "Ettrick Shepherd," Carlyle, even Burns himself, are half ideal, until you have stood by the Ettrick and Yarrow, sadly left the princely Abbotsford, shuddered at the dolorous dearth and meanness of Carlyle's boyhood home at Ecclefechan, and heard with your own hearing the melodious songs of the Nith and the Doon.

If this is true of Ireland and Scotland, how infinitely more impressive is this identification to the average American pilgrim in England, the mother-land of our own race and tongue. A mighty volume, and a sweet and tender one, withal, could be made relegating apparent realities to their home in myth-land, and beckoning from the realms of legend and tradition the actual beings whose imagery first swept from reality, and whom successive centuries of poetic fancy, shared alike by us from childhood to manhood, have placed further and further behind the ever-loved veilings of mystery and song. No two characters in the semi-mythology of Britain are better illustrations than those of King Arthur and Robin Hood. Antitypes as they were and are, the one the embodiment of the loftiest and noblest qualities in ruler and man, the other, jocund anarchist and Puckish freebooter and "leveler" of his time, both are objects of equal, though unlike devotion, not only in the literature of centuries, but in the breasts of millions who speak the English tongue.

The most curious thing about these two characters is that the least aids to identification are found among the high-minded and learned. Literature universally places them in shadow-land. But go where you may among the English lowly, King Arthur is really there; Robin Hood with his faithful, Little John, Friar Tuck and their hundred archers bold, are ever a goodly company, a helpful unconscious ethical counterpoise, it has sometimes seemed to me, where burdens and impositions of caste and condition are most grievous and sore to abide. A few years of wandering among the British lowly, more than all reading and study, have convinced me that both King Arthur and Robin Hood once really existed and lived much the same manner of lives as the song and ballad makers, although responsible for their legendary character, have shadowed forth. I can take you into thousands of cabins in Devonshire, Cornwall and in Brittany—for King Arthur is even more a god to the Britons than to the West of England Armorican Celts—where the books are unknown; where no manner of literature ever came; where history of clan and sept have been preserved from father to son; where the Arthurian legends live more bright and glowing than in all the printed tales of the Table Round. These absolutely bookless folk will take you to the very landing-place of King Uther; show you the real remains of the twin castles Tintagel and Terrabil; relate how Uther Pendragen besieged the Duke of Cornwall, slew him, and the same day wed his widow, Ygrayne, to whom the child, Arthur, was born, and reared by the enchanter, Merlin, under the good Sir Ector's care, who restored to him the kingdom of Cornwall on Pendragon's death; how the noble King Arthur instituted the Order of Knights of the Round Table, whose saintly acts in the service of God and man, until they fell into sin, were deeds of good and glory; how Arthur loved only and wed Guinevere, betrayed by Launcelot; and, at last, receiving his death-wound in battle with his rebellious nephew's forces at Camelford (which the poets make Camelot), Arthur bade the loyal knight, Sir Bedever, carry him to Dozmare Pool, fling his sword Excalibur therein, when a boat, rowed by three Queens, appeared. Into this Arthur was lifted, and borne away to the island-vale of Avillion, that his grievous wound might be healed. These folk say, and believe, that Arthur is still in fairy-land; that his spirit often returns in the guise of a bird, the chough, hovering about the old scenes with pathetic murmering; and that he will surely "come again,"

"Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,"

To reign as a King should and might over his beloved England. Literature never provided a hundred thousand bookless folk with this. It remains, because in it has been preserved, without books, a fadeless actuality.

In like manner Robin Hood's Land becomes the whole of England. Piercing their armor of sodden reserve, you will find that the sober English peasant and the grave English workman, have minds full enough of chivalry and romance. Robin Hood is immortal with these, because as a "leveler" of rank and class, he represents an undefinable yet certain power to buffet the church and the nobility. He is a rescuer of maids in distress and men in duress. He embodies the unconscious yet universal leaning towards Communism among the English lowly. Above all, he is the luminous type of that dearest thing to every lowly Briton's heart, "fair play," whether in frolic, freebooting or fight. Fairly defined, Robin Hood's Land comprises the shires of Nottingham and Lincoln with the southern half of Yorkshire. There is not a plowman, forester, gamekeeper, and I would almost venture to say, any human being among the lowly outside the factories, in this portion of England, who has not a clearer conception of the life, character and exploits of the merry outlaw than all books could give. As is well known, the manuscript and old-record researches by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, an assistant keeper of the public records of England, made public in 1852, placed fairly within the domain of authentic history the facts concerning the actual existence and career of Robin Hood. He was born about 1220. His family were of some station, and seated at Wakefield. With many others he became an outlaw from having espoused the cause of the unfortunate Earl of Lancaster. He retreated with a hundred or more of his comrades to the depths of Sherwood Forest, not a score of miles from his birthplace. By their unequaled skill in archery; godless pranks with Lords and Bishops; robberies of the high to share with the lowly, and their adequate wits in all exigencies, they secured the loyalty of the peasantry roundabout and put to defiance the entire forces of the crown. At this juncture King Edward wisely pardoned Robin Hood, giving him service as one of the "valets, porteurs de la chambre," in the royal household. Here he remained for more than a year, to which existing vouchers for his payment attest. But the hunger for the greenwood was too strong. Begging the King for permission to visit the old chapel at Barnsdale, it was granted "for a s'ennight." Having once rejoined his comrades, he could not again be persuaded to leave them; and he continued the old outlaw's life, until, resorting to the priory of Kirkless for surgical aid, he died from loss of blood, and was buried in the grounds of the priory, now Kirkless Hall, four miles north of Huddersfield, and the seat of the noble family of Armytage.

But, precisely as I have found with the Cornish and Devonshire peasantry in identification of King Arthur and his land, it is among the lowly of Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire that are discovered innumerable proofs, in tradition, ballad and nomenclature, of the merry outlaw and his men. Literature has not created these for the delectation of an ignorant peasantry. The peasantry themselves have furnished, by word of mouth, the material—and but an infinitesimal portion has been utilized—enabling writers old and new to transfer the real Robin Hood to the Robin Hood of fiction and song. A close defining of Robin Hood's Land would give it the area of Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire and Barnsdale Forest in Yorkshire, with a narrow strip of country leading northeast through southern Yorkshire, to the sea, near Scarborough, the latter being occasionally traversed by the outlaws when too closely pressed by the King's soldiery. In the outlaw's time but one highway traversed the region. That was the old Roman Road from London to Berwick. Perhaps half a dozen hamlets, the one ancient city of Nottingham, so old that its history has been traced back 950 years before the Christian era and its first inhabitants dug holes in the rocks for homes, and a few chapels, abbeys and priories of the rudest construction, could have been found in all the area. To-day a forest of chimneys stands where stood the giant English oaks. You can look from no open spot within it, without your horizon being clouded with their black silhouettes against a smoke-laden sky. As many hundreds of towns and hamlets are in Robin Hood's Land now as there were single ones in the archer-outlaw's time. But near the roaring of the forge, the clatter of the looms and the mournful songs of millions of spindles, like the tiny nests of the meadow-larks escaping the blades of the reapers, are little nests of English peasants' homes, bits of English copse and hedge, and patches of ancient English oak, which modern industry and modern landlordism have not quite effaced; and it is among these, seeking the wraiths and traditions of the olden Robin Hood's Land and the new, that we will go pilgriming in our next.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

Prince Nicholas, of Montenegro, has ordained in his official gazette that every one of his active warriors shall plant during 1891 200 grape-vines, every Brigadier must plant twenty, every commander and under commander of a battalion ten, every drummer or color bearer five. Every guide, moreover, must plant two olive trees, and every corporal one. The gazette calculates that in consequence of this order Montenegro will have 4,000,000 grape-vines and 20,000 olive trees on January 1st.

A new enterprise has been started in Chicago for the purpose of transporting cattle from the great ranches in Wyoming, Utah and Montana to Philadelphia, where immense abattoirs will be erected. It is intended that this dressed beef shall go to supply the European markets. It will cost less to ship live cattle to Philadelphia and kill them there than to kill them in the West and ship the dressed beef to New York and Europe.

AN UNIQUE ASYLUM.

How Foundlings Are Provided For in Peru.

The Noble and Self-Sacrificing Work of the Sisters of Charity in Peru—How Unfortunate Waifs are Received and Cared for.

[Special Correspondence of SUNDAY UNION.]

AREQUIPA, Peru, 1890.

In the center of the old city, nearly opposite the ruins of what was once the woman's hospital, which was shaken down by the great earthquake of twenty years ago—is a very ancient-looking structure, straggling over an entire square, whose closed doors and small, heavily-barred windows give no hint of what may be going on within. My attention was first attracted by its appearance of antiquity, the utter silence that broods over the locality, and the numbers of black-gowned priests and blue-gowned Sisters of Charity who are constantly gliding in and out its worm-eaten portal. One day, having extended my walk to the farther side of the enormous building where it faces an unfrequented thoroughfare, I observed something which aroused my curiosity to the highest pitch—merely a kind of wooden cage or turn-stile set in the walls, shaped like a circular box with two compartments, which chanced to be slowly revolving as I passed. What could it be—another "mystery of the monkery," or a relic of Inquisition days? While I looked, the box slowly turned again and presented its blank side to the street, so like the surrounding walls, that one might pass a thousand times and never notice it. But a little groove remained, into which the fingers might be fitted, and of course the spirit of Mother Eve impelled me to try it. Pulled one way, it refused to move: pulled the other, the cage swung around with a rheumatic creak and turned its empty compartment to the view. Journalistic enterprise demanded a solution of the riddle, and forthwith I became a walking interrogation point until the bottom facts were attained.

The ancient edifice—which is now nearly three hundred years old, and for more than two centuries served as a convent for the nuns of Santa Catarina—is one of the several foundling institutions which have long flourished in Peru; and the swinging box, like those we read of in France and Italy, is set every night with its hollow side outward, for the reception of any infants that may be placed in it by unknown hands—a perpetually open door for the shelter of those unwelcome waifs who are immeasurably worse than orphaned, and whose acknowledgement brings ruin upon their erring parents. The mother, or her emissary, stealing along that deserted street in the darkness, has only to put the new-born citizen into the box, give it the slightest impetus, and around it turns, affording immediate protection to the tiny occupant, while no eye inside the building can see who placed it there. A Sister of Charity is stationed on the inner side of the wall, whose sole business it is to watch for new arrivals at all hours of the night, to receive and care for them.

A newspaper column is not the place for discussing those social questions that have perplexed the wisest heads and noblest hearts ever since this sinful world was young—those saddest problems that seem to thwart the plans of the Almighty and almost make one doubt His overruling care. I am only to relate what exists in Arequipa, as in many other parts of South America, leaving my readers to approve or condemn, according to their individual convictions. Certainly Catholic Peru is in advance of most Protestant countries in having almost entirely eradicated the crime of destroying infants before their birth, by rendering it possible for unwedded mothers to dispose of the proofs of their shame without committing murder and possibly suicide. In communities which are perhaps more civilized the impression appears to prevail that if provision were made for the flotsam and jetsam thus cast up on the sea of human wickedness, it would be an encouragement to vice—as if the young women of the land would flock to avail themselves of the privilege!

In due time we obtained permission to visit the unique asylum, which, like all other benevolent institutions of South America, is conducted under the direct auspices of the Church of Rome. However Christians of diverse sects who are traveling the many routes to heaven may differ on dogmas and doctrinal points, all not blinded by bigotry must yield the palm of unselfish living and tireless practice of charity, the greatest of Christian virtues, to the uncounted army of Catholic devotees, male and female, who have given their lives to the care of the sick, the indigent, the helpless, and the so-called "heathen." No spot on the earth's surface is too bleak or forbidding, no human beings too degraded, and no depth of crime or misery too dark to be penetrated by the ministrations of learned monks and gentle Sisters of Charity—not merely by the easy method of sending Bibles, tracts and the contributions of other people, but by going to live among the objects of religious solicitude and devoting toilsome years to bettering their condition.

Led by the matron, we went first to inspect the mysterious hole in the wall. Close to its inner opening stands the little iron bedstead—with a cross at the foot of it and a picture of the Mother of Sorrows at its head—where rests the good Sister whose nightly business it was to watch the revolving cradle and to take out new comers. She informed me that the number of additions to the household by this means averaged about three a week, and those so far during the current year (eight months of it were then gone) only seventy-two had been received. She said that the majority of these children whose birth-days nobody celebrates, evidently belong to the poorest classes and arrive naked or wrapped in rags, others are dressed in the daintiest raiment that love and wealth and the instinct of maternal tenderness can suggest; that with the latter is usually found a generous sum of money for the child's maintenance, and not infrequently a tear-blotted letter beseeching especial care for the forsaken baby and promising to pay well for its future support. What suggestions of tragedy are here—of human frailty and divine compassion—of the old perplexing problem that came with the tempter into Eden!

This box is an inexhaustible source of revenue for the asylum, and nearly every night it is secretly revolved by outside hands (presumably those who have unacknowledged children within), and purses put in labeled for the support of the infant received on such and such a date. No questions are ever asked, and no efforts made to trace the parentage of the waifs. On certain days of the week the institution is open to visitors, and the children may be adopted by whoever desires them; thus giving the unknown parents an opportunity of secretly seeing their castaways, and of eventually repossessing themselves of them without fear of discovery—unless, as sometimes happens, nature is too powerful to be overcome by guile and unfortunate babies develop a marked resemblance to the authors of their being.

The outer walls of the quaint old building are four feet thick and ramble around three inner court-yards, each of which has its central fountain and tangle of flowers and passion vines, and a clump of olive or fig trees shading the shrine of a Christ, a Virgin or a saint. These courts are surrounded by corridors, whose tiled arches are upheld by long lines of queerly-carved pillars, now streaked with mold and crumbling under "the insidious tooth of time." Traversing their moss-grown pavements, we found the path obstructed by several donkeys that had been driven to the inner doors with supplies of fuel, milk and vegetables; and the blue-gowned matron—her round, benevolent face shining like a full-blown peony in the sun, with rosary, crucifix and bunch of keys jingling at her side, and the flaps of her wide, white bonnet standing out like sails—failing to budge the animal by the usual "st-th-th! underlie!" put her strong, fat shoulder to each one's rump and quietly pushed it out of the way.

Such immaculate cleanliness prevails everywhere that one might eat off from every inch of flooring, whether of wood, tile or adobe, and such absolute silence reigned that we found it difficult to believe there were actually a great number of children quartered under the roof. No muddy little foot-prints, nor marks of careless fingers, nor shouts of childish glee proclaimed their existence. A glimpse of the perfect discipline needed in such a crowded institution is anywhere enough to give one a heartache, with the knowledge that the rescued waifs, though comfortably fed and clothed, must become hardly more than automatons—rising and retiring, eating, sleeping, playing and praying by inexorable rule, led by the nod and beck of their keepers. The good Sisterhood, by the way, being all maiden ladies of certain age, are scarcely the natural guardians of childhood, having voluntarily foregone the development of the maternal instinct and being compelled by their vows to sternly repress the most tender sentiments of the heart. Worthy women though they undoubtedly are, I scarched every countenance in vain for one trace of that undefinable yet unmistakable sweetness of expression indicative of completed womanhood, that comes only to the faces of those who have loved.

In this asylum the children are carefull trained in the tenets of the church, and educated to a moderate extent in the lore of books, while each is taught some useful trade which he or she may practice for future support. Thus, while the boys learn saddlery, shoe-making, poncho-weaving, cabinet-work, etc., the girls manufacture artificial flowers, fancy boxes, lace and embroidery, and are trained for domestic service. If not adopted, and if self-supporting, they may remain here permanently should they choose to do so; or at the age of eighteen they may go forth to shift for themselves. There are are a number of "orphans" here, both male and female, reared in the institution and are now nearing middle age, who prefer to work hard all their days for the general good, rather than leave the shelter of the only home they have ever known. The young men earn considerable sums at their various occupations, and the girls take in fine sewing, embroidery and laundry work. They have also a model bakery in the house, and the very best bread that is sold in the city comes from these ovens.

At present there are 426 children in the asylum. The smallest of these able to be out of the nursery (a class of forty-seven between the ages of 2 and 5 years), were put through their best paces for our edification, with little songs and parrot-like dialogues, each setting forth their religious faith and the goodness of their protectors. All were neatly, though poorly clad—the girls in blue gingham gowns, the boys with jean-jackets and trousers, both sexes wearing aprons exactly alike, of the same coarse blue cloth that the Sisters wear for dresses, with woolen hose knit by the larger girls and pegged shoes made by the boys. Each little apron had a square pocket patched on in front, into which was thrust a calico handkerchief—but the usual lamentable neglect peculiar to childhood's use of the latter article prevailed. At the head of each little cot in the long, clean dormitory hung a calico bag, marked with the owner's number, containing a comb and a rosary—and woe to the luckless youngster who forgets the use of either!

The most amusing part of our entertainment was furnished by the large boys' band. We came down the old stone stairs of the dormitory at the tap of the drum, and saw ranged under the fig-trees a group of lads from twelve to fourteen years old, who rendered some really creditable music upon what at first sight looked to be first-class instruments. Closer inspection, however, disclosed that the horns and cornets were nothing but paste-board and twisted paper, the bass drum made of a skin stretched over a half-barrel, held in place by the original hoop, and the snare made from a hard can which still showed the New York brand painted on its side. One young genius had a section of cane cut into a flute; another had a bit of coarse comb with a bit of paper over it for a mouthpiece, and the rest tooted away upon fine-tooth combs.

Among the crowd of little faces it is noticeable that none of them are purely Indian, though so large a percentage of Peru's population are Indians. Many are unmistakable aristocrats in feature and bearing, and not a few have the fair hair and blue eyes of Anglo-Saxon blood.

On the following Sunday we were invited to go with the children to a beautiful estate in the outskirts of the city which had been willed to the institution by a deceased Frenchman. We marched three miles through dusty lanes bordered by cactus and wild nasturtions, beside the blue-gowned sisterhood and troop of castaways, simply for the pleasure of seeing the latter enjoy an hour or two of freedom and sunshine. There is house on the estate, a beautiful flower-garden, an orchard, swings, arbors, fields green with barley and alfalfa, and meadows where sheep were browsing; and it did one's soul good to see the forsaken creatures happy as so many butterflies, the elder children taking care of the little ones, and the good sisters sitting by, each busy with her knitting-work.

FANNIE B. WARD.

A CULINARY CRITIC.

John Bull, he loves his beef and ale,
His pudding full of plums.
The Frenchman likes his fricassee
And frogs' legs with bread crumbs.

The Scotchman eats his meal of oats,
Like horses in a paddock,
His haggis weird, his hodgepodge strange,
And toothsome finnan haddock;

And—tell it not in Gath, my boys—
In whispers be it said:
He sometimes even longs to eat
His marma-lade on bread.

The German favors saurkraut,
And ripe Limberger cheese,
Hot and cold slaw, and other things,
That *he'll* digest with ease.

You join a band of Muscovites—
They wish you at the deuce,
Because you cannot make a meal
Off candle *a la Russe*.

Within a Chinese restaurant,
You hear a waiter halloa:
"Nice bird's nest soup; roast rat quite hot—
And puppy dog to follow."

You dine with a Sea Island chief,
Where all the dishes vary,
From yams on rice, to babes on toast
And roasted missionary.

The Esquimaux's sarcastic smile
Pronounces you a lubber,
Because you have no appetite
For walrus oil and blubber.

And thus you find in many climes,
Wherever you may roam,
The cooking is not quite the same
As that you get at home.

And often in your wanderings
You drop a tear and sigh
For oyster stew and succotash,
Ice cream and pumpkin pie.

But the one dish of all the rest
To which my fancy leans
Is my New England's greatest pride—
My Yankee pork and beans.

—*New England Magazine.*

The Curfew.

As in Old England, so in New England is the curfew still heard. In Boston the 9 o'clock bell was rung from time immemorial up to within a very few years. So, also, at 8 o'clock in the morning and 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Many Bostonians regretfully miss this good old custom; old, as is witnessed by Joseph Josselyn, who visited Boston in 1663, and in his description says: "On the south there is a small but pleasant common, where the galiants, a little before sunset, walk with their marmalet madams, as we do in Moorsfield, etc., till the 9 o'clock bell rings them home to their respective habitations, when presently the Constables walk their rounds to see good order kept and take up loose people."

In many of our towns the curfew still rings out o'er hill and dale. In South America it is called the "Stay-bell"—*toque de la queda*—and after it was rung, at 10 o'clock, the use of the streets was forbidden by municipal ordinances to the inhabitants of Quito and other Peruvian towns.—*New England Magazine.*

IN RELIGION'S REALM.

Expressions from the Various Religious Newspapers.

The Religious Thought of the Day as Expressed in the Sectarian Press—Some Matters of Interest to Both Ministers and Laymen.

The *Herald and Presbyter* had said: "Our Roman Catholic exchanges are discussing the question, 'Can a priest convey absolution by telephone?' More momentous, however, is the question, 'Can he convey it at all?' We do not believe that he can. 'Who can forgive sin but God only?'" On this the *Christian Union* remarks: "The *Herald and Presbyter* has not yet learned the lesson Christ attempted to teach those who first denied that a man can forgive sin. Christ said the Son of man can forgive sins; and afterward He sent His disciples out with the assurance 'whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted.' And still Christian ministers quote, as though it were conclusive, the words of the carping Jew denying that man can forgive sins."

The *Watchman* (Bapt.) says: "Not a little is said by those averse to 'revival' methods in churches as to the honor to be put upon the 'regular' agencies. The 'regular' agencies are to be honored, no one doubts that, but we have a profound scepticism as to the efficiency of 'regular' dullness and formalism, and of all mechanical and lifeless service, regular or irregular. When we talk about the value of 'the regular services' we need to have a pretty clear idea of what these regular services are. If they are not informed with life, with freshness, and with spiritual power, a little irregularity that would introduce these elements would be the best thing. But when 'the regular services' of a church are vital and inspiring, and blessed by the Spirit to the conversion of men and the building up of manhood, we do not need irregularity of any kind."

The *Congregationalist* thinks well of baptism "without any water." It says: "The *Christian Inquirer* of December 25th had an article on the consecration of infants, and editorially commended the practice. The ceremony suggested seems to have been similar to that usually employed in infant baptism, except that no water was to be used. Its published correspondence on the subject shows that there are Baptist churches in which the public consecration of infants is common, one pastor sending a copy of a 'certificate of consecration.' Other correspondents are greatly alarmed, and regard the practice as 'Romish' and a 'Popish folly.' Yet it shows how near together are many Baptists and Congregationalists. The gulf that divides them is not only shallow, but absolutely dry. Those children whose parents solemnly and publicly enter into covenant with God in their behalf, even without any water, we have strong confidence will realize the fulfillment of His promises, and accept the conditions of the covenant as they come to maturity."

On the subject of opening the Columbus Fair on Sundays the Rev. J. H. Van Buren writes in the *Churchman* (P. E.): "There may be different opinions on the nature and obligations of Sunday itself; but whatever view may be taken, Sabbatarian or other, in this the Christian element of the American people unite, they do keep Sunday. It is not right for the authorities in charge of the World's Fair to ignore their wishes. To set aside the sanctions which have thus far safeguarded the Lord's day would be usurping a function which the Government of the United States itself does not exercise. For, while the Constitution declares that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' the opening of the World's Fair would certainly prohibit the 'free exercise' of religion to every employe in the service of the commission. Such a course could not be said to reflect aright the genius of American institutions as interpreted by Congress itself, which always adjourns on Sunday."

The *Western Christian Advocate* has a new view of panics. It says: "We suspect that Satan has something to do with timing these stock panics. They do not hurt many people, but they do give some a chance to cry 'hard times' as an excuse for not taking church papers or helping on the benevolences. Never was a Christmas more generally or generously observed than the last one. Never were more cigars smoked than on that day—or better ones, perhaps. Home spreads have been abundant, and outside the speculating and borrowing classes there has been little financial distress. But it is whispered aloud by some pastors that they meet the 'hard times' when they approach some laymen on the matter of four cents a week for the *Advocate*."

"Farmton" says in the *Advance*: "I do not approve of the church-bell. Poetry, imagination, history are on its side; but usefulness is against it. Formerly usefulness was in its favor. For formerly watches were not common, and clocks were less common than at present; and care was not easily exercised as to the accuracy of these measures of time. Parishioners needed the bell as an aid in their promptness at the service. But at present every house has a clock, and its daily adjustment by the noon whistles is easy enough. The bell has become comparatively useless. But, further, the bell has become in many instances a nuisance. If every church in one of our cities had a bell ringing at the same hour, what a commotion, worse confounded than all Poe's poetry about 'bells' can suggest. Such a commotion is not pleasant for healthy folks; but to folks whose nerves are ticklish it is a torture; and to those who lie on beds of sickness, either chronic or temporary, these noises are a form of the barbarism of a Christian civilization from which they have the right to ask to be freed. I admire the judgment, as well as the energy in which the judgment was expressed, with which Dr. John Hall declined to have a chime of bells put into the steeple of the Fifth Avenue Church. A gentleman offered a chime of bells. 'If it is accepted,' the pastor is reported as saying, 'the Fifth Avenue Church can be looking for a new minister.' He had a heart big for the suffering ones who lie in the great hospital directly opposite his church. No church bell should be allowed in a city. In the country it is far less objectionable; and in a sparsely settled community it may prove of great worth, ministering at once to æsthetic delight and religious emotions, as well as prompting to punctuality."

The Rev. Prof. Crooks, of Drew Theological Seminary, writing in the *Methodist Review* for January on "The Gospel of John," sums up the attacks on the Fourth Gospel as follows: "It has been discovered by the Tubingen critics that the early Christians were distinguished above all other men for their rascality. They secured unity of belief, but secured it by fraud. True, they reformed morals, they recognized civilization, they gave to the world a body of truth which the best part of mankind continues to regard as inexpressibly precious; but they accomplished all this by the use of the basest deceit. Among the books which we have from this time is a gospel which is notable for its lofty spirituality; but it is a forgery. Some cunning deceiver contrived it, invented its dramatic narrative, invented its inimitable delineations of character, invented the intense loyalty to the truth which is its vital spirit, excogitated out of his own brain those traits which give to the personality of Jesus an added charm, and then published the whole to the world as the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved. For all the ages since the Christian world has drawn from this gospel much of its best spiritual food, but it has fed upon lies; has gathered from it, too, some of the most important precepts for the guidance of life, especially the new commandment of self-sacrificing love (John xv., 12-17); but this is a pure invention. The post-apostolic age, the middle age, and the modern age have alike been standing on a rotten foundation, for the harmony of early Christian belief, the so-called Catholic faith, on which they rest, was achieved by an audacious imposture."

The *Christian Leader* (Univ.) says: "Professor Hincks of Andover examines in detail Dr. Martineau's criticism of the Gospels, contained in his last work on 'The Seat of Authority in Religion,' and easily convicts 'the angelic doctor' of capital errors. The case against Dr. Martineau might be made even stronger than Professor Hincks has made it. So long as an assailant of the genuineness of the Gospels confines himself to assumptions, inferences from general statements, and criticism of discrepant testimony in the synoptics, all goes smoothly with him. But the moment he begins to deal with historic facts and to argue from them he is encompassed with dangers. For the truth is that no one of the several theories, more or less ingenious devised to account for the facts, fits in with half of them. It comes to pass that every theorist furnishes the means of disproving his own contention. Dr. Martineau is no exception. He argues no less than four different dates for the composition of the Gospels; and his argument under the supposition of one date is utterly destructive of his reasoning based on another date.

"It is apparent that Dr. Martineau, learned and acute as he is, has never mastered the subject of the Christian evidences; and quite as apparent that he follows blindly guides who, whatever their knowledge, are dominated by a bias fatal to the judicial determination of the question. One who reveres Dr. Martineau, and who has learned to accept him as an authority in the highest realms of human thought, experiences an unwelcome revulsion as he finds him, in another department, a blunderer and a retailer of thrice-exploded fancies. Prof. Hincks' closing paragraph expresses what we believe must be a prevalent, painful reflection, that a lofty mind, leaving the realm of truth in which it is at home, and entering new fields and using untried methods, may fail to show its best powers, may be taken captive by prejudice, may neglect to give its conclusions thorough testing, and may therefore make assertions not worthy of its noble fame.'"

Answering to its own question, "Rationalism or Positive Religion; Which?" The *Unitarian Review* says: "The business of the former is mainly negative or preparatory. The latter includes, it may be, a profounder understanding of some things which rationalism has been apt to overlook. These things have in a large measure been hidden from some of us by symbols and veils, some which the critical understanding—justified in so doing by the mistaken and even disastrous use made of them—has been obliged to rend away, without so much as caring, for the present, to see what lay beneath. That which lay so hidden was an element of human life and experience; fundamentally, when once recognized for what it is, the most important and significant element of all. It is not likely that a single one of those dogmas—such as the mystery of the Trinity, atonement, eternal judgment, regeneration, or original sin—is without its counterpart in some phase of human experience, of profound moment to us if we could only see what it really is, yet so travestied, disguised and abused in the theologies of the past, that we have discarded it almost angrily, perferring to stand under 'the naked heaven,' alone, rather than accept what so affronts our better conscience. And yet the loss we have thereby incurred, or are liable to incur, is almost infinite, if we would comprehend something of the deep mystery of our life."

The *Christian Union* says: "Against all doctrines that put any limitation upon the mercy of God, we believe and teach that God's mercy is infinite and illimitable; that it is not limited to any race; nor to any elect; nor to the baptized; nor to the believers of any creed; nor to the possessors of any experience; nor to any conditions of conduct or character, past, present, or future; nor to any epoch, age, or men. We believe the teaching of the Bible to be that Jesus Christ manifests God, not a part or phase or aspect of God, but God in his entire moral character; that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that his mercy endureth for ever.

"But universal forgiveness is not the same as universal salvation; nor mercy for all the same as heaven for all. If we were Calvinists of the John Calvin type, if we disbelieved in the freedom of the will, if we believed that the question of each soul's salvation, that is, of each individual character, was determined by God, and by God alone, we should hold and teach Universalism. But we hold that virtue consists in the voluntary choice of righteousness by a soul which is absolutely free to choose between good and evil, light and darkness, righteousness and sin. God can persuade, can influence, can help, but no one, not even God, can make the choice for the individual. He must make it for himself. He who believes that all men will finally become the children of God, must found this belief upon the conviction either that God can decide this issue for every man, or else that every man will finally decide it as God would have him decide it. We distinctly disbelieve the first proposition, and we see no adequate ground for believing the second. On the contrary, such intimations as are afforded by the course of life and by the hints of Scripture, indicate that there are intelligent moral beings who will finally, definitely, and in spite of all divine influence, reject the good and choose the evil. So long as they exist, the divine mercy will still desire to reclaim them, but they will be irreclaimable."

A BLUE RIBBON.

A ribbon of the softest blue
The sweet June sky's most lovely hue,
When youth and hope made all things fair—
I bought it to bind up my hair—
To all my life it held the key,
Yet never was it worn by me.

"My own! my own!" I thought him then.
The handsome, blithe young sailor Ben.
His last "good-by" on leaving shore,
His gladdest greeting home once more,
Were always mine. 'Twas with a thought
Of *him* that ribbon first was bought.

My heart beat high. I always knew
Just when the Bonny Bride was due.
"With foot on land you sail the sea,"
Light laughed my cousin Jane at me.
Oh, shallow-hearted, weak and vain,
But full of arts was Cousin Jane.

She spied my ribbon fresh and new,
She snatched the length of shining blue,
And knotted it upon her breast.
"It is the shade that suits me best;
Oh, let me wear it once," she said.
I bit my lip, but bowed my head.

When, looking up, within the door
Stood Ben, *my* Ben, at home once more;
But, oh, his gaze—why should it be?—
Was turned on Jane instead of me!
She'd never looked so fair before;
'Twas that blue ribbon that she wore!

With jealous pang I knew it then—
Forever lost to me was Ben.
When Love attempts his wings to try,
'Tis vain to stay him; let him fly!
But, oh, I knew I need not mourn
Had I myself that ribbon worn!

Well, let it go. Sore Heaven's grace
Needs she who is not fair of face.
But 'tis its red robe makes the rose;
The garments' charm for beauty goes;
And that blue ribbon held the key
Of all my lonely life for me!

—*Marian Douglas, in Harper's Bazar.*

Large Bells.

Most large bells are old bells. Although England has so many bells and chimes that it has been call "The Ringing Island," and Belgium's bells have caused her to be named "the classic land of bells," yet Russia, perhaps, exceeds all other nations in its fondness for bells, having an immense number of them, and many very large ones. The "King of Bells," the largest one in the world, is in Moscow. It was cast first in 1651, and recast in 1734. It remained in the pit where it was cast until 1836, when Nicholas I. caused it to be raised and placed upon a stone pedestal near the tower of Ivan in the Kremlin, where it now stands. *New England Magazine.*

A monster grapevine at Athens, Ga., which covers more than a quarter of an acre, has been known to produce enough of grapes in a single year to make 100 gallons of wine. It was planted by Professor Rutherford about thirty-two years ago.

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