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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for September 22nd, 2023

Electric Scotland News

Sumer is at an end as this Saturday sees the first day of Fall or so my calendar tells me.

Here in Chatham the weather has been good with warm sunny days this week. We have avoided all the really bad weather and wild fires. In fact I am delighted I decided to settle in this area as we do seem to avoid all extremes of weather over the course of a year.

I found a work around for those news sites that are behind a paywall. I found it on YouTube where they showed the url of the story and after the https:// they inserted archive.is/ before the rest of the url and low and behold it worked!!!

I used to enjoy reading Conrad Black's articles in the National Post but haven't been able to read his column as it's for subscribers only. I thus tried this work around and was able to read the whole article. I haven't yet tried it on any other site but felt I'd let you know about this.

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish which I do myself from time to time. Here is what caught my eye this week...

SNP will turn Scotland into the drug death capital of the world, says Esther McVey
Fourteen years of SNP rule has landed Scotland with the dubious title of the drug capital of Europe and this will continue with their new drug consumption rooms strategy, writes Esther McVey

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/1813062/snp-scotland-drugs-esther-mcvey>

Scotland's hidden epidemic of crime as shoplifters, domestic abusers and even sex criminals escape with a slap on wrist

More than 1,150 thugs accused of domestic abuse have been let off with fines and warning letters since 2020

Read more at:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12510315/Scotlands-hidden-epidemic-crime-shoplifters-domestic-abusers-sex-criminals-escape-slap-wrist.html>

The inspiration behind a Borders common ridings board game

A former festival flower girl has created a new strategy board game based on her beloved Borders common

ridings. Glasgow-based gallery assistant Jo Reid launched Border Riding after her idea was snapped up by games company Stout Stoot.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-66820067>

Why Norway remembers its wartime debt to Dumfries

When Norway was overwhelmed by Germany early in World War Two, many of its soldiers and others fled to Scotland. A large number of them ended up in Dumfries - where their army command came to be based.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-66786975>

Pierre Poilievre's convention speech a true plan to fix Canada

Pierre Poilievre's address to the federal Conservative party conference on Sept. 8 in Quebec City was one of the most effective and important political speeches in this country in many years.

Read more at:

<https://archive.ph/Ub6cV#selection-2089.0-2089.191>

Canadians must stand behind Jordan Peterson's fight for free expression

If professionals can be publicly humiliated and threatened with expulsion over political opinions, everyone in this country is at risk

Read more at:

<https://archive.ph/hkFGx#selection-1989.1-1989.135>

Why Western nations fear India-Canada row

The last thing the United States and other western powers want now is a row that divides them from India. On the grand geopolitical chess board, India is a key player.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-66856568>

We should not lose our critical faculties because something is presented as Scottish
WHAT IS IT about so much of Scottish media news reporting that it has to see everything through the prism of nationalism? I fully understand we all like to read of our ain folk doing well, but this should not mean we lose our analytical and critical faculties in the process.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2023/09/we-should-not-lose-our-critical-faculties-because-something-is-presented-as-scottish/>

Trump set for even bigger victory than 2016 as new poll delivers crushing result for Biden
The Republican hopeful leads President Joe Biden 41 percent to 35 percent in seven key states that could tilt the election in his favor, a bombshell new poll suggests.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/us/1814903/donald-trump-2024-joe-biden-president>

India suspends visas for Canadians as row escalates

India has stopped issuing visas to Canadian citizens amid an escalating row over the killing of a Sikh separatist on Canadian soil. India said the temporary move was due to "security threats" disrupting work at its missions in Canada. Canada's visa services remain open in India.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-66851964>

Britain's Military Enlightenment

The British did not acquire an empire through martial strength alone.

Read more at:

<https://www.theamericanconservative>

Electric Canadian

Mopping Up

A Dog Story of the Princess "Pats" By Lieutenant Jack Munroe, Through the Eyes of Bobbie Bums, Regimental Mascot (1918) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/moppingup0000munr1.pdf>

Certain Canadian Superstitions

From the Journal of American Folk-Lore by Alice M. Leeson (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/canadianfolklore.pdf>

Indians and Eskimos of Canada

A Student's Guide to Reference Resources (1975) (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/IndiansandEskimosofCanada.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 17th day of September 2023

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26394-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-17th-day-of-september-2023>

Brother Eskimo

By Alan Sullivan, Illustrated by George Avison (1921) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/brothereskimo0000sull.pdf>

Electric Scotland

From North of Argyll

We're are off to beautiful North Carolina for the really awesome Scotland County Highland Games.

This will be the second time we have played at this festival so we can vouch for it being a truly excellent weekend. It's well run, family friendly, with some awesome entertainment.

Here is the website link to the festival. It's on October 6th and 7th 2023.

<http://www.carolina-highlandgames.com/>

Romantic Narratives From Scottish History and Tradition

By Robert Scott Fittis (1903) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/romanticnarrativ00fittuoft.pdf>

The Sheriffs of Fort William from 1775 to 1926

Their dealings with some of the Judges of the East India Company. The old Jail at Calcutta. Jurors, Constables, Public Meetings. Early Municipal Elections, Doctors, Attorneys, Merchants, Barristers and other matters relating to the city of Calcutta during the past century by Charles Moore (second edition) (1926) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/india/The-Sheriffs-Of-Fort-William-From-1775-To-1926.pdf>

A Tribute to the Principles, Virtues, Habits and Public Usefulness of the Irish and Scotch Early Settlers of Pennsylvania

By a Descendant by George Chambers (1871) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/scotsirish/tributetoprincip01cham.pdf>

The Household Physician

A Family Guide to the preservation of health and the domestic treatment of ailments and disease, with chapters on food and drugs, and first aid in accidents and injuries by J. M'Gregor-Robertson, M.A., M.B., C.M.(Honours), F.F.P.S.G., F.R.S.(Ed.) Formerly Lecturer on Physiology in the University of Glasgow, with an introductory note by John G. M'Kendrick, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., Emeritus Professor of the Institutes of Medicine, Glasgow University (1898) (pdf)

You can study this huge volume at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/medical/householdphysici00mgreuoft.pdf>

Memoir of the late David Boswell Reid, M.D., F.K.S.E., &c.

By Hugo Reid (1863) (pdf)

You can read this book about him at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/scots/memoir_david_reid.pdf

Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present

By Michael Newton, University of Richmond (2003) (pdf)

You can read this at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/america/Jacobite_Past_Loyalist_Present.pdf

The History, Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross

With a description of both, and of the Firths of Forth and Tay, and the Islands in them; In which there is an Account of the Royal Seats and Castles; and of the Royal Burghs and Ports; and of the Religious Houses and Schools; and of the most Remarkable Houses of the Nobility and Gentry, with an account of the natural products of the land and water by Sir Robert Sibbald, M. D. (1803) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

Story

Some Recollections of Carlyle's Talk

By William Black

I

IN a somewhat shabbily furnished room (but on the walls there was a large copy of the Berlin picture of Frederick the Great dressed as a drummer-boy; and on the table a number of Frederick's snuff-boxes were strewn about) in a dingy little street in Chelsea, an old man, worn, and tired, and bent, with deeply lined, ascetic features, a firm under-jaw, tufted grey hair and tufted grey and white beard, and sunken and unutterably sorrowful eyes, returned from the fireplace, where with trembling fingers he had been lighting his long clay pipe, and resumed his seat in front of the reading-desk.

"I do not think," he was saying, in an absent kind of way, "that I shall see Scotland again. To me it has become a sad and strange and solemn country; now that all my kinsfolk and friends are gone. And then there is the fatigue of the long journey; and the noise and the sleeplessness make travelling almost impossible for me. As it is, I suffer a great deal of physical misery, and also of mental gloom."

But presently he had resumed in a lighter strain:

"I well remember my first voyage to Glasgow. I was early up on deck; and I found that all around me was no atmosphere, nothing that could be called an atmosphere, but just a vast immensity of smoke and yellow vapour; and through the yellow vapour there pulsed an extraordinary light—a red glare that flashed up and across the skies, as if the whole world were in conflagration. I turned, and asked the man at the wheel what it meant. 'Dixon's Ironworks,' said he. This Dixon family were of enormous wealth, according to popular repute; and yet there was a wild story of one of them, supposed to be worth nine millions, being suddenly confronted with the question whether he was worth nine pence. A story that gave rise to much talk and foolish wonder at the time. Doubtless he has long ere now gone down to Erebus and Nox. The Glasgow merchants seemed to me a shrewd, well-to-do, plain, kindly, and hospitable folk; but their wives—I cannot recollect having ever taken notice of women's dress before—but I thought when I saw them in the streets that their gowns were just a little extravagant—a little marked and extravagant.....Glasgow is the 'west country' to the Edinburgh people; and I got to know something of the west-country, chiefly through the long excursions that Edward Irving and I used to make through the Trossachs, and round by Loch Katrine, and Wordsworth's Inversnaid. Well I mind those walks; almost the individual trees down by the side of the water, the brown burns, the blue hills over Loch Lomond way. We had much to talk of in those days."

The pipe is laid aside; an afternoon stroll is proposed; and the old man suggests that the window should be opened, to let in the fresh air and let out the tobacco-smoke. His visitor would fain perform this little office for him; but no. With a gentle, old-fashioned courtesy one seldom encounters nowadays, the offer is declined; though the trembling hands find difficulty with the sash. But eventually the window is raised. Then he goes off to exchange his grey woollen dressing-gown for the cloak and slouched hat familiar to Chelsea thoroughfares; and in a few minutes the house in Cheyne Row is left behind.

II

Now, in endeavouring to place on paper a few of Carlyle's obiter dicta, it is impossible to convey to the reader how immeasurably they lose in the process. Carlyle did not talk Scotch—not any dialect of it [I have frequently seen put into Carlyle's mouth, as his native dialect, that strange and fearsome speech that for centuries has

done duty among English humorists as the Scotch language. Shakespeare was an early offender. His Captain Jamy says: "It sail be vary gud, gud feith, gud captains bath; and I sail quit you with gud leve," &c. It is needless to observe that gibberish of this kind bears no relation whatsoever to any speech spoken anywhere outside the Zoological Gardens; but it and the various emendations of it that have been handed down, and are now extant—may serve: gud feith, as a specimen of southern wit]; but he spoke with a strong South-of-Scotland insistence of emphasis; then he had a fine abundance of picturesque phraseology; and, above all, he liked to wind up a sentence with something—a wild exaggeration, it might be, or a sardonic paradox, or a scornful taunt—but, anyhow, with something that sounded like the crack of a whip. [It is amusing to notice how the chief of Carlyle's disciples—Ruskin, Froude, Kingsley, to name no others—have been now and again led away by the temptation of this trick of reckless climax. I have before me, as I write, a letter from Mr. Froude, in which he says that Victor Hugo is not worth notice, "except as illustrative of the tendencies of modern productiveness"; and he goes on: "The soil and atmosphere are unfavourable to high genius; and gifted men, for the most part, remain silent, or else go mad." Now, what does this mean? It means nothing at all. It is merely the crack of a whip, lashing the harmless and unresisting air.] It was rather startling to be asked, as a preliminary inquiry as to what was afoot in the literary world.

"Is that young man ----- still going about vomiting forth blasphemy and the fires of Tophet?"

One was happy to be able to assure him that the young man ----- was not doing anything of the kind; that, on the contrary, he was fast winning his way to a proud and honoured position in the very front rank of English poets.

But it was different when he came to talk of Tennyson; for he had somehow formed the impression that Tennyson was being ousted from his throne by the younger men; and this appeared greatly to concern him. It was a difficult matter to convince him that the "banjo Byrons" had not displaced Tennyson from the affections of the English people; and then, of course, the irrefragable argument—an appeal to Tennyson's publishers—could not be mentioned; for in these days, to say of a man that his books are bought by the public, is to convict him (at least the whipper-snappers of criticism appear to think so) of having sinned the unforgivable sin. How this delusion about Tennyson's waning popularity got implanted in Carlyle's mind, it is hard to say; but I venture to make a guess. It is well known—though it sounds incredible enough—that Tennyson was sensitive to newspaper comment—he who ought never to have looked at a line of it; and it is just possible that he may have made complaint to Carlyle of the treatment he was receiving at the hands of some of the obscurities of the press. But that was not the treatment liberally and generously accorded him by the public—the great public of the English-speaking peoples; which, after all, to an English author, is the sole important thing.

About certain novelists: "There's that woman they call Miss-----, and there's that other woman who calls herself-----; God forbid that I should read their trash; but if what I am told of it be true, then when they go before Rhadamanthus, I should think their sentence would be forty stripes save one."

About Disraeli: "There's that man Disraeli. They tell me he is a good speaker. Perhaps I do not know what a good speaker is. But I read a speech of his that he delivered at Glasgow a year or two ago; and it appeared to me the greatest jargon of nonsense that ever got into any poor creature's head!"

Nevertheless, he was not always grumbling and growling.

"This Chelsea Embankment now is about the cheerfulest place I know of: the brightness and general liveliness of it; the river flowing and shining; those small eager steamers puffing on their way, and carrying their loads; the open sky; the trees; the people walking up and down, to breathe the fresh air; the nursemaids and the perambulators and the children—the young generation coming on; even those brats o' laddies-----"

But at this point one of the brats o' laddies got a swift surprise. He had been twirling himself round the iron rail overlooking the Thames; and threatening every moment to pitch himself into the stream; when, of a sudden, he

was gripped by the scruff of the neck, and hauled on to the pavement.

“You young rascal, do ye want to throw yourself into the water?”

That tatterdemalion, if he is alive, must now be a man of five-and-twenty: one wonders where he is, and whether he knows that in his youth he got a friendly word (and grip) from the greatest man of letters of the nineteenth century.

III

He appeared to be greatly interested in the Chelsea Pensioners, and in the various gardening occupations and amusements with which the ancient warriors managed to pass the time.

“There are two of them—I do not see them at the moment—who serve as an excellent example of the economy of human force. One of them is a helpless cripple, and cannot get about by himself; the other has lost his eyesight, and cannot get about by himself; so the lame man places himself in a Bath chair, and directs it, while the blind man pushes behind; and together they have their small rambles, doing no harm to any living creature, and each of them profiting by lending to the other what the other lacks.” . . . “We had fine men for soldiers in those days; look at their stature even now, old and shrunken as they are.”

But here the talk wandered away into Germany, partly perhaps Carlyle had been reading a very frivolous little book of mine, the characters in which are supposed to have espoused the side of Germany at a time when Germany was not popular in England. Carlyle’s personal experiences of Germany, however, seemed to have been distinctly disappointing; and although he did not expressly say so, one somehow gathered that the chief reason was a conclusion he had formed that the Germans did not properly appreciate Goethe.

“The most notable man in literature for two hundred years.....The one man who has shown us what Christianity might be without the husks and cloaks that have been heaped upon it.....But there is no real religion at the present day. And the man or the nation that has no religion will come to no thing.”

It was a matter of keen regret to him that he had never seen Goethe face to face.

“Thackeray’s recollection of Goethe was vague and inaccurate; Thackeray had a confused memory of Goethe’s being a dark man.”

And then, as the conversation wandered on to other German authors, and when one was challenged to say which of them one had the greatest affection for, there was nothing possible but an honest answer, though it was easily to be foreseen that it would prove the letting in of waters. And it did. It proved to be the letting in of many waters. For the next quarter of an hour poor Heine had a bad time of it “That slimy and greasy Jew fit only to eat sausages made of toads.”

Thunders and lightnings raged round the head of poor Heinrich, and struck out at all his race as well — “no real fun in the Jews — a cynical grin—no honest laughter.”

But at last the dispensation of wrath came to an end.

“After all, let us remember that he wrote the Lorelei. And there was good-humour in his satire of Borne.”

This mention of the Lorelei in mitigation of punishment was somewhat remarkable. Mr. Allingham—an old friend and frequent companion of Carlyle’s—assured me that he, Carlyle, had no sense whatever of the magic of lyrical poetry; while he had unmistakably a magnificent disdain for anything, whether in art or literature, that he could not personally appreciate. He had himself tried verse-making; conspicuously he did not succeed; and

ever thereafter he kept repeating, "If you have anything to say, say it: why sing it?" In like manner he tried novelwriting; he failed; and ever thereafter he scoffed at fiction—fiction, which from the time of Homer to the time of Thackeray has been the one beautiful and resplendent feature of the mental world. The same anthropometric tendency is clearly traceable throughout his article on Scott. If Carlyle mistook the agonies of dyspepsia for a mysterious and imperious call urging a man to go out into rocky places and wrestle with the Mystery of Existence; Scott, on the other hand, having a perfectly happy digestion, found it no part of his duty to wander into dark regions and fight imaginary dragons anywhere: much good it would have done either the world or him!—none the less the Westminster article had to be written, the one man measuring the other by himself; and if there was any hurt done, it was not done to Scott. However, with regard to the Lorelei, it is quite possible that Carlyle was crediting Heine, not with the strange lyrical enchantment of these verses, but with merely having written a universally popular song; for he can have travelled but for a short time in Germany who has not heard German mothers and their daughters sing the Lorelei duet, when the "Luft ist ktihl, und es dunkelt, und ruhig fliesset der Rhein."

IV

Thereafter the talk was of a more private and personal nature; for this man appeared to have the kindest and humanest interest in the family relationships and circumstances of any one he might chance to be talking to, however unimportant; and more than that, he had frank words of sympathy and encouragement for literary aims and ambitions that must to him, at his age, have seemed trivial enough. "I wish you well," he said, in earnest tones, at the parting of our ways. One could not help lingering for a moment or two, regarding that solitary and pathetic figure as it passed away along the grey pavement. I saw him no more.

END.

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you.

Alastair