

# Whitefriars Journal.

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PRIVATE  
CIRCULATION.



## Pilgrimage to Stratford-on-Avon.

*Group photographed by Friar J. Russell in front of the Shakespeare Memorial.*



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CLUB NOTES.

# Whitefriars Journal.

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## PILGRIMAGE TO SHAKESPEARE'S COUNTRY.

*(Summarised from the "Stratford-upon-Avon Herald.")*

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THE annual pilgrimage of the Whitefriars Club, a well-known literary institution in the Metropolis, on Saturday, June 23rd, was attended with glorious weather, and the literary folk who made the journey to Shakespeare's country must have departed enchanted with their tour of Stratford-on-Avon. The President for the day was Friar Sir W. P. Treloar (Alderman and Sheriff of London), and the guest of the Club the Right Hon. Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, sculptor and donor of the handsome monument which adorns the Memorial grounds. The Friars and guests—to the number of 120—assembled at Paddington station at 9.30 a.m., when presentations of bouquets of roses were made to the wives of the chairmen of the saloons. Through the kindness of Friar B. F. Stevens—who was unfortunately unable to accompany the Club—roses were also provided for the Friars and their guests—white for the Friars and red for the guests. The special train consisted of six saloons. Among those who made the journey were:—

*Saloon A.*—Friar Sir W. P. Treloar, (Chairman), Lady Treloar, Mr. R. T. Treloar, Miss Treloar, Friar Rev. H. L. Nelthropp, Miss Mark, Rev. H. T. C. Franklin, Friar J. Dalgety Henderson, Mrs. Henderson, Friar T. Heath Joyce, Mrs. Joyce, Friar Wm. Westall, Miss Westall, Friar H. S. Wellcome, Mr. A. C. Fletcher, Dr. Barnardo, Rev. S. G. Hayward, Friar R. E. Leader, Miss Dorothy Leader.

*Saloon B.*—Friar A. G. Browning (Chairman), Mrs. Browning, Rev. C. J. Martyn, Mr. Hervé Browning, Professor Warren, Mr. E. Paige, Friar R. Hovenden, Miss McGiverin, Miss Hovenden, Miss Annie Hovenden, Friar H. J. Brown, Mrs. Brown, Mr. R. N. Fairbanks, Miss Browning, Friar L. H. Falck, Mrs. Falck, Friar John Foster Fraser, Mrs. Fraser, Friar A. Spurgeon, Mrs. Spurgeon, Miss Thorp.

*Saloon C.*—Friar W. Senior (Chairman,) Mrs. Senior, Friar J. Farlow Wilson, Mrs. Wilson, Friar G. H. Perkins, Mr. Plowman, Friar F. J. Wilson, Friar R. Dupper Lloyd, Mrs. Lloyd, Miss Lloyd, Friar Chas.

Braid, Mr. Frank Dethridge, Friar J. Dillon Croker, Friar F. A. Atkins, Mrs. Atkins, Mr. Jas. Bowden, Mrs. Bowden, Friar Silas K. Hocking, Miss Hocking, Friar Joseph Hocking, Mrs. Hocking.

*Saloon D.*—Friar W. G. Lacy (Chairman), Mrs. Lacy, Miss Lacy, Mr. Percy Ortner, Miss Viva Ortner, Friar R. Lee Campbell, Mrs. Campbell. Friar W. H. Boucher, Miss Boucher, Friar Chas. Pearce, Mrs. Pearce, Friar R. Newton Crane, Colonel Millard Hunsiker, Mrs. Millard Hunsiker, Mrs. Chas. Poe, Friar R. L. Jefferson, Mr. C. P. Sisley, Friar J. Russell, Mr. W. Doman, Mrs. Doman, Friar J. F. Moss, Friar Thomas Mason.

*Saloon E.*—Friar Clement K. Shorter (Chairman), Mrs. Shorter, Mrs. Thompson, Friar J. M. Tuohy, Mrs. Tuohy, Friar E. Clodd, Miss Augusta Larner, Friar F. J. Cross, Friar John A. Steuart, Mrs. Steuart, Friar A. J. Fuller, Mrs. Fuller, Friar J. H. Baily, Miss Baily, Friar W. M. Saunders, Mrs. Saunders.

*Saloon F.*—Friar Robert Leighton, (Chairman), Mrs. Leighton, Dr. Burnett Smith, Mrs. Burnett Smith, Miss Trelawney, Mr. G. B. Burgin, Mrs. Burgin, Friar A. Kinross, Friar E. T. Sachs, Mrs. Sachs, Mr. Francis Gubbins, Mrs. Gubbins, Friar E. Mathers, Mrs. Mathers, Miss Mathers, Miss F. Layman.

Luncheon was served in the train, which arrived at Warwick about mid-day. Thirty landaus were in waiting, arranged in four sections, and a twelve miles' drive through Shakespeare's country was commenced. Through the courtesy of the owner, Mr. Fairfax Lucy, the carriages were allowed to drive through Charlecote Park and past the historic mansion. At Stratford the first section were received at the poet's house by the High Steward, Sir Arthur Hodgson, K.C.M.G., who, as chairman of the trustees, warmly welcomed the club to the town. Sir Arthur was accompanied by Lord Ronald Gower, and the Mayor (Councillor W. Pearce) was also in attendance. A tour was made of the Birthplace and Museum, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, New Place, and the Parish Church.

Subsequently, by special invitation of the Governors, the entire party met in the Memorial building, the museum, picture gallery and grounds being thrown open. The party having submitted themselves to the photographic mercy of Friar J. Russell, all assembled in the theatre, where an interesting ceremony was enacted. The stage was artistically adorned with palms and flowering plants, red and white blooms predominating, and in the centre upon a pedestal was the bronze bust, executed by the late eminent artist, William Page, president of the Academy of Design, New York, which was to be presented to the Memorial Gallery, through the medium of the club, as a gift from the family of the American painter. The bust was draped with the American and English flags.

Friar Spurgeon announced that apologies for non-attendance had been received from Lord Leigh, Mr. T. Edgar Pemberton, Dr. Boddy, Lady Warwick, and Friar Richard Whiteing.

Sir Henry Irving wrote :—

“ I regret very much that I cannot accompany the members of the Whitefriars Club to Stratford-on-Avon, especially as the visit will mark the acquisition by Shakespeare’s birthplace of another American memorial of the poet. Will you be so good as to express my regrets to your colleagues, and to the family of Mr. William Page, whose bust of Shakespeare is to be so happily added to the treasures of Stratford-on-Avon? Shakespeare is one of the great bonds of concord between the American people and our country, and when a new token of their homage to him comes from the hands of a distinguished American artist we share their pride and gratification.” (Applause).

The following letter was sent from Mr. George Wyndham, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, War Office :—

“ I am afraid that, as you anticipate, it will be quite impossible for me to go to Stratford with the Whitefriars Club on Saturday. I need not say that, if circumstances had made it possible, it would have been a great pleasure to me to be there on the occasion of the presentation of Mr. Page’s bust to the Shakespeare Memorial, which will add one more link to the many which already unite English and American lovers of Shakespeare. Every student of Shakespeare will be grateful to Mr. Page’s family for their interesting gift—one of so many which England, and in particular Stratford, owe to the generous enthusiasm of the poet’s admirers in America.” (Applause).

SIR WILLIAM TRELOAR then rose and said: An unexpected yet pleasing duty has been laid upon me as Chairman of to-day’s proceedings. It will be known to the Trustees of the Shakespeare Memorial that some 40 years ago the startling announcement was made that an authentic death mask of England’s great poet had been found by Dr. Becker, of Hesse Darmstadt, in an old rag-shop in Mayence. Dr. Becker had long known that this mask and a portrait, which also claimed to be authentic, had existed in the Kesselstadt family. The Count Francis von Kesselstadt had died in 1843, when many of the family possessions were dispersed, and both mask and painting disappeared from view until by accident they were recognised and rescued by Dr. Becker. The death mask acquired a wide notoriety from the offer made of it to the Trustees of the British Museum at an exorbitant price ( £10,000 I believe), and from the heated controversy which arose between Professor Owen and other authorities as to its genuineness. The conclusion now generally accepted is that while the mask may very possibly have been made from the cast of the poet’s features taken immediately after death, the evidence in its favour is purely circumstantial. About the year 1870 or a little earlier, the existence of the Kesselstadt mask became known to a distinguished American artist, William Page, President of the National Academy of Design, New York. Page had a great reputation as a portrait painter, but he produced also many historical and imaginative works, and he was an enthusiastic student and admirer of Shakespeare. He is said to have known all the Sonnets by heart, and to have enjoyed

reciting them to his sitters, some of whom were ready to give him as many sittings as he pleased, even ninety in one case, for the sake of hearing him recite and for his brilliant conversation. The discovery of the Darmstadt mask was a matter of intense interest to him. He procured a number of photographs of it, from which he proceeded to make various models, one a mask of colossal size, but the more he worked at his subject the more urgent became his desire to see and study the original mask. In 1874, though seriously ill, he accomplished the journey to Darmstadt and visited Dr. Becker, who, with great kindness and courtesy, offered him every possible facility for examining and measuring the mask, and permitted him to take further photographs and wax casts from it. Thus furnished, Page returned to America, where, after three or four years' more work and study, not of the mask only, but of the Stratford monument and of all the best regarded portraits of Shakespeare, he produced a plaster bust and a full-sized portrait in oil of "Shakespeare Reading." From the plaster bust a single casting in bronze was made. This was sent to England for exhibition in 1880, and shortly afterwards returned to the artist, who died at Tottenville, New York, in 1885. At the suggestion of Friar B. F. Stevens, a relative of the late William Page, and one of the most valued members of our Club—(hear, hear)—the three sons of the artist, Mr. James Lowell Page, Mr. George Stevens Page, and Mr. Henry Stevens Page offer for acceptance by the Trustees of the Shakespeare Memorial this bronze bust and framed photograph of the crayon drawing, which served as the first sketch for the picture of "Shakespeare Reading." They are the outcome of very much patient thought by an American artist who had won the highest distinction in his profession, and they represent the deep conviction of a hero-worshipper who had devoted a life-long study to the writings, the character, and the memorials of his hero. (Applause.) I deeply regret that Friar Stevens is prevented by illness from being with us to-day. (Hear, hear.) This presentation would have been most properly made by him. In his absence I, as Chairman for the day, have to ask you to let me, acting for the three sons of the artist, lay these singularly appropriate offerings at the shrine of our great English poet. And, as a last thought, I may perhaps suggest that a new interest will be found in comparing this bronze bust with the head of Shakespeare in the magnificent monument by our distinguished guest, Lord Ronald Gower, which adorns the grounds of this Memorial Building. Each presents the matured conviction of a master mind, and however they may be found to differ, each will in its own way help the student of Shakespeare to a closer realisation of the form and feature of the "man who was not for an age, but for all time." (Applause.)

The bust having been unveiled, amidst applause, MR. EDGAR FLOWER rose to return thanks for the gift. He said one of the most

arduous tasks in connection with that institution was the receiving of gifts, and the expressing in adequate terms of their appreciation of the same. But the interesting address which the chairman had given had removed that difficulty. The most authentic likenesses of Shakespeare, as they knew, were founded upon two or three original models, one, the bust in the church, which was erected by the poet's friends within a few years of his death, and they knew was intended to represent him. Then there was the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio, which, according to Ben Jonson, was like him. Then there was the death mask of Darmstadt, on which the bust before them had been founded, and when they thought of the master mind of the artist they would agree that it was no ordinary gift. Mr. Flower mentioned other portraits in the Memorial gallery, Angelica Kaufmann's ideal picture, and an interesting statuette, representing the poet, by Antoine Kessel, which was presented some time ago by Mrs. Tyndall, of Edgbaston, Birmingham. The bust which had been generously given that day would be prized as one of their best treasures, not only for its intrinsic value, but also because it provided a link between Shakespearian lovers of England and America. (Applause.) He trusted the Club would convey their gratitude to the family, and inform them that it would be preserved in the building with very great care. It not only formed a bond between English and American admirers of the poet, but would also serve as a memento of the visit of the Whitefriars Club to the Memorial Theatre. (Applause.)

FRIAR WM. SENIOR said a pilgrimage of that kind demanded not only good management, about which they would have something to say in their own Club, but also certain formalities, and he had been entrusted with one of the latter. He might say that the formalities included keeping time as well as they could—(laughter)—they were due at the house of their hospitable hostess at four o'clock, and it was now within a minute or two of the hour. However, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and it devolved upon him to say what he had to say briefly. (Laughter.) He trusted that their presence would assure the governors that the Whitefriars Club, in the matter of Shakespeare, was in unison with the body they so worthily represented. Indeed, he remembered at the great tercentenary festival in 1864, at Stratford, it was Creswick, afterwards one of the most devoted of White Friars, who delivered the speech of the day, and it was Friswell, another of the brotherhood, who wrote the speech for him. The White Friars had their Shakespearian nights, and were at one with them in their endeavours, whenever they could, to keep the shield of Shakespeare as bright as his own genius. (Applause.) They believed that there was a Shakespeare; that he was himself, no other, and not connected with a limited liability company. (Laughter.) They felt that Stratford-on-Avon was hallowed by its associations with Shakespeare. It was privileged to grow the wood which made his

cradle, and to keep guard for all time over his bones. They had that day been looking upon the things that Shakespeare looked upon ; they had been treading in his footsteps ; they had driven through the park where he did *not* steal the deer—(laughter)—and they had noticed some suitable corners where he must have kissed Anne Hathaway. (Laughter.) That beautiful building was an assurance to the world that it might sometimes happen that a prophet was not forgotten in his own country. It was not only because the governors had so kindly received the club that day, but because they had so nobly fulfilled, were now fulfilling, and would continue to fulfil, the duty of custodians to the most interesting object lessons that the world could show, that he begged to move a very hearty vote of thanks to them. (Applause.)

FRIAR FARLOW WILSON, in seconding, mentioned that he took a part in connection with the festival of 1864. He hoped the institution would be properly supported by the country for centuries to come. One thing was certain, the name of Shakespeare would never be forgotten. (Applause.)

The motion was carried with acclamation, and the Mayor of Stratford (Mr. W. Pearce) suitably returned thanks.

SIR ARTHUR HODGSON also replied, and said it gave him great pleasure to welcome the grand old Whitefriars Club to Stratford-on-Avon.

The gathering then broke up, the members proceeding by way of Waterside to Avon Croft, Miss Marie Corelli's residence.

#### MISS MARIE CORELLI'S GARDEN PARTY.

It was one of the most natural things in the world that when the Whitefriars Club arranged to visit the shrine of the king of poets, they should also wish to pay their respects to one of the most gifted and popular women writers of modern literature, Miss Marie Corelli. Having consented to receive the band of pilgrims, she threw herself heart and soul into the making of the necessary arrangements conducive to their happiness and comfort. It was an ideal afternoon for a garden party. The somewhat suspicious looking clouds which hovered near in the early part of the day disappeared, and left behind a brilliant blue sky, flecked with tiny cloudlets.

At one end of the lawn a large marquee was placed furnished with small tables and chairs. The tables were covered with dainty cloths and graced by beautiful flowers—roses, carnations, pinks, syringa, peonies, etc.,—artistically arranged in tall wicker stands, the handles tied with huge bows of a harmonising shade of ribbon. A large quantity of the flowers used were sent to Miss Corelli by Mrs. Charles Flower and Sir Arthur Hodgson. The buffet on one side of the tent was laden with delectable confections

of every description. Miss Corelli received her guests on the lawn. A large number of local people were invited to meet the Friars.

A graceful act was performed soon after the arrival of the party by Lady Treloar, who, on behalf of the Club, presented Miss Corelli with a handsome shower bouquet of magnificent proportions. The blossoms embraced in it were white roses, lilies, carnations, tuber roses, and pale yellow orchids and maidenhair fern, the whole tied with streamers of pale yellow silk.

The return train to London was timed for 6.38, and previous to their departure SIR WILLIAM TRELOAR expressed the grateful thanks of the Whitefriars Club for the hospitality they had enjoyed that day, more especially the hours spent in Miss Corelli's garden. (Hear, hear.) The Whitefriars Club was a small band of brothers which had its home in Fleet Street, and they were glad once a year to leave Fleet Street, and all its petty acrimonies, to disport themselves in some such classic grounds as those, and they looked forward to it as a red-letter day, the present occasion being one of the best. (Hear, hear.) Miss Corelli's hospitality to the members of the Club, with their wives, sweethearts and friends, had endeared her to them for ever. He assured their hostess that, though another member might make a longer and better speech, no one could thank her more heartily than he himself did.

MR. CLEMENT SHORTER, in seconding the proposition, said all would remember that when Mr. Burke was speaking at Bristol, his colleague candidate rose to his feet with the remark "I say ditto to Mr. Burke." He would like to say the same to Sir William Treloar's speech. But he would also like to emphasise the fact that they had had a splendid day in this wonderful excursion into Shakespeare's country, culminating in that delightful party which Miss Corelli had given them. He had previously had a discussion with Miss Corelli on the subject of reviews, and she very wisely said that if an author could sell two or three hundred thousand books without mention from the newspapers, reviews were not needed. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) He would also like to say that if there were any newspaper scribes present who had any ill-feeling towards Miss Corelli or her books, it would be quite done away with after the courtesy she had shown them, and they were all going back with an immense sense of the pleasure and privilege received that day. (Hear, hear.)

SIR WILLIAM TRELOAR said it was customary to put such propositions to the vote, but as they were all unanimous he would ask them to show their appreciation in the usual way by cheers, which was heartily acceded to.

SIR ARTHUR HODGSON said he had been asked by Miss Corelli to acknowledge the vote of thanks, and in doing so advised the members of the Whitefriars Club never to refuse a lady. (Laughter.) He was delighted to return thanks for Marie Corelli, for that was the name by which he and all present knew her best, and he was

sure she would not think he was taking a liberty when he spoke of her as Marie Corelli. He had very little to say, for in asking him to return thanks a lady placed a man in a difficult position, especially when that man knew the lady to be so much more eloquent than he could ever be. They had all been glad to welcome the Whitefriars Club, and he thought that the pleasures of an eventful day had been much increased by the kindness and hospitality of Marie Corelli. Speaking for himself he considered it a great treat and honour to be associated with men and women who occupied such prominent positions in the literary world. Stratfordians were highly privileged, and they turned with gratitude and reverence to the spot where the great poet first saw the light, and as long as the sun shone his name would be honoured. (Applause.) He would thank them for Miss Corelli, but he wished she would speak to them herself, for it would be such a pleasure to listen to her.

Sir Arthur's last sentence evoked great enthusiasm, and after repeated calls for a speech, MISS CORELLI rose to her feet, and said it was impossible for her to add anything to what Sir Arthur Hodgson had said. When the king had spoken they must all be silent. They in Stratford-on-Avon were his subjects ; he was the best beloved and most honoured and dearest man among them. She hoped they would carry away with them pleasant remembrances of their visit. That house stood there in the reign of Henry VII., so that it was quite possible that Shakespeare visited it. She hoped they would all come again and see Stratford to better advantage. They had not seen its beauties, or the river with its lovely stretch of water between Alveston and Hatton Rock, and if ever they did come again it would be pleasant to give them another welcome.

A round of applause followed Miss Corelli's speech, followed by three cheers for her and Sir Arthur Hodgson.

A very pretty souvenir of the Pilgrimage was presented to some of the guests. It contained photographs of the Shakespearian places of interest, with apt quotations from Shakespeare, etc. It was charmingly got up.

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Supplementing the above excellent report it may be added that the souvenir referred to was the joint production of Friars A. G. Browning and W. G. Lacy, and these brethren with Friar Perkins most generously bore the entire cost of the production. A few copies remain, application for which should be made to Friar Lacy, 52, North Side, Wandsworth Common.

## PILGRIMAGE TO BURFORD BRIDGE.

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AN invitation having been received from Mr. George Meredith to pay him a visit, a coach drive to Box Hill was arranged for Saturday, July 7th. A start was made early in the day from the Victoria Embankment in three coaches, and lunch was partaken of at the far-famed Burford Bridge Hotel. Friar W. Robertson Nicoll presided, among those present being :—

Friar Mackenzie Bell; Friar H. J. Brown, Mrs. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Muirhead; Friar W. H. Boucher and Mrs. Boucher; Friar C. H. Cook; Friar Jas. Drysdale; Friar L. H. Falck and Mrs. Falck; Friar H. Frith; Friar William Hill and Mrs. Hill; Friar Coulson Kernahan and Mrs. Kernahan; Friar W. G. Lacy; Friar Kenric B. Murray, Mrs. Murray and Miss Murray; Friar Dr. Robertson Nicoll, Miss Nicoll, Mr. Frank Dodd, Miss Brooke; Friar G. H. Perkins; Friar J. Russell and Mrs. Russell; Friar W. H. Rideing; Friar A. Spurgeon and Mrs. Spurgeon; Friar W. Senior and Mrs. Senior; Friar W. N. Shansfield, Mr. Hugh Spender; Friar John A. Steuart; Friar Clement K. Shorter and Mrs. Shorter; Friar J. Farlow Wilson.

The only toast submitted was “The health of George Meredith.” The Chairman said :—

I have the great pleasure and the great honor of proposin the health of George Meredith, the illustrious writer who i our neighbour for the nonce, and who has so kindly invited us to his hospitality this afternoon. My first knowledge of George Meredith was gained early from an old volume of the *Critic*. It contained a review of Mr. Meredith's first book, the poems of 1851. The critic was Mr. W. M. Rossetti, and he had the wisdom to quote “Love in a Valley,” which he justly called a very charming, rhythmical, and melodious poem. He might have said much more. Tennyson was a reader of that volume, and said that he could not get the lines out of his head, such was their magical music and melody. The poem, in fact, has its sure place in the golden Scriptures of love. The little book, with all its various power, made little impression, and its reception must have disappointed in some degree the young poet. Yet with the generosity and high-heartedness which has marked his whole career, Mr. Meredith, at the end of 1851, wrote a generous sonnet to Alexander Smith, which was published in the *Leader*. Alexander Smith, as Lowell said, was “launched, as I have seen boys launch their little vessels, with so strong a push that it ran wholly under water.” At the time, however, he had a great and instant success, and his name and work in these days ought to be known far better than they are. It is pleasant to think that among the chorus of his contemporaries was the young poet who thought that he had seen his own

little craft go down while the other was riding prosperously on. (Hear, hear.)

After a silence of five years, that wonderful book, "The Shaving of Shagpat," was published. Nowadays it is, perhaps, the main business of critics to pursue with their little watering pots the prairie fire of popularity. (Loud laughter.) They may do little, perhaps they may even pour oil on the flame, but the fire burns out in due time. (Hear, hear.) There was no need for anyone to attempt staying the popularity of "The Shaving of Shagpat," for it had very little. There was, however, one strong admirer, George Eliot, who at the time was emerging from the obscurity of a reviewer, and writing her first story, "The Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton." I am sorry to be compelled to reveal that on this occasion George Eliot acted the part of a multiple reviewer. (Cries of "Shame!") She contributed articles on "The Shaving of Shagpat" both to the *Leader* and to the *Westminster Review*. The *Leader* criticism has been republished, but the *Westminster* is hardly known. George Eliot compares the book to Beckford's "Vathek," the object of Byron's enthusiastic praise, and says that she has had more pleasure from "The Shaving of Shagpat" than from its popular predecessor. She thinks George Meredith's book might have been called "The Thousand and Second Arabian Night." Not that it was an imitation. It was a worthy following that came from genuine love and mental affinity. The critic, however, marked with some acuteness that the author had no wish to study the popular mood. She was right. The first edition of "The Shaving of Shagpat" was sold as a remainder, and nine years elapsed before a second edition was issued.

I do not intend to follow the fortunes of Mr. Meredith's later works. It is almost incredible that neither "Evan Harrington" nor "Richard Feverel" touched the public for long. "Richard Feverel," that marvellous love story with the shine of the morning on its dewy pages, took no fewer than nineteen years to get into a second edition, a fact as disgraceful to the critics as to readers generally. (Applause.) However, Mr. Meredith even then was not without very weighty suffrages. Mr. Swinburne, who has all his life taken his chief delight in the "noble pleasure of praising," spoke in 1862 of Mr. Meredith as "one of the leaders of English literature," and it is known that "Modern Love," Mr. Meredith's second volume of poems, was warmly admired by Robert Browning, who had a special care for the verses which give the book its title. Still, even so late as 1879, that accomplished writer, Miss Arabella Shore, had to say, "It needs but some great critic to place him even in popular recognition among the few great writers of the time." I do not know that any special critic had a very large share in the gradual conversion of the English public, or at least many of them, to George

Meredith. I take pride in remembering that I had the honour of publishing and partly suggesting the first printed tribute of Robert Louis Stevenson to the genius of the master. Robert Louis Stevenson's powerful influence amongst the younger men of letters helped to direct them to George Meredith's books, and to read was to admire. (Applause.) How nobly George Meredith demeaned himself through all this! He never whined, he never uttered even a complaint. It is needless to say that he never lowered the pitch of his writing. (Hear, hear.) He did his very best, adding to the permanent stores of literature one noble book after another without for a moment stooping to the spirit of a hireling. In fact it might almost be said of him that he became so used to standing alone that he moved away as the world crept up



The Pilgrimage to Burford Bridge.

(Photo by Friar Russell.)

to him, and went further into the wilderness. His life has been as noble, as stainless, and as exemplary as his books have been. No more august and majestic figure has been seen among us. (Applause.)

It would be absurd on an occasion like this to attempt any criticism of Mr. Meredith. But it may be pointed out that it is peculiarly fitting ladies should be our guests to-day in consideration of what George Meredith has done for womanhood. It was rightly pointed out as early as 1864, in the estimate of which Mr. Justice McCarthy is justly proud, that George Meredith has done more almost than any other to idealise woman, that he has seen that the highest charm of womanhood is her womanhood, not her gifts, not her beauty, nor her virtues, but her womanhood. (Applause.) Who has given us such a gallery of women as Meredith has? Some will prefer the wild sweetness

of one, the purity as of fire of another. And others of us will take as our heroine Cecilia, that pure and proud lily with a heart of gold. Much might be said of that philosophy of the comical which runs through all Mr. Meredith's works, and which is best expressed in his own phrase, "thoughtful laughter." Much also might be said of the vesture of his thoughts, of his extraordinary power of expressing the most subtle and elusive emotions. Mr. Barrie put it in a homely but effective way when he said that Meredith "turned gas upon everything." His poetry has been mainly of the joy of earth, and to some of us the most haunting and delicious strain in all his music is "The Woods of Westermain." In this loveliest part of the loveliest county of England we remember that he has written his thoughts of the scenery that lies about us. Surrey is associated with many fair names and famous. (Hear, hear.) In this hotel Keats wrote part of his "Endymion," and that great, dear, and brave spirit Hazlitt was also a lover of these woods and streams. Of George Eliot, and Charles Dickens, and others I need not speak. But it may be said with confidence that for generations to come Surrey will, with even greater pride than now, claim George Meredith as her undying painter and interpreter, as her best-loved son. (Applause.) A word must be said about Mr. Meredith's long kindness to authors. He has himself, for a short time, occupied the editorial chair, and many of us will remember how he spoke of Frederic Myers and Owen Meredith and others, but I have no right to tell in public what I know of an active kindness to which for years many English writers have owed more than they can express. It is permissible to speak of Mr. Thomas Hardy's tribute to the deep interest Mr. Meredith showed in his first work, and I have heard Olive Schreiner tell of what he did for her "Story of an African Farm." We all hope that the day is far distant when the many records of his goodness leap to light. (Applause.) We may be sure that George Meredith is, as Robert Louis Stevenson said, built for immortality. Some of you will be asked fifty years after this—

And did you once see Meredith plain,  
And did he stop and speak to you?

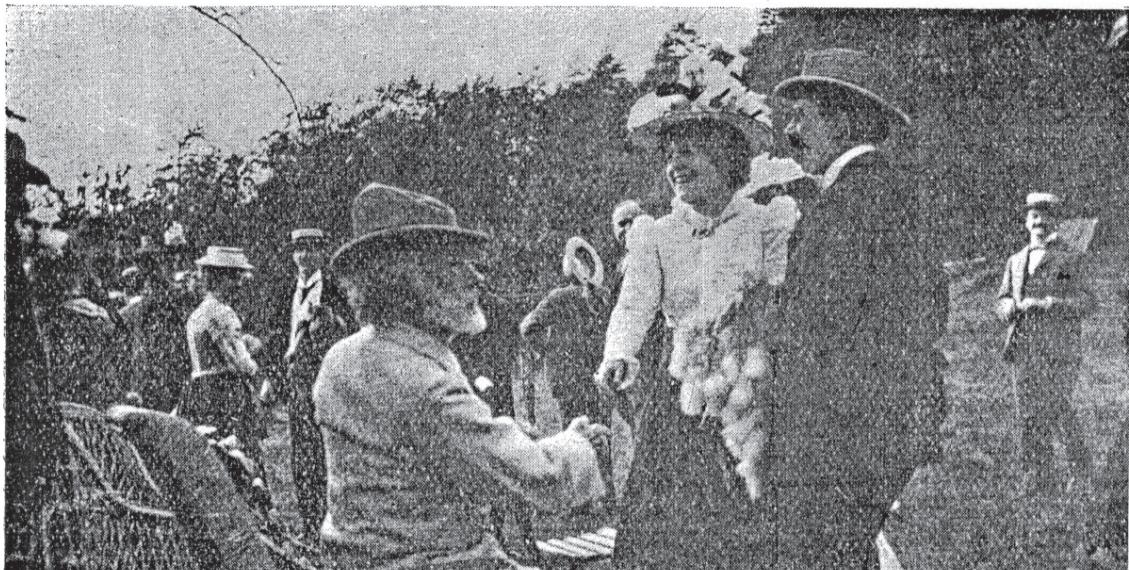
(Loud Applause.)

The toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

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After lunch the company proceeded to Mr. Meredith's residence, which is within about five minutes' walk from the hotel. They were most graciously received by the novelist and his daughter, Mrs. Sturgis. Mr. Meredith was in excellent form and talked with his usual brightness and wit. As recorded by one of the Friars, he seemed touched by the homage that was paid to him on all sides, and, notwithstanding his infirmity, insisted on seeing his guests

to the gate. Tea was afterwards provided in the Hotel garden, and brief speeches were delivered by Friars Senior, Clodd, Steuart and Shorter. Friar Russell secured several excellent photographs of the company grouped on the lawn, and Friars Perkins and Shorter were successful in their snapshotting operations. The weather was perfect.



Mr. George Meredith tells a Good Story to Friar Shorter and his Wife.

(*Snapshot by Friar Perkins.*)

### SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE VISIT TO GEORGE MEREDITH.

BY FRIAR JOHN A. STEUART.

It is greatly to be feared that the White Friars of to-day are sorry exemplars in the virtue of austere abstinence, which ought to distinguish the Order. Whatever their tenets on the side of self-abnegation their practice is distinctly, I had almost said aggressively, Omarian. They assemble about the mahogany, feast, jest and make merry, as if ever remembering, with the philosopher of Naishápúr :—

“ How little while we have to stay,  
And once departed can return no more.”

This year they have conducted themselves more than ever in the spirit of the gay chaplain of Robin Hood, the Falstaff of the sackcloth gown and girdle of rushes.

By all accredited creeds misfortune ought to be the result. What are the facts? At the instigation of the arch conspirator, Friar Spurgeon, they scour the country for worldly pleasure, and—what is more to the purpose—find it. Twice this year they have found it unalloyed,—first at Stratford-upon-Avon, when, in heavenly weather, they worshipped Shakespeare and had strawberries and cream with Miss Marie Corelli. As Heine remarked of the plums on the Jena road, the strawberries were very good, and the worship was entirely delectable. The second occasion was when they coached, again in heavenly weather, with a company of guests, including a number of ladies, to Burford Bridge, and did homage to Mr. George Meredith.

It is needless to describe the journey from the Embankment to Burford Bridge. The way lies (after quitting dreary suburbs) through an undulating leafy country, rich in all the charm of tree and meadow and stream. In the beginning of July when the woods are densely foliaged and the pastures softly green, when flowers gleam in midsummer pride and waters twinkle to the sun, Surrey is an Eden of many enchantments. Burford Bridge, tucked among the clustering hills, seems to the casual summer visitor the realisation of a poet's dream. In December I should expect to find it a dripping oozy paradise, but in early July with the sunlight on the wooded hills and the blue sky flecked with downy cloud, it is a place for sweet thoughts, bright faces, kindly deeds—and enjoyment, not wholly material.

At Burford Bridge Hotel the Friars and their guests dined under the presidency of Friar Robertson Nicoll, and I venture to think that all who heard the Chairman's after-dinner speech will agree with me it was ideally suited to the occasion, light, graceful, in part humorous, in part serious, and always happy. It was, of course, an appreciation of the man of genius whom we were presently by grace of Friars Clodd and Shorter to shake by the hand.

“And did you once see Meredith plain,  
And did he stop and speak to you?”

quoth the Chairman, adapting Browning.

We climbed the hill, talking of that wonderful series of novels, a series made for immortality, if anything written in our generation will live; and lo! in his garden there stood to receive us the magician himself, a picturesque grey figure, weak bodily, yet instinct with the energy which is genius. Pleading infirmity, Mr. Meredith seated himself on a garden seat, and passing one by one we shook that right hand through which, if I may so express myself, has flowed so much humour, so much sunny philosophy, so many vital creations that are now companions of humanity for all time. He was cordial and characteristic. As he writes, so he talks, brilliantly. Not the tongue alone, but the whole countenance

speaks. The eager spiritualised face seems to express the flashing thought, before it can form itself on the tongue, and the eyes, light blue-grey and clear as a child's, look up smilingly and shrewdly. They are worth studying, for they are the keenest eyes of this generation. They look through man and especially through woman (since Shakespeare's there have been no women comparable to Meredith's) as if humanity, the darkest thing on earth, were diaphanous; but they look humorously, sympathetically and therein lies the secret of their power. The voice is as characteristic as the eye. Carlyle long ago remarked how wonderfully physiognomic is the voice. Hostlers flocked just to hear Burns speak; and one feels there must have been enchantment in the mere tones of Shakespeare. Mr. Meredith's



Mr. George Meredith Snapshotted by Friar Perkins in front of his House.

voice is the exquisite instrument of a teeming brain and a great heart. He speaks and your attention is instant. As Johnson said of Burke, if one were by chance to go at the same time with Mr. Meredith "under a shed to shun a shower," one would say, "here is an extraordinary man." I hope it will not be thought impertinent if I add that the head has the Shakesperian bumps, the bump of sheer intellect no less than the bump of creative imagination—a rarer combination than some good people imagine. Thought transfused by imagination, or imagination transfused by thought—put it as you like—must always be the basis of great, that is to say lasting, work in literature. Goethe said of Byron that when he tried to think he was a child. If Byron was a child how many noted novelists are babes! In thought, as in imagination, Mr. Meredith is a giant. One feels his strength even in his casual conversation.

To the White Friars he talked at his ease about trifles: but the trifles were somehow sublimated; and the play of word and fancy was as significant of power as is the gambol of summer lightning about the edge of a cloud.

The visit to the famous chalet, where the *Egoist* and half a dozen other masterpieces were written, had a particular interest. The cottage conforms to Mr. Ruskin's idea of a work-place; small, with a pleasant outlook. Standing high on the hill side, it affords wide views of green heights and valleys. Below, embowered in flowers and trees, is the dwelling-house, a minute's walk away. The library in the chalet is a workman's library, and the writing table bears the same practical appearance. The books, as might be expected, are pleasantly cosmopolitan; classics of all ages and countries, not excluding English. French works are conspicuous, and there is more than a tincture of German philosophy. But one thinks less of the books than of the brooding hours and joyous flights of the creative spirit in that lonely wind-swept garden-house. Many a midnight hour has the great novelist and poet spent there, giving "to airy nothings a local habitation and a name" that must remain to fascinate long, long after the shaping hand shall have vanished. In the time to come, say, a century hence, when the White Friars of that day, tempted, perhaps, by curiosity, turn over musty records to read our unremembered names, the love of Richard and Lucy and the folly of Sir Willoughby will still be potent to charm and warn and purify. One can fancy, too, those remote successors going to Boxhill and saying "Here and here walked, and talked, and worked, the novelist of his age," and for a certainty they will envy us the privilege of holding converse with him in the flesh. Mr. Meredith says he will write no more novels, so that already the chalet belongs to history.

We descended to say farewell, a first and last farewell so far as most of us are concerned. Mr. Meredith, chatting pleasantly, walked down the long garden with his guests, and among the flowers in front of the house we left him with his daughter, Mrs. Sturgis, whose charming cordiality enhanced the delight of a memorable visit. At the gate some of us turned for a last glimpse of the most picturesque figure in the prose literature of England since the death of Carlyle; then took our way feeling that the man and his environment were perfectly harmonised, feeling also that Mr. Meredith is one of the few famous personalities who do not disappoint at close quarters.

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BY FRIAR COULSON KERNAHAN.

Friar Spurgeon has requested me to put upon record my impressions of our pilgrimage to that Mecca of your true literary believer, Flint Cottage, Boxhill. It were as idle for a member of

the College of Cardinals to dispute an edict of the Pope as for a White Friar to set at naught the command of our good angel and guardian, Mr. Arthur Spurgeon.

Our journey down I pass in silence. That the journey itself was not so passed will be taken for granted when I say that we were so fortunate as to have for coach companions, Friar Robertson Nicoll and his accomplished daughter, and Friar Clement Shorter and his many-gifted wife.

Our visit to Boxhill came about under the happiest auspices, and was as different from the exploitation of the great for the gratification of the little—now, alas, so common—as Flint Cottage itself is different from Fleet Street. The taste with which the



**Friar Robertson Nicoll thanks Mr. Meredith for his kind invitation.  
Mrs. Sturgis in the foreground talking to Mrs. Shorter.**

*(Snapshot by Friar Perkins )*

programme was arranged, the quiet dignity with which it was carried out, were as ideal as the weather, and one came away with the hope, if not the conviction, that Mr. Meredith's own recollection of the visit would be scarcely less pleasant than our own. To Friar Edward Clodd—who, when the literary history of the Nineteenth Century comes to be written, will be remembered not only for his own scholarly contributions to literature, but as the intimate friend of many of the most distinguished men of his time—the honours of the day must be accorded. It was to his good offices that we owed the invitation from Mr. Meredith, and it was by him and by Friar Clement Shorter that the guests were so courteously and tactfully introduced. By our hostess, Mrs. Sturgis, we were received with the grace and charm that were to be expected from the daughter of such a father. What more to say than that, I do not know, though there is much which one

would like to say about Mrs. Sturgis and the sweet dignity with which she welcomed us.

But though the precept, *Place aux Dames*, is inscribed upon the heart of every faithful student of "The Pilgrim's Scrip," even *Place aux Dames* must on this occasion be superseded. It was Mr. Meredith whom we had come to see; it was Mr. Meredith who filled our hearts and our horizon. I shall not soon forget my first glimpse of the home where so much of his life has been passed. One of Mr. Meredith's contemporaries speaks of that sense of human story which haunts the mind when one looks upon some quiet English country house and remembers its human associations. "Many a simple home will move one's heart like a poem, many a cottage like a melody." If one can so feel at sight of a cottage, the very name of whose tenant is unknown to us, how much more must we be moved when we look, for the first time, upon the walls which have sheltered him whose words have so long made their home in our hearts! That there should have been to us anything of strangeness in what, to him, has been so familiar, seemed to me almost incongruous. "Surely I know that 'wet bird-haunted English lawn!'" I said to myself. "And that shoulder of green upland where, even now, two lovers stand out clearly against the line of sky—it must be that I have looked upon it before."

But see! Someone is coming towards us from the far end of the garden. This is no old man, surely. His hand rests, it is true, upon his daughter's arm, but at sight of us he stands erect, and, uncovering with a courtly salutation, steps forward to welcome his guests.

Mr. Meredith's portraits (I had well-nigh written the word in the singular, for the one man, every aspect of whose face we all wish to know, is the one man who has most set his face against letting his face be known to us) give one no idea of his personality. They are likenesses, it is true. The noble shaping and carriage of the head, the commanding presence, the stern beauty of the features, the touch of hauteur, and even of what I may paradoxically call "gentle severity" are all to be seen in his portraits. But, compared with Mr. Meredith himself, the best of his portraits is but a beautiful mask.

It was a perfect summer day—a day not of blinding, blazing, intolerable glare, but of alternate cloud and shine, a day of swiftly-changing atmospheric effects, when cloud squadrons were surprised by the ambushing sun, and when the sun in turn was put to flight by cloud cavalry, that brought with it rumours of rain and of reinforcements approaching upon the horizon. But to me the face of Nature seemed dull and impassive when compared with the face of the man with whom it was our high privilege to have speech. Never before have I seen a face at once so strong and so sensitive. It seemed carved in cold steel, but nerved like the nostrils of a

racehorse. In moments of repose it struck me as strangely melancholy. Then something was said that brought back the smile—a smile that seemed caused by a light upon the face rather than by the play of the features. The lines which, an instant ago, had been set and severe were now all tenderness—stern tenderness, it is true, as of one who had infinite compassion for humanity, but in whose pity no element of weak laxity could enter. Judgment, self-control, and humour, these are the characteristics which to me seemed most plainly writ upon the face of George Meredith.



*Photo by Friar Russell.*

**A Group of Friars at Burford Bridge.**

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Humour I take to be the very essence of his being—humour that is touched with gaiety, and humour which deepens into sadness; for though the lips of Humour may smile at the sight of human folly, yet when we look into her eyes, we see them sad at the thought of human sorrow. The quality of one's humour is so often a matter of nationality, that some remarks which Mr. Meredith made in my hearing should be recorded. One of our party was, like myself, an Irishman, and when he was introduced to our host, Mr. Meredith exclaimed: "He bears a name which is surely Irish, and I see, too, that he hath the true Irish eye. Am I mistaken in supposing you to be an Irishman?"

"I am so fortunate," replied the Friar.

"You put it well! You put it well!" was Mr. Meredith's comment. "And I, too, am fortunate in being of Irish blood."

"Is that so?" replied the Irishman. "We are proud, indeed, to know that we may claim Mr. George Meredith as a countryman."

"Ah, but you can only claim the half of me," was our host's laughing rejoinder. "My mother was an Irishwoman, but my father was Welsh."

To Friar J. A. Steuart, the brilliant young author of "Wine on the Lees," Mr. Meredith's greeting was especially cordial, but it was Mrs. Clement Shorter who was honoured with the lion's, or rather the lioness's, share of our host's conversation.

We returned, as we had come, by coach, and were fortunate in a perfect summer evening; such an evening—except for the fact that no rain had fallen—as Mr. Stephen Phillips saw by inward vision when he wrote of "an angel evening after rain." It was one of those evenings when the air seemed light-filled even to sparkling; when the atmosphere was so clear that one wondered whether some fairy had been at work to play tricks with our sense of space. Was it the Fairy Mab or the Enchanter Meredith whose spell lay upon us? The very sun seemed a sharer in the conspiracy to bewitch, for as he sank he flooded the country with such glamour of gold that new reaches of landscape opened up wherever we looked.

All this I saw, and yet I saw it not, for—though the two eyes of me looked upon a fairy world—the one figure that filled the landscape, the one form to which all this was to me but the mere setting or background, was that of the stern-browed Master of Men with whom we had that day had speech in the garden.

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#### LETTER FROM FRIAR WHITEING.

45, Mecklenburgh Square,  
Bloomsbury, W.C.

*July 9th, 1900.*

MY DEAR SPURGEON,—I feel very sorry that my health will not allow me to brave the fatigues of your pilgrimage on Saturday next. It would have been both an honour and pleasure for me to salute the venerable chief of our craft, George Meredith, whose writings have done so much to invest it with all the dignity of letters, and to make the novel a true successor to the epic. I am afraid this opportunity of making his acquaintance will be the last that will ever fall in my way, for I know that retirement is, with him, a duty, as well as a great spiritual solace. I can only regret the bad luck that has made me an invalid at such a time.

My warmest regards to all brother friars, and my best wishes for the success of their excursions both to Burford Bridge and to Paris.

Very sincerely yours,

RICHARD WHITEING.

## CLUB NOTES.

THE members of the Committee with their ladies were entertained at a delightful garden party given by Friar George Manville Fenn and his amiable wife at Syon Lodge, Isleworth, on July 7th. The day was fine and we all thoroughly enjoyed the visit in Friar Fenn's old-world garden. Now that his friend, the author of "Lorna Doone," has gone, Friar Fenn is the only novelist left who occupies his spare time in running a market garden.

FRIAR GILBERT PARKER is contesting Gravesend in the Unionist interest. A newspaper wit says that it is appropriate he should aspire to sit in "The Seats of the Mighty." Another member of the Club, Friar Cecil Harmsworth, is standing as a Liberal in Mid-Worcestershire. Friar Spurgeon received invitations from two constituencies in East Anglia, but for personal reasons he was unable to accept either of them.

A PARTY of Friars and their ladies paid a most enjoyable visit to Paris on September 14th. On the invitation of Friar Perkins they lunched on September 16th at the Restaurant Marguery with Monsieur Yves Guyot, the proprietor of *Le Siecle*, as the principal guest. Friar Perkins proposed the health of Monsieur Guyot in felicitous terms, and in his reply our guest spoke most cordially of the relationships existing between the two countries. Mrs. Robert Leighton gave the toast of the Whitefriars Club, and said very nice things about the Friars present and absent. Friar Senior replied with a most witty speech. Other toasts followed. The health of Friar Perkins was drunk with great enthusiasm. The other speakers included Friars Leighton, Cross, Spurgeon, Campbell, and Miss Kathleen Lacy. Our Treasurer is to be heartily congratulated on the success of the luncheon. On the following Wednesday he was invited to lunch with Monsieur Guyot at the Restaurant *Pré aux Clercs*.

ON Sunday evening the members of the Friars' party attended a reception given in honour of the British Press by the Superior Press Commission at the Exhibition. Monsieur Hébrard, editor-in-chief and proprietor of *Le Temps*, and Monsieur de Nalèche, editor-in-chief of the *Journal des Débats*, received the guests. It fell to the lot of Friar Arthur Spurgeon to respond to the toast of "The British Press," and he proposed the toast of "Our Comrades of the French Press." The proceedings were characterised by great cordiality.

THE reception accorded to the first number of this Journal was most gratifying. The Committee do not propose to issue the Journal at regular intervals, but only at such times as may be considered necessary and expedient.

FRIAR RICHARD WHITEING has so far recovered from his serious illness that he was able to attend the meeting of the Committee held on September 19th. A resolution, heartily congratulating him on his reappearance at the Club, was enthusiastically carried. Friar Whiteing sympathetically responded.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL is to be the guest of the Club at the opening dinner to be held on October 5th, with Friar Senior in the chair. He will open a conversation on "War Correspondence." Other guests during the Session will include General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Dr. Furnivall, Mr. E. C. Borchgrevink, Mr. Arthur Severn, and Dr. Watson (Ian Maclarens).

THE Christmas Dinner will take place at the Trocadero on Friday, December 21st, Friar Richard Whiteing in the chair. Ladies will be invited.

THE Annual Meeting of the Club will be held on December 7th, under the presidency of Friar T. Heath Joyce. Members are requested to note that guests cannot be invited to attend the dinner on this date.

THE reception accorded to "The Chronicles of the Whitefriars Club" must be very gratifying to the Editor, Friar Heath Joyce, and Friar J. Farlow Wilson, who has rendered most valuable assistance in the production of the volume. Members are reminded that any copies left after December 31st will only be obtainable at 10s. 6d. each.

GREAT satisfaction has been expressed at the improvements made in the Club-room during the recess. A Club tariff is now being printed and also a Club wine list.

MR. GEORGE MEREDITH has sent a charming letter to the Hon. Secretaries in regard to the visit paid to him in July by members of the Club.

THE Committee warmly thank Friars J. A. Steuart and Coulson Kernahan for their great kindness in contributing the interesting "impressions" of the Burford Bridge pilgrimage which appear elsewhere. They are also indebted to Friars Perkins and Russell for permission to reproduce photographs taken by them.