

A PLEA FOR THE CONESTOGA RIVER.

“Are not Albana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?”

Perhaps I cannot introduce my theme more appropriately than by quoting a few lines from the greatest of Scotch poets, addressed to his friend, William Simson, entreating him to lend his aid in extolling the streams of their native country, Scotland. He wrote:

“Ramsay and famous Fergusson
Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow and Tweed to mony a tune
Oure Scotland rings;
While Irvin, Lugar, Ayr an’ Doon
Naebody sings.

“The Ilissus, Tiber, Thames an’ Seine
Glide sweet in mony a tunefu’ line;
But Willie, set your fit to mine
And cock your crest,
We’ll gar our streams and burnles
shine
Up wi’ the best!”¹

One of the most beautiful streams in the world flows quietly through the green meadows and along the sunny braes of Lancaster county for a distance of more than sixty miles, draining a territory 315 square miles in area, and zigzags around the southeastern boundaries of this city in a way that makes it an unending pleasure to all who are thoroughly acquainted with its un-

¹Burns’ “Address to William Simson.”

numbered attractions. During the past fifty years it has been my lot to encounter the name in manuscript and in print anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 times, more nearly the latter than the former, perhaps, and only about once in a thousand times is it even by accident called a river. It is the Conestoga "Creek" to most of our people, "and it is nothing more." It is only on the rarest occasions that it is dignified by the name of "River," and yet a river it is in all that constitutes a river, just as truly as are some of the most noted streams of the world, which have been called rivers for thousands of years.

This is hard to understand. Several times in the Pennsylvania Archives I have found it called the Conestoga River. That was well nigh 200 years ago, and the men who so called it were men who came from the Old World, where streams of less than half its length and size were and are still called rivers, not only in ordinary speech, but on the maps also, and rivers they will remain so long as their currents run to the sea. Why, then, we may ask, is not our beautiful home stream, the winding Conestoga, also called a "River" instead of a "Creek" merely? Doubtless the remarkable expansion that attends all American ideas is accountable for this perversion of terms. The American people are not like the Old World people. Our ideas and views differ

²This phase of the question may profitably be carried a step further: 315 square miles represent 201,600 acres. Now, every one knows that Lancaster county is one of the best watered and drained counties in the State. If we estimate one spring or tributary to every 1,000 acres, we have 200 affluents, large and small, pouring their waters into the Conestoga. The number is probably twice 200. To ask us to call a stream with perhaps 400 tributaries a "creek" is a proposition that offends human intelligence.

widely from theirs on almost every subject that can be named. They are slow and we are fast; we are aggressive and progressive, they are conservative and slow. Our views are expansive; theirs are contracted. We look through telescopes from the smaller end; they from the other. To us no stream can be a river that is much less than a thousand miles long and a mile wide; they live on the banks of a little stream on which nothing larger than a toy canoe can float, and delight in calling it a river, and singing its praises in song, while we live our lives away on a larger and more beautiful stream, see its charms every day in the year, and content ourselves with speaking of it under the undignified name of a "creek." Big surroundings are productive of big ideas. Just because some of our mountains are among the largest and highest in the world, our prairies the widest and greenest, and our rivers among the longest and widest and deepest, we refuse to call anything a river that does not partake of all these grand proportions.

But this is all a mistake. People lived on the banks of rivers, sailed and rowed on their waters, fished and bathed in their crystal waves for thousands of years before America was discovered. If anybody ever knew what a river meant, it must have been these people of the olden time, and we cannot ignore the titles they gave to the famous water-courses of the world. They invented the names by which they should be known, and, having laid down the law governing such cases, thousands of years before Columbus sailed the seas, I hold that their ideas of what constitutes a river are equal to, and quite as deserving of attention as our own.

In proof of the idea I have here ad-

vanced I shall take it upon myself to call up some of the great historic streams of the world, going back into the very beginning of recorded time, and follow it down, although not in chronological order, to the present day, with examples known to you all, and, in this way, endeavor to convince you of the fact that you have all your lives done injustice to one of the most charming water-courses, as I believe, in the world, and win you to a more generous judgment in favor of our Conestoga. I shall not make my appeal to sentiment only, but to what the verdict of the past 5,000 years has been. I shall show you that some of the greatest deeds of all time occurred on banks of streams no larger, nor as large as the Conestoga; that their names have come down to us in song and story linked with the heroic deeds of all ages, and that, in many instances, they were far more insignificant in themselves than the one which it has been the pleasure of you all, during all your days, to have denominated by the insignificant and undignified title of "Creek."

Before proceeding further it may be well to get at the meaning of the word "creek." The word originally meant "a small inlet of the shore of the sea or of a river;" "a little bay;" "a nook in a harbor where anything is landed;" "a small inlet, bay or cove, a recess in the shore of the sea or of a river;" "the tidal estuary of a small river, where vessels may find harbor." In Great Britain, the word is used in the customs service to mean "a small inlet, either into the shore or into a small tidal river, where anything is landed;" "a shallow water-course with much tumbling and breaking over stony places." In the Bible we have this same definition of the word creek, in the description of

Paul's shipwreck, where it is written, "and when it was day they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust the ship." It seems unnecessary to pursue this phase of the question any further. What was originally meant to apply to the outlet of a stream became at last the name given to the entire water-course, from its fountain head to its mouth.

The name Conestoga (Kanastoge) was undoubtedly applied to that branch of the Algonquin family of Red Men living along the Susquehanna River and its branches. The meaning of the word, as given by the Indians themselves, is, "at the place of the immersed pole."³ Later it was given to the stream also, and to the magnificent domain of hill and verdant valley drained by it. Still later to the fine breed of draught horses bred in the valley, and ultimately also to the large and commodious wagons built here for more than a century for commercial uses at home and distant points.

The Conestoga.

The main one of the two streams which go to form the headwaters of the Conestoga rises in the "Big Swamp," in Caernarvon township, Lancaster county; it flows eastwardly across the county line into Berks county, where, after a course of about four miles, it turns westwardly, crosses back into Lancaster county, and pursues its course within our county limits until its waters fall into the Susquehanna. I am aware that the claim is made that its entire course is through Lancaster county, but careful investigations

³Handbook of American Indians, Vol. 1, p. 335; Hanna's "The Wilderness Trail," Vol. 1, p. 35.

among persons of the highest veracity living along its headwaters convince me that its course as I have outlined it is the true one. The fact that it flows as far eastward as Morgantown, four miles from the county line, and back again by a shorter route seems to be convincing.

There are three mills on it in Berks county, namely, Kurtz's, Graham's, and Hart's. In Lancaster county there are at present (this was written about 1905) the following mills located on the stream coming eastward from the Berks county line: Grube's, Hertzler's, Weaver's, Martin's, Overholtzer's, A. A. Martin's, Samuel Martin's, Rupp's and Nolt's in Earl. I regret that the page of notes on which the remaining mills were named has been lost. I remember, however, that in all there were twenty-seven grist mills on the stream. There are perhaps as many more on its various affluents. No note is taken of the numerous saw-mills and other mills on its banks. To call such a stream a creek seems almost farcical.

Although satisfied that the foregoing account of the rise and course of the Conestoga was correct, to make assurance doubly sure, on July 14, 1911, I made a tour through the region described to verify the account already given. Citizens at Churchtown, Morgantown and beyond were visited and interviewed, and on the return the "Forest" country was traversed, and old men living in the neighborhood were carefully questioned, and their information carefully sifted and compared with what I personally saw. The large township maps of Lancaster and Berks counties were also examined and found to tell the same story in all particulars save one, shortly to be mentioned.

The source of the Conestoga is in what for a century has been known as "The Forest," a once heavily-wooded and still-timbered country, in Caernarvon township, Lancaster county. The immediate locality of the large spring that gives the river birth is known as "Bortz's Swamp," the "Big Swamp" and "Pengall Field," the property at present being in the ownership of Peter Wertz. The country near the head of the stream is marshy and covered with underbrush, and I was advised by persons living within a mile of the spot not to attempt to reach it in the automobile in which I traveled, but the exact locality was pointed out to me from an elevated point. Milton D. Curley, along and through whose father's farm the stream runs for a considerable distance, and who has been familiar with the land for miles around from boyhood, told me that within a mile of the rise of the Conestoga, half a dozen springs empty into the main stream, which, as I traced it, crosses the county line into Caernarvon township, Berks county, at a point four miles from its source.

It flows close by the ancient village of Morgantown, where, turning westwardly, it enters Lancaster county again, whence it pursues its zig-zag course about sixty miles further, until it debouches into the Susquehanna at Safe Harbor. Its course in Berks county is four and a half or five miles. On the Lancaster county maps the stream is called the Conestoga Creek throughout its entire course, but the Berks county cartographers, envious, perhaps, that so noble a river should belong to our county exclusively, have called it the "Swamp Creek" during its short course in their county, and have given the name of Conestoga Creek to a little tributary that

takes its rise at the foot of the Welsh Mountains, just where that range loses its name, and, although this affluent is only about two and one-half miles long and not more than one-third as large as the main stream—our Conestoga—and loses itself in the latter close by Morgantown, they claim the Conestoga rises in “Old Berks,” a claim that, of course, cannot be tolerated for a moment. To permit a small stream two and one-half miles long falling into one eight miles long at the point of junction, with thrice the former’s volume of water, and give the larger and far more important water-course its own name, is opposed to common fairness as well as to common sense.

The Rubicon.

No river in all the world, whether large or small, is more noted than the Rubicon, a little stream famous as the limit prescribed by the Roman Senate to the advance of Cæsar on his march toward the Eternal City to contest with Pompey for the empire of the world. When Cæsar, at the head of his legions, reached this small stream he paused for a little space on its banks before taking a step that probably meant death or the dominion of the world to him. “We may still retreat,” he said to those about him, “but if we pass this little bridge, nothing is left for us but to fight it out in arms.” “*Jacta est alea*,” he exclaimed, “the die is cast,” the Rubicon was crossed, and Cæsar went forward to become the first man in Rome and the master of the world. And yet the world-famous Rubicon is hardly more than a shallow, brawling rivulet only twenty miles long.”⁴

⁴There was a very ancient law of the Republic, forbidding any General returning from the wars to cross the Rubicon with his troops under arms. Suetonius—Bohn’s ed. p. 22.

The Mersey.

The Mersey, commercially considered, is one of the important rivers of Great Britain, and of the world. Its length is seventy miles, but that includes an estuary or bay sixteen miles long, leaving only fifty-four miles for the river proper. The city of Liverpool is located on it, the second largest city in the kingdom, with 1,000,000 souls, including its suburbs. It is the greatest cotton mart in the world. Its imports and exports unitedly amount to \$1,500,000,000. It is one of the world's great cities.

The Trebia.

In the winter of 216 B. C. Hannibal crossed the Alps from Gaul and entered upon the plains of Italy. He had 50,000 infantry and 9,000 horse when he began the ascent. When he arrived in the valley of the Po he had 20,000 of the former and 6,000 of the latter left. On opposite banks of the Trebia the Carthaginian and Roman armies lay encamped, Hannibal in command of the former, the Consuls Scipio and Sempronious of the latter. For several days the commanders maneuvered for advantage, but at last the Consuls fell into a trap Hannibal had laid for them, and one of the world's greatest victories was won, and the army of 40,000 men commanded by Scipio and Sempronious was cut to pieces; only 10,000 escaped by flight. The Trebia, on whose banks this great battle was fought, is a mountain stream only fifty-five miles long, which, in summer, runs babbling over a broad gravelly bed, so shallow that the foot traveler can easily walk across it, but, after heavy rains, it temporarily becomes a rapid torrent.

The Bannockburn.

Six hundred years ago, on June 24, 1314, King Robert Bruce, of Scotland, defeated King Edward II., of England, in the greatest pitched battle that Scotland ever saw, on the banks of a little stream called Bannockburn, which thereby gained world-wide celebrity, since enhanced by Burns' immortal lyric of that name. The Scotch army, assembled with extreme effort, amounted to only 30,000 men; that of the English King numbered 100,000, commanded by Edward in person. After the combat seventy-five English nobles and knights remained lying on the battlefield, and as many more were taken prisoners. England had never before lost so great a battle, nor Scotland won so great a victory. It achieved the independence of the latter kingdom. I have gone to some trouble to learn all I could about the rivulet Bannockburn, which, on that day, acquired a world-wide fame. A correspondent residing hard by on the burn writes to me as follows: "The Bannock rises in Earl's Hill, in the parish of St. Niman's, and flows in an easterly direction through the parish till it falls into the river Forth at Powmaise. (The mouths of streams in this part of the country are called pows). Its average width from bank to bank is about forty-five feet; the width of the water is at most twenty-five feet. In the first part of its course the Bannock is a shallow, brawling stream; when it reaches the lower ground it flows less rapidly. In the latter part of its course its depth is about two feet. It is never dry." Our Conestoga may well match the Bannock, but who among us can match Burns' blood-stirring battle hymn:

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots whom Bruce has often led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!
Now's the day and now's the hour;
See the front of battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

"Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha so base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!
Lay the proud usurper low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die!"

The Aufides.

I have already told you of Hannibal's great victory on the Trebia in 217 B. C. That battle was followed by a still greater one in the following year on the banks of the Aufides. The Roman forces this time were under the command of the Consuls Aemilius and Varro. The Carthagenian army numbered 50,000 men of all arms; the Roman force, 76,000. Hannibal's army was drawn up in a loop of the little river Aufides. Never was there a more decisive victory or a bloodier. Of the 76,000 Romans who went into the fight, 70,000 lay on the field of battle, among whom was a Consul, two Pro-Consuls, both the Quaestors, twenty-one out of forty-eight Tribunes, two-thirds of the staff officers, and eighty men of Senatorial rank. History records no defeat more complete, and few more murderous. Hannibal's loss is variously estimated by historians at from 6,000 to 8,000. The Aufides is a river a little longer than the Conestoga, and so shallow everywhere as to have been easily crossed on foot by both armies.⁵

⁵The slaughter in battle in ancient times was comparatively much greater than in modern, owing to the fact that those were mainly hand-to-hand conflicts, and few were left wounded on the field. The wounded are never

The Nith.

Whose heart does not grow soft and tender when Maxwellton's banks, where Annie Laurie gave her promise true, are brought to mind. Those braes lie along the river Nith, which is just about as large as the Conestoga. When will some Pennsylvania bard do for our beautiful stream what Lady Scott has done for the Nith?

The Lee.

Everybody has heard of Frank Mahoney, that versatile Irishman who, under the pseudonym of "Father Prout," so long mystified the lovers of true poetry by his jovial songs and imitations. "The Bells of Shandon" is one of the most tuneful lyrics in the language; you have all heard it, but here are a few lines of it to show how the pretty little river Lee, only thirty-five miles long, has become one of the best-known rivers, not only of Ireland, but of the world—

"I've heard bells chiming
Full many a clime in,
Tolling sublime in
 Cathedral shrine,
But all their music
 Speak naught like thine;
For memory dwelling
On each proud swelling
Of the belfry knelling
 Its loved notes free
Made the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
 Of the river Lee."

I wish there was time to give you the remaining stanzas also. In a magazine issued for the present month of January, I find this river called "the tiny Lee."

The Anio and the New Anio.

These are the names of two streams,

mentioned by ancient historians. Perhaps the wounded were all killed after the battle by the victors.

forty miles long, rising in the district of Umbria, Italy. Caius Caligula, one of the worst of the Cæsars who ruled in Rome—if one can be said to have been worse than the rest—began a magnificent aqueduct to carry the waters of these small rivers to Rome. One of the streams was carried on arches immediately after leaving its source for a distance of three miles. The other, the Anio Novus, also began on arches, which continued for upwards of twenty miles. After this the waters of both rivers were conveyed underground; but at the distance of six miles from Rome they were again united and carried upon arches all the rest of the way. This is regarded as the most perfect of the ancient aqueducts, and it has been repaired so as to also convey the waters of the Acqua Felice, one of the three streams that now supply Rome. The waters of the Anios were distributed through the city by a number of splendid reservoirs. Horace speaks of the falls of the Anio.⁶

The Dee.

Every song collection has the pleasant ballad of "The Miller of the Dee," written by Charles Mackay, and most of you have no doubt played or sung it yourselves. The miller was a man content with his lot, and so he sang one day, as King Hal came riding by and heard him troll his lay:

"I owe no one I cannot pay, I thank
the river Dee,
That turns the mill and grinds the
corn to feed my babes and me."

To this and more like it, King Hal responded:

⁶See note in Suetonius' "Lives of the Caesars," Bohn's edition, p. 265.

"Thy mealy cap is worth my crown,
thy mill my kingdom's fee!
Such men as these are England's
boast, oh miller of the Dee."

Charles Kingsley, in one of the most pathetic lyrics in the English language, has also immortalized the word in "The Sands O' Dee:"

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee!
The western wind was wild and dark
wi' foam,
And all alone went she."

There are three rivers Dee; one in Wales, seventy miles long; one in Ireland, twenty miles long, and a third in Scotland, fifty miles long. Take your choice of the lot, I have never seen either of them, but have no doubt that our Conestoga excels them all.

The Metaurus.

More than 2,000 years ago—to be precise, it was in 207 B. C.—one of the greatest battles of the world was fought. The Second Punic War was on, the war between the two great republics of the ancient world, Rome and Carthage. Hasdrubal had entered Italy to assist his brother, Hannibal. The two Carthaginian armies were at a considerable distance apart, and they were maneuvering to unite and capture the proud city on the seven hills. Hasdrubal's army was on the banks of the Metaurus. The Roman armies, under the Consuls Claudius Nero and Livius Salinator, out-maneuvered Hasdrubal, and he determined to steal away by night and join Hannibal. His guides deserted him, and rains having swollen the Metaurus river, he was unable to ford it and lost his way. The Consuls fell upon his army, and Livy, perhaps

the greatest of historians, relates the result. He says: "At no time during the war were so many of the enemy slain in one battle: 56,000 of the enemy (Carthagenians) were killed and 5,400 captured. The other booty was great of every kind, and also of gold and silver. About 8,000 of the Romans were killed. When Hasdrubal saw the day had gone against him, he put spurs to his horse, rushed upon the Roman cohorts, and fell fighting, as was worthy of the son of Hamilcar and the brother of Hannibal."

Horace says the battle of Metaurus was the salvation of Italy: "Then by the death of Hasdrubal fell all the hope and future of Carthage." The Metaurus, which, from this battle, has become one of the historic rivers of the world, is hardly fifty miles long, and everywhere fordable in ordinary weather. It may be compared with the Pequea for size.

The Dove.

The English poet, Wordsworth, has immortalized the river Dove in his exquisite little poem called "Lucy," than which there are few finer things in any language. Listen to a few lines:

"She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Besides the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to
praise
And very few to love.

* * * * *

"She lived unknown, and few could
know
When Lucy ceased to be,
But she is in her grave, and Oh!
The difference to me."

Yet the Dove river is a small stream in England, not two-thirds as long as our Conestoga, and never less than thirty or more than sixty feet wide.

*Livy: History of Rome, book 27.

The Chickahominy.

I must not omit a notable stream in our own country, which, half a century ago, was as familiar to our people as the Conestoga itself; it was the Chickahominy, famous in our Civil War annals. For several years the Federal and Confederate armies faced and fought each other along its banks. Four battles were fought there in June, 1862. I have interviewed a score of men who were there and saw it daily during that year. Not two of them could give me a correct or the same account of it. At last I got into communication with an old resident upon its banks, acquainted with its waters from source to mouth. He detailed at much length its windings, width and depth at many places. Unfortunately, his long description is lost. It is longer than the Conestoga by twenty miles, is not so wide, and is fordable at most places except towards its mouth.

The Battle of Chevy Chase or Otterburn.

What student of English literature has not read or heard of the very old ballad of Chevy Chase, also called the battle of Otterburn, a battle that holds a conspicuous place in Scottish and English history? It was fought in 1388. At that time James, Earl of Douglas, was warden of the Scottish marches or borders, and Henry Lord Percy, warden of the English marches. Lord Percy's son, Henry, best known in history by the surname of Hotspur, from his fiery temper, evidently having nothing worth doing on his hands, sent word to the Earl of Douglas that he and his clansmen would take a few days' hunting across the border in Scotland. It meant more than a hunt, however, and well Earl Douglas understood it, for the "Fiery Cross"

summoned all the clans to the Douglas banner to meet Percy, who had assembled a large body of his vassals. The Scots were encamped in a meadow, through which flowed the river Read, or Otterburn, a stream so insignificant that I have not been able to locate it on the maps or in the encyclopedias. It was probably not larger than the average Lancaster county farmhouse spring. Yet on that little brook was fought one of the most hardly-contested battles of that age. The Earl of Douglas was killed and the Earl of Murray was mortally wounded. Harry Hotspur and his brother, Ralph, were taken prisoners. There are several versions of the ballad, one giving the victory to the English, the other to the Scotch. Addison devoted two numbers of the Spectator to a critique of the ballad of Chevy Chase. Speaking of the poem, Sir Philip Sidney, that gentle poet, scholar and gallant knight, said: "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found my heart more moved than with a trumpet; yet it is sung by some blind crowder with no regular voice than rude style; what would it do trimmed with the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?"

The Asopus.

Who has not heard of the battle of Platea, one of the proudest names in Grecian story?

"There had the Persian thousands
stood;
There had the glad earth drunk their
blood
On old Platea's day."

It was in the year 479 B. C. that a Persian Army of about 300,000 men under Mardonius confronted the confederated forces of Greece, the Spartans, Lacedemonians, Corinthians,

and some Athenians, on the banks of the Asopus, under the command of Pausanius and Aristides, numbering, all told, about 110,000 men, which was perhaps the largest army united Greece ever put into the field. After maneuvering for some days on opposite sides of the Asopus, Mardonius crossed that stream and attacked the forces of Greece. Desperate deeds of valor were performed on both sides. The light-armed Persians hurled themselves on the serried ranks of the Spartan phalanx. Mardonius himself, at the head of 1,000 picked men, threw himself into the thick of the fight and was struck down by the hand of Aimmestus, a valorous Spartan. A panic seized his soldiers and they fled in wild disorder until they again reached their fortified camp on the opposite side of the Asopus. The camp was stormed, and a horrible carnage ensued. Herodotus tells us that only 3,000 men exclusive of the division of Artabazus escaped. That account is undoubtedly exaggerated, but the Persian loss was unquestionably very great. The Greek losses did not exceed 1,400 men. Ten days were required to bury the dead and divide the booty. The latter was immense. The "Father of History" relates that among the spoils were "tents decorated with gold and silver, gilt and plated couches, and golden bowls and cups and other drinking utensils; they also found sacks on the wagons in which were discovered gold and silver cauldrons, and from the bodies that lay dead they stripped bracelets, necklaces and scymeters of gold."⁸ And how about the Asopus? It is described as "a small, sluggish stream, not easily forded after heavy rains," perhaps twenty-five miles long.

⁸Herodotus: Book 9.

The Boyne.

Who has not heard of the memorable battle of the Boyne, fought on July 1, 1690, on the river of that name, between King James II., of England, and his son-in-law, William III., Prince of Orange, Stadholder of the Netherlands, the prize being the English throne. The fight occurred at Old-bridge, where the river was hardly more than 200 feet wide. A cloudless sun shone on that bright and tranquil stream, and on the beautiful valley of the Boyne, on that summer morning. On the one side waved the flag of the House of Stuart, and on the other the flag of the House of Bourbon.

On the southern bank was encamped the army of King James. 30,000 in number, composed of Irish, some English, and an auxiliary French army. On the northern bank, in battle array, stood the 36,000 soldiers of Prince William. In his ranks were Scotch, Welsh, Dutch, Germans, Danes and Swiss. About 10 o'clock in the morning the soldiers of William began to cross the stream in half a dozen places, some of the bravest fighting in mid-stream. The superior numbers and skill of the Prince of Orange triumphed completely, and ere sundown the allied army was in wild flight, and William and Mary became King and Queen of England. The Boyne is a little longer, but not larger, than the Conestoga, and fordable the greater part of its course.

The Esk.

All of us, in our school days, declaimed Scott's stirring ballad of "Young Lochinvar." Don't you remember how that gallant wooer

"Swam the Esk river where ford there was none."

Now, there are four Esk rivers in

Scotland: One in Dumfriesshire, forty-three miles long; one in Edinburghshire, twenty-three miles long; the South Esk, forty-nine miles long, in Forfarshire, and the North Esk, twenty-nine miles long. Take your choice of the lot. The Conestoga is larger and deeper and broader than either of them.

The Awe.

Let me call up another Scottish stream immortalized by Scott in that pretty song, "Nora's Vow." The cold, fair lady declares

"The Awe's fierce stream may backward turn,"

before she will wed the Earl's son." Now, that "fierce stream" is just five miles long. Of its "fierceness," I have no record. For the ending of the story, I refer you to the song itself.

The Avoca.

If I am not mistaken, it was Tom Moore who wrote that pretty song, "The Vale of Avoca." Well, the Avoca, in County Wicklow, Ireland, is just nine miles long, and correspondingly deep and wide.

The Till.

Once more our story takes us back to Scotland, and again we see a great victory won on and across a brooklet so insignificant that you will have difficulty in finding the name in the geographical lexicons. Two hundred years after the decisive battle of Bannockburn, another great victory was won, but this time 10,000 of Scotland's best and bravest lay dead on the field, and England won perhaps her greatest triumph, and Scotland sustained her greatest defeat. James IV., of Scotland, with an army of about 30,000 men, had taken up a position at a spur of the Cheviot hills, on the brook called Till, a burn only thirty miles

long. The English army, under the Earl of Surrey, with 32,000 men, marched to give him battle. For a time successes were won by both sides, but military blunders by the Scottish leaders cost that side dear, and when night fell their forces retreated, leaving the English in possession of the field. The flower of Scottish chivalry, nobility, gentry, and even clergy, lay lifeless under the bright, but unheeding, stars. "Scarcely a family of eminence," says Scott, "but had an ancestor killed at Flooden, and there is no province of Scotland, even to this day, where the battle is mentioned without a sensation of terror and horror." The English lost about 4,000 men, but they were of inferior rank. First among the Scottish dead was King James himself, who was slain while fighting on foot in the front rank among the clansmen. The Archbishop of St. Andrews and twelve earls were among the killed as well as many minor noblemen. Scott's poem of Marmion is founded on the events of this battle and canto VI gives a vivid, as well as accurate, history of the fight. The Till was full of the dead and dying, and the soldiers passed and repassed it almost dryshod.

Has ever soldier's death on the field of battle been more graphically described than that of Marmion in Scott's poem of the same name? Hear a few lines:

"The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the
gale,

And—Stanley! was the cry;—

A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye:

With dying hand above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted 'Victory!'

'Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley,
on!'

Were the last words of Marmion."

The Busentia.

What reader of Roman history does not remember the story of Alaric, the Goth, who thrice besieged Rome, and the third time took and plundered it? Who does not remember the circumstances of his burial? Dying suddenly in the midst of his conquests, his barbarian followers determined that his Roman enemies should never obtain his remains nor insult them. "By the labor of a captive multitude, they forcibly diverted the course of the Busentinus, a small river. The royal sepulchre, adorned with the splendid spoils and trophies of Rome, was constructed in the vacant bed; the waters were then restored to their natural channel; and the secret spot where the remains of Alaric had been deposited, was forever concealed by the inhuman massacre of the prisoners who had been employed to do the work."⁹

"But yet the mountain stream shall
turn,

And lay the secret channel bare,
And hollow for your sovereign's urn,
A resting place forever there:
Then bid its everlasting springs
Flow back upon the King of Kings;
And never be the secret said
Until the deep give up its dead."¹⁰

Yet the Busentia, immortalized in the pages of history, is but an insignificant stream, not more than half as long or large as the Conestoga.

The Cam.

Everybody has heard of the Cam. Once at least each year the most famous boat races in the world are rowed upon it, between rival crews connected with the Universities of Cambridge and Ox-

⁹Gibbon's History of Rome; Vol. 3, Chapter 31.

¹⁰Edward Everett.

ford. Cambridge, England's great university town, lies upon its banks, and has taken its name from this historic stream. It is a sluggish stream, forty miles long. At Cambridge it is barely wide enough for an eight-cared boat to turn in it. Yet to British university men it is the most endeared stream in all the world.

The Ayr.

Who has not heard of the Ayr, and who does not love it for the sake of him

“Who an humble flower could make
Immortal as his song.”¹¹

The Ayr is a small stream, only thirty-three miles long, but poesy has placed it in the first class among the water-courses of the world. Two miles away Robert Burns was born, and here he lived his life of toil and poverty and wrote the songs that have placed him in the first rank among British poets. Where can you find anything that surpasses “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” in reverence, pathos and sweetness? Where is there anything that equals the rollicking humor of “Tam O’Shanter?” Alloway Kirk is but a short distance away from the pretty river. “The Auld Brig of Doon” recalls Tam’s escape from the eldritch revellers at the midnight dance. Near the Ayr is also the Burns monument, that tells the tale of the brilliant, but unfortunate, poet.

“Such tombs as his are pilgrim shrines,
Shrines to no code or creed confined,
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind.”¹²

Bonny Doon.

With this name early and late memories will come back to most of you.

¹¹Fitzgreen Halleck.

¹²Ibid.

Who that has ever struck the keys of a piano or organ does not remember the time when

"Ye banks and braes of bonny Doon" was foremost among the tuneful songs of that youthful repertoire? For more than a hundred years it has been a favorite, and so it will remain until the love of melody has died in the human heart. The Doon is but an insignificant stream, thirty miles long, including a lake through which it passes, yet Burns has made it one of the world's classic water-courses.

The Scamander and Simois.

For the last in this long series of remarkable rivers, the most memorable of all has been reserved. Two streams, small in length and volume, have a history about which an entire library has been written. Who has not heard

"The tale of Troy divine?"

Who has not read how the Trojan prince, Paris, eloped with Helen, the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, and the most beautiful woman in the world?

"Oh, thou art fairer than the evening
air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand
stars."

Her's is indeed the most illustrious name in the world's long history of female beauty.

"Her's was the face that launch'd a
thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of
Ilium."

To avenge that wrong, punish the offender and recover his wife, Menelaus summoned all the kings of Greece to aid him, and the result was that more than a thousand ships bore

100,000 Greeks to Asia Minor, where Troy, the capital of aged Priam's kingdom, was located. That country, bordering on the Ægean Sea and the Hellespont, and about 500 miles in circumference, became for ten long years the battleground of the most renowned war of which history and literature have a record.

Greek mythology largely centers around that spot. Mount Ida, the Olympus of the ancient world—the home of the Grecian gods—was within that kingdom. The gods themselves took part in the contest. Jupiter, Venus and Apollo and others fought for the Trojans, while Juno, Minerva, Neptune and many more ranged themselves with the Greeks. Mars, true to his instincts, fought on both sides, sometimes for the Trojans and then again for the Greeks.

Through the plain on which Troy was located flowed two streams, the Scamander and its tributary, the Simois. Troy was situated near the junction of these rivers, "Where Silver Simois and Scamander flow," and the war was waged along their banks. Of that long and bloody strife Homer has told in immortal verse. The Iliad will live in literature while mankind survives. The story of the deeds of "cloud-compelling Jupiter," "swift-footed Achilles," "white-armed Andromache," "much-counselling Ulysses," "large-eyed Juno," and, greatest of all, "crest-tossing Hector," will never die. A very large library has been written about Homer and his epic. The first book printed in the English language by the first and most celebrated English printer, William Caxton, in 1474, was the story of Troy.

The Iliad contains numberless allusions to the Scamander. It is called the "fair flowing," "eddying," "rapid

flowing," "deep eddying river," "old Xanthus roars," "the flashing billows beat the whitening shores," "roars the resounding surge," and many similar ones. One would be led to think from all this that the Scamander was an Amazon or a Mississippi. But what is it in reality? No section of the Old World has been more carefully surveyed by competent explorers, and we are at no loss to know all about this river, as it is to-day, if not at the time of the Trojan war. Mr. Robert Wood, who in 1750 made a minute survey of the river and the plain through which it flows, says: "Springing from the rock, it divides itself immediately into a shallow basin, seven or eight feet in diameter; from thence dripping in small quantity down a romantic, woody cliff. From this source to its present mouth the Scamander may be about twenty-three miles long in a straight line, but more if we take the windings of the river. At the time when we saw this river we found it confined to a small part of its channel. We pitched our tent in its dry, gravelly bed, close to the stream, which was then so small that a less army than that of Xerxes might have drunk it dry."¹³

Dr. Schliemann, to whom the world owes more than to all the other explorers of the Troad combined, is very explicit on the condition of the Scamander. He calls it "a small brook," and says that in the spring of 1882 the water in the Simois was only a few inches deep, and by March was entirely dry. Even the course of the Scamander in the plain of Troy had no running water in the beginning of July, and thenceforward consisted of only a series of pools of stagnant

¹³Robert Wood's "Essay on the Original Genius of Homer and on the Ancient and Present State of the Troad," p. 280.

water, which diminished as the season advanced. In a note he adds: "It happens on an average once every three years, in August and September, that the Scamander has no running water; it also happens, perhaps as often, that the Simois dries up completely in August and September. The inhabitants who dwell in the village of Yeni Shehor, who have to fetch their whole supply of water from the Scamander, are badly off when the river dries, for they have then to sink wells in the river bed, and to dig the shafts deeper and deeper, in proportion as the river becomes drier and drier." ¹⁴

As throwing some light on the question of calling very small streams rivers in Europe, I may state that there are upwards of 300 so-called rivers in England and Wales, and yet those two countries, taken together, are just about as large as Florida or Michigan. To scare up 300 or more rivers in either of the two States named would require that every water-course as large as the Lititz Spring, with which you are all familiar, should be called a river, and that such is really the case I will state that old Izaak Walton, in his famous book, tells us that the "Dove," which flowed by his door, and which has already been described, could be covered at its source by his hat, and flows nine gallons of water per minute! Think of that statement! Why, there is no farmhouse spring in all Lancaster county, or hydrant in the city, with any self-respect, that cannot do better than that. Yet one of the many editors of old Izaak Walton's book has written an entire page of the most fulsome stuff you ever read about that little stream miscalled a river.

¹⁴Schliemann's *Troja*, Chap. 1; pp. 15-16.

There are many more comparisons and contrasts like the foregoing which might be presented. My original list included an additional score. Such streams, for example, as the Senlac, a small tributary of the Derwent, in Yorkshire, where, on September 25, 1066, Harold, the last of the Saxon kings of Britain, and one of the ablest that ever sat on the English throne, met and defeated his traitor brother, Tostig, and his Norwegian ally, Harold Haardraade, only to be himself defeated and killed three weeks later by William, the Norman, at the battle of Hastings.

On the Suran, a little stream in Switzerland, an affluent of the Aar, where, on July 9, 1386, the historical battle of Sempach, which gave Switzerland her independence, was won by 1,400 Switzers against 4,000 Austrians. The Swiss leader, the famous Arnold of Winkelried, was slain on the field of battle.

“Make way for Liberty, he cried;
Make way for Liberty, and died.”

Switzerland has celebrated that victory annually down to the present time.

Or the Alma, the little Crimean stream on which the battle of that name was fought on September 20, 1854, between the allied English and French forces and the Russians under Menschikoff, when many of the British soldiers fought waist deep in the river's channel.

Pennsylvania is one of the best watered States on the American continent. There are perhaps a thousand streams within her borders which, in any European country, would be called rivers, while not even a baker's dozen of them are spoken of as rivers hereathome. The Conestoga, Codorus, Brandywine, Conewago, Con-

owingo, Conemaugh, Conecocheague, Loyal Hanna, Sinamahoning, Shenango, Tunkhannock and Mahoning are as truly rivers as are the Susquehanna, Delaware, West Branch, Schuylkill, Allegheny, Monogahela, Lehigh, Juniata and Ohio.

Our Conestoga has borne its present misnomer long enough. Let no member of this society ever again speak or write about it as a creek. Call it what it deserves to be called and what it really is—the Conestoga river. In one of our local newspapers it has been so called for years, largely through my personal efforts.

But, after all, perhaps better results could hardly be expected, when one of our county histories, issued under the sanction of a prominent institution of learning, calls the beautiful Conestoga, that flows placidly by its stately halls, a creek. It is time to sit down heavily on such an ignorant and unjust geographical nomenclature, and I trust the members of this society will do so as often as the opportunity presents itself. Call our minor streams brooks, burns, rills, creeks, runs, branches, springs and rivulets, the names that belong to them, but don't forget to give our rivers their proper titles also.

I began with a quotation from Scotland's greatest poet—I will close with an extract from a living Scottish poet, which does for our river what I have been pleading for, full and exact justice:

“Not Turner's noted crook of Lune,
Nor Byron's wide and winding Rhine,
Nor Burns' banks of Bonny Doon
Nor boasted Tweed, nor lauded Tyne,
Not Delaware nor Brandywine,
Nor Spey, nor Tay, nor Don nor Dee,
Nor Shakespeare's Avon, still more
fine.

E'er seemed so beautiful to me—
As tranquil Conestoga!”¹⁵

¹⁵James D. Law.

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