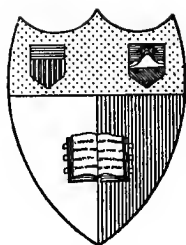


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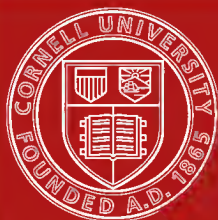
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VOCATIONS

*SETTING FORTH THE VARIOUS PHASES OF THE MECHANIC
ARTS, HOME-MAKING, FARMING AND WOODCRAFT, BUSI-
NESS, THE PROFESSIONS OF LAW, MINISTRY AND
MEDICINE, PUBLIC SERVICE, LITERATURE AND
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ENTERTAINMENT AND THE FINE
ARTS . . . WITH PRACTICAL
INTRODUCTIONS BY A
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INTRODUCTION

By

HENRY VAN DYKE, D.D., LL.D.

It is a curious fact, and at first sight rather disconcerting, that there is no good guidebook to the vocation of authorship. There are a few self-portraits, more or less convincing, of authors at work. There are many essays, more or less illuminating, upon the craft of writing in general, and upon the habits and procedure of certain great writers in particular. The best of these confessions and criticisms are excellent reading, full of entertainment and instruction for the alert and candid mind in every age and calling, and touched with a special, sympathetic interest for those young persons who have sternly resolved, or fondly dreamed, that they will follow a literary career. A volume of carefully selected material of this kind might be made (and in the present book I hope it has been made) attractive and rewarding to all gentle readers, and particularly profitable to those who are also intending authors. But the one thing for which such a book ought not to be taken, or mistaken, is a manual of the profession of literature.

The reasons for this appear to me quite as remarkable as the fact itself. The business of authors being to write, why should we not be able to gather from them such instruction in regard to writing, and the necessary preparation for it, as would make the pathway of authorship so plain that the wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein?

The answer to this question is an open secret, an instructive paradox, which is revealed in the whole history of literature, and which stands out clearly enough even in a little book like this: *There is no pathway of authorship*.

It is a voyage, if you like; but there are no guide-posts in the sea. It is a flight, if you like; but there are no tracks in the air. It is certainly not a journey along a railway line, or a highroad, or even a well-marked footpath.

In this it differs from other vocations like the Church, the Bar, the Army, the Navy, Engineering, Medicine, or Teaching. For each of these there is a pretty clearly defined path of preparatory study, with fixed gateways of examination along its course. When the last gate is passed and the young doctor is licensed to practice, the young clergyman ordained to preach, the young lawyer admitted to the bar, the path broadens into a road, which leads from one professional duty to another and brings him from task to task, if he is fortunate and industrious, with the regularity of a time-table, and, it must be added, with something of the monotony of a clock.

It is not so with the young intending author. There is no time of preparation prescribed, or even authoritatively advised, for him or for her. There are no fierce examiners standing like lions in the way. No hard-earned diploma, or certificate, or license is demanded. There are no set duties to be performed at certain times, like a case to be argued at the first session of the court in November, or an appendix to be removed next Thursday afternoon, or two sermons to be preached every Sunday. Intending authors, and for that matter practicing authors, are like Milton's Adam and Eve when the closed gate of Paradise was behind them:

The world was all before them where to choose.

It looks very free and easy and attractive, this vocation of bookmaking. All that the young writer has to do is to provide himself, or herself, with paper and a pen (or a typewriter), retire into a convenient room (almost any kind of a room will answer the purpose), and emerge with a book which a publisher will print, advertise, and distribute, and which the public will read. And after that? Why, after that it looks freer and easier still. All that the successful writer has to do is to repeat the process, with a new theme, at any convenient season.

But this very freedom, which is so alluring at a distance, becomes bewildering and troublesome at close range. The young intending author who has a serious ambition and a mind in thinking order very soon recognizes, either by the light of pure reason or by the glimmer of sad experience, that there are difficulties in this simple business of writing books which publishers will desire to print and the public to read. Many manuscripts are offered but few are chosen. How does one learn to cope with these difficulties and overcome them? How does one make ready to produce a manuscript which shall be reasonably sure of a place among the chosen few? By going to college, or by travel? By living in solitude, or in society? By imitating select models, or by cultivating a strenuous originality? By reading Plato, or "Public Opinion"?

Nobody seems to know, of a certainty, the right answer to these questions. Guesses are made at them. Universities announce courses in daily theme-writing. Schools of correspondence offer to teach the secrets of literature. Bureaus of Authorship are advertised. But the results produced by these various institutions are not consistent enough to be regarded as inevitable. Travel does not guarantee an observing mind, nor solitude a

profound one; nor does society always refine the intelligence. The strenuous effort to be original often ends in a very common type of folly. Conscious imitation may be the sincerest flattery, but it rarely produces the closest resemblance.

Meantime, a sufficient number of authors, great and small, continue to arrive, as they always have arrived, from their native regions, by their own ways, at their own forms and degrees of success. Ask them how they got there, and they can not tell you, even when they try to do so. The reason is because they do not know. There was no pathway. They traveled as they could. Power and skill came to them, sometimes suddenly, sometimes slowly, always inexplicably.

Do you suppose it is possible to explain how Shakespeare became able to write "Hamlet," or Milton to compose "Paradise Lost"? It is true that George Eliot describes "how she came to write fiction," and Stevenson gives an entertaining sketch of some of the methods in which he pursued his "own private end, which was to learn to write." But does George Eliot herself understand the secret of her preparation to create her vivid, revealing "Scenes from Clerical Life"? Or will the study of all those favorite authors to whom Stevenson says he "played the sedulous ape" enable the young short-story-tellers really to reproduce his too easily imitable style?

In the middle of the nineteenth century several learned, industrious, and wise Americans were delivering lectures. Why did Emerson's crystallize into essays? Where did Hawthorne learn how to write "The Scarlet Letter," in Bowdoin College or in the Salem Custom-house? Could Thackeray have told you how he found the way from "The Luck of Barry Lyndon" to "Vanity

Fair," or Dickens from "Sketches by Boz" to "Pickwick Papers"?

There is no other vocation of man into which "the unknown quantity" enters as largely as it does into authorship; and almost all writers who have won fame, even in a modest degree, if they are thoroughly candid, will confess to a not unpleasant experience of surprise at their own success.

Now all this implies an element of uncertainty in the author's profession, — if, indeed, a vocation so pathless may be called a profession at all. In the regular and, so to speak, macadamized professions, those who follow the road with energy, fidelity, and fair intelligence may count upon a reasonable reward. But in the open field of literature it is impossible to foretell which one of a thousand aspirants will come to fame, or which ten will be able to earn a decent living.

It is for this reason, no doubt, that some instinct of prudence, or some pressure of necessity, has made many authors provide themselves with another breadwinner than the pen. When we consider how many well-known and even famous writers, from Chaucer to Conan Doyle, have had some avocation beside writing, we may justly conclude that there is hardly any human occupation, from diplomacy to doctoring, in which the intending author may not learn to write, and from which genius, or even talent, may not find a passage into literature. Charles Lamb's labors as a clerk in the East India House did not dim the luminous wit of his essays. William De Morgan's long life as a manufacturer of tiles did not prevent him, at last, from making his novels "somehow good." The career of James Ford Rhodes as an ironmaster was no bar to his notable success as a historian. Indeed, it almost seems as if some useful occupation, or

at least some favorite recreation or pursuit, to bring the writer into unprofessional contact with the realities of life and the personalities of other men, were more of a help than a hindrance to vital authorship.

Writing, in itself, is not an especially interesting or picturesque employment. Romance can make little of it. Even when the hero of a novel is a literary person, like Arthur Pendennis or David Copperfield, the things that interest us most happen to him outside of the book room. It is what lies behind writing, and leads up to it, and flows into it, that really counts. The biography of an author is almost interrupted when he takes his pen in hand. Who would not ride with Scott on a summer raid through the Highlands, or walk with him and his dogs beside the Tweed, rather than watch him at work in the little room where he wrote "Waverley" by candlelight?

I think it was Byron who said something like this: "The moment in which a poem is conceived is one of infinite pleasure, the hours in which it is brought forth are full of the pains of labor." Of course this is not meant to deny that the author's vocation has its own inward delight and its own exceeding great reward. The delight lies in the conception of something that craves utterance; and the reward lies in the production of something that goes out alive into life. A true call to the vocation of literature is both inward and outward: a strong desire of self-expression, and a proved power of communicating thought and feeling through the written word.

The wish to write merely for the sake of being a writer, if I may so describe a vague ambition which vexes many young persons, is rather a small and futile thing, and seldom leads to happiness, usefulness, or greatness. Literature has been made by men and women

who became writers because they had something to say and took the necessary pains to learn how to say it.

But how did this happen to these men and women? What brought them to this happy pass where the inward call to self-expression was confirmed by the outward power to interest gentle readers? Who can tell that?

It looks simple. And no doubt there is a certain element of simplicity in the necessary processes of learning to spell, to construct sentences, to use words correctly, to develop plots, to recognize rhymes, and to observe metres. But there is a mystery in it, after all. From Shakespeare's deepest tragedy to Kipling's most rattling ditty, from Wordsworth's loftiest ode to Dobson's lightest lyric, from Victor Hugo's biggest romance to De Maupassant's briefest tale, from Plato's profoundest dialogue to Chesterton's most paradoxical monologue, from George Eliot's "Romola" to Miss Alcott's "Little Women," every bit of literature, great or small, has a measure of magic in it, and ultimately is no more explicable than life itself.

To the young intending author, then, we should give all manner of good advice about reading only the best books, respecting the sanctities of language, cultivating the powers of observation and reflection; but, after all, we shall have to confess that there is no sure and only path to the literary vocation.

If you can, you can; you may depend on 't;
And if you can't, you can't; and there's an end on 't.

Henry van Dyke

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, PRINCETON, N. J.
Sept. 15, 1910.

LITERATURE

GOETHE'S FIRST ATTEMPT AT DRAMA¹

BY GOETHE



MY unabating enthusiasm for the writings of Shakespeare had enlarged the circle of my ideas. The stage appeared to me too limited, and the ordinary duration of a performance too brief to suffice for the development of a great work. In dramatizing the character of the noble Goetz von Berlichingen, I endeavored to preserve the events of his life in the manner in which he has himself described them, invested with all their historical interest. My imagination rose, as it were, with my subject, and the forms which I adopted, exceeding all the limits of scenic representation, approximated more and more to those of a dramatic narrative. Urged by my sister, who expressed her impatience to see me commence the undertaking, I took up my pen and wrote my first scene. With this, Cornelia appeared satisfied, though she placed but little faith in my perseverance. Piqued by her distrust, and at the same time encouraged by her approbation, I completed my work in the space of six weeks. I showed it to Merk, who pronounced a favorable opinion on it. I next sent it to Herder, who handled it with severity, and ridiculed at once the piece and the author.

Without being discouraged, I some time afterwards

* ¹ From the Memoirs of Goethe, written by himself in 1824.

carefully revised my work, and I perceived that independently of the unities of time and place, I had violated the unity of interest; which, in my opinion, was still more important. I set to work courageously, and without mercy struck out parts which pleased me very well, but in which I found I had deviated from the rules of art. I soon completed my drama under a new form; but I was still dissatisfied and wished to subject it to some additional corrections. I consulted Merk on the subject; he asked me what advantage I expected to derive from these perpetual alterations.

“A thing thus continually done and undone,” said he, “may indeed change its form, but it will seldom be improved. We should calculate well the effect of a work, and when it is once finished, begin a new one. These eternal alterations indicate nothing but irresolution.”

A new experiment in literature, hazarded by a young man unknown to the public, could not fail to be pronounced an act of temerity. I was afraid I should find no bookseller willing to undertake the publication of my dramatic production. Merk, however, obviated this difficulty. He seized the opportunity of indulging his taste for trading speculation. As editor of “The Frankfort Gazette,” he had formed a connection with literary men and booksellers. My work was original, and he therefore conceived it could not fail to be attractive. We agreed to publish it at our own expense. I undertook to supply the paper and Merk engaged to defray the cost of printing.

We immediately put our design into execution, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing my dramatic sketch in print. It excited greater interest than I had expected, and was an object of almost general attention. However, through the want of sufficient connection, we were unable to satisfy the demands of the public, and a pirated edition

of the work soon made its appearance. Our receipts, particularly in ready money, came slowly in; and my pecuniary resources were not, of course, very extensive. Thus it happened that at the moment when I was the object of public attention, and when my work was crowned with complete success, I had scarcely the means of paying for the paper which had enabled me to unfold my talent to the world. Merk, who was accustomed to extricate himself from embarrassments of this kind, promised to arrange all in a satisfactory way; but I was obliged to content myself merely with the breath of fame.

Some fugitive essays, which I had published anonymously, had afforded me the means of knowing the public and the journalists; I had seen how they treated writers, who, in my opinion, possessed the highest merit. I could, therefore, appreciate the value of their praise and their condemnation. I had learned to endure censure, and I was not transported by encomium.

This indifference proved very useful to me; for if my ideas had not been firmly fixed, into what errors might I not have been led by the contradictions I remarked even in the criticisms of well-informed men. I may mention, as an example, a long analysis of my piece which appeared in "The German Mercury." I could not convince myself of the justice of the writer's censure, or of the propriety of the hints he threw out to me. What was my joy when I observed in the next number of "The Journal" some remarks by Wieland more favorable to my work. He took up my defence, and pointed out the errors of my first judge. Still, however, the condemnation had been recorded. If, thought I, men of talent and information form such erroneous judgments, what must I expect from the mass of the public.

The pleasure which I derived from my friendly inter-

course with Merk, was unfortunately of short duration. The intelligent Landgravine of Hesse Darmstadt engaged him to join her suite in a journey to St. Petersburg. His correspondence succeeded to his conversation. His letters, which were filled with interesting details, extended my knowledge of the world, and helped to form my mind. But still I could not help regretting his absence at a moment when I so much needed his advice.

He who determines to enlist as a soldier makes up his mind to endure the fatigues and dangers of war: he looks forward to privation, wounds, and even death; but he has only a vague and general notion of these miseries, and forms no idea of the circumstances through which they may unexpectedly occur. It is the same with the man who tries his fortune in the world in any way, but above all as an author. Of this truth I was soon convinced by experience.

I was indebted for the public favor to the subject rather than to the execution of my work. Indeed, the subject of a literary composition was considered by the young writers of the day merely as a banner, beneath which they might, at their ease, display a taste for unrestrained independence: this was a charm that had attracted better heads than mine. I have in my possession a letter from Bürger, that eminent, and, in many respects, truly singular genius, which bears testimony to the effect produced by the appearance of my drama.

On the other hand several sensible men blamed me for having clothed anarchy in seductive colors, and went so far as to impute to me a wish to revive the reign of disorder and the law of force. Others pronounced me to be a profound scholar, and proposed that I should reprint the original narrative of my hero, with notes. Because I had plucked the flowers of reputation, they gave me credit

for being a careful and experienced gardener. However, some proved themselves rather sceptical on the subject of my learning, and suspected that I was not thoroughly intimate with the history of the period from which I had chosen my subject.

I one day unexpectedly received a visit from a distinguished public functionary. I was the more sensible to the honor thus conferred on me when he commenced the conversation by complimenting me on the merits of my drama, and my historical knowledge. However, he soon made me acquainted with the real object of his visit. He had called to inform me that Goetz von Berlichingen was not the brother-in-law of Franz von Sickingen, and that by this imaginary alliance, I had deviated from the truth of history.

I appealed to the authority of Goetz himself, who addresses Franz by the title alluded to; but I was given to understand that that was purely a mark of courtesy to an intimate friend, and that no more relationship existed between these two celebrated men, than between travelers and postilions, when the latter are addressed by the title of brother-in-law.¹ I thanked him for his lesson, and at the same time told him I was sorry it was too late to profit by it. At this he also expressed his regret. He advised me to set to work and study the history and constitution of Germany, for which purpose he offered me the use of his library; a favor of which I failed not amply to avail myself.

But the most comical incident to which the production of my drama gave rise was the visit I received from a bookseller, who, without any ceremony, asked me to write a dozen such works, promising to give me liberal encourage-

¹ *Schwager* (brother-in-law) is the appellation familiarly applied to postilions in Germany.

ment for my labor. I was very much amused at this proposition. But, after all, it was not so ridiculous as may at first sight appear: for I had been turning over in my mind the most remarkable events of German history, with the view of rendering them the subjects of dramatic composition. But these ideas, like many others I formed, were never carried into effect.

The drama of Goetz von Berlichingen was not, however, the only object to which I directed my attention. While I was writing and re-writing it, and superintending the printing and publishing, I revolved in my mind plans for other works. I prepared to enter upon another kind of imitative composition, which is not usually classed with dramatic literature, though there is really considerable analogy between the two styles. To this new labor my attention was called by a habit which I believe to be peculiar to myself.

Accustomed to derive my most agreeable recreation from society, I loved to substitute an imaginary conversation for solitary ideas, and when I was alone my fancy created interlocutors, with whom I discussed the subject that happened at the time to engage my thoughts. I addressed the person whom my fancy pictured, as if he had really been present; and I imagined him to answer me, either by words or by those signs of approval or disapproval which I knew to be characteristic of the supposed individual. I laid down my propositions, and explained and defended all that was disapproved, until I succeeded in bringing my interlocutor over to my opinion.

It is curious that I did not select for these imaginary colloquies, persons with whom I was intimately acquainted; but, on the contrary, those whom I had seldom seen, who lived at a distance from me, or whom I had only accidentally met in society. I generally chose for my interlocu-

tors persons who were calculated to listen rather than to speak, and who possessed good sense enough to take an interest in what was submitted to their consideration, without seeking to depart from their proper sphere. I often summoned to these imaginary discussions individuals of both sexes and of every rank. I conversed only on such subjects as were suited to their understandings and tastes; and thus I conceived myself entitled to rely with confidence on their definitive approval.

It is easy to perceive the relation that exists between these imaginary dialogues and epistolary correspondence. The only difference is, that correspondence supposes a mutual confidence, while in ideal conversation one may procure a continual change of interlocutors, toward whom one is bound by no reciprocal feelings.

At the time to which I am now referring, the subject I wished to paint, was that distaste of life which is not the result either of want or misery. For this picture the epistolary form naturally presented itself to me. Melancholy is the offspring of solitude. He who yields to melancholy flies from everything that is calculated to produce a contrary impression, and he feels nothing more intolerable than the gayety and tumult of society. The pleasures which others enjoy are to him a painful reproach, and that which might be expected to wean him from his melancholy, only plunges him more deeply into it. If he ever unfold the sentiments which agitate him, it is only in epistolary communication. An overflowing of the heart, conveyed through the medium of writing, whether it have for its object the expression of gayety or of grief, meets with no contradiction. A reply inspired by opposite sentiments, serves only to confirm the recluse in his disordered fancies.

If the letters of Werther, written in this spirit, present

so varied a charm, it is because the character which I have given to each letter was suggested by the imaginary dialogues which I successively maintained with different interlocutors, though in the work in question the letters are addressed only to one friend. But I have already said enough as to the way in which this little book was composed.

ROBERT BURNS'S HISTORY OF HIMSELF

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER TO DR. MOORE

MAUCHLINE, 2nd August, 1787.



SIR:— For some months past I have been rambling over the country, but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of ennui, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honor to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment.

I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be often at my own expense; for I assure you, Sir, I havè, like Solomon, whose character, excepting in the trifling affair of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble, — I have, I say, like him, turned my eyes to behold madness and folly, and like him, too, frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you that the poor author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got

acquainted in the herald's office; and, looking through that granary of honors, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood.

Gules, purple, argent, etc., quite disowned me.

My father was in the north of Scotland the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large, where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son.

For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighborhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye till they could discern between good and evil; so, with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate.

At those years, I was by no means a favorite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and

boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraipts, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry, but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp lookout in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors.

The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was "The Vision of Mirza," and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear —

"For though on dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave —"

I met with these pieces in Manson's English Collection, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were the "Life of Hannibal," and the "History of Sir William Wallace." Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in rapture up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins which will boil along there, till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting the coun-

try half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, etc., used a few years afterwards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was like our catechism definition of infinitude, without bounds or limits. I formed several connections with other youngers, who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy in the rehearsal of parts, in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green stage that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged playfellows. It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were, perhaps, born in the same village.

My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my plow-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations; and one, whose heart, I am sure, not even the "Munny Begum" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor



THE HOME OF ROBERT BURNS

who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of "Twa Dogs."

My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labor. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and to weather these two years, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly; I was a dexterous plowman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert), who could drive a plow very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel-writer might, perhaps, have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life — the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labors of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom: she was a "bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass." In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and bookworm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I can not tell; you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, etc.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from

our labors; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious rattan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettles and thistles.

Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favorite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

Thus with me began love and poetry; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here, but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail, by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to where the wicked cease from troubling and where the weary are at rest!

It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of

this period, perhaps the most ungainly awkward boy in the parish — no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's Geographical Grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from "The Spectator." These, with Pope's Works, some Plays of Shakespeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, "The Pantheon," Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," Stackhouse's "History of the Bible," Justice's "British Gardener's Directory," Boyle's Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's "Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin," "A Select Collection of English Songs," and Hervey's "Meditations," had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labor, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my criticism, such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which, I believe, was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness and sobriety and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the will-o'-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence.

The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim.

I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labor. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it — the last I always hated — there was contamination in the very entrance!

Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriasm that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always, where two or three met together, there was I among them.

But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every warfare in the world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favor, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plow, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared further for my labors than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart.

A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity that recommended me as a proper

second on these occasions; and I dare say I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favorite theme of my song, and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farmhouse and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice, baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labor and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature; to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialing, etc., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind.

The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learned to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming fillette, who lived next door to the school, upset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and cosines for a few days

more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon, to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,

Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important edition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far that though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me a many letters as if I had been a broad-plodding son of day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie — Tristram Shandy and the Man of Feeling were my bosom favorites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humor of the hour. I had usually half-a-dozen or

more pieces on hand: I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except "Winter, a Dirge," the eldest of my printed pieces; "The Death of Poor Maillie," "John Barley-corn," and songs first, second, and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighboring town (Irvine) to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My partner was a scoundrel of the first water; and to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousal to the New Year, the shop took fire and burnt to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

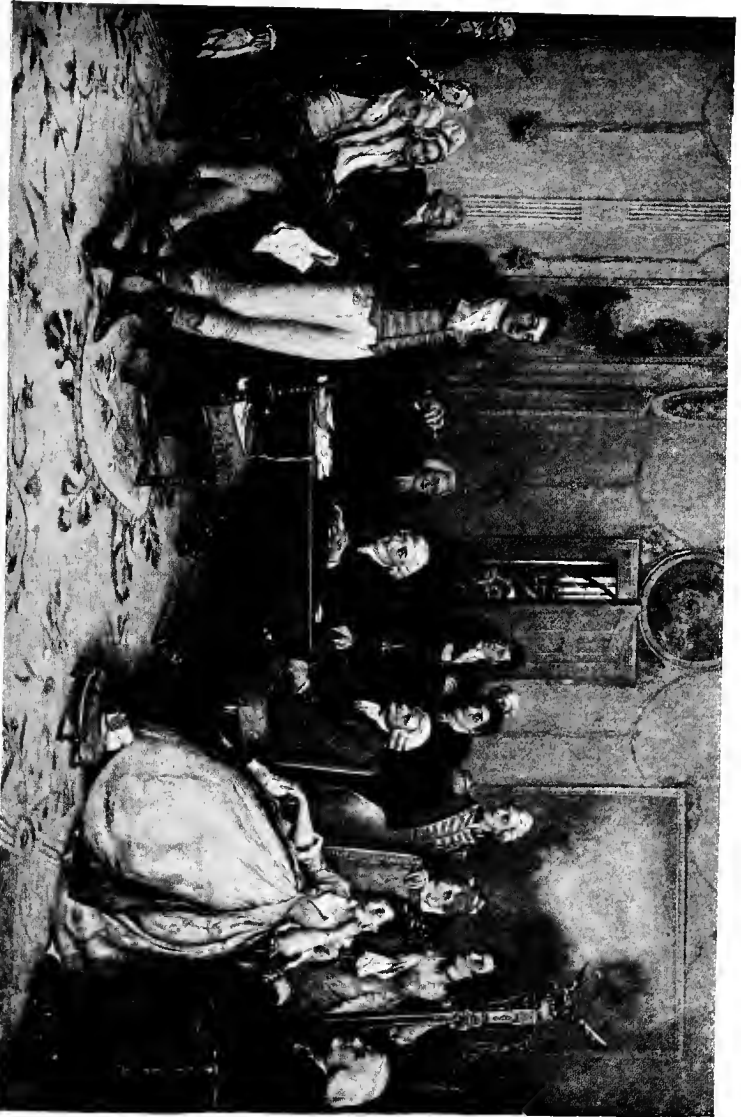
I was obliged to give up this scheme; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and, what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and, to crown my distresses, a *belle fille*, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their *mitimus* — "Depart from me, ye cursed."

I now began to be known in the neighborhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that

saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personae* in my "Holy Fair." I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend, who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause.

"Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, "The Lament." This was a most melancholy affair, which I can not yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; in truth it was only nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica.

But before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears — a poor negro-driver — or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say, that, *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favor.



After the painting by C. M. HARDIE

BURNS IN EDINBURGH

It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man, and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation — where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

Hungry ruin had me in the wind.

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia — “The gloomy night is gathering fast,” when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition.

The doctor belonged to a set of critics, for whose ap-

plause I had not dared to hope. His opinion, that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. *Oubliez-moi, grand Dieu, si jamais je l'oublie!*

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to "catch" the characters, and "the manners living as they rise."

You can now, Sir, form a pretty near guess of what sort of a wight he is whom for some time you have honored with your correspondence. That whim and fancy, keen sensibility and riotous passions, may still make him zigzag in his future path of life is very probable; but come what will, I shall answer for him the most determinate integrity and honor. And though his evil star should again blaze in his meridian with tenfold more direful influence, he may reluctantly tax friendship with pity, but with no more.

With the most grateful respect; I have the honor to be, Sir, your very humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS

THE WRITING OF A GREAT HISTORY

By EDWARD GIBBON

IHAD now attained the first of earthly blessings, independence; I was the absolute master of my hours and actions; nor was I deceived in the hope that the establishment of my library in town would allow me to divide the day between study and society.

No sooner was I settled in my house and library than I undertook the composition of the first volume of my History. At the outset all was dark and doubtful, — even the title of the work, the true era of the Decline and Fall of the Empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative; and I was often tempted to cast away the labor of seven years. The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation: three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced with a more equal and easy pace; but the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters have been reduced, by three successive revisals, from a large volume to their present size; and they might still be compressed without any loss of facts or sentiments.

An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns, from Commodus to

Alexander; a fault of which I have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London. Such an oracle might have been consulted and obeyed with rational devotion; but I was soon disgusted with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends, some will praise from politeness, and some will criticize from vanity. The author himself is the best judge of his own performance; no one has so deeply meditated on the subject; no one is so sincerely interested in the event.

By the friendship of Mr. (now Lord) Elliot, who had married my first cousin, I was returned at the general election for the borough of Liskeard. I took my seat at the beginning of the memorable contest between Great Britain and America, and supported, with many a sincere and silent vote, the rights, though not perhaps the interest, of the mother country. After a fleeting illusive hope, prudence condemned me to acquiesce in the humble station of a mute. I was not armed by nature and education with the intrepid energy of mind and voice,

Vincendum strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.

Timidity was fortified by pride, and even the success of my pen discouraged the trial of my voice. But I assisted at the debates of a free assembly; I listened to the attack and defence of eloquence and reason; I had a near prospect of the character, views, and passions of the first men of the age. The eight sessions that I sat in Parliament were a school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of an historian.

The volume of my History, which had been somewhat delayed by the novelty and tumult of a first session, was now ready for the press. After the perilous adventure had been declined by my friend Mr. Elmsly, I agreed

upon easy terms with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable bookseller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer; and they undertook the care and risk of the publication, which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. The last revisal of the proofs was submitted to my vigilance; and many blemishes of style, which had been invisible in the manuscript, were discovered and corrected in the printed sheet. So moderate were our hopes, that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan. During this awful interval I was neither elated by the ambition of fame nor depressed by the apprehension of contempt. My diligence and accuracy were attested by my own conscience.

History is the most popular species of writing, since it can adapt itself to the highest or the lowest capacity. I had chosen an illustrious subject. Rome is familiar to the school-boy and the statesman; and my narrative was deduced from the last period of classical reading. I had likewise flattered myself that an age of light and liberty would receive, without scandal, an inquiry into the human *causes* of the progress and establishment of Christianity.

I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work, without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and the bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day; nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any *profane* critic. The favor of mankind is most freely bestowed on a new acquaintance of any original merit; and the mutual surprise of the public and

their favorite is productive of those warm sensibilities which at a second meeting can no longer be rekindled. If I listened to the music of praise, I was more seriously satisfied with the approbation of my judges. The candor of Dr. Robertson embraced his disciple.

Nearly two years had elapsed between the publication of my first and the commencement of my second volume; and the causes must be assigned of this long delay.

After a short holiday, I indulged my curiosity in some studies of a very different nature; a course of anatomy, which was demonstrated by Dr. Hunter, and some lessons of chemistry, which were delivered by Mr. Higgins. The principles of these sciences, and a taste for books of natural history, contributed to multiply my ideas and images; and the anatomist and chemist may sometimes track me in their own snow.

I dived, perhaps too deeply, into the mud of the Arian controversy; and many days of reading, thinking and writing were consumed in the pursuit of a phantom.

It is difficult to arrange, with order and perspicuity, the various transactions of the age of Constantine; and so much was I displeas'd with the first essay that I committed to the flames above fifty sheets.

The six months of Paris and pleasure must be deducted from the account. But when I resumed my task I felt my improvement; I was now master of my style and subject, and while the measure of my daily performance was enlarged, I discovered less reason to cancel or correct. It has always been my practice to cast a long paragraph in a single mold, to try it by my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of the pen till I had given the last polish to my work. Shall I add that I never found my mind more vigorous, nor my composi-

tion more happy, than in the winter hurry of society and parliament?

So flexible is the title of my History, that the final era might be fixed at my own choice; and I long hesitated whether I should be content with the three volumes, the Fall of the Western Empire, which fulfilled my first engagement with the public. In this interval of suspense, nearly a twelvemonth, I returned by a natural impulse to the Greek authors of antiquity; I read with new pleasure the Iliad and the Odyssey, the histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, a large portion of the tragic and comic theater of Athens, and many interesting dialogues of the Socratic school. Yet in the luxury of freedom I began to wish for the daily task, the active pursuit, which gave a value to every book and an object to every inquiry: the preface of a new edition announced my design, and I dropped without reluctance from the age of Plato to that of Justinian. The original texts of Procopius and Agathias supplied the events and even the characters of his reign; but a laborious winter was devoted to the codes, the pandects, and the modern interpreters, before I presumed to form an abstract of the civil law. My skill was improved by practice, my diligence perhaps was quickened by the loss of office; and, excepting the last chapter, I had finished the fourth volume before I sought a retreat on the banks of the Lemman lake.

From my early acquaintance with Lausanne, I had always cherished a secret wish that the school of my youth might become the retreat of my declining age. A moderate fortune would secure the blessings of ease, leisure, and independence; the country, the people, the manners, the language, were congenial to my taste; and I might indulge the hope of passing some years in the domestic society of a friend. After traveling with several

English, Mr. Deyverdun was now settled at home, in a pleasant habitation, the gift of his deceased aunt; we had long been separated, we had long been silent; yet in my first letter I exposed, with the most perfect confidence, my situation, my sentiments, and my designs. His immediate answer was a warm and joyful acceptance: the picture of our future life provoked my impatience; and the terms of arrangement were short and simple, as he possessed the property, and I undertook the expense of our common house. Before I could break my English chain, it was incumbent on me to struggle with the feelings of my heart, the indolence of my temper, and the opinion of the world, which unanimously condemned this voluntary banishment. In the disposal of my effects, the library, a sacred deposit, was alone excepted. As my postchaise moved over Westminster Bridge, I bade a long farewell to the "fumum et opes strepitumque Romae." My journey by the direct road through France was not attended with any accident, and I arrived at Lausanne nearly twenty years after my second departure. Within less than three months the coalition struck on some hidden rocks; had I remained on board I should have perished in the general shipwreck.

Since my establishment at Lausanne more than seven years have elapsed; and if every day has not been equally soft and serene, not a day, not a moment, has occurred in which I have repented of my choice. During my absence, a long portion of human life, many changes had happened: my elder acquaintance had left the stage; virgins were ripened into matrons, and children were grown to the age of manhood. But the same manners were transmitted from one generation to another; my friend alone was an inestimable treasure; my name was not totally forgotten, and all were ambitious to wel-

come the arrival of a stranger and the return of a fellow citizen. The first winter was given to a general embrace, without any nice discrimination of persons and characters. After a more regular settlement, a more accurate survey, I discovered three solid and permanent benefits of my new situation.

My personal freedom had been somewhat impaired by the House of Commons and the Board of Trade; but I was now delivered from the chain of duty and dependence, from the hopes and fears of political adventure; my sober mind was no longer intoxicated by the fumes of party, and I rejoiced in my escape, as often as I read of the midnight debates which preceded the dissolution of Parliament.

My English economy had been that of a solitary bachelor who might afford some occasional dinners. In Switzerland I enjoyed at every meal, at every hour, the free and pleasant conversation of the friend of my youth; and my daily table was always provided for the reception of one or two extraordinary guests. Our importance in society is less a positive than a relative weight: in London I was lost in the crowd; I ranked with the first families of Lausanne, and my style of prudent expense enabled me to maintain a fair balance of reciprocal civilities.

Instead of a small house between a street and a stable-yard, I began to occupy a spacious and convenient mansion, connected on the north side with the city, and open on the south to a beautiful and boundless horizon. A garden of four acres had been laid out by the taste of Mr. Deyverdun; from the garden a rich scenery of meadow and vineyards descends to the Lemane lake, and the prospect far beyond the lake is crowned by the stupendous mountains of Savoy. My books and my acquaintance had been first united in London; but this happy position

of my library in town and country was finally reserved for Lausanne. Possessed of every comfort in this triple alliance, I could not be tempted to change my habitation with the changes of the seasons.

My transmigration from London to Lausanne could not be effected without interrupting the course of my historical labors. The hurry of my departure, the joy of my arrival, the delay of my tools, suspended their progress; and a full twelvemonth was lost before I could resume the thread of regular and daily industry. A number of books most requisite and least common had been previously selected; the academical library of Lausanne, which I could use as my own, contained at least the fathers and councils; and I have derived some occasional succor from the public collections of Berne and Geneva. The fourth volume was soon terminated by an abstract of the controversies of the Incarnation, which the learned Dr. Prideaux was apprehensive of exposing to profane eyes.

It had been the original design of the learned Dean Prideaux to write the history of the ruin of the Eastern church. In this work it would have been necessary, not only to unravel all those controversies which the Christians made about the hypostatical union, but also to unfold all the niceties and subtle notions which each sect entertained concerning it. The pious historian was apprehensive of exposing that incomprehensible mystery to the cavils and objections of unbelievers; and he durst not, "seeing the nature of this book, venture it abroad in so wanton and lewd an age."

In the fifth and sixth volumes the revolutions of the Empire and the world are most rapid, various, and instructive; and the Greek or Roman historians are checked by the hostile narratives of the barbarians of the East and the West.

It was not till after many designs, and many trials, that I preferred, as I still prefer, the method of grouping my picture by nations; and the seeming neglect of chronological order is surely compensated by the superior merits of interest and perspicuity. The style of the first volume is, in my opinion, somewhat crude and elaborate; in the second and third it is ripened into ease, correctness, and numbers; but in the three last I may have been seduced by the facility of my pen, and the constant habit of speaking one language and writing another may have infused some mixture of Gallic idioms. Happily for my eyes, I have always closed my studies with the day, and commonly with the morning; and a long but temperate labor has been accomplished without fatiguing either the mind or body; but when I computed the remainder of my time and my task, it was apparent that, according to the season of publication, the delay of a month would be productive of that of a year. I was now straining for the goal, and in the last winter many evenings were borrowed from the social pleasures of Lausanne. I could now wish that a pause, an interval, had been allowed for a serious revisal.

I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride

was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.

I will add two facts which have seldom occurred in the composition of six, or at least of five, quartos. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press. Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes excepting those of the author and the printer: the faults and the merits are exclusively my own.

When I contemplate the common lot of mortality, I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life. The far greater part of the globe is overspread with barbarism or slavery: in the civilized world the most numerous class is condemned to ignorance and poverty and the double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honorable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions. The general probability is about three to one, that a new-born infant will not live to complete his fiftieth year. I have now passed that age, and may fairly estimate the present value of my existence in the threefold division of mind, body, and estate.

The first and indispensable requisite of happiness is a clear conscience, unsullied by the reproach or remembrance of an unworthy action: —

Vic murus ahenus est nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.

I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity: some mischievous appetites and habits have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigor from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual

source of independent and rational pleasure; and I am not sensible of any decay of the mental faculties. The original soil has been highly improved by cultivation; but it may be questioned whether some flowers of fancy, some grateful errors, have not been eradicated with the weeds of prejudice.

Since I have escaped from the long perils of my childhood, the serious advice of a physician has seldom been requisite. "The madness of superfluous health" I have never known, but my tender constitution has been fortified by time, and the inestimable gift of the sound and peaceful slumbers of infancy may be imputed both to the mind and body.

I have already described the merits of my society and situation; but these enjoyments would be tasteless or bitter, if their possession were not assured by an annual and adequate supply. According to the scale of Switzerland, I am a rich man; and I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expense, and my expense is equal to my wishes. My friend Lord Sheffield has kindly relieved me from the cares to which my taste and temper are most adverse. Shall I add, that since the failure of my first wishes I have never entertained any serious thoughts of a matrimonial connection.

I am disgusted with the affectation of men of letters, who complain that they have renounced a substance for a shadow, and that their fame (which sometimes is no insupportable weight) affords a poor compensation for envy, censure, and persecution. My own experience, at least, has taught me a very different lesson; twenty happy years have been animated by the labor of my History, and its success has given me a name, a rank, a character, in the world, to which I should not otherwise have been entitled.

HAWTHORNE'S EARLY STRUGGLES¹

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE



HE author of "Twice-Told Tales" has a claim to one distinction, which, as none of his literary brethren will care about disputing it with him, he need not be afraid to mention. He was, for a good many years, the obscurest man of letters in America.

These stories were published in magazines and annuals, extending over a period of ten or twelve years, and comprising the whole of the writer's young manhood, without making (so far as he has ever been aware) the slightest impression on the public. One or two among them, the "Rill from the Town Pump," in perhaps a greater degree than any other, had a pretty wide newspaper circulation; as for the rest, he had no ground for supposing that, on their first appearance, they met with the good or evil fortune to be read by anybody.

Throughout the time above specified, he had no incitement to literary effort in a reasonable prospect of reputation or profit, nothing but the pleasure itself of composition — an enjoyment not at all amiss in its way, and perhaps essential to the merit of the work in hand, but which, in the long run, will hardly keep the chill out of a writer's heart, or the numbness out of his fingers. To this total lack of sympathy, at the age when his mind would naturally have been most effervescent, the public owe it (and it is certainly an effect not to be regretted on either part) that the author can show nothing for the thought and

¹ By courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Company

industry of that portion of his life, save the forty sketches, or thereabouts, included in these volumes.

Much more, indeed, he wrote; and some very small part of it might yet be rummaged out (but it would not be worth the trouble) among the dingy pages of fifteen- or twenty-year-old periodicals, or within the shabby morocco covers of faded Souvenirs. The remainder of the works alluded to had a very brief existence, but, on the score of brilliancy, enjoyed a fate vastly superior to that of their brotherhood, which succeeded in getting through the press. In a word, the author burned them without mercy or remorse, and, moreover, without any subsequent regret, and had more than one occasion to marvel that such very dull stuff, as he knew his condemned manuscripts to be, should yet have possessed inflammability enough to set the chimney on fire!

After a long while the first collected volume of the "Tales" was published. By this time, if the author had ever been greatly tormented by literary ambition (which he does not remember or believe to have been the case), it must have perished, beyond resuscitation, in the dearth of nutriment. This was fortunate; for the success of the volume was not such as would have gratified a craving desire for notoriety. A moderate edition was "got rid of" (to use the publisher's very significant phrase) within a reasonable time, but apparently without rendering the writer or his productions much more generally known than before. The great bulk of the reading public probably ignored the book altogether. A few persons read it, and liked it better than it deserved. At an interval of three or four years, the second volume was published, and encountered much the same sort of kindly, but calm, and very limited reception. The circulation of the two

volumes was chiefly confined to New England; nor was it until long after this period, if it even yet be the case, that the author could regard himself as addressing the American public, or, indeed, any public at all. He was merely writing to his known or unknown friends.

As he glances over these long-forgotten pages, and considers his way of life while composing them, the author can very clearly discern why all this was so. After so many sober years, he would have reason to be ashamed if he could not criticize his own work as fairly as another man's; and, though it is little his business, and perhaps still less his interest, he can hardly resist a temptation to achieve something of the sort. If writers were allowed to do so, and would perform the task with perfect sincerity and unreserve their opinions of their own productions would often be more valuable and instructive than the works themselves.

At all events, there can be no harm in the author's remarking that he rather wonders how the "Twice-Told Tales" should have gained what vogue they did than that it was so little and so gradual. They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade, — the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion there is sentiment; and, even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver. Whether from lack of power, or an unconquerable reserve, the author's touches have often an effect of tameness; the merriest man can hardly contrive to laugh at his broadest humor; the tenderest woman, one would suppose, will hardly shed warm tears at his deepest pathos. The book, if you

would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown, twilight atmosphere in which it was written; if opened in the sunshine, it is apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages.

With the foregoing characteristics, proper to the production of a person in retirement (which happened to be the author's category at the time), the book is devoid of others that we should quite as naturally look for. The sketches are not, it is hardly necessary to say, profound; but it is rather more remarkable that they so seldom, if ever, show any design on the writer's part to make them so. They have none of the abstruseness of idea, or obscurity of expression, which mark the written communications of a solitary mind with itself. They never need translation. It is, in fact, the style of a man of society. Every sentence, so far as it embodies thought or sensibility, may be understood and felt by anybody who will give himself the trouble to read it, and will take up the book in a proper mood.

This statement of apparently opposite peculiarities leads us to a perception of what the sketches truly are. They are not the talk of a secluded man with his own mind and heart (had it been so, they could hardly have failed to be more deeply and permanently valuable), but his attempts, and very imperfectly successful ones, to open an intercourse with the world.

The author would regret to be understood as speaking sourly or querulously of the slight mark made by his earlier literary efforts on the public at large. It is so far the contrary, that he has been moved to write this preface chiefly as affording him an opportunity to express how much enjoyment he has owed to these volumes, both before and since their publication. They are the memorials of very tranquil and not unhappy

years. They failed, it is true, — nor could it have been otherwise, — in winning an extensive popularity. Occasionally, however, when he deemed them entirely forgotten, a paragraph or an article, from a native or foreign critic, would gratify his instincts of authorship with unexpected praise, — too generous praise, indeed, and too little alloyed with censure, which, therefore, he learned the better to inflict upon himself. And, by the by, it is a very suspicious symptom of a deficiency of their popular element in a book when it calls forth no harsh criticism. This has been particularly the fortune of the “Twice-Told Tales.” They made no enemies, and were so little known and talked about that those who read, and chanced to like them, were apt to conceive the sort of kindness for the book which a person naturally feels for a discovery of his own.

This kindly feeling (in some cases, at least) extended to the author, who, on the internal evidence of his sketches, came to be regarded as a mild, shy, gentle, melancholic, exceedingly sensitive, and not very forcible man, hiding his blushes under an assumed name, the quaintness of which was supposed, somehow or other, to symbolize his personal and literary traits. He is by no means certain that some of his subsequent productions have not been influenced and modified by a natural desire to fill up so amiable an outline, and to act in consonance with the character assigned to him; nor, even now, could he forfeit it without a few tears of tender sensibility.

To conclude, however: these volumes have opened the way to most agreeable associations, and to the formation of imperishable friendships; and there are many golden threads interwoven with his present happiness, which he can follow up more or less directly, until he finds their commencement here; so that his pleasant pathway among

realities seems to proceed out of the Dreamland of his youth, and to be bordered with just enough of its shadowy foliage to shelter him from the heat of the day. He is therefore satisfied with what the "Twice-Told Tales" have done for him, and feels it to be far better than fame.

EXTRACTS FROM
RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S JOURNAL¹

ROXBURY, January 4, 1825.



HAVE closed my school. I have begun a new year. I have begun my studies, and this day a moment of indolence engendered in me phantasms and feelings that struggled to find vent in rhyme. I thought of the passage of my years, of their even and eventless tenor, and of the crisis whic his but a little way before, when a month will determine the dark or bright dye they must assume forever.

I turn now to my lamp and my tomes. I have nothing to do with society. My unpleasing boyhood is past, my youth wanes into the age of man, and what are the unsuppressed glee, the cheering games, the golden hair and shining eyes of youth unto me? I withdraw myself from their spell. A solemn voice commands me to retire.

And if in those scenes my blood and brow have been cold, if my tongue has stammered where fashion and gayety were voluble, and I have had no grace amid the influences of Beauty and the festivities of Grandeur, I shall not hastily conclude my soul ignobly born and its horoscope fully cast. I will not yet believe that because it has lain so tranquil, great argument could not make it stir. I will not believe because I can not unite dignity, as many can, to folly, that I am not born to fill the eye of great expectation, to speak when the people listen, nor to cast my mite into the great treasury of morals and intellect. I will not quite despair, nor quench my flambeau in the dust of "Easy live and quiet die."

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These men to whom the muse has vouchsafed her inspirations, fail, when they fail, by their own fault. They have an instrument in their hands that discourses music by which the multitude can not choose but be moved. Yet the player has sometimes so many freaks, or such indolence, as to waste his life. If you have found any defect in your sympathies that puts a bar between you and others, go and study to find those views and feelings in which you come nearest to other men. Go and school your pride and thaw your icy benevolence, and nurse somewhere in your soul a spark of pure and heroic enthusiasm.

Habit is the succor God sends in aid of Perseverance, that is, he decrees that what you have done laboriously you shall do easily. The great majority of men are bundles of beginnings. . . . Some very unseasonable circumstances occurred and the good purpose was postponed. Who is there here who does not remember his defeats; who that does not own himself the cause? The world is full of slippery, imbecile, undetermined persons, who carry a cowardice in their bosoms that invites attack. Here and there is a Hercules who persists in his purposes. . . . He can not fail. If all the universe oppose he can not fail. For the stake is nothing; the skill of his game is all. The soul he has made unconquerable, and so, at death, it bursts into eternity, like a God to win worlds. One of the reasons why Perseverance hath such potency is because it gains by littles, and life is made up of littles, and happiness.

Everything has its price. Little goods are lightly gained, but the rich sweets of things are in the ribs of the mountain, and months and years must dig for them. For example, a jest or a glass of wine a man can procure

without much pains to relieve his trouble for a moment, but a *habit of patience*, which is the perfect medicine, he can not procure in a moment or a week or a month. It will cost thought and strife and mortification and prayer.

In some of the foreign manufacturing towns steam-power is generated and vended in amounts to suit very different purposes. I conceive every man to be such a shop. His conversation and works in the world do generate a certain amount of power, which he applies here to certain objects, but these objects are arbitrary and they are temporary, will soon be removed, and he will be called on to apply the same habits, i.e., steam-power, to new uses, and very different ones in heaven.

Give your good project a fair trial, a year, two years. It is of small matter if it should prove on the whole inexpedient. It has done *you* good, if it has not mankind; and so has given the state a better citizen for its next occasions.

July 8, 1831.

No man can write well who thinks there is any choice of words for him. The laws of composition are as strict as those of sculpture and architecture. There is always one line that ought to be drawn, or one proportion that should be kept, and every other line or proportion is wrong, and so far wrong as it deviates from this. So in writing, there is always a right word, and every other than that is wrong. There is no beauty in words except in their collocation. The effect of a fanciful word misplaced, is like that of a horn of exquisite polish growing on a human head.

To the same purpose I find at this date in "Guesses at Truth," — "In good prose, (says Schlegel) every word should be underlined:" "no italics in Plato." In good writing, every word means something. In good writing, words become one with things. I take up a poem; if I

find that there is not a single line there, no word but expresses something that is true for me as well as for him, — it is adamant. Its reputation will be slow, but sure from every caprice of taste. No critic can hurt it, he will only hurt himself by tilting against it. This is the confidence we feel concerning Shakespeare. We know, Charles says, "that his record is true." And this is the ordeal which the new aspirant Wordsworth must undergo. He has writ lines that are like outward nature, so fresh, so simple, so durable; but whether all or half his texture is as firm I doubt, though last evening I read with high delight his Sonnets to Liberty.

July 10.

Old English writers are the standards, not because they are old, but simply because they wrote well. They deviated every day from other people, but never from truth, and so we follow them. If we write as well, we may deviate from them and our deviations shall be classical.

January 11, 1832.

People sometimes wonder that persons wholly uneducated to write, yet eminent in some other ability, should be able to use language with so much purity and force. But it is not wonderful. The manner of using language is surely the most decisive test of intellectual power, and he who has intellectual force of any kind will be sure to show it there. For that is the first and simplest vehicle of mind, is of all things next to the mind, and the vigorous Saxon that uses it well is of the same block as the vigorous Saxon that formed it, and works after the same manner.

August 18.

To be genuine. Goethe, they say, was wholly so. The difficulty increases with the gifts of the individual. A plow-boy can be, but a minister, an orator, an ingenious thinker how hardly! George Fox was. "What I am in

words," he said, "I am the same in life." Swedenborg was. "My writings will be found," he said, "another self." George Washington was; "the irreproachable Washington." Whoever is genuine, his ambition is exactly proportioned to his powers. The height of the pinnacle determines the breadth of the base.

Would it not be the text of a useful discourse to young men, *that every man must learn in a different way?* How much is lost by imitation! Our best friends may be our worst enemies. A man should learn to detect and foster that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within far more than the luster of [the] whole firmament without. Yet he dismisses without notice his peculiar thought *because* it is peculiar. The time will come when he will postpone all acquired knowledge to this spontaneous wisdom, and will watch for this illumination more than those who watch for the morning. For this is the principle by which the other is to be arranged. This thinking would go to show the significance of self-education; that in reality there is no other; for, all other is naught without this.

A man must teach himself because that which each can do best none but his maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master that could have taught Shakespeare? Where is the master that could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is an unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is just that part he could not borrow. . . . Every man comes at the common results with most conviction in his own way. But he only uses a different vocabulary from yours; it comes to the same thing.

An imitation may be pretty, comical, popular, but it

never can be great. Buonaparte mimicked Themistocles. If anybody will tell me who it is the great man imitates in the original crisis when he performs a great act, — who Muley Molok imitated, or Falkland, or Scipio, or Aristides, or Phocion, or Fox, or More, or Alfred, or Lafayette, I will tell him who else can teach him than himself. A man has got to learn that he must embrace the truth, or shall never know it; that to be thankful for a little is the way to get more. He is to work himself clear of how much nonsense and mischief. He is to learn, like the Persian, to speak the truth.

Do you say that a mechanic must attend to language and composition? You are looking the wrong way and seeking the source in the river. Strong thinking makes strong language; correct thinking, correct speech.

GLIMPSES OF CHARLES LAMB

FROM HIS LETTERS

To COLERIDGE

ARE we *never* to meet again? How differently I am circumstanced now! I have never met with anyone — never shall meet with anyone — who could or can compensate me for the loss of your society. I have no one to talk all these matters about to; I lack friends; I lack books to supply their absence. But these complaints ill become me.

I get home at night o'rwearied, quite faint, and then to cards with my father, who will not let me enjoy a meal in peace; but I must conform to my situation, and I hope I am, for the most part, not unthankful.

I am got home at last, and, after repeated games at cribbage, have got my father's leave to write awhile; with difficulty got it, for when I expostulated about playing any more, he very aptly replied, "If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all." The argument was unanswerable, and I set to afresh.

Your company was one "cordial in this melancholy vale:" the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavorable comparison with the uninteresting converse I always and *only* can partake in.

Not a soul loves Bowles here; scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testa-

ment: they talk a language I understand not. I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter, and with the dead in their books. My sister, indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly, our reading and knowledge from the self-same sources; our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow: never having kept separate company, or any "company" "together;" never having read separate books, and few books *together* — what knowledge have we to convey to each other? In our little range of duties and connections, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion, rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us. You talk very wisely; and be not sparing of *your advice*. Continue to remember us, and to show us you do remember us: we will take as lively an interest in what concerns you and yours. All I can add to your happiness will be sympathy: you can add to mine *more*: you can teach me wisdom.

I am indeed an unreasonable correspondent; but I was unwilling to let my last night's letter go off without this qualifier: you will perceive by this my mind is easier, and you will rejoice. I do not expect or wish you to write till you are moved; and, of course, shall not, till you announce to me that event, think of writing myself. Love to Mrs. Coleridge and David Hartley, and my kind remembrance to Lloyd, if he is with you.

TO WORDSWORTH

I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is (and why should I not confess it?), I am not plethorically abounding in cash at this present. Merit, God knows, is

very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself. My motto is "contented with little, yet wishing for more." Now, the books you wish for would require some pounds, which, I am sorry to say, I have not by me; so I will say at once, if you will give me a draft upon your own banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of it to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely; for it is a scurvy thing to cry, "Give me the money first," and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries; but the debt remains as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it!

The books which you want, I calculate at about eight pounds. Ben Jonson is a guinea book. Beaumont and Fletcher, in folio, the right folio, not now to be met with; the octavos are about three pounds. As to any other dramatists, I do not know where to find them, except what are in Dodsley's "Old Plays," which are about three pounds also. Massinger I never saw but at one shop, and it is now gone; but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve, and the rest of King Charles's moralists, are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will inquire after; but I fear Spenser's is not to be had apart from his poems; I never saw it.

But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old poets and dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for I suppose you do not include the twenty pound edition of "Hamlet," single play, which Kemble has. Marlowe's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one

and the other two of his plays: but John Ford is the man after Shakespeare. Let me know your will and pleasure soon, for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self, is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency, without the penalty usually annexed.

I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, wagons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavement, the print-shops, the old book-stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes — London itself a pantomime and a masquerade — all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no

passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books) for groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about (like a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge), wherever I have moved, old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school, — these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of anything. Your sun and moon and skies and hills and lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind; and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the “Beauties of Nature,” as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city.

Give my kindest love, and my sister's, to Dorothy and yourself; and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite. Thank you for liking my play.

Mary and I felt quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St. Giles's. We wish'd we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowledging for the share we had enjoyed of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of

too-much-cordiality. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an after-thought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are, every day in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love.

Robinson is on the circuit. Our panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning, almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, etc. There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*. Be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. Books are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance, methinks, is too confined and strait-laced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend. Why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and through all creation.

Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me. Not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him anything in return, would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I knew he meant a freewill offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome.

You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which I pray God may prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department;

which, if it take place, will produce me more time, i.e. my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation, which will knock at my nerves another way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at four o'clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had.

As you say, how a man can fill three volumes up with an essay on the drama is wonderful; I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject.

Did you ever read Charron "On Wisdom"? or Patrick's "Pilgrim"? If neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl "On Job," six folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing warehousekeepers' accounts and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what lord of liberty I shall be! I shall dance and skip, and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow, and throw 'em at rich men's night-caps, and talk blank verse, hoity-toity, and sing — "A clerk I was in London gay," "Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban," like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that alley. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck.

Good-by to you all.

TO THOMAS MANNING.

I did n't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 't was just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, and when you are down the ladder you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what

it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead.

Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little mandarin for our mantel-piece, as a companion to the child I am going to purchase at the Museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakespeare's plays, to be made into children's tales. Six are already done by her; to wit, "The Tempest," "The Winter's Tale," "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Much Ado about Nothing," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and "Cymbeline." "The Merchant of Venice" is in forwardness. I have done "Othello" and "Macbeth," and mean to do all the tragedies.

I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money,—it is to bring in sixty guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous pagan anthropophagi.

Quam homo homini praestat! but then, perhaps, you'll get murdered, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious.

Oh Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings which you have made so pleasant are gone perhaps for ever. Four years, you talk of, may be ten, and you may come back and find such alter-

ations! Some circumstances may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I daresay all this is Hum, and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

Good-by.

When I last wrote to you I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 2, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them; but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, etc., rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humor. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library.

My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent — cold with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen.

Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life; I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb.

I have published a little book for children on titles of honor; and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honor — As at first, 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb, of Stamford (where my family came from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice); 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country; otherwise, I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent; higher than which is nothing but the Lamb of God upon earth.

Puns I have not made many (nor punch much) since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral; upon which I remarked, that they must be a very sharp set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. I am stuffed out so

with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia) that I can't jog on. It is New Year here; that is, it was New Year half a year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space; and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them.

TO MISS HUTCHINSON

I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary has been ill, and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favorable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the East India House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time, we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death.

I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise. By God's blessing, in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theaters, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable; we are strong for

the time as rocks; — the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs. Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla! I feel I hardly feel enough for him; my own calamities press about me, and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can and all the kindness I can, towards you all. God bless you!

HOW I CAME TO WRITE FICTION¹

By GEORGE ELIOT



SEPTEMBER, 1856, made a new era in my life, for it was then I began to write fiction. It had always been a vague dream of mine that some time or other I might write a novel; and my shadowy conception of what the novel was to be, varied, of course, from one epoch of my life to another. But I never went further towards the actual writing of the novel than an introductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village and the life of the neighboring farm-houses; and as the years passed on I lost any hope that I should ever be able to write a novel, just as I desponded about everything else in my future life.

I always thought I was deficient in dramatic power, both of construction and dialogue, but I felt I should be at my ease in the descriptive parts of a novel. My "introductory chapter" was pure description, though there were good materials in it for dramatic presentation. It happened to be among the papers I had with me in Germany, and one evening at Berlin something led me to read it to George. He was struck with it as a bit of concrete description, and it suggested to him the possibility of my being able to write a novel, though he distrusted — indeed, disbelieved in — my possession of any dramatic power. Still, he began to think that I might as well try some time what I could do in fiction, and by and by, when we came back to England, and I had greater

¹ From "George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals" by J. W. Cross.

success than he ever expected in other kinds of writing, his impression that it was worth while to see how far my mental power would go towards the production of a novel, was strengthened. He began to say very positively, "You must try and write a story," and when we were at Tenby he urged me to begin at once. I deferred it, however, after my usual fashion with work that does not present itself as an absolute duty.

But one morning, as I was thinking what should be the subject of my first story, my thoughts merged themselves into a dreamy doze, and I imagined myself writing a story, of which the title was "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton." I was soon wide awake again and told George. He said, "Oh, what a capital title!" and from that time I had settled in my mind that this should be my first story. George used to say, "It may be a failure — it may be that you are unable to write fiction. Or, perhaps, it may be just good enough to warrant your trying again." Again, "You may write a *chef d'œuvre* at once — there's no telling." But his prevalent impression was, that though I could hardly write a poor novel, my effort would want the highest quality of fiction — dramatic presentation. He used to say, "You have wit, description, and philosophy — those go a good way toward the production of a novel. It is worth while for you to try the experiment."

We determined that if my story turned out good enough we would send it to Blackwood; but George thought the more probable result was that I should have to lay it aside and try again.

But when we returned to Richmond I had to write my article on "Silly Novels," and my review on Contemporary Literature for the "Westminster," so that I did not begin my story till September 22.

After I had begun it, as we were walking in the park, I mentioned to George that I had thought of a plan of writing a series of stories, containing sketches drawn from my own observation of the clergy, and calling them "Scenes from Clerical Life," opening with "Amos Barton." He at once accepted the notion as a good one — fresh and striking; and about a week afterwards, when I read him the first part of "Amos," he had no longer any doubt about my ability to carry out the plan. The scene at Cross Farm, he said, satisfied him that I had the very element he had been doubtful about — it was clear I could write good dialogue. There still remained the question whether I could command any pathos; and that was to be decided by the mode in which I treated Milly's death.

One night George went to town on purpose to leave me a quiet evening for writing it. I wrote the chapter from the news brought by the shepherd to Mrs. Hackit, to the moment when Amos is dragged from the bedside, and I read it to George when he came home. We both cried over it, and then he came up to me and kissed me, saying, "I think your pathos is better than your fun."

| November 16. — Wrote the last word of "Adam Bede" and sent it to Mr. Langford. *Jubilate*.

The germ of "Adam Bede" was an anecdote told me by my Methodist Aunt Samuel (the wife of my father's younger brother) — an anecdote from her own experience. We were sitting together one afternoon during her visit to me at Griff, probably in 1839 or 1840, when it occurred to her to tell me how she had visited a condemned criminal — a very ignorant girl, who had murdered her child and refused to confess; how she had stayed with her praying through the night, and how the poor creature at last broke out into tears and confessed her crime.

My aunt afterwards went with her in the cart to the place of execution; and she described to me the great respect with which this ministry of hers was regarded by the official people about the jail. The story, told by my aunt with great feeling, affected me deeply, and I never lost the impression of that afternoon and our talk together; but I believe I never mentioned it, through all the intervening years, till something prompted me to tell it to George in December, 1856, when I had begun to write the "Scenes of Clerical Life."

He remarked that the scene in the prison would make a fine element in a story; and I afterwards began to think of blending this and some other recollections of my aunt in one story, with some points in my father's early life and character. The problem of construction that remained was to make the unhappy girl one of the chief *dramatis personae*, and connect her with the hero. At first I thought of making the story one of the series of "Scenes," but afterwards, when several motives had induced me to close these with "Janet's Repentance," I determined on making what we always called in our conversation "My Aunt's Story," the subject of a long novel, which I accordingly began to write on the 22d October, 1857.

The character of Dinah grew out of my recollections of my aunt, but Dinah is not at all like my aunt, who was a very small, black-eyed woman, and (as I was told, for I never heard her preach) very vehement in her style of preaching. She had left off preaching when I knew her, being probably sixty years old, and in delicate health; and she had become, as my father told me, much more gentle and subdued than she had been in the days of her active ministry and bodily strength, when she could not rest without exhorting and remonstrating in season and out of season.

I was very fond of her, and enjoyed the few weeks of her stay with me greatly. She was loving and kind to me, and I could talk to her about my inward life, which was closely shut up from those usually round me. I saw her only twice again, for much shorter periods — once at her own home at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, and once at my father's last residence, Foleshill.

The character of Adam and one or two incidents connected with him were suggested by my father's early life; but Adam is not my father any more than Dinah is my aunt. Indeed, there is not a single portrait in Adam Bede — only the suggestions of experience wrought up into new combinations. When I began to write it, the only elements I had determined on, besides the character of Dinah, were the character of Adam, his relation to Arthur Donnithorne, and their mutual relations to Hetty — i.e., to the girl who commits child-murder — the scene in the prison being, of course, the climax towards which I worked.

Everything else grew out of the characters and their mutual relations. Dinah's ultimate relation to Adam was suggested by George, when I had read to him the first part of the first volume; he was so delighted with the presentation of Dinah, and so convinced that the reader's interest would center in her, that he wanted her to be the principal figure at the last. I accepted the idea at once, and from the end of the third chapter worked with it constantly in view.

The first volume was written at Richmond, and given to Blackwood in March. He expressed great admiration of its freshness and vividness, but seemed to hesitate about putting it in the Magazine, which was the form of publication he as well as myself had previously contemplated. He still wished to have it for the Magazine, but

desired to know the course of the story. At present he saw nothing to prevent its reception in "Maga," but he would like to see more. I am uncertain whether his doubts rested solely on Hetty's relation to Arthur, or whether they were also directed towards the treatment of Methodism by the Church. I refused to tell my story beforehand, on the ground that I would not have it judged apart from my treatment, which alone determines the moral quality of art; and ultimately I proposed that the notion of publication in "Maga" should be given up, and that the novel should be published in three volumes at Christmas, if possible. He assented.

I began the second volume in the second week of my stay at Munich, about the middle of April. While we were at Munich George expressed his fear that Adam's part was too passive throughout the drama, and that it was more important for him to be brought into more direct collision with Arthur. This doubt haunted me, and out of it grew the scene in the wood between Arthur and Adam; the fight came to me as a necessity one night at the Munich opera, when I was listening to "William Tell."

Work was slow and interrupted at Munich, and when we left I had only written to the beginning of the dance on the Birthday Feast, but at Dresden I wrote uninterruptedly and with great enjoyment in the long, quiet mornings, and there I nearly finished the second volume—all, I think, but the last chapter, which I wrote here in the old room at Richmond in the first week of September, and then sent the manuscript off to Blackwood.

The opening of the third volume — Hetty's journey — was, I think, written more rapidly than the rest of the book, and was left without the slightest alteration of the first draught. Throughout the book I have altered

little; and the only cases I think in which George suggested more than a verbal alteration, when I read the manuscript aloud to him, were the first scene at the Farm, and the scene in the wood between Arthur and Adam, both of which he recommended me to "space out" a little, which I did.

When, on October 29, I had written to the end of the love scene at the Farm between Adam and Dinah, I sent the manuscript to Blackwood, since the remainder of the third volume could not affect the judgment passed on what had gone before. He wrote back in warm admiration, and offered me, on the part of the firm, eight hundred pounds for four years' copyright. I accepted the offer. The last words of the third volume were written and despatched on their way to Edinburgh, November the 16th, and now on the last day of the same month I have written this slight history of my book.

I love it very much, and am deeply thankful to have written it, whatever the public may say to it — a result which is still in darkness, for I have at present had only four sheets of the proof. The book would have been published at Christmas, or rather early in December, but that Bulwer's "What Will He Do with It?" was to be published at that time, and it was thought that this novel might interfere with mine.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT MYSELF¹

BY ALFRED TENNYSON

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
SURREY, Nov. 21st, 1882.



EAR SIR,

I thank you for your able and thoughtful essay on "The Princess." You have seen, amongst other things, that if women ever were to play such freaks the burlesque and the tragic might go hand-in-hand.

I may tell you that the songs were not an afterthought. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem — again, I thought, the poem will explain itself, but the public did not see that the child, as you say, was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness and inserted them. You would be still more certain that the child was the true heroine if, instead of the first song as it now stands,

As thro' the land at eve we went,

I had printed the first song which I wrote,

The losing of the child.'

The child is sitting on the bank of a river, and playing with flowers — a flood comes down — a dam has been broken thro' — the child is borne down by the flood — the whole village distracted — after a time the flood has subsided — the child is thrown safe and sound again upon

¹ Letter to S. E. Dawson in response to his publication "A Study of 'The Princess.'"

the bank and all the women are in raptures. I quite forget the words of the ballad but I think I may have it somewhere.

Your explanatory notes are very much to the purpose and I do not object to your finding parallelisms. They must always occur. A man (a Chinese scholar) some time ago wrote to me saying that in an unknown, untranslated Chinese poem there were two whole lines of mine, almost word for word. Why not? Are not human eyes all over the world looking at the same objects, and must there not consequently be coincidences of thought and impressions and expressions? It is scarcely possible for anyone to say or write anything in this late time of the world to which, in the rest of the literature of the world, a parallel could not somewhere be found. But when you say that this passage or that was suggested by Wordsworth or Shelley or another, I demur, and more, I wholly disagree. There was a period in my life when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landscape etc. in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, e.g.:

"A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight."

Suggestion:

The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England, tho' now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapor, and the moon was behind it.

A great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps.

Suggestion:

A coming storm seen from the top of Snowdon.
In the "Idylls of the King."

with all

Its stormy crests that smote against the skies.

Suggestion:

A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea.

as the water-lily starts and slides.

Suggestion:

Waterlilies in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks — quite as *true* as Wordsworth's simile and more in detail.

A wild wind shook—
follow, follow, thou shalt win.

Suggestion:

I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise and —

Shake the songs, the whispers and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.

The wind, I believe, was a west wind but, because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south and, naturally, the wind said "follow." I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley's lines are not familiar to me, tho', of course, if they occur in the "Prometheus," I must have read them.

I could multiply instances, but I will not bore you, and far indeed am I from asserting that books, as well as

nature, are not, and ought not to be, suggestive to the poet. I am sure that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great masters as Vergil or Milton where they adopt the creation of a by-gone poet, and re-clothe it, more or less, according to their own fancy. But there is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, bookworms, index hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that *he*, too, has no imagination, but is forever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say "Ring the bells," without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sydney — or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean "roars," without finding out the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarized it. (Fact!)

I have known an old fishwife, who had lost two sons at sea, to clench her fist at the advancing tide on a stormy day and cry out — "Ay! roar do! how I hates to see thee show thy white teeth!" Now if I had adopted her exclamation and put it into the mouth of some old woman in one of my poems, I daresay the critics would have thought it original enough, but would most likely have advised me to go to Nature for my old women and not to my own imagination; and indeed it is a strong figure.

Here is another little anecdote about suggestion. When I was about twenty or twenty-one I went on a tour to the Pyrenees. Lying among these mountains before a waterfall that comes down one thousand or twelve hundred feet I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words —

Slow dropping veils of thinnest lawn.


When I printed this a critic informed me that "lawn" was the material used in theaters to imitate a waterfall and graciously added "Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theater but to Nature herself for suggestions."

I think it is a moot point whether — if I had known how that effect was produced on the stage — I should have ventured to publish the line.

I find that I have written, quite contrary to my custom, a letter, when I had merely intended to thank you for your interesting commentary.

ELIZABETH BARRETT TO ROBERT BROWNING¹

50 WIMPOLE STREET, February 17, 1845.

EAR MR. BROWNING, To begin with the end (which is only characteristic of the perverse like myself), I assure you I read your handwriting as currently as I could read the clearest type from font. If I had practiced the art of reading your letters all my life, I could n't do it better. And then I approve of small manuscript upon principle. Think of what an immense quantity of physical energy must go to the making of those immense sweeping handwritings achieved by some persons. . . . Mr. Landor, for instance, who writes as if he had the sky for a copy-book and dotted his *i*'s in proportion.

People who do such things should wear gauntlets; yes, and have none to wear; or they would n't waste their time so. People who write — by profession — shall I say? — never should do it, or what will become of them when most of their strength retires into their head and heart (as is the case with some of us and may be the case with all) and when they have to write a poem twelve times over, as Mr. Kenyon says I should do if I were virtuous? Not that I do it. Does anybody do it, I wonder? Do *you*, ever? From what you tell me of the trimming of the light, I imagine not. And besides, one may be laborious as a writer, without copying twelve times over. I believe there are people who will tell you in a moment what three

¹ From the letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. Copyright, 1908, by Harper & Brothers.

times six is, without "doing it" on their fingers; and in the same way one may work one's verses in one's head quite as laboriously as on paper — I maintain it.

I consider myself a very patient, laborious writer — though dear Mr. Kenyon laughs me to scorn when I say so. And just see how it could be otherwise. If I were netting a purse I might be thinking of something else and drop my stitches; or even if I were writing verses to please a popular taste, I might be careless in it. But the pursuit of an Ideal acknowledged by the mind, *will* draw and concentrate the powers of the mind — and Art, you know, is a jealous god and demands the whole man — or woman. I can not conceive of a sincere artist who is also a careless one — though one may have a quicker hand than another, in general, — and though all are liable to vicissitudes in the degree of facility — and to entanglements in the machinery, notwithstanding every degree of facility. You may write twenty lines one day — or even three like Euripides in three days — and a hundred lines in one more day — and yet on the hundred, may have been expended as much good work, as on the twenty and the three. And also, as you say, the lamp is trimmed behind the wall — and the act of utterance is the evidence of foregone study still more than it is the occasion to study.

The deep interest with which I read all that you had the kindness to write to me of yourself, you must trust me for, as I find it hard to express it. It is sympathy in one way, and interest every way! And now, see! Although you proved to me with admirable logic that, for reasons which you know and reasons which you don't know, I could not possibly know anything about you; though that is all true — and proven (which is better than true) — I really did understand of you before I was told,

exactly what you told me. Yes, I did indeed. I felt sure that as a poet you fronted the future — and that your chief works, in your own apprehension, were to come. Oh — I take no credit of sagacity for it; as I did not long ago to my sisters and brothers, when I professed to have knowledge of all their friends whom I never saw in my life, by the image coming with the name; and threw them into shouts of laughter by giving out all the blue eyes and black eyes and hazel eyes and noses Roman and Gothic ticketed aright for the Mr. Smiths and Miss Hawkinses — and hit the bull's-eye and the true features of the case, ten times out of twelve.

But *you* are different. *You* are to be made out by the comparative anatomy system. You have thrown out fragments of *os . . . sublime . . .* indicative of soul-mammothism — and you live to develop your nature, — *if* you live. That is easy and plain. You have taken a great range — from those high faint notes of the mystics which are beyond personality . . . to dramatic impersonations, gruff with nature, “gr-r-r, you swine,” and when these are thrown into harmony, as in a manner they are in “Pippa Passes” (which I could find in my heart to covet the authorship of, more than any of your works), the combinations of effect must always be striking and noble — and you must feel yourself drawn on to such combinations more and more. But I do not, you say, know yourself — you. I only know abilities and faculties. Well, then, teach me yourself — you. I will not insist on the knowledge — and, in fact, you have not written the R. B. poem yet — your rays fall obliquely rather than directly straight. I see you only in your moon.

Do tell me all of yourself that you can and will before the R. B. poem comes out. And what is “Luria”? A

poem and not a drama? I mean, a poem not in the dramatic form? Well! I have wondered at you sometimes, not for daring, but for bearing to trust your noble works into the great mill of the "rank, popular" playhouse, to be ground to pieces between the teeth of vulgar actors and actresses. I, for one, would as soon have "my soul among lions." "There is a fascination in it," says Miss Mitford, and I am sure there must be, to account for it. Publics in the mass are bad enough; but to distill the dregs of the public and baptize one's self in that acrid moisture, where can be the temptation? I could swear by Shakespeare, as was once sworn "by those dead at Marathon," that I do not see where. I love the drama too. I look to our old dramatists as to our kings and princes in poetry. I love them through all the deeps of their abominations. But the theater in those days was a better medium between the people and the poet; and the press in those days was a less sufficient medium than now. Still, the poet suffered by the theater even then; and the reasons are very obvious.

How true — how true — is all you say about critics. My convictions follow you in every word. And I delighted to read your views of the poet's right aspect toward criticism — I read them with the most complete appreciation and sympathy. I have sometimes thought that it would be a curious and instructive process, as illustrative of the wisdom and apprehensiveness of critics, if any one would collect the critical soliloquies of every age touching its own literature (as far as such may be extant) and *confer* them with the literary product of the said ages.

Professor Wilson has begun something of the kind apparently, in his initiatory paper of the last "Blackwood" number, on critics, beginning with Dryden — but

he seems to have no design in his notice — it is a mere critique on the critic. And then, he should have begun earlier than Dryden — earlier even than Sir Philip Sydney, who in the noble “Discourse on Poetry,” gives such singular evidence of being stone-critic-blind to the gods who moved around him. As far as I can remember, he saw even Shakespeare but indifferently. Oh, it was in his eyes quite an unillumed age, that period of Elizabeth which *we* see full of suns! and few can see what is close to the eyes though they run their heads against it; the denial of contemporary genius is the rule rather than the exception. No one counts the eagles in the nest, till there is a rush of wings, and lo! they are flown. And here we speak of understanding men, such as the Sydneys and the Drydens. Of the great body of critics you observe rightly, that they are better than might be expected of their badness, only the fact of their *influence* is no less undeniable than the reason why they should not be influential. The brazen kettles will be taken for oracles all the world over. But the influence is for to-day, for this hour — not for to-morrow and the day after — unless indeed, as you say, the poet do himself perpetuate the influence by submitting to it.

Do you know Tennyson? — that is, with a face to face knowledge? I have great admiration for him. In execution, he is exquisite, — and, in music, a most subtle weigher out to the ear of fine airs. That such a poet should submit blindly to the suggestions of his critics (I do not say that suggestions from without may not be accepted with discrimination sometimes, to the benefit of the accepter), blindly and implicitly to the suggestions of his critics, is much as if Babbage were to take my opinion and undo his calculating machine by it.

Napoleon called poetry *science creusé* — which, al-

though he was not scientific in poetry himself, is true enough. But anybody is qualified, according to everybody, for giving opinions upon poetry. It is not so in chemistry and mathematics. Nor is it so, I believe, in whist and the polka. But then these are more serious things.

Yes — and it does delight me to hear of your garden full of roses and soul full of comforts! You have the right to both — you have the key to both. You have written enough to live by, though only beginning to write, as you say of yourself. And this reminds me to remind you that when I talked of coveting most of the authorship of your “Pippa,” I did not mean to call it your finest work (you might reproach me for *that*), but just to express a personal feeling. Do you know what it is to covet your neighbor’s poetry? — not his fame, but his poetry? — I dare say not. You are too generous. And, in fact, beauty is beauty, and, whether it comes by our hand or another’s, blessed be the coming of it! *I*, besides, feel *that*. And yet — and yet, I have been aware of a feeling within me which has spoken two or three times to the effect of a wish, that I had been visited with the vision of “Pippa,” before you — *confiteor tibi* — I confess the baseness of it. The conception is, to my mind, most exquisite and altogether original — and the contrast in the working out of the plan, singularly expressive of various faculty.

Is the poem under your thumb, emerging from it? and in what meter? May I ask such questions?

And does Mr. Carlyle tell you that he has forbidden all “singing” to this perverse and froward generation, which should work and not sing? And have you told Mr. Carlyle that song is work, and also the condition of work? I am a devout sitter at his feet — and it is an effort to me to think him wrong in anything — and once when he

told me to write prose and not verse, I fancied that his opinion was I had mistaken my calling, — a fancy which in infinite kindness and gentleness he stooped immediately to correct. I never shall forget the grace of that kindness — but then! For *him* to have thought ill of *me*, would not have been strange — I often think ill of myself, as God knows. But for Carlyle to think of putting away, even for a season, the poetry of the world, was wonderful and has left me ruffled in my thoughts ever since. I do not know him personally at all. But as his disciple I ventured (by an exceptional motive) to send him my poems, and I heard from him as a consequence. “Dear and noble” he is indeed — and a poet unaware of himself; all but the sense of music. You feel it so — do you not? And the “dear sir” has let him have the “letter of Cromwell,” I hope; and satisfied “the obedient servant.” The curious thing in this world is not the stupidity, but the upper-handism of the stupidity. The geese are in the Capitol, and the Romans in the farmyard — and it seems all quite natural that it should be so, both to geese and Romans!

But there are things you say, which seem to me supernatural, for reasons which I know and for reasons which I don't know. You will let me be grateful to you — will you not? You must, if you will or not. And also — I would not wait for more leave — if I could but see your desk — as I do your death's heads and the spider-webs appertaining; but the soul of Cornelius Agrippa fades from me.

Ever faithfully yours,

ELIZABETH B. BARRETT.

MY EARLIEST LITERARY WORK¹

By ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS



THE first thing which I wrote, marking in any sense the beginning of what authors are accustomed to call their "literary career," — I dislike the phrase and wish we had a better, — was a war story.

As nearly as I can recall the facts, up to this time I had shown no literary tendency whatever. It is true that, during my school days, I did perpetrate three full-grown novels in manuscript. My dearest particular intimate and I shared in this exploit, and read our chapters to each other on Saturday afternoons.

I remember that the title of one of these "books" was "The Shadow of a Lifetime." It was a double title with a heroine to it, but I forget the lady's name, or even the nature of her particular shadow. The only thing that can be said about these three volumes is that their youthful author had the saving sense not to try the Christian temper of a publisher with their perusal.

Yet, in truth, I have never regretted the precious portion of human existence spent in their creation; for I must have written off in that way a certain amount of apprenticeship which does, in some cases, find its way into type, and devastate the endurance of a patient public.

The war story of which I speak was distinctly the beginning of anything like genuine work for me. Mr. Alden tells me that it was published in January, 1864; but I

¹ From "Chapters from a Life." Copyright, 1896, by Houghton Mifflin Company.

think it must have been written a while before that, though not long, for its appearance quickly followed the receipt of the manuscript. The name of the story was "A Sacrifice Consumed." It was a very little story, not covering more than four or five pages in print. I sent it to "Harper's Magazine," without introduction or what young writers are accustomed to call "influence"; it was sent quite privately, without the knowledge of any friend.

It was immediately accepted, and a prompt check for twenty-five dollars accompanied the acceptance. Even my father knew nothing of the venture until I carried the letter and enclosure to him. The pleasure on his expressive face was only equaled by its frank and unqualified astonishment. He read the story when it came out, and, I think, was touched by it, — it was a story of a poor and plain little dressmaker, who lost her lover in the army, — and his genuine emotion gave me a kind of awed elation, which has never been repeated in my experience. Ten hundred thousand unknown voices could not move me to the pride and pleasure which my father's first gentle word of approval gave to a girl who cared much to be loved and little to be praised; and the plaudits of a "career" were the last things in earth or heaven then occupying her mind.

Afterwards, I wrote with a distinct purpose, and, I think, quite steadily. I know that longer stories went, soon and often, to the old magazine, which never sent them back; and to which I am glad to pay the tribute of a gratitude that I have never outgrown. There was nothing of the stuff that heroines and geniuses are made of in a shy and self-distrustful girl, who had no faith in her own capabilities, and, indeed, at that time the smallest possible amount of interest in the subject.

It may be a humiliating fact, but it is the truth, that

had my first story been refused, or even the second or the third, I should have written no more.

For the opinion of important editors, and for the sacredness of market value in literary wares, as well as in professorships or cotton cloth, I had a kind of respect at which I sometimes wonder; for I do not recall that it was ever distinctly taught me. But, assuredly, if nobody had cared for my stories enough to print them, I should have been the last person to differ from the ruling opinion, and should have bought at Warren Draper's old Andover bookstore no more cheap printer's paper on which to inscribe the girlish handwriting (with the pointed letters and the big capitals) which my father, with patient pains, had caused to be taught me by a queer old traveling master with an idea. Professor Phelps, by the way, had an exquisite chirography, which none of his children, to his evident disappointment, inherited.

But the editor of "Harper's" took everything I sent him; so the pointed letters and the large capitals continued to flow towards his desk.

Long after I had achieved whatever success has been given me, this magazine returned me one of my stories — it was the only one in a lifetime. I think the editor then in power called it too tragic, or too something; it came out forthwith in the columns of another magazine that did not agree with him, and was afterwards issued, I think, in some sort of "classic" series of little books.

I was a little sorry, I know, at the time, for I had the most superstitious attachment for the magazine that, when "I was a stranger, took me in"; but it was probably necessary to break the record in this, as in all other forms of human happiness. A manuscript by any chance returned from any other quarter seemed a very inferior affliction.

Other magazines took their turn — the "Atlantic," I

remember — in due course; but I shared the general awe of this magazine at that time prevailing in New England, and, having, possibly, more than my share of personal pride, did not very early venture to intrude my little risk upon that fearful lottery.

The first story of mine which appeared in the "Atlantic" was a fictitious narrative of certain psychical phenomena occurring in Connecticut, and known to me, at first hand, to be authentic. I have yet to learn that the story attracted any attention from anybody more disinterested than those few friends of the sort who, in such cases, are wont to inquire, in tones more freighted with wonder than admiration: "What! Has she got into the '*Atlantic*'?"

The "Century" came in turn, when it came into being. To this delightful magazine I have always been, and always hope to be, a contributor.

I read, with a kind of hopeless envy, histories and legends of people of our craft who "do not write for money." It must be a pleasant experience to be able to cultivate so delicate a class of motives for the privilege of doing one's best to express one's thoughts to people who care for them. Personally, I have yet to breathe the ether of such a transcendent sphere. I am proud to say that I have always been a working woman, and always had to be; though I ought to add that I am sure the proposal that my father's allowance to his daughter should cease, did not come from the father.

When the first little story appeared in "Harper's Magazine," it occurred to me, with a throb of pleasure greater than I supposed then that life could hold, that I could take care of myself, and from that day to this I have done so.

One hesitates a little, even in autobiography, about saying precisely this. But when one remembers the thou-

sands of women who find it too easy to be dependent on too heavily weighted and too generous men, one hesitates no longer to say anything that may help those other thousands of women who stand on their own feet, and their own pluck, to understand how good a thing it is to be there.

Of all the methods of making a living open to educated people to-day, the profession of literature is, probably, the poorest in point of monetary returns. A couple of authors, counted successful as the world and the word go, said once,—

“We have earned less this year than the fisherman in the dory before the door of our summer home.” Perhaps it had been a good year for Jack; possibly a poor one for those other fishers, who spread their brains and hearts — a piteous net — into the seas of life in quest of thought and feeling that the idlers on the banks may take a summer’s fancy to. But the truth remains. A successful teacher, a clever manufacturer, a steady mechanic, may depend upon a better income in this country than the writer whose supposed wealth he envies, and whose books he reads on Sunday afternoons, if he is not too sleepy, or does not prefer his bicycle.

“When we see (as we have actually done) our market-man driving by our old buggy and cheap horse on holidays, with a barouche and span, we enjoy the sight very much; and when I say (for the other occupant of the buggy has a little taste for two horses, which I am so plebeian as not to share, having never been able to understand why one is not enough for anybody), ‘But would you *be* the span-owner — for the span?’ we see the end of the subject, and grow ravenously contented.”

One can not live by bread or magazine stories alone, as the young daughter of toil too soon found out. Like

other writers, I did hack work. Of making Sunday-school books I scarcely found an end. I must have written over a dozen of them; I wince, sometimes, when I see their forgotten dates and titles in encyclopedias; but a better judgment tells me that one should not be ashamed of doing hard work honestly. I was not an artist at Sunday-school literature (there are such), and have often wondered why the religious publishing societies kept me at it so steadily and so long.

There were tales of piety and of mischief, of war and of home, of babies and of army nurses, of tomboys, and of girls who did their mending and obeyed their mothers.

The variety was the only thing I can recall that was commendable about these little books, unless one except a considerable dash of fun.

One of them came back to me; it happened to be the only book I ever wrote that did — and when the Andover expressman brought in the square package, just before tea, I felt my heart stand still with mortification. Fortunately nobody saw the expressman. I always kept my ventures to myself, and did not, that I can remember, read any manuscript of mine to suffering relatives or friends before publication. Indeed, I carried on the writer's profession for many years as if it had been a burglar's.

At the earliest moment possible I got myself into my little room, and turned both keys upon myself and my rejected manuscript. But when I came to read the publisher's letter, I learned that hope still remained, a flickering torch, upon a darkened universe. That excellent man did not refuse the story, but raised objections to certain points or forms therein, to which he summoned my attention. The criticism called substantially for the rewriting of the book. I lighted my lamp, and, with the June beetles butting at my head, I wrote all night. At three

o'clock in the morning I put the last sentence to the remodeled story — the whole was a matter of some three hundred and fifty pages of manuscript — and crawled to bed. At six I stole out and found the expressman, that innocent and ignorant messenger of joy or woe. The revised manuscript reached the publisher by ten o'clock, and his letter of unconditional acceptance was in my hands before another tea-time.

I have never been in the habit of writing at night, having been early warned against this practice by the wisest of fathers (who notably failed to follow his own advice); and this almost solitary experience of the midnight oil remains as vivid as yesterday's sunset to me. My present opinion of that night's exploit is, that it signified an abnormal pride which might as well have received its due humiliation. But, at the time, it seemed to be the inevitable or even the creditable thing.

Sunday-school writers did books by sets in those days; perhaps they do still. And at least two such sets I provided to order, each of four volumes. Both of these, it so happens, have survived their day and generation — the Tiny books, we called them, and the Gypsy books. Only last year I was called upon to renew the copyright for Gypsy, a young person now thirty years old in type.

There is a certain poetic justice in this little circumstance, owing to the fact that I never *worked* harder in my life at anything than I did upon those little books; for I had, madly enough, contracted to supply four within a year.

We had no vacations in those days; I knew nothing of hills or shore; but "spoke straight on" through the burning Andover summers. Our July and August thermometers used to stand up hard at over ninety degrees, day and

night, for nearly a week at a time. The large white mansion was as comfortable as ceiled walls and back plaster could be in that furnace; but my own small room, on the sunny side of the house, was heated seven times hotter than endurance. Sometimes I got over an open register in a lower room, and wrote in the faint puffs of damp air that played with my misery. Sometimes I sat in the cellar itself; but it was rather dark, and one cherished a consciousness of mice. In the orchard or the grove, one's brains fricasseed quickly; in fact, all out-of-doors was a scene of bottomless torment worthy of a theology older and severer than Andover's. I am told that the Andover climate has improved of late years.

When the last chapter of the last book was done, it occurred to me to wonder whether I might ever be able to afford to get for a week or two where the thermometer went below ninety degrees in summer. But this was a wild and baseless dream, whose irrationality I quickly recognized. For such books as those into which I had been coining a year of my young strength and heart, I received the sum of one hundred dollars apiece. The "Gypsy" publisher was more munificent. He offered one hundred and fifty; a price which I accepted with incredible gratitude.

I mention these figures distinctly, with the cold-blooded view of dimming the rosy dreams of those young ladies and gentlemen with whom, if I may judge by their letters, our country seems to be brimming over.

"Will you read my poem?" "Won't you criticize my manuscript?" "I would like to forward my novel for your perusal." "I have sent you the copy of a rejected article of mine, on which I venture to ask" — etc., etc. "I have been told that all I need is influence." "My friends think my book shows genius; but I have no influ-



After the painting by GEROME

A COLLABORATION

ence." "Will it trouble you too much to get this published for me?"

"Your influence" — and so on, and so on, run the piteous appeals which every successful author receives from the great unknown world of discouraged and perplexed young people who are mistaking the stir of youth or vanity, or the *ennui* of idleness, or the sting of poverty, for the solemn throes of power.

What can one do for them, whom no one but themselves can help? What can one say to them, when anything one says is sure to give pain or dishearten courage?

Write, if you *must*; not otherwise. Do not write, if you can earn a fair living at teaching or dressmaking, at electricity or hod-carrying. Make shoes, weed cabbages, survey land, keep house, make ice-cream, sell cake, climb a telephone pole. Nay, be a lightning-rod peddler or a book agent, before you set your heart upon it that you shall write for a living. Do anything honest, but do not write, unless God calls you, and publishers want you, and people read you, and editors claim you.

Respect the market laws. Lean on nobody. Trust the common sense of an experienced publisher to know whether your manuscript is worth something or nothing. Do not depend on influence. Editors do not care a drop of ink for influence. What they want is good material, and the fresher it is, the better. An editor will pass by an old writer any day for an unknown and gifted new one, with power to say a good thing in a fresh way. Make your calling and election sure. Do not flirt with your pen. Emerson's phrase was, "toiling terribly." Nothing less will hint at the grinding drudgery of a life spent in living "by your brains."

Inspiration is all very well; but "genius is the infinite capacity for taking pains."

Living? It is more likely to be dying by your pen; despairing by your pen; burying hope and heart and youth and courage in your inkstand.

Unless you are prepared to work like a slave at his galley, for the toss-up chance of a freedom which may be denied him when his work is done, do not write. There are some pleasant things about this way of spending a lifetime, but there are no easy ones.


There are privileges in it, but there are heartache, mortification, discouragement, and an eternal doubt.

Had one not better have made bread or picture frames, run a motor, or invented a bicycle tire?

Time alone — perhaps one might say, eternity — can answer.

JO'S FIRST SUCCESS¹

By LOUISA M. ALCOTT

ORTUNE suddenly smiled upon Jo, and dropped a good-luck penny in her path. Not a golden penny, exactly, but I doubt if half a million would have given more real happiness than did the little sum that came to her in this wise.

Every few weeks she would shut herself up in her room, put on her scribbling suit, and "fall into a vortex," as she expressed it, writing away at her novel with all her heart and soul, for till that was finished she could find no peace. Her "scribbling suit" consisted of a black woolen pinafore on which she could wipe her pen at will, and a cap of the same material, adorned with a cheerful red bow, into which she bundled her hair when the decks were cleared for action. This cap was a beacon to the inquiring eyes of her family, who during these periods kept their distance, merely popping in their heads semi-occasionally, to ask, with interest, "Does genius burn, Jo?"

They did not always venture even to ask this question, but took an observation of the cap, and judged accordingly. If this expressive article of dress was drawn low upon the forehead, it was a sign that hard work was going on; in exciting moments it was pushed rakishly askew; and when despair seized the author it was plucked wholly off, and cast upon the floor. At such times the intruder silently withdrew; and not until the red bow was seen

¹ From "Little Women." Copyright, 1896, by J. S. P. Alcott. By permission of Little, Brown & Co.

gayly erect upon the gifted brow, did any one dare address Jo.

She did not think herself a genius by any means; but when the writing fit came on, she gave herself up to it with entire abandon, and led a blissful life, unconscious of want, care, or bad weather, while she sat safe and happy in an imaginary world, full of friends almost as real and dear to her as any in the flesh. Sleep forsook her eyes, meals stood untasted, day and night were all too short to enjoy the happiness which blessed her only at such times, and made these hours worth living, even if they bore no other fruit. The divine afflatus usually lasted a week or two, and then she emerged from her "vortex," hungry, sleepy, cross, or despondent.

She was just recovering from one of these attacks when she was prevailed upon to escort Miss Crocker to a lecture, and in return for her virtue was rewarded with a new idea. It was a People's Course, the lecture on the Pyramids, and Jo rather wondered at the choice of such a subject for such an audience, but took it for granted that some great social evil would be remedied or some great want supplied by unfolding the glories of the Pharaohs to an audience whose thoughts were busy with the price of coal and flour, and whose lives were spent in trying to solve harder riddles than that of the Sphinx.

They were early; and while Miss Crocker set the heel of her stocking, Jo amused herself by examining the faces of the people who occupied the seat with them. On her left were two matrons, with massive foreheads, and bonnets to match, discussing Woman's Rights and making tating. Beyond sat a pair of humble lovers, artlessly holding each other by the hand, a somber spinster eating peppermints out of a paper bag, and an old gentleman taking his preparatory nap behind a yellow bandanna.

On her right, her only neighbor was a studious-looking lad absorbed in a newspaper.

It was a pictorial sheet, and Jo examined the work of art nearest her, idly wondering what unfortuitous concatenation of circumstances needed the melodramatic illustration of an Indian in full war costume, tumbling over a precipice with a wolf at his throat, while two infuriated young gentlemen, with unnaturally small feet and big eyes, were stabbing each other close by, and a disheveled female was flying away in the background with her mouth wide open. Pausing to turn a page, the lad saw her looking, and, with boyish good-nature, offered half his paper, saying bluntly, "Want to read it? That's a first-rate story."

Jo accepted it with a smile, for she had never outgrown her liking for lads, and soon found herself involved in the usual labyrinth of love, mystery, and murder, for the story belonged to that class of light literature in which the passions have a holiday, and when the author's invention fails, a grand catastrophe clears the stage of one-half the *dramatis personae*, leaving the other half to exult over their downfall.

"Prime, is n't it?" asked the boy, as her eye went down the last paragraph of her portion.

"I think you and I could do as well as that if we tried," returned Jo, amused at his admiration of the trash.

"I should think I was a pretty lucky chap if I could. She makes a good living out of such stories, they say"; and he pointed to the name of Mrs. S. L. A. N. G. Northbury, under the title of the tale.

"Do you know her?" asked Jo, with sudden interest.

"No; but I read all her pieces, and I know a fellow who works in the office where this paper is printed."

"Do you say she makes a good living out of stories

like this?" and Jo looked more respectfully at the agitated group and thickly sprinkled exclamation points that adorned the page.

"Guess she does! She knows just what folks like, and gets paid well for writing it."

Here the lecture began, but Jo heard very little of it, for while Professor Sands was prosing away about Belzoni, Cheops, scarabei, and hieroglyphics, she was covertly taking down the address of the paper, and boldly resolving to try for the hundred-dollar prize offered in its columns for a sensational story. By the time the lecture ended and the audience awoke, she had built up a splendid fortune for herself (not the first founded upon paper), and was already deep in the concoction of her story, being unable to decide whether the duel should come before the elopement or after the murder.

She said nothing of her plan at home, but fell to work next day, much to the disquiet of her mother, who always looked a little anxious when "genius took to burning." Jo had never tried this style before, contenting herself with very mild romances for the "Spread Eagle." Her theatrical experience and miscellaneous reading were of service now, for they gave her some idea of dramatic effect, and supplied plot, language, and costumes. Her story was as full of desperation and despair as her limited acquaintance with those uncomfortable emotions enabled her to make it, and, having located it in Lisbon, she wound up with an earthquake, as a striking and appropriate *dénouement*. The manuscript was privately dispatched, accompanied by a note, modestly saying that if the tale did n't get the prize, which the writer hardly dared expect, she would be very glad to receive any sum it might be considered worth.

Six weeks is a long time to wait, and a still longer time

for a girl to keep a secret; but Jo did both, and was just beginning to give up all hope of ever seeing her manuscript again, when a letter arrived which almost took her breath away; for on opening it, a check for a hundred dollars fell into her lap.

For a minute she stared at it as if it had been a snake, then she read her letter and began to cry. If the amiable gentleman who wrote that kindly note could have known what intense happiness he was giving a fellow-creature, I think he would devote his leisure hours, if he has any, to that amusement; for Jo valued the letter more than the money, because it was encouraging; and after years of effort it was so pleasant to find that she had learned to do something, though it was only to write a sensation story.

A prouder young woman was seldom seen than she, when, having composed herself, she electrified the family by appearing before them with the letter in one hand, the check in the other, announcing that she had won the prize. Of course there was a great jubilee, and when the story came every one read and praised it; though after her father had told her that the language was good, the romance fresh and hearty, and the tragedy quite thrilling, he shook his head, and said in his unworldly way, —

“You can do better than this, Jo. Aim at the highest, and never mind the money.”

“I think the money is the best part of it. ; What *will* you do with such a fortune?” asked Amy, regarding the magic slip of paper with a reverential eye. {

“Send Beth and mother to the seaside for a month or two,” answered Jo promptly.

“Oh, how splendid! No, I can't do it, dear, it would be so selfish,” cried Beth, who had clapped her thin hands, and taken a long breath, as if pining for fresh ocean

breezes; then stopped herself, and motioned away the check which her sister waved before her.

“Ah, but you shall go, I’ve set my heart on it; that’s what I tried for, and that’s why I succeeded. I never get on when I think of myself alone, so it will help me to work for you, don’t you see? Besides, Marmee needs the change, and she won’t leave you, so you *must* go. Won’t it be fun to see you come home plump and rosy again? Hurrah for Dr. Jo, who always cures her patients!”

To the seaside they went, after much discussion; and though Beth did n’t come home as plump and rosy as could be desired, she was much better, while Mrs. March declared she felt ten years younger; so Jo was satisfied with the investment of her prize money, and fell to work with a cheery spirit, bent on earning more of those delightful checks. She did earn several that year, and began to feel herself a power in the house; for by the magic of a pen, her “rubbish” turned into comforts for them all. “The Duke’s Daughter” paid the butcher’s bill, “A Phantom Hand” put down a new carpet, and the “Curse of the Coventrys” proved the blessing of the Marches in the way of groceries and gowns.

Wealth is certainly a most desirable thing, but poverty has its sunny side, and one of the sweet uses of adversity is the genuine satisfaction which comes from hearty work of head or hand; and to the inspiration of necessity we owe half the wise, beautiful, and useful blessings of the world. Jo enjoyed a taste of this satisfaction, and ceased to envy richer girls, taking great comfort in the knowledge that she could supply her own wants, and need ask no one for a penny.

Little notice was taken of her stories, but they found a market; and, encouraged by this fact, she resolved to

make a bold stroke for fame and fortune. Having copied her novel for the fourth time, read it to all her confidential friends, and submitted it with fear and trembling to three publishers, she at last disposed of it, on condition that she would cut it down one-third, and omit all the parts which she particularly admired.

"Now I must either bundle it back into my tin-kitchen to mold, pay for printing it myself, or chop it up to suit purchasers, and get what I can for it. Fame is a very good thing to have in the house, but cash is more convenient; so I wish to take the sense of the meeting on this important subject," said Jo, calling a family council.

"Don't spoil your book, my girl, for there is more in it than you know, and the idea is well worked out. Let it wait and ripen," was her father's advice; and he practiced as he preached, having waited patiently thirty years for fruit of his own to ripen, and being in no haste to gather it, even now, when it was sweet and mellow.

"It seems to me that Jo will profit more by making the trial than by waiting," said Mrs. March. "Criticism is the best test of such work, for it will show her both unsuspected merits and faults, and help her to do better next time. We are too partial; but the praise and blame of outsiders will prove useful, even if she gets but little money."

"Yes," said Jo, knitting her brows, "that's just it; I've been fussing over the thing so long, I really don't know whether it's good, bad, or indifferent. It will be a great help to have cool, impartial persons take a look at it, and tell me what they think of it."

"I would n't leave out a word of it; you'll spoil it if you do, for the interest of the story is more in the minds than in the actions of the people, and it will be all a muddle if you don't explain as you go on," said Meg, who

firmly believed that this book was the most remarkable novel ever written.

"But Mr. Allen says, 'Leave out the explanations, make it brief and dramatic, and let the characters tell the story,'" interrupted Jo, turning to the publisher's note.

"Do as he tells you; he knows what will sell, and we don't. Make a good, popular book, and get as much money as you can. By and by, when you've got a name, you can afford to digress, and have philosophical and metaphysical people in your novels," said Amy, who took a strictly practical view of the subject.

"Well," said Jo, laughing, "if my people *are* 'philosophical and metaphysical,' it is n't my fault, for I know nothing about such things, except what I hear father say, sometimes. If I've got some of his wise ideas jumbled up with my romance, so much the better for me. Now, Beth, what do you say?"

"I should so like to see it printed *soon*," was all Beth said, and smiled in saying it; but there was an unconscious emphasis on the last word, and a wistful look in the eyes that never lost their childlike candor, which chilled Jo's heart, for a minute, with a foreboding fear, and decided her to make her little venture "*soon*."

So, with Spartan firmness, the young authoress laid her first-born on her table, and chopped it up as ruthlessly as any ogre. In the hope of pleasing every one, she took every one's advice; and, like the old man and his donkey in the fable, suited nobody.

Her father liked the metaphysical streak which had unconsciously got into it; so that was allowed to remain, though she had her doubts about it. Her mother thought that there *was* a trifle too much description; out, therefore, it nearly all came, and with it many necessary links in the story. Meg admired the tragedy; so Jo piled up

the agony to suit her, while Amy objected to the fun, and, with the best intentions in life, Jo quenched the sprightly scenes which relieved the somber character of the story. Then, to complete the ruin, she cut it down one-third, and confidently sent the poor little romance, like a picked robin, out into the big, busy world, to try its fate.

Well, it was printed, and she got three hundred dollars for it; likewise plenty of praise and blame, both so much greater than she expected that she was thrown into a state of bewilderment, from which it took her some time to recover.

"You said, mother, that criticism would help me; but how can it, when it's so contradictory that I don't know whether I've written a promising book or broken all the ten commandments?" cried poor Jo, turning over a heap of notices, the perusal of which filled her with pride and joy one minute, wrath and dire dismay the next. "This man says 'An exquisite book, full of truth, beauty, and earnestness; all is sweet, pure, and healthy,'" continued the perplexed authoress. "The next, 'The theory of the book is bad, full of morbid fancies, spiritualistic ideas, and unnatural characters.' Now, as I had no theory of any kind, don't believe in Spiritualism, and copied my characters from life, I don't see how this critic *can* be right. Another says, 'It's one of the best American novels which has appeared for years' (I know better than that); and the next asserts that 'though it is original, and written with great force and feeling, it is a dangerous book.' 'Tis n't! Some make fun of it, some overpraise, and nearly all insist that I had a deep theory to expound, when I only wrote it for the pleasure and the money. I wish I'd printed it whole or not at all, for I do hate to be so misjudged."

Her family and friends administered comfort and com-

mentation liberally; yet it was a hard time for sensitive, high-spirited Jo, who meant so well, and had apparently done so ill. But it did her good, for those whose opinion had real value gave her the criticism which is an author's best education; and when the first soreness was over, she could laugh at her poor little book, yet believe in it still, and feel herself the wiser and stronger for the buffeting she had received.

“Not being a genius, like Keats, it won't kill me,” she said stoutly; “and I've got the joke on my side, after all; for the parts that were taken straight out of real life are denounced as impossible and absurd, and the scenes that I made up out of my own silly head are pronounced ‘charmingly natural, tender, and true.’ So I'll comfort myself with that; and when I'm ready, I'll up again and take another.”

JUVENILIA

By A. CONAN DOYLE

IT is very well for the master craftsman with twenty triumphs behind him to look down the vista of his successes, and to recall how he picked out the path which has led him to fame, but for the tiro whose first book is perilously near to his last one it becomes a more invidious matter. His past presses too closely upon his present, and his reminiscences, unmellowed by the flight of years, are apt to be rawly and crudely personal. And yet even time helps me when I speak of my first work, for it was written seven-and-twenty years ago.

I was six at the time, and have a very distinct recollection of the achievement. It was written, I remember, upon foolscap paper, in what might be called a fine bold hand — four words to the line, and was illustrated by marginal pen-and-ink sketches by the author. There was a man in it, and there was a tiger. I forget which was the hero, but it did n't matter much, for they became blended into one about the time when the tiger met the man. I was a realist in the age of the Romanticists. I described at some length, both verbally and pictorially, the untimely end of that wayfarer. But when the tiger had absorbed him, I found myself slightly embarrassed as to how my story was to go on. "It is very easy to get people into scrapes, and very hard to get them out again," I remarked, and I have often had cause to repeat the precocious aphorism of my childhood. On this occasion the situation was

beyond me, and my book, like my man, was engulfed in my tiger. There is an old family bureau with secret drawers, in which lie little locks of hair tied up in circles, and black silhouettes and dim daguerreotypes, and letters which seem to have been written in the lightest of straw-colored inks. Somewhere there lies my primitive manuscript, where my tiger, like a many-hooped barrel with a tail to it, still envelops the hapless stranger whom he has taken in.

Then came my second book, which was told and not written, but which was a much more ambitious effort than the first. Between the two, four years had elapsed, which were mainly spent in reading. It is rumored that a special meeting of a library committee was held in my honor, at which a by-law was passed that no subscriber should be permitted to change his book more than three times a day. Yet, even with these limitations, by the aid of a well-stocked bookcase at home, I managed to enter my tenth year with a good deal in my head that I could never have learned in the class-rooms.

I do not think that life has any joy to offer so complete, so soul-filling as that which comes upon the imaginative lad, whose spare time is limited, but who is able to snuggle down into a corner with his book, knowing that the next hour is all his own. And how vivid and fresh it all is! Your very heart and soul are out on the prairies and the oceans with your hero. It is you who act and suffer and enjoy. You carry the long small-bore Kentucky rifle with which such egregious things are done, and you lie out upon the topsail yard, and get jerked by the flap of the sail into the Pacific, where you cling on to the leg of an albatross, and so keep afloat until the comic boatswain turns up with his crew of volunteers to hand-spike you into safety.

What a magic it is, this stirring of the boyish heart and mind! Long ere I came to my teens I had traversed every sea and knew the Rockies like my own back garden. How often had I sprung upon the back of the charging buffalo and so escaped him! It was an everyday emergency to have to set the prairie on fire in front of me in order to escape from the fire behind, or to run a mile down a brook to throw the bloodhounds off my trail. I had creased horses, I had shot down rapids, I had strapped on my moccasins hindforemost to conceal my tracks, I had lain under water with a reed in my mouth, and I had feigned madness to escape the torture. As to the Indian braves whom I slew in single combats, I could have stocked a large graveyard, and, fortunately enough, though I was a good deal chipped about in these affairs, no real harm ever came of it, and I was always nursed back into health by a very fascinating young squaw. It was all more real than the reality. Since those days I have in very truth both shot bears and harpooned whales, but the performance was flat compared with the first time that I did it with Mr. Ballantyne or Captain Mayne Reid at my elbow.

In the fulness of time I was packed off to a public school, and in some way it was discovered by my playmates that I had more than my share of the lore after which they hankered. There was my *debut* as a story-teller. On a wet half-holiday I have been elevated on to a desk, and with an audience of little boys all squatting on the floor, with their chins upon their hands, I have talked myself husky over the misfortunes of my heroes. Week in and week out those unhappy men have battled and striven and groaned for the amusement of that little circle. I was bribed with pastry to continue these efforts, and I remember that I always stipulated for tarts down and

strict business, which shows that I was born to be a member of the Authors' Society.

Sometimes, too, I would stop dead in the very thrill of a crisis, and could only be set agoing again by apples. When I had got as far as "With his left hand in her glossy locks, he was waving the blood-stained knife above her head, when——" or "Slowly, slowly, the door turned upon its hinges, and with eyes which were dilated with horror, the wicked Marquis saw——" I knew that I had my audience in my power. And thus my second book was evolved.

It may be that my literary experiences would have ended there had there not come a time in my early manhood when that good old harsh-faced schoolmistress, *Hard Times*, took me by the hand. I wrote, and with amazement I found that my writing was accepted. "*Chambers's Journal*" it was which rose to the occasion, and I have had a kindly feeling for its mustard-colored back ever since. Fifty little cylinders of manuscript did I send out during eight years, which described irregular orbits among publishers, and usually came back like paper boomerangs to the place that they had started from. Yet in time they all lodged somewhere or other. Mr. Hogg, of "*London Society*," was one of the most constant of my patrons, and Mr. James Payn wasted hours of his valuable time in encouraging me to persevere. Knowing as I did that he was one of the busiest men in London, I never received one of his shrewd and kindly and most illegible letters without a feeling of gratitude and wonder.

I have heard folk talk as if there were some hidden back door by which one may creep into literature, but I can say myself that I never had an introduction to any editor or publisher before doing business with them, and that I do not think that I suffered on that account. Yet

my apprenticeship was a long and trying one. During ten years of hard work, I averaged less than fifty pounds a year from my pen. I won my way into the best journals, "Cornhill," "Temple Bar," and so on; but what is the use of that when the contributions to those journals must be anonymous? It is a system which tells very hardly against young authors. I saw with astonishment and pride that "Habakuk Jephson's Statement" in the "Cornhill" was attributed by critic after critic to Stevenson, but, overwhelmed as I was by the compliment, a word of the most lukewarm praise sent straight to my own address would have been of greater use to me.

After ten years of such work I was as unknown as if I had never dipped a pen into an ink bottle. Sometimes, of course, the anonymous system may screen you from blame as well as rob you of praise. How well I can see a dear old friend running after me in the street, waving a London evening paper in his hand! "Have you seen what they say about your 'Cornhill' story?" he shouted. "No, no. What is it?" "Here it is! Here it is!" Eagerly he turned over the column, while I, trembling with excitement, but determined to bear my honors meekly, peeped over his shoulder. "The 'Cornhill' this month," said the critic, "has a story in it which would have made Thackeray turn in his grave." There were several witnesses about, and the Portsmouth bench are severe upon assaults, so my friend escaped unscathed. Then first I realized that British criticism had fallen into a shocking state of decay, though when some one has a pat on the back for you you understand that, after all, there are some very smart people upon the literary Press.

And so at last it was brought home to me that a man may put the very best that is in him into magazine work for years and years and reap no benefit from it, save, of

course, the inherent benefits of literary practice. So I wrote another of my first books and sent it off to the publishers. Alas for the dreadful thing that happened! The publishers never received it, the Post Office sent countless blue forms to say that they knew nothing about it, and from that day to this no word has ever been heard of it. Of course it was the best thing I ever wrote. Who ever lost a manuscript that was n't? But I must in all honesty confess that my shock at its disappearance would be as nothing to my horror if it were suddenly to appear again — in print. If one or two other of my earlier efforts had also been lost in the post, my conscience would have been the lighter. This one was called "[The Narrative of John Smith," and it was of a personal-social-political complexion. Had it appeared I should have probably awakened to find myself infamous, for it steered, as I remember it, perilously near to the libelous. However, it was safely lost, and that was the end of another of my first books.

Then I started upon an exceedingly sensational novel, which interested me extremely at the time, though I have never heard that it had the same effect upon anyone else afterwards. I may urge in extenuation of all shortcomings that it was written in the intervals of a busy though ill-paying practice. And a man must try that and combine it with literary work before he quite knows what it means. How often have I rejoiced to find a clear morning before me, and settled down to my task, or rather, dashed ferociously at it, as knowing how precious were those hours of quiet! Then to me enter my housekeeper, with tidings of dismay.

"Mrs. Thurston's little boy wants to see you, doctor."

"Show him in," say I, striving to fix my scene in my mind that I may splice it when this trouble is over. "Well, my boy?"

"Please, doctor, mother wants to know if she is to add water to that medicine."

"Certainly, certainly."

Not that it matters in the least, but it is well to answer with decision. Exit the little boy, and the splice is about half accomplished when he suddenly bursts into the room again.

"Please, doctor, when I got back mother had taken the medicine without the water."

"Tut, tut!" I answer. "It really does not matter in the least."

The youth withdraws with a suspicious glance, and one more paragraph has been written when the husband puts in an appearance.

"There seems to have been some misunderstanding about that medicine," he remarks coldly. "Not at all," I say, "it really did n't matter."

"Well, then, why did you tell the boy that it should be taken with water?"

And then I try to disentangle the business, and the husband shakes his head gloomily at me.

"She feels very queer," says he; "we should all be easier in our minds if you came and looked at her."

So I leave my heroine in the four-foot way with an express thundering towards her, and trudge sadly off, with the feeling that another morning has been wasted, and another seam left visible to the critic's eye in my unhappy novel. Such was the genesis of my sensational romance, and when publishers wrote to say that they could see no merit in it, I was, heart and soul, of the same way of thinking.

And then, under more favorable circumstances, I wrote "Micah Clarke," for patients had become more tractable, and I had married, and in every way I was a brighter

man. A year's reading and five months' writing finished it, and I thought I had a tool in my hands that would cut a path for me. So I had, but the first thing that I cut with it was my finger. I sent it to a friend, whose opinion I deeply respected, in London, who read for one of the leading houses, but he had been bitten by the historical novel, and very naturally he distrusted it. From him it went to house after house, and house after house would have none of it. Blackwood found that the people did not talk so in the seventeenth century; Bentley that its principal defect was that there was a complete absence of interest; Cassells that experience had shown that an historical novel could never be a commercial success. I remember smoking over my dog-eared manuscript when it returned for a whiff of country air after one of its descents upon town, and wondering what I should do if some sporting, reckless kind of publisher were suddenly to stride in and make me a bid of forty shillings or so for the lot. And then suddenly I bethought me to send it to Messrs. Longmans, where it was fortunate enough to fall into the hands of Mr. Andrew Lang.

From that day the way was smoothed to it, and, as things turned out, I was spared that keenest sting of ill-success, that those who had believed in your work should suffer pecuniarily for their belief. A door had been opened for me into the temple of the Muses, and it only remained that I should find something that was worthy of being borne through it.

THE WRECK OF THE "GROSVENOR"

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL

WHAT can I recollect of the writing, publication, and reception of the earliest of my sea books, "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor'"? I approach the subject with diffidence, and ask the reader to forgive me if he thinks or finds me unduly egotistical. "John Holdsworth: Chief Mate," preceded "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor.'" I do not regard that story as a novel of the sea. I was reluctant and timid in dealing with ocean topics when the scheme of that tale came into my head; I contented myself with pulling off my shoes and socks and walking about ankle deep into the ripples. But in the "Grosvenor" I went to sea like a man; I signed articles aboard her as second mate; I had ruffians for shipmates, and the stench of the harness-cask was the animating influence of the narrative. It is the first sea book I ever wrote, in the sense, I mean, that its successors are sea books: what I have to say, therefore, agreeably to the plan of these personal contributions, will refer to it.

And first, I must write a few words about my own experience as a sailor. I went to sea in the year 1858, when I was a child of thirteen years and a few months old. My first ship was a well-known Australian liner, the "Duncan Dunbar," commanded by an old salt, named Neatby, who will always be memorable to me for his habit of wearing the tall chimney-pot hat of the London streets in all weathers and parallels, whether in the roasting calms of the Equator, or in the snow-darkened hurricanes

of the Horn. I went to sea as a "midshipman," as it is termed, though I never could persuade myself that a lad in the Merchant Service, no matter how heavy might be the premium his friends paid for him, has a right to a title of grade or rating that belongs essentially and peculiarly to the Royal Navy.

I signed for a shilling a month, and with the rest of us (there were ten) was called "young gentleman"; but we were put to work which an able seaman would have been within his rights in refusing, as being what is called "boys" duty. I need not be particular. Enough that the discipline was as rough as if we had been lads in the forecabin, with a huge boatswain and brutal boatswain's mates to look after us. We paid ten guineas each as a contribution to some imagination of a stock of eatables for the midshipmen's berth; but my memory carries no more than a few tins of preserved potatoes, a great number of bottles of pickles, and a cask of exceedingly moist sugar. Therefore, we were thrown upon the ship's provisions, and I very soon became intimately acquainted with the quality and nature of the stores served out to forecabin hands.

I made, but not after the manner of Gulliver, several voyages into remote nations of the world, and in the eight years I was at sea I picked up enough knowledge to qualify me to give the public a few new ideas about the ocean life. Yet when the scribbling mania possessed me it was long before I could summon courage to write about the sea and sailors. I asked myself, Who is interested in the Merchant Service? What public shall I find to listen to me? Those who read novels want stories about love and elopements, abductions, and the several violations of the sanctities of domestic life. The great mass of readers — those who support the circulating libraries — are ladies.

Will it be possible to interest ladies in fore-castle life and in the prosaics of the cabin?

Then, again, I was frightened by the *Writer for Boys*. *He* was very much at sea. I never picked up a book of his without lighting upon some hideous act of piracy, some astounding and unparalleled shipwreck, some marvelous island of treasure. This writer, of a clan numerous as Wordsworth's "little lot of stars," warned me off and affrighted me. His paper ship had so long and successfully filled the public eye that I shrank from launching anything real, anything with strakes and treenails, anything with running rigging so leading that a sailor would exactly know what to let go when the order was given.

In plain English, I judged that the sea story had been irremediably depressed, and rendered wholly ridiculous by the strenuous periodic and Christmas labors of the *Writer for Boys*. Had he not sunk even Marryat and Michael Scott, who, because they wrote about the sea, were compelled in due course by the publishers to address themselves exclusively to boys! The late George Cupples — a man of fine genius — in the course of a letter to me, complained warmly of being made to figure as "Captain" George Cupples upon the title-page of his admirable work, "The Green Hand." He assured me that he was no captain, and that his name thus written was merely a bookseller's dodge to recommend his story to boys.

And, still, I would sometimes think that if I would but take heart and go afloat in imagination, under the old red flag, I should find within the circle of the horizon such materials for a book as might recommend it, at all events on the score of freshness. Only two writers had dealt with the mercantile side of the ocean life — Dana, the author of "Two Years before the Mast," and Herman Melville, both of them, it is needless to say, Americans. I

could not recollect a book, written by an Englishman, relating, as a work of fiction, to shipboard life on the high seas under the flag of the Merchant Service. I excluded the *Writer for Boys*. I could recall no author who, himself a practical seaman, one who had slept with sailors, eaten with them, gone aloft with them, and suffered with them, had produced a book, a novel — call it what you will — wholly based on what I may term the inner life of the fore-castle and the cabin.

It chanced one day that a big ship, with a mast-headed color, telling of trouble on board, let go her anchor in the Downs. I then lived in a town which overlooks those waters. The crew of the ship had mutinied: they had carried the vessel halfway down Channel, when, discovering by that time what sort of provisions had been shipped for them, they forced the master to shift his helm for the inwards course. The crew of thirteen hairy, queerly attired fellows, in Scotch caps, divers-colored shirts, dungaree breeches stuffed into half wellingtons, were brought before the magistrates. The bench consisted of an old sea captain, who had lost a ship in his day through the ill conduct of his crew, and whose hatred of the fore-castle hand was strong and peculiar; a parson, who knew about as much of the sea as his wife; a medical practitioner, and a schoolmaster. I was present, and listened to the men's evidence, and I also heard the captain's story. Samples of the food were produced. A person with whom I had some acquaintance found me an opportunity to examine and taste samples of the fore-castle provisions of the ship whose crew had mutinied. Nothing more atrociously nasty could be found amongst the neglected putrid sweepings of a butcher's back premises. Nothing viler in the shape of food ever set a famished mongrel hiccoughing. Nevertheless, this crew of thirteen or fourteen men, for

refusing to sail in the vessel unless fresh fore-castle stores were shipped, were sent to jail for terms ranging from three to six weeks.

Some time earlier than this there had been legislation helpful to the seaman through the humane and impassioned struggles of Mr. Samuel Plimsoll. The crazy, rotten old coaster had been knocked into staves. The avaricious owner had been compelled to load with some regard to the safety of sailors. But I could not help thinking that the shore-going menace of the sailor's life did not lie merely in overloaded ships, and in crazy, porous hulls. Mutinies were incessantly happening in consequence of the loathsome food shipped for sailor's use, and many disasters attended these outbreaks.

When I came away from the magistrates' court, after hearing the men sentenced, I found my mind full of that crew's grievance. I reflected upon what Mr. Plimsoll had done, and how much of the hidden parts of the sea life remained to be exposed to the public eye, to the advantage of the sailor, providing the subject should be dealt with by one who had himself suffered, and very well understood what he sat down to write about. This put into my head the idea of the tale which I afterwards called "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor.'" I said to myself, I'll find a story on a mutiny at sea, occasioned entirely by the shipment of bad provisions for the crew. No writer has as yet touched this ugly feature of the life. Dana is silent. Herman Melville merely drops a joke or two as he rolls out of the caboose with a cube of salt horse in his hand. It has never been made a serious canvas of. And yet deeper tragedies lie in the stinking harness-cask than in the started butt. There are wilder and bloodier possibilities in a barrel of rotten pork, and in a cask of worm-riddled ship's bread, than in a whole passage of shifting

cargoes, and in a long round voyage of deadweight that sinks to the wash-streak.

But if I was to find a public I must make my book a romance. I must import the machinery of the petticoat. The pannikin of rum I proposed to offer must be palatable enough to tempt the lips of the ladies to sip it. My publisher would want a market, and if Messrs. Mudie and Smith would have none of me I should write in vain; for assuredly I was not going to find a public among sailors. Sailors don't read: a good many of them *can't* read. Those who can have little leisure, and they do not care to fill up their spare hours with yarns of a calling which eighty¹ out of every hundred of them loathe. So I schemed out a nautical romance and went to work, and in two months and a week I finished the story of "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor.' "

Whilst I was writing it an eminent publisher, a gentleman whose friendship I had been happy in possessing for many years, asked me to let him have a sea story. I think he had been looking into "John Holdsworth: Chief Mate," which some months before this time had been received with much kindness by the reviewers. I sent him the manuscript of "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor.' " One of his readers was a lady, and to this lady my friend the publisher forwarded the manuscript, with a request for a report on its merits. Now to send the manuscript of a sea book to a woman! To submit a narrative abounding in marine terms, thunder-charged with the bully-in-our-alley passions of the fore-castle, throbbing with suppressed oaths, clamorous with rolling oceans, the like of which no female would ever dream of leaving her bunk to behold — to submit all this, and how much more, to a lady for an opinion on its merits! Of course, the poor woman barely understood a third of what she looked at,

and as, obviously, she could n't quite collect the meaning of the remainder, she pronounced against the whole. She called it a "catalogue of ship's furniture," and the manuscript came back to me. I never regret this. I do not believe that this sea book would ever have cut a figure in my old and esteemed friend's list.

Publishers are well known by the public for the sorts of intellectual wares they severally deal in. If I desired a charming story about flirtation, divorce, inconvenient husbands, the state of the soul when it has flown out of the body, the passions of the female heart while it still beats hot in the breast, I should turn to my friend's list, well assured of handsome satisfaction. But I don't think I could read a sea book published by him. I should suspect the marine qualities of a Jack who had run foul of, and got smothered up in, a whole wardrobe of female apparel, grinning with a scarcely sunburnt face through the horse-collar of a crinoline, the deep sea roll of his gait hampered and destroyed by the clinging folds of a flannel petticoat.

Be this as it may, I sent the manuscript of "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor'" to my old friend Edward Marston, of the firm of Sampson Low & Co. The firm offered me fifty pounds for it; I took the money and signed the agreement, in which I disposed of all rights. Do I murmur over the recollection of this fifty pounds which, with another ten pounds kindly sent to me by Mr. Marston as the whole of, or a part of, a check received from Messrs. Harper & Brothers, was all I ever got for this sea book? Certainly not. The transaction was absolutely fair, and what leaning there was was in my favor. The book was an experiment; it was published anonymously; it might have fallen dead. Happily for publisher and author, the book made its way. I believe it was imme-

diately successful in America, and that its reception there somewhat influenced inquiry here. American critics who try to vex me say that my books never would have been read in this country but for what was said of them in the States, and for the publicity provided for them there by the twenty-cent editions. How far this is true I don't know; but certainly the Yankees are handsomer and prompter in their recognition of what pleases them than we are on our side. What they like they raise a great cry over, and the note of so mighty a concourse, I don't doubt, fetches an echo out of distances below the horizon.

It is many years now since "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor'" was written, and I do not very clearly recollect its reception in this country. I believe it speedily went into a second edition. But before we talk of an edition seriously we must first learn the number of copies which make it. Since this was written, my friend, Mr. R. B. Marston, of the firm of Sampson Low & Co., has been good enough to look into the sales of "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor,'" and he informs me that down to 1891 there had been sold 34,950 copies. One of the most cordial welcomes the story received was from "Vanity Fair." I supposed that the review was written by the editor, Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, until I learnt that the late Mr. James Runciman was the author.

The critics on the whole were generous. They thought the book fresh. They judged that it was an original piece of work wrought largely out of the personal experiences of the writer. One gentleman, indeed, said that he had crossed the Channel on several occasions between Boulogne and Folkestone, but had never witnessed such seas as I described; and another that he had frequently traveled to Plymouth on the Great Western Railway in

company with sailors, but had never met such seamen as the forecandle hands I depicted.

The book is considered my best — this, perhaps, because it was my first, and its reputation lies in the memory and impression of its freshness. It is far from being my best. Were it my property I would rewrite it. I had quitted the sea some years when I wrote the story, and here and there my memory played me false; that is to say, in the direction of certain minute technicalities and in accounts of the internal discipline of the ship. Yet, on the whole, the blunders are few considering how very complicated a fabric a vessel is, and how ceaselessly one needs to go on living the life of the sea to hold all parts of it clear to the sight of the mind. Professionally, the influence of the book has been small. I have heard that it made one ship-owner sorry and rather virtuous, and that for some time his harness-casks went their voyages fairly sweet. He is, however, but a solitary figure, the lonesome Crusoe of my little principality of fancy. As a piece of literature, "The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor'" has been occasionally imitated. Mr. Plimsoll, I understand, has lately been dealing with the subject of sailors' food. I heartily wish success to his efforts.

MY FIRST PRINTED WORK¹

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



ALL through my boyhood and youth, I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use, it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practiced to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise; for to anyone with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also; often accompanied my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played many parts; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

This was all excellent, no doubt; so were the diaries I sometimes tried to keep, but always and very speedily discarded, finding them a school of posturing and melancholy self-deception. And yet this was not the most effi-

¹ From *Memories and Portraits*.

cient part of my training. Good though it was, it only taught me (as far as I have learned them at all) the lower and less intellectual elements of the art, the choice of the essential note and the right word: things that to a happier constitution had perhaps come by nature. And regarded as training, it had one grave defect; for it set me no standard of achievement. So that there was perhaps more profit, as there was certainly more effort, in my secret labors at home. Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality.

I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts, I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and in the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann. I remember one of these monkey tricks, which was called "The Vanity of Morals:" it was to have had a second part, "The Vanity of Knowledge;" and as I had neither morality nor scholarship, the names were apt; but the second part was never attempted, and the first part was written (which is my reason for recalling it, ghostlike, from its ashes) no less than three times: first in the manner of Hazlitt, second in the manner of Ruskin, who had cast on me a passing spell, and third, in a laborious pasticcio of Sir Thomas Browne.

So with my other works: "Cain," an epic, was (save the mark!) an imitation of "Sordello:" "Robin Hood," a tale in verse, took an eclectic middle course among the fields

of Keats, Chaucer, and Morris: in "Monmouth," a tragedy, I reclined on the bosom of Mr. Swinburne; in my innumerable gouty-footed lyrics, I followed many masters; in the first draft of "The King's Pardon," a tragedy, I was on the trail of no lesser man than John Webster; in the second draft of the same piece, with staggering versatility, I had shifted my allegiance to Congreve, and of course conceived my fable in a less serious vein — for it was not Congreve's verse, it was his exquisite prose, that I admired and sought to copy.

Even at the age of thirteen I had tried to do justice to the inhabitants of the famous city of Peebles in the style of the "Book of Snobs." So I might go on forever, through all my abortive novels, and down to my later plays, of which I think more tenderly, for they were not only conceived at first under the bracing influence of old Dumas, but have met with resurrections: one, strangely bettered by another hand, came on the stage itself and was played by bodily actors; the other, originally known as "Semiramis: a Tragedy," I have observed on bookstalls under the *alias* of "Prince Otto." But enough has been said to show by what arts of impersonation, and in what purely ventriloquial efforts I first saw my words on paper.

That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats's; it was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned; and that is why a revival of letters is always accompanied or heralded by a cast back to earlier and fresher models. Perhaps I hear some one cry out: But that is not the way to be original! It is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet, if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality. There can be

none more original than Montaigne, neither could any be more unlike Cicero; yet no craftsman can fail to see how much the one must have tried in his time to imitate the other. Burns is the very type of a prime force in letters: he was of all men the most imitative. Shakespeare himself, the imperial, proceeds directly from a school.

It is only from a school that we can expect to have good writers; it is almost invariably from a school that great writers, these lawless exceptions, issue. Nor is there anything here that should astonish the considerate. Before he can tell what cadences he truly prefers, the student should have tried all that are possible; before he can choose and preserve a fitting key of words, he should long have practiced the literary scales; and it is only after years of such gymnastics that he can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it.

And it is the great point of these imitations that there still shines beyond the student's reach his inimitable model. Let him try as he please, he is still sure of failure; and it is a very old and a very true saying that failure is the only highroad to success. I must have had some disposition to learn; for I clear-sightedly condemned my own performances. I liked doing them indeed; but when they were done, I could see they were rubbish. In consequence, I very rarely showed them even to my friends; and such friends as I chose to be my confidants I must have chosen well, for they had the friendliness to be quite plain with me. "Padding," said one. Another wrote: "I can not understand why you do lyrics so badly."

No more could I! Thrice I put myself in the way of a more authoritative rebuff, by sending a paper to a maga-

zine. These were returned; and I was not surprised or even pained. If they had not been looked at, as (like all amateurs) I suspected was the case, there was no good in repeating the experiment; if they had been looked at — well, then I had not yet learned to write, and I must keep on learning and living. Lastly, I had a piece of good fortune, which is the occasion of this paper, and by which I was able to see my literature in print, and to measure experimentally how far I stood from the favor of the public.

The Speculative Society is a body of some antiquity, and has counted among its members Scott, Brougham, Jeffrey, Horner, Benjamin Constant, Robert Emmet, and many a legal and local celebrity besides. By an accident, variously explained, it has its rooms in the very buildings of the University of Edinburgh: a hall, Turkey carpeted, hung with pictures, looking, when lighted up at night with fire and candle, like some goodly dining room; a passage-like library, walled with books in their wire cages; and a corridor with a fireplace, benches, a table, many prints of famous members, and a mural tablet to the virtues of a former secretary.

I sat one December morning in the library of the Speculative; a very humble-minded youth, though it was a virtue I never had much credit for; yet proud of my privileges as a member of the Spec.; proud of the pipe I was smoking in the teeth of the Senatus; and, in particular, proud of being in the next room to three very distinguished students, who were then conversing beside the corridor fire.

These three students sat, as I was saying, in the corridor, under the mural tablet that records the virtues of Macbean, the former secretary. We would often smile

at that ineloquent memorial, and thought it a poor thing to come into the world at all and leave no more behind one than Macbean. And yet of these three, two are gone and have left less; and this book, perhaps, when it is old and foxy, and some one picks it up in a corner of a bookshop, and glances through it, smiling at the old, graceless turns of speech, and perhaps for the love of *Alma Mater* (which may be still extant and flourishing) buys it, not without haggling, for some pence — this book may alone preserve a memory of James Walter Ferrier and Robert Glasgow Brown.

Their thoughts ran very differently on that December morning; they were all on fire with ambition; and when they had called me in to them, and made me a sharer of their design, I too became drunken with pride and hope. We were to found a University magazine. A pair of little, active brothers — Livingstone by name, great skip-pers on the foot, great rubbers of the hands, who kept a bookshop over against the University building — had been debauched to play the part of publishers. We four were to be conjunct editors and, what was the main point of the concern, to print our works; while, by every rule of arithmetic — that flatterer of credulity — the adventure must succeed and bring great profit.

Well, well: it was a bright vision. I went home that morning walking upon air. To have been chosen by these three distinguished students was to me the most unspeakable advance; it was my first draught of consideration; it reconciled me to myself and to my fellowmen; and as I steered round the railings at the Tron, I could not withhold my lips from smiling publicly. Yet, in the bottom of my heart, I knew that magazine would be a grim fiasco; I knew it would not be worth reading; I knew, even if it were, that nobody would read it; and I kept wondering

how I should be able, upon my compact income of twelve pounds per annum, payable monthly, to meet my share in the expense. It was a comfortable thought to me that I had a father.

The magazine appeared, in a yellow cover which was the best part of it, for at least it was unassuming; it ran four months in undisturbed obscurity, and died without a gasp. The first number was edited by all four of us with prodigious bustle; the second fell principally into the hands of Ferrier and me; the third I edited alone; and it has long been a solemn question who it was that edited the fourth. It would perhaps be still more difficult to say who read it. Poor yellow sheet, that looked so hopefully in the Livingstones' window! Poor, harmless paper, that might have gone to print a *Shakespeare* on, and was instead so clumsily defaced with nonsense! And, shall I say, Poor Editors? I can not pity myself, to whom it was all pure gain. It was no news to me, but only the wholesome confirmation of my judgment, when the magazine struggled into half-birth, and instantly sickened and subsided into night.

I had sent a copy to the lady with whom my heart was at that time somewhat engaged, and who did all that in her lay to break it; and she, with some tact, passed over the gift and my cherished contributions in silence. I will not say that I was pleased at this; but I will tell her now, if by any chance she takes up the work of her former servant, that I thought the better of her taste. I cleared the decks after this lost engagement; had the necessary interview with my father, which passed off not amiss; paid over my share of the expense to the two little, active brothers, who rubbed their hands as much, but methought skipped rather less than formerly, having perhaps, these two also, embarked upon the enterprise with some graceful

illusions, and then, reviewing the whole episode, I told myself that the time was not yet ripe, nor the man ready; and to work I went again with my penny version-books, having fallen back in one day from the printed author to the manuscript student.

DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

AS there is only one man in charge of a steamer, so there is but one man in charge of a newspaper, and he is the editor. My chief taught me this on an Indian journal, and he further explained that an order was an order, to be obeyed at a run, not a walk, and that any notion or notions as to the fitness or unfitness of any particular kind of work for the young had better be held over till the last page was locked up to press. He was breaking me into harness, and I owe him a deep debt of gratitude, which I did not discharge at the time. The path of virtue was very steep, whereas the writing of verses allowed a certain play to the mind, and, unlike the filling in of reading matter, could be done as the spirit served. Now, a sub-editor is not hired to write verses: he is paid to sub-edit. At the time, this discovery shocked me greatly; but, some years later, when I came to be a sort of an editor in charge, Providence dealt me for my subordinate one saturated with Elia. He wrote very pretty, Lamblike essays, but he wrote them when he should have been sub-editing. Then I saw a little of what my chief must have suffered on my account. There is a moral here for the ambitious and aspiring who are oppressed by their superiors.

This is a digression, as all my verses were digressions from office work. They came without invitation, unman-neredly, in the nature of things; but they had to come, and the writing out of them kept me healthy and amused. To the best of my remembrance, no one then discovered

their grievous cynicism, or their pessimistic tendency, and I was far too busy, and too happy, to take thought about these things.

So they arrived merrily, being born out of the life about me, and they were very bad indeed, and the joy of doing them was payment a thousand times their worth. Some, of course, came and ran away again, and the dear sorrow of going in search of these (out of office hours, and catching them) was almost better than writing them clear. Bad as they were, I burned twice as many as were published, and of the survivors at least two-thirds were cut down at the last moment. Nothing can be wholly beautiful that is not useful, and therefore my verses were made to ease off the perpetual strife between the manager extending his advertisements and my chief fighting for his reading-matter. They were born to be sacrificed. Rukn-Din, the foreman of our side, approved of them immensely, for he was a Muslim of culture. He would say: "Your pottery very good, sir; just coming proper length to-day. You giving more soon? One-third column just proper. Always can take on third page."

Mahmoud, who set them up, had an unpleasant way of referring to a new lyric as "*Ek aur chiz*" — one more thing — which I never liked. The job side, too, were unsympathetic, because I used to raid into their type for private proofs with old English and Gothic headlines. Even a Hindoo does not like to find the serifs of his f's cut away to make long s's.

And in this manner, week by week, my verses came to be printed in the paper. I was in very good company, for there is always an undercurrent of song, a little bitter for the most part, running through the Indian papers. The bulk of it is much better than mine, being more graceful, and is done by those less than Sir Alfred Lyall —

to whom I would apologize for mentioning his name in this gallery — "Pekin," "Latakia," "Cigarette," "O.," "T.W.," "Foresight," and others, whose names come up with the stars out of the Indian Ocean going eastward.

Sometimes a man in Bangalore would be moved to song, and a man on the Bombay side would answer him, and a man in Bengal would echo back, till at last we would all be crowing together like cocks before daybreak, when it is too dark to see your fellow. And, occasionally, some unhappy Chaaszee, away in the China Ports, would lift up his voice among the tea chests, and the queer-smelling yellow papers of the Far East brought us his sorrows. The newspaper files showed that, forty years ago, the men sang of just the same subjects as we did — of heat, loneliness, love, lack of promotion, poverty, sport, and war. Further back still, at the end of the eighteenth century, Hickey's "Bengal Gazette," a very wicked little sheet in Calcutta, published the songs of the young factors, ensigns, and writers to the East India Company. They, too, wrote of the same things, but in those days men were strong enough to buy a bullock's heart for dinner, cook it with their own hands because they could not afford a servant, and make a rhymed jest of all the squalor and poverty. Lives were not worth two monsoons' purchase, and perhaps the knowledge of this a little colored the rhymes when they sang:

In a very short time you're released from all cares —
If the Padri's asleep, Mr. Oldham reads prayers!

The note of physical discomfort that runs through so much Anglo-Indian poetry had been struck then. You will find it most fully suggested in "The Long, Long Indian Day," a comparatively modern affair; but there is a set of verses called "Scanty Ninety-five," dated about Warren

Hastings's time, which gives a lively idea of what our seniors in the Service had to put up with. One of the most interesting poems I ever found was written at Meerut, three or four days before the Mutiny broke out there. The author complained that he could not get his clothes washed nicely that week, and was very facetious over his worries.

My verses had the good fortune to last a little longer than some others, which were more true to facts and certainly better workmanship. Men in the Army, and the Civil Service, and the Railway, wrote to me saying that the rhymes might be made into a book. Some of them had been sung to the banjoes round camp fires, and some had run as far down coast as Rangoon and Moulmein, and up to Mandalay. A real book was out of the question, but I knew that Rukn-Din and the office plant were at my disposal at a price, if I did not use the office time. Also, I had handled in the previous year a couple of small books, of which I was part owner, and had lost nothing.

So there was built a sort of a book, a lean oblong docket, wire stitched, to imitate a D.O. Government envelop, printed on one side only, bound in brown paper, and secured with red tape. It was addressed to all heads of departments and all Government officials, and among a pile of papers would have deceived a clerk of twenty years' service. Of these "books" we made some hundreds, and as there was no necessity for advertising, my public being to my hand, I took reply postcards, printed the news of the birth of the book on one side, the blank order-form on the other, and posted them up and down the Empire from Aden to Singapore, and from Quetta to Colombo. There was no trade discount, no reckoning twelves as thirteens, no commission, and no credit of any kind whatever. The money came back in poor but honest


rupees, and was transferred from the publisher, the left-hand pocket, direct to the author, the right-hand pocket.

Every copy sold in a few weeks, and the ratio of expenses to profits, as I remember it, has since prevented my injuring my health by sympathizing with publishers who talk of their risks and advertisements. The down-country papers complained of the form of the thing. The wire binding cut the pages, and the red tape tore the covers. This was not intentional, but Heaven helps those who help themselves. Consequently, there arose a demand for a new edition, and this time I exchanged the pleasure of taking in money over the counter for that of seeing a real publisher's imprint on the title-page. More verses were taken out and put in, and some of that edition traveled as far as Hongkong on the map, and each edition grew a little fatter, and, at last, the book came to London with a gilt top and a stiff back, and was advertised in the publishers' poetry department.

But I loved it best when it was a little brown baby with a pink string round its stomach; a child's child, ignorant that it was afflicted with all the most modern ailments; and before people had learned, beyond doubt, how its author lay awake of nights in India, plotting and scheming to write something that should "take" with the English public.

A LAST WORD¹

By HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

Y pilgrimage is ended. I have come home to rest; and, recording the time past, I have fulfilled these things, and written them in this book, as it would come into my mind, — for the most part, when the duties of the day were over, and the world around me was hushed in sleep. The pen wherewith I write most easily is a feather stolen from the sable wing of night. Even now, as I record these parting words, it is long past midnight. The morning watches have begun. And as I write, the melancholy thought intrudes upon me, — To what end is all this toil? Of what avail these midnight vigils? Dost thou covet fame? Vain dreamer! A few brief days, — and what will the busy world know of thee? Alas! this little book is but a bubble on the stream; and although it may catch the sunshine for a moment, yet it will soon float down the swift-rushing current, and be seen no more!

¹ From "Outre Mer," by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

AUTHORSHIP

By ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

Translated by T. BAILEY SAUNDERS, M. A.



HERE are, first of all, two kinds of authors; those who write for the subject's sake, and those who write for writing's sake. While the one have had thoughts or experiences which seem to them worth communicating, the others want money; and so they write, for money. Their thinking is part of the business of writing. They may be recognized by the way in which they spin out their thoughts to the greatest possible length; then, too, by the very nature of their thoughts, which are only half-true, perverse, forced, vacillating; again, by the aversion they generally show to saying anything straight out, so that they may seem other than they are. Hence their writing is deficient in clearness and definiteness, and it is not long before they betray that their only object in writing at all is to cover paper. This sometimes happens with the best authors.

As soon as the reader perceives this, let him throw the book away; for time is precious. The truth is that when an author begins to write for the sake of covering paper, he is cheating the reader; because he writes under the pretext that he has something to say.

Writing for money and reservation of copyright are, at bottom, the ruin of literature. No one writes anything that is worth writing, unless he writes entirely for the sake of his subject. What an inestimable boon it would be, if in every branch of literature there were only a few

books, but those excellent! This can never happen, as long as money is to be made by writing. It seems as if the money lay under a curse; for every author degenerates as soon as he begins to put pen to paper in any way for the sake of gain. The best works of the greatest men all come from the time when they had to write for nothing or for very little. And here, too, that Spanish proverb holds good, which declares that honor and money are not to be found in the same purse — *honra y provecho no caben en un saco*. The reason why Literature is in such a bad plight nowadays is simply and solely that people write books to make money. A man who is in want sits down and writes a book, and the public is stupid enough to buy it. The secondary effect of this is the ruin of language.

A great many bad writers make their whole living by that foolish mania of the public for reading nothing but what has just been printed, — journalists, I mean. Truly, a most appropriate name. In plain language it is *journeymen, day-laborers!*

Again, it may be said that there are three kinds of authors. First come those who write without thinking. They write from a full memory, from reminiscences; it may be, even straight out of other people's books. This class is the most numerous. Then come those who do their thinking while they are writing. They think in order to write; and there is no lack of them. Last of all come those authors who think before they begin to write. They are rare.

Authors of the second class, who put off their thinking until they come to write, are like a sportsman who goes forth at random and is not likely to bring very much home. On the other hand, when an author of the third or rare class writes, it is like a *battue*. Here the game has

been previously captured and shut up within a very small space; from which it is afterwards let out, so many at a time, into another space, also confined. The game can not possibly escape the sportsman; he has nothing to do but aim and fire — in other words, write down his thoughts. This is a kind of sport from which a man has something to show.

But even though the number of those who really think seriously before they begin to write is small, extremely few of them think about *the subject itself*: the remainder think only about the books that have been written on the subject, and what has been said by others. In order to think at all, such writers need the more direct and powerful stimulus of having other people's thoughts before them. These become their immediate theme; and the result is that they are always under their influence, and so never, in any real sense of the word, original. But the former are roused to thought by the subject itself, to which their thinking is thus immediately directed. This is the only class that produces writers of abiding fame.

It must, of course, be understood that I am speaking here of writers who treat of great subjects; not of writers on the art of making brandy.

Unless an author takes the material on which he writes out of his own head, that is to say, from his own observation, he is not worth reading. Book manufacturers, compilers, the common run of history writers, and many others of the same class, take their material immediately out of books; and the material goes straight to their fingertips without even paying freight or undergoing examination as it passes through their heads, to say nothing of elaboration or revision. How very learned many a man would be if he knew everything that was in his own books! The consequence of this is that these writers talk

in such a loose and vague manner, that the reader puzzles his brains in vain to understand what it is of which they are really thinking. They are thinking of nothing. It may now and then be the case that the book from which they copy has been composed exactly in the same way; so that writing of this sort is like a plaster cast of a cast; and in the end, the bare outline of the face, and that, too, hardly recognizable, is all that is left of your 'Antinous. Let compilations be read as seldom as possible. It is difficult to avoid them altogether; since compilations also include those textbooks which contain in a small space the accumulated knowledge of centuries.

There is no greater mistake than to suppose that the last work is always the most correct; that what is written later on is in every case an improvement on what was written before; and that change always means progress. Real thinkers, men of right judgment, people who are in earnest with their subject, — these are all exceptions only. Vermin is the rule everywhere in the world: it is always on the alert, taking the mature opinions of the thinkers, and industriously seeking to improve upon them (save the mark!) in its own peculiar way.

If the reader wishes to study any subject, let him beware of rushing to the newest books upon it, and confining his attention to them alone, under the notion that science is always advancing, and that the old books have been drawn upon in the writing of the new. They have been drawn upon, it is true; but how? The writer of the new book often does not understand the old books thoroughly, and yet he is unwilling to take their exact words; so he bungles them, and says in his own bad way that which has been said very much better and more clearly by the old writers, who wrote from their own lively knowledge of the subject. The new writer frequently omits the best

things they say, their most striking illustrations, their happiest remarks; because he does not see their value or feel how pregnant they are. The only thing that appeals to him is what is shallow and insipid.

It often happens that an old and excellent book is ousted by new and bad ones, which, written for money, appear with an air of great pretension and much puffing on the part of friends. In science a man tries to make his mark by bringing out something fresh. This often means nothing more than that he attacks some received theory which is quite correct, in order to make room for his own false notions. Sometimes the effort is successful for a time; and then a return is made to the old and true theory. These innovators are serious about nothing but their own precious selves; it is this that they want to put forward, and the quick way of doing so, as they think, is to start a paradox. Their sterile heads take naturally to the path of negation; so they begin to deny truths that have long been admitted — the vital power, for example, the sympathetic nervous system, *generatio equivoca*, Bichat's distinction between the working of the passions and the working of intelligence; or else they want us to return to crass atomism, and the like. Hence it frequently happens that *the course of science is retrogressive*.

To this class of writers belong those translators who not only translate their author but also correct and revise him; a proceeding which always seems to me impertinent. To such writers I say: Write books yourself which are worth translating, and leave other people's works as they are!

The reader should study, if he can, the real authors, the men who have founded and discovered things; or, at any rate, those who are recognized as the great masters in every branch of knowledge. Let him buy second-hand



After the painting by MUNKACSÝ

MILTON DICTATING PARADISE LOST

books rather than read their contents in new ones. To be sure, it is easy to add to any new discovery — *inventis aliquid addere facile est*; and, therefore, the student, after well mastering the rudiments of his subject, will have to make himself acquainted with the more recent additions to the knowledge of it. And, in general, the following rule may be laid down here as elsewhere: if a thing is new, it is seldom good; because if it is good, it is only for a short time new.

What the address is to a letter, the title should be to a book; in other words, its main object should be to bring the book to those among the public who will take an interest in its contents. It should, therefore, be expressive; and since by its very nature it must be short, it should be concise, laconic, pregnant, and if possible give the contents in one word. A prolix title is bad; and so is one that says nothing, or is obscure and ambiguous, or even, it may be, false and misleading; this last may possibly involve the book in the same fate as overtakes a wrongly addressed letter. The worst titles of all are those which have been stolen, those, I mean, which have already been borne by other books; for they are in the first place a plagiarism, and secondly the most convincing proof of a total lack of originality in the author. A man who has not enough originality to invent a new title for his book, will be still less able to give it new contents. Akin to these stolen titles are those which have been imitated, that is to say, stolen to the extent of one-half.

A book can never be anything more than the impress of its author's thoughts; and the value of these will lie either in *the matter about which he has thought*, or in the *form* which his thoughts take, in other words, *what it is that he has thought about it*.

The matter of books is most various; and various also

are the several excellences attaching to books on the score of their matter. By matter I mean everything that comes within the domain of actual experience; that is to say, the facts of history and the facts of nature, taken in and by themselves and in their widest sense. Here it is the *thing* treated of which gives its peculiar character to the book; so that a book can be important, whoever it was that wrote it.

But in regard to the form, the peculiar character of a book depends upon the *person* who wrote it. It may treat of matters which are accessible to every one and well known; but it is the way in which they are treated, what it is that is thought about them, that gives the book its value; and this comes from its author. If, then, from this point of view a book is excellent and beyond comparison, so is its author. It follows that if a writer is worth reading, his merit rises just in proportion as he owes little to his matter; therefore, the better known and the more hackneyed this is, the greater he will be. The three great tragedians of Greece, for example, all worked at the same subject-matter.

So when a book is celebrated, care should be taken to note whether it is so on account of its matter or its form; and a distinction should be made accordingly.

Books of great importance on account of their matter may proceed from very ordinary and shallow people, by the fact that they alone have had access to this matter; books, for instance, which describe journeys in distant lands, rare natural phenomena, or experiments; or historical occurrences of which the writers were witnesses, or in connection with which they have spent much time and trouble in the research and special study of original documents.

On the other hand, where the matter is accessible to

every one, or very well known, everything will depend upon the form; and what it is that is thought about the matter will give the book all the value it possesses. Here only a really distinguished man will be able to produce anything worth reading; for the others will think nothing but what any one else can think. They will just produce an impress of their own minds; but this is a print of which every one possesses the original.

However, the public is very much more concerned to have matter than form; and for this very reason it is deficient in any high degree of culture. The public shows its preference in this respect in the most laughable way when it comes to deal with poetry; for there it devotes much trouble to the task of tracking out the actual events or personal circumstances in the life of the poet which served as the occasion of his various works; nay, these events and circumstances come in the end to be of greater importance than the works themselves; and rather than read Goethe himself, people prefer to read what has been written about him, and to study the legend of Faust more industriously than the drama of that name. And when Bürger declared that "people would write learned disquisitions on the question, Who Leonora really was," we find this literally fulfilled in Goethe's case; for we now possess a great many learned disquisitions on Faust and the legend attaching to him. Study of this kind is, and remains, devoted to the material of the drama alone. To give such preference to the matter over the form, is as if a man were to take a fine Etruscan vase, not to admire its shape or coloring, but to make a chemical analysis of the clay and paint of which it is composed.

The attempt to produce an effect by means of the material employed — an attempt which panders to this evil tendency of the public — is most to be condemned

in branches of literature where any merit there may be lies expressly in the form; I mean, in poetical work. For all that, it is not rare to find bad dramatists trying to fill the house by means of the matter about which they write. For example, authors of this kind do not shrink from putting on the stage any man who is in any way celebrated, no matter whether his life may have been entirely devoid of dramatic incident; and sometimes, even, they do not wait until the persons immediately connected with him are dead.

The distinction between matter and form to which I am here alluding, also holds good of conversation. The chief qualities which enable a man to converse well are intelligence, discernment, wit and vivacity: these supply the form of conversation. But it is not long before attention has to be paid to the matter of which he speaks; in other words, the subjects about which it is possible to converse with him — his knowledge. If this is very small, his conversation will not be worth anything, unless he possesses the above-named formal qualities in a very exceptional degree; for he will have nothing to talk about but those facts of life and nature which everybody knows. It will be just the opposite, however, if a man is deficient in these formal qualities but has an amount of knowledge which lends value to what he says. This value will then depend entirely upon the matter of his conversation; for, as the Spanish proverb has it, "*Mas sabe el necio en su casa, que el sabio en la agena*" — "a fool knows more of his own business than a wise man of others'."

I'M GOING TO BE AN AUTHOR

By JEROME K. JEROME



PLEASE, sir," he said, "could you tell me the right time?"

"Twenty minutes to eight," I replied, looking at my watch.

"Oh," he remarked. Then added for my information after a pause: "I have n't got to be in till half-past eight."

After that we fell back into our former silence, and sat watching the murky twilight, he at his end of the park seat, I at mine.

"And do you live far away?" I asked, lest, he having miscalculated, the short legs might be hard put to it.

"Oh no, only over there," he answered, indicating with a sweep of his arm the northern half of London where it lay darkening behind the chimney-fringed horizon; "I often come and sit here."

It seemed an odd pastime for so very small a citizen. "And what makes you like to come and sit here?" I said.

"Oh, I don't know," he replied, "I think."

"And what do you think about?"

"Oh — oh, lots of things."

He inspected me shyly out of the corner of his eye, but, satisfied apparently by the scrutiny, he sidled up a little nearer.

"Mamma does not like this evening time," he confided to me; "it always makes her cry. But then," he went on to explain, "Mamma has had a lot of trouble, and that makes any one feel different about things, you know."

I agreed that this was so. "And do you like this evening time?" I enquired.

"Yes," he answered; "don't you?"

"Yes, I like it too," I admitted. "But tell me why you like it, then I will tell you why I like it."

"Oh," he replied, "things come to you."

"What things?" I asked.

Again his critical eye passed over me, and it raised me in my own conceit to find that again the inspection contented him, he evidently feeling satisfied that here was a man to whom another gentleman might speak openly and without reserve.

He wriggled sideways, slipping his hands beneath him and sitting on them.

"Oh, fancies," he explained; "I'm going to be an author when I grow up, and write books."

Then I knew why it was that the sight of his little figure had drawn me out of my path to sit beside him, and why the little serious face had seemed so familiar to me, as of some one I had once known long ago.

So we talked of books and bookmen. He told me how, having been born on the fourteenth of February, his name had come to be Valentine, though privileged parties, as for example Aunt Emma, and Mr. Dawson, and Cousin Naomi, had shortened it to Val, and Mamma would sometimes call him Pickaniny, but that was only when they were quite alone. In return I confided to him my name, and discovered that he had never heard it, which pained me for the moment, until I found that of all my confrères, excepting only Mr. Stevenson, he was equally ignorant, he having lived with the heroes and the heroines of the past, the new man and the new woman, the new pathos and the new humor being alike unknown to him.

Scott and Dumas and Victor Hugo were his favorites. "Gulliver's Travels," "Robinson Crusoe," "Don Quixote," and the "Arabian Nights," he knew almost by

heart, and these we discussed, exchanging many pleasant and profitable ideas upon the same. But the psychological novel, I gathered, was not to his taste. He liked "real stories," he told me, naïvely unconscious of the satire, "where people did things."

"I used to read silly stuff once," he confessed humbly, "Indian tales and that sort of thing, you know, but Mamma said I'd never be able to write if I read that rubbish."

"So you gave it up," I concluded for him.

"Yes," he answered. But a little sigh of regret, I thought, escaped him at the same time.

"And what do you read now?" I asked.

"I'm reading Marlowe's plays and De Quincey's Confessions (he called him Quinsy) just now," was his reply.

"And do you understand them?" I queried.

"Fairly well," he answered. Then added more hopefully, "Mamma says I'll get to like them better as I go on."

"I want to learn to write very, very well indeed," he suddenly added after a long pause, his little earnest face growing still more serious, "then I'll be able to earn heaps of money."

It rose to my lips to answer him that it was not always the books written very, very well that brought in the biggest heaps of money; that if heaps of money were his chiefest hope he would be better advised to devote his energies to the glorious art of self-advertisement and the gentle craft of making friends upon the Press. But something about the almost baby face beside me, fringed by the gathering shadows, silenced my middle-aged cynicism. Involuntarily my gaze followed his across the strip of foot-worn grass, across the dismal-looking patch of ornamental water, beyond the haze of tangled trees, beyond the distant row of stuccoed houses, and, arrived there with him, I noticed many men and women clothed in the garments

of all ages and all lands, men and women who had written very, very well indeed and who notwithstanding had earned heaps of money, the hire worthy of the laborer, and who were not ashamed; men and women who had written true words which the common people had read gladly; men and women who had been raised to lasting fame upon the plaudits of their day; and before the silent faces of these, made beautiful by Time, the little bitter sneers I had counted truth rang foolish in my heart, so that I returned with my young friend to our green seat beside the foot-worn grass, feeling by no means so sure as when I had started which of us twain were the better fitted to teach wisdom to the other.

“And what would you do, Valentine, with heaps of money?” I asked.

Again for a moment his old shyness of me returned. Perhaps it was not quite a legitimate question from a friend of such recent standing. But his frankness wrestled with his reserve and once more conquered.

“Mamma need not do any work then,” he answered. “She isn’t really strong enough for it, you know,” he explained, “and I’d buy back the big house where she used to live when she was a little girl, and take her back to live in the country — the country air is so much better for her, you know — and Aunt Emma, too.”

But I confess that as regards Aunt Emma his tone was not enthusiastic.

I spoke to him — less dogmatically than I might have done a few minutes previously, and I trust not discouragingly — of the trials and troubles of the literary career, and of the difficulties and disappointments awaiting the literary aspirant, but my croakings terrified him not.

“Mamma says that every work worth doing is difficult,” he replied, “and that it doesn’t matter what career we

choose there are difficulties and disappointments to be overcome, and that I must work very hard and say to myself 'I *will* succeed,' and then in the end, you know, I shall."

"Though of course it may be a long time," he added cheerfully.

Only one thing in the slightest daunted him, and that was the weakness of his spelling.

"And I suppose," he asked, "you must spell very well indeed to be an author."

I explained to him, however, that this failing was generally met by a little judicious indistinctness of caligraphy, and all obstacles thus removed, the business of a literary gent seemed to him an exceptionally pleasant and joyous one.

"Mamma says it is a noble calling," he confided to me, "and that any one ought to be very proud and glad to be able to write books, because they give people happiness and make them forget things, and that one ought to be awfully good if one's going to be an author, so as to be worthy to help and teach others."

"And do you try to be awfully good, Valentine?" I enquired.

"Yes," he answered; "but it's awfully hard, you know. I don't think anybody could ever be *quite* good — until," he corrected himself, "they were grown up."

"I suppose," he added with a little sigh, "it's easy for grown-up people to be good."

It was my turn to glance suspiciously at him, this time wondering if the seeds of satire could have taken root already in that tiny brain. But his eyes met mine without flinching, and I was not loath to drift away from the point.

"And what else does your Mamma say about literature,

Valentine?" I asked. For the strangeness of it was that, though I kept repeating under my breath "Copy-book maxims, copy-book maxims," hoping by such shibboleth to protect myself from their influence, the words yet stirred within me old childish thoughts and sentiments that I, in my cleverness, had long since learnt to laugh at, and had thought forgotten. I, with my years of knowledge and experience behind me, seemed for the nonce to be sitting with Valentine at the feet of this unseen lady, listening, as I again told myself, to "copy-book maxims" and finding in them in spite of myself a certain element of truth, a certain amount of helpfulness, an unpleasant suggestion of reproach.

He tucked his hands underneath him, as before, and sat swinging his short legs.

"Oh — oh, lots of things," he answered vaguely.

"Yes?" I persisted.

"Oh, that —" he repeated it slowly, recalling it word for word as he went on, "that he who can write a great book is greater than a king; that a good book is better than a good sermon; that the gift of being able to write is given to anybody in trust, and that an author should never forget that he is God's servant."

I thought of the chatter of the clubs, and could not avoid a smile. But the next moment something moved me to take his hand in mine, and, turning his little solemn face towards mine, to say:

"If ever there comes a time, little man, when you are tempted to laugh at your mother's old-fashioned notions — and such a time may come — remember that an older man than you once told you he would that he had always kept them in his heart, he would have done better work."

Then growing frightened at my own earnestness, as we men do, deeming it, God knows why, something to be

ashamed of, I laughed away his answering questions, and led the conversation back to himself.

"And have you ever tried writing anything?" I asked him.

Of course he had, what need to question! And it was, strange to say, a story about a little boy who lived with his mother and aunt, and who went to school.

"It is sort of," he explained, "sort of auto — bio — graphical, you know."

"And what does Mamma think of it?" was my next question, after we had discussed the advantages of drawing upon one's own personal experiences for one's material.

"Mamma thinks it is very clever — in parts," he told me.

"You read it to her?" I suggested.

"Yes," he acknowledged, "in the evening, when she's working, and Aunt Emma is n't there."

The room rose up before me, I could see the sweet-faced lady in her chair beside the fire, her white hands moving to and from the pile of sewing by her side, the little flushed face of the lad bending over his pages written in sprawling schoolboy hand.

Suddenly he said, a little more distinctly:

"Please, sir, could you tell me the time?"

"Just over the quarter, Valentine," I answered, waking up and looking at my watch.

"I did n't know it was so late," he said, "I must go."


But as our hands met another question occurred to him.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "you said you'd tell me why you liked to come and sit here of an evening, like I do. Why?"

"So I did, Valentine," I replied, "but I've changed my mind. When you are a big man, as old as I am, you come and sit here and you'll know. But it isn't so pleasant a reason as yours, Valentine, and you wouldn't understand it. Good-night."

THE FLOOD OF BOOKS¹

BY HENRY VAN DYKE

“HE world is cumbered with books,” complained the wise man, two thousand years ago. “There are books here in Jerusalem and in Thebes and in Babylon and in Nineveh; even in Tyre and Sidon among the Philistines, no doubt one would find books. Still men go on scribbling down their thoughts and observations, in spite of the fact that there is nothing new under the sun. Where are the readers to come from, I wonder? For much study is a weariness of the flesh, and of making many books there is no end.”

But what would the writer that was king say if he were alive to-day, when the annual output of books in this country alone is about five thousand, and when the printing press multiplies these volumes into more than five million copies? Doubtless he would be much astonished, and perhaps even more displeased. But I conjecture that he would go on writing his own books, and that when they were done he would look for a publisher. For each age has its own thoughts and feelings; and each man who is born with the impulse of authorship thinks that he has something to say to his age; and even if it is nothing more than a criticism of other men for writing so much and so poorly, he wants to say it in his own language.

Thomas Carlyle, talking volubly on the virtues of

¹ From “Essays in Application.” By Henry Van Dyke. Copyright, 1905, by Charles Scribner’s Sons.

silence, represents a *rôle* which is never left out in the drama of literature.

After all, is it not better that a hundred unnecessary books should be published than that one good and useful book should be lost? Nature's law of parsimony is arrived at by a process of expense. The needless volumes, like the infertile seeds, soon sink out of sight; and the books that have life in them are taken care of by the readers who are waiting somewhere to receive and cherish them.

Reading is a habit. Writing is a gift. Both may be cultivated. But I suppose there is this difference between them: the habit may be acquired by any who will; the gift can be developed only by those who have it in them to begin with. How to discover it and make the best of it, and use the writing gift so that it shall supply the real needs and promote the finest results of the reading habit, — that is the problem.

I do not know of any ready-made solution. The only way to work it out is for the writers to try to write as well as they can, and for the publishers to publish the best that they can get, and for the great company of readers to bring a healthy appetite, a clean taste, and a good digestion to the feast that is prepared for them. If any one partakes not wisely but too much, that is his own fault.

No doubt a good many people are drawn to writing by slight and foolish motives, and they do their work foolishly and slightly. Every human occupation has a certain proportion of silly and superficial workers, to whom the work seems less important than the pay. But in the guild of letters there are also men and women of the better sort, to whom each year brings sincere delight in their work for its own sake.

Scholars have been sifting and arranging the results of

their studies in great libraries. Observers of men and manners have been traveling and taking notes in strange lands and in the foreign parts of their own country. Teachers of life and morals have been trying to give their lessons a convincing and commanding form. Critics have been seeking to express the secrets of good work in arts and letters. Students of nature have been bringing together the records of their companionship with birds and beasts and flowers. Story-tellers have been following their dream-people through all kinds of adventures to joyful or sorrowful ends. And poets, a few, have been weaving their most delicate fancies and their deepest thoughts into verse.

In what different places, and under what various conditions these men and women have been working! Some of them in great cities, in rooms filled with books; others in quiet country places, in little "dens" of bare and simple aspect; some among the tranquillizing influences of the mountains; others where they could feel the inspiration of an outlook over the tossing, limitless plains of the ocean; a few, perhaps, in tents among the trees, or in boats on the sea, — though, for my part, I find it difficult to understand how any one can actually write out-of-doors. The attractions of nature are so close and so compelling that it is impossible to resist them. Out-of-doors for seeing and hearing, thinking and feeling! Indoors for writing!

It is pleasant to reflect upon the great amelioration which has been made in the "worldly lot" of writers, by the increase and wider distribution of the pecuniary rewards of authorship. It is not necessary to go back to the age of Grub Street for comparison. There has been a change even since the days when Lowell wrote, "I can not come (to New York) without any money, and

leave my wife with sixty-two and a half cents, such being the budget brought in by my secretary of the treasury this week;" and when Hawthorne's friends had to make up a purse and send it to him anonymously, to relieve the penury caused by the loss of his position in the Custom-House at Salem.

Nowadays, people who certainly do not write better than Lowell and Hawthorne, find life very much easier. They travel freely; they live in a comfortable house — some of them have two — with plenty of books and pictures. The man who would begrudge this improvement in the condition of literary workers must have, as Dr. Johnson would say, "a disposition little to be envied." It is no more than the world has done for the doctors and the lawyers. Have not the profits of book-making, on the material and commercial side, advanced even more rapidly? The wages of printers and paper-makers and book-binders are larger. The fortunes of successful publishers are increased. Why should not the author have a share in the general prosperity?

Besides, it should be remembered that while there has been a certain enlargement in the pay of literary workers, it has not yet resulted in opulence among men of letters as a class. The principal gain has been along the line of enlarged opportunities and better remuneration for magazine, newspaper, and editorial work. Setting these aside, the number of people who make a good living by writing books is still very small. I will not even attempt to guess how many there are; it might precipitate a long correspondence. But it is safe to say that there are not fivescore in America. What a slight burden is the support of a hundred authors among eighty million people! Your share in the burden is a little more than one-millionth part of an author. What is that compared with

the pleasure that you get out of new books, even though you are one of those severe people who profess to read none but old ones?

When I hear that the brilliant writer of "The Mountain of Derision" has just built a mansion at Laxedo, or that the author of "The Turning Point" is driving a four-in-hand through the White Mountains, it does not cause me a single pang of discontent. My contribution to that mansion, according to the present rate of royalty, was about forty cents, and to the support of the equipage I have given perhaps thirty cents. In each case I received good value for my money, — pleasant and, I trust, not unprofitable hours. This expense irks me far less than the extra two dollars a ton that I shall probably have to pay for coal this winter.

But I would not be understood as agreeing to the general proposition that the possession of four-in-hands and the like is necessary, or even favorable, to the production of good literature. Of course, if a man has extraordinary luck, he may find some competent person to take care of his luxuries for him, while he gives himself to the enjoyment of his work, and lives almost as comfortably as if he had never become rich. But, as a rule, it may be taken for granted that plain living is congenial to high thinking. A writer in one of the English periodicals a couple of years ago put forth the theory that the increase of pessimism among authors was due to the eating of too much and too rich food. Among other illustrations he said that Ibsen was inordinately given to the pleasures of the table. However that may be, it is certain that the literary life, at its best, is one that demands a clear and steady mind, a free spirit, and great concentration of effort. The cares of a splendid establishment and the distractions of a complicated social life are not likely, in

the majority of cases, to make it easier to do the best work. Most of the great books, I suppose, have been written in rather small rooms.

The spirit of happiness also seems to have a partiality for quiet and simple lodgings. "We have a little room in the third story (back)," wrote Lowell in 1845, just after his marriage, "with white curtains trimmed with evergreen, and are as happy as two mortals can be."

There is the highest authority for believing that a man's life, even though he be an author, consists not in the abundance of things that he possesses. Rather is its real value to be sought in the quality of the ideas and feelings that possess him, and in the effort to embody them in his work.

The work is the great thing. The delight of clear and steady thought, of free and vivid imagination, of pure and strong emotion; the fascination of searching for the right words, which sometimes come in shoals like herring, so that the net can hardly contain them, and at other times are more shy and fugacious than the wary trout which refuse to be lured from their hiding-places; the pleasure of putting the fit phrase in the proper place, of making a conception stand out plain and firm with no more and no less than is needed for its expression, of doing justice to an imaginary character so that it shall have its own life and significance in the world of fiction, of working a plot or an argument clean through to its inevitable close: these inward and unpurchasable joys are the best wages of the men and women who write.

What more will they get? Well, unless history forget to repeat itself, their additional wages, their personal dividends under the profit-sharing system, so to speak, will be various. Some will probably get more than they deserve, others less.

The next best thing to the joy of work is the winning of gentle readers and friends who find some good in your book, and are grateful for it, and think kindly of you for writing it.

The next best thing to that is the recognition, on the part of people who know, that your work is well done, and of fine quality. That is called fame, or glory, and the writer who professes to care nothing for it is probably deceiving himself, or else his liver is out of order. Real reputation, even of a modest kind and of a brief duration, is a good thing; an author ought to be able to be happy without it, but happier with it.

The next best thing to that is a good return in money from the sale of a book. There is nothing dishonorable in writing for money. Samuel Johnson, in the days of his poverty, wrote "Rasselas" to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral.

But to take, by choice, a commercial view of authorship, to write always with an eye on the market, to turn out copious and indifferent stuff because there is a ready sale for it, to be guided in production by the fashion of the day rather than by the impulse of the mind, — that is the sure way to lose the power of doing good work.

The best writing is done for its own sake. In the choice of a subject, in the manner of working it out, in the details of form and illustration, style, and diction, an author can not be too jealous in guarding his own preference, ideal, inspiration, — call it what you will. Otherwise his book will lack the touch of personality, of independence, of distinction. It is here, perhaps, that a large part of the modern output of books fails to come up to the best standard.


But when a piece of work has been done, freely, sincerely, thoroughly, — done as well as the writer can do it, — then it is safe. The new methods of paper-making

and printing and binding, the modern system of publishing and advertising, the admirable skill of the artists who are now engaged in designing illustrations and book-covers and types, certainly can not hurt the quality of a book, and may do something to help its sale. For this the honest author, having finished his work as nearly as possible to his own satisfaction, and disposed of it for the best price obtainable, should be duly grateful.

Amid the making of many books, good literature is still produced, as it was in the days of Thackeray and Dickens, Carlyle and Ruskin, Tennyson and Browning, Irving and Hawthorne and Lowell and Emerson, out of the hearts of men and women who write because they love it, and who do their work in their own way because they know that, for them, it is the best way.

SINCERITY IN COMPOSITION ¹

By EDWIN PERCY WHIPPLE

FROM my own experience and observation I should say that every boy who is ready enough in spelling, grammar, geography, and arithmetic, is appalled when he is commanded to write what is termed "a composition." When he enters college the same fear follows him; and the Professor of Rhetoric is a more terrible person to his imagination than the professors of Greek, Latin, Mathematics, and Moral and Intellectual Philosophy. Both boys at school and young men in college show no lack of power in speaking their native language with a vehemence and fluency which almost stuns the ears of their seniors. Why, then, should they find such difficulty in writing it? When you listen to the animated talk of a bright school-boy or college student, full of a subject which really interests him, you say at once that such command of racy and idiomatic English words must of course be exhibited in his "compositions" or his "themes;" but when the latter are examined, they are commonly found to be feeble and lifeless, with hardly a thought or a word which bears any stamp of freshness or originality, and which are so inferior to his ordinary conversation that we can hardly believe they came from the same mind.

The first quality which strikes an examiner of these exercises in English composition is their *falseness*. No boy or youth writes what he personally thinks and feels,

¹ From "American Literature and Other Papers"—Ticknor & Co., 1887. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

but writes what a boy or a youth is expected to think or feel. This hypocrisy vitiates his writing from first to last, and is not absent in his "Class Oration," or in his "Speech at Commencement." I have a vivid memory of the first time the boys of my class, in a public school, were called upon to write "composition." The themes selected were the prominent moral virtues or vices. How we poor innocent urchins were tormented by the task imposed upon us! How we put more ink on our hands and faces than we shed upon the white paper on our desks! Our conclusions generally agreed with those announced by the greatest moralists of the world. Socrates and Plato, Cicero and Seneca, Cudworth and Butler, could not have been more austere moral than were we little rogues, as we relieved the immense exertion involved in completing a single short baby-like sentence by shying at one companion a rule, or hurling at another a paper-pellet intended to light plump on his forehead or nose. Our custom was to begin every composition with the proposition that such or such a virtue "was one of the greatest blessings we enjoy;" and this triumph of accurate statement was not discovered by our teacher to be purely mechanical, until one juvenile thinker, having avarice to deal with, declared it to be "one of the greatest evils we enjoy."

The whole thing was such a piece of monstrous hypocrisy, that I once timidly suggested to the school-master that it would be well to allow me to select my own subject. The request was granted; and as narrative is the natural form of composition which a boy adopts when he has his own way, I filled, in less than half the time heretofore consumed in writing a quarter of a page, four pages of letter-paper with an account of my being in a ship taken by a pirate, of the heroic defiance I launched at the pirate captain, and the sagacity I evinced in escaping the fate of

my fellow-passengers, in not being ordered to "walk the plank." The story, though trashy enough, was so much better than any of the moral essays of the other pupils, that the teacher commanded me to read it before the whole school, as an evidence of the rapid strides I had made in the art of "composition."

This falseness of thought and feeling is but too apt to characterize the writing of the student after he has passed from the common school to the academy or the college. The term "sophomorical" is used to describe speeches which are full of emotion which the speaker does not feel, full of words in four or five syllables that mean nothing, and, in respect to imagery and illustrations, blazing with the cheap jewelry of rhetoric, — with those rubies and diamonds that can be purchased for a few pennies an ounce. The danger is that this "sophomorical" style may continue to afflict the student after he has become a clergyman, a lawyer, or a legislator.

Practical men who may not be "college educated" still have the great virtue of using the few words they employ as identical with facts. When they meet a man who has half the dictionary at his disposal, and yet gives no evidence of apprehending the real import and meaning of one word among the many thousands he glibly pours forth, they naturally distrust him, as a person who does not know the vital connection of all good words with the real things they represent.

Indeed, the best rule that a professor of rhetoric could adopt would be to insist that no student under his care should use an unusual word until he had *earned the right to use it* by making it the verbal sign of some new advance in his thinking, in his acquirements, or his feelings.

Shakespeare, the greatest of English writers, — and perhaps the greatest of all writers, — required fifteen

thousand words to embody all that his vast exceptional intelligence acquired, thought, imagined, and discovered; and he had earned the right to use every one of them. Milton found that eight thousand words could fairly and fully represent all the power, grandeur, and creativeness of his almost seraphic soul, when he attempted to express his whole nature in a literary form. All the words used by Shakespeare and Milton are *alive*: "cut them and they will bleed." But it is ridiculous for a college student to claim that he has the mighty resources of the English language at his supreme disposal, when he has not verified, by his own thought, knowledge, and experience, one in a hundred of the words he presumptuously employs.

Daniel Webster passed safely through all the stages of the "sophomoric" disease of the mind, as he passed safely through the measles, the chicken-pox, and other eruptive maladies incident to childhood and youth. The process, however, by which he purified his style from this taint, and made his diction at last as robust and as manly, as simple and as majestic, as the nature it expressed, will reward a little study.

The mature style of Webster is perfect of its kind, being in words the express image of his mind and character, — plain, terse, clear, forcible; and rising from the level of lucid statement and argument into passages of superlative eloquence only when his whole nature is stirred by some grand sentiment of freedom, patriotism, justice, humanity, or religion, which absolutely lifts him, by its own inherent force and inspiration, to a region above that in which his mind habitually lives and moves.


At the same time it will be observed that these thrilling passages, which the boys of two generations have ever been delighted to declaim in their shrillest tones, are strictly illustrative of the main purpose of the speech in which

they appear. They are not mere purple patches of rhetoric, loosely stitched on the homespun gray of the reasoning, but they seem to be inwoven with it and to be a vital part of it. Indeed, we can hardly decide, in reading these magnificent bursts of eloquence in connection with what precedes and follows them, whether the effect is due to the logic of the orator becoming suddenly morally impassioned, or to his moral passion becoming suddenly logical.

What gave Webster his immense influence over the opinions of the people of New England was, first, his power of so "putting things" that everybody could understand his statements; secondly, his power of so framing his arguments that all the steps, from one point to another, in a logical series, could be clearly apprehended by every intelligent farmer or mechanic who had a thoughtful interest in the affairs of the country; and thirdly, his power of inflaming the sentiment of patriotism in all honest and well-intentioned men by overwhelming appeals to that sentiment, so that after convincing their understandings, he clinched the matter by sweeping away their wills.

THE UNKNOWN AUTHOR AND THE PUBLISHER¹

By A PUBLISHER'S READER

“HERE,” says the author as yet unpublished, “the manuscript is finished, is even type-written, ‘tied-up, ticketed, and labeled’ and forwarded to the publisher, with directions as to its return, but I am a nobody as yet. *My* manuscript will not be read. It will be returned, possibly without being unwrapped. To get anything read these days one must have influence.”

So he gets this influence, — or thinks he does, — through a letter of introduction written by some one who has “influence” with the publisher.

The result is that the letter carries not the slightest weight, and the chances are that the letter, and not the manuscript, is the unread contribution.

For the Great Unpublished should believe this of all things: *Every manuscript submitted is given a chance*; never a one is returned unconsidered, and they are read often several times. The house for which the writer of these confessions spends himself has the invariable rule that each manuscript be read by two persons, and if one of these gives hint of merit, it is passed to a third.

It should be apparent to every one in these days why this should be so. There have been too many instances where publishers have made small fortunes from “first books,” — books whose manuscripts have been submitted

¹ From “The World’s Work.” Copyright, 1901, by Doubleday, Page & Company.

without preliminary introductions, unsought and unheralded. Indeed, there is more chance of financial success with "first books" than with those written by authors of established reputations, for these latter are justified in demanding heavy royalties, which cut deep into the profits.

The numerous instances of the great success of "first" books, written by "new men," have established admirable precedents. Considering the matter strictly from the financial point of view, one can never say when, in looking through the day's batch, one is to come upon a second "David Harum," a second "Peter Sterling," or a second "Eben Holden." If the unpublished author will reflect upon the matter, he will soon realize that the publisher *must* look for him with *more* eagerness than he is looking for the publisher; because, if the author fails to "place" his manuscript, he loses no more, financially, than the price of the paper and ink, and he can try other publishers. He is not limited to this one chance; whereas the publisher has only this one chance on this manuscript, and if he fails to accept a "David Harum," loses, we will say, something in the neighborhood of a quarter of a million dollars.

So the possibility of being neglected should never discourage even the most diffident, the least self-confident. Remember an axiom: — If you submit a manuscript, it will be read; if it is good enough, it will be published, — published whether your name be Rudyard Kipling, or Sarah Brown.

It is *not* the men of established reputations who are sought for so painfully; these already have found their publisher and in a great majority of cases are bound to one particular House. They are for all other Houses out of the market. The "New Man" is the free lance; he is drifting hither and thither, ready to be snapped up by

the first bidder; then, too, the arrived author's limit of success can be pretty well gauged, — so-and-so will sell five thousand, so-and-so ten thousand — but who shall say how far the "New Man" will go? "A first book by a new author, and a good book at that!" The average bookseller will order more copies than of a new novel by Henry James.

It would interest and surprise the pessimists, could they but know how the game goes in the editorial office; could they but understand how easy, — and *not* how difficult, — it is for even fair work to pass muster. It is true that it is easier to induce the publisher to accept a novel than it is to get the public to buy it. As a matter of course, the Reader for the House must have his standard. The public, too, has its own; but the public's standard is determined only by *published* books, — books that have been deemed good enough to print. On the other hand, the Reader must pass in review hundreds upon hundreds of manuscripts that are, — ninety-nine out of a hundred of them, — impossible. How easy it is, then, for even the moderately good book to stand forth resplendent from the somber background of worthlessness! How easy it is to judge it not by standards of real actual excellence, but by those of the "unavailables," in whose company it is found.

All volunteer manuscripts, then, have their chance, — are considered. But it does not follow that each and every one is read from cover to cover. Some can be pronounced unavailable after a reading of a few pages or chapters; a larger number hold out illusive hopes of better ahead through the first chapter; a few do not prove hopeless till the middle of the story; still fewer are read to the very end before decision is reached.

However, long experience develops a certain instinct, a

certain *flair*. If the author has a good story to tell, there will be an unmistakable sense of mastery of words in his very introduction; a convincing feeling of power of presentation in the very first page. The Unpublished will never know, can never understand, the infinite relief, the sensation of actual exhilaration, that invades the Reader of Many Manuscripts when he realizes that here at last is something good, — not merely popular necessarily, but a book earnestly done and with a knowledge of the tools. Nor could the author's dearest friend labor so diligently to get the book accepted as does the Reader in such case.

More people are writing to-day than ever before; constantly the "New Man" is coming to the front with his thousands and tens of thousands of copies sold. While these lines are being written, there is very little doubt that somewhere between the Oceans an unknown and unpublished author is at work upon a story that will soon be "the literary sensation of the year." It stands to all good reason that it behooves the publisher to discover him. Obviously this is so. Was not the "Red Badge of Courage" thus written, and the "Gentleman from Indiana," and "Plain Tales," and others, and still others, and still others? The history of publishing teems with just such "finds."

So remembering all these things and possibly remembering "finds" of his own, the Reader attacks his pile of manuscript in much the same spirit as the miner his work of prospecting, disappointed from hour to hour, yet hoping always that the next wrapper removed, the next stone turned, may uncover the chef-d'œuvre or the mine; or if not the next, why, then, the next, or the next after that, or the next after that, and so on to the end, — always cheerfully expectant and almost always disappointed.

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For so many — so very, very many — of the manuscripts are so very — so very, very — bad! The great difficulty seems to be that the writers confuse literature and life, and hold to the foolish mistake that the first is of more importance than the last. They have believed that the way to equip themselves for their profession is to read and study other novels; that they must, — in a word, — be literary. Error, hopeless and complete, and resulting in stories that at the very best and by the most elastic stretch of charity can be only mediocrities. The great bulk of declined manuscripts falls under this head, and the author, seeing that his work is like that of others who are published and successful, fails to understand the reason for the refusal to publish.

In these manuscripts you shall find the stock incidents, the stock characters, the stock episodes that have done duty since the days of Hawthorne and Cooper. Is it a novel of the South? Behold the General with his inevitable “damme, sir” and mint julep; behold the young man, newly arrived from “up North” and falling in love with the one available girl of the community; behold the complication brought about by the young girl’s brother and the catastrophe precipitated by conflicting sectional instincts! Invariably does this kind begin with the expected arrival of the Northern stranger, and no sooner does the wearied Reader of Many Manuscripts discover in the first chapter the old negro hitching up the decrepit horse to the broken-down conveyance, when promptly the entire panorama of the story rises up, — a ghost of other long-dead stories, — and stands despairing in the eye of the mind.

Is it a story of Colonial Virginia? So, in the opening paragraphs the “gentle” Reader is ungently transported to the market place of the town on the morning of a public

event. Behold the old familiar "Burgess" with his old familiar, "Why, how now, Mistress Nancy, and whither away so bravely bedecked?" as the heroine "trips lightly" — they always trip lightly in the colonial romance — upon the scene.

But ah, — most frequent of all, it is the novel of Cavalier and Roundhead. Alas for the *naïveté* of it, alas for the guilelessness of it; with its "beshrew me's" and its "and thou lovest me's;" its Puritan maiden in love with the Cavalier, or its Cavalier damsel in love with the Puritan stalwart; and, as if for the first time in the world, upon the title-page, inevitably, *inevitably*, this inscription: "*From the memoirs of one Perkyn Warbeck (or whatever the name), Sometime Field Cornet in his Majesty's Troop of Horse.*"

It is hard to read this kind; one knows what is to follow. How easy it is to foretell the vicissitudes of the romance. How surely it can be prophesied that the { Cavalier } in love with the { Puritan } will get into trouble because of that fatal passion, and be misunderstood and misjudged as a traitor. How accurately can that battle, which will occur in Chapter XV, be foreseen, how positive from the very start may one be of the little imitation strut of the little imitation mannikin — copied from those literary Godey books of the historical romancers, Scott and Weyman. How certain one is of the demureness of the Puritan maid, how positive of the "roystering" swagger of the Cavalier blade.

Fustian, stuffing, sawdust, rhetoric, "damme, sir," "what ho there," "beshrew me," and all the rest of it, — what a labor lost, what effort unconsciously misdirected!

One pities this kind, but there are some at whom one can afford to be indignant. These are they who know

better, who are *not* unpublished, but, "watching the market," pilfer from former successes.

There is quick work with this kind, for their insincerity is apparent from the very first. The petty thief stealing an overcoat risks at least the thirty days of the law. But these literary pickpockets are lower even than he, for they know no law can reach them, and they write with the avowed object of selling, — selling stolen goods, — and they forfeit the right to be resentful when the publisher refuses to act as their pawnbroker or "fence."

The Reader of Many Manuscripts, it may be believed, disposes of these gentlemen in short order, preferring to put his time to the better purpose of considering blundering, clumsy originality, so only it be conceived in a spirit of sincerity.

That is the word to end upon, *sincerity*, sincerity, and again and again sincerity. If the unpublished is sincere, if he takes his profession seriously, if honestly he tries to present life as he sees it (not as the public have pretended to like to see it), then he is the "New Man" for whom a hundred clashing presses are waiting, for whom every House is searching. He may not be accepted at once, but his work is watched, he himself is kept in view and in mind. Encouragement, even to the advancing of royalty upon work yet to be written, is awaiting him; and not only will his manuscripts be read as earnestly and seriously as he has written them, but in the end his work will be published, and with all the energy and resource of which the House is capable pushed to the extremest limit of its circulation.

WHAT IS A NOVEL?¹

By MARION CRAWFORD

IT has been remarked by a very great authority concerning the affairs of men that "there is no end of the making of books," and to judge from appearances the statement is even more true to-day than when it was first made. Especially of the making of novels there is no end, in these times of latter-day literature. No doubt many wise and good persons and many excellent critics devoutly wish that there might be; but they are not at present strong enough to stand against us, the army of fiction-makers, because we are many, and most of us do not know how to do anything else, and have grown gray in doing this particular kind of work, and are dependent upon it for bread as well as butter; and lastly and chiefly, because we are heavily backed, as a body, by the capital of the publisher, of which we desire to obtain for ourselves as much as possible. Therefore, novels will continue to be written, perhaps for a long time to come. There is a demand for them and there is profit in producing them. Who shall prevent us, authors and publishers, from continuing the production and supplying the demand?

This brings with it a first answer to the question, "What is a novel?" A novel is a marketable commodity, of the class collectively termed "luxuries," as not contributing directly to the support of life or the maintenance of health. It is of the class "artistic luxuries" because it

¹ By Permission of Mitchell Kennerley, publisher of "The Forum." Copyright, 1893.

does not appeal to any of the three material senses — touch, taste, smell; and it is of the class “intellectual artistic luxuries,” because it is not judged by the superior senses, — sight and hearing. The novel, therefore, is an intellectual artistic luxury, — a definition which can be made to include a good deal, but which is, in reality, a closer one than it appears to be at first sight.

No one, I think, will deny that it covers the three principal essentials of the novel as it should be, of a story or romance, which in itself and in the manner of telling it shall appeal to the intellect, shall satisfy the requirements of art, and shall be a luxury, in that it can be of no use to a man when he is at work, but may conduce to peace of mind and delectation during his hours of idleness. The point upon which people differ is the artistic one, and the fact that such differences of opinion exist makes it possible that two writers as widely separated as Mr. Henry James and Mr. Rider Haggard, for instance, find appreciative readers in the same year of the same century, — a fact which the literary history of the future will find it hard to explain.

Probably no one denies that the first object of the novel is to amuse and interest the reader. But it is often said that the novel should instruct as well as afford amusement and the “novel-with-a-purpose” is the realization of this idea. We might invent a better expression than that clumsy translation of the neat German “*Tendenz-Roman*.” Why not compound the words and call the odious thing a “purpose-novel?”

The purpose-novel, then, proposes to serve two masters, besides procuring a reasonable amount of bread-and-butter for its writer and publisher. It proposes to escape from any definition of the novel in general and make itself an “intellectual moral lesson” instead of an “intellectual

artistic luxury." It constitutes a violation of the unwritten contract tacitly existing between writer and reader. As far as supply and demand are concerned, books in general and works of fiction in particular are commodities and subject to the same laws, statutory and traditional, as other articles of manufacture. A toy-dealer would not venture to sell real pistols to little boys as pop-guns, and a gun-maker who should try to sell the latter for Colt's revolvers would get into trouble, even though he were able to prove that the toy was as expensive to manufacture as the real article, or more so, silver-mounted, chiseled, and lying in a Russia-leather case. I am not sure that the law might not support the purchaser in an action for damages if he discovered at a critical moment that his revolver was a plaything. It seems to me that there is a similar case in the matter of novels. A man buys what purports to be a work of fiction, a romance, a novel, a story of adventure, pays his money, takes his book home, prepares to enjoy it at his ease, and discovers that he has paid a dollar for somebody's views on socialism, religion, or the divorce laws.

Such books are generally carefully suited with an attractive title. The binding is as frivolous as can be desired. The bookseller says it is "a work of great power," and there is probably a sentimental dedication on the fly-leaf to a number of initials to which a romantic appearance is given by the introduction of a stray "St." and a few hyphens. The buyer is probably a conservative person, who takes no sort of interest in the laws relating to divorce, in the invention of a new religion, or the position of the labor question. He has simply paid money, on the ordinary tacit contract between furnisher and purchaser, and he has been swindled, to use a very plain term for which a substitute does not occur to me.

Or say that a man buys a seat in one of the regular theaters. He enters, takes his place, preparing to be amused, and the curtain goes up. The stage is set as a church, there is a pulpit before the prompter's box, and the Right Reverend, the Bishop of the Diocese, is on the point of delivering a sermon. The man would be legally justified in demanding his money at the door, I fancy, and would probably do so, though he might admit that the Bishop was the most learned and edifying of preachers. There are indeed certain names and prefixes to names which suggest serious reading, independently of the words printed on the title-page of the book. If the Archbishop of Canterbury, or General Booth, or the Emperor William published a novel, for instance, the work might reasonably be expected to contain an exposition of personal views on some question of the day. But in ordinary cases the purpose-novel is a simple fraud, besides being a failure in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand.

What we call a novel may educate the taste and cultivate the intelligence; under the hand of genius it may purify the heart and fortify the mind; it should never under any circumstances be suffered to deprave the one or to weaken the other; it may stand for scores of years, — and a score of years is a long time in our day, — as the exposition of all that is noble, heroic, honest, and true in the life of woman or man; but it has no right to tell us what its writer thinks about the relations of labor and capital, or to set up what the author conceives to be a nice, original, easy scheme of salvation, any more than it has a right to take for its theme the relative merits of the "broomstick-car" and the "storage system," temperance, vivisection, or the "Ideal Man" of Confucius. Lessons, lectures, discussions, sermons, and didactics generally belong to institutions set apart for especial purposes and

carefully avoided, after a certain age, by the majority of those who wish to be amused. The purpose-novel is an odious attempt to lecture people who hate lectures, to preach at people who prefer their own church, and to teach people who think they know enough already. It is an ambush, a lying-in-wait for the unsuspecting public, a violation of the social contract, — and as such it ought to be either mercilessly crushed or forced by law to bind itself in black, and label itself “Purpose” in very big letters.

In art of all kinds the moral lesson is a mistake. It is one thing to exhibit an ideal worthy to be imitated, though inimitable in all its perfection, but so clearly noble as to appeal directly to the sympathetic string that hangs untuned in the dullest human heart; to make man brave without arrogance, woman pure without prudishness, love enduring yet earthly, not angelic, friendship sincere but not ridiculous. It is quite another matter to write a “guide to morality” or a “handbook for practical sinners” and call either one a novel, no matter how much fiction it may contain.

Wordsworth tried the moral lesson and spoiled some of his best work with botany and the Bible. A good many smaller men than he have tried the same thing since, and have failed. Perhaps “Cain” and “Manfred” have taught the human heart more wisdom than “Matthew” or the unfortunate “idiot boy” over whom Byron was so mercilessly merry. And yet Byron probably never meant to teach any one anything in particular, and Wordsworth meant to teach everybody, including and beginning with himself.

I do not wish to be accused of what is called smart writing. It is much easier to attack than to defend, and much more blessed to give hard knocks than to receive

them. A professed novelist is perhaps not a competent judge of novels from the point of view which interests the reader, and which is of course the reader's own. We know the "technique" of the trick better than the effect it produces, just as it is hard for a conjuror to realize the sensations of the old gentleman in the audience who finds a bowl of gold-fish in his waistcoat pocket. We do not all know one another's tricks, but we have a fair idea of the general principle on which they are done and a very definite opinion about our own business as compared with that of the parson or the professor.

We know our books from the inside and we see the strings of the puppets, while the public only guesses at the mechanism as it sits before the stage, watching the marionettes and listening to the voice from behind the scenes.

A novel is, after all, a play, and perhaps it is nothing but a substitute for the real play with live characters, scene-shifting, and footlights. But miracle-plays have gone out of fashion in modern times, except at Oberammergau. The purpose-novel is a miracle-play, — and if it be true that any really good novel can be dramatized, nothing short of a miracle could put a purpose-novel on the boards.

Most people have a very clear conception of what a good play ought to be and of the precise extent to which realism can be effective without being offensive. But it is strange, and it is a bad sign of the times, that persons who would not tolerate a coarse play read novels little, if at all, short of indecent.

It has always seemed to me that the perfect novel, as it ought to be, exists somewhere in the state of the Platonic idea, waiting to be set down on paper by the first man of genius who receives a direct literary inspiration.

It must deal chiefly with love. For in that passion all men and women are most generally interested, either for its present reality or for the memories that soften the coldly vivid recollection of an active past and shed a tender light in the dark places of by-gone struggles, or because the hope of it brightens and gladdens the path of future dreams. |

The perfect novel must be clean and sweet, for it must tell its tale to all mankind, to saint and sinner, pure and defiled, just and unjust. It must have the magic to fascinate and the power to hold its reader from first to last. Its realism must be real, of three dimensions, not flat and photographic; its romance must be of the human heart and truly human, that is, of the earth as we all have found it; its idealism must be transcendent, not measured to man's mind but proportioned to man's soul. Its religion must be of such grand and universal span as to hold all worthy religions in itself. Conceive, if possible, such a story, told in a language that can be now simple, now keen, now passionate, and now sublime; or rather, pray, do not conceive it, for the modern novelist's occupation would suddenly be gone, and that one book would stand alone of its kind, making all others worse than useless — ridiculous, if not sacrilegious, by comparison.

Why must a novel-writer be either a "realist" or a "romantist?" And, if the latter, why "romanticist" any more than "realisticist?" Why should a good novel not combine romance and reality in just proportions? Is there any reason to suppose that the one element must necessarily shut out the other? Both are included in every-day life, which would be a very dull affair without something of the one and would be decidedly incoherent without the other. Art, if it is "to create and foster agreeable illusions," as Napoleon is believed to have said

of it, should represent the real, but in such a way as to make it seem more agreeable and interesting than it actually is. That is the only way to create "an agreeable illusion," and by no other means can a novel do good while remaining a legitimate novel and not becoming a sermon, a treatise, or a polemic.

It may reasonably be inquired whether the prevailing and still growing taste for fiction expresses a new and enduring want of educated men and women. The novel, as we understand the word, is after all a very recent invention. Considering that we do not find it in existence until late in the last century, its appearance must be admitted to have been very sudden, its growth fabulously rapid, and its development enormous. The ancients had nothing more like it than a few collections of humorous and pathetic stories. The Orientals, who might be supposed to feel the need of it even more than we do, had nothing but their series of fantastic tales strung rather loosely together without general plan. Men and women seemed to have survived the dullness of the dark age with the help of the itinerant story-teller.

The novel is a distinctly modern invention, satisfying a modern want. In the ideal state described with so much accuracy by Mr. Bellamy, I believe the novel would not sell. It would be incomprehensible or it would not be a novel at all, according to our understanding. Do away practically with the struggle for life, eliminate all the unfit and make the surviving fittest perfectly comfortable — men and women might still take a curious interest in our present civilization, but it would be of a purely historical nature. Gratuitously to invent a tale of a poor man fighting for success would seem to them a piece of monstrously bad taste and ridiculously useless. Are we tending to such a state as that? There are those who believe

that we are, — but a faith able to remove mountains at “cut rates” will not be more than enough to realize their hopes.

It may be fairly claimed that humanity has, within the past hundred years, found a way of carrying a theater in its pocket, and as long as humanity remains what it is, it will delight in taking out its pocket-stage and watching the antics of the actors, who are so like itself and yet so much more interesting. Perhaps that is, after all, the best answer to the question, “What is a novel?” It is, or ought to be, a pocket-stage. Scenery, light, shade, the actors themselves, are made of words and nothing but words, more or less cleverly put together. A play is good in proportion as it represents the more dramatic, passionate, romantic, or humorous sides of real life. A novel is excellent according to the degree in which it produces the illusions of a good play, — but it must not be forgotten that the play is the thing, and that illusion is eminently necessary to success.

Every writer who has succeeded has his own methods of creating such illusion. Some of us are found out and some of us are not, but we all do the same thing in one way or another, consciously or unconsciously.

But this is not the place for a study of methods. As far as I have been able, I have answered the question I asked, and which stands at the head of this article. But I have answered it in my own way. What am I, a novelist, trying to do? I am trying, with such limited means as I have at my disposal, to make little pocket-theaters, out of words. I am trying to be architect, scene-painter, upholsterer, dramatist, and stage manager, all at once. Is it any wonder if we novelists do not succeed as well as we could wish, when we try to be masters of so many trades?

SUCCESS IN LITERATURE

By GEORGE HENRY LEWES



LITERATURE has become a profession: to many a serious and elevating profession; to many more a mere trade, having miserable trade-aims and trade-tricks. As in every other profession, the ranks are thronged with incompetent aspirants, without seriousness of aim, without the faculties demanded by their work. They are led to waste powers which in other directions might have done honest service, because they have failed to discriminate between aspiration and inspiration, between the desire for greatness and the consciousness of power.

Still lower in the ranks are those who follow Literature simply because they see no other opening for their incompetence; just as forlorn widows and ignorant old maids thrown suddenly on their own resources open a school — no other means of livelihood seeming to be within their reach. Lowest of all are those whose esurient vanity, acting on a frivolous levity of mind, urges them to make Literature a plaything for display. To write for a livelihood, even on a complete misapprehension of our powers, is at least a respectable impulse. To play at Literature is altogether inexcusable: the motive is vanity, the object notoriety, the end contempt.

The rarity of good books in every department, and the enormous quantity of imperfect, insincere books, has been the lament of all times. The complaint being as old as Literature itself, we may dismiss without notice all the accusations which throw the burden on systems of educa-

tion, conditions of society, cheap books, levity and superficiality of readers, and analogous causes. None of these can be a *vera causa*; though each may have had its special influence in determining the production of some imperfect works. The main cause I take to be that indicated in Goethe's aphorism: "In this world there are so few voices and so many echoes."

Talent, as will become apparent in the course of our inquiry, holds a very subordinate position in Literature to that usually assigned to it. Indeed, a cursory inspection of the Literature of our day will detect an abundance of remarkable talent — that is, of intellectual agility, apprehensiveness, wit, fancy, and power of expression — which is nevertheless impotent to rescue "clever writing" from neglect or contempt. It is unreal splendor; for the most part mere intellectual fireworks. In Life, as in Literature, our admiration for mere cleverness has a touch of contempt in it, and is very unlike the respect paid to character. And justly so. No talent can be supremely effective unless it act in close alliance with certain moral qualities.

A man may be variously accomplished, and yet be a feeble poet. He may be a real poet, yet a feeble dramatist. He may have dramatic faculty, yet be a feeble novelist. He may be a good story-teller, yet a shallow thinker and a slipshod writer. For success in any special kind of work it is obvious that a special talent is requisite; but obvious as this seems, when stated as a general proposition, it rarely serves to check a mistaken presumption.

There are many writers endowed with a certain susceptibility to the graces and refinements of Literature which has been fostered by culture till they have mistaken it for native power; and these men, being really destitute of native power, are forced to imitate what others have

created. They can understand how a man may have musical sensibility and yet not be a good singer; but they fail to understand, at least in their own case, how a man may have literary sensibility, yet not be a good storyteller or an effective dramatist. They imagine that if they are cultivated and clever, can write what is delusively called a "brilliant style," and are familiar with the masterpieces of Literature, they must be more competent to succeed in fiction or the drama than a duller man, with a plainer style and a slenderer acquaintance with the "best models." Had they distinctly conceived the real aims of Literature this mistake would often have been avoided. A recognition of the aims would have pressed on their attention a more distinct appreciation of the requirements.

No one ever doubted that special aptitudes were required for music, mathematics, drawing, or for wit; but other aptitudes not less special are seldom recognized. It is with authors as with actors: mere delight in the art deludes them into the belief that they could be artists. There are born actors, as there are born authors. To an observant eye such men reveal their native endowments. Even in conversation they spontaneously throw themselves into the characters they speak of. They mimic, often quite unconsciously, the speech and gesture of the person. They dramatize when they narrate. Other men with little of this faculty, but with only so much of it as will enable them to imitate the tones and gestures of some admired actor, are misled by their vanity into the belief that they also are actors, that they also could move an audience as their original moves it.

In Literature we see a few original writers, and a crowd of imitators: men of special aptitudes, and men who have mistaken their power of repeating with slight variation

what others have done, for a power of creating anew. The imitator sees that it is easy to do that which has already been done. He intends to improve on it; to add from his own stores something which the originator could not give; to lend it the luster of a richer mind; to make this situation more impressive, and that character more natural. He is vividly impressed with the imperfections of the original. And it is a perpetual puzzle to him why the public, which applauds his imperfect predecessor, stupidly fails to recognize his own obvious improvements.

From such men the cry goes forth about neglected genius and public caprice. In secret they despise many a distinguished writer, and privately, if not publicly, assert themselves as immeasurably superior. The success of a Dumas is to them a puzzle and an irritation. They do not understand that a man becomes distinguished in virtue of some special talent properly directed; and that their obscurity is due either to the absence of a special talent, or to its misdirection. They may probably be superior to Dumas in general culture or various ability; they are his inferiors in particular ability. They may be conscious of a wider knowledge, a more exquisite sensibility, and a finer taste more finely cultivated; yet they have failed to produce any impression on the public where the despised favorite has produced a strong impression. They are thus thrown upon the alternative of supposing that he has had "the luck" denied to them, or that the public taste is degraded and prefers trash. Both opinions are serious mistakes. Both injure the mind that harbors them.

In how far is success a test of merit? Rigorously considered, it is an absolute test. Nor is such a conclusion shaken by the undeniable fact that temporary applause is often secured by works which have no lasting value. For

we must always ask, What is the nature of the applause, and from what circles does it rise? A work which appears at a particular juncture, and suits the fleeting wants of the hour, flattering the passions of the hour, may make a loud noise, and bring its author into strong relief.

This is not luck, but a certain fitness between the author's mind and the public needs. He who first seizes the occasion, may be for general purposes intrinsically a feebler man than many who stand listless or hesitating till the moment be passed; but in Literature, as in Life, a sudden promptitude outrivals vacillating power.

Generally speaking, however, this promptitude has but rare occasions for achieving success. We may lay it down as a rule that no work ever succeeded, even for a day, but it deserved that success; no work ever failed but under conditions which made failure inevitable. This will seem hard to men who feel that in their case neglect arises from prejudice or stupidity.

Yet it is true even in extreme cases; true even when the work once neglected has since been acknowledged superior to the works which for a time eclipsed it. Success, temporary or enduring, is the measure of the relation, temporary or enduring, which exists between a work and the public mind. The millet seed may be intrinsically less valuable than a pearl; but the hungry cock wisely neglected the pearl, because pearls could not, and millet seeds could, appease his hunger.

We have all more or less to contend against public misconception, no less than against our own defects. The object of Literature is to instruct, to animate, or to amuse. Any book which does one of these things succeeds; any book which does none of these things fails. Failure is the indication of an inability to perform what was attempted: the aim was misdirected, or the arm was too weak.

LITERATURE AS A PROFESSION¹

By BRANDER MATTHEWS



THE best basis for a profitable discussion is nearly always to be found in an early agreement in regard to the exact meaning of the words we intend to use; and in any inquiry into literature as a profession we had better begin by trying to find out just what meaning we wish to give to each of the words thus united. To define a *profession* is easy. A profession is the calling or occupation which one professes to follow and by which one gets one's living. To define *literature* is not easy; for the word is strangely various, meaning all things to all men, calling for one interpretation to-day and for another to-morrow.

But with the aid of the dictionary we may hit on a rough-and-ready definition not unfit for our present needs. Literature, then, is the communication of facts, ideas, and emotions by means of books. If we combine these definitions we see that the profession of literature is the calling of those who support themselves by the communication of facts, ideas, and emotions through the medium of books.

No searching examination guards the entrance to the profession of literature, and no special diploma is demanded of those who wish to practice it. Unlike medicine and the law, literature seems to call for no particular schooling. Apparently, the possession of pen and ink and paper is enough; and the practitioner is then free to communicate by means of books whatever facts, ideas, and emotions he

¹ By Permission of the Author. From "The Historical Novel and Other Essays." Copyright, 1901, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

may happen to have stored within him ready for distribution to the world at large. Every one of us is more or less trained in speaking, which is the earliest of the arts of expression — as writing is one of the latest; and to do with the hand what we are accustomed to do with the tongue seems as if it ought not to be a feat of exceeding difficulty. Perhaps this apparent ease of accomplishment is one of the reasons why literature has only recently got itself recognized as a profession. Congreve and Horace Walpole and Byron all affected to look down on the writings by which alone they are remembered to-day.

† Even now the boundaries of the profession of literature are not a little vague. Is a college professor a man of letters? Is a lecturer? Is an editor? And, more particularly, is a journalist a literary man? Any one who is thrown much with young men about to make the choice of a calling is aware that much confusion exists in their minds between literature and journalism; and they will talk of “going into literature” when what they really propose to do is to get on a newspaper. Even when they do perceive some difference between literature and journalism they are inclined to hold that although it may be journalism to write for a daily or a weekly paper, yet to write for a monthly magazine is “to contribute to literature.” But it ought to be obvious that this is a distinction without a difference, and altogether misleading.

The articles dealing with temporary themes so frequently found in the monthlies are frankly journalistic in their intent; and as emphatically literary are certain memorable poems first printed in the dailies — Drake’s “American Flag,” for instance, originally published in the New York “Evening Post,” Holmes’s “Old Ironsides,” sent to the Boston “Advertiser,” and Mr. Kipling’s “Recessional,” written for the London “Times.” And just as

these genuine contributions to literature appeared first in newspapers, so mere journalism very often nowadays gets itself bound into books — the war correspondent's letters from the front, for example, and the descriptive reporting that enlivens our magazines.

Far deeper than any classification of periodicals — the daily and the weekly in a lower group and the monthly in a higher — is the real distinction between literature and journalism. The distinction is one of aim and of intent; and there is a total difference of temper and of attitude. The object of journalism at its best is the opposite of the object of literature; and the two arts are in reality incompatible and almost hostile the one to the other. The work of the journalist, as such, is for the day only; the work of the man of letters, as such, is for all time. Now and again, no doubt, what the journalist does survives longer than its allotted twenty-four hours; and, more often than not, what the man of letters does fails of immortality. But none the less was the one done in the full consciousness that it was ephemeral, and the other in the high hope that it might be eternal.

In as far as the journalist is a leader of public opinion, he seeks to accomplish his immediate purpose by arousing and by convincing his readers until they are ready to do as he bids them. His chief weapon is repetition. He says what he has to say again and again and again, varying his form from day to day, indeed, but repeating himself unhesitatingly and of necessity. He keeps on hammering until he drives his nail home; and then he picks up another nail, to be driven home in its turn by another series of incessant blows. In one article he touches only one side of the case, reserving the other aspects for the other articles that he knows he will have to write. He lives in an atmosphere of controversy, and breathes freely as if it were his native air.

He plans no element of permanence in his work, and, indeed, never allows himself to think of such a thing. As the origin of the word journalism implies, the journalist seeks only to be sufficient unto the day — no more and no less. The result of his labor is to be sought in a movement of public opinion, having its record, perhaps, on the statute-book of the State and even in the history of the whole country; but his work itself has perished. Horace Greeley is the most famous of all American journalists, and his was a daring and a trenchant style. But whatever may have been his share in bringing about the abolition of negro slavery, not one of his assaults on the slaveholders survived to be read by the generation that followed his — a generation to whom Greeley was but a name and a legend. It is the essential condition of the best newspaper writing that its interest should be temporary; and no sooner has the journalist done his work than he must expect to see it sink into the swift oblivion of the back number.

The man of letters is almost the exact antithesis of the newspaper man. He seeks above all things to express himself — to give form to a something within him that is striving to be born, to body forth his own vision of life, to record once for all his own understanding of the universe. He toils joyfully, without haste and without rest, never quitting his work till he has done his best by it, until at last he knows it to be as perfect as he can make it, however dissatisfied he may remain with his final achievement. The object of his effort may seem but a trifle — a little lyric or the briefest of short stories; yet he never relaxes his standard, believing that the Tanagra figurines called for as keen a conscience in the artist as the Attic marbles themselves. Though he may work swiftly when the mood is on him and the muse inspires, he is

never in a hurry. And where the journalist writes every night what must be forgotten before the next new moon, the man of letters may keep to himself what he has done, even for seven years, as Horace advised; and in all that time he may bestow on it ungrudgingly again and again the loving labor of the file.

Thus we see that journalism is a craft, while literature is an art; and that the two callings are almost irreconcilable. The practice of the one often tends to unfit a man for the practice of the other. There are journalists, not a few, who have become men of letters, and there are men of letters who have gone on newspapers; but I cannot recall the name of any man who won equal fame in both vocations.

Bryant was a poet who was also the chief editorial writer of a daily newspaper; and one of his biographers tells us how careful Bryant was to do all his journalistic writing in the office of the paper itself, leaving his own home free from any taint of contemporary pressure.

As journalism is not literature, neither is editing. An editor, like a journalist, may or may not be a man of letters; but there is no need that he should be. There is no reason to suppose that a man of letters can edit, any more than there is to suppose that he can write for a newspaper. To edit a periodical, daily or weekly, monthly or quarterly, is a special art, calling for special qualifications having no relation whatever to the special qualifications which the literary artist must have.

Some literary artists have been endowed with the double equipment, but not many. Poe was apparently one of the few men of letters, who are also born with the editorial faculty; and it is related that whenever he took charge of a magazine its circulation soon increased. Dickens also was successful as an editor, whereas Thackeray

showed no remarkable aptitude, and soon gave up the uncongenial task.

Often literature is seen to be a by-product of other professions. Literature, pure and simple, rarely rewards its followers with enough to live on; and the most of them are forced to look to another calling for their bread, even if they can rely on literature for their butter.

It is but a divided allegiance they can give to literature and they find themselves compelled to become journalists like Bryant; editors, like Poe; lecturers, like Emerson; college professors, like Lowell. They have positions in the civil service, as Wordsworth had and Burns and Matthew Arnold. They are magistrates and sheriffs, like Fielding and Scott, or physicians, like the authors of "Elsie Venner" and of "Marjorie Fleming." Perhaps they have inherited invested funds sufficient to support them without the necessity of earning money, as had Gibbon and Parkman.

However few the men of letters may be to-day who are supported by literature pure and simple, they are not less numerous than they were yesterday. In our own language, especially, the conditions of literature as a profession whereby a man may earn his living are far more favorable in the present than they were ever in the past. The extraordinary expansion of the English-speaking stock on both sides of the Atlantic, the swiftness of communication, the spread of education, the granting of international copyright, have all united to pay the author a reward for his work, never before offered. Shakespeare, at the end of the nineteenth century would not need to be an actor to make a living. Neither would Molière, since we have also international stageright. And Homer would not be forced to go on the road giving author's readings — in his time the sole resource of the epic poet.

It is well for the permanence and for the variety of literature that the man of letters should not be allowed to narrow his art to technic, that he should be compelled to make a wide appeal, and that he should rely for support not on the qualities which professed critics praise in his art, but on those which the plain people may freely find in his work. The man of letters may have his heart set on technic itself, and so best, if only his craftsmanship is a servant of his interest in life, and not a substitute for it. "Laborious Orient ivory, sphere in sphere," is for the cabinet of the collector only, not for the glance of the public eye in the plaza.

It is the constant danger of the artist that he may come to have only technic — that he can command the art of expression, and have nothing to express. His very skill then tends to make him remote from the healthy, common mass of men; it gives him a disquieting aloofness, and perhaps even a vague insincerity such as comes to those who deal in words rather than in things. Literature can not live by words alone; it is but an empty voice if it has no facts, no ideas, no emotions to communicate. Men of letters are to be found in other callings partly because literature itself is but a doubtful support, and partly because in these other callings they meet their fellow men face to face and hand to hand, and so have occasion to accumulate the facts, to clarify the ideas, and to experience the emotions which alone can give vitality to literature. And this is why the professions that seem akin to literature — journalism and editing and lecturing — are perhaps less helpful to the development of the literary artist than the other crafts which have no relation to literature.

Bagehot gives as the reason why there are so many wretched books that the men who know how to write

don't know anything else, while the men who really know things and have really done things unfortunately don't know how to write. We can see the truth of this saying more clearly when we recall the genuine satisfaction with which we receive the books of the men who have done something and who — by a double gift of fortune — are able to write about the things they really know. This accounts for the charm of the autobiographies of artists and of men of action — Mr. Joseph Jefferson's, for example, and Benvenuto Cellini's, the "Commentaries" of Cæsar, and the "Personal Memoirs" of Grant.

In as far as literature is an art it is its own reward; but in as far as it is a profession it must provide a livelihood. And here is the crucial difficulty of all the arts when they are also professions. For the artist works chiefly to bring forth what is in him as best he can, for the sheer joy of the labor, in frank gratification of the play impulse which is deep rooted in all of us. How, then, can he take pay for that which is beyond all price? When he has sought to express himself, to set down in black and white his own vision of the universe, or of any tiny fragment of it, then all-absorbing to his soul, how can money measure the delight he took in his toil? Yet this which was wrought in secret and with delicious travail, the artist must vend in open market, in competition with his fellow craftsmen; putting it up to be knocked down to the highest bidder, huckstering his heart's blood, and receiving for it whatever the variable temper of the public may deem it to be worth at the moment.

And why not, indeed? Shakespeare did this, and Molière also. And shall any man of letters to-day be more dainty than they were? Cervantes did the same, and Thackeray; Hawthorne did it, and Turgenieff; and their art was none the less transcendent, and they themselves

none the less manly. They were modest, all of them; and they never cried out that the world owed them a living, or that the times were out of joint, since they had not every day so gaudy a banquet as a stock speculator on the eve of his bankruptcy. Each of them sold his wares as best he could, wondering, it may be, why he should be paid at all for that which it had been so keen a delight to produce. Hawthorne it was who declared that "the only sensible ends of literature are, first, the pleasurable toil of writing; second, the gratification of one's family and friends; and, lastly, the solid cash." And Stevenson insisted that "no other business offers a man his daily bread upon such joyful terms; the direct returns — the wages of the trade — are small, but the indirect — the wages of the life — are incalculably great." Thus Stevenson speaks of the artist at large; and as to the man of letters he maintains that "he labors in a craft to which the whole material of his life is tributary, and which opens a door to all his tastes, his loves, his hatreds, and his convictions, so that what he writes is only what he longed to utter. He may have enjoyed many things in this big, tragic playground of the world; but what shall he have enjoyed more?"

The true artist dreams of a remote millennium when

Only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall
blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for
fame,
But each for the joy of the working . . .

Yet, if we can judge by the history of the past, it is better for the artist himself that this should remain a dream only, and that he, having worked for the joy of the working, shall then take his wages in money, like the rest of us. It is better that he should not be tenant-at-will

of a separate star of his own, but a resident of this workaday world where his fellow man has a residence also. It is best that he should be forced to face the realities of existence, and first of all to have the delight of his labor, and then to take the hire of which the laborer is worthy.

The profession of literature is not for those who do not relish its toil and who do not love it for its own sake. It is not for those who are thinking rather of the wages than of the work. Above all, it is not for those who have a high standard of wages and a low standard of work.

FICTION WRITING AS A BUSINESS¹

BY FRANK NORRIS



THE exaggerated and exalted ideas of the unenlightened upon this subject are, I have found, beyond all reason and beyond all belief. The superstition that with the publication of the first book comes fame and affluence is as firmly rooted as that other delusion which asks us to suppose that "a picture in the Paris Salon" is the certificate of success, ultimate, final, definite.

One knows, of course, that very naturally the "Eben Holden" and "David Harum" and "Richard Carvel" fellows make fortunes, and that these are out of the discussion; but also one chooses to assume that the average, honest, middle-class author supports himself and even a family by the sale of his novels — lives on his royalties.

Royalties! Why in the name of heaven were they called that, those microscopic sums that too, too often are less royal than beggarly? It has a fine sound — royalty. It fills the mouth. It can be said with an air — royalty. But there are plenty of these same royalties that will not pay the typewriter's bill.

Take an average case. No, that will not do, either, for the average published novel — I say it with my right hand raised — is, irretrievably, hopelessly and conclusively, a financial failure.

Take, then, an unusually lucky instance, literally a novel whose success is extraordinary, a novel which has

¹ From "The Responsibilities of a Novelist." Copyright, 1903, Doubleday, Page & Company

sold twenty-five hundred copies. I repeat that this is an extraordinary success. Not one book out of fifteen will do as well. But let us consider it. The author has worked upon it for — at the very least — three months. It is published. Twenty-five hundred copies are sold. Then the sale stops. And by the word stop one means cessation in the completest sense of the word. There are people — I know plenty of them — who suppose that when a book is spoken of as having stopped selling, a generality is intended, that merely a falling off of the initial demand has occurred. Error. When a book — a novel — stops selling, it stops with the definiteness of an engine when the fire goes out. It stops with a suddenness that is appalling, and thereafter not a copy, not one single, solitary copy is sold. And do not for an instant suppose that ever after the interest may be revived. A dead book can no more be resuscitated than a dead dog.

But to go back. The twenty-five hundred have been sold. The extraordinary, the marvelous has been achieved. What does the author get out of it? A royalty of ten per cent. Two hundred and fifty dollars for three months' hard work. Roughly, less than twenty dollars a week, a little more than two dollars and fifty cents a day. An expert carpenter will easily make twice that, and the carpenter has infinitely the best of it in that he can keep the work up year in and year out, where the novelist must wait for a new idea, and the novel writer must then jockey and maneuver for publication. Two novels a year is about as much as the writer can turn out and yet keep a marketable standard. Even admitting that both the novels sell twenty-five hundred copies, there is only five hundred dollars of profit. In the same time the carpenter has made his eighteen hun-

dred dollars, nearly four times as much. One may well ask the question: Is fiction writing a money-making profession?

The astonishing thing about the affair is that a novel may make a veritable stir, almost a sensation, and yet fail to sell very largely.

There is so-and-so's book. Everywhere you go you hear about it. Your friends have read it. It is in demand at the libraries. You don't pick up a paper that does not contain a review of the story in question. It is in the "Book of the Month" column. It is even, even — the pinnacle of achievement — in that shining roster, the list of best sellers of the week.

Why, of course the author is growing rich! Ah, at last he has arrived! No doubt he will build a country house out of his royalties. Lucky fellow; one envies him.

Catch him unawares and what is he doing? As like as not writing unsigned book reviews at five dollars a week in order to pay his board bill — and glad of the chance.

It seems incredible. But one must remember this: That for every one person who buys a book, there will be six who will talk about it. And the half-thousand odd reviewers who are writing of the book do not buy it, but receive "editorial" copies from the publishers, upon which no royalty is paid.

I know it for an undisputed fact that a certain novel which has ever been called the best American novel of the nineteenth century, and which upon publication was talked about, written about and even preached about, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, took ten years in which to attain the sale of ten thousand copies. Even so famous, so brilliant an author as Harold Frederic did not at first sell conspicuously. "That Lawton Girl," "The

Copperhead," "Seth's Brother's Wife," masterpieces though they are, never made money for the writer. Each sold about two thousand copies. Not until "Theron Ware" was published did Mr. Frederic reap his reward.

Even so great a name as that of George Meredith is not a "sesame," and only within the last few years has the author of "Evan Harrington" made more than five or six hundred dollars out of any one of his world-famous books.

But of course there is another side. For one thing, the author is put to no expense in the composing of his novel. (It is not always necessary to typewrite the manuscript.) The carpenter must invest much money in tools; must have a shop. Shop rent and tools repaired or replaced cut into his eighteen hundred dollars of profit. Or take it in the fine arts. The painter must have a studio, canvases, models, brushes, a whole equipment; the architect must have his drafting room, the musician his instrument.

But as far as initial expense is concerned, a half-dollar will buy every conceivable necessary tool the novelist may demand. He needs no office, shop or studio; models are not required. The libraries of the city offer him a quiet working place if the home is out of the question. Nor, as one has so often urged, is any expensive training necessary before his money-earning capacity is attained. The architect must buy instruction for many years. The painter must study in expensive studios, the musician must learn in costly conservatories, the singer must be taught by high-priced maestros. Furthermore, it is often necessary for the aspirant to travel great distances to reach the cities where his education is to be furthered; almost invariably a trip to and a residence in Europe is indispensable. It is a great undertaking and an expensive

one to prepare for the professions named, and it takes years of time — years during which the aspirant is absolutely non-productive.

But the would-be novel writer may determine between breakfast and dinner to essay the plunge, buy (for a few cents) ink and paper between dinner and supper, and have the novel under way before bedtime.

How much of an outlay of money does his first marketable novel represent? Practically nothing. On the other hand, let us ask the same question of, say, the painter. How much money has he had to spend before he was able to paint his first marketable picture? To reach a total sum he must foot up the expenses of at least five years of instruction and study, the cost of living during that time, the cost of materials, perhaps even the price of a trip to Paris. Easily the sum may reach five thousand dollars. Fifty cents' worth of ink and paper do not loom large beside this figure.

Then there are other ways in which the fiction writer may earn money — by fiction. The novelist may look down upon the mere writer of short stories, or may even look down upon himself in the same capacity, but as a rule the writer of short stories is the man who has the money. It is much easier to sell the average short story than the average novel. Infinitely easier. And the short story of the usual length will fetch one hundred dollars. One thousand people — think of it — one thousand people must buy copies of your novel before it will earn so much for you. It takes three months to complete the novel — the novel that earns the two hundred and fifty dollars. But with ingenuity, the writer should be able to turn out six short stories in the same time, and if he has luck in placing them there is six hundred dollars earned — more than twice the sum made by the novel. So that

the novelist may eke out the alarming brevity of his semi-annual statements by writing and selling "short stuff."

Then — so far as the novel is concerned — there is one compensation, one source of revenue which the writer enjoys and which is, as a rule, closed to all others. Once the carpenter sells his piece of work it is sold for good and all. The painter has but one chance to make money from the sale of his picture. The architect receives payment for his design and there is the end. But the novelist — and one speaks now of the American — may sell the same work over many times. Of course, if the novel is a failure it is a failure, and no more is said.

But suppose it is a salable, readable, brisk bit of narrative, with a swift action and rapid movement. Properly managed, this, under favorable conditions, might be its life history: First it is serialized either in the Sunday press or, less probably, in a weekly or monthly. Then it is made up into book form and sent over the course a second time. The original publisher sells sheets to a Toronto or Montreal house and a Canadian edition reaps a like harvest. It is not at all unlikely that a special cheap cloth edition may be bought and launched by some large retailer either of New York or Chicago. Then comes the paper edition — with small royalties, it is true, but based upon an enormous number of copies, for the usual paper edition is an affair of tens of thousands. Next the novel crosses the Atlantic and a small sale in England helps to swell the net returns, which again are added to — possibly — by the "colonial edition" which the English firm issues. Last of all comes the Tauchnitz edition, and with this (bar the improbable issuing of later special editions) the exploitation ceases. Eight separate times the same commodity has been sold, no one of the sales militating against

the success of the other seven, the author getting his fair slice every time.

Can any other trade, profession or art (excepting only the dramatist, which is, after all, a sister art) show the like? Even (speaking of the dramatist) there may be a ninth reincarnation of the same story and the creatures of the writer's pages stalk forth upon the boards in cloak and buskin.

And there are the indirect ways in which he may earn money. Some of his ilk there are who lecture. Nor are there found wanting those who read from their own works. Some write editorials or special articles in the magazines and newspapers with literary departments. But few of them have "princely" incomes.

LITERARY TRAINING¹

By C. E. HEISCH



HERE is much preliminary work to be undertaken before the threshold of the literary life can be crossed; and the task to which the intending author must first apply himself, will be his own training for the career which he has chosen. For his training, he must write; for his education, he must read. It is true that only a part of his education will come to him from books; but it is with that part that we are immediately concerned.

At this point in his career, if he be so happy as to possess a friend who has trodden this path before him, who is willing to act as his torchbearer, who will guide his reading, draw out his thoughts, show him his mistakes, and point out the dangers which beset the way, he may safely leave his education in these competent hands. But it is more than probable that he has no such friend, and, in that case, he is practically left to his own resources.

And here let him pause for a moment, and consider what it is that he wishes to do. Does he wish to teach others? — for every writer is in some sort a teacher, — then must he first teach himself. And what is it that he requires to learn? Surely everything that he will have occasion to teach; and since it is impossible at the outset to foresee what this will be, the range of his reading will hardly be too wide.

It is not, however, the range of our reading or its amount that concerns us most nearly, but the quality of the books

¹From "The Art and Craft of the Author."

we choose. Let us lay down for ourselves an inviolable rule that we will read none but the best books; and this, not merely because life is short and our time for reading is limited, not merely because the time spent upon a bad book is taken from a good one, but on account of the effect upon the mind and character which books are capable of producing. For we go to them not so much to possess ourselves of the information which they contain, or for the cultivation of a good style in writing; (although, for both these uses, we value them highly), but for mental and moral nourishment; and upon the quality of that nourishment our mental and moral health will, in a great measure, depend. A good book enlarges the outlook, deepens the sympathies, quickens the perceptions, enriches the mind, and elevates the character. This is real education; for it is the "leading forth" or developing of the powers of the soul. Our chosen books, like our chosen friends, readily raise or sink us to their own level; "it is so easy with the great to be great," and as easy, alas! with the base to be base.

Ruskin, in his "Sesame and Lilies," has a characteristic passage, in which he personifies books, and makes them address us thus: —

"Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms, No. If you will not rise to us, we can not stoop to you. . . . You must rise to the level of our thoughts, if you would be gladdened by them. This, then," he adds, "is what you have to do, and I admit that it is much. You must, in a word, love these people, if you are to be among them. . . . You must love them, and show your love by a true desire to be taught by them and to enter into their thoughts. To

enter into theirs, observe; not to find your own expressed by them. If the person who wrote the book is not wiser than you, you need not read it; if he be, he will think differently from you in many respects."

It is strange that it should be necessary, in this matter of reading, to insist so strongly upon a principle which is the natural rule of our daily lives. In ordinary matters we do not need to be told to choose the best, still less to make resolutions and lay down rules for ourselves: we naturally choose it because we want it; because we are anxious, as the phrase goes, to do the best we can for ourselves.

But there is a further reason. In the affairs and transactions of every-day life we *know* what is best; we can distinguish for ourselves what is good from what is bad; whereas, in this matter of books, this is precisely what many of us can not do. It is not because we are willing to be put off with an inferior article that we read a worthless, or worse than worthless, book, but because we do not know that it is inferior. Probably four-fifths of the reading public, in the absence of any tradition or received opinion, would come to some such conclusion as Robert Louis Stevenson's "honest man," who "thought, and was not ashamed to have it known of him, that Ouida was better in every way than William Shakespeare." "This," adds Stevenson, "would be about the staple of lay criticism."

Now, this power of discriminating between good and bad in literature, the immediate recognition of what is valuable, and recoil from what is worthless, is indispensable to the author. This knowledge is an essential part of his art, which he must make it his business to acquire. For how is it possible that he should himself produce what is good, if he is incapable of recognizing excellence when it comes in his way?

Happily for himself, he is not left to wander alone through the pathless wilderness of existing books. He has the guidance of received opinion — that is, of the expression of the cultivated taste of each generation in turn; and of this he should thankfully avail himself, until, by this very process, his own taste becomes cultivated. Let him, then, at least during the period of his education, restrict his reading to such books as that taste has approved. He will soon find that the “higher vision” has poisoned “all meaner choice for evermore.”

Our next point will be the writer’s training. We can learn to write by writing, and in no other way. And if we ask how we are to set about this writing which is to teach us to write, the answer is supplied by no less a person than that master of the art, Robert Louis Stevenson. In a very interesting essay, entitled “A College Magazine,” he gives us a detailed account of the process by which he taught himself to write, and of the “literary scales” which he practiced with that end in view.

“As I walked,” he tells us, “my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words. . . . Description was the principal field of my exercise; for to any one with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject.”

So far, however, he “lived with words only,” but he goes on to describe a further exercise, which called for more intellectual effort. This was nothing else than a deliberate attempt to imitate the style of any author who happened, at the moment, to dominate his fancy. Like most artists, he was very susceptible to the influence of style; he readily caught the infection, and, when imbued with the manner of a favorite poet or essayist, it was easy to him to reproduce it. This, as we see, did not prevent his acquiring a very distinctive and original style of his

own; but it was "in the works of these masters that he learned the language which he was to use after his own fashion." This kind of imitation he considers the most valuable practice which an intending author can have. "That," he says, "like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats. It was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned." We have no space for further quotation, but we commend the whole paper to the study of our readers; it is full of valuable suggestion.

And yet there was a weak point in Stevenson's system, as he himself came to recognize, namely, that his attempts were submitted to no censor. His fine taste and his very extensive acquaintance with English classics would go far to minimize, in his case, the effect of this disadvantage. But, by the ordinary mortal, criticism is needed; and the Essay Club, where the work passes through the hands of a competent critic, may be of great service to the young writer. For it is not only that we work better when we know that the result of our work will be weighed in the balance, but that criticism shows us our weak points, and thus gives us the opportunity of strengthening them. Left to ourselves, we are apt to practice what we do best and most easily; whereas we ought to concentrate our forces upon what we do worst and find most difficult.

It is comparatively easy to record the results of our own observation or to express our own thoughts, especially as in youth these are likely to be neither subtle nor profound. The thought that has taken root in our own mind, and has germinated and developed there, will often clothe itself in words without conscious effort on our part. But it is far otherwise when we set ourselves to express the

thoughts of others, especially if those thoughts be far higher and deeper than our own. To train himself in this really difficult branch of his art, the writer can not have a finer exercise than translation. The words of the original will not help him much; it will be necessary for him to take into account the genius of the language from which the translation is made, as well as to enter into the thoughts of the writer, if he is to give those thoughts adequate expression. This is no easy task; but in proportion to its difficulty will be the benefit derived from it and the joy of success.

Another very useful exercise is the following: let the young writer read carefully some matter of fact — either history, science, biography, or what not; let him make himself thoroughly master of the subject; then, shaking himself free of the actual materials, let him tell the story in his own way, as clearly, simply, and concisely as possible. He will find it a bracing exercise to work in the light fetters imposed by fact, and, at the same time, he will gain experience in the handling of materials, often a matter of difficulty even to the mature author.

Finally, if he is wise, he will follow the example of Josef Joubert, of whom, even in youth, it was said, "*Il s'inquiétait de perfection bien plus que de gloire*"—"He strove for perfection far more than for fame." Even if his productions are never to see the light, he should make it a rule to finish as carefully, and in all respects to work as well, as if he were writing for mankind and for all time. And his reward will be nothing less than this: that he will "sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice; and he himself, knowing what he wants to do, and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it."

SHAKESPEARE¹

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT



HE striking peculiarity of Shakespeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds, so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and had no one peculiar bias or exclusive excellence more than another. He was just like any other man, but that he was like all other men. He was the least of an egotist that it was possible to be. He was nothing in himself; but he was all that others were, or that they could become. He not only had in himself the germs of every faculty and feeling, but he could follow them by anticipation, intuitively, into all their conceivable ramifications, through every change of fortune or conflict or passion, or turn of thought. He had "a mind reflecting ages past" and present: all the people that ever lived are there. There was no respect of persons with him. His genius shone equally on the evil and on the good, on the wise and on the foolish, the monarch and the beggar. "All corners of the earth, kings, queens, and states, maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave," are hardly hid from his searching glance.

He was like the genius of humanity, changing places with all of us at pleasure, and playing with our purposes as with his own. He turned the globe round for his amusement, and surveyed the generations of men, and the individuals as they passed, with their different con-

¹ From "Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton."

cerns, passions, follies, vices, virtues, actions, and motives — as well those that they knew, as those which they did not know, or acknowledge to themselves. The dreams of childhood, the ravings of despair, were the toys of his fancy. Airy beings waited at his call and came to his bidding. Harmless fairies “nodded to him, and did him courtesies”: and the night-hag bestowed the blast at the command of “his so potent art.” The world of spirits lay open to him, like the world of real men and women: and there is the same truth in his delineations of the one as of the other; for if the preternatural characters he describes could be supposed to exist, they would speak and feel and act as he makes them. He had only to think of anything in order to become that thing, with all the circumstances belonging to it. When he conceived of a character, whether real or imaginary, he not only entered into all its thoughts and feelings, but seemed instantly, and as if by touching a secret spring, to be surrounded with all the same objects, “subject to the same skyey influences,” the same local, outward, and unforeseen accidents which would occur in reality.

Each of his characters is as much itself, and as absolutely independent of the rest as well as of the author, as if they were living persons, not fictions of the mind. The poet may be said, for the time, to identify himself with the character he wishes to represent, and to pass from one to another, like the same soul successively animating different bodies. By an art like that of the ventriloquist, he throws his imagination out of himself, and makes every word appear to proceed from the mouth of the person in whose name it is given. His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them.

His characters are real beings of flesh and blood; they speak like men, not like authors. One might suppose that he had stood by at the time, and overheard what passed. As in our dreams we hold conversations with ourselves, make remarks, or communicate intelligence, and have no idea of the answer which we shall receive, and which we ourselves shall make, till we hear it: so the dialogues in Shakespeare are carried on without any consciousness of what is to follow, without any appearance of preparation or premeditation. The gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. Nothing is made out by formal inference and analogy, by climax and antithesis: all comes, or seems to come, immediately from nature. Each object and circumstance exists in his mind, as it would have existed in reality: each several train of thought and feeling goes on of itself, without confusion or effort. In the world of his imagination, everything has a life, a place and being of its own.

The passion in Shakespeare is of the same nature as his delineation of character. It is not some habitual feeling or sentiment preying upon itself, growing out of itself, and molding everything to itself; it is passion modified by passion, by all the other feelings to which the individual is liable, and to which others are liable with him; subject to all the fluctuations of caprice and accident; calling into play all the resources of the understanding and all the energies of the will; irritated by obstacles or yielding to them; rising from small beginnings to its utmost height; now drunk with hope, now stung to madness, now sunk in despair, now blown to air with a breath, now raging like a torrent. The human soul is made the sport of fortune, the prey of adversity: it is stretched on the wheel of destiny, in

restless ecstasy. The passions are in a state of projection. Years are melted down to moments, and every instant teems with fate. We know the results, we see the process.

Shakespeare's imagination is of the same plastic kind as his conception of character or passion. "It glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven." Its movement is rapid and devious. It unites the most opposite extremes; or as Puck says, in boasting of his own feats, "puts a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes." He seems always hurrying from his subject, even while describing it; but the stroke, like the lightning's, is sure as it is sudden. He takes the widest possible range, but from that very range he has his choice of the greatest variety and aptitude of materials. He brings together images the most alike, but placed at the greatest distance from each other; that is, found in circumstances of the greatest dissimilitude. From the remoteness of his combinations, and the celerity with which they are affected, they coalesce the more indissolubly together. The more the thoughts are strangers to each other, and the longer they have been kept asunder, the more intimate does their union seem to become. Their felicity is equal to their force. Their likeness is made more dazzling by their novelty. They startle, and take the fancy prisoner in the same instant.

Shakespeare's language and versification are like the rest of him. He has a magic power over words; they come winged at his bidding, and seem to know their places. They are struck out at a heat on the spur of the occasion, and have all the truth and vividness which arise from an actual impression of the objects. His epithets and single phrases are like sparkles, thrown off from an imagination fired by the whirling rapidity



THE HOUSES OF SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON, ENGLAND

SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE AT STRATFORD

of its own motion. His language is hieroglyphical. It translates thoughts into visible images. It abounds in sudden transitions and elliptical expressions. This is the source of his mixed metaphors, which are only abbreviated forms of speech. These, however, give no pain from long custom. They have, in fact, become idioms in the language. They are the building, and not the scaffolding to thought. We take the meaning and effect of a well-known passage entire, and no more stop to scan and spell out the particular words and phrases than the syllables of which they are composed. In trying to recollect any other author, one sometimes stumbles, in case of failure, on a word as good. In Shakespeare, any other word but the true one is sure to be wrong.

He had an equal genius for comedy and tragedy; and his tragedies are better than his comedies, because tragedy is better than comedy. His female characters, which have been found fault with as insipid, are the finest in the world. Lastly, Shakespeare was the least of a coxcomb of any one that ever lived, and much of a gentleman.

MILTON, THE IDEAL SCHOLAR¹

BY GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS



TECHNICAL scholarship begins in a dictionary, and ends in a grammar. The sublime scholarship of John Milton began in literature and ended in life.

Graced with every intellectual gift, he was personally so comely, that the romantic woods of Vallambrosa are lovelier from their association with his youthful figure sleeping in their shade. He had all the technical excellences of the scholar. At eighteen he wrote better Latin verses than have been written in England. He replied to the Italian poets who complimented him, in purer Italian than their own. He was profoundly skilled in theology, in science, and in the pure literature of all languages.

These were his accomplishments, but his genius was vast and vigorous. While yet a youth, he wrote those minor poems, which have the simple perfection of productions of nature; and, in the ripeness of his wisdom and power, he turned his blind eyes to heaven, and sang the lofty song which has given him a twin glory with Shakespeare in English renown.

It is much for one man to have exhausted the literature of other nations, and to have enriched his own. But other men have done this in various degrees. Milton went beyond it to complete the circle of his character as the scholar.

You know the culmination of his life. The first scholar in England, and in the world at that time, fulfilled his office. His vocation making him especially the

¹ From "The Duty of the American Scholar."

representative of liberty, he accepted the part to which he was naturally called, and, turning away from all the blandishments of ease and fame, he gave himself to liberty and immortality.

Is the scholar a puny, timid, conforming man? John Milton showed him to be the greatest citizen of the greatest Commonwealth. Disdaining to talk of the liberty of the Shunamites, when the liberty of Englishmen was imperiled, he exposed the details of a blind tyranny in words which are still the delight and refuge of freedom, and whose music is as majestic as the cause they celebrate. The radiance of those principles is still the glory of history. They still search out and expose the wiles of tyranny, as the light of a great beacon, flashing at midnight upon a mountain top, reveals the tents of the enemy skulking on the plain.

While the men of Norfolk, and of the fens, were mustering to march away for liberty — to return no more — he did not stay to conjugate Greek verbs in *mi*, nor conceive that the scholar's library was his post of honor. In words that are the eternal rebuke of every scholar, of every literary man, of every clergyman, who, in a day when human liberty is threatened, does not stand for liberty, but cringes under the courtesies of position, Milton cries to us across two hundred years, with a voice of multitudinous music, like that of a great wind in a forest:

“I can not praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, notwithstanding dust and heat.”

Can you not fancy the parish beadles getting up and walking rapidly away from such sentiments? Can you

not fancy all the noble and generous hearts in the world shouting through the centuries, "Amen, amen!"

The scholar is the representative of thought among men, and his duty to society is the effort to introduce thought and the sense of justice into human affairs. He was not made a scholar to satisfy the newspapers or the parish beadles, but to serve God and man. While other men pursue what is expedient, and watch with alarm the flickering of the funds, he is to pursue the truth, and watch the eternal law of justice.

But if this be true of the scholar in general, how peculiarly is it true of the American scholar, who, as a citizen of a republic, has not only an influence by his word and example, but, by his vote, a direct agency upon public affairs. In a republic which decides questions involving the national welfare by a majority of voices, whoever refuses to vote is a traitor to his own cause, whatever that cause may be; and if any scholar will not vote, or have an opinion upon great public measures, because that would be to mix himself with politics, but contents himself with vague declamation about freedom in general, knowing that the enemies of freedom always use its name, then that scholar is a traitor to Liberty, and degrades his order by justifying the reproach that the scholar is a pusillanimous trimmer.

The American scholar has duties to politics in general; and he has, consequently, duties to every political crisis in his country; what his duties are in this crisis of our national affairs, I shall now tell you, as plainly as I can. The times are grave, and they demand sober speech. To us young men the future of this country is trusted. What names does history love, and every honest man revere? The names of those who gave their youth and strength to the cause which is waiting for us to serve it.

HONORÉ DE BALZAC¹

By WILLIAM C. TRENT

HONORÉ DE BALZAC, by common consent the greatest of French novelists and to many of his admirers the greatest of all writers of prose fiction, was born at Tours, May 16, 1799. Neither his family nor his place of birth counts for much in his artistic development; but his sister Laure, afterwards Madame Surville — to whom we owe a charming sketch of her brother and many of his most delightful letters, — made him her hero through life, and gave him a sympathy that was better than any merely literary environment.

He was a sensitive child, little comprehended by his parents or teachers, which probably accounts for the fact that few writers have so well described the feelings of children so situated [see "*Le Lys dans la Vallée*" (The Lily in the Valley) and "Louis Lambert"]. He was not a good student, but undermined his health by desultory though enormous reading and by writing a precocious Treatise on the Will, which an irate master burned and the future novelist afterwards naïvely deplored. When brought home to recuperate, he turned from books to nature, and the effects of the beautiful landscape of Touraine upon his imagination are to be found throughout his writings, in passages of description worthy of a nature-worshiper like Sénancour himself.

About this time a vague desire for fame seems to have seized him, — a desire destined to grow into an almost

¹ By kind permission of J. A. Hill, New York.

morbid passion; and it was a kindly Providence that soon after (1814) led his family to quit the stagnant provinces for that nursery of ambition, Paris. Here he studied under new masters, heard lectures at the Sorbonne, read in the libraries, and finally, at the desire of his practical father, took a three years' course in law.

He was now at the parting of the ways, and he chose the one nearest his heart. After much discussion, it was settled that he should not be obliged to return to the provinces with his family, or to enter upon the regular practice of law, but that he might try his luck as a writer on an allowance purposely fixed low enough to test his constancy and endurance. Two years was the period of probation allotted, during which time Balzac read still more widely and walked the streets studying the characters he met, all the while endeavoring to grind out verses for a tragedy on Cromwell. This, when completed, was promptly and justly damned by his family, and he was temporarily forced to retire from Paris.

He did not give up his aspirations, however, and before long he was back in his attic, this time supporting himself by his pen. Novels, not tragedies, were what the public most wanted, so he labored indefatigably to supply their needs and his own necessities, not relinquishing, however, the hope that he might some day watch the performance of one of his own plays. His perseverance was destined to be rewarded, for he lived to write five dramas which fill a volume of his collected works; but only one, the posthumous comedy "Mercadet," was even fairly successful. Yet that Balzac had dramatic genius his matured novels abundantly prove.

The ten romances, however, that he wrote for cheap booksellers between 1822 and 1829, displayed so little genius of any sort that he was afterwards unwilling to

cover their deficiencies with his great name. They have been collected as youthful works ("*Œuvres de Jeunesse*"), and are useful to a complete understanding of the evolution of their author's genius; but they are rarely read even by his most devoted admirers. They served, however, to enable him to get through his long and heart-rending period of apprenticeship, and they taught him how to express himself; for this born novelist was not a born writer and had to labor painfully to acquire a style which only at rare moments quite fitted itself to the subject he had in hand.

Much more interesting than these early sensational romances were the letters he wrote to his sister Laure, in which he grew eloquent over his ambition and gave himself needed practice in describing the characters with whom he came in contact. But he had not the means to wait quietly and ripen, so he embarked in a publishing business which brought him into debt. Then, to make up his losses, he became partner in a printing enterprise which failed in 1827, leaving him still more embarrassed financially, but endowed with a fund of experience which he turned to rich account as a novelist.

Henceforth the sordid world of debt, bankruptcy, usury, and speculation had no mystery for him, and he laid it bare in novel after novel, utilizing also the knowledge he had gained of the law, and even pressing into service the technicalities of the printing office [see *Illusions Perdues* (Lost Illusions)]. But now at the age of twenty-eight he had over one hundred thousand francs to pay, and had written nothing better than some cheap stories; the task of wiping out his debts by his writing seemed therefore a more hopeless one than Scott's. Nothing daunted, however, he set to work, and the year that followed his second failure in business saw the composition

of the first novel he was willing to acknowledge, "Les Chouans."

This romance of Brittany in 1799 deserved the praise it received from press and public, in spite of its badly jointed plot and overdrawn characters. It still appeals to many readers, and is important to the "Comédie Humaine" as being the only novel of the "Military Scenes." The "Physiology of Marriage" followed quickly (1829-30), and despite a certain pruriency of imagination, displayed considerable powers of analysis, powers destined shortly to distinguish a story which ranks high among its author's works, "*La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote*" (1830). This delightful novelette, the queer title of which is nearly equivalent to "At the Sign of the Cat and the Racket," showed in its treatment of the heroine's unhappy passion the intuition and penetration of the born psychologist, and in its admirable description of bourgeois life the pictorial genius of the genuine realist. In other words the youthful romancer was merged once for all in the matured novelist. The years of waiting and observation had done their work, and along the streets of Paris now walked the most profound analyst of human character that had scrutinized society since the days when William Shakespeare, fresh from Stratford, trod the streets and lanes of Elizabethan London.

The year 1830 marks the beginning not merely of Balzac's success as the greatest of modern realists, but also of his marvelous literary activity. Novel after novel is begun before its predecessor is finished; short stories of almost perfect workmanship are completed; sketches are dashed off that will one day find their appropriate place in larger compositions, as yet existing only in the brain of the master. Nor is it merely a question of individual works: novels and stories are to form different series, —

“Scenes from Private Life,” “Philosophical Novels and Tales,” — which are themselves destined to merge into “Studies of Manners in the Nineteenth Century,” and finally into the “Comédie Humaine” itself.

Yet it was more than a swarm of stories that was buzzing in his head; it was a swarm of individuals often more truly alive to him than the friends with whom he loved to converse about them. And just because he knew these people of his brain, just because he entered into the least details of their daily lives, Balzac was destined to become much more than a mere philosopher or student of society; to wit, a creator of characters, endowed with that “absolute dramatic vision” which distinguishes Homer and Shakespeare and Chaucer. But because he was also something of a philosopher and student of sociology, he conceived the stupendous idea of linking these characters with one another and with their several environments, in order that he might make himself not merely the historian but also the creator of an entire society.

In other words, conservative though he was, Balzac had the audacity to range himself by the side of Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, and to espouse the cause of evolution even in its infancy. The great ideas of the mutability of species and of the influence of environment and heredity were, he thought, as applicable to sociology as to zoölogy and as applicable to fiction as to either. So he meditated the “Comédie Humaine” for several years before he announced it in 1842, and from being almost the rival of Saint-Hilaire he became almost the anticipator of Darwin.

But this idea of evolution was itself due to the evolution of his genius, to which many various elements contributed: his friendships and enmities with contemporary authors, his intimacies with women of refinement and fashion, his business struggles with creditors and publish-

ers, his frequent journeys to the provinces and foreign countries; and finally his grandiose schemes to surround himself with luxury and the paraphernalia of power, not so much for his own sake as for the sake of her whose least smile was a delight and an inspiration. About each of these topics an interesting chapter might be written, but here a few words must suffice.

With regard to Balzac's debts, the fact should be noted that he might have paid them off more easily and speedily had he been more prudent. He cut into the profits of his books by the costly changes he was always making in his proof sheets, — changes which the artist felt to be necessary, but against which the publishers naturally protested. In reality he wrote his books on his proof sheets, for he would cut and hack the original version and make new insertions until he drove his printers wild. Indeed, composition never became easy to him, although under a sudden inspiration he could sometimes dash off page after page while other men slept.

He had, too, his affectations; he must even have a special and peculiar garb in which to write. All these eccentricities and his outside distractions and ambitions, as well as his noble and pathetic love affair, entered into the warp and woof of his work with effects that can easily be detected by the careful student, who should remember, however, that the master's foibles and peculiarities never for one moment set him outside the small circle of the men of supreme genius. He belongs to them by virtue of his tremendous grasp of life in its totality, his superhuman force of execution and the inevitableness of his art at its best.

The decade from 1830 to 1840 is the most prolific period of Balzac's genius in the creation of individual works; that from 1840 to 1850 is his great period of philo-

sophical coördination and arrangement. In the first he hewed out materials for his house; in the second he put them together. This statement is of course relatively true only, for we owe to the second decade three of his greatest masterpieces. For the year 1830 alone the Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul gives seventy-one entries, many of slight importance, but some familiar to every student of modern literature, and during the next six there were no less than a dozen masterpieces. Such a decade of accomplishment is little short of miraculous, and the work was done under stress of anxieties that would have crushed any normal man.

But anxieties and labors were lightened by a friendship which was an inspiration long before it ripened into love, and were rendered bearable both by Balzac's confidence in himself and by his ever nearer view of the goal he had set himself. The task before him was as stupendous as that which Comte had undertaken, and required not merely the planning and writing of new works but the utilization of all that he had previously written. Untiring labor had to be devoted to this manipulation of old material, for practically the great output of the five years 1829-34 was to be coördinated internally, story being brought into relation with story and character with character.

This meant the creation and management of an immense number of personages, the careful investigation of the various localities which served for environments, and the profound study of complicated social and political problems. No wonder, then, that the second decade of his maturity shows a falling off in abundance, though not in intensity of creative power: and that the gradual breaking down of his health, under the strain of his ceaseless efforts and of his abnormal habits of life, made itself

more and more felt in the years that followed the great preface which in 1842 set forth the splendid design of the "Comédie Humaine."

This preface, one of the most important documents in literary history, must be carefully studied by all who would comprehend Balzac in his entirety. It can not be too often repeated that Balzac's scientific and historical aspirations are important only in as far as they caused him to take a great step forward in the development of his art.

The nearer the artist comes to reproducing for us life in its totality, the higher the rank we assign him among his fellows. Tried by this canon, Balzac is supreme. His interweaving of characters and events through a series of volumes gives a verisimilitude of his work unrivaled in prose fiction, and paralleled only in the work of the world-poets. In other words, his use of coördination upon a vast scale makes up for his lack of delicacy and sureness of touch, as compared with what Shakespeare and Homer and Chaucer have taught us to look for. Hence he is with them even if not of them.

This great claim can be made for the Balzac of the "Comédie Humaine" only; it could not be made for the Balzac of any one masterpiece like "Le Père Goriot," or even for the Balzac of all the masterpieces taken in lump and without coördination. Balzac by coördination has in spite of his limitations given us a world, just as Shakespeare and Homer have done; and so Taine was profoundly right when he put him in the same category with the greatest of all writers. When, however, he added St. Simon to Shakespeare, and proclaimed that with them Balzac was the greatest storehouse of documents that we have on human nature, he was guilty not merely of confounding *genres* of art, but also of laying stress on the

philosophic rather than on the artistic side of fiction. Balzac does make himself a great storehouse of documents on human nature, but he also does something far more important, he sets before us a world of living men and women.

To have brought this world into existence, to have given it order in the midst of complexity, and that in spite of the fact that death overtook him before he could complete his work, would have been sufficient to occupy a decade of any other man's life; but he, though harassed with illness and with hopes of love and ambition deferred, was strong enough to do more. On March 14th, 1850, he was married to Mme. Hanska, at Berditchef; on August 18th, 1850, he died at Paris.

Madame Evelina de Hanska came into Balzac's life about 1833, just after he had shaken off the unfortunate influence of the Duchesse de Castries. The young Polish countess was much impressed, we are told, by reading the "Scènes de la Vie Privée" (Scenes of Private Life), and was somewhat perplexed and worried by Balzac's apparent change of method in the "La Peau de Chagrin." She wrote to him over the signature "L'Étrangère" (A Foreigner), and he answered in a series of letters recently published in the *Revue de Paris*. Not long after the opening of this correspondence the two met, and a firm friendship was cemented between them.

The lady was about thirty, and married to a Russian gentleman of large fortune, to whom she had given an only daughter. She was in the habit of traveling about Europe to carry on this daughter's education, and Balzac made it his pleasure and duty to see her whenever he could, sometimes journeying as far as Vienna. In the interim he would write her letters, which possess great charm and importance to the student of his life.

The husband made no objection to the intimacy, trusting both to his wife and to Balzac; but for some time before the death of the aged nobleman, Balzac seems to have distrusted himself and to have held slightly aloof from the woman whom he was destined finally to love with all the fervor of his nature. Madame Hanska became free in the winter of 1842-43, and the next summer Balzac visited St. Petersburg to see her. His love soon became an absorbing passion, but consideration for her daughter's future withheld the lady's consent to a betrothal till 1846. It was a period of weary waiting, in which our sympathies are all on one side; for if ever a man deserved to be happy in a woman's love, it was Balzac. His happiness came, but almost too late to be enjoyed. His last two years, which he spent in Poland with Madame de Hanska, were oppressed by illness, and he returned to his beloved Paris only to die. The struggle of thirty years was over, and although his immense genius was not as yet fully recognized, his greatest contemporary, Victor Hugo, was magnanimous enough to exclaim on hearing that he was dying, "Europe is on the point of losing a great mind." Balzac's disciples feel that Europe really lost its greatest writer since Shakespeare.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

BY THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

IN 1756 Goldsmith landed at Dover, without a shilling, without a friend, and without a calling. He had, indeed, if his own unsupported evidence may be trusted, obtained from the University of Padua, a doctor's degree; but this dignity proved utterly useless to him. In England his flute was not in request; there were no convents; and he was forced to have recourse to a series of desperate expedients. He turned strolling player; but his face and figure were ill-suited to the boards of the humblest theater. He pounded drugs and ran about London with vials for charitable chemists. He joined a swarm of beggars which made its nest in Axe Yard. He was for a time usher of a school, and felt the miseries and humiliations of this situation so keenly, that he thought it a promotion to be permitted to earn his bread as a bookseller's hack; but he soon found the new yoke more galling than the old one, and was glad to become an usher again. He obtained a medical appointment in the service of the East India Company; but the appointment was speedily revoked. Why it was revoked we are not told. The subject was one on which he never liked to talk. It is probable that he was incompetent to perform the duties of the place.

Then he presented himself at Surgeon's Hall for examination, as mate to a naval hospital. Even to so humble a post he was found unequal. By this time the schoolmaster whom he had served for a morsel of food and the

third part of a bed was no more. Nothing remained but to return to the lowest drudgery of literature. Goldsmith took a garret in a miserable court, to which he had to climb from the brink of Fleet Ditch by a dizzy ladder of flagstones called Breakneck Steps. The court and the ascent have long disappeared; but old Londoners will remember both. Here, at thirty, the unlucky adventurer sat down to toil like a galley slave. .

In the succeeding six years he sent to the press some things which have survived and many which have perished. He produced articles for reviews, magazines, and newspapers; children's books which, bound in gilt paper and adorned with hideous woodcuts, appeared in the window of the once far-famed shop at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard; "An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe," which, though of little or no value, is still reprinted among his works; a *Life of Beau Nash*, which is not reprinted, though it well deserves to be so; a superficial and incorrect, but very readable *History of England*, in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a nobleman to his son; and some very lively and amusing sketches of London Society, in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a Chinese traveler to his friends.

All these works were anonymous; but some of them were well known to be Goldsmith's; and he gradually rose in the estimation of the booksellers for whom he drudged. He was indeed emphatically a popular writer. For accurate research or grave disquisition he was not well qualified by nature or by education. He knew nothing accurately; his reading had been desultory; nor had he meditated deeply on what he had read. He had seen much of the world; but he had noticed and retained little more of what he had seen, than some grotesque incidents



After the painting by E. M. WARD

DR. JOHNSON AND GOLDSMITH

and characters which had happened to strike his fancy. But though his mind was very scantily stored with materials, he used what materials he had in such a way as to produce a wonderful effect.

There have been many greater writers; but perhaps no writer was ever more uniformly agreeable. His style was always pure and easy, and, on proper occasions, pointed and energetic. His narratives were always amusing, his descriptions always picturesque, his humor rich and joyous, yet not without an occasional tinge of amiable sadness. About everything that he wrote, serious or sportive, there was a certain natural grace and decorum, hardly to be expected from a man a great part of whose life had been passed among thieves and beggars, streetwalkers and merry-andrews, in those squalid dens which are the reproach of great capitals.

As his name gradually became known, the circle of his acquaintance widened. He was introduced to Johnson, who was then considered as the first of living English writers; to Reynolds, the first of English painters; and to Burke, who had not as yet entered parliament but had distinguished himself greatly by his writings and by the eloquence of his conversation. With these eminent men Goldsmith became intimate. In 1763, he was one of the nine original members of that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of The Club.

By this time Goldsmith had quitted his miserable dwelling at the top of Breakneck Steps, and had taken chambers in the more civilized region of the Inns of Court. But he was still often reduced to pitiable shifts. Towards the close of 1764 his rent was so long in arrears that his landlady one morning called in the help of a

sheriff's officer. The debtor, in great perplexity, despatched a message to Johnson; and Johnson, always friendly, though often surly, sent back the messenger with a guinea, and promised to follow speedily. He came and found that Goldsmith had changed the guinea, and was railing at the landlady over a bottle of Madeira.

Johnson put the cork into the bottle, and entreated his friend to consider calmly how money was to be procured. Goldsmith said that he had a novel ready for the press. Johnson glanced at the manuscript, saw that there were good things in it, took it to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds and soon returned with the money. The rent was paid and the sheriff's officer withdrawn. According to one story, Goldsmith gave his landlady a sharp reprimand for her treatment of him; according to another he insisted on her joining him in a bowl of punch. Both stories are probably true. The novel which was thus ushered into the world was "The Vicar of Wakefield."

But before "The Vicar of Wakefield" appeared in print, came the great crisis of Goldsmith's literary life. In Christmas week, 1764, he published a poem entitled "The Traveler." It was the first work to which he had put his name; and it at once raised him to the rank of a legitimate English classic. The opinion of the most skillful critics was, that nothing finer had appeared in verse since the fourth book of the "Dunciad."

In one respect "The Traveler" differs from all Goldsmith's other writings. In general his designs were bad, and his execution good. In "The Traveler," the execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophical poem, ancient or modern, has a plan so noble, and at the same time so simple. An English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down

on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our own minds.

While the fourth edition of "The Traveler" was on the counters of the booksellers, "The Vicar of Wakefield" appeared, and rapidly obtained a popularity which has lasted down to our own time, and which is likely to last as long as our language.

The success which had attended Goldsmith as a novelist emboldened him to try his fortune as a dramatist. He wrote "The Good-natured Man," a piece which had a worse fate than it deserved. Garrick refused to produce it at Drury Lane. It was acted at Covent Garden in 1768, but was coldly received. The author, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright, no less than five hundred pounds—five times as much as he had made by "The Traveler" and "The Vicar of Wakefield" together.

In 1770 appeared "The Deserted Village." In mere diction and versification this celebrated poem is fully equal, perhaps superior, to "The Traveler."

In 1773, Goldsmith tried his chance at Covent Garden with a second play, "She Stoops to Conquer." The manager was not without great difficulty induced to bring this piece out. The sentimental comedy still reigned, and Goldsmith's comedies were not sentimental. "The Good-natured Man" had been too funny to succeed; yet the mirth of "The Good-natured Man" was sober when compared with the rich drollery of "She Stoops to Conquer," which is, in truth, an incomparable farce in five acts. On this occasion, however, genius triumphed.

Pit, boxes, and galleries were in a constant roar of laughter. If any bigoted admirer of Kelley and Cumberland ventured to hiss or groan, he was speedily silenced by a general cry of "Turn him out" or "Throw him over." Two generations have since confirmed the verdict which was pronounced on that night.

While Goldsmith was writing "The Deserted Village" and "She Stoops to Conquer," he was employed on works of a very different kind, works from which he derived little reputation but much profit. He compiled for the use of schools a "History of Rome," by which he made three hundred pounds, a "History of England," by which he made six hundred pounds, a "History of Greece," for which he received two hundred and fifty pounds, a "Natural History" for which the booksellers covenanted to pay him eight hundred guineas.

These works he produced without any elaborate research, by merely selecting, abridging, and translating into his own clear, pure, and flowing language, what he found in books well known to the world, but too bulky or too dry for boys and girls.

He committed some strange blunders; for he knew nothing with accuracy. Thus in his "History of England" he tells us that Naseby is in Yorkshire; nor did he correct this mistake when the book was reprinted. He was very nearly hoaxed into putting into the "History of Greece" an account of a battle between Alexander the Great and Montezuma. In his "Animated Nature" he relates, with faith and with perfect gravity, all the most absurd lies which he could find in books of travels about gigantic Patagonians, monkeys that preach sermons, and nightingales that repeat long conversations.

Yet ignorant as Goldsmith was, few writers have done more to make the first steps in the laborious road to

knowledge easy and pleasant. His compilations are widely distinguished from the compilations of ordinary bookmakers. He was a great, perhaps unequaled master of the arts of selection and condensation. In these respects his histories of Rome and of England, and still more his own abridgments of these histories, well deserve to be studied. In general nothing is less attractive than an epitome; but the epitomes of Goldsmith, even when most concise, are always amusing; and to read them is considered by intelligent children, not as a task but as a pleasure.

Goldsmith might now be considered as a prosperous man. He had the means of living in comfort, and even in what to one who had so often slept in barns and on bulks must have been luxury. His fame was great and was constantly rising. He lived in what was intellectually far the best society of the kingdom, in a society in which no talent or accomplishment was wanting, and in which the art of conversation was cultivated with splendid success. There probably were never four talkers more admirable in four different ways than Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick; and Goldsmith was on terms of intimacy with all four.

He aspired to share in the colloquial renown; but never was ambition more unfortunate. It may seem strange that a man who wrote with so much perspicuity, vivacity, and grace, should have been, whenever he took part in conversation, an empty, noisy, blundering rattle. But on this point the evidence is overwhelming. So extraordinary was the contrast between Goldsmith's published works and the silly things which he said, that Horace Walpole described him as an inspired idiot. "Noll," said Garrick, "wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Pol."

His associates seem to have regarded him with kindness, which, in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect. His heart was soft even to weakness; he was so generous that he quite forgot to be just; he forgave injuries so readily that he might be said to invite them, and was so liberal to beggars that he had nothing left for his tailor and his butcher.

Goldsmith has sometimes been represented as a man of genius, cruelly treated by the world, and doomed to struggle with difficulties, which at last broke his heart. But no representation can be more remote from the truth. He did, indeed, go through much sharp misery before he had done anything considerable in literature. But after his name had appeared on the title-page of "The Traveler," he had none but himself to blame for his distresses. His average income, during the last seven years of his life, certainly exceeded four hundred pounds a year, and four hundred pounds a year ranked, among the incomes of that day, as high as eight hundred pounds a year would rank at present. A single man living in the Temple, with four hundred pounds a year, might then be called opulent. Not one in ten of the young gentlemen of good families who were studying the law there had so much.

But all the wealth which Lord Clive had brought from Bengal, and Sir Lawrence Dundas from Germany, joined together, would not have sufficed for Goldsmith. He spent twice as much as he had. He owed more than two thousand pounds; and he saw no hope of extrication from his embarrassments. His spirits and health gave way. He was attacked by a nervous fever, which he thought himself competent to treat. It would have been happy for him if his medical skill had been appreciated

as justly by himself as by others. Notwithstanding the degree which he pretended to have received at Padua, he could procure no patients.

“I do not practice,” he once said; “I make it a rule to prescribe only for my friends.”

“Pray, dear Doctor,” said Beauclerk, “alter your rule, and prescribe only for your enemies.”

Goldsmith now, in spite of this excellent advice, prescribed for himself. The remedy aggravated the malady. The sick man was induced to call in real physicians; and they at one time imagined they had cured the disease. Still his weakness and restlessness continued. He could get no sleep. He could take no food. “You are worse,” said one of his medical attendants, “than you should be from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at ease?”

“No, it is not,” were the last recorded words of Oliver Goldsmith.

He died on the third of April, 1774, in his forty-sixth year. He was laid in the churchyard of the Temple. The coffin was followed by Burke and Reynolds. Both these great men were sincere mourners. Burke, when he heard of Goldsmith's death, burst into a flood of tears. Reynolds had been so much moved by the news, that he flung aside his brush and palette for the day.

SIR WALTER SCOTT¹

By GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY



SIR WALTER SCOTT, the prince of prose romancers, should be reckoned among the great benefactors of mankind. Of the works of prose in the nineteenth century, which have contributed to human happiness on the universal scale, the Waverley Novels hold a place by virtue of their millions of readers; and now, coming into the hands of the fourth generation, they are still one of the principal effective contemporary possessions of the English race in literature.

Criticism, which sooner or later assails all works of great fame, has the most trifling effect upon them; they are invulnerable in the hearts of the people. They contain so much humanity in its plain style; they disclose such romantic scenes, such stir of gallantry, such a high behavior, in connection with events and personages otherwise memorable; and they are, besides, so colored with the hues of the mind arising from local association, imaginative legend, historic glamor, and the sense of the presence of fine action, that their reception by the heart is spontaneous. Especially, they contain Scotland as Don Quixote contains Spain, only upon a broader and more diversified scale. Cervantes, indeed, comes into one's mind in connection with Scott in many ways.

Scott's descent was like that of Cervantes. He was of the old blood, but born in a modest station. If the changes of time had not reduced his family stock to the

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condition of the poor hidalgo, they had much tempered its original border strain. Scott was as much attached to his ancestors as a New Englander, and was continually harking back in his anecdotes — and he had a full repertoire of such tales of the house — to “Auld Watt” of Harden and “Beardie” of Teviotdale, while through these worthies and otherwise he could trace the affluents of his blood to the great Scotch houses, among which he took particular pride in Buccleugh. His father was a simple lawyer, whose portrait is exactly drawn in Saunders Fairford, in “Redgauntlet,” a plain citizen, shrewd, formal, practical, well exemplifying the fixed type of the profession at Edinburgh.

Perhaps the literary strain, which does not appear in the paternal ancestry, came from the mother, the daughter of an eminent physician, Dr. Rutherford, and herself well educated; certainly, although Scott had several brothers and a sister, the genius of the family was wholly allotted to him.

Owing to a lameness, which developed in his right leg in childhood and was an impediment to him throughout life, the boy was in early years country bred and much encouraged in physical exertion, for which indeed he had a natural inclination, being full of animal vigor and spirits. He said late in life, “From childhood’s earliest hour I have rebelled against external circumstances”; and in combating this physical disadvantage he first exercised his courage and pertinacity. His deficiency did not interfere with his good comradeship as a schoolboy. He walked and rode a good deal, and he bore perhaps more than his share in the rough fighting of the schools and the town then in vogue. As he passed from master to master, each of them characteristic examples of the old discipline, he did his tasks and won their interest and

favor, but it was rather by his sympathetic understanding of literature than by any brilliancy of mind.

He had the education of the schools as a thing of course, and it was valuable to him; but he illustrates the fact that to turn a boy loose in a library is to give him the best of all opportunities — the opportunity for self-education. He read from childhood widely and well, and while yet a boy had such an acquaintance with great literature as would now seem phenomenal, though it was precisely the same as that which a generation later New England boys had at the same age, if they were so inclined. More than in his childish verses or the tales composed with his schoolmates there is the feeling of instinct in Ballantyne's school anecdote: "Come, slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story." Plainly in his boyhood Scott was as full of literature as he was of fight.

If one could have discerned it, however, the true sign of the future was not in the literary tastes which Scott shared with others of his kind, but in the historic sense which he possessed in a peculiar degree. He was from the start deeply interested in his own country and his own people; he was an insatiable listener to the tales of "Sixty Years Since" and their like, to the border ballads, the legends, all the romantic growths of the Scotch memory; he had the zeal of an antiquary in seeing the places where events had happened, the old fields of battle, the ruined castle, the border wall, or whatever spot or object history had left its mark upon. This was the gift that, like Aaron's rod, was to swallow up all the others.

It is impossible to trace in Scott, in early life, any of the self-consciousness that is apt to accompany such precocity and intensity, any sense of a call from the future.

His father tolerated and indulged these tastes, but to his practical mind a literary career for his son would hardly have occurred. The youth was docile, was apprenticed in his father's office, and at twenty-one was called to the bar. Meanwhile he maintained his literary pursuits as a matter of course. Intellectual interest at that time was still a part of men's life, and in the clubs of good fellowship, where Scott delighted to make one and was often a leading spirit, literature had its share with other topics.

Thus it happened that he was among the first of his contemporaries to feel the attraction of German literature, then reaching England, and to acquire some knowledge of it; the kinship of its ballad and romance with the spirit of the border, which was already growing incarnate in Scott, prepared a ready welcome for it in his sympathies. Nothing is more remarkable in Scott's life than its entire naturalness. He never made an effort, hardly a choice; he merely did the next thing; so now he did not think of adopting literature as a career, but it was natural for him to try his hand at a translation.

Life went on as naturally, too, in other ways. The course of true love not running smooth, he was left with a memory of early devotion which diffused a pathetic tenderness over his recollections of youth; and in the lapse of time—not too long a lapse—he married happily an English-bred lady of French birth, being speedy in both the wooing and the wedding. In his cottage at Lasswade and afterwards on the little estate of Ashestiel he had a characteristic home, filled with his personality, and in both he showed that passion for making the place his own which was later displayed on the grand scale at Abbotsford. He made no great progress at the

bar, and as time went on he habitually ascribed something of this slowness to the unfavorable effect of his literary avocations on his professional reputation.

Tenacity, however, was characteristic of him. He never let go of anything while it would hold. He knew the ways of his world, too, and was not averse to them; and in this case wisdom was justified of her child. At twenty-eight he was made sheriff of Selkirkshire, and five years later obtained the additional post of clerk to the Court of Session; and although he did not at once come into the emoluments of the latter, the two places secured him for life an ample independence and honorable station. His position in the working world was that of a gentleman of the law with clerical and executive duties.

It may be that this security of tenure as a practical man contributed something to Scott's attitude toward the profession of literature — a view exceptional among authors — as a mode of life like any other, and consequently to his remarkable freedom from literary vanity. He was always a man of many affairs, of which literature was only one; and it took its place as a normal part of life. It is likely, however, that the slowness of his development as an author was the fundamental cause of his taking so sober a view. His precocity never took the form of immature publication. In the case of no genius is the gradual hiving of the material on which it was to work so marked, the unhurried ripening of faculty so like a process of nature; and Scott seems all the time as ignorant of what was to be the outcome as the seed and blade are of the full corn in the ear.

He was an out-of-doors man as he had been a tramping boy. It is impossible to think of him without his horses and dogs. His duties as sheriff took him across country continually, and he always had more months out of Edin-

burgh than in it notwithstanding his clerkship. He was thus in constant contact with Scotch life and country, and he never lost or relaxed his first impulse, to know and see with his eyes, as far as his eyes could see it, all the local history. He was also in love with the genius of Scotland as it was stamped in the people of all sorts and conditions. Human nature, the rough hard article free from its alloy of the town, was treasure-trove to him. On those annual "raids into Liddesdale," and on many another journey, he made himself master of this book of truth out of which came so much of the character, anecdote, and phrase that are most sterling, real, and humorsome in his books. For all such actuality in the countryside he had the same tenacity of mind as Lincoln showed in his circuit riding, and he was as full of genuine telling anecdote gathered from the living lip. He was, too, most companionable; "he met every man," it was said, "like his blood relation." In these "raids" and journeys there was much roughness, but it was welcome to him as having some taste of the old border life.

The country people were fond of him; to them he was to the end of his days "the Sheriff." In Edinburgh, also, he held a vigorous and social life with men. In the times of the fear of Napoleonic invasion, he had been a live patriot and cavalryman, quartermaster of the Light Horse, and took his share of camp and drill with great zest, while still in the late twenties of life; and he was always a fearless horseman, preferring the turbulent ford to the safe passage and never "going round" for anything in the way.

If he "broke the neck of the day's work" before breakfast, as was his lifelong habit, it was a matter of necessity; for a man who spent the greater part of the day in physical activity and exercise could have a fresh mind only in the

morning. In those early hours he accomplished his literary work; and if there was much mechanical routine in the practice, perhaps his youthful experience as a writer of legal foolscap had accustomed him to the drudgery of the desk. In a life of such variety and scope, so full of work of all kinds, with many active interests, overflowing too with hospitality and rich in friendships, genius less abundant and powerful than Scott's would have been overwhelmed, but he had the knack to turn it all into new resources.

Until Scott was past thirty he may well have thought of literature as only the busiest and most delightful part of his leisure, and have seemed to himself as to others the son of the old lawyer treading in his father's footsteps to a like mediocre fortune. He was of a more generous make, it is true; he was not at all a precisian; there was much freedom for human nature in Edinburgh life, and he took his share; in the careless cheer of his youthful days and in the hearty sociability of his manhood there was something that would now be thought boisterous; boy and man, conviviality was warm in his blood. He was one of those men who diffuse a physical glow about them.

But also, it is plain, there was something in him that set him distinctly apart; the unlikeness which isolates genius, felt before it is recognized, like the electric air of the undischarged cloud; in every company, however varied, though never too much the leader, he was the interesting man. There was a glow in his mind as well as in his blood. It was not literary ambition exactly; though he says that when he wrote the song of Young Lochinvar he was "passionately ambitious of fame," it was more the flash of a young man's feeling than the awakening of resolute ambition.

Though so widely and well read in literature and with a real bookishness in his tastes, his genius was not at all bookish. The glow in his mind was vital, and nourished on life, and it flowed almost entirely from that historic sense, that absorbed interest in his own country and people, which was the master-light in which he saw life. He attracted all Scottishness to himself as by the necessity of a fairy gift. If any delver in the old literature was in the neighborhood, such as the marvelous Leyden, he was close in his company; if there was a kindred scholar across the border, like Ellis, he was in correspondence with him; and with such men he began that growing circle of friendships by letter, reënforced with occasional visits, which is one of the most agreeable and peculiar pleasures of the literary life and in Scott's case was so large and interesting a part of his biography.

He had, for the time, concentrated his antiquarian interest in the endeavor to collect and edit the ballads which he finally issued as the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," and in particular attention to old metrical romances. This work was really a stage in his preparation to write, a stone that marks his progress in that absorption of Scotland into his own genius which he was unconsciously accomplishing without a thought of its ulterior end. He was so far, in the line of his true development, only a literary antiquary.

The beginnings of his literary career, which antedated the "Minstrelsy," did not grow out of his true material, but in a curiously opposite way were distinctly bookish. His faculty of imagination was stirred independently and apart from the subjects it was to operate upon habitually. He made some translations from the German ballads, and also a version of Goethe's "Goetz von Berlichingen"; and in connection with these studies

he tried some original ballads of his own. He was then twenty-eight years old and he describes these as his first "serious attempts at verse."

Two years later, when he published the early volumes of the "Minstrelsy," the idea that he might make literature an important part of his life seems to have been distinctly formed, and it had found its true roots. The close tie, the natural birth indeed, of his first poem, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," out of the deepest prepossession of his mind, is obvious. He wrote it, perhaps, with as little self-confidence as ever any distinguished poet felt in composing his first work, and was as much surprised by its reception as the world was at its appearance. He won at once a popular crown which no hand feebler than Byron's was to wrest from him. He had then already reached his thirty-fourth year. "Marmion," and "The Lady of the Lake," which quickly followed, confirmed his poetic fame; on these three tales in verse, together with a score of lyrics, his permanent vogue as what he might have called "a rhymers" rests.

The entrance of Scott on the field of prose fiction bears a close resemblance to his début in poetry. It has the same tentativeness, the character of an experiment. He had long had in mind an attempt to depict the manners of his country in prose. He had read Miss Edgeworth's Irish tales, and he thought something like that could be done for Scotland. He had for some years been privately interested with Ballantyne in the printing business; and the fact had turned his mind to the problems of publishing and kept him keenly alive to the opportunities of trade, as if he had been — as essentially he was — a publisher's adviser. He was always interested in "bringing out" something, and the usefulness of his own



ABBOTSFORD

faculties in feeding the press was a constant element in the business. Like Cervantes, again, he tried all kinds; but his first experiment in fiction had not seemed promising.

He began "Waverley" in 1805, just after the publication of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel"; he resumed it five years later and was again discouraged; after another interval, finding the manuscript while he was hunting for fishing tackle, he wrote the last two volumes in three weeks, in 1813, and it was published anonymously early the next year. Its success, which is one of the legends of literature, was as far beyond expectation as that of "The Lay" had been in its time; and he followed it up, just as he had done in poetry, with that rapid succession of triumph after triumph which made him in the end one of the leading figures of contemporary Europe and the national glory of his own country.

The Waverley Novels made Scott one of the famous men of Europe; he held a place of distinction unshared at home, the idol of his own country, and honored and beloved in every English-speaking land. He also, as is well known, made a great deal of money by them; and Scott was glad to make money. He spent it in a magnificent way, and here the trait of Quixotism is very obvious. Abbotsford, his most human monument, may be described as a romantic work, the material counterpart to his estate in imagination. Don Quixote sought the chivalric past, which was the life of his brain, in contemporary Spain; and with a touch of the same madness Scott desired to realize on the banks of the Tweed something of that old baronial life which was so large a part of his memory and imagination; he added farm to farm till he had obtained a considerable domain; he built a mansion; he gathered there the museum of relics of crown, battle, and clan, which is still intact; and there

he dispensed hospitality with ancient generosity, to the representative of his country as well as to his friends and dependents, with a shadow at least of feudal state. It was a dream that almost came to pass.

But at the moment of its realization the crash in his fortunes occurred which condemned him to spend the remainder of his days in a heroic effort to die an honest man. The secret of the authorship of "Waverley" was well kept on the whole; at first it was probably merely a means of guarding his reputation, which he did not wish to expose to the risk of failure as a novelist; afterwards, was useful as a means of exciting interest and there was no particular reason to change. There was another secret, however, that had been much better kept, — the fact that he was a commercial partner with the printer Ballantyne; and the occasion of his secretiveness in this case was that an interest in trade would have been regarded as inconsistent with his professional position as a lawyer. The secretiveness, the willingness to go into trade, the love of money, can be turned against Scott; but, to my mind, they only make him more human, a natural man.

Scott's practical attitude toward life, and also toward literature itself as a profession like any other, seems not unlike that of Shakespeare; it is the mortal side of the immortal genius which in its own realm was loosened from the sense of reality and lived in an imaginary world. Scott met the situation that confronted him with courage, an unwearied labor, a reckless expenditure of mental power and physical health, which again illustrates the marvelous tenacity of his nature. He held on till he died. The story of the last days and the voyage to Italy is well known. He was a failing man. He still held the place of honor which he had won in men's minds, the love of his own and the respect of foreign

nations. Goethe saluted him almost from his deathbed; and soon after Scott himself passed away at Abbotsford.

The fruit of Scott's life is an immeasurable good. There is the life itself, as full of kindness as of energy, of duty as of honor, incessant in activity, many-sided, patient in official routine, with country loves, with refinement, blameless in the relations of son, brother, husband, father, and friend, with room for the affections of dogs and horses and all God's creatures; a life not saintly as we wish the lives of women to be, not without weakness, but a source of strength to others, with the right humilities and the right prides, unshaken in its loyalties, a man's life.

There are the works, which have been the delight of millions of homes through fourscore years. I remember one summer seeing a boy of six enacting Rob Roy, and not long after hearing Lowell tell me just before he died that he had lately read the Waverley Novels through again with much happiness; genius with a reach like that will defy time long. I have read them myself repeatedly in the passing of years, and always with a greater admiration of their literary power, their sheer creative faculty, their high strain of feeling and human truth, and their wholesomeness for the daily sympathies and moral ideals of the democracy.

They are a great feature in English literature. They lie massive, like Ben Nevis and Loch Lomond, in the geography of the soul's country, where she builds her earthly mansions. One takes leave of them, for a time, but he closes the volume, whatever it may be, with Tennyson's exclamation in his heart:

O great and gallant Scott,
True gentleman, heart, blood, and bone,
I would it had been my lot
To have seen thee, and heard thee; and known.

WORDSWORTH'S GOOD FORTUNE¹

BY THOMAS DEQUINCEY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH had passed his infancy on the very margin of the Lake district, just six miles, in fact, beyond the rocky screen of Whinlatter, and within one hour's ride of Bassenthwaite Water. To those who live in the tame scenery of Cockermouth, the blue mountains in the distance, the sublime peaks of Borrowdale and of Buttermere, raise aloft a signal, as it were, of a new country, a country of romance and mystery, to which the thoughts are habitually turning. Children are fascinated, and haunted with vague temptations, when standing on the frontiers of such a foreign land; and so was Wordsworth fascinated, so haunted.

Fortunate for Wordsworth that, at an early age, he was transferred to a quiet nook of this lovely district. At the little town of Hawkshead, seated on the northwest angle of Esthwaite Water, a grammar school (which, in English usage, means a school for classical literature) was founded, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, by Archbishop Sandys, who belonged to the very ancient family of that name still seated in the neighborhood. Hither were sent all the four brothers; and here it was that Wordsworth passed his life, from the age of nine until the time arrived for his removal to college. Taking into consideration the peculiar tastes of the person, and the peculiar advantages of the place, I conceive that no pupil of a public school

¹ From "Literary Reminiscences."

can ever have passed a more luxurious boyhood than Wordsworth.

From the year 1794-95 we may date the commencement of Wordsworth's entire self-dedication to poetry as the study and main business of his life. Somewhere about this period also his sister joined him, and they began to keep house together, once at Race Down, in Dorsetshire; once at Clevedon, on the coast of Somersetshire; then amongst the Quantock Hills, in the same county, or in that neighborhood; particularly at Alfoxton, a beautiful country-house, with a grove and shrubbery attached.

It was at Alfoxton that Miss Mary Hutchinson visited her cousins the Wordsworths, and there, or previously in the north of England, at Stockton-upon-Tees and Darlington, that the attachment began between Miss Hutchinson and Wordsworth which terminated in their marriage about the beginning of the present century. The marriage took place in the north; somewhere, I believe, in Yorkshire; and, immediately after the ceremony, Wordsworth brought his bride to Grasmere, in which most lovely of English valleys he had previously obtained, upon a lease of seven or eight years, the cottage in which I found him living at my first visit to him in November, 1807.

His marriage — the capital event of life — was fortunate; so were all the minor occasions of a prosperous life. He has himself described, in his "Leech-Gatherer," the fear that at one time, or at least in some occasional moments of his life, haunted him, lest at some period or other he might be reserved for poverty. "Cold, pain, and hunger, and all fleshly ills," occurred to his boding apprehension, and "mighty poets in their misery dead."

*He thought of Chatterton, the marvelous boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in its pride;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plow along the mountain-side.*

And, at starting on his career of life, certainly no man had plainer reasons for anticipating the worst evils that have ever persecuted poets, excepting only two reasons which might warrant him in hoping better; and these two were — his great prudence, and the temperance of his daily life. He could not be betrayed into foolish engagements; he could not be betrayed into expensive habits. Profusion and extravagance had no hold over him, by any one passion or taste. He was not luxurious in anything; was not vain or even careful of external appearances; was not, even in the article of books, expensive. Very few books sufficed him; he was careless habitually of all the current literature, or indeed of any literature that could not be considered as enshrining the very ideal, capital, and elementary grandeur of the human intellect.

Thousands of books that have given the most genuine and even rapturous delight to millions of ingenuous minds were for Wordsworth absolutely a dead letter, — closed and sealed up from his sensibilities and his powers of appreciation, not less than colors from a blind man's eye. Even the few books which his peculiar mind had made indispensable to him were not in such a sense indispensable as they would have been to a man of more sedentary habits.

He lived in the open air, and the enormity of pleasure which both he and his sister drew from the common appearances of nature and their everlasting variety — variety so infinite that, if no one leaf of a tree or shrub ever exactly resembled another in all its filaments and their arrangement, still less did any one day repeat another in all its pleasurable elements.

With these simple or rather austere tastes, Wordsworth (it might seem) had little reason to fear poverty, certainly not with any moderate income; but meantime he had

none. About the time when he left college, I have good grounds for believing that his whole regular income was precisely = 0. Some fragments must have survived from the funds devoted to his education; and with these, no doubt, he supported the expenses of his continental tours, and his year's residence in France. But at length cold, pain, and hunger, and "all fleshly ills," must have stared him in the face pretty earnestly. And hope of longer evading an unpleasant destiny of daily toil, in some form or other, there seemed absolutely none. "For," as he himself expostulates with himself:

For how can he expect that others should
Sow for him, build for him, and at his call,
Love him, who for himself will take no thought at all? .

In this dilemma, he had all but resolved, as Miss Wordsworth once told me, to take pupils; and perhaps that, though odious enough, was the sole resource he had, for Wordsworth never acquired any popular talent of writing for the current press; and, at that period of his life, he was gloomily unfitted for bending to such a yoke.

In this crisis of his fate Wordsworth, for once, and once only, became a martyr to some nervous affection. That raised pity; but I could not forbear smiling at the remedy, or palliation, which his few friends adopted. Every night they played at cards with him, as the best mode of beguiling his sense of distress, whatever that might be; cards, which, in any part of the thirty-and-one years since I have known Wordsworth, could have had as little power to interest him, or to cheat him of sorrow, as marbles or a kite. However, so it was; for my information could not be questioned: it came from Miss Wordsworth.

The crisis, as I have said, had arrived for determining the future color of his life. Memorable it is, that exactly in those critical moments when some decisive step had

first become necessary, there happened the first instance of Wordsworth's good luck; and equally memorable that, at measured intervals throughout the long sequel of his life since then, a regular succession of similar but superior windfalls have fallen in, to sustain his expenditure, duly as it grew with the growing claims upon his purse. A more fortunate man, I believe, does not exist than Wordsworth. The aid which now dropped from heaven, as it were, to enable him to range at will in parts of his own choosing, and

“ Finally array
His temples with the Muses' diadem,”

came in the shape of a bequest from Raisley Calvert, a young man of good family in Cumberland, who died about this time of pulmonary consumption. The sum left by Raisley Calvert was nine hundred pounds, and it was laid out in an annuity. This was the basis of Wordsworth's prosperity in life; and upon this he built up, by a series of accessions, in which each step, taken separately for itself, seems perfectly natural, whilst the total result had undoubtedly something wonderful about it, the present goodly edifice of his fortunes.

Next in the series came the present Lord Lonsdale's repayment of his predecessor's debt. Upon that, probably, Wordsworth felt himself entitled to marry. Then, I believe, came some fortune with Miss Hutchinson; then — that is, fourthly — some worthy uncle of the same lady was pleased to betake himself to a better world, leaving to various nieces, and especially to Mrs. Wordsworth, something or other, — I forget what, but it was expressed by thousands of pounds.

At this moment, Wordsworth's family had begun to increase; and the worthy old uncle, like everybody else

in Wordsworth's case, finding his property very clearly "wanted," and, as people would tell him, "bespoke," felt how very indelicate it would look for him to stay any longer in this world, and so off he moved.

But Wordsworth's family, and the wants of that family, still continued to increase; and the next person — viz., the fifth — who stood in the way, and must, therefore, have considered himself rapidly growing into a nuisance, was the stamp distributor for the county of Westmoreland. About March, 1814, I think it was that his very comfortable situation was wanted. Probably it took a month for the news to reach him, because in April, and not before, feeling that he had received a proper notice to quit, he, good man, this stamp distributor, like all the rest, distributed himself and his office into two different places,— the latter falling, of course, into the hands of Wordsworth.

This office, which it was Wordsworth's pleasure to speak of as "a little one," yielded, I believe, somewhere about five hundred pounds a year. Gradually, even *that*, with all former sources of income, became insufficient, which ought not to surprise anybody; for a son at Oxford, as a gentleman commoner, would spend, at the least, three hundred pounds per annum, and there were other children.

Still, it is wrong to say that it had become insufficient; as usual, it had not come to that, but, on the first symptoms arising that it soon would come to that, somebody, of course, had notice to consider himself a sort of nuisance-elect; in this case, it was the distributor of stamps for the county of Cumberland. His district was absurdly large; and what so reasonable as that he should submit to a Polish partition of his profits,— no, not Polish, for, on reflection, such a partition neither was nor could be

attempted with regard to an actual incumbent. But then, since people had such consideration for him as not to remodel the office as long as he lived, on the other hand, the least he could do for "people" in return — so as to show his sense of this consideration — was not to trespass on so much goodness longer than necessary. Accordingly here, as in all cases before, the *Deus ex machina* who invariably interfered when any *nodus* arose in Wordsworth's affairs, caused the distributor to begone into a region where no stamps are wanted, about the very month or so, when an additional four hundred pounds per annum became desirable.

The result of this new distribution was something that approached to an equalization of the districts,— giving to each, as was said, in round terms, a thousand a year.

Thus I have traced Wordsworth's ascent, through its several steps and stages, to what, for his moderate desires and habits so philosophic, may be fairly considered opulence. And it must rejoice every man who joins in the public homage *now* rendered to his powers (and what man is to be found that, more or less, does not?) to hear, with respect to one so lavishly endowed by nature, that he has not been neglected by fortune; that he has never had the finer edge of his sensibilities dulled by the sad anxieties, the degrading fears, the miserable dependencies, of debt; that he has been blessed with competency even when poorest; has had hope and cheerful prospects in reversion through every stage of his life; that at all times he has been liberated from *reasonable* anxieties about the final interests of his children; that at all times he has been blessed with leisure, the very amplest that ever man enjoyed, for intellectual pursuits the most delightful; yes, that, even for those delicate and coy pursuits, he has possessed, in combination, all the conditions for their

most perfect culture, — the leisure, the ease, the solitude, the society, the domestic peace, the local scenery, — Paradise for his eye, in Miltonic beauty, lying outside his windows, Paradise for his heart in the perpetual happiness of his own fireside; and, finally, when increasing years might be supposed to demand something more of modern luxuries, and expanding intercourse with society in its most polished forms, something more of refined elegancies, that his means, still keeping pace in almost arithmetical ratio with his wants, had shed the graces of art upon the failing powers of nature, had stripped infirmity of discomfort, and (as far as the necessity of things will allow) had placed the final stages of life, by means of many compensations, by universal praise, by plaudits reverberated from senates, benedictions wherever his poems have penetrated, honor, troops of friends, — in short, by all that miraculous prosperity can do to evade the primal decrees of nature, had placed the final stages upon a level with the first.

CHARLES DICKENS

By CAROLINE TICKNOR

“**W**HAT a face!” exclaimed Leigh Hunt of Dickens; “it has in it the life and soul of fifty human beings.” And it was because of this very abundance of life and soul, that this master of fiction gave to the creations of his brain those qualities which placed them from the first within that charmed circle of literary immortals.

Charles Dickens was so vividly alive that to produce the vague and colorless would have been with him an absolute impossibility. He was robust and hearty and brimful of humor, and in his study of mankind he found, in common life and among simple folk, the most vital and genuine expression of those qualities. He was at times accredited with having a taste for the vulgar and commonplace, whereas his mission was to prove conclusively that the common and commonplace is by no means vulgar, but has a dignity and beauty all its very own. With an unerring instinct he placed his finger upon vulgarity, sham, and hypocrisy among the rich, pretentious, and aristocratic. There may have been in his lively entertaining world exaggerated people, but there were no uninteresting people, no dull personages. And as he found the conventional lady and gentleman as a rule intolerably dull personages, with a consistent refusal to be bored he briskly turned his attention elsewhere.

If his pictures of high life were sometimes shadowy and unreal, his pictures of ordinary, average human life were so vivid and so convincing that they were

quickly seized upon and hung up in every mental picture gallery.

What other writer of English fiction has had his works so widely read and re-read, declaimed, put into reading books and dramatized, and, what is more, adopted into common speech, so that his many characters stand, like those of Shakespeare, for types which need no explanation beyond the mere pronouncing of their names?

And what other writer has won during his lifetime such personal popularity as that accorded Dickens? He enthralled the people and moved them as no other Englishman has done, and he was mourned by them as if he had been a potentate; indeed, as a recent critic has exclaimed, "prime ministers and princes were private persons compared with Dickens. He had been a great popular king; . . . he had in essence held great audiences of millions, and made proclamations to more than one of the nations of the earth; . . . he did what not any English statesman, perhaps, has done: he called out the people; his public success was a marvel and almost a monstrosity."

The boyhood of Charles Dickens was not a happy one; he had little schooling, little money, and little affection lavished upon him; he was a queer, small boy, inclined to be sickly, subject to numberless hard knocks. Indeed, the first quarter of his career, much of which has been chronicled in "David Copperfield," was not calculated to inspire the future novelist with an enthusiasm for that world the darker portions of which were early presented to his notice.

He was born at Landport, Portsmouth, England, on February 7, 1812, his father, Mr. John Dickens, being a clerk in the Navy Pay Office at that seaport.

Upon the termination of the war in 1815, a large

reduction was made in the number of clerks in this office, and Mr. Dickens, receiving a pension, removed to London with his wife and seven children. The elder Dickens had undoubtedly some of the traits ascribed to the unpractical Micawber in "Copperfield," and something of the self-indulgence and pompous deportment of Mr. Turveydrop in "Bleak House," and it was during his imprisonment for debt, when the son was a youth, that Charles Dickens acquired his intimate knowledge of the Marshalsea and its inmates.

The story of the unhappy drudgery of the young Copperfield is the story of young Dickens, who, in recalling those early struggles, could write, at the height of his fame:

"My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget, in my dreams, that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and I wander desolately back to that time of my life."

Yet these early clouds were happily dispelled after a few years, and the budding career of the young journalist, who had won a name for himself as a clever paragraphist, blossomed auspiciously in the production of the "Sketches by Boz," the author's first printed book, which appeared in 1835. In assuming the pseudonym of "Boz," Dickens adopted a household nickname which he had at one time bestowed upon his younger brother, in honor of Moses in the "Vicar of Wakefield." The word, pronounced through the nose, became "Boses," afterwards shortened to "Boz."

The "Sketches by Boz" were followed by "The Pickwick Papers," the author's first serial, which appeared in the "Monthly Magazine," illustrated by

"Phiz," and the first few instalments created little notice. Then suddenly the introduction of the character of "Sam Weller" took the reading world by storm and "Boz" awoke to find himself famous. There are few other instances on record of an author's rising so rapidly to fame and fortune. At twenty-six Dickens was hailed as the most brilliant and popular writer of his day, a distinction which he retained until the hour of his death, thirty-five years later.

The production of "Pickwick" was the result of a happy accident, having been suggested by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, who desired that this new literary star should write a series of monthly articles to illustrate certain pictures of a comic character to be drawn by Robert Seymour. Between "Boz" and this artist "Pickwick" was created, his appearance being immediately followed by the tragic death of Seymour, who was succeeded by Hablot K. Browne, known as "Phiz."

Never from this time, until he laid it down forever, was the pen of Dickens idle. "Oliver Twist" (1838) was followed by "Nicholas Nickleby" (1839), to which the author signed his name Charles Dickens, dropping from this time the pseudonym of "Boz."

"The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge" came next, and then appeared "The American Notes, for General Circulation," the latter being the fruit of its author's visit to America in 1842. This volume gave great offense to the American public, because Dickens, seeing the crude and ridiculous side of certain Americans, emphasized their faults, while he paid but scanty attention to their virtues, and as a result his criticisms rankled in the American mind for many years.

"David Copperfield," published in 1850, is perhaps the most popular of its author's productions, and is of

especial interest on account of its autobiographical character already referred to. It was preceded by "Martin Chuzzlewit," "A Christmas Carol," and "Dombey and Son," and followed by "A Child's History of England," "Bleak House" (1853), "Hard Times" (1854), and "Little Dorrit" (1857), in which Dickens returns to the debtor's prison of Micawber and of his own father. In this book he also introduces an autobiographical touch in his delineation of the character of "Flora Finching," who was undoubtedly no other than the dimpled Dora "twenty years after."

The oft-reiterated question, "And who was Dora?" has at last been conclusively answered. Most of the biographers of Dickens have asserted that "Dora" was Katherine Hogarth, afterwards Mrs. Dickens, but the recent publication of a series of Dickens letters has dispelled all previous doubts in regard to the puzzling query, proving that the first love of the novelist, immortalized in Copperfield, was Miss Maria Beadnell, who afterwards became Mrs. Louis Winter.

Dickens became acquainted with the Beadnell family when he was about eighteen, and for the next four years worshipped at the shrine of Maria, who was one of three sisters. The young journalist was handsome, talented, and attractive, and Maria, two years his senior, was much interested in him and flirted with him desperately. But Dickens was poor, a young reporter without apparent prospects, whom Maria's family did not regard as eligible; the parental verdict accordingly went strongly against this ardent youth, and Maria, who had previously encouraged her young suitor, discarded him with a coldness and unconcern upon which his frantic appeals made no impression. Dickens made a last appeal, and Maria vouchsafed no answer and Dickens went away a changed being; his

pride stung to the quick, he turned with tenfold ambition to his work, in order to demonstrate that the lover spurned was the equal of any man in London.

Two years later Dickens married Katherine Hogarth, but nevertheless his first attachment was very strong, as is proven by the fact that it was the vision of his first love which took possession of his fancy when, seventeen years after his parting with her, he sat down to pen "David Copperfield" and to recall his youthful ecstasy. Doubtless the idealized memory of this first love would have been cherished by Dickens to the end had not the object of his adoration herself appeared in the flesh to exorcise it. In 1855 this lady wrote to Dickens recalling this early friendship, and several cordial letters were exchanged in which the novelist expressed great warmth of feeling.

Had the stout, middle-aged, and still very sentimental Mrs. Winter allowed herself to remain a lovely memory some miles from London, "Dora" she would have remained forever, not only on the printed page but also in the heart of her one-time adorer; but after opening a correspondence with her early admirer, to which he responded with enthusiasm, she appointed a meeting, desiring once more to try her fascinations upon her former lover who had now become famous. They met, and instantly the illusion was shattered which for a quarter of a century had rested upon a secure foundation.

From the shock of this meeting Dickens turned to the production of "Little Dorrit"; here, in the guise of "Flora," the writer pictures the transformed "Dora" as she appeared when her former lover met her again after many years. After which disillusionment, be it said, Dickens avoided as far as possible further meetings with his first love.

He writes in "Little Dorrit": "Flora, always tall, had grown to be very broad too, and short of breath; but that was not much. Flora, whom he had left a lily, had become a peony; but that was not much. Flora, who had seemed enchanting in all that she had said and thought, was diffuse and silly. That was much. Flora, who had been spoiled and artless long ago, was determined to be spoiled and artless now. That was a fatal blow." And from this blow the early friendship, temporarily revived, never rallied.

The union of Dickens and Katherine Hogarth, which took place on April 2, 1836, did not prove a particularly happy one. Seven children were born to them, but, as years went on, the incompatibility of tempers and temperaments made the affairs of the household more and more complicated and irritating, and in 1857 a separation was agreed upon; it being arranged that the oldest son should be established in a separate home with his mother, while the other children remained with their father; this, owing to the eccentricities of Mrs. Dickens, seemed the only possible solution of the domestic problem which had arisen.

In 1859 "A Tale of Two Cities" appeared, a vivid presentation of the French Revolution, which reveals a vast amount of careful study and research on the part of its author. This volume is a remarkable departure for Dickens and quite unlike any other of his works. "Great Expectations" (1861) was followed and preceded by many short stories and sketches, published in "All the Year Round," a weekly journal founded and edited by Dickens. The novelist's last completed work was "Our Mutual Friend" (1865), "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" remaining unfinished at the time of the author's death in 1870. In addition to his long list of

successful novels, Dickens founded and edited two successful periodicals, "Household Words" and "All the Year Round," to which he contributed many sketches and stories. He began giving public readings in London in 1858, and these he continued with great satisfaction to immense audiences for more than ten years. These readings were enormously popular in America during his second and last visit in 1868.

As an after-dinner speaker he was rarely equaled, and he was inimitable as an amateur actor, in plays of his own composition, which he delighted to enact.

He did not often attempt verse, and "The Ivy Green" is perhaps the only bit of his poetical work held in remembrance.

Dickens was not free from literary faults which have been often pointed out by critics, who are troubled by his tricks of style, his tendency to melodramatic effects, and his lack of classic literary training, but he remains a master magician, and a tremendous force in modern life. It was a fine trait of his character that, though full of interests, intellectual, domestic, and social, the distress of the poor of England, he used to say, "pierced through his happiness, and haunted him day and night." Through his genius, the rich man faring sumptuously was made to feel the presence of the poor man at his gate; the unhappy inmates of the workhouse, the neglected children of our great cities, the starved and ill-used boys in remote schools, found that a new interest had suddenly been awakened in their forlorn and desolate lot. And the master hand which drew the sorrows of the English poor drew also the picture of the unselfish kindness, the patience, and tender thoughtfulness that may lie concealed under the roughest exterior in many a squalid home.

Dickens was lavishly endowed by nature with many

gifts. He was one of the gentlest and most affectionate of men. He inspired all men with a sense of his ease and power, and he was master of every situation in which he placed himself. He deliberated well before he acted with that marvelous vigor which was characteristic of him. He had a deep, rich, cheery voice, a noble countenance, and a hand which expressed his warmth of feeling in a firm grip. He had steadfastness, endurance, thoroughness, in all that he attempted, and when he took a cause in hand, or a friend under his wing, those that knew him breathed with placid security. He was the soul of truth and manliness as well as of kindness, and he possessed that boy-element which has been so often remarked in men of genius.

It has been pointed out that the gospel which Dickens preached in reference to the evil in class distinctions was that "the way to overcome them was not to denounce them, but to ignore them as children ignore them," and he impressed upon his work "the first of all democratic doctrines, 'that all men are interesting.'"

And in regard to his immortal literary creations, one may echo the words of one of his truly appreciative critics, the late and widely lamented Laurence Hutton, who affirmed that "Pecksniff will live almost as long as hypocrisy lasts; that Heep will not be forgotten while mock humility exists; that Mr. Dick will go down to posterity arm-in-arm with Charles the First, whom he could not avoid in his memorial; that Barkis will be quoted until men cease to be willin'. And so long as cheap, rough coats cover faith, charity, and honest hearts, the world will remember that Captain Cuttle and the Peggottys were so clad."

THACKERAY'S EARLY TRAINING ¹

By CHARLES WHIBLEY



LIKE many another Anglo-Indian boy, Thackeray suffered ill-treatment and neglect at his first school, which was hard by Miss Pinkerton's at Chiswick, and which no doubt was kept in the fear of God by Dr. Swishtail. But in 1821 his mother returned from India, the wife of Major Carmichael Smyth, the kindest of stepfathers, and a year later Thackeray was sent to the Charterhouse. Here he remained six indolent years, and, as the place is woven into the very web of his novels, this time of idleness was not wasted. No writer has ever been more loyal to his school than was Thackeray to the Charterhouse. It appears as Gray Friars or Slaughter House again and again; the best of his characters neglect the education that was there provided; and even his sympathy for Richard Steele is the keener because the Christian Hero was once a gown-boy at the old school.

But if the Charterhouse was a pleasant memory, the memory had mellowed with time. For Thackeray was not very happy at school; nor was the system of Dr. Russell, for a while triumphantly successful, likely to inspire an intelligent or imaginative boy. He learned no Greek, he tells us, and little Latin. The famous scene in "Pendennis," wherein Pendennis can not construe the Greek play despite the prompting of Timmins, is drawn from life, and there can be no mistaking the Doctor's speech.

¹ From "William Makepiece Thackeray," by Charles Whibley. By permission of the Author and the Publishers, Dodd, Mead Company. Copyright, 1903.

“Pendennis, sir,” said he, “your idleness is incorrigible and your stupidity beyond example. You are a disgrace to your school and to your family, and I have no doubt will prove so in after life to your country. . . . Miserable trifler! A boy who construes *sed, and*, instead of *but*, at sixteen years of age, is guilty not merely of folly, and ignorance, and dullness inconceivable, but of crime, of deadly crime, of filial ingratitude, which I tremble to contemplate.”

The rhodomontade of the Doctor is confirmed by contemporaries. Dean Liddell, who sat next to Thackeray at school, has left a sketch of him. “He never attempted to learn the lesson,” says the Dean, “never exerted himself to grapple with the Horace. We spent our time mostly in drawing, with such skill as we could command. His handiwork was very superior to mine, and his taste for comic scenes at that time exhibited itself in burlesque representations of Shakespeare. I remember one, — Macbeth as a butcher brandishing two blood-reeking knives, and Lady Macbeth as a butcher’s wife clapping him on the shoulder to encourage him.” Thus the faculty of drawing declared itself early, as a few experiments remain to prove. But Dean Liddell repudiates the charge that he destroyed Thackeray’s “opportunities of self-improvement” by doing his Latin verses.

For the rest, Thackeray, the schoolboy, appears to have been “pretty, gentle, and rather timid,” as Venables, the smasher of his nose and his lifelong friend, describes him. He was never flogged, and only inspected the famous flogging-block “as an amateur.” He had a taste for “pastry-cookery,” and once consumed a half-a-crown’s worth, “including ginger-beer.” He had a still keener taste for reading, not the Latin and Greek books prescribed by his masters, but “The Heart of Mid-Lothian,”

by the author of "Waverley," or "Life in London," by Pierce Egan. In other words, Dumbiedikes meant more to him than the Pious Aeneas; and he professed a far deeper sympathy with Tom and Jerry, not forgetting Bob Logic, than with Caesar crossing the Rubicon, or Hannibal splitting the Alps with vinegar. More than penny-tarts, more than games, he loved the novels of his boyhood.

"I trouble you to find such novels in the present day!" he exclaims when, in his "De Juvenute," he glances back into the past. "O 'Scottish Chiefs,' did n't we weep over you! O 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' did n't I and Biggs Minor draw pictures out of you!"

In fact, his was the childhood proper to a writer of romance, and if his career at school was undistinguished either by vice or virtue, it was by no means fruitless. The young Thackeray was already observant, and not only did he know how to use his eyes, but he could store up his experience. He, too, saw the celebrated fight between Berry and Biggs; he, too, rejoiced that at the one hundred and second round Biggs, the bully, failed to come up to time; he, too, marveled at the dignity of the head-boy, who he confidently believed would be Prime Minister of England, and who, he was surprised to find in after life, did not top six feet. Like unnumbered others, he remembered the time when the big boys wore mustaches and smoked cigars, and he cherished the memory — this one unique — of "old Hawkins," the cock of the school, who once thrashed a bargee at Jack Randall's in Slaughter House Lane.

In brief, he carried from the Charterhouse the true flavor of the place, and if he left behind him all knowledge of the classics, he was already more apt for literature than the famous head-boy himself.

But he did not love the Charterhouse until he had created it for himself. Not even the presence of such friends as Liddell, Venables, and John Leech atoned for Russell's savagery. The Doctor's eye was always upon him, whom he denounced for "an idle, shuffling, profigate boy," and in the last letter written from school the boy desires nothing so much as a release from his bondage. "There are but three hundred and seventy in the school," he wrote; "I wish there were only three hundred and sixty-nine."

So in 1828 he said a joyous goodbye to the Doctor, to Biggs and Berry and all the rest, and prepared himself with his stepfather's help to enter the University at Cambridge. Trinity was his college, and William Whewell was his tutor; and while he loved his college, he cherished neither sympathy nor respect for the great man who wrote "The Plurality of Worlds." Crump, in "The Snob Papers," the Grand Llama who would not permit an undergraduate to sit down in his presence, owes something to that Master of Trinity whom Sir Francis Doyle called "God's greatest work," and whom Thackeray attacked with a violence that was neither humorous nor just.

Moreover, his brief sojourn at Cambridge — he stayed but four terms — was undistinguished. It has been told a dozen times how he was a bye-term man and took a fourth class in his May, but these details are of no importance: it is enough to remember that he belonged to as brilliant a set as has rarely illuminated either university and that at Trinity he made his first experiments in literature.

The friend of Tennyson, FitzGerald, Monckton Milnes, and Kinglake — to say nothing of John Allen, Brookfield, and Kemble — was not likely to refrain his hand

from the English language, and Thackeray's ambition was assured. It is characteristic that his first step was in the direction of university journalism, and he enhanced the vapid humor of "The Snob" with a few specimens of verse and prose. "Timbuctoo," the parody of a prize poem, is his, and he ingenuously records how proud he was to hear it praised by those who knew not its authorship. It is not a sparkling travesty; indeed, it is chiefly memorable because the subject, given out for the Chancellor's Medal, suggested a set of verses to Tennyson in which the master's genius is already revealed. Thackeray's also were the reflections of Dorothea Julia Ramsbottom, while he claimed with a proper pride the simple advertisement:

"Sidney Sussex College. — Wanted, a few Freshmen; please apply at the buttery."

Once he had seen himself in print, Thackeray did not pause, and he claimed an active share in "The Gownsmen," which followed "The Snob." There is nothing sparkling in its eighteen numbers, and the wonder is that it survived two terms. Meanwhile more serious projects engrossed him, and he destined a paper upon "The Revolt of Islam" for "The Chimaera," a journal which never made its appearance.

But, with that zest of life which always distinguished him, he had other than literary interests. In his second year, we are told, he plunged into the many extravagances which presently involved Pendennis in ruin, and, like Pendennis, he profited enormously. Duns, no doubt, followed the purveyors of little dinners up his chastened staircase; and if he took his fate less tragically than Arthur Pendennis, he, too, suffered remorse and embarrassment. But the compensations were obvious. The friendships which he made ended only with his life, and

he must have been noble, indeed, who was the friend of Alfred Tennyson and of Edward FitzGerald. E.J.

Moreover, Cambridge taught him the literary use of the University, as the Charterhouse had taught him the literary use of a public school. In a few chapters of "Pendennis" he sketched the life of an undergraduate, which has eluded all his rivals save only Cuthbert Bede. He sketched it, moreover, in the true spirit of boyish extravagance, which he felt at Cambridge, and preserved even in the larger world of London; and if Trinity and the rustling gown of Mr. Whewell had taught him nothing more than this, he would not have contemplated them in vain.

For Thackeray, while he had neglected scholarship, had already learned the more valuable lessons of life and travel — lessons not one of which he forgot when he sat him down to the composition of fiction. Paris had always been familiar to him, and no sooner had he made up his mind to leave Cambridge than he set out — in 1830 — for Germany. He visited Weimar, the quietude of whose tiny court he celebrated when he drew his sketch of Pumpnickel and its society; and there he gave himself up to the study of German literature and to the worship of Goethe.

Already his head was full of literary schemes. He would translate the German ballads into English, he would write a treatise upon German manners: in brief, he adopted and dismissed the innumerable projects which cloud the brain of ambitious youth. But, what is more important, he made his first entry into "society," and he saw Goethe. In "Fraser's Magazine" of January, 1840, there are some "Recollections" of Germany which may be ascribed to him, and in which are set forth the perturbation of a young student who confronts the pontiff

of letters for the first time. But a letter addressed to G. H. Lewes presents a better picture, and proves that a quarter of a century had not dimmed the youthful impression.

“Five-and-twenty years ago,” thus he wrote in 1855, “at least a score of young English lads used to live at Weimar for study, or sport, or society: all of which were to be had in the friendly little Saxon capital. The Grand Duke received us with the kindest hospitality. The court was splendid, but most pleasant and homely. We were invited in our turn to dinners, balls, and assemblies there. Such young men as had a right appeared in uniforms, diplomatic and military. Some, I remember, invented gorgeous clothing; the kind old Hof-Marschall of those days, Monsieur de Spiegel (who had two of the most lovely daughters eyes ever looked on), being in no wise difficult as to the admission of these young Englanders.”

So Thackeray spent his days in the study of literature and in a pleasant hero-worship. He purchased Schiller's sword, and he saw Goethe. “Vidi tantum,” said he; “I saw him but three times.” But the image was ineffaceable. “Of course I remember well,” again Thackeray speaks, “the perturbation of spirit with which, as a lad of nineteen, I received the long-expected intimation that the Herr Geheimrath would see me on such a morning. This notable audience took place in a little ante-chamber of his private apartments, covered all round with antique casts and bas-reliefs. He was habited in a long gray or drab redingote, with a white neckcloth and a red ribbon in his buttonhole. He kept his hands behind his back, as in Rauch's statuette. His complexion was very bright, clear, and rosy. His eyes extraordinarily dark, piercing, and brilliant. I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero

of a certain romance called 'Melmoth the Wanderer.'” But Thackeray was relieved to find that the great man spoke French with not a good accent, was emboldened to send him “Fraser’s Magazine,” and heard with pride that he had deigned to look at some of his drawings. The meeting is a link in the unbroken chain of literary tradition, and it is not surprising that Thackeray should have guarded a proud memory of the poet who lighted the torch of romanticism, then — in 1830 — dazzling the eyes of Europe.

Meanwhile he was intent upon a profession. Though only twenty he reflected that at that age his father had seen five years’ service, and the inaction irked him. Accordingly he chose the law, and read for a while in the chambers of Mr. Taprell, a well-known conveyancer. But the study of deeds did not long engross him. The few months which he spent in London were devoted to the companionship of his friends and to the practice of caricature. He smoked pipes with FitzGerald and Tennyson, he frequented the theaters with John Kemble, and under the auspices of Charles Buller he presently got his first insight into Radical politics. Indeed, he gave his help in canvassing Liskeard for his friend, who sat on the Liberal side of the first reformed Parliament, and so well did the Cornish electors remember him that they would have elected him many years afterwards as their representative. But he tired of politics as speedily as of law, and went off to Paris to study painting and French literature. And then came the opportunity of journalism. He deserted the atelier of Gros (or another) for the office of “The National Standard,” and henceforth, save for a brief interval, he followed the trade of letters.

Whatever we may think of the venture, we can have no doubt of Thackeray’s courage and enterprise. To own

and to edit a newspaper is always a desperate hazard, more easily faced, it is true, with the half-conscious recklessness of youth than with the settled calm of maturer years. Now Thackeray was no more than twenty-one when he purchased and managed "The National Standard," a paper which had survived eighteen numbers without distinction.

"The National Standard" was "hailed down," to use his own phrase, after it had floated but a few months in the breeze, and Thackeray, thrown back upon painting, worked in the studios of Brine and Gros, or copied the old masters industriously in the Louvre. Meantime he continued to make experiments in literature, found his way to the office of "Frazer's Magazine," and was buying experience at not too high a rate. His own experience was doubtless that of Mr. Batchelor in "Lovel the Widower."

While Thackeray had squandered a part of his patrimony, his stepfather, Major Carmichael Smyth, had made unlucky investments, and father and son, whose equal friendship suggests the tie which bound Clive Newcome to the Colonel, collaborated in founding a Radical paper. Such heavy artillery as Grote and Molesworth came to their aid, and the banner under which they fought bore the proud title of "The Constitutional." Thackeray was appointed correspondent in Paris, where for some six months he discharged his duties in the proper spirit of Radicalism. No doubt he was influenced by his journal; no doubt the consciousness that the austere Grote had his eye upon him encouraged him to dullness. But the truth is that Thackeray's letters to "The Constitutional" are particularly grave.

The downfall of "The Constitutional" rendered Thackeray penniless. But not only had he lost his patri-

mony: he had incurred an added responsibility, having married Miss Creagh Shawe, a lady of Doneraile, at the British Embassy in Paris; so that in 1837, when he returned to London and the magazines, he was no better off than other adventurers who work for their bread. Indeed, as he told Mrs. Brookfield, he once wrote with Longueville Jones in "Galignani's Messenger" for ten francs a day, and he installed himself in Great Coram Street without a very clear prospect of success.

But temperament and experience were in his favor. He was far better equipped for the craft of letters than the most of his contemporaries. He knew something of the great world which lies beyond Cambridge and London; he had studied the life of foreign cities; and he had sojourned in no place which had not contributed something to the material of his art. Being no recluse, he had always mixed freely with his fellows. Nor was his temperament less happy than his education. Energy, courage, and good spirits were his. In the letters of FitzGerald you get a glimpse of him, pleasure-loving, humorous, and alert.

A big, burly man he was — Carlyle a few years later described him as "a half-monstrous Cornish giant" — with a mass of hair kempt or unkempt in the romantic fashion, a high stock about his neck, and an eyeglass stuck insolently in his eye. Old for his years in looks as in experience, he held his own with such captains of the press as Lockhart and Maginn, and was ready to engage in the violent warfare of letters with as fine a spirit as any of them.

THE SECRET OF MACAULAY'S SUCCESS¹

By SIR GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN



THE main secret of Macaulay's success lay in this, that to extraordinary fluency and facility he united patient, minute, and persistent diligence. He knew well, as Chaucer knew before him, that

There is na workeman
That can bothe worken wel and hastilie.
This must be done at leisure parfaitlie.

If his method of composition ever comes into fashion, books probably will be better, and undoubtedly will be shorter. As soon as he had got into his head all the information relating to any particular episode in his "History" (such, for instance, as Argyll's expedition to Scotland, or the attainder of Sir John Fenwick, or the calling in of the clipped coinage), he would sit down and write off the whole story at a headlong pace; sketching in the outlines under the genial and audacious impulse of a first conception, and securing in black and white each idea and epithet and turn of phrase, as it flowed straight from his busy brain to his rapid fingers.

His manuscript, at this stage, to the eyes of any one but himself, appeared to consist of column after column of dashes and flourishes, in which a straight line, with a half-formed letter at each end and another in the middle, did duty for a word. From amidst a chaos of such hieroglyphics Lady Trevelyan, after her brother's death,

¹ From "The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay." By permission of Harper and Brothers.

deciphered that account of the last days of William which fitly closes the "History."

As soon as Macaulay had finished his rough draft, he began to fill it in at the rate of six sides of foolscap every morning; written in so large a hand, and with such a multitude of erasures, that the whole six pages were, on an average, compressed into two pages of print. This portion he called his "task," and he was never quite easy unless he completed it daily. More he seldom sought to accomplish; for he had learned by long experience that this was as much as he could do at his best; and, except when at his best, he never would work at all.

"I had no heart to write," he says in his journal of March 6, 1851. "I am too-self-indulgent in this matter, it may be: and yet I attribute much of the success which I have had to my habit of writing only when I am in the humor, and of stopping as soon as the thoughts and words cease to flow fast. There are, therefore, few lees in my wine. It is all the cream of the bottle."

Macaulay never allowed a sentence to pass muster until it was as good as he could make it. He thought little of recasting a chapter in order to obtain a more lucid arrangement, and nothing whatever of reconstructing a paragraph for the sake of one happy stroke or apt illustration. Whatever the worth of his labor, at any rate it was a labor of love.

Antonio Stradivari has an eye
That winces at false work, and loves the true.

Leonardo da Vinci would walk the whole length of Milan that he might alter a single tint in his picture of the Last Supper. Napoleon kept the returns of his army under his pillow at night, to refer to in case he was sleepless, and would set himself problems at the Opera while

the overture was playing: "I have ten thousand men at Strasbourg; fifteen thousand at Magdeburg; twenty thousand at Wurtzburg. By what stages must they march so as to arrive at Ratisbon on three successive days?"

What his violins were to Stradivarius, and his fresco to Leonardo, and his campaigns to Napoleon, that was his "History" to Macaulay. How fully it occupied his thoughts did not appear in his conversation; for he steadily and successfully resisted any inclination to that most subtle form of selfishness which often renders the period of literary creation one long penance to all the members of an author's family. But none the less his book was always in his mind; and seldom, indeed, did he pass a day, or turn over a volume, without lighting upon a suggestion which could be turned to useful purpose.

In May, 1851, he writes: "I went to the Exhibition, and lounged there during some hours. I never knew a sight which extorted from all ages, classes, and nations such unanimous and genuine admiration. I felt a glow of eloquence, or something like it, come on me from the mere effect of the place, and I thought of some touches which will greatly improve my Steinkirk."

It is curious to trace whence was derived the fire which sparkles through every line of that terse and animated narrative which has preserved from unmerited oblivion the story of a defeat more glorious to the British arms than not a few of our victories.

Macaulay deserved the compliment which Cecil paid to Sir Walter Raleigh as the supreme of commendations: "I know that he can labor terribly." One example will serve for many, in order to attest the pains which were ungrudgingly bestowed upon every section of the "History":

“March 21st. — To-morrow I must begin upon a difficult and painful subject, Glencoe.

“March 23d. — I looked at some books about Glencoe. Then to the Athenæum, and examined the Scotch Acts of Parliament on the same subject. Walked a good way, meditating. I see my line. Home, and wrote a little, but thought and prepared more.

“March 25th. — Wrote a little. Mr. Lovell Reeve, editor of ‘The Literary Gazette,’ called, and offered to defend me about Penn. I gave him some memoranda. Then to Glencoe again, and worked all day with energy, pleasure, and, I think, success.

“March 26th. — Wrote much. I have seldom worked to better purpose than on these three days.

“March 27th. — After breakfast I wrote a little, and then walked through April weather to Westbourne Terrace, and saw my dear little nieces. Home, and wrote more. I am getting on fast with this most horrible story. It is even worse than I thought. The Master of Stair is a perfect Iago.

“March 28th. — I went to the Museum, and made some extracts about Glencoe.”

On the 29th, 30th, and 31st of March, and the 1st and 2d of April, there is nothing relating to the “History” except the daily entry, “Wrote.”

“April 3d. — Wrote. This Glencoe business is infernal.

“April 4th. — Wrote; walked round by London Bridge and wrote again. To-day I finished the massacre. This episode will, I hope, be interesting.

“April 6th. — Wrote to good purpose.

“April 7th. — Wrote and corrected. The account of the massacre is now, I think, finished.

“April 8th. — I went to the Museum, and turned over the ‘Gazette de Paris,’ and the Dutch dispatches of 1692.

I learned much from the errors of the French Gazette, and from the profound silence of the Dutch ministers on the subject of Glencoe. Home, and wrote.

"*April 9th.* — A rainy and disagreeable day. I read a 'Life of Romney,' which I picked up uncut in Chancery Lane yesterday; a quarto. That there should be two showy quarto lives of a man who did not deserve a duodecimo! Wrote hard, rewriting Glencoe.

"*April 10th.* — Finished 'Don Carlos.' I have been long about it; but twenty pages a day in bed while I am waiting for the newspaper will serve to keep up my German. A fine play, with all its faults. Schiller's good and evil genius struggled in it; as Shakespeare's good and evil genius, to compare greater things with smaller, struggled in 'Romeo and Juliet.' 'Carlos' is half by the author of 'The Robbers' and half by the author of 'Wallenstein'; as 'Romeo and Juliet' is half by the author of 'Love's Labor Lost' and half by the author of 'Othello.' After 'Romeo and Juliet' Shakespeare never went back, nor Schiller after 'Carlos.' Wrote all the morning, and then to Westbourne Terrace. I chatted, played chess, and dined there.

"*April 11th.* — Wrote all the morning. Ellis came to dinner. I read him Glencoe. He did not seem to like it much, which vexed me, though I am not partial to it. It is a good thing to find sincerity."

That author must have had a strong head, and no very exaggerated self-esteem, who, while fresh from a literary success which had probably never been equaled, and certainly never surpassed,—at a time when the booksellers were waiting with a most feverish eagerness for anything that he chose to give them,—spent nineteen working days over thirty octavo pages, and ended by humbly acknowledging that the result was not to his mind.

When at length, after repeated revisions, Macaulay had satisfied himself that his writing was as good as he could make it, he would submit it to the severest of all tests, that of being read aloud to others. Though he never ventured on this experiment in the presence of any except his own family and his friend Mr. Ellis, it may well be believed that, even within that restricted circle, he had no difficulty in finding hearers. "I read," he says in December, 1849, "a portion of my 'History' to Hannah and Trevelyan with great effect. Hannah cried, and Trevelyan kept awake. I think what I have done as good as any part of the former volumes, and so thinks Ellis."

Whenever one of his books was passing through the press, Macaulay extended his indefatigable industry and his scrupulous precision to the minutest mechanical drudgery of the literary calling. There was no end to the trouble that he devoted to matters which most authors are only too glad to leave to the care and experience of their publisher. He could not rest until the lines were level to a hair's breadth, and the punctuation correct to a comma; until every paragraph concluded with a telling sentence, and every sentence flowed like running water.

I remember the pleasure with which he showed us a communication from one of the readers in Mr. Spottiswoode's office, who respectfully informed him that there was one expression, and one only, throughout the two volumes, of which he did not catch the meaning at a glance. And it must be remembered that Macaulay's punctilious attention to details was prompted by an honest wish to increase the enjoyment, and smooth the difficulties, of those who did him the honor to buy his books. His was not the accuracy of those who judge it necessary to keep up a distinction in small matters between the learned and

the unlearned. As little of a purist as it is possible for a scholar to be, his distaste for Mr. Grote's exalted standard of orthography interfered sadly with his admiration for the judgment, the power, and the knowledge of that truly great historian. He never could reconcile himself to seeing the friends of his boyhood figure as Kleon, and Alkibiades, and Poseidon, and Odysseus; and I tremble to think of the outburst of indignation with which, if he had lived to open some of the more recent editions of the Latin poets, he would have lighted upon the "Dialogue with Lydia," or the "Ode to Lyce," printed with a small letter at the head of each familiar line.

Macaulay's correspondence in the summer and autumn of 1848 is full of allusions to his great work, the first volumes of which were then in the hands of the publisher. On the 22d of June he writes to Mr. Longman:

"If you wish to say, 'History of England from the Accession of James II.,' I have no objection; but I can not consent to put in anything about an Introductory Essay. There is no Introductory Essay, unless you call the first Book of Davila, and the first three chapters of Gibbon, Introductory Essays."

In a letter to his sister Selina he says: "Longman seems content with his bargain. Jeffrey, Ellis, and Hannah all agree in predicting that the book will succeed. I ought to add Marian Ellis's judgment; for her father tells me that he can not get the proof sheets out of her hand. These things keep up my spirits; yet I see every day more and more clearly how far my performance is below excellence."

On the 24th of October, 1848, he writes to my mother: "I do not know whether you have heard how pleasant a day Margaret passed with me. We had a long walk, a great deal of chat, a very nice dinner, and a quiet, happy

evening. That was my only holiday last week. I work with scarcely any intermission from seven in the morning to seven in the afternoon, and shall probably continue to do so during the next ten days. Then my labors will become lighter, and, in about three weeks, will completely cease. There will still be a fortnight before publication. I have armed myself with all my philosophy for the event of a failure. Jeffrey, Ellis, Longman, and Mrs. Longman seem to think that there is no chance of such a catastrophe. I might add Macleod, who has read the third chapter, and professes to be, on the whole, better pleased than with any other history that he has read. The state of my own mind is this: when I compare my book with what I imagine history ought to be, I feel dejected and ashamed; but when I compare it with some histories which have a high repute, I feel reassured."

He might have spared his fears. Within three days after its first appearance the fortune of the book was already secure. It was greeted by an ebullition of national pride and satisfaction which delighted Macaulay's friends, and reconciled to him most who remained of his old political adversaries. Other hands than his have copied and preserved the letters of congratulation and approval which for months together flowed in upon him from every quarter of the compass; but prudence forbids me to admit into these pages more than a very few samples of a species of correspondence which forms the most uninviting portion of only too many literary biographies. It is, however, worth while to reproduce the phrases in which Lord Halifax expressed the general feeling that the "History" was singularly well timed.

"I have finished," he writes, "your second volume, and I cannot tell you how grateful all lovers of truth, all lovers of liberty, all lovers of order and of civilized free-

dom, ought to be to you for having so set before them the History of our Revolution of 1688. It has come at a moment when the lessons it inculcates ought to produce great practical effects on the conduct of the educated leaders of what is now going on abroad; but I fear that the long education in the working of a constitution such as ours is not to be supplied by any reading or meditation. Jameses we may find, but Europe shows no likeness of William."

"My dear Macaulay," says Lord Jeffrey, "the mother that bore you, had she been yet alive, could scarcely have felt prouder or happier than I do at this outburst of your graver fame. I have long had a sort of parental interest in your glory; and it is now mingled with a feeling of deference to your intellectual superiority which can only consort, I take it, with the character of a female parent."

A still older friend even than Lord Jeffrey — Lord Auckland, the Bishop of Sodor and Man — wrote of him in more racy, but not less affectionate, language: "Tom Macaulay should be embalmed and kept. I delight in his book, though luckily I am not half through it, for I have just had an ordination, and my house is pervaded by Butler's 'Analogy' and young priests. Do you think that Tom is not a little hard on old Cranmer? He certainly brings him down a peg or two in my estimation. I had also hated Cromwell more than I now do; for I always agree with Tom, and it saves trouble to agree with him at once, because he is sure to make you do so at last. Since I have had this book I have hated the best insular friend we have for coming in and breaking up the evening. At any other crisis we should have embraced him on both sides of his face."

THE STORY OF WASHINGTON IRVING OF NEW YORK¹

BY ELBRIDGE S. BROOKS



HE street echoed with the sound of martial music,—the rattle of the drum, and the shrill quaver of the fife; a flash of color and a flutter of flags filled the nearest street; and the small boy on the doorstep could not resist the temptation. Darting from his perch on the “stoop” of his father’s house, he whisked about the corner and was soon forcing his way into the crowd.

It was a joyous and jubilant crowd into which this runaway six-year-old had thrown himself. It was evidently out for a holiday, and yet it seemed to be a holiday of exceptional significance. The flags and the music, the soldiers and the crowd, were but a part of the accessories of the pageant, while the pageant itself finally became, for this small spectator, simply a large, impressive-looking man standing on a balcony, plainly dressed in brown short-clothes, to whom another man in black robes handed an open book which the big man in brown fervently kissed.

Then the small boy in the crowd heard the man in black robes call out in loud, triumphant tones, “Long live George Washington, President of the United States!” Whereupon the people, packed in the street below, cheered themselves hoarse, the drums and fifes played up their loudest, all the bells in all the steeples rang a merry

¹ From “Historic Americans.” Copyright, 1899, Thomas Y. Crowell & Company.

peal, the guns boomed out a salute, and young Washington Irving, aged six, had witnessed the inauguration of George Washington as the first President of the United States of America.

Seventy years after, in a beautiful vine-embowered home on the banks of the noble Hudson, an old man wrote "The End" to a long and exhaustive work upon which he had expended a vast amount of research, time, and labor. Sick almost unto death, he still gave to the work a devoted and unremitting attention, and when at last it was finished, the last "copy" turned in to the printer, the pen with which it was written given to an admiring friend, the last task of a long and busy life was concluded, and the famous author gave to the world the life story of the man for whom he was named, the patriot for whom he had an enthusiastic reverence, the big man in brown whom, as a small boy, he had seen made President of the United States, and whose story as told by him has become world-renowned as Irving's "Life of Washington."

There is a story told to the effect that, when this small boy was first "put into trousers," the Irving maid-servant who was charged with his care followed the dignified and awe-inspiring first President of the United States into a shop, dragging the boy with her.

"Please, your Honor," said this Scotch Lizzie, with the inevitable courtesy of those days as her "manners," but with an evidently exalted opinion of the Irving family as well, — "please, your Honor, here's a bairn as was named after you."

And the great Washington, punctilious in small matters as he was in great affairs, stooped down and laid his hand upon the head of the small Washington.

"I am glad to know you, my little man," he said; "grow up to be a good one."

He grew to be both good and great,—good in his character, great in the service he did to American letters. For as surely as George Washington was the Father of his Country so surely was Washington Irving the Father of his Country's Literature.

He was a boy of old New York,—that quaint, picturesque, yet cosmopolitan city of the close of the eighteenth century, when Fulton Street was uptown, Canal Street far in the country, and Central Park an unclaimed wilderness; when Dutch ways and Dutch manners still controlled the city's domestic life, and the growth and bustle of the mighty nineteenth century had not commenced — even in prophecy. Washington Irving's father was a prosperous merchant of the town, and the boy, being of a delicate constitution, was not held to strict accountability either in school, pursuits, or recreations; though he has put on record a glimpse of the over-strict discipline of those days, when he remarked, "When I was young I was led to think that, somehow or other, everything that was pleasant was wicked."

One thing, certainly, he did not find to be pleasant, — books and study. Learning came hard to him; he had not sufficient application to do well with the dull routine studies of those days of stupid text-books and stupider methods of teaching, and so, gradually, he became, as he confesses, a "saunterer and a dreamer," with just two fixed desires, — to keep out of college and to go to sea. It is well, however, to add here that he awoke later to see and acknowledge his error; for he always regretted that he had not "gone through" college.

So, at sixteen his father decided, much against his own will, to make a lawyer of young Washington; for he had wished the boy to be almost anything else. But law-books were, if anything, drier than school-books, and

young Irving lost no opportunity to turn from reading law to essays, novels, and poems. He loved, too, the life in the open air, and he tramped and hunted all the section along the Hudson above New York, until the region became dear to him with a charm that never forsook him. He loved to hear the stories that haunted that romantic country that had been the bloody borderland of the Revolution, and which teemed with the legends and traditions that this careless, dreamy boy was later to give to literature and fame.

Opportunity, at last, came to him to go abroad. This was due to the affection and forethought of his eldest brother, — “the man I loved most on earth,” Washington Irving said of him, — who feared for his brother’s delicate health and appreciated the benefit that would come to one of his disposition if he were able to see the great world beyond the sea.

The voyage and the travel had precisely the effect this wise elder brother desired: they braced the young fellow up mentally and physically, and after two years abroad he returned filled with the new thoughts and new desires that opportunity and a broader culture created in him, laying thus the foundations from which sprang his literary career.

This career commenced soon after his return to New York. He began with sketches and personalities, — a sort of magazine work, — and then, suddenly, blossomed into real achievement with his familiar and ever-famous anonymous travesty, “Knickerbocker’s History of New York.” It was the forerunner of the American humor which in the next century was to become so original and marked a feature of American literature, and although it has been so mistakenly accepted as fact as to work a serious and harmful influence on the real and valuable

story of the beginnings of New York history, it still has become an American classic, — a humorous masterpiece with no appreciable rival until the appearance, almost sixty years after, of Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad."

The leaderless war of 1812 found Washington Irving (even as the war of 1898 found so many good Americans) regretting its necessity, but an ardent patriot.

One night as the regular steamboat was puffing down the river, and the cabin was filled with sleepy, reclining passengers, a man came on board at Poughkeepsie and electrified the company with the dreadful news of the British capture of Washington and the destruction of the public buildings.

"Well," said a voice in sneering comment from one of the dimly seen benches, "what else could you expect? I wonder what Jimmy Madison will say now?"

The patriotic but not over-strong Irving fairly sprang at the partisan and critic.

"Sir!" he cried indignantly, "do you seize on such a disaster only for a sneer? Let me tell you, sir, it is not a question now about 'Jimmy' Madison or 'Jimmy' Armstrong or any other 'Jimmy.' The pride and honor of the nation are wounded, the country is insulted and disgraced by this barbarous success, and every *loyal* citizen should feel the ignominy and be earnest to avenge it."

The whole cabin broke into applause at this patriotic outburst, and the selfish partisan had not a word to say.

"I could not see the fellow," Irving explained, "but I wouldn't stand what he said, and I just let fly at him in the dark."

Then he went at once to the governor and offered his services. They were readily accepted, and Irving, being made the governor's aide and military secretary, became at once Colonel Washington Irving.

He served as aide and secretary until the close of the war, and his duties were neither so light nor so decorative as one is apt to regard those of these staff warriors. He really was a worker and a vigorous one, but he hailed with joy the completion of the war, and also the opportunity for another trip abroad.

This second visit to Europe gave him fresh stores of experience and material, but he was scarcely yet ready to take up literature as a profession. Life was too easy and too enjoyable.

Suddenly, however, he was brought face to face with duty. Misfortune fell upon the Irving family: his brothers failed in business and he was compelled to look out for himself. But what then appeared a great disaster actually proved, as have so many other disasters to men, a real incentive, "a fortunate failure"; for it made Washington Irving a purpose-filled worker, and gave him to American literature.

His "History of New York," and his scattered sketches, had made him known in England as one of those apparent impossibilities,—an American author. So, when he was forced to take up his pen as a bread winner, he determined to carry on his work in London, and at once began writing those delightful papers which make up the "Sketch Book," and which were published serially both in England and America.

Success did not come without a few first "hitches," but, once started, it came uninterruptedly, and Irving found a market for all that he could write. In 1820 appeared the "Sketch Book"; in 1822, "Bracebridge Hall"; in 1824, "Tales of a Traveler"; and then Irving was able to change his atmosphere and go to Spain, where he wrote the "Life of Columbus," published in 1828; the "Conquest of Granada," in 1829; and the sketches known as "Tales of the Alhambra."

Then, having gained both fame and fortune by his pen, he determined to return, and in 1832 he arrived in New York, after an absence of seventeen years. He was famous, popular, and honored. America hailed him as her first man of letters — the American who had fairly won English recognition and respect. Indeed, the rush of hospitalities upon him was so great that, finally, he was obliged to turn his back upon his social successes and “take to the woods.”

He did this literally; for in the fall of 1832 he made a journey into the prairie land of the West and Southwest, gaining material and “local color” for his books of American travel and adventure which appeared soon after, — “A Tour on the Prairies,” in 1835; “Astoria,” in 1836; and the “Adventures of Captain Bonneville,” in 1837.

While at work on these books he had been able to purchase a “little Dutch cottage” and ten acres of land on the river-bank just below Tarrytown on the Hudson. That little stone Dutch cottage, in which once had lived the Van Tassells, of Sleepy Hollow fame, grew, with some modest additions, into Sunnyside, the best-known literary residence in America next to Longfellow’s house at Cambridge.

In 1842 Washington Irving was made United States minister to Spain. The appointment reflected great credit upon President Tyler, but still more upon Daniel Webster, who advocated and secured the appointment, and who looked upon it as a distinct and merited recognition of the work of Irving in the cause of American literature.

The appointment was most unexpected to Irving. He scarcely knew what to say or do.

“Washington Irving,” said Daniel Webster, “is now the most astonished man in the city of New York.”

“What shall I do?” he said to his nephew and later biographer. “I don’t want to go and yet I do. I don’t want to leave Sunnyside, and yet a residence at Madrid would let me do some work I must undertake. I appreciate the honor and distinction, but — good heavens! it’s exile — it’s exile! It is hard, very hard,” he added, smiling upon his nephew, “and yet I suppose I must try to bear it. ‘God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,’ you know,” and thus, making merry even in his struggle over a divided duty, he accepted the unsolicited appointment and made ready to go to Spain.

He remained in Madrid as minister to Spain four years, from 1842 to 1846, but he did not do the literary labor he expected to perform there. He had it on his mind, however, and the “work” he referred to, while considering his appointment, he really planned and arranged there. This was to be his greatest work — the “Life of Washington.” His attention to the affairs of his post, however, occupied much of his time, and Daniel Webster, who was then secretary of state, used to say that he always laid aside every other correspondence to read a diplomatic despatch from the United States minister to Spain.

On the nineteenth of September, 1846, Irving found himself “home again” at Sunnyside. He was overjoyed to be once more in what he called his “darling little Sunnyside,” and he intended to get to work on his proposed books at once. But he did not. Leisure was too pleasant, and was one of the things he could now afford; but he wrote at last to his nephew, begging him to come and spur him on, for, said he, “I am growing a sad laggard in literature, and need some one to bolster me up occasionally. I am ready to do anything else rather than write.”

But after a while he got to work again, and published in 1849 his "Life of Goldsmith" — his favorite author; in 1850 he issued "Mahomet and his Successors," and in 1854 "Wolfert's Roost." He had also through these years been at work on his "Life of Washington," the first volume of which appeared in 1855, and the fifth and concluding volume in 1859.

So, for just fifty years, from 1809 to 1859, had Washington Irving been making a name for himself, and a place for American literature. Before his day little that could be called literature had appeared from American writers. Theology or politics were the only themes that could inspire the American pen, and, at the best, the result of this inspiration was dry and dull enough. Washington Irving put life and strength, sentiment and sinew into the dry bones of American letters, and created a school of writing in which, however, few scholars could equal the master, whose work stands at this day strong in its influence, captivating in its style, enchanting in its humor, and simple in its pathos.

Irving was a most companionable man, fond of society and of his friends, enjoying a good time, but always curious to hear and see what was going on in the world.

"I never could keep at home," he declared, "when Madrid was in a state of siege and under arms, and the troops bivouacking in every street and square; and I always had a strong hankering to get near the gates when the fighting was going on."

This quality was almost that of the newspaper man and special correspondent; this made him *see* things wherever he was.— in mid-ocean, in European capitals, in the heart of the Catskills, amid the silent ruins of the Alhambra, or in the mighty lonesomeness of the Western plains.

But, with all his love of society, his friendly ways, and his personal popularity, Irving was one of the most modest and retiring of men — fearing nothing so much as an after-dinner speech, as witness his comical experience when called upon to speak at the famous Dickens dinner in 1842.

“ I shall certainly break down — I shall certainly break down,” he kept saying before he was called upon to speak, even though his speech was all written out and lay beside his plate.

“ There! I told you I should break down, and I’ve done it!” he exclaimed, as he resumed his seat with his speech only half delivered, but with all the table loud in its applause of the neat way in which he got out of the scrape.

Dickens loved him, Scott loved him, Moore loved him, Motley and Bancroft loved him. In fact, every one who knew intimately this gracious, kindly, lovable, and friendly man loved him, from kings to children, and from great men to gardeners.

He never married. The woman whom he hoped to make his wife died early in his life and he remained a bachelor until his death. But his home was the Mecca of all the children of his kindred families, and he had always a kindly greeting and a cheery word for every niece and nephew who came to see him; a letter written to his nephew, Irving Grinnell, is one of the things that every boy — especially every young American — should read.

It is claimed by some critics that though Washington Irving was one of the chief ornaments of American literature he was not really an American author; that he conformed too closely to English standards and was an English rather than an American writer. And yet


nothing was more distinctively American, in humor and conception, than his "Knickerbocker's New York"; while such stories of his as "Rip Van Winkle" and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" — American both, in subject and manner as well — hold their place among the famous specimens of American Literature.

Whatever he may have been in style and method he certainly showed his countrymen what American writers could do. He lifted American literature out of the deadly ruts into which what there was of it persistently stuck, and he inspired younger men to follow his example and be natural, creative, and original.

Unaffected, loyal, courteous, kind hearted, refined, and unconscious, he put the stamp of sincerity, artistic finish, clear and easy narrative upon whatever he wrote. His history, instead of being dry and stilted, is picturesque and attractive; his biography is at once direct, poetical, and intellectual; while the pathos, the humor, the vividness, and the beauty of his shorter sketches have made them outlive a host of pretentious and overstrained attempts at story telling; so that Washington Irving, to-day, is read by thousands with the same delight, though with a clearer sense of his excellences as well as his imperfections, as when, years ago, he came, a new star in the intellectual firmament, leading and lighting the way to endeavor, success, progress, and development in the field which he had discovered as the founder and father of a real American literature.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER ¹

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE

 MORE than a century ago, in the town of Burlington, New Jersey, was born a man destined to become one of the best-known figures of his time. He was as devout an American as ever lived, for he could arraign the shortcomings of his countrymen as staunchly as he could defend and glorify their ideals. He entered fearlessly and passionately into the life around him, seeing intensely, yet sometimes blind; feeling ardently, yet not always aright; acting with might and conviction, yet not seldom amiss. He loved and revered good, scorned and hated evil, and with the strength and straightforwardness of a bull championed the one and gored the other. He worshiped justice, but lacked judgment; his brain, stubborn and logical, was incongruously mated with a deep and tender heart.

A grave and burly backwoods gentleman was he, with a smattering of the humanities from Yale, and a dogged precision of principle and conduct from six years in the navy. He had the iron memory proper to a vigorous organization and a serious, observant mind; he was tirelessly industrious — in nine-and-twenty years he published thirty-two novels, many of them of prodigious length, besides producing much matter never brought to light. His birth fell at a noble period of our history and his surroundings fostered true and generous manhood.

¹ From "Novelists" in the "Warner Classics." Used by permission of J. A. Hill & Co. Copyright, 1897.

Doubtless many of his contemporaries were as true men as he: but to Cooper in addition was vouchsafed the gift of genius; and that magic quality dominated and transfigured his else rugged and intractable nature, and made his name known and loved over all the earth. No author has been more widely read than he; no American author has won even a tithe of his honorable popularity.

Though Jersey may claim his birthplace, Cooper's childhood from his second to his fourteenth year was passed on the then frontiers of civilization, at Coopers-town on the Susquehanna. There in the primeval forest, hard by the broad Lake Otsego and the wide-flowing river, the old Judge, his father, built his house and laid out his town. Trees, mountains, wild animals, and wild men nursed the child, and implanted in him seeds of poetry and wrought into the sturdy fibers of his mind golden threads of creative imagination.

Then round about the hearth at night men of pith and character told tales of the Revolution, of battle, adventure, and endurance, which the child, hearing, fed upon with his soul, and grew strong in patriotism and independence. Nobility was innate in him; he conceived lofty and sweet ideals of human nature and conduct, and was never false to them thereafter. The ideal Man — the ideal Woman — he believed in them to the end. And more than twice or thrice in his fictions we find personages like Harvey Birch, Leatherstocking, Long Tom Coffin, the jailer's daughter in "The Bravo," and Mabel Dunham and Dew-of-June in "The Pathfinder," which give adequate embodiment to his exalted conception of the possibilities of his fellow-creatures.

For though portrayal of character in the ultra-refined modern sense of the term was impossible to Cooper, yet he perceived and could impressively present certain broad

qualities of human nature, and combine them in consistent and memorable figures. Criticism may smile now and then, and Psychology arch her eyebrows, but the figures live, and bid fair to be lusty long after present fashions have been forgotten.

But of the making of books Cooper, during the first three decades of his life, had no thought at all. He looked forward to a career of action; and after Yale College had given him a glimpse of the range of knowledge, he joined a vessel as midshipman, with the prospect of an admiral's cocked hat and glory in the distance. The glory, however, with which the ocean was to crown him was destined to be gained through the pen and not the sword, when at the age of five-and-thirty he should have published "The Pilot."

As a naval officer he might have helped to whip the English in the War of 1812; but as author of the best sea story in the language he conquered all the world of readers unaided. Meanwhile, when he was twenty-one years old he married a Miss Delancey, whose goodness (according to one of his biographers) was no less eminent than his genius, and who died but a short time before him. The joys of wedded life in a home of his own outweighed with him the chances of warlike distinction, and he resigned his commission and took command of a farm in Westchester County; and a gentleman farmer, either there or at his boyhood's home in Cooperstown, he remained till the end, with the exception of his seven years' sojourn in Europe.

His was a bodily frame built to endure a hundred years, and the robustness of his intelligence and the vivacity of his feelings would have kept him young throughout; yet he died of a dropsy, at the prime of his powers, in 1851, heartily mourned by innumerable friends, and having already outlived all his enmities.

He died, too, the unquestioned chief of American novelists; and however superior to his may have been the genius of his contemporary, Walter Scott, the latter can hardly be said to have rivaled him in breadth of dominion over readers of all nationalities. Cooper was a household name from New York to Ispahan, from St. Petersburg to Rio Janeiro; and the copyright on his works in various languages would to-day amount to a large fortune every year.

Three generations have passed since with "The Spy" he won the sympathies of mankind; and he holds them still. It is an enviable record. And although in respect of actual quality of work produced there have been many geniuses greater than he, yet it is fair to remember that Cooper's genius had a great deal of stubborn raw material to subdue before it could proceed to produce anything. It started handicapped. As it was, the man wasted years of time and an immensity of effort in doing, or trying to do, things he had no business with. He would be a political reformer, a critic of society, an interpreter of law, even a master grammarian. He would fight to the finish all who differed from him in opinion; he fought and — incredible as it may seem — he actually conquered the American press. He published reams of stuff which no one now reads and which was never worth reading to enforce his views and prove that he was right and others wrong.

All this power was misdirected; it might have been applied to producing more and better Leatherstockings and Pilots. Perhaps he hardly appreciated at its value that one immortal thing about him — his genius — and was too much concerned about his dogmatic and bull-headed Self. Unless the world confessed his infallibility, he could not be quite at peace with it. Such an attitude

arouses one's sense of humor; it would never have existed had Cooper possessed a spark of humor himself.

But he was uncompromisingly serious on all subjects, or if at times he tried to be playful we shudder and avert our faces. It is too like Juggernaut dancing a jig. And he gave too much weight to the verdict of the moment, and not enough to that judgment of posterity to which the great Verulam was content to submit his fame. Who cares to-day, or how are we the better or the worse, if Cooper were right or wrong in his various convictions? What concerns us is that he wrote delightful stories of the forest and the sea; in those stories, and not in his controversial or didactic homilies, we choose to discover his faith in good and ire against evil. Cooper, in short, had his limitations; but, with all his errors, we may take him and be thankful.

Moreover, his essential largeness appears in the fact that in the midst of his bitterest conflicts, at the very moment when his pamphlets and "satires" were heating the printing-presses and people's tempers, a novel of his would be issued, redolent with pure and serene imagination, telling of the prairies and the woods, of deer and panther, of noble redskins and heroic trappers.

It is another world, harmonious and calm; no echo of the petty tumults in which its author seemed to live is audible therein. But it is a world of that author's imagination, and its existence proves that he was greater and wiser than the man of troubles and grievances who so noisily solicits our attention. The surface truculence which fought and wrangled was distinct from the interior energy which created and harmonized, and acted perhaps as the safety-valve to relieve the inward region from disturbance.

The anecdote of how Cooper happened to adopt litera-

ture as a calling is somewhat musty, and its only significant feature is the characteristic self-confidence of his exclamation, on laying down a stupid English novel which he had been reading to his wife, "I could write as well as that myself!" Also in point is the fact that the thing he wrote, "Precaution," is a story of English life, whereof at that time he had had no personal experience.

One would like to know the name of the novel which touched him off; if it was stupider and more turgid than "Precaution" it must have been a curiosity. Cooper may have thought otherwise, or he may have been stimulated by recognition of his failure, as a good warrior by the discovery that his adversary is a more redoubtable fighter than he had gauged him to be. At all events he lost no time in engaging once more, and this time he routed his foe, horse and foot. One is reminded of the exclamation of his own Paul Jones, when requested to surrender — "I haven't begun to fight!"

"The Spy" is not a perfect work of art, but it is a story of adventure and character such as the world loves and will never tire of. "Precaution" had showed not even talent; "The Spy" revealed unquestionable genius. This is not to say that its merit was actually unquestioned at the time it came out; our native critics hesitated to commit themselves, and awaited English verdicts. But the nation's criticism was to buy the book and read it, and they and other nations have been so doing ever since.

Nothing in literature lasts longer, or may be oftener re-read with pleasure, than a good tale of adventure. The incidents are so many and the complications so ingenious that one forgets the detail after a few years, and comes to the perusal with fresh appetite. Cooper's best books are epics, possessing an almost Homeric vitality.

The hero is what the reader would like to be, and the latter thrills with his perils and triumphs in his success. Ulysses is Mankind, making sweet uses of adversity, and regenerate at last; and Harvey Birch, Leatherstocking, and the rest are congenial types of Man, acting up to high standards in given circumstances.

But oh! the remorseless tracts of verbiage in these books, the long toiling through endless preliminaries, as of a too unwieldy army marching and marshaling for battle! It is Cooper's way; he must warm to his work gradually, or his strength cannot declare itself. His beginnings abound in seemingly profitless detail, as if he must needs plot his every footstep on the map ere trusting himself to take the next. Balzac's method is similar, but possesses a spiritual charm lacking in the American's. The modern ability of Stevenson and Kipling to plunge into the thick of it in the first paragraph was impossible to this ponderous pioneer. Yet when at length he does begin to move, the impetus and majesty of his advance are tremendous; as in the avalanche every added particular of passive preparation adds weight and power to the final action.

Cooper teaches us, Wellington-like, "what long-enduring hearts can do!" Doubtless, therefore, any attempt to improve him by blue-penciling his tediousness would result in spoiling him altogether. We must accept him as he is. Dullness past furnishes fire to present excitement. It is a mistake to "skip" in reading Cooper; if we have not leisure to read him as he stands, let us wait until we have.

"Precaution" and "The Spy" both appeared in 1821, when the author was about thirty-two years old. Two years passed before the production of "The Pioneers," wherein Cooper draws upon memory no less than upon

imagination, and in which Leatherstocking first makes our acquaintance.

As a rule (proved by exceptions), the best novels of great novelists have their scene in surroundings with which the writer's boyhood was familiar. "The Pioneers" and the ensuing series of Leatherstocking tales are placed in the neighborhood of the lake and river which Cooper, as a child, had so lovingly learned by heart. Time had supplied the requisite atmosphere for the pictures that he drew, while the accuracy of his memory and the minuteness of his observation assured ample realism.

In the course of the narrative the whole mode of life of a frontier settlement from season to season appears before us, and the typical figures which constitute it. It is history, illuminated by romance and uplifted by poetic imagination. One of our greatest poets, speaking after the second-thought of thirty years, declared Cooper to be a greater poet than Hesiod or Theocritus. But between a poet and a prose writer capable of poetic feeling there is perhaps both a distinction and a difference.

The birth year of the "Pioneers" and of the "Pilot" is again the same. Now Cooper leaves, for the time, the backwoods, and embarks upon the sea. He is as great upon one element as upon the other: of whom else can that be affirmed? We might adapt the apothegm on Washington to him: he was "first on land, first on sea, and first in the hearts of his readers." In "The Pilot" the resources of the writer's invention first appear in full development.

His personal experience of the vicissitudes and perils of a seaman's life stood him in good stead here, and may indeed have served him well in the construction of all his fictions. Fertility in incident and the element of suspense are valuable parts of a story-teller's outfit, and Cooper

excelled in both; he might have been less adequately furnished in these respects had he never served on a man-of-war. Be that as it may, "The Pilot" is generally accepted as the best sea story ever written. Herman Melville and his disciple Clark Russell have both written lovingly and thrillingly of the sea and seamen, but neither of them has rivaled their common original. Long Tom Coffin is the peer of Leatherstocking himself, and might have been made the central figure of as many and as excellent tales.

The three books — "The Spy," "The Pioneers," and "The Pilot" — form a trilogy of itself more than sufficient to support a mighty reputation; and they were all written before Cooper was thirty-five years old. Indeed, his subsequent works did not importantly add to his fame; and many of them of course might better never have been written. "Lionel Lincoln," in 1825, fell far short of the level of the previous romances; but "The Last of the Mohicans," in the year following, is again as good as the best, and the great figure of Leatherstocking even gains in solidity and charm. As a structure, the story is easily criticized, but the texture is so sound and the spirit so stirring that only the cooler afterthought finds fault. Faults which would shipwreck a lesser man leave this leviathan almost unscathed.

At this juncture occurred the unfortunate episode in Cooper's career. His fame having spread over two continents, he felt a natural desire to visit the scene of his foreign empire and make acquaintance with his subjects there; it seemed an act of expediency too to get local color for romances which should appeal more directly to these friends across the sea. Upon these pretexts he set forth, and in due season arrived in Paris.

Here he chanced to read a newspaper criticism of the

United States government; and, true to his conviction that he was the heaven-appointed agent to correct and castigate the world, he sat down and wrote a sharp rejoinder. He was well furnished with facts, and he exhibited plenty of acumen in his statement of them; though his cumbrous and pompous style, as of a schoolmaster laying down the law, was not calculated to fascinate the lectured ones.

In the controversy which ensued he found himself arrayed against the aristocratic party, with only the aged Lafayette to afford him moral support; his arguments were not refuted, but this rendered him only the more obnoxious to his hosts, who finally informed him that his room was more desirable than his company. As a Parthian shaft, our redoubtable champion launched a missile in the shape of a romance of ancient Venice ("The Bravo"), in which he showed how the perversion of institutions devised to insure freedom inevitably brings to pass freedom's opposite.

It is a capital novel, worthy of Cooper's fame; but it neither convinced nor pleased the effete monarchists whom it arraigned. In the end accordingly he returned home, with the consciousness of having vindicated his countrymen, but of having antagonized all Europe in the process.

It may be possible to win the affection of a people while proving to them that they are fools and worse; but if so, Cooper was not the man to accomplish the feat. It should be premised here that during his residence abroad he had written, in addition to "The Bravo," three novels which may be placed among his better works; and one, "The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish," whose lovely title is its only recommendation. "The Red Rover" was by some held to be superior even to "The Pilot"; and "Heiden-

hauer " and " The Headsman of Berne " attempt, not with entire success, to repeat the excellence of " The Bravo." He had also published a volume of letters critical of national features, entitled " Notions of the Americans," which may have flattered his countrymen's susceptibilities, but did nothing to assuage the wounded feelings of those with whom he contrasted them.

Now, when a warrior returns home after having manfully supported his country's cause against odds, and at the cost of his own popularity, he feels justified in anticipating a cordial reception. What, then, must be his feelings on finding himself actually given the cold shoulder by those he had defended, on the plea that his defense was impolitic and discourteous? In such circumstances there is one course which no wise man will pursue, and that is to treat his aspersers with anything else than silent disdain.

Cooper was far from being thus wise; he lectured his fellow-citizens with quite as much asperity as he had erewhile lectured the tyrants of the Old World; with as much justice, too, and with an effect even more embroiling. In " A Letter to his Countrymen," " Monikins," " Homeward Bound," and " Home as Found " he admonished and satirized them with characteristic vigor. The last named of these books brings us to the year 1838, and of Cooper's life the fiftieth.

He seemed in a fair way to become a universal Ishmael. Yet once more he had only begun to fight. In 1838 he commenced action against a New York newspaper for slander, and for five years thereafter the courts of his country resounded with the cries and thwackings of the combatants. But Cooper could find no adversary really worthy of his steel, and in 1843 he was able to write to a friend, " I have beaten every man I have sued who has not retracted his libels! "

He had beaten them fairly, and one fancies that even he must at last have become weary of his favorite passion of proving himself in the right. Howbeit, peace was declared over the corpse of the last of his opponents, and the victor in so many fields could now apply himself undisturbedly to the vocations from which war had partially distracted him — only partially, for in 1840, in the heat of the newspaper fray, he astonished the public by producing one of the loveliest of his romances and perhaps the very best of the Leatherstocking series, "The Pathfinder."

William Cullen Bryant holds this to be "a glorious work," and speaks of its moral beauty, the vividness and force of its delineations, and the unspoiled love of nature and fresh and warm emotions which give life to the narrative and dialogue. Yet Cooper was at that time over fifty years of age.


Nevertheless, as far as his abilities both mental and physical were concerned, the mighty man was still in the prime of his manhood, if not of his youth. During the seven or eight years yet to elapse, after the close of his slander suits in 1843, before his unexpected death in 1851, he wrote not less than twelve new novels, several of them touching the high-water mark of his genius. Of them may be specially mentioned "Two Admirals" and "Wing-and-Wing," "Wyandotte" and "Jack Tier." Besides all this long list of his works, he published "Sketches of Switzerland" in 1836; "Gleanings in Europe," in a series of eight volumes, beginning 1837; a "Naval History of the United States" in two octavo volumes; and wrote three or four other books which seem to have remained in manuscript. Altogether it was a gigantic life-work, worthy of the giant who achieved it.

Cooper was hated as well as loved during his lifetime,

but at his death the love had quenched the hate, and there are none but lovers of him now. He was manly, sincere, sensitive, independent; rough without but sweet within. He sought the good of others, he devoutly believed in God, and if he was always ready to take his own part in a fight he never forgot his own self-respect or forfeited other men's. But above all he was a great novelist, original and irresistible. America has produced no other man built on a scale so continental.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE¹

BY KIRK MONROE

F all the literary workers of the century, none has made a more indelible mark upon history, and at the same time achieved for herself a more widespread and enviable reputation, than Harriet Beecher Stowe. Not only does she stand in the foremost rank of famous women of the world, but, in shaping the destiny of the American people at a most critical period of their history, her influence was probably greater than that of any other individual. Charles Sumner said that if "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had not been written, Abraham Lincoln could not have been elected President of the United States.

Of course the abolition of slavery in America was not, and could not have been, accomplished by any one person. It was the result of the united efforts of Mrs. Stowe with her wonderful book, of Garrison with his "Liberator," of Whittier with his freedom-breathing poetry, of Sumner in the senate chamber, of Wendell Phillips with his caustic wit and unanswerable arguments, of Frederick Douglass with his convincing tales of personal wrong, of Gamaliel Bailey with his "National Era," of Theodore Weld the pioneer abolitionist, of James Birney, and of a host of other heroic workers, besides the thousands of brave souls who cheerfully offered their lives on the battlefield, but the greatest and most far-reaching of all these influences was that of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the work that

¹ By courtesy of the Author. From "The Lives and Deeds of Self Made Men." Copyright, 1889, by Estes & Lauriat.

ranks but fourth in point of circulation among all the books of the world.

When a person has exercised such a power as this over mankind, we may very naturally ask, who is she? What stock did she spring from? What is her history?

The answers to these questions are readily given; for no life was more open, simple, and straightforward than that of Mrs. Stowe. To begin with, she was one of those Beechers, who, as a family, were so set apart by the strength of their intellect, as to give rise to the saying that "mankind is composed of men, women, and Beechers." Of this notable family, the offspring of Dr. Lyman and Roxana Beecher, Harriet Elizabeth was the seventh child, and was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, June 14, 1812.

Her early childhood was spent out of doors and in her father's study, satisfying at once her intense love of Nature and her literary cravings, both of which were born with her and grew with her growth. As a Congregational minister, with a large family to support upon a salary of but five hundred dollars a year, Dr. Beecher had, of course, no money to expend on books other than those necessary to his calling. His meager library contained only the profound theological treatises of the day; but over these his little daughter, curled up as quiet as a mouse in one corner of the study while the grave Doctor wrote or thought aloud over his sermons, pored and meditated in the hope of extracting something comprehensible from them. Another resource was yielded by the dim corners of the attic, where were stored barrels of old sermons and pamphlets, which were diligently examined by the child in search of palatable literary food.

Here she was at last rewarded by the glorious discovery of a fragmentary copy of the "Arabian Nights." Then

Mather's "Magnalia" found its way into the minister's library, and soon afterwards came several of the works of Walter Scott, the only novels the Beecher children were allowed to read. These, with the "Pilgrim's Progress," constituted the child's library, upon which her imagination so thrived that she became noted among her playmates as an improviser of thrilling tales that were always welcomed with eager interest.

Besides being a genuine hearty country girl, full of fun, always ready for a romp with her brothers and entering with a zest into their out-of-door sports, Harriet was thoughtful and studious far beyond her years. This was strikingly shown when she was but eleven years old, in a composition that she prepared for public reading at a school exhibition. It bore the astonishing title "Can the Immortality of the Soul be proved by the Light of Nature?" and proved to be an able argument in the negative, full of well-chosen premises and logical deductions.

When the child was twelve years old she was sent to Hartford to enter a female seminary recently established in that city by her sister Catherine. Here she remained, scholar and assistant teacher, until 1832, when, her father being called to the Presidency of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, the entire Beecher family removed to that city. For the next eighteen years it was Harriet's home, and here in 1835 she became Mrs. Stowe by marrying the professor of Biblical Literature in the Seminary. Here, too, she made her first attempts at authorship, and here she unwittingly gathered and stored away material for her great book.

Her first literary venture was a primary school geography, prepared for a Western publisher. Then she wrote a story of New England life, and received for it the prize

of fifty dollars that had been offered by the editor of the "Western Magazine," to which she became, from that time forth, a regular contributor. Her stories soon began to find favor in Eastern papers, such as the "New York Independent," the "Evangelist," and the "National Era." She became a leading member of the Semicolon Club, a famous literary society of Cincinnati in those days; and in 1842 a collection of her sketches, read at its meetings, was published in book form, under the title of "The Mayflower," by Harper and Brothers of New York.

During most of these years of Cincinnati life Mrs. Stowe was a sad invalid, suffering continually from nervous troubles which not only caused great physical prostration, but induced periods of mental depression and profound melancholy. Her writing was at this time largely a labor of necessity, undertaken for the purpose of eking out her husband's slender income and helping to provide for their rapidly increasing family.

At the time of her marriage Mrs. Stowe was not an acknowledged abolitionist, nor had she given serious consideration to the subject of slavery. In Cincinnati, however, it was forced upon her at all times and in all forms. The city was one of the most important stations of the underground railway, and slaves were constantly escaping or being recaptured within its limits. The Ohio River alone separated it from the slave state of Kentucky; and Lane Seminary, with which the fortunes of the Beecher family were so closely allied, was the rank-est hotbed of abolition in the country.

One by one the incidents that afterwards appeared with such telling effect in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" were forced upon the attention of the young authoress. Topsy was an inmate of her own family. She visited the Shelbys in Kentucky; Senator Bird and the great-hearted Van

Tromp were well-known characters of her acquaintance. Her husband and her brother Henry Ward, driving by night over almost impassable roads, conveyed a fugitive slave girl who had been a servant in the Stowe family to a place of safety from her pursuers. Mrs. Stowe's brother Charles acted for some months as collecting agent for a New Orleans commission house, and on one of his trips up the Red River discovered the Legree plantation, of which he drew a faithful picture in his next home letter. In another letter he told of the slave mother who sought the liberty of death for her babe by springing into the river, with it clasped to her bosom, from the deck of a steamer on which he was traveling.

All these and many more similar things Mrs. Stowe saw or heard of, until she gradually became filled with a sense of outrage and indignation; but still she wrote nothing to indicate the tendency of the sentiments that were each day growing stronger within her. She preferred to reserve her forces until she could deal a decisive blow, and many years elapsed before she felt that the time had come.

It was not until 1850, after the Stowes had removed from Cincinnati to Brunswick, Maine, where Professor Stowe filled a chair in Bowdoin College, that, with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, by Congress, she was roused to action. Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, editor of the "National Era" of Washington, had just written to her, asking for a serial story for his paper. Her sister Isabella begged her to write something that should show the enormity of the law just enacted by Congress. Mrs. Stowe's own indignation at its passage was so great that she required no urging to utter her protest against it. She had just given birth to the youngest of her seven children, and was still too feeble to write; but for weeks

she struggled mentally with the great problem presented to her.

At last, as an inspiration, while she sat at communion in the little Brunswick church, the scene of Uncle Tom's death was presented to her mind. Upon reaching home she wrote it out and read it to her children, from whom the tale drew ready tears of indignant sympathy. The new year had dawned before the story had assumed form in its author's mind, and work upon it, constantly interrupted by domestic cares, was fairly begun. It was started as a modest serial in the "National Era" in May, 1851, and announced to run for about three months.

But, once begun, the inspired story could not be stopped until its full message had been told; as Mrs. Stowe has often said, "I had no control over it. It insisted upon being written as it stands, and would suffer no abridgment."

Instead of running for three months only, the story was not completed until April, 1852, by which time it had increased the circulation of the paper in which it was published by fifteen thousand copies. For it, in serial form, Mrs. Stowe received three hundred dollars. At first it attracted but little attention; but before it was ended it had stirred up a degree of feeling, both North and South, such as no American story had ever aroused.

Long before its serial publication was finished, John P. Jewett, a young Boston publisher, had made overtures for its production in book form. His offer was accepted, and in March, 1852, a modest edition of one thousand copies was issued. They were sold in a day. Within ten days ten thousand copies of the book, in both cloth and paper covers, had been ordered. At the end of six months the poor professor's wife, who had never in her life been able to afford a silk dress, received ten thousand dollars in royalties. At the end of a year three hundred

thousand copies of the book had been sold, and it was in its one hundred and twentieth edition.

Long ere this, the modest authoress, who was far more astonished than any one else at the success of her venture, had received congratulations from many of the world's most distinguished people, and had become the most famous woman of her day. The poet Whittier thanked God for the Fugitive Slave Law, since it had inspired "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

With praise of the book came bitter denunciations of it and its author, assaults upon her character, and declarations that the whole story was a gross misrepresentation of facts. To answer these Mrs. Stowe prepared, in the winter of 1852-1853, a "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin." It contained some hundreds of pages of irrefutable evidence that in her previous book she had written only of what actually existed, and that, too, with a generous suppression of much far worse than anything yet described.

Upon the completion of this labor, the authoress and her husband accepted the urgent invitation of the Glasgow Anti-Slavery Society to visit Scotland, and sailed for Europe. In the meantime "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had found its way across the ocean, where it was the sensation of the day. Everybody, from the Queen to the humblest peasant, was reading it and talking of it. It had been dramatized, and was being played to crowded houses in two of the leading London theaters. As it was unprotected by English register, some forty publishing houses were issuing cheap editions of the book, and its circulation was enormous.

At the present time the sales of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in Great Britain and her colonies have exceeded two millions of copies. Of the enormous profits thus made

from the production of her own brain by foreign publishers, Mrs. Stowe never received one cent, owing to the lack of a law for international copyright.

If, however, she had not gained a fortune by the sales of her book abroad, she had certainly acquired fame; and from the moment of her landing in England until her return to America, her journeyings were the scenes of such ovations as had never before been accorded to an American. None was too high nor too proud to do homage to her genius, and none was so poor or lowly but realized that she was the champion of those in like condition. Dukes and earls considered themselves as honored in securing her as a guest; and a present of a thousand golden guineas, the result of penny offerings from all parts of the kingdom, testified the universal approbation of her great work.

A charming record of these eventful journeyings has been preserved in "Sunny Memories," a book written by Mrs. Stowe in the form of a journal, and published in London before her return to America.

Before taking this European trip, and just after "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was finished, the Stowes had removed from Brunswick to Andover, Massachusetts, where the professor had accepted a position in the Theological Seminary. Now the world-famed authoress returned to this beautiful New England village, to resume the peaceful domestic life that was so much more congenial to her tastes than any other. Here the "Stowe Cabin," as their new home was called, became a noted center of the great anti-slavery movement then so powerfully agitating the country; and in it were received and modestly entertained many of the most distinguished literary people of this and other lands. Here Mrs. Stowe wrote her second anti-slavery novel, "Dred," in 1855; and in 1856 she

visited England for the second time, in order to secure for it foreign rights of publication. A subsequent foreign tour was made in 1859; and always, while she was abroad, letters from Mrs. Stowe's pen were in active demand by the leading American papers and magazines.

From 1850 until 1880 the life of this popular authoress was one of ceaseless literary activity. Besides "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which has been translated into more than twenty languages, the key to it, and "Dred," she wrote in this time a score of books, the best known of which are "The Minister's Wooing," "The Pearl of Orr's Island," "Agnes of Sorrento," "Oldtown Folks," "Footsteps of the Master," "My Wife and I," and "We and Our Neighbors"; read from her own writings to hundreds of appreciative audiences in all parts of the country; wrote hundreds of magazine articles, stories, poems, and sketches; and composed a number of well-known hymns.

Immediately after the close of the Civil War she purchased a beautiful place at Mandarin, on the St. John's River in Florida, in order that she might come into personal contact with the recently emancipated colored people of the South, and help fit them for their new conditions of life. Here she made her winter home for sixteen years, or until her husband's failing health forbade him to undertake the long journey to it. In 1873 the Stowes selected Hartford, Connecticut, as their northern home; and here, in a charming cottage on Forrest Street, cared for by her devoted children and surrounded by congenial neighbors, of whom Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner were the best known, this most famous and beloved of American women peacefully and happily spent the declining years of her eventful life, and here she died, July 1, 1896.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

By C. MACMILLAN

IF Whittier owed little to external fortune, he owed much that is unpurchasable to the circumstances of his birth and breeding. The poverty of his early years, the necessity of toiling on the farm, the shrewdness and integrity of his ancestors, the mysticism and influence of Quaker traditions, the fervent religious convictions of the home, the keen boyish insight into the significance of simple nature either in rural scenes or in humble men and women — all these, although perhaps they were not conducive to a liberal education, nevertheless contributed to make him, like Burns, the interpreter of common life, the poet of the heart rather than of the intellect.

The home life of the boy was typical of the period and of the country. "At an early age," the poet himself records, "I was set to work on the farm and doing errands for my mother, who, in addition to her ordinary house duties, was busy in spinning and weaving the linen and woolen cloth needed for the family."

He was not permitted by circumstances "to enter the House of Life through the library door." Few American poets had smaller chances of education in boyhood. His parents although refined by nature were unlettered; his youthful reading was from the Bible, from a few religious books, the "Farmer's Almanac" and the country newspapers; his university was the district school, attended irregularly in the winter months when the farm did not need his services. Later, when William Lloyd Garrison

discovered his talent, he attended for two sessions the Haverhill Academy.

But other influences gradually worked to fashion the future poet. "When I was fourteen years old," he writes, "my first schoolmaster brought with him to our home a volume of Burns's poems from which he read, greatly to my delight. I begged him to leave the book with me, and I set myself at once to the task of mastering the glossary of the Scottish dialect at its close. This was about the first poetry I had ever read and it had a lasting influence on me. I began to make rhymes myself and to imagine stories and adventures."

Thus the boy was peculiarly molded by home surroundings to be the Burns of America, and to paint a picture of American home life, "Snowbound," equal in many respects to "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

In other ways Whittier's early years were those of the normal boy. Although he was "innocent of books" — to quote his own phrase — he found companionship in the hills, and woods, and streams around him, "the ancient teachers never dumb of Nature's unhoued lyceum." All these to him were enchanted ground.

He entered eagerly into the many joys of a country boy's life — the feats of pond and river, of rod and gun; the shooting of teal and loon; the seeking for woodchucks, or muskrats, or eagles' eggs; the sleigh rides and the summer sails; the following of the mowers along the swaths of the low green meadows; the moonlit skaters' keen delight; the hake-broil on driftwood coals; the clam-bake on the gray sand-beach to the music of the mysterious ocean; the kite-flying, and the nutting in the autumn woods; and above all the wistful watching of the sunset beyond the hills with the wonder it always brings to the thinking boy.

Then in the more immediate home life he enjoyed the tending of the cattle in the huge hay-scented barn; the nightly chores about the farm-house; the corn husking and the apple bees; the innocent rustic party with its blind-man's-buff and its forfeits; the carding and the weaving and the holding the skeins of winding yarn; the wonderful stories of Indian raids and of witchcraft, told on winter nights around the blazing hearth. All these delights were his, and all played their part to round out that conception of nature and that insight into simple human life, which are so peculiarly characteristic of his work. He is described in his later youth as a distinguished looking young man, with remarkably beautiful eyes, a tall, slim, straight figure, bashful and diffident but not awkward, reserved but never uncongenial, self-confident but never forward, and filled with the quiet dreams and the "long thoughts" of youth.

Whittier's long literary career, from the publication of his first poem by William Lloyd Garrison, in 1856, to his death, in 1892, was strangely uninfluenced by external incidents. Although he was busy and active all his days he lived a life of quiet retirement almost pathetic in his loneliness. He suffered much from frail health; he sacrificed much to duty.

At the age of thirty he moved with his mother, his aunt, and his sister to a little cottage at Amesbury near the old homestead, and there he spent the remainder of his days, interested always in public affairs, contributing on questions of the hour to newspapers and magazines, but yet surrounded by the typical Quaker quiet. Some of his biographers believe they have discovered the identity of the subject of his poem "Memories," and the real explanation of his lonely life. But the "beautiful and happy girl" of his youth remains hidden, although the memory

and influence of his early romance stayed with him to the end. His proud and diffident spirit guarded the incident well; he trod alone his most sacred paths of thought, and he kept their secrets to himself, and apart from these few verses suggestive of Wordsworth's poems to Lucy he threw no light upon the mystery. Even of "Memories" he said, "I love it too; but I hardly know whether to publish it, it is so personal and near my heart."

His intimacy with the great men and minds of his day was beautiful in its sincerity and unity of hopes and ideals. But even in this he paid the penalty, as he himself records, of living to be old and losing the friends of his manhood. Emerson and Longfellow died before him, and he and Holmes alone remained "the last leaves upon the tree."

Yet in Whittier's nature, strength and tenderness, as they always are, were not far apart; he had a buoyant, hopeful spirit, and he uttered no complaints. "Circumstances," he wrote to a friend, "the care of an aged mother and the duty owed to a sister in delicate health for many years must be the excuse for leading the lonely life which has called out thy pity. I know there has something very sweet and beautiful been missed, but I have no reason to complain."

Few poets, however, have received such recognition during their lifetime and few have lived to see such a rich harvest from the seed they themselves have sown. He saw realized his fondest dream, the abolition of slavery; he helped with his pen to fight and win the battle, and he saw in his last years a nation of peace and growing strength, which gave him its love and honor. Like his own "Name sake,"

"He saw the old time's groves and shrines
In the long distance fair and dim;
And heard, like sound of far-off pines,
The century's mellowed hymn."



THE HOME OF WHITTIER, AMESBURY, MASS.

The poetry of Whittier covers a wide range of subjects. He is known first of all as the poet of rural tales and idyls filled with pastoral scenes and pictures of humble life. They are simple alike in subject and in style. In these poems, with their suggestions of hearth and quiet country, he has a charm for the masses that the poems of greater culture can never possess, and by these he will continue to make his appeal. From first to last he is concerned with the life of his countrymen. He beautifies in a picturesque way the human associations that cluster about the labors and the laborers of the world — shipbuilders and fishermen, huskers and weavers, lumbermen and tillers of the soil. He never lost his sympathy with these humble people, and he wrote not of their drudgery but of the underlying dignity of their work.

His "Songs of Labor" were written not as a literary exercise but as the natural expression of his own feelings, in homely word and homespun phrase, effortless and unadorned. Yet they carried him to the hearts of the people. This is possible only to the born singer, endowed with the vision and the divine faculty, who sees and has the natural power to express the beauty of common things.

"Whittier," wrote Holmes, "reached the hearts of his fellow countrymen, especially of New Englanders paralyzed by the teachings of Edwards, as Burns kindled the souls of Scotchmen palsied by the dogmas of Thomas Boston and his fellow sectaries. I thank God that He has given you the thoughts and feelings which sing themselves as naturally as the woodthrush rings his silver bell."

Apart from these pastoral poems, he wrote widely on subjects connected with New England history, witchcraft, and tradition. He reveled, like Hawthorne, in the hall of colonial romance, and his ballads have classed him as the

greatest American ballad writer. One who knew well the conditions of Whittier's time believed that if every other record of the early history and life of New England were lost, the story could be constructed again from the papers of the poet. "Traits, habits, facts, traditions, incidents — he holds a torch to the dark places and illumines them every one."

But it was given to Whittier to appeal to the national as well as the individual conscience. His path for a time lay through the field of political poetry. A love for freedom and the rights of men of whatever station in life was deep-rooted in his nature. It was but natural that he should use his pen against the most gigantic evil of his day and that he should become the poet of the abolitionist movement. In his "Songs of Freedom" he appealed with a pathetic but ringing zeal, fervent and earnest, to the hearts of his countrymen in behalf of the Southern slave. He threw himself into the fight with all the ardor and power of his nature, and he saw realized his dream of unity, and liberty, and equal rights to all.

During the brief period since Whittier's death, his work has steadily grown in the estimation of his countrymen. There are learned readers who declare that Whittier was not a poet, and that measured by high standards his poetry fails. Society folk, very likely, sometimes find him dull, and old-fashioned, and even common, and too religiously earnest in his call. To them he wears a homespun dress strangely out of place in fashionable circles that assume over their teacups an intellectual air. By these he will, perhaps, be thought worthy only of neglect.

But, in the pointed phrasing of so high an authority as Professor Bliss Perry, "to find the true audience of a poet" you are not to look in the social register. You must seek out the shy boy and girl who live on side streets

and hill roads — no matter where, as long as the road to dreamland leads to their gate; you must seek the working girls and shopkeepers, the school-teachers and country ministers; you must make a census of the lonely uncounted souls who possess the treasures of the humble.”

Among such a gathering of readers, Whittier holds, and will continue to hold, a high place. Moreover, the greatest and truest critics of his own day believed that he was a true poet. Tennyson declared that his “Play-mates” was a perfect poem, and that in some of his descriptions of scenery and wild flowers he would rank with Wordsworth. Holmes said that “In School Days” was the most beautiful schoolboy poem in the English language; and Matthew Arnold pronounced it one of the perfect poems which must live.

But in view of Whittier’s own attitude toward his work, it is useless to measure it by any theory of poetics. He himself would be the first to renounce any claim to what is usually termed Art in his verse. He did not write for mere æsthetic beauty. He felt always the sense of moral responsibility, and this sense produced the majority of his poems. His opinion of his own work is summed up in the proem of the first edition of his verse:

The rigor of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labor’s hurried time,
Or Duty’s rugged march through storm and strife are here.

He desired that every line he wrote should serve a moral end rather than be an example of mere literary excellence. His “Mogg Megone” he thought was liable to the grave objection that it was not calculated to do good. In his writing he did not strive for correctness or charm. He made no effort to avoid colloquialisms, and

he never in any of his work consciously sought alliteration. In a letter to his publisher, he said he had left one bad rhyme in the poem he was submitting, to preserve his well-known character in that respect; and he could see no harm in two words as common and insignificant as "well" in the same verse. His own desire was that a stanza in his "Namesake" could be applied with truth to his ideals:

The words he spake, the thoughts he penned,
Are mortal as his hand and brain,
But if they served the Master's end,
He has not lived in vain.

Before such an attitude, principles of versification fail and literary criticism is dumb.

By those who believe in liberty and justice and love; by those who realize the possibilities of this great new land, and who feel the dignity and beauty of humble dutiful toil — his poems will always be held in reverence. To those of us, too, who amid the din of cities still retain impressions of the old-fashioned country life; to those of us who still look back in ourselves like Stevenson for the "lad that's gone," Whittier must always remain a magician with golden keys that unlock for us the storehouse of boyish memories.

There is little doubt that despite criticism and all the changes in literary taste, "Snowbound," "In School Days," "Maud Muller," "Prayer Seeker," and "Barbara Frietchie," will continue to be read wherever the English language is known. But apart from his work, Whittier's personality will always demand respect, and men will revere the gentle, human heart behind the poems.

FRANCIS PARKMAN¹

By JAMES SCHOULER



FRANCIS PARKMAN was born in Boston, September 16, 1823. He came of a line of honorable Massachusetts ancestors, among whom were college graduates and Congregational clergymen with literary acquirements. From his grandfather, a wealthy and prosperous Boston merchant, he seems to have inherited that decided taste for floriculture which became a marked accomplishment; fondness for books and study being, in a broader sense, a family trait.

An inbred taste for letters combined from early boyhood with a love of woodland adventure to direct the youth's destiny. Frail when a child, Francis was sent to the country home of a maternal relative, near the Middlesex Fells, where he remained for several years. That magnificent forest tract, still in its primitive wildness, gave him a first sympathetic acquaintance with out-of-doors life, which he never lost. Returning home, when turned of twelve, he pursued his classical studies at a private school in Boston, and entered Harvard College in 1840, just seventeen years of age.

Here once more the fondness for forest life was manifested; he spent one college vacation in camping and canoeing on the Magalloway River, in northern Maine, to this day a favorite haunt of the sportsman; and in the course of another, he explored the calm waters of Lakes George and Champlain, a region redolent with traditions

¹ By permission of the Author and "The Harvard Graduates' Magazine."

of the old French and Indian War. Sickness once more diverting him from his regular studies, he was sent on a voyage to Europe, from which he returned in season to graduate with his class in 1844.

In the course of his foreign tour he visited Rome, and, lodging in a monastery of the Passionist Fathers, he learned something by observation, for the first time, of those missionary agencies which the Roman Catholic Church had employed in former centuries with so much effect for reclaiming the red tribes of our great interior wilderness.

By this time, and indeed as early as his sophomore year at college, and before passing out of his teens, young Parkman had formed the distinct design of writing a history of the French and Indian War; and what to others might have seemed the casual recreation of youth bore immediately, from his own serious point of view, upon a precocious purpose. Heeding the wishes of his elders, he gave some two years after graduation to the dry study of the law; but destiny proved paramount, and in the summer of 1846 he was seen starting for the far West, with a young kinsman and college mate for a companion, ostensibly seeking personal adventure, but in reality resolved upon preparing himself by personal observation for the great literary task of life.

A printed volume, which gathered in the course of three years a series of sketches he had meantime contributed to the "Knickerbocker Magazine," descriptive of these wild experiences, was his first exploit in authorship; and under the style of the "Oregon Trail," these sketches with their original title first modified, and then restored, made up a book still prominent in our literature. Here the narrator himself is traveler and pioneer, supplying materials of contemporaneous description for historians

of a later day to draw upon. An acute comprehension of strange scenery and strange people remote from conventional society, faithfulness to facts, and the power of delineating with humor and picturesque effect whatever may be best worth describing, are evinced in this earliest effort; and the impressiveness of the volume is greatly enhanced by the preface which the author inserted in a later edition, recalling vividly from the retrospect of another quarter of a century the wild scenes and lonely cavalcade which were already of the remote past, never in that once remote and lonely Pike's Peak region to be beheld again.

It was in 1846 that the Mexican War was declared, whose first announcement reached our young explorers while they were far out on the plains, though in season to give them that summer a sight of Doniphan's military expedition, as well as of those more peaceful emigrant bands whose winding way was toward Oregon, California, and the Salt Lake wilderness, ignorant of gold and bent only upon agriculture.

Curious observers only, of such momentous caravans, the two Boston youths indulged their bent by camping among the Sioux Indians, and living upon their rough and precarious fare, listening to Indian legends, studying Indian traits and customs, and hunting the buffalo with their roving companions. The young historian gained the information he sought; but he paid dearly for his rash opportunity, for he was confirmed in invalid habits for the rest of his life.

"The Oregon Trail" is autobiographical, and so, too, are occasional passages in the prefaces which Mr. Parkman has written for his later successful works, more strictly historical. Of the probable influence upon his labors of the renowned Prescott, his older fellow sufferer

and fellow citizen, we have spoken. To Washington Irving's "Astoria," Mr. Parkman's "Oregon Trail" makes familiar reference; and very likely, to recitals of Indian hardships borne by his New England ancestors were added, by the time he became a college student, the fascinating delight of Cooper's "Leather-Stocking Tales," whose romance of the French and Indian period has not yet lost its attractive hold upon American youth.

Fortified further by his own practical contact with primitive life, whose recital had marked his first launch in literature, he buckled down to the graver task of historian and delineator of the past. But the star of strength and of the unconquerable will he had now full need to invoke. From the day he returned from the far West to the day of his death he was never again entirely well. Chief among the obstacles to retard his progress was the condition of his sight; and for about three years the light of day was insupportable, and every attempt to read or write completely debarred. Indeed, as Mr. Parkman has recorded, there were two periods preceding 1865, each lasting several years, during which such labors "would have been merely suicidal," and his health forbade reading or writing for much over five minutes at a time, and often forbade it altogether.

Only by the most rigid perseverance and economy of strength could such disheartening obstacles be overcome. In sifting materials, and in composition, he had to rely largely, like Mr. Prescott, upon memory and the sense of hearing. His amanuensis would repeatedly read the papers aloud, copious notes and extracts being simultaneously made; but instead of composing in solitude and having recourse to the stylus and noctograph, he relied rather upon dictation to his secretary, who would write down the narrative as he pronounced it.

“ This process,” he adds, cheerfully, of his own general plan, “ though extremely slow and laborious, was not without its advantages, and I am well convinced that the authorities have been even more minutely examined, more scrupulously collected, and more thoroughly digested than they would have been under ordinary circumstances.”

The habit of traveling, to visit described localities,—favored as it is so greatly in later times by our improved facilities of travel,—is one for every narrator of events to turn to account; for not only may interesting traditions be gathered on the spot, but one gathers details of local coloring, which others could never catalogue for him, and gains besides the inspiration of great surroundings. To Mr. Parkman, with his delicate constitution, such journeys must have afforded a relaxing relief and diversion, besides the indulgence of a strong natural taste and disposition. Through wild regions of the North and West, by the camp fire or in the canoe, he had already gained familiar acquaintance, and he still continued to visit and examine every spot, near or remote, where the important incidents which he described occurred. The extensive seat of the final French and Indian struggle, the whole region of Detroit, the St. Lawrence and Plains of Abraham, as well as remote Florida, became thus familiar to him. “ In short,” as he wrote in 1884, reiterating what he had said in other volumes already, “ the subject has been studied as much from life in the open air as at the library table.”

But none the less was Mr. Parkman a steady worker in his library; and his search for original documents and among masses of rare material was incessant. Whatever might be the immediate subject, he gathered whatever valuable collections of papers, in any way accessible, might aid his description. The truth of the past, and the whole truth, he diligently inquired into. He was not

content with secondary authorities, but searched for primary ones in the most conscientious and thorough manner; and he founded each narrative as largely as possible upon original and contemporary materials, collating with the greatest care, and only accepting the statements of secondary writers when found to conform to those who lived in the times.

In short, as he expressed himself, he was too fond of his theme to neglect any means within his reach of making his conception of it distinct and true. All this was necessitated to a considerable extent by the crude and promiscuous character of the publications offered in the present choice of subjects; for the history of the French colonization in America was as wild, when Mr. Parkman took it up for research, as that colonization itself. "The field of the history," as he forcibly observes, "was uncultured and unreclaimed, and the labor that awaited me was like that of the border settler, who, before he builds his rugged dwelling, must fell the forest trees, burn the undergrowth, clear the ground, and hew the fallen trunks in due proportion."

Yet under the old French régime in Canada the pen was always busy, and among reports to be found in the French archives were voluminous records. To make his investigations closer he visited Europe in 1858, soon after the death of his wife, and prosecuted his researches among the public collections of France, Spain, and England. Other visits followed in 1868, 1872, 1880, and 1881, after the scope of his historical work had enlarged, chiefly at Paris. His preparations for composition were thus exhaustive, and he spared neither labor nor expense. Nor with all his preparation did he feel that his work could be satisfactory unless as a narrator he could enter fully into the atmosphere of the times he described.

“Faithfulness to the truth of history,” as he justly observed, “involves far more than a research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and still the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue. The narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the time. He must study events in their bearings, near and remote; in the character, habits, and manners of those who took part in them. He must himself be, as it were, a sharer or spectator of the men he describes.”

Two other observations from Mr. Parkman’s pen are so apt and admirable that we can not refrain from quoting them. One relates to historical citation, “a matter in which critics are apt to be overexact, as though historians ought to load down pages with pedantic notes, the usual display of second-hand assistance, and not be trusted at all upon their responsible statements. Observing on his own behalf that his citations are much less than his material, most of the latter being of a collateral and illustrative nature, “such,” he well adds, “is necessarily the case, where one adhering to facts tries to animate them with the life of the past.” And, again, seeking to be fair and impartial in his estimates of men and measures, he challenged the descendants of those who thought him otherwise to test his proofs. “As extremists on each side,” he wrote finally at the close of his labors, “have charged me with favoring the other, I hope I have not been unfair to either.”

With views of his vocation so just and honorable, Mr. Parkman slowly of necessity, but with firm tenaciousness, wrought out his literary plans. His first work, “The Conspiracy of Pontiac,” in two volumes, was published in 1851; the subject being a dramatic one of war and of

conquest, and chosen by himself most happily for the portrayal of forest life and the Indian character. It was not until January, 1865, that his next volume appeared on "Pioneers of France in the New World"; and meanwhile he had made an unsuccessful venture with a work of pure fiction."

So long a gap in his historical labors he never left again; for by this time he had accepted sickness and physical trial as permanent incidents of his career, while his historical plan had widened into its fullest scope. At first intending to limit himself to the great closing struggle for supremacy between France and Great Britain, he had decided at length to cover the whole field of French colonization in America. Under such an arrangement, "Pontiac's Conspiracy" would take its place as a sequel to his works written later, while its own introductory sketch served as the base of more extended and consecutive narratives to follow.

Other volumes were accordingly under way when "Pioneers of France" appeared; and in 1867 he published "Jesuits in North America," a thrilling record of missionary labors, which was followed in 1869 by "La Salle, and the Discovery of the Great West," a recital of explorations about the upper Mississippi. "The Old Régime in Canada" came out in 1874, treating of the transition period of 1653-1680; and to this succeeded, in 1877, "Count Frontenac, and New France under Louis XIV," the story of the bravest warrior and viceroy France ever sent to this continent.

These works, following the earliest, were in single volumes, each taking its independent place in a series of narratives entitled "France and England in the New World." By this time the patient scholar had reached the full prime of life, and time admonished him to econ-

omize his remaining strength to the utmost. He interrupted the course of description sufficiently to make sure of that romantic period, the British conquest of Canada, which had first captivated his youthful imagination.

“Montcalm and Wolfe,” a work of two volumes, was therefore his next undertaking; this he finished by 1884, soon after rounding his three-score years; and leaving the climax of battle upon the Plains of Abraham for a closing scene, he now turned back once more with his veteran pen to fill the intervening gap. In 1892 two more volumes, entitled “The Half-Century of Conflict,” and embracing the period 1700–1748, preceded “Montcalm and Wolfe” in the completed series. Mr. Parkman’s monumental work, in spite of intervening obstacles which prolonged its execution, was now finished, with the same conscientious, thorough, and painstaking devotion which had always characterized him, and he now took final leave of his labors. His calculation of allotted strength had not been wide of the mark, for the very next year after laying down the historical pen his earthly limit was reached. He died a gentle death on the 8th of November, 1893.

DICKENS AS A REPORTER

BY JOHN FORSTER



DICKENS was nineteen years old when at last he entered the gallery. His father, with whom he still lived in Bentinck Street, had already joined the gallery as a reporter for one of the morning papers, and was now in the more comfortable circumstances derived from the addition to his official pension which this praiseworthy labor insured; but his own engagement on the "Chronicle" dates somewhat later. His first parliamentary service was given to the "True Sun," a journal which had then on its editorial staff some dear friends of mine, through whom I became myself a contributor to it, and afterwards, in common with all concerned, whether in its writing, reporting, printing, or publishing, a sharer in its difficulties. The most formidable of these arrived one day in a general strike of the reporters; and I well remember noticing at this dread time, on the staircase of the magnificent mansion we were lodged in, a young man of my own age, whose keen animation of look would have arrested attention anywhere, and whose name, upon inquiry, I then for the first time heard. It was coupled with the fact, which gave it interest even then, that "young Dickens" had been spokesman for the recalcitrant reporters, and conducted their case triumphantly. He was afterwards during two sessions engaged for the "Mirror of Parliament," which one of his uncles by the mother's side originated and conducted; and finally, in his twenty-third year, he became a reporter for the "Morning Chronicle."

A step far more momentous to him (though then he did not know it) he had taken shortly before. In the December number for 1833, of what then was called the "Old Monthly Magazine," his first published piece of writing had seen the light. He has described himself dropping this paper ("Mr. Minns and his Cousin," as he afterwards entitled it, but which appeared in the magazine as "A Dinner at Poplar Walk") stealthily, one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street; and he has told his agitation when it appeared in all the glory of print:

"On which occasion I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there." He had purchased the magazine at a shop in the Strand; and exactly two years afterwards, in the younger member of a publishing firm who had called, at the chambers in Furnival's Inn to which he had moved soon after entering the gallery, with the proposal that originated *Pickwick*, he recognized the person he had bought that magazine from, and whom before or since he had never seen.

This interval of two years more than comprised what remained of his career in the gallery and the engagements connected with it; but that this occupation was of the utmost importance in its influence on his life, in the discipline of his powers as well as of his character, there can be no doubt whatever. "To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work, when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first successes," he said to the New York editors when he last took leave of them. It opened to him a wide and varied range of experience, which his wonderful observation, exact as it was humorous, made

entirely his own. He saw the last of the old coaching days, and of the old inns that were a part of them; but it will be long before the readers of his living page see the last of the life of either.

“There never was,” he once wrote to me (in 1845), “anybody connected with newspapers who, in the same space of time, had so much express and post-chaise experience as I. And what gentlemen they were to serve, in such things, at the old ‘Morning Chronicle’! Great or small, it did not matter. I have had to charge for half a dozen breakdowns in half a dozen times as many miles. I have had to charge for the damage of a greatcoat from the drippings of a blazing wax candle, in writing through the smallest hours of the night in a swift-flying carriage and pair. I have had to charge for all sorts of breakages fifty times in a journey without question, such being the ordinary results of the pace which we went at. I have charged for broken hats, broken luggage, broken chaises, broken harness — everything but a broken head, which is the only thing they would have grumbled to pay for.”

Something to the same effect he said publicly twenty years later, on the occasion of his presiding, in May, 1865, at the second annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, when he condensed within the compass of his speech a summary of the whole of his reporting life.

“I am not here,” he said, “advocating the case of a mere ordinary client of whom I have little or no knowledge. I hold a brief to-night for my brothers. I went into the gallery of the House of Commons as a parliamentary reporter when I was a boy, and I left it — I can hardly believe the inexorable truth — nigh thirty years ago. I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren here can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for

the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches in which the strictest accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been to a young man severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour.

“ The very last time I was at Exeter, I strolled into the castle yard there, to identify, for the amusement of a friend, the spot on which I once ‘ took,’ as we used to call it, an election speech of Lord John Russell at the Devon contest, in the midst of a lively fight maintained by all the vagabonds in that division of the county, and under such a pelting rain that I remember two good-natured colleagues, who chanced to be at leisure, held a pocket handkerchief over my notebook, after the manner of a state canopy in an ecclesiastical procession.

“ I have worn my knees by writing on them on the old back row of the old gallery of the old House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords, where we used to be huddled together like so many sheep — kept in waiting, say, until the woosack might want restuffing. Returning home from exciting political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been, in my time, belated on miry byroads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken postboys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never forgotten compliments by the late Mr. Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew.

“ These trivial things I mention as an assurance to you that I never have forgotten the fascination of that old pursuit. The pleasure that I used to feel in the rapidity and dexterity of its exercise has never faded out of my breast. Whatever little cunning of hand or head I took to it, or acquired in it, I have so retained as that I fully believe I could resume it to-morrow, very little the worse from long disuse. To this present year of my life, when I sit in this hall, or where not, hearing a dull speech (the phenomenon does occur), I sometimes beguile the tedium of the moment by mentally following the speaker in the old, old way; and sometimes, if you can believe me, I even find my hand going on the tablecloth, taking an imaginary note of it all.”

MY FIRST EXPERIENCES IN NEW YORK¹

By HORACE GREELEY



REACHING Schenectady from Buffalo by line boat, — my sixth and last journey on “the raging canal,” — I debarked about six in the afternoon, and took the turnpike for Albany. I think a railroad between the two cities first and last named was completed soon afterward; but I believe not a mile of iron track was then operated in the state, if (in fact) anywhere in America, save the little affair constructed to freight granite from the quarry at Quincy, Mass., to Boston. Night fell when I was about halfway over; so I sought rest in one of the many indifferent taverns that then lined the turnpike in question, and was directed to sleep in an anteroom through which people were momentarily passing; I declined, and, gathering up my handful of portables, walked on.

Half a mile farther, I found another tavern, not quite so inhospitable, and managed to stay in it till morning; when I rose and walked on to Albany. Having never been in that city before, I missed the nearest way to the day boat, and when I reached the landing it was two or three lengths on its way to New York, having left at seven in the morning. I had no choice but to wait for another, which started at ten in the morning, towing a barge on either side, and reached, in twenty hours, the emporium, where I, after a good view of the city, as we passed it down the river, was landed near Whitehall at six in the morning.

¹ From “Recollections of a Busy Life.”

New York was then about one-third of her present size; but her business was not one-fourth so great as now; and her real size — counting her suburbs, and considering the tens of thousands who find employment in and earn subsistence here, though sleeping outside of her chartered limits — was not one-fifth that of 1867. No single railroad pointed toward her wharves. No line of ocean steamers brought passengers to her hotels, nor goods to her warehouses, from any foreign port. In the mercantile world, her relative rank was higher, but her absolute importance was scarcely greater than that of Rio Janeiro or San Francisco is to-day. Still, to my eyes, which had never till yesterday gazed on a city of even twenty thousand inhabitants, nor seen a sea-going vessel, her miles square of mainly brick or stone houses, and her furlongs of masts and yards, afforded ample incitement to a wonder and admiration akin to awe.

It was, if I recollect aright, the 17th of August, 1831. I was twenty years old the preceding February; tall, slender, pale, and plain, with ten dollars in my pocket, summer clothing worth perhaps as much more, nearly all on my back, and a decent knowledge of so much of the art of printing as a boy will usually learn in the office of a country newspaper. But I knew no human being within two hundred miles, and my unmistakably rustic manner and address did not favor that immediate command or remunerating employment which was my most urgent need.

However, the world was all before me; my personal estate, tied up in a pocket handkerchief, did not at all encumber me; and I stepped lightly off the boat, and away from the detested hiss of escaping steam, walking into and up Broad Street in quest of a boarding house. I found and entered one at or near the corner of Wall; but the price of board given me was six dollars per week; so I

did not need the giver's candidly kind suggestion that I would probably prefer one where the charge was more moderate. Wandering thence, I can not say how, to the North River side, I halted next at 168 West Street, where the sign of "Boarding" on a humbler edifice fixed my attention. I entered, and was offered shelter and subsistence at two dollars and a half per week, which seemed more rational, and I closed the bargain.

My host was Mr. Edward McGolrick; his place quite as much grogshop as boarding house; but it was quietly, decently kept while I stayed in it, and he and his family were kind and friendly. I regret to add that liquor proved his ruin not many years afterward. My first day in New York was a Friday, and, the family being Roman Catholic, no meat was eaten or provided, which I understood; but when Sunday evening was celebrated by unlimited card playing in that same house, my traditions were decidedly jarred. I do not imply that my observances were better or worse than my host's, but that they were different.

Having breakfasted, I began to ransack the city for work, and, in my total ignorance, traversed many streets where none could possibly be found. In the course of that day and the next, however, I must have visited fully two-thirds of the printing offices on Manhattan Island, without a gleam of success. It was midsummer, when business in New York is habitually dull; and my youth and unquestionable air of country greenness must have told against me. When I called at "The Journal of Commerce," its editor, Mr. David Hale, bluntly told me I was a runaway apprentice from some country office; which was a very natural, though mistaken, presumption. I returned to my lodging on Saturday evening, thoroughly weary, disheartened, disgusted with New York, and resolved to shake its dust from my feet next

Monday morning, while I could still leave with money in my pocket, and before its almshouse could foreclose upon me.

But that was not to be. On Sunday afternoon and evening several young Irishmen called at McGolrick's, in their holiday saunterings about town; and, being told that I was a young printer in quest of work, interested themselves in my effort, with the spontaneous kindness of their race. One among them happened to know a place where printers were wanted, and gave me the requisite direction; so that, on visiting the designated spot next morning, I readily found employment; and thus, when barely three days a resident, I had found anchorage in New York.

The printing establishment was John 'T. West's, over McElrath & Bang's publishing house, 85 Chatham Street, and the work was at my call simply because no printer who knew the city would accept it. It was the composition of a very small (32mo) New Testament, in double columns, of agate type, each column barely twelve ems wide, with a center column of notes in pearl, only four ems wide; the text thickly studded with references by Greek and superior letters to be notes, which of course were preceded and discriminated by corresponding indices, with prefatory and supplementary remarks on each Book, set in pearl, and only paid for as agate. The type was considerably smaller than any to which I had been accustomed; the narrow measure and thickly sown italics of the text, with the strange characters employed as indices, rendered it the slowest, and by far the most difficult, work I had ever undertaken; while the making up, proving, and correcting twice, and even thrice over, preparatory to stereotyping, nearly doubled the time required for ordinary composition. I was never a swift typesetter; I aimed to be an assiduous and correct one; but my proofs on this

work at first looked as if they had caught the chicken pox, and were in the worst stage of a profuse eruption.

For the first two or three weeks, being sometimes kept waiting for letter, I scarcely made my board; while, by diligent type-sticking through twelve to fourteen hours per day, I was able, at my best, to earn but five to six dollars per week. As scarcely another compositor could be induced to work on it more than two days, I had this job in good part to myself; and I persevered to the end of it.

I had removed, very soon after obtaining it, to Mrs. Mason's shoemaker boarding house at the corner of Chat-ham and Duane Streets, nearly opposite my work; so that I was enabled to keep doing nearly all the time I did not need for meals and sleep. When it was done, I was out of work for a fortnight, in spite of my best efforts to find more; so I attended, as an unknown spectator, the sittings of the Tariff Convention, which was held at the American Institute, north end of the City Hall Park, and presided over by the Hon. William Wilkins, of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

I next found work in Ann Street, on a short-lived monthly, where my pay was not forthcoming; and the next month saw me back at West's, where a new work — a commentary on the Book of Genesis, by the Rev. George Bush — had come in; and I worked on it throughout. The chirography was blind; the author made many vexatious alterations in proof; the page was small and the type close; but, though the reverse of *fat*, in printers' jargon, it was not nearly so abominably lean as the Testament; and I regretted to reach the end of it. When I did, I was again out of work, and seriously meditated seeking employment at something else than printing; but the winter was a hard one, and business in New York stagnant to an extent not now conceivable.

I think it was early in December, when a " cold snap " of remarkable severity closed the Hudson, and sent up the price of coal at a bound to sixteen dollars per ton, while the cost of other necessaries of life took a kindred but less considerable elevation. Our city stood as if besieged till spring relieved her; and it was much the same every winter. Mechanics and laborers lived awhile on the scanty savings of the preceding summer and autumn; then on such credit as they could wring from grocers and landlords, till milder weather brought them work again. The earnings of good mechanics did not average eight dollars per week in 1831-32, while they are now double that sum; and living is *not* twice as dear as it then was. Meat may possibly be; but bread is not; fuel is not; clothing is not; while travel is cheaper; and our little cars have enabled workingmen to live two or three miles from their work without serious cost or inconvenience; thus bringing Yorkville or Green Point practically as near to Maiden Lane or Broad Street as Greenwich or the Eleventh Ward was. Winter is relatively dull now, but not nearly so stagnant as it formerly was. In spite of an inflated currency and high taxes, it is easier now for a workingman to earn his living in New York than it was thirty to forty years ago.

About the 1st of January, 1832, I found employment on " The Spirit of the Times," a weekly paper devoted to sporting intelligence, then started by Messrs. William T. Porter and James Howe, two young printers, of whom the former, if not both, had worked with me at West's the previous fall. I think it was a little after midnight, on the 1st of January, 1832, when we compositors delivered the forms of the first number into the hands of the pressmen in an upper story in Fulton Street. The concern migrated to Wall Street the next March, finding a loca-

tion very near the present site of the Merchants' Exchange; and I clung to it through the ensuing spring and summer; its foreman, Francis V. Story, being nearly of my own age, and thenceforth my devoted friend. But the founders and editors were also quite young; they were inexperienced in their calling, without capital or influential friends, having recently drifted from the country to the city much as I did; and their paper did not pay — I know it was difficult to make it pay *me* — especially through the dreary cholera summer of 1832.

Having been fairly driven to New York two or three years earlier than I deemed desirable, I was in like manner impelled to undertake the responsibilities of business while still in my twenty-second year. My friend Story, barely older than myself, but far better acquainted with city ways, having been for many years the only son of a poor widow, and accustomed to struggling with difficulties, had already conceived the idea of starting a printery, and offering me a partnership in the enterprise. His position in Wall Street, on "The Spirit of the Times," made him acquainted with Mr. S. J. Sylvester, then a leading broker and seller of lottery tickets, who issued a weekly "Bank-Note Reporter," largely devoted to the advertising of his own business, and who offered my friend the job of printing that paper. Story was also intimate with Dr. W. Beach, who, in addition to his medical practice, dabbled considerably in ink, and at whose office my friend made the acquaintance of a young graduate—Dr. H. D. Shepard, who was understood to have money, and who was intent on bringing out a cheap daily paper, to be sold about the streets — then a novel idea — daily papers being presumed desirable only for mercantile men, and addressed exclusively to their wants and tastes.

Dr. Shepard had won over my friend to a belief in the

practicability of his project; and the latter visited me at my work and my lodging, urging me to unite with him in starting a printery on the strength of Mr. Sylvester's and Dr. Shepard's proffered work. I hesitated, having very little means — for I had sent a good part of my past year's scanty savings to aid my father in his struggle with the stubborn wilderness; but Story's enthusiastic confidence at length triumphed over my distrust; we formed a partnership, hired part of two rooms already devoted to printing, on the southwest corner of Nassau and Liberty Streets (opposite our city's present post office), spending our little all (less than two hundred dollars), and stretching our credit to the utmost, for the requisite materials. I tried Mr. James Conner, the extensive type-founder in Ann Street — having a very slight acquaintance with him, formed in the course of frequent visits to his foundry in quest of "sorts" (type found deficient in the several offices for which I had worked at one time or another) — but he, after hearing me patiently, decided not to credit me six months for the forty dollars' worth of type I wanted of him; and he did right — my exhibit did not justify my request. I went directly thence to Mr. George Bruce, the older and wealthier founder, in Chambers Street — made the same exhibit, and was allowed by him the credit I asked; and that purchase has since secured to his concern the sale of not less than fifty thousand dollars worth of type. I think he must have noted something in my awkward, bashful ways that impelled him to take the risk.

"The Morning Post" — Dr. Shepard's two-cent daily, which he wished to sell for one cent — was issued on the 1st of January, 1833. Nobody in New York reads much (except visitor's cards) on New Year's Day; and that one happened to be very cold, with the streets much obstructed

by a fall of snow throughout the preceding night. Projectors of newspapers in those days, though expecting other people to advertise in their columns, did not comprehend that *they* also must advertise, or the public will never know that their bantling has been ushered into existence; and Dr. Shepard was too poor to give his sheet the requisite publicity, had he understood the matter. He was neither a writer nor a man of affairs; had no editors, no reporters worth naming, no correspondents, and no exchanges even; he fancied that a paper would sell, if remarkable for cheapness, though remarkable also for the absence of every other desirable quality.

He was said to have migrated, while a youth, from New Jersey to New York, with fifteen hundred dollars in cash; if he did, his capital must have nearly all melted away before he had issued his first number. Though his enterprise involved no outlay of capital by him, and his weekly outgoes were less than two hundred dollars, he was able to meet them for a single week only, while his journal obtained a circulation of but two or three hundred copies. Finally, he reduced its price to one cent; but the public would not buy it even at that, and we printers, already considerably in debt for materials, were utterly unable to go on beyond the second or third week after the publisher had stopped paying. Thus the first cheap-for-cash daily in New York — perhaps in the world — died when scarcely yet a month old; and we printers were hard aground on a lee shore, with little prospect of getting off.

We were saved from sudden bankruptcy by the address of my partner, who had formed the acquaintance of a wealthy, eccentric Briton, named Schols, who had a taste for editorial life, and who was somehow induced to buy the wreck of "The Morning Post," remove it to an office

of his own, and employ Story as foreman. He soon tired of his thriftless, profitless speculation, and threw it up; but we had meantime surmounted our embarrassments by the help of the little money he paid for a portion of our materials and for my partner's services. Meantime, the managers of the New York lotteries, then regularly drawn under state auspices, had allowed a portion of their letterpress printing to follow Mr. Sylvester's into our concern, and were paying us very fairly for it; I doing most of the composition. For two or three months after Dr. Shepard's collapse, I was frequently sent for to work as a substitute in the composing room of "The Commercial Advertiser," not far from our shop; and I was at length offered a regular situation there; but our business had by this time so improved that I was constrained to decline.

Working early and late, and looking sharply on every side for jobs, we were beginning to make decided headway, when my partner was drowned (July 9, 1833) while bathing in the East River near his mother's residence in Brooklyn, and I bitterly mourned the loss of my nearest and dearest friend. His place in the concern was promptly taken by another young printer, a friend of the bereaved family, Mr. Jonas Winchester, who soon married Story's oldest sister; and we thus went on, with moderate but steady prosperity, until the ensuing spring, when we issued (March 22, 1834), without premonitory sound of trumpet, "The New-Yorker," a large, fair, and cheap weekly folio (afterward changed to a double quarto), devoted mainly to current literature, but giving regularly a digest of all important news, including a careful exhibit and summary of election returns and other political intelligence. I edited and made up this paper, while my partner took charge of our more profitable jobbing business.

“The New-Yorker” was issued under my supervision, its editorials written, its selections made, for the most part by me, for seven years and a half from the date just given. Though not calculated to enlist partisanship or excite enthusiasm, it was at length extensively liked and read. It began with scarcely a dozen subscribers; these steadily increased to nine thousand; and it might, under better business management (perhaps I should add, at a more favorable time), have proved profitable and permanent.

That it did not was mainly owing to these circumstances: 1. It was not extensively advertised at the start, and at least annually thereafter, as it should have been. 2. It was never really published, though it had half a dozen nominal publishers in succession. 3. It was sent to subscribers on credit, and a large share of them never paid for it, and never will, while the cost of collecting from others ate up the proceeds. 4. The machinery of railroads, expresses, news companies, news offices, etc., whereby literary periodicals are now mainly disseminated, did not then exist.

I was worth at least fifteen hundred dollars when it was started; I worked hard and lived frugally throughout its existence; it subsisted for the first two years on the profits of our job work; when I, deeming it established, dissolved with my partner, he taking the jobbing business and I “The New-Yorker,” which held its own pretty fairly thenceforth till the commercial revulsion of 1837 swept over the land, whelming it and me in the general ruin.

I had married in 1836 (July 5th), deeming myself worth five thousand dollars and the master of a business which would thenceforth yield me for my labor at least one thousand dollars per annum; but, instead of that, or of

any income at all, I found myself obliged, throughout 1837, to confront a net loss of about one hundred dollars per week — my income averaging one hundred dollars, and my inevitable expenses two hundred dollars.

In vain I appealed to delinquents to pay up; many of them migrated; some died; others were so considerate as to order the paper stopped, but very few of these paid; and I struggled on against a steadily rising tide of adversity that might have appalled a stouter heart. Often did I call on this or that friend with intent to solicit a small loan to meet some demand that could no longer be postponed nor evaded, and, after wasting a precious hour, leave him, utterly unable to broach the loathsome topic. I have borrowed five hundred dollars of a broker late on Saturday, and paid him five dollars for the use of it till Monday morning, when I somehow contrived to return it.

Most gladly would I have terminated the struggle by a surrender; but, if I had failed to pay my notes continually falling due, I must have paid money for my weekly supply of paper — so that would have availed nothing. To have stopped my journal (for I could not give it away) would have left me in debt, beside my notes for paper, from fifty cents to two dollars each, to at least three thousand subscribers who had paid in advance; and that is the worst kind of bankruptcy. If any one would have taken my business and debts off my hands, upon my giving him my note for two thousand dollars, I would have jumped at the chance, and tried to work out the debt by setting type, if nothing better offered. If it be suggested that my whole indebtedness was at no time more than five thousand to seven thousand dollars, I have only to say that even one thousand dollars of debt is ruin to him who keenly feels his obligation to fulfil every engagement, yet is utterly without the means of so doing, and who finds

himself dragged each week a little deeper into hopeless insolvency. To be hungry, ragged, and penniless is not pleasant; but this is nothing to the horrors of bankruptcy. All the wealth of the Rothschilds would be a poor recompense for a five years' struggle with the consciousness that you had taken the money or property of trusting friends — promising to return or pay for it when required — and had betrayed their confidence through insolvency.

I dwell on this point, for I would deter others from entering that place of torment. Half the young men in the country, with many old enough to know better, would "go into business" — that is, into debt — to-morrow, if they could. Most poor men are so ignorant as to envy the merchant or manufacturer whose life is an incessant struggle with pecuniary difficulties, who is driven to constant "shinning," and who, from month to month, barely evades that insolvency which sooner or later overtakes most men in business; so that it has been computed that but one in twenty of them achieve a pecuniary success.

For my own part — and I speak from sad experience, — I would rather be a convict in a State prison, a slave in a rice swamp, than to pass through life under the harrow of debt. Let no young man misjudge himself unfortunate, or truly poor, as long as he has the full use of his limbs and faculties, and is substantially free from debt. Hunger, cold, rags, hard work, contempt, suspicion, unjust reproach, are disagreeable; but debt is infinitely worse than them all. And, if it had pleased God to spare either or all of my sons to be the support and solace of my declining years, the lesson which I should have most earnestly sought to impress upon them is:

"Never run into debt! Avoid pecuniary obligation as you would pestilence or famine. If you have but fifty cents, and can get no more for a week, buy a peck of corn,

parch it, and live on it, rather than owe any man a dollar! ” Of course, I know that some men must do business that involves risks, and must often give notes and other obligations, and I do not consider him really in debt who can lay his hands directly on the means of paying at some little sacrifice, all he owes; I speak of *real* debt — that which involves risk or sacrifice on the one side, obligation and dependence on the other — and I say, from all such, let every youth humbly pray God to preserve him evermore!

When I at length stopped “ The New-Yorker ” (September 20, 1841), though poor enough, I provided for making good all I owed to its subscribers who had paid in advance, and shut up its books whereon were inscribed some ten thousand dollars owed me in sums of one dollar to ten dollars each, by men to whose service I had faithfully devoted the best years of my life — years that though full of labor and frugal care, might have been happy had they not been made wretched by those men’s dishonesty. They took my journal, and probably read it; they promised to pay for it, and defaulted; leaving me to pay my paper maker, type founder, journeymen, etc., as I could. My only requital was a sorely achieved but wholesome lesson. I had been thoroughly burned out, only saving my books, in the great Ann Street fire (August 12, 1835); I was burned out again in February, 1845; and, while the destruction was complete, and the insurance but partial, I had the poor consolation, that the account books of “ The New-Yorker ” — which I had never opened since I first laid them away, but which had been an eyesore and a reminder of evil days whenever I stumbled upon them — were at length dissolved in smoke and flame, and lost to sight forever.

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER¹

By J. W. KELLER



JOURNALISM in its essential qualifications is a learned profession; in its exactions, its limitations to income, and its insecurity of employment, it is more nearly a trade.

Thirteen years of constant labor as a newspaper man have forced me to this conclusion, and I am led to offer it here not through any dissatisfaction with my lot in life but as a fair definition of what I am pleased to call my "profession." It must be borne in mind, however, that this definition does not apply to capital in journalism, but to labor. When the question of capital is considered, journalism becomes at once a business, pure and simple. Money is invested to make money. The fundamental principle of metropolitan journalism to-day is to buy white paper at three cents a pound and sell it at ten cents a pound. And in some quarters it does not matter how much the virgin whiteness of the paper is defiled so long as the defilement sells the paper. It is not the purpose of this article to attack or even describe the perverted ethics of modern journalism, except in as far as it affects the working newspaper man. It is the material rather than the moral advantage or disadvantage which claims attention here.— what journalism offers to the man who adopts it as a lifelong vocation.

There is no calling so alluring to the young and the uninitiated as newspaper work. The variety, the excite-

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ment, the constantly recurring opportunities to visit new scenes, to meet famous people, to undergo novel experiences, envelop this work in a seductive glamor. The fact that behind its representative always stands the mighty power of the newspaper itself fills the novice with a delightful sensation that approximates intoxication. He assumes that he is a part of that vast, indefinite, and mysterious potentiality which the public dreads and fears, and sometimes, not unreasonably, hates. To have men of years and wealth and station treat him with deferential consideration swells him with a sense of his own importance. To be paid to go where other people pay to go, to take precedence in public gatherings, to enter portals closed to others, to penetrate police and fire lines — in short, to experience all the advantages which policy rather than courtesy extends to the newspapers, is a constant delight to the new reporter. Nor is it less gratifying to him to realize that he has stepped from the door of his *alma mater* into a new world, which furnishes him with a living while it entertains him so royally. His classmate who chose the law is still digging in a law school or drudging in a lawyer's office, actually paying money to learn a profession while he is paid to learn the newspaper business. His income for the first year is from five hundred dollars to seven hundred dollars. This is doubled in the second year. In the third year, or even sooner, if he is at all clever, he is permitted to write for his newspaper "on space," that is, at a certain stipulated sum a column.

This is a glorious day for him. Still beardless and but little more than two years in journalism, he finds himself on a footing of equality, as far as opportunity to make money is concerned, with men who are twice his age and have grown gray in the service. His soul is filled with

exultation; ambition spurs him to renewed effort, and the horizon of his future is bright with the rosy glow of hope. His income the next year is three thousand dollars. He works day and night, in fair weather and foul. Like the soldier, he stands ready to answer every call of duty and performs every task faithfully and well. But three thousand dollars is his income the next year and the next and the next, until he realizes one day that he has grown old.

Young men are entering the business just as he entered it, and are pushing him to the wall just as he pushed others. Novelty has ceased to attract him, he no longer feels the spur of ambition, enthusiasm is dead, the glamor of journalism is gone. He fights stubbornly for a living for himself and his family. But with all his desperate struggling he sees his income dwindle just as it grew. The best work is given to younger men, to those who are nimbler on their feet and quicker with their pens. Unlike the soldier, he finds his years of faithful service count for nothing. He has grown old in a business which has no place for old men, where to grow old is accounted almost a crime. He is not dismissed, but he is starved out — not deliberately, but because the work must be done more quickly than he can do it. He can not better his condition with any other newspaper, because every other newspaper recognizes that he is of as little value to it as he is to the journal which sapped his vitality and dropped him.

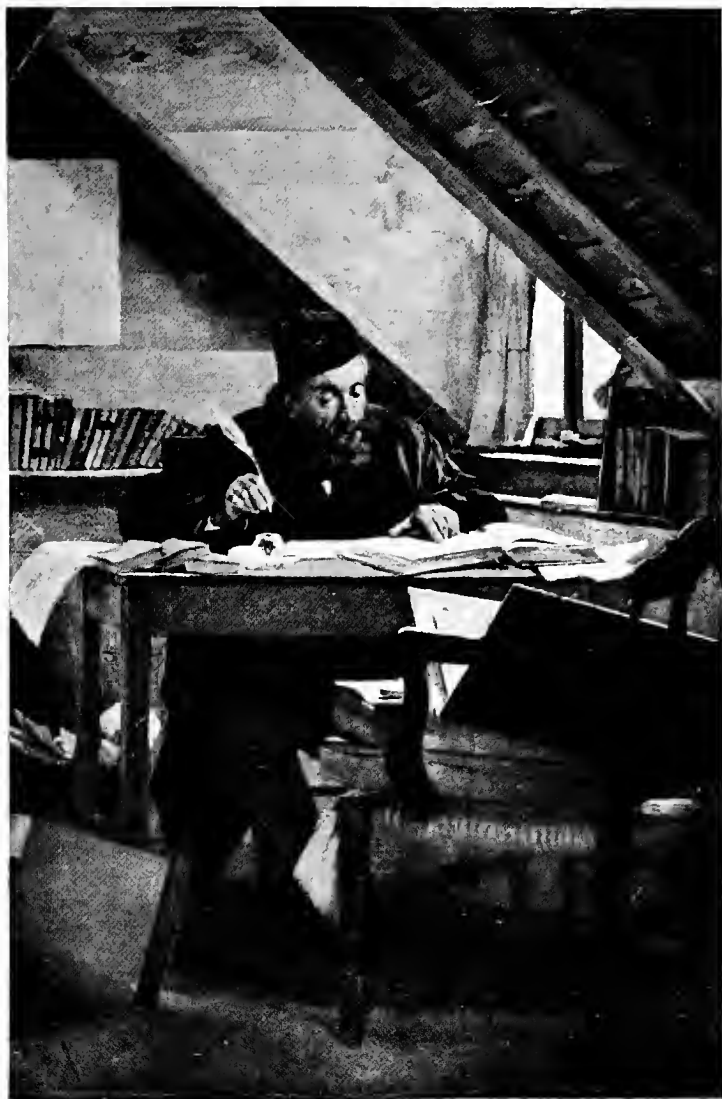
What becomes of him? If he has been frugal and thrifty, he may have saved enough money to insure him against penury. With these savings and fugitive work here and there, he is enabled to eke out his existence to the end. If he has saved nothing, and thrift is not a characteristic or privilege of newspaper men in general, he becomes one of those gray hosts that haunt Newspaper

Row asking for work that is seldom given, begging a little money from this friend or that, dying at last so poor that decent burial is vouchsafed only through the meager charity of the Press Club. This picture is not attractive, but its truth is fully attested by the white and silent witnesses that dot the green sward of Cypress Hills Cemetery.

The most pathetic figure in journalism is the man who has grown old in its service. Through no fault of his, he finds himself without a vocation when he most needs it. In any other business, his experience would be of value. The accumulated knowledge of years would command a price commensurate with its worth. Here it is valueless, because in the first ten years of his journalistic career he has mastered the art of reporting, of copy reading, of any routine departmental work, and experience shows that celerity decreases with age after a certain period of years has been reached. Journalism is essentially a business for young men. They rush into it by hundreds, they remain in it by tens.

Ninety per cent of the men who enter journalism leave it before they become old. They remain in it only long enough to make it a stepping-stone to something else less exacting, less limited in remuneration, less insecure in employment. On the staff of the daily newspaper with which I am connected there is only one man over fifty years of age, and the average age of the employees in the editorial department is less than thirty-five. A canvass of other metropolitan newspaper offices will show but a slight variation from these figures. There are more old men doing messenger service for telegraph companies than reporting for the daily newspapers.

Where do these men go when they give up newspaper work? They are to be found chiefly in politics or the



After the painting by E. GELHAY

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theatrical business, two pursuits closely allied to journalism, although the law entices many and strictly commercial pursuits a few. A vast number die in the service before they grow old. The death rate is high among newspaper workers. This is a business which knows no Sabbath, no holiday, no day of rest. The newspaper must be printed three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and the mental fatigue, the nervous waste, the physical exhaustion necessary to accomplish this feat must be shared in some degree by every member of the staff. The result is that vitality is more quickly destroyed here than elsewhere and newspaper workers die young.

It would seem that a business so alluring to beginners should retain a greater percentage of men entering it. The first cause to drive them out is the limit of money to be earned. I have already cited the case of the reporter and have mentioned three thousand dollars per annum as his income. This is a high figure. The average income of reporters working for the New York newspapers is really less than two thousand dollars per annum. Copy readers average about the same. The various heads of departments, such as dramatic, musical, sporting, foreign and exchanges, range from two thousand dollars to three thousand five hundred dollars; editorial writers from two thousand five hundred dollars to four thousand dollars; city and Sunday editors from three thousand dollars to five thousand dollars; and managing editors from five thousand dollars to fifteen thousand dollars.

It must be borne in mind, however, that each newspaper has but one managing editor. There are probably only two men in metropolitan journalism, without proprietary interests, who draw a salary of fifteen thousand dollars; two more may draw ten thousand dollars each,

and the others have high places but low incomes. And yet there are people who insist on placing journalism on the same professional plane with law and medicine. Just think of limiting the income from the practice of law or medicine to any such figures as these!

It is this limitation, fixed by the relation of labor to capital, which makes journalism more of a trade than a profession. The newspaper worker is simply a wage earner, a hired man. It is a good trade, a grand and noble trade in brains, but it is a trade, and it is a mere hallucination to call it a profession in the sense that law and medicine are professions.

Insecurity of employment is a kindred evil. What a man does counts for little against what he does not do. One error in judgment, one serious mistake, will wipe out a record of years of faithful, conscientious, and fruitful toil. A change in management or the whim of a proprietor may annul a position won by a lifetime of earnest endeavor and devotion to duty.

One instance will serve to illustrate this point. A man had held for years the post of city editor on a large New York daily. He had become famous throughout the world of journalism as the greatest news condenser of his time. The newspaper he had served so long suddenly dropped him from the place he had held with such credit to it and such honor to himself. And for what? Not that he had made any error, but that he had grown old. For this crime, he was cast adrift in the stormy sea of journalism, to seek bread elsewhere.

No position similar to his old one was open to him, and he was forced in the evening of his life to begin a new career, to start again as a reporter, to go back to the work he had done thirty years before. He made the effort and struggled bravely for a time, but the keen competition

of younger and stronger men told against him and he found himself outrun in the groveling race for a livelihood. One night he was sent out on a river-front assignment in the cold and wet and darkness of a winter storm. That night he met his death amid the floating ice of the Hudson. It may have been an accident, but whatever the cause of his death his heart had been broken. This is but one of a long series of similar tragedies.

Not a year passes without one or more "shake-ups," as newspaper men call them, in the offices of our large dailies. Without apparent cause, men are assigned to new and humiliating duties or are thrown out of employment altogether. The managing editor of to-day may have the choice to-morrow of doing reporter's work or of doing no work at all. The firmly-established principle of American journalism is that the newspaper is everything and the newspaper man is nothing. The newspaper absorbs the newspaper man completely. Whatever the journalist does goes to the credit of the journal. I will venture the assertion that no person who reads this article can name the editorial writers of any New York newspaper, unless he may chance to be on the staff of that newspaper. Even the proprietors of newspapers do not know the authors of the various writings which grace their pages. They seldom care to know, except to disapprove. And if they do not know, how much less do the readers of newspapers know? The impersonality of journalism is a bar to that individual reputation so dear and so important to honest workers in every calling. In no other vocation do personal endeavor and achievement accrue so little to the credit of the individual.

But of all the material disadvantages of journalism as a career, the remoteness of the possibility of ever becoming a newspaper proprietor is the most discouraging. The

highest ambition of a true newspaper man is to own a newspaper, or at least to have a controlling interest in a newspaper, for it is only under this condition that he can direct its policy.

Here lies the fascination of journalism and here it rises to the height of a profession, to a height, indeed, above that of any other profession. The modern newspaper is the greatest power on earth. In comparison with it every other individual influence sinks into insignificance. To wield this power, to exert this influence is worth the labor, the worry, the sacrifice of a lifetime.

“The glory of journalism,” said the aged proprietor of a New York daily recently, “is to be able to help your friends and to fight your enemies; to promulgate the doctrines you love and to attack the shams you hate; to have in your hands always a weapon with which you can crush a man who is not similarly armed, and with which you can resist the onslaught of any publication whatsoever.”

There was a savage satisfaction in this selfish utterance which suggested the moral bluntness of some of the newspapers of to-day, but it expressed the power of the greatest factor in modern civilization and indicated the possibilities for good which might come from a broader and more Christian exercise of such a power. But how is the working newspaper man to attain this goal? The magnitude of the capital necessary to start a daily newspaper in New York is in itself an almost insuperable obstacle. There are ten great daily newspaper properties in the metropolis; there are five thousand working newspaper men. If the man in control of each of these properties should be replaced by a working newspaper man not now in control, there would be at least four thousand nine hundred and ninety journalists in the same condition they

were before the change was made — the condition of hired men. They would still have to come at the beck and call of some one else, still have to go on working day in and day out for a limited weekly stipend, still have to live in the uncertainty of having no work on the morrow, still have to surrender their abilities, their energies and their lives to the newspaper, only to be dropped when it had absorbed all the good in them.

“What does the working newspaper man expect?” the newspaper will ask. He expects nothing but his wages at the end of the week. He has agreed to give the newspaper so much labor for so much money, and he is man enough to carry out his contract without grumbling. If he does not like his trade, he can try some other. But don't tell him that he is a “professor,” and, above all, don't lead any young man about to choose a life vocation into journalism under a misapprehension of its conditions. Let him understand these thoroughly, and then if he would still be a journalist let him take his chance of finding employment in a field where the supply of raw material is always far in excess of the demand. If the opportunity should afford and he should disclose aptitude for newspaper work, he will not find his lot so very hard so long as he has youth and strength. He will make a better living than he could as a clerk and it is possible he may become some day a managing editor or even a proprietor.

To attain preëminent success in journalism to-day, a man must have an acute appreciation and a competent knowledge of both the “business end” and the “editorial end.” He must be able to combine the two. His mind must be broad enough to grasp all sides of journalism, versatile enough to change instantly from one phase to another, and subtle enough to understand the minutest details. In the past decade we have seen one such mind

loom up from the Western horizon and revolutionize metropolitan journalism. It may be contended with some justice that this revolution has entailed in some respects a questionable benefit; but the revolution is here, and the fruit of it is the largest circulation and the greatest advertising patronage in America. Within the last two years another mind, similar to that already alluded to, but working on other lines, has made its impress on the newspaper world. The experiments of the latter are yet in their infancy; but they are so numerous, so varied, so resourceful, that all question of their ultimate success has already been abandoned.

It will have been observed that in writing this paper I have had in mind particularly the daily journalism of New York. In other cities, the newspaper worker's condition may vary slightly, according to local environment, but the essential principles are the same everywhere in America.

Briefly, the disadvantages of journalism as a permanent vocation are the limitation to income, the insecurity of place, the comparative impossibility of ever working except for hire, the impersonality of the work, the absolute power which the newspaper has over the newspaper man, the constant drain upon both mental and physical forces, and the fact that old age is almost as fatal to employment as death itself.

Another serious disadvantage, and by no means the least, is the jealousy and envy which obtain among newspaper men. Many of the changes in place are due to the wirepulling, the backbiting, and the petty conspiracies of the men themselves. The ambition of the average newspaper man does not reach to the proprietorship of a newspaper. But it does reach to some place with more power and more salary than that he occupies. Advance-

ment is what he seeks, and advancement can be had only by a change of place, and a change of place can be had only with the consent of the proprietor or his direct representative. The proprietor thus becomes a sort of despot, at whose feet his vassals sue for favor and to influence whom plots and counterplots are laid until the honest, straightforward, guileless man is so sick of such underhand work that he is all too willing to quit the contest and seek some other field. Hence it is that the best places are not always held by the best men. The courtier is often more successful, temporarily at least, than the journalist.

The advantages of journalism as a vocation, as I have hinted above, depend largely on the point of view. It is probable that the lower grades of physicians, lawyers, and preachers do not earn greater monetary compensation for their labors than newspaper men. The same statement applies to the lower grades of men in commercial pursuits. Hence it will be seen that in the mere matter of furnishing a livelihood, journalism does not compare unfavorably with other vocations. But it is to the higher grades, to the boundless opportunities afforded to superior talents and unflagging industry, that a man must look in choosing his life calling; and in these journalism without a proprietary interest suffers in comparison.

Moreover, while there are innumerable worthless men in other vocations, men who lower the general average, there are no worthless men in journalism. It has no place for dullards or laggards. Such may enter, but they are speedily discovered and mercilessly dropped. The result is that journalists as a class are intelligent, educated, earnest, industrious; and it is not the least advantage of the calling to be with these and of these. Another advantage of journalism lies in the character of the work the

journalist has to do. The world is his field of labor, mankind his constant study. Under these conditions, labor never becomes insipid or uninteresting. Each rising sun brings with it a new turn of the kaleidoscope of human affairs, as rich in color, as wonderful in grouping, as that of the day which is gone. There is always an opportunity, even for the humblest, to do some good; and if the mighty power of the newspaper is only rightly and justly exercised there is an exultation in achievement which is shared by every active agent in its production.

THE GIRL AND THE PEN¹

By ANNA STEESE RICHARDSON



THE girl with literary ambitions belongs to one of two classes. Either she thinks she could earn her living at home, by writing for magazines, or she wants to become a "journalist."

The profession of letters is broad and liberal. It presupposes a college education — yet I have known girls to graduate from the eighth grade into the short-story field, because they found inspiration and help in the English masterpieces which they read after working hours. It presupposes leisure, elegant surroundings, and a restful environment, and yet one of the daintiest fairy tales I ever read was penned by a woman between the time that she sent five growing girls off to school and the washing of the breakfast dishes. I know of no work in which patient, persistent, unflinching effort and study bring such rich rewards, because the joy of giving birth to a new thought is equaled only by the joy of the mother in her first-born. The writer extracts something more than mere dollars from the profession of letters — the happiness peculiar to congenial work, intensified by steady, mental growth, and the development of resources within herself which rescue her from morbidness, loneliness, and selfishness.

The successful writer must draw information and inspiration from her contact with human nature. She must

¹ From "The Girl Who Earns Her Own Living." Copyright, 1909, R. W. Dodge & Co., New York.

know people in order to write of them, consequently she is never self-centered. She may become egotistical, spoiled by flattery when success is achieved, but during her probation she is dependent upon her fellow men, therefore interested in them, and so is herself interesting.

Against this argument must be arraigned the stern fact that the woman who is entirely dependent upon her own efforts should not turn to writing, even though she may have the gift, as a profession in which she can secure immediate returns. She must combine writing with more practical work, something that will pay her board and keep a roof over her head until she wields the pen with such dexterity that financial returns are sure and regular. This period varies. Some women suddenly develop a gift for humorous versification, epigrammatic little essays, or a new field of fiction, and score phenomenal success; but, as a rule, the history of the writer who builds a substantial success reads far differently.

My first story was written — and promptly rejected — when I was fifteen. I drew my first weekly salary as a writer (and this on a small country paper) when I was twenty-seven, yet during that interval there was never a day, whether I was teaching school or cooking for hired men or catering to summer boarders, that I did not renew my determination, oft times buried deep beneath piles of unwashed dishes and unironed clothes, that one day I would be financially independent through my writings.

I make this question of financial independence the goal toward which most writers work because it is their real object, and because most of the women who write to me mention financial burdens which they hope to lighten by the aid of their pens. This introduction has been made strongly personal because I know that many of my readers will say that I paint too disheartening a picture

for the girl with the pen. I want each one of these critics to know that I understand not only just how she feels in her ambitious, hopeful moments, but just how she will feel when manuscript after manuscript comes back — “Returned with thanks.”

If the wolf is very close to your door, do not try to fight him with your pen. Better select for your weapon the needle, the frying-pan, or the iron. He recognizes the power of the pen only when it is wielded by an experienced hand.

If you are willing to wait and work patiently and to live frugally, then find some regular occupation that will occupy half or three-fourths of the day, and devote the other half or fourth to writing, giving the early part of the day to your pen work if possible. Depend upon serving or teaching or nursing, or whatever you can do well, to keep body and soul together, and do not expect your pen to yield returns for many weeks or months, perhaps years. But, on the other hand, if you keep the steadfast faith within yourself that some day you will reach your goal, your more practical work will be made lighter by your hours of writing, and life will be worth while.

First, cultivate your powers of observation. Keep your eyes open at home and abroad. Note what people around you are doing, their peculiarities of speech and their mannerisms. Study changes in nature's panorama. Open your mind to outside influences, to the happiness and the sorrow of those with whom you come in contact, so that in time you may express these emotions in such clear fashion that the world of readers will say: “Yes, I know a woman who acts just that way when she is frightened,” or “Why, I have felt just like that ever so many times.” You can not picture human nature until you know it. The painter transfers to his canvas the thrush

tilting on the swaying branch; the writer must transfer to his sheet of paper the soul swaying under emotions.

Two home-going stenographers from a newspaper office passed a forlorn little figure sitting on the edge of the curbing of a city fountain. The girl's thin shoulders were shaken by silent sobs. Her mouse-like teeth were set hard in her thin, colorless lips. The first stenographer who passed did not notice that the child was crying. In fact, she was thinking what a hot day it had been, and how hard it was to work in a great office amid the clickety-click of typewriters.

The second girl, her eyes open to all that went on around her, despite the heat, spied the heaving shoulders, unlocked the hard-set lips, and heard a story which led to the exposure of a great wrong, which placed the girl on the staff of a big paper, and which lifted her protégée above want and misery.

Which one of those two girls hurrying away from the same office was the born writer? Fine phrases alone will not make a writer. You must cultivate the knowledge of human nature, the power of observation and the ability to put this combination of knowledge and observation into a word form which will reach the hearts of your readers.

Write every day. Write of everything you see. Cultivate the letter habit. If your friends enjoy your letters and beg for more, you are making headway. Put into those letters your impressions of events and people. Divide your hours of reading between the works of standard English writers, like Macaulay, Carlyle, Dickens, Scott, and Washington Irving, the books which are making the success of the moment, and the best current magazines. This last is important because you must know the trend of literary taste, the sort of fiction, special article, or poetry that editors are buying.

If you seriously contemplate writing for a living, you must make a business of reading regularly at your public library or subscribing for the current magazines. If you have written a tale to entertain children, buy or borrow at the library every magazine you can find for juvenile readers, and decide which editor is using stories such as you have to offer. If you are offering practical suggestions for the housewife, make a list of magazines published especially for women, and send your script to each one, until many rejections have proven that it is not salable. A woman told me the other day that she had sent one story to twenty-nine magazines before she sold it.

If you have a love story, study the magazines which publish fiction before sending forth the tale. Do not send it to "The Review of Reviews" or "The Scientific American" simply because your brother happens to be a subscriber to one of these excellent but fictionless magazines.

The mechanical preparation of a manuscript is the simplest part of your work. Unless you write an extremely legible and uniform hand, have your script typewritten. The usual charge is ten cents per page, folio size. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page write your name and address in full. In the upper right-hand corner, write: "Submitted at your regular rates." Every publication has its rate for unknown authors. Only the established author names his own price. In the center of the sheet, below these corner inscriptions, write the title of your story.

Tell the typist who copies your story to double-space it. This leaves room for editorial corrections if your story is accepted. On the last page, four or five spaces below the last line, have your address and name written again. If you send out two or a dozen poems in the same envelop,

put your name and address on each and every one. Do not trust that the typewriting or the long hand or the general style will identify them. If you send out a novel, mark each chapter with the full title and your name and address. If you could see the mail unloaded on the desk of a sorting clerk in a magazine office some morning you would understand this caution.

Do not ask for an immediate decision, or acknowledgment by return mail. Simply enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope for the return of your story if not available, and do not write a letter detailing the story of your own life and the reasons why you need the money this story is worth. The busy editor has no time to read this letter, neither is he conducting a charity bureau. His readers demand good, readable stories, not a poorly-written story, bought because you needed the money. Be sure to pay postage on your script in full, and fold it as few times as possible, using a large envelop for this mailing. Never roll a script.

When your story reaches the editorial offices in some far-away city, it will be sorted with dozens of others and recorded in a great book, then passed on to the young man or woman who is known as the first reader. If hopeless in style or unsuited to this particular magazine, it will be returned to you at once, with a printed slip of rejection. If it seems promising, it is passed on to the second reader, or the editor for whose department it seems best fitted. He reads it, and, if favorably inclined, holds it for an editorial council, provided the magazine staff is large, or he transmits it to the editor-in-chief. With hundreds of manuscripts pouring in every morning, you must understand that this process will take time. If you hear nothing after your manuscript has been in the office a month, write a polite note of inquiry.

To the average woman who wants to write at home I would say: "Start with what are known as 'fillers,' little stories which are sandwiched in between the big features of a magazine for women readers."

Perhaps you have found some method of lightening your housework, some new way of correcting a fault common to childhood; perhaps you have been to a lunch or tea and seen some novel decorations or enjoyed a novel game; perhaps your church society has given a new entertainment. Write of any of these matters, briefly and clearly, so that some other woman could lighten her housework, correct her child, give a pretty luncheon or plan a profitable church entertainment. Then look over the magazines for women and send this "story" to the one which seems to give considerable space to such matters. If the matter is used, you will be paid for it. Reputable editors never stoop to filching ideas, as some out-of-town writers think.

Now for the would-be newspaper girl, "the journalist" as she would call herself.

The way to become a newspaper reporter is to report. Begin right where you are, where you will have friends to help you to gather news, and parents to provide you with a home until you learn whether newspaper work is all that you have pictured it, and until the editor has learned that you have the true newspaper instinct. This will not take long. Here is one of the joys of newspaper work. You are not kept in suspense.

Remember the newspaper world wants facts, not phrases, and plan your interview accordingly. Do not take the editor an essay on "Architects of Fate." Tell him rather that Mrs. Brown had a tea party the other night and his paper ought to publish the news about it; that the Smithson domicile is harboring brand-new twins,

and that Jennie Piper is entertaining two pretty girls from St. Joe. He will ask you the girls' names, and if you do not know, he will say then and there that you are not so much of a newspaper woman as he thought you were.

Tell him you know everybody and go everywhere and hear many, many things that somehow never get into his weekly paper; or, if you are fortunate enough to live in a town which supports a daily, that you think you could run a daily column or half column of society and personal news. That is the opening wedge for you girls with the pen — personalities, gossip, if you will. You can not start by reporting murders or conducting household departments. You must begin by giving the editor something his older, more blasé reporters have failed to give him, the small, trifling items that make a paper gossipy and readable.

If you are a newspaper woman born, you will succeed in your home town, I do not care what the size of the paper. You will create a demand for your services. If you can not please the editor there, if you can not induce your neighbors to give you news, what do you expect to do in a strange city with women to interview who place implacable butlers between you and the news you would learn?

By all means beg the editor of your home paper to try you out; and then make yourself invaluable to him before you try your wings in the great city.

You may have influential letters; you may have diplomas and pretty frocks and a prettier smile, but in a great city where you think there must be hundreds of openings you will find other girls with the same influential letters, good frocks, and pleasing smiles ready on the ground, a hundred to every opening. And when you tell the city

editor that you have had no experience but are willing to learn, he will inform you that he does not run a kindergarten for reporters.

Get your training near home, if you have to work months for nothing. I did this, and I have never regretted it, and just to clinch my argument I beg leave to drop into personalities once more.

Years ago in a mid-West city of twenty thousand inhabitants and one daily paper, I found that I had to put my ability as a writer to more regular and better financial account. I called to see the editor of the one daily paper. He said his staff was complete, but I insisted on having something to do — just to show him that I could write. He said: "Go write up the squirrels in the park."

Now, natural history was so much Greek to me, but I had to convince him. I spent a morning in the park, watched the squirrels and talked with the watchman. The next Sunday that paper printed a column about the habits and tricks of the park squirrels — for which I never received a cent.

The staff was still full. If I had any new department or idea to suggest, "perhaps," said the editor vaguely.

The women's clubs were just then coming into prominence. I begged space for a department devoted to club meetings — and got it, with a salary of five dollars a week, providing the department made good. Can you imagine, you girls who want to write up sensational murders, the mad excitement of reporting a dozen or more literary meetings a week, and trying to make the matter readable?

My next assignment consisted of going from pastor to pastor each Sunday afternoon and finding church news for Monday morning's paper, sorting out routine announcements and digging relentlessly for some bit of real re-

ligious news. Next I was sent down on what was known as Implement Row, where agricultural machinery was handled, there to climb for one whole long day in each week over platforms and trucks and under freight cars, often to be rewarded with less than a column of personal items about traveling men or out-of-town visitors. I worked so hard I scarcely had time to eat. And all the while that staff remained full! Men had the police run, the post office, the federal courthouse and the theaters — all of which I felt I could do, oh, so very well!

Those were shoe-destroying, soul-wearing days, but when I finally came to New York and was told by the city editor on a large paper to go down to the Battery and get a certain emigrant story, I thanked the good old mid-West paper and its patient staff of editors who had trained me to start for the Battery without asking the irritable city editor where the Battery was, how much copy he wanted, what I should ask the emigrant, etc. Those early days when I had had to squeeze news from the mere leavings of news sources had taught me how to get a story — and that is what makes a newspaper woman.

Now supposing that you have served your apprenticeship on a daily paper in a small inland city, how shall you approach the city editor in a large city, perhaps in Chicago, Philadelphia, or New York?

First, you must have funds on which to live while seeking work in the city. It may be weeks or months before you secure a salaried position, and while you are doing space work at four or five dollars per column you must have money for board, room and carfare, to say nothing of the shoe leather, on which reporting is merciless. Unless you have strong letters of personal introduction to city editors and have made a record for clever, not mediocre, work in your home town, never start for

a strange city and a new, as yet unassured position, without at least enough money to meet your current expenses for two months.

Second, take with you every letter of introduction or recommendation that you can muster. Also carry a number of newspaper clippings, as evidence of the good work you have done on the home paper.

Third, be wise in selecting the season of your flight. Do not seek work in a large city during mid-summer. The reportorial force is generally cut down the summer season, and much of the space given during the rest of the year to articles on the various phases of city life is filled with correspondence from summer resorts. September is perhaps the best month in which to seek work in a city newspaper office, for at that time editors look kindly on new blood for their staffs.

Fourth, do not rush from the depot to the editorial sanctum. Study the city a bit and get your bearings. Incidentally, you may pick up some idea for a story which you can present to the editor during your first call. The girl who comes to the editor with an idea has ten chances where the girl who merely asks for work, for an assignment suggested by the editor, has one. The girl with ideas or suggestions for good stories is in demand.

A few words about the income of the young writer. Put out of your mind the fabulous earnings credited to novelists and playwrights. Remember that you are serving a literary apprenticeship, not writing the one "best seller."

If you are writing "fillers" for ten-cent magazines, you will be paid from a half to one cent per word. If you are writing little love stories, from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred words, for the syndicates which supply fiction to the daily papers, you will receive about ten

dollars per story. If you receive twenty-five or thirty dollars for your first three-thousand-word fiction tale, you will be doing well. Later, when you acquire style and reputation, you will be paid from seventy-five to two hundred dollars for a strong, telling story. The income of the magazine writer is as uncertain as her moods.

The income of the newspaper woman is more certain. In large cities the editor of the Sunday magazine section, first hope of the newly-arrived writer, pays five dollars a column for general material, more for special stories along exclusive lines with good illustrations. What is known as an exclusive special, not a news story, for a Sunday paper, the sort that will fill a page with text and illustrations, is sure to bring from thirty to fifty dollars.

A woman reporter without city experience may be asked to start at fifteen dollars a week. If she has good letters, or shows marked ability, or if her work in her home paper has attracted the attention of the city editor, she may be offered twenty dollars a week. From this point her salary is raised, according to her usefulness and efficiency, to thirty-five dollars a week. When she is worth this to the city editor, she generally asks to be put on space instead of salary, and then she earns, according to her physical strength, working capacity, and keenness of observation, from fifty dollars a week up.

In large cities the field of the newspaper woman is unlimited, for she soon finds openings in magazines for her keen stories of city life. But her daily life is not easy. It is strenuous, nerve-straining, and harsh. Her hours are irregular, her work will not wait for a more propitious day or better weather, and the excuse has not yet been invented which will soften the heart or lighten the criticism of the editor when she scores failure.

HOW WASHINGTON IS REPORTED¹

BY ROBERT LINCOLN O'BRIEN

WHEN the White House was "restored" to its original design, a small office building was erected, a little to the west of it, for the use during the business day of the President, his secretaries, telegraphers, and messengers. Jefferson, it seems, had planned for this purpose, and, it is supposed, built on the White House grounds a box-like structure much like those compact little offices of the country lawyers, which are still seen.

This modern counterpart of Jefferson's office contains a room which he never thought of, and that is the one designed for newspaper representatives. It is equipped with telephone booths, typewriting machines, desks, and other working appliances. Its window commands the approaches for persons who come by all kinds of conveyances.

It is not expected that the newspaper men will stay much of their time in this room. It rather furnishes a snug harbor from which they sally forth to harpoon with inquiries the visiting statesman as he attempts to glide from a call on the President out into the open sea, or the Cabinet officer on his way to an informal conference with his chief.

Even fifteen years ago, when I went to Washington, there would have been no need of such a press room. In that time methods of reporting the White House have

¹ By permission of the Author, "The Youth's Companion," and Ginn & Company. Copyright, 1908.

entirely changed. It was then a port of call on a daily round; it is now a fortress to be manned constantly, at least during the waking hours.

Then, the correspondents of important newspapers, with the regularity of the milkman, looked into the White House once a day, usually to talk with the private secretary, and occasionally with the President himself, on any topic of peculiar interest to their particular papers. Representatives of the Associated Press and other organizations which supply a uniform news service to a great many papers and whose work is thus somewhat different from that of the correspondents of individual papers, called oftener — perhaps morning and afternoon — but it was with all of them a call.

Now, because of the more generous scale in which news is measured, and doubtless in part by reason of the increased importance which attaches to the White House as a disposer of human affairs, a number of newspaper men have no other occupation in life, no other assignment, than to camp there, watching the tide of President-seeking humanity which flows in and out of its portals.

There is no secret passageway by which visitors may enter and depart. Everybody who approaches this office building is subject to questioning from one or more of the colony of reporters. From the press room they see a man coming, discuss who he is and what he is probably coming for; by the time he crosses the threshold he is greeted by the one or two newspaper men who know him best, speaking for the group, and they exhibit such a familiarity with his business that he usually completes the story to set right any little inaccuracies that may have crept into the conjectural version of the press room.

Formerly, Cabinet officers going away from their Tuesday and Friday meetings had to run the gauntlet

of an extra number of newspaper men who had gathered for that purpose. The member who came out first gave a little information, with which, as a fulcrum, they pried the succeeding members to better advantage, and finally accumulated a fairly complete story. But a stop has been put to this. Secretary Loeb was the first to give out an official statement of what had been done at the Cabinet meeting, as far as the administration saw fit to make one, and members of the Cabinet are supposed to refuse to converse concerning its deliberations. I believe there is also a White House rule against newspaper men's questioning them on this subject.

What are the relations of the President to this colony of Boswells who keep his diary for him? He knows that they are there, as a necessary evil or a blessing inseparable from his high office, according to the point of view, and he doubtless has "spells" of feeling each way. At all events, he does what he can to facilitate their work.

The names of all persons who dine or take luncheon at the White House are copied by one of the secretaries on typewritten "fimsies," which are left with the chief doorkeeper to be given to any responsible reporter who may call for one. At all White House receptions, great and small, the entire list of invited guests is furnished to the press. This saves the society reporter the task of spying round, and also relieves her or him of an occasional call from a self-conscious individual who is afraid his presence may have been overlooked.

The White House secretaries are constantly sending into the press room formal statements on public policy, rarely, if ever, purporting to come from the President, but couched in such language that the telegraph editors at their desks in the home offices throughout the land promptly recognize, as the message comes in over the

wires, that it is information from the White House, on the authority of its chief. The purpose of the United States to take Porto Rico was thus made known to the world in the closing days of the Spanish War.

Lists of persons nominated for office, and of promotions in the army and navy are regularly given out through the press room, and often posted there for the convenience of all comers.

But these are largely routine things. In addition, as far as his time will permit, President Roosevelt was in the habit of seeing the more influential newspaper correspondents when they called; and besides, he often summoned a group of perhaps twenty-five to explain to them some policy on which he was about to enter, submitting on such occasions to any questions which they saw fit to ask. President Taft will probably continue these pleasant arrangements.

President Roosevelt's relations with the newspaper men were closer than those of most of his predecessors. President McKinley had an especial fondness for the older men whom he had known when a member of the House. President Cleveland saw a great many newspaper men during his first administration, but in his second found his time too much occupied to permit of its employment to any great extent in this way. President Harrison tells, in his "Story of Our Country," that he thought a day at the White House not complete unless he had conversed with at least one newspaper man.

The present consul at Birmingham went one day to seek General Harrison's opinion on intercollegiate football. The President said, "No, but I will tell you about something else," and he did so.

But it is the White House callers who really keep the colony of reporters camped there busy. I recall a digni-

fied Senator who, coming out of the President's office one day, remarked half-patronizingly to the newspaper men that since Congress had adjourned they were probably so short of material that they would be willing to print almost anything they could get, without much regard to its worth.

"That reminds me," spoke up one of the group, not thinking how his remarks would sound. "Don't you think it would be a good time, Senator, for you to give us some of your views?"

The reporting of the executive departments is not wholly unlike that of the White House, except that no one of them, unless it be the Treasury, requires the constant attention of any newspaper men, and in this case only representatives of a few financial journals would make it their all-day headquarters.

Most departments have a press room for the convenience of the newspaper workers. Most of them issue regular publications from which the correspondents extract material adapted to the needs of their respective localities. The Treasury, for example, prints each noon a statement of the nation's financial condition. Every Thursday morning it brings out a pamphlet known as "Treasury Decisions," and it has several monthly publications.

The Post Office issues an interesting daily bulletin telling of all postmasters appointed, resigned, and deceased, together with new offices and routes, star and rural free delivery, and so forth. The daily "Consular Reports" have a more extensive and expensive corps of foreign correspondents than any other publication of their size in the world, and perhaps of any size.

When Congress is in session "the Congressional Record," which comes out each morning, carries a verbatim report of all the proceedings in both Houses. The practice of giving "leave to print" has done much to lower the

interest of this otherwise informing journal, since the presence of actual listeners invariably exercises a beneficial influence upon the speech maker.

Certain bureaus prepare material for the press and distribute it among the correspondents. The newspaper articles which appear Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons, telling the condition of business in some particular industrial line of exportation or home manufacture, over a Washington date line, and usually marked "Special," come from the Bureau of Statistics of the Department of Commerce and Labor. It interprets statistics as well as compiles them. Other bureaus systematically "release," for simultaneous publication in as many newspapers as care for them, facts and figures derived from current government work, and of supposed public interest. The Census Office announcements are especially noteworthy.

These are all aids in reporting the national capital. The trouble with them as a sole reliance is that the public likes best not routine information of an accepted sort, but the more sensational disclosures which must come as the result of the correspondent's personal investigation or research, or perhaps accidental discovery.

The danger of relying too much upon even the best of matter already committed to type is illustrated by the experience of a young Missouri correspondent who was asked by his paper to send to it all he could ever get from Senator Cockrell, who was much admired, but not given to talking freely. One day the correspondent discovered in a Washington newspaper an interview with Mr. Cockrell. He cut it out, and prepared a somewhat fulsome introduction, ending with the words, "Thus explaining his reasons for breaking silence, the distinguished Senator furthermore said."

The correspondent became so excited that he pasted the clipping on with the wrong side up, so that the wires carried westward that night an abstract of conditions in the Baltimore grain market, with some speculation as to the price movement in hay.

The next morning a message came back saying that, while the paper always welcomed Senator Cockrell's views, it wished the correspondent could induce him to speak on some livelier theme.

The press associations, of course, cover all the departments, but in a rather routine and colorless way. Each special correspondent, by contrast, follows the line of his paper's interests, sectional, political, or otherwise. Eastern correspondents rarely do much at the Interior Department, for example, whose concerns are with Indians, public lands, irrigation, and the like; the Treasury is the great source of information for New York, Boston, and Chicago men. The value of the State, War and Navy departments as news sources depends on the swing of the doors of the Temple of Janus.

In time of war, their corridors are well trodden by all newspaper men; in time of peace, these departments fall, as a rule, into the hands of specialists. Some Washington newspaper men make themselves specialists in army and navy affairs, or in an acquaintance among the diplomats, and often have a regular connection with the "service" papers, while supplying at space rates such of the dailies as desire occasional material of this sort.

But it is at the Capitol, when Congress is in session, that most of the newspaper men spend most of their time. These two "mosts" are used advisedly. A bureau containing several men, like those of the newspapers of the largest cities, will keep one man at the White House and nearby departments, and perhaps two at the Capitol.

The man who serves alone one or more papers will put in most of his time on Capitol Hill.

The one hundred and eighty men admitted to the press gallery, which is the test of real newspaper standing, represent about as many methods of work and lines of interest. No two newspapers want just the same material; some newspapers want everything written from the point of view of their locality. "With Second Lieutenant Smith of Robinson City standing at his post of duty, Admiral Dewey sailed into Manila Bay," would be one way of writing an account of that famous engagement for the Robinson City newspapers. To disregard absolutely any local interest, in the tone and coloring of the sketch, is the opposite policy. This latter plan gives an article better historical perspective. It is also less unlike that of the Associated Press, which will go in on the wires with the special despatch.

The New York newspapers pay little attention to locality in their narratives, whereas some of the smaller cities maintain a special Washington service almost solely to get this local touch.

Each editor must decide for himself whether the pensions and patents granted in the country are more important than the newspaper's own version of the Senate tariff program for the next Congress.

Many similar lines of cleavage run through the reporting of Washington. Coloring from the political point of view presents other considerations; some papers tolerate only a little of it, others want a great deal. The Associated Press, supposedly neutral, necessarily leans somewhat toward the official view, since it is relied on to carry the formal statements, announcements, and proclamations of those in power and authority.

In reporting Congress, some changes have come to

pass in the last generation, which show that fashion, in dealing in the commodity known as news, is just as arbitrary a dictator as in the models of Parisian millinery. We may think the same thoughts our fathers thought, but we require from the press different stimulating influences to produce them.

Once the main task of the Washington correspondent was to sit in the gallery of the House of Representatives, taking down diligently the points made in the debate on the floor. To-day very little attention is paid to the debate, particularly in the House. If the person who visits Washington for the first time, and goes into the gallery of the House, looks across to the reservation above the clock, and back to the Speaker's desk, he will see it almost empty, no matter how interesting the discussion below may be.

This occasions considerable comment on the part of visitors, and not least from correspondents of a former generation who return to Washington after a long interval on a visit. They used to hang their overcoats in the House gallery and report House proceedings, occasionally going to the north end of the Capitol to look in on the Senate, much as reporters now cast a side glance at the Supreme Court. Why has this change come to pass?

The seat of power in our Federal government has been largely transferred to the Senate; that is the body which it pays best to watch, and accordingly, correspondents are considerably less inattentive to its proceedings than to those of the House.

The Associated Press, and like organizations, keep a man on the floor of each House to follow the debate. His work suffices for most newspapers, aside from some outburst having special or local interest. Coöperative reporting is much more adequate than it used to be, and is constantly improving in efficiency.

But a greater reason than this for the inattentive attitude of special correspondents in the galleries, particularly in that of the House, is the changed tastes of newspaper readers, as interpreted by the editors. Instead of abstracts of debate, no matter how informing, they prefer tales of cloak-room conspiracy, speculations as to the effects of some projected move of the opposition or gossip of the caucus committee.

The modern world apparently does not believe that legislation is made in the legislative chamber, but rather where two or three of the leaders are gathered together. In short, the world believes that if speech itself is made to conceal thought and not to express it, as the cynic has said, debate on the floor of Congress is designed to cloak, or polish over, or otherwise make presentable to the world, policies which are really worked out behind the scenes. Hence the empty press gallery.

There is also a somewhat more frivolous taste than in the elder days. Illustrated journalism reacts upon Washington. The enterprising photographer makes a business of enticing all the rising men into his studio, and then he issues, at intervals, a bulletin to the newspaper correspondents, telling them what counterfeit presentments of great men have been caught for the convenience of the press. Many a "Sunday special" is written round a series of pictures.

The substitution of the telegraph wire for the mail, in conveying Washington information, has also had its effects. The old-style editorial correspondence, or the discussion of events, with a good measure of opinion and comment thrown in, seems less adapted to wire transmission than articles which have the flavor of news from end to end.

Many times it happens that the correspondents put

their heads together, with the result that their imagination outruns their discretion. One day in hot weather, when developments were few, a correspondent remarked to some friends that he thought the name Philippine Islands should be changed to McKinley Islands, as a tribute to the President who had just died. The idea met instant acceptance, and it was declared that on the morrow an investigation would be made to see what public men would support the proposal.

One of the party declared that he could not wait, since he needed just such a story that night, and suggested that the scheme should go forth to their papers at once, and that it should be followed up the next day with interviews supporting it.

This was agreed to. Some important newspapers came out Monday morning with a front-page headline on the McKinley Islands. The enterprising promoters of the plan started forth a few hours later to seek interviews on it. The only man whom they could find in town of sufficient importance to quote, Gen. Henry C. Corbin, was usually accommodating. But when the request for his indorsement of the idea was made, he threw up his hands, saying, "Do you mean to tell me that any one has been foolish enough to propose that thing?"

At least one of the newspapers that had floated this idea announced a few days after that the plan was ill-advised, and that those public men in Washington who were thinking about it had better think again, since the practical difficulties in the way were almost insurmountable.

The correspondents as a body seldom stay in Washington many years. A decade of experience will put its possessor into a very small senior class in the gallery. The corps is constantly recruited from many sources.

Home newspapers send on to Washington the young man who apparently possesses a special aptitude for political work and the handling of national questions. And the Washington bureaus themselves are self-feeding. The telegrapher, the stenographer, and even the messenger boy, have often worked up to the head of the bureau.

Robert J. Wynne, who was telegraph operator, became an assistant to the late and well-known Gen. H. V. Boynton, and finally the head of a bureau of his own. He left newspaper work to become First Assistant Postmaster-General, and on Mr. Henry C. Payne's death was made a member of the Cabinet, and later our consul-general at London. Business and official life are well recruited from the Washington corps, as well as other positions in the newspaper world.

Men who have been in Washington as correspondents frequently return as members of Congress. A fair percentage of the newspaper men of the country have been at some time in their lives through the Washington "mill."

The present commissioner of the Indian Office and the head of the Bureau of Manufactures are old correspondents. The alliance between public life and reporting it is thus quite close.

It is a commonplace that public men trust the correspondents with some of their greatest secrets, and their invariable testimony is that the confidence is well reposed. It is a newspaper man's capital in life to know how to keep a secret.

EDWIN LAWRENCE GODKIN¹

By JAMES BRYCE

AS with the progress of science new arts emerge and new occupations and trades are created, so with the progress of society professions previously unknown arise, evolve new types of intellectual excellence, and supply a new theater for the display of peculiar and exceptional gifts. Such a profession, such a type, and the type which is perhaps most specially characteristic of our times, is that of the editor. It scarcely existed before the French Revolution, and is, as now fully developed, a product of the last eighty years.

Various are its forms. There is the business editor, who runs his newspaper as a great commercial undertaking, and may neither care for politics nor attach himself to any political party. America still recollects the familiar example set by James Gordon Bennett, the founder of "The New York Herald." There is the selective editor, who may never pen a line, but shows his skill in gathering an able staff round him, and in allotting to each of them the work he can do best. Such an one was John Douglas Cook, a man of slender cultivation and few intellectual interests, but still remembered in England by those who forty years ago knew the staff of "The Saturday Review," then in its brilliant prime, as possessed of an extraordinary instinct for the topics which caught the public taste, and for the persons capable of

¹ From "Studies in Contemporary Biography," by permission of the Author and the Macmillan Company. Copyright, 1903.

handling those topics. John T. Delane, of "The Times," had the same gift, with talents and knowledge far surpassing Cook's.

A third and usually more interesting form is found in the editor, who is himself an able writer, and who imparts his own individuality to the journal he directs. Such a one was Horace Greeley, who, in the days before the War of Secession, made "The New York Tribune" a power in America. Such another, of finer natural quality, was Mikhaïll Katkof, who in his short career did much to create and to develop the spirit of nationality and imperialism in Russia thirty years ago.

It was to this third form of the editorial profession that Edwin L. Godkin belonged. He is the most remarkable example of it that has appeared in our time — perhaps, indeed, in any time since the profession rose to importance; and all the more remarkable because he was never, like Greeley or Katkof, the exponent of any widespread sentiment or potent movement, but was frequently in opposition to the feeling for the moment dominant.

Edwin Lawrence Godkin, the son of a Protestant clergyman and author, was born in the county of Wicklow, in Ireland, in 1831. He was educated at Queen's College, Belfast, read for a short time for the English bar, but drifted into journalism by accepting the post of correspondent to "The London Daily News" during the Crimean War in 1853-54. The horror of war which he retained through his life was due to the glimpse of it he had in the Crimea. Soon afterwards he went to America, was admitted to the bar in New York, but never practiced, spent some months in traveling through the Southern States on horseback, learning thereby what slavery was, and what were its economic and social consequences, was for two or three years a writer on "The New York Times,"

and ultimately, in 1865, established in New York a weekly journal called "The Nation." This he continued to edit, writing most of it himself, till 1881, when he accepted the editorship of "The New York Evening Post," an old and respectable paper, but with no very large circulation. "The Nation" continued to appear, but became practically a weekly edition of "The Evening Post," or rather, as some one said, "The Evening Post" became a daily edition of "The Nation," for the tone and spirit that had characterized "The Nation" now pervaded "The Post." In 1900 failing health compelled him to retire from active work, and in May, 1902, he died in England. Journalism left him little leisure for any other kind of literary production; but he wrote in early life a short history of Hungary; and a number of articles which he had in later years contributed to "The Nation" or to magazines were collected and published in three volumes between 1895 and 1900.

His mind was admirably fitted for the career he had chosen. It was logical, penetrating, systematic, yet it was also quick and nimble. His views were definite, not to say dogmatic, and as they were confidently held, so, too, they were confidently expressed. He never struck a doubtful note. He never slurred over a difficulty, or sought, when he knew himself ignorant, to cover up his ignorance. Imagination was kept well in hand, for his constant aim was to get at and deal with the vital facts of every case. If he was not original in the way of thinking out doctrines distinctively his own, nor in respect of any exuberance of ideas bubbling up in the course of discussion, there was fertility as well as freshness in his application of principles to current questions, and in the illustrations by which he enforced his arguments.

As his thinking was exact, so his style was clear-cut

and trenchant. Even when he was writing most swiftly, it never sank below a high level of form and finish. Every word had its use and every sentence told. There was no doubt about his meaning, and just as little about the strength of his convictions. He had a gift for terse, vivacious paragraphs commenting on some event of the day or summing up the effect of a speech or a debate. The touch was equally light and firm. But if the manner was brisk, the matter was solid; you admired the keenness of the insight and the weight of the judgment just as much as the brightness of the style. Much of the brightness lay in the humor.

He was prepared at any moment to incur unpopularity from his subscribers, or even to offend one-half of his advertisers. He took no pains to get news before other journals, and cared nothing for those "beats" and "scoops" in which the soul of the normal newspaper man finds a legitimate source of pride. He was not there, he would have said, to please either advertisers or subscribers, but to tell the American people the truths they needed to hear, and if those truths were distasteful, so much the more needful was it to proclaim them. He was absolutely independent not only of all personal but all party ties. A public man was never either praised or suffered to escape censure because he was a private acquaintance. He once told me that the being obliged to censure those with whom he stood in personal relations was the least agreeable feature of his profession.

The lesson of his editorial career is a lesson not for America only. Among the dangers that beset democratic communities, none are greater than the efforts of wealth to control not only electors and legislators, but also the organs of public opinion, and the disposition of statesmen and journalists to defer to and flatter the majority,

adopting the sentiment dominant at the moment, and telling the people that its voice is the voice of God.

Godkin was not only inaccessible to the lures of wealth, — the same may happily be still said of many of his craft brethren, — he was just as little accessible to the fear of popular displeasure. Nothing more incensed him than to see a statesman or an editor with his “ear to the ground” (to use an American phrase), seeking to catch the sound of the coming crowd. To him, the less popular a view was, so much the more did it need to be well weighed and, if approved, to be strenuously and incessantly preached.

Democracies will always have demagogues ready to feed their vanity and stir their passions and exaggerate the feeling of the moment. What they need is men who will swim against the stream, will tell them their faults, will urge an argument all the more forcibly because it is unwelcome. Such an one was Edwin Godkin. Since the death of Abraham Lincoln, America has been generally more influenced by her writers, preachers, and thinkers than by her statesmen. In the list of those who have during the last forty years influenced her for good and helped by their pens to make her history, a list illustrated by such names as those of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Phillips Brooks and James Russell Lowell, his name will find its place and receive its well-earned meed of honor.

THE PERSONAL EQUATION IN JOURNALISM¹

By HENRY WATTERSON



THE daily newspaper, under modern conditions, embraces two parts very nearly separate and distinct in their requirements — the journalistic and the commercial.

The aptitude for producing a commodity is one thing, and the aptitude for putting this commodity on the market is quite another thing. The difference is not less marked in newspaper making than in other pursuits. The framing and execution of contracts for advertising, for printing paper and ink, linotyping and presswork; the handling of money and credits; the organization of the telegraphic service and postal service; the supervision of machinery — in short, the providing of the vehicle and the power that turns its wheels — is the work of a single mind, and usually it is engrossing work. It demands special talent and ceaseless activity and attention all day long, and every day in the year. Except it be sufficient, considerable success is out of the question. Sometimes its sufficiency is able to float an indifferent product. Without it the best product is likely to languish.

The making of the newspaper, that is, the collating of the news and its consistent and uniform distribution and arrangement, the representation of the mood and tense of the time, a certain continuity, more or less, of thought and purpose — the popularization of the commodity —

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call for energies and capacities of another sort. The editor of the morning newspaper turns night into day. When others sleep he must be awake and astir. His is the only vocation where versatility is not a hindrance or a diversion; where the conventional is not imposed upon his personality. He should be many-sided, and he is often most engaging when he seems least heedful of rule.

Yet nowhere is ready and sound discretion in greater or more constant need. The editor must never lose his head. Sure, no less than prompt, judgment is required at every turning. It is his business to think for everybody. Each subordinate must be so drilled and fitted to his place as to become in a sense the replica of his chief. And, even then, when at noontime he goes carefully over the work of the night before, he will be fortunate if he finds that all has gone as he planned it, or could wish it. So in a well-ordered newspaper office, when at midnight wires are flashing and feet are hurrying, and to the on-looking stranger chaos seems to reign, the directing mind and hand have their firm grip upon the tiller ropes, which extend from the editorial room to the composing room, from the composing room to the pressroom, and from the pressroom to the breakfast table.

Personal journalism had its origin in the crude requirements of the primitive newspaper. An editor, a printer, and a printer's devil, were all-sufficient. For half a century after the birth of the daily newspaper in America, one man did everything which fell under the head of editorial work. The army of reporters, telegraphers, and writers, duly officered and classified, which has come to occupy the larger field, was undreamed of by the pioneers of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

Individual ownership was the rule. Little money was embarked. Commonly, it was "So-and-So's paper."

While the stories of private war, of pistols and coffee, have been exaggerated, the early editors were much beset; were held to strict accountability for what appeared in their columns; sometimes had to take their lives in their hands. In certain regions the duello flourished — one might say became the fashion. Up to the War of Secession, the instance of an editor who had not had a personal encounter, indeed, many encounters, was a rare one. Not a few editors acquired celebrity as “crack shots,” gaining more reputation by their guns than by their pens.

The good old times, when it was thought that a man who had failed at all else could still keep a hotel and edit a newspaper, have passed away. They are gone forever. If a gentleman kills his man nowadays, even in honest and fair fight, they call it murder. Editors have actually to be educated to their work, and to work for their living. The soul of Bombastes has departed, and journalism is no longer irradiated and advertised by the flash of arms.

We are wont to hear of the superior integrity of those days. There will always be in direct accountability a certain sense of obligation lacking to the anonymous and impersonal. Most men will think twice before they commit their thoughts to print where their names are affixed. Ambition and vanity, as well as discretion, play a restraining part here; they play it even though there be no provocation to danger. Yet, seeing that somebody must be somewhere back of the pen, the result would appear still to be referable to private character.

Most of the personal journalists were in alliance with the contemporary politicians; all of them were the slaves of party. Many of them were without convictions, holding to the measures of the time the relation held by the play actors to the parts that come to them on the stage.

The new school of journalism, sometimes called imper-

sonal and taking its lead from the countingroom, which generally prevails, promises to become universal in spite of an individualist here and there uniting salient characteristics to controlling ownership — a union which in the first place created the personal journalism of other days.

Here, however, the absence of personality is more apparent than real. Control must be lodged somewhere. Whether it be upstairs, or downstairs, it is bound to be — if successful — both single-minded and arbitrary, the embodiment of the inspiration and the will of one man; the expression made to fit the changed conditions which have impressed themselves upon the writing and the speaking of our time.

Eloquence and fancy, oratory and rhetoric, have for the most part given place in our public life to the language of business. More and more do budgets usurp the field of affairs. As fiction has exhausted the situations possible to imaginative writing, so has popular declamation exhausted the resources of figurative speech; and just as the novel seeks other expedients for arousing and holding the interest of its readers, do speakers and publicists, abandoning the florid and artificial, aim at the simple and the lucid, the terse and incisive, the argument the main point, attained, as a rule, in the statement. To this end the countingroom, with its close kinship to the actualities of the world about it, has a definite advantage over the editorial room, as a school of instruction. Nor is there any reason why the head of the countingroom should not be as highly qualified to direct the editorial policies as the financial policies of the newspaper of which, as the agent of a corporation or an estate, he has become the executive; the newspaper thus conducted assuming something of the character of the banking institution and the railway company, being, indeed, in a sense a common carrier. At

least a greater show of stability and respectability, if not a greater sense of responsibility, would be likely to follow such an arrangement, since it would establish a more immediate relation with the community than that embraced by the system which seems to have passed away, a system which was not nearly so accessible, and was, moreover, hedged about by a certain mystery that attaches itself to midnight, to the flare of the footlights and the smell of printers' ink.

If the newspaper manager is to make no distinction between vaudeville and journalism, between the selling of white paper disfigured by printer's ink and the selling of shoes, or sheet music, comment would seem superfluous. I venture to believe that such a manager would nowhere be able long to hold his own against one of an ambition and intelligence better suited to supplying the requirement of the public demand for a vehicle of communication between itself and the world at large. Now and then we see a very well-composed newspaper fail of success because of its editorial character and tone. Now and then we see one succeed, having no editorial character and tone. But the rule is otherwise. The leading dailies everywhere stand for something. They are rarely without aspiration.

My own observation leads me to believe that more is to be charged against the levity and indifference of the average newspaper — perhaps I should say its ignorance and indolence — than against the suppression of important news. As a matter of fact, suppression does not suppress.

The disposition to publish everything, without regard to private feeling or good neighborhood, may be carried to an excess. The newspaper which constitutes itself judge and jury, which condemns in advance of conviction, which, reversing the English rule of law, assumes the

accused guilty instead of innocent — the newspaper, in short, which sets itself up as a public prosecutor — is likely to become a common scold and to arouse its readers out of all proportion to any good achieved by publicity. As in other affairs of life, the sense of decency imposes certain reserves, and also the sense of charity.

The justest complaint which may be laid at the door of the modern newspaper seems to me its invasion of the home, and the conversion of its reporters into detectives. Pretending to be the defender of liberty, it too often is the assailant of private right. Each daily issue should indeed aim to be the history of yesterday, but it should be clean as well as truthful; and as we seek in our usual walks and ways to avoid that which is nasty and ghastly, so should we, in the narration of scandal and crime, guard equally against exaggeration and pruriency, nor be ashamed to suppress that which may be too vile to tell.

Disinterestedness, unselfish devotion to the public interest, is the soul of true journalism as of true statesmanship; and this is as likely to proceed from the countingroom as from the editorial room; only, the business manager must be a journalist.

The journalism of Paris is personal, the journalism of London is impersonal, — that is to say, the one illustrates the self-exploiting, individualized star system, the other, the more sedate and orderly, yet not less responsible commercial system; and it must be allowed that, in both dignity and usefulness, the English is to be preferred to the French journalism. It is true that English publishers are sometimes elevated to the peerage. But this is nowise worse than French and American editors becoming candidates for office. In either case, the public and the press are losers in the matter of the service rendered, because

journalism and office are so antipathetic that their union must be destructive to both.

The upright man of business, circumspect in his everyday behavior and jealous of his commercial honor, needs only to be educated in the newspaper business to bring to it the characteristic virtues which shine and prosper in the more ambitious professional and business pursuits. The successful man in the centers of activity is usually a worldly-wise and prepossessing person. Other things being equal, success of the higher order inclines to those qualities of head and heart, of breeding and education and association, which go to the making of what we call a gentleman. The element of charm, scarcely less than the elements of energy, integrity, and penetration, is a prime ingredient. Add breadth and foresight, and we have the greater result of fortune and fame.

All these essentials to preëminent manhood must be fulfilled by the newspaper which aspires to preëminence. And there is no reason why this may not spring from the business end, why they may not exist and flourish there, exhaling their perfume into every department; in short, why they may not tempt ambition. The newspapers, as Hamlet observes of the players, are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time. It were indeed better to have a bad epitaph when you die than their ill-report while you live, even from those of the baser sort; how much more from a press having the confidence and respect — and yet more than these, the affection — of the community? Hence it is that special college training is beginning to be thought of, and occasionally tried; and, while this is subject to very serious disadvantage on the experimental side, its ethical value may in the long run find some way to give it practical application and to make it permanent as an arm of the newspaper service. Assuredly, char-

acter is an asset, and nowhere does it pay surer and larger dividends than in the newspaper business.

We are passing through a period of transition. The old system of personal journalism having gone out, and the new system of countingroom journalism having not quite reached a full realization of itself, the editorial function seems to have fallen into a lean and slippered state, the matters of tone and style honored rather in the breach than in the observance. Too many ill-trained, uneducated lads have graduated out of the city editor's room by sheer force of audacity and enterprise into the more important posts. Too often the countingroom takes no supervision of the editorial room beyond the immediate selling value of the paper the latter turns out. Things upstairs are left at loose ends. There are examples of opportunities lost through absentee landlordism.

These conditions, however, are ephemeral. They will yield before the progressive requirements of a process of popular evolution which is steadily lifting the masses out of the slough of degeneracy and ignorance. The dime novel has not the vogue it once had. Neither has the party organ. Readers will not rest forever content under the impositions of fake or colored news; of misleading headlines; of false alarms and slovenly writing. Already they begin to discriminate, and more and clearly they will learn to discriminate, between the meretricious and the true.

The competition in sensationalism, to which we owe the yellow press, as it is called, will become a competition in cleanliness and accuracy. The countingroom, which is next to the people and carries the purse, will see that decency pays, that good sense and good faith are good investments, and it will look closer to the personal character and the moral product of the editorial room, requir-

ing better equipment and more elevated standards. There will never again be a Greeley, or a Raymond, or a Dana, playing the rôle of "star" and personally exploited by everything appearing in journals which seemed to exist mainly to glorify them. Each was in his way a man of superior attainments. Each thought himself an unselfish servant of the public. Yet each had his limitations — his ambitions and prejudices, his likes and dislikes, intensified and amplified by the habit of personalism, often unconscious. And, this personal element eliminated, why may not the impersonal head of the coming newspaper — proud of his profession, and satisfied with the results of its ministration — render a yet better account to God and the people in unselfish devotion to the common interest?

LITERATURE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

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| Familiar Studies of Men and Books
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON | The English Novel
SIDNEY LANIER |
| Short Studies in Literature
HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE | Journalism and Literature
HENRY W. BOYNTON |
| Studies in Literature
JOHN MORLEY | American Literature
EDWIN PERCY WHIPPLE |
| Letters on Literature
ANDREW LANG | Studies in History and Letters
THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON |
| Among My Books
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL | Poets of America
EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN |
| Partial Portraits
HENRY JAMES | Words and Their Uses
RICHARD GRANT WHITE |
| My Literary Passions
WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS | Yesterdays with Authors
JAMES T. FIELDS |
| Magazine Writing and the New Literature
HENRY M. ALDEN | Critical Essays
T. B. MACAULAY |
| The Historical Novel and Other Essays
BRANDER MATTHEWS | A Study of Prose Fiction
BLISS PERRY |
| Makers of American Literature
EDWIN W. BOWEN | The Art of Authorship
GEORGE BAINTON |
| The Appreciation of Literature
GEORGE E. WOODBERRY | A Literary History of America
BARRETT WENDELL |
| Forces in Fiction
RICHARD BURTON | Talks on Writing English
ARLO BATES |
| Views and Reviews
W. E. HENLEY | History of English Literature
H. A. TAINÉ |

