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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A JOURNALIST'S NOTE-BOOK ***

A JOURNALISTS NOTE-BOOK

By Frank Frankfort Moore

Author of “Forbid the Banns,” “Daireen,’” “A Gray Eye or So,” etc.

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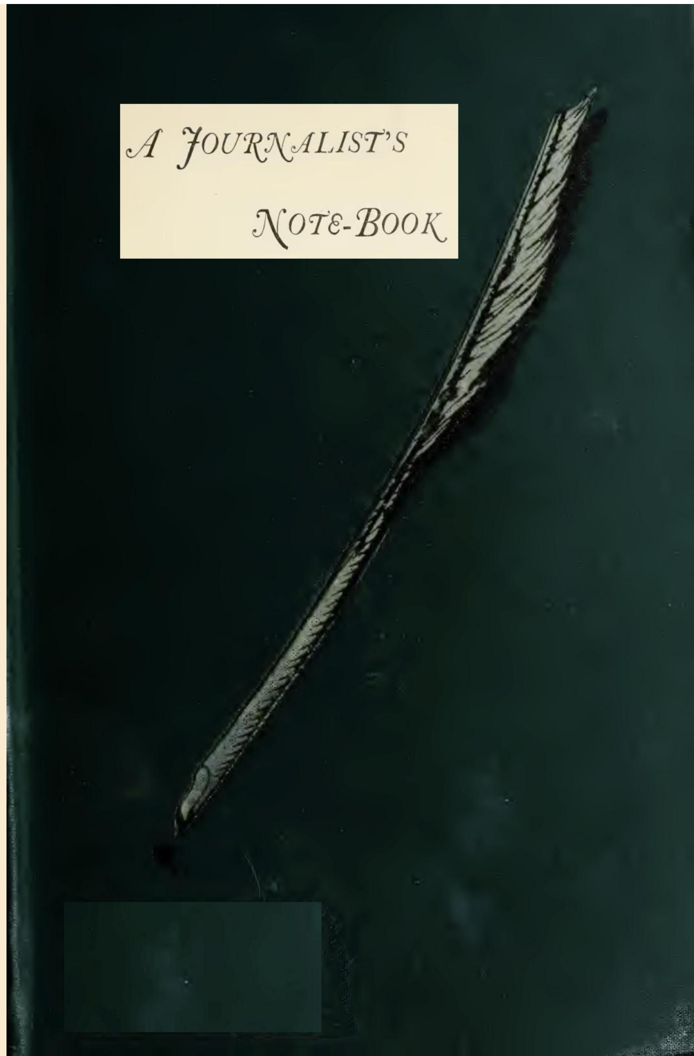
1894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By

FRANK FRANKFORT MOORE

Author of
"I Forbid the Banns," "Daireen,"
"A Gray Eye or So," etc.

"Creta et carbone notandum"

London 1894
HUTCHINSON AND CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW

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CHAPTER I.—PAST AND PRESENT.

Odd lots of journalism—Respectability and its relation to journalism—The abuse of the journal—The laudation of the journalist—Abuse the consequence of popularity—Popularity the consequence of abuse—Drain-work and grey hairs—“Don’t neglect your reading for the sake of reviewing”—Reading for pleasure or to criticise—Literature—Deterioration—The Civil List Pension—In exchange for a soul.

SOME years ago there was an auction of wine at a country-house in Scotland, the late owner of which had taken pains to gain a reputation for judgment in the matter of wine-selecting. He had all his life been nearly as intemperate as a temperance orator in his denunciation of whisky as a drink, hoping to inculcate a taste for vintage clarets upon the Scots; but he that tells the tale—it is not a new one—says that the man died without seriously jeopardizing the popularity of the native manufacture. The wines that he had laid down brought good prices, however; but, at the close of the sale, several odd lots were “put up,” and all were bought by a local publican. A gentleman who had been present called upon the publican a few days afterwards, and found him engaged in mixing into one huge cask all the “lots” that he had bought—Larose, Johannisberg, Château Coutet.

“Hallo,” said the visitor, “what’s this mixture going to be, Rabbie?”

“Weel, sir,” said the publican, looking with one eye into the cask and mechanically giving the contents a stir with a bottle of Sauterne which he had just uncorked—“Weel, sir, I think it should be port, but I’m no sure.”

These odd lots of journalistic experiences and recollections may be considered a book, “but I’m no sure.”

After all, “a book’s a book although”—it’s written by a journalist. Nearly every writer of books nowadays becomes a journalist when he has written a sufficient number. He is usually encouraged in this direction by his publishers.

“You’re a literary man, are you not?” a stranger said to a friend of mine.

“On the contrary, I’m a journalist,” was the reply.

“Oh, I beg your pardon, I’m sure,” said the inquirer, detecting a certain indignant note in the disclaimer. “I beg your pardon. What a fool I was to ask you such a question!”

“I hope he wasn’t hurt,” he added in an anxious voice when we were alone. “It was a foolish question; I might have known that he was a journalist, *he looked so respectable*.”

We are all respectable nowadays. We belong to a recognised profession. We may pronounce our opinions on all questions of art, taste, religion, morals, and even finance, with some degree of diffidence: we are at present merely practising our scales, so to speak, upon our various “organs,” but there is every reason to believe that confidence will come in due time. Are not our ranks being recruited from Oxford? Some years ago men drifted into journalism; now it is looked on as a vocation. Journalism is taken seriously. In a word, we are respectable. Have we not been entertained by the Lord Mayor of London? Have we not entertained Monsieur Emile Zola?

People have ceased to abuse us as they once did with great freedom: they merely abuse the journals which support us. This is a healthy sign; for it may be taken for granted that people will invariably abuse the paper for which they subscribe. They do not seem to feel that they get the worth of their subscription unless they do so. It is the same principle that causes people to sneer at a dinner at which they have been entertained. If we are not permitted to abuse our host, whom may we abuse? The one thing that a man abuses more than to-day’s paper is the negligence of the boy who omits to deliver it some morning. Only in one town where I lived did I find that a newspaper was popular. (It was not the one for which I wrote.) The fathers and mothers taught their children to pray, “God bless papa, mamma, and the editor of the *Clackmannan Standard*.”

I met that editor some years afterwards. He celebrated a sort of impromptu Commination Service against the people amongst whom he had lived. They had never paid for their subscriptions or their advertisements, and they had thus lowered the *Standard* of Clackmannan and of the editor’s confidence in his fellow-men.

The only newspaper that is in a hopeless condition is the one which is neither blessed at all nor cursed at all. Such a newspaper appeals to no section of the public. It has always seemed to me a matter of question whether a man is better satisfied with a paper that reflects (so far as it is possible for a paper to do so) his own views, or with one that reflects the views that he most abhors. I am inclined to believe that a man is in a

better humour with those of his fellow-men whom he has thoroughly abused, than with the one whom he greets every morning on the top of his omnibus.

It is quite a simple matter to abuse a newspaper into popularity. One of the Georges whose biographies have been so pleasantly and touchingly written by Thackeray and Mr. Justin M'Carthy, conferred a lasting popularity upon the man whom he told to get out of his way or he would kick him out of it.

The moral of this is, that to be insulted by a monarch confers a greater distinction upon a man living in Clapham or even Brixton than to be treated courteously by a greengrocer.

But though people continue to abuse the paper for which they subscribe, and for which they are usually some year or two in arrears in the matter of payment, still it appears to me that the public are slowly beginning to comprehend that newspapers are written (mostly) by journalists. Until recently there was, I think, a notion that journalists sat round a bar-parlour telling stories and drinking whisky and water while the newspapers were being produced. The fact is, that most of the surviving anecdotes of the journalists of a past generation smell of the bar-parlour. The practical jesters of the fifties and the punsters of the roaring forties were tap-room journalists. They died hard. The journalists of to-day do not even smile at those brilliant sallies—bequeathed by a past generation—about wearing frock-coats and evening dress, about writing notices of plays without stirring from the taproom, about the mixing up of criticisms of books with police-court reports. Such were the humours of journalism thirty or forty years ago. We have formed different ideas as to the elements of humour in these days. Whatever we may leave undone it is not our legitimate work.

It was when journalism was in a state of transition that a youth, waiting on a railway platform, was addressed by a stranger (one of those men who endeavour to make religious zeal a cloak for impertinence)—"My dear young friend, are you a Christian?"

"No," said the youth, "I'm a reporter on the *Camberwell Chronicle*."

On the other hand, it was a very modern journalist whose room was invaded by a number of pretty little girls one day, just to keep him company and chat with him for an hour or so, as it was the day his paper—a weekly one—went to press. In order to get rid of them, he presented each of them with a copy of a little book which he had just published, writing on the flyleaf, "With the author's compliments." Just as the girls were going away, one of them spied a neatly bound Oxford Bible that was lying on the desk for editorial notice.

"I should so much like that," she cried, pouncing upon it.

"Then you shall have it, my dear, if you clear off immediately," said the editor; and, turning up the flyleaf, he wrote hastily on it, "*With the author's compliments*."

Yes, he was a modern journalist, and took a reasonable view of the authoritative nature of his calling.

Our position is, I affirm, becoming recognised by the world; but now and again I am made to feel that such recognition does not invariably extend to all the members of our profession. Some years ago I was getting my hair cut in Regent Street, and, as usual, the practitioner remarked in a friendly way that I was getting very grey.

"Yes," I said, "I've been getting a grey hair or so for some time. I don't know how it is. I'm not much over thirty." (I repeat that the incident occurred some years ago.)

"No, sir, you're not what might be called old," said he indulgently. "Maybe you're doing some brain-work?" he suggested, after a pause.

"Brain-work?" said I. "Oh no! I work for a daily paper, and usually write a column of leading articles every night. I produce a book a year, and a play every now and again. But brain-work—oh no!"

"Oh, in that case, sir, it must be due to something else. Maybe you drink a bit, sir."

I did not buy the bottle which he offered me at four-and-nine. I left the shop dissatisfied.

This is why I hesitate to affirm that modern journalism is wholly understanded of the people.

But for that matter it is not wholly understanded of the people who might be expected to know something about it. The proprietor of a newspaper on which I worked some years ago made use of me one day to translate a few lines of Greek which appeared on the back of an old print in his possession. My powers amazed him. The lines were from an obscure and little-known poem called the "Odyssey."

"You must read a great deal, my boy," said he.

I shook my head.

"The fact is," said I, "I've lately had so much reviewing to do that I haven't been able to read a single book."

"That's too hard on you," said he gravely. "Get some of the others of the staff to help you. You mustn't neglect your reading for the sake of reviewing."

I didn't.

Upon another occasion the son of this gentleman left a message for me that he had taken a three-volume novel, the name of which he had forgotten, from a parcel of books that had arrived the previous day, but that he would like a review of it to appear the next morning, as his wife said it was a capital story.

He was quite annoyed when the review did not appear.

But there are, I have reason to know, many people who have got no more modern ideas respecting that branch of journalism known as reviewing.

"Are you reading that book for pleasure or to criticise it?" I was asked not so long ago by a young woman who ought to have known better. "Oh, I forgot," she added, before I could think of anything sharp to say by way of reply—"I forgot: if you meant to review it you wouldn't read it."

I thought of the sharp reply two days later.

So it is, I say, that some of the people who read what we write from day to day, have still got only the vaguest notions of how our work is turned out.

Long ago I used to wish that the reviewers would only read the books I wrote before criticising them; but now my dearest wish is that they will review them (favourably) without reading them.

I heard some time ago of a Scot who, full of that brave sturdy spirit of self-reliance which is the precious endowment of the race of North Britons, came up to London to fight his way in the ranks of literature. The grand inflexible independence of the man asserted itself with such obstinacy that he was granted a Civil List Pension; and while in receipt of this form of out-door relief for poets who cannot sell their poetry, he began a series of attacks upon literature as a trade, and gave to the world an autobiography in a sentence, by declaring that literature and deterioration go hand in hand.

This was surely a very nasty thing for the sturdy Scotchman, who had attained to the honourable independence of the national almshouse, to say, just as people were beginning to look on literature as a profession.

But then he sat down and forthwith reeled off a string of doggerel verses, headed "The Dismal Throng." In this fourth-form satirical jingle he abused some of the ablest of modern literary men for taking a pessimistic view of life. Now, who on earth can blame literary men for feeling a trifle dismal if what the independent pensioner says is true, and success in literature can only be obtained in exchange for a soul? The man who takes the most pessimistic view of the profession of literature should be the last to sneer at a literary man looking sadly on life.

CHAPTER II.—THE OLD SCHOOL.

The frock-coat and muffler journalist—A doomed race—One of the specimens—A masterpiece—-"Stilt your friend"—A jaunty emigrant—A thirsty knave—His one rival—Three crops—His destination—"The New Grub Street"—A courteous friend—Free lodgings—The foreign guest—Outside the hall door—The youth who found things—His ring—His watch—The fruits of modesty—Not to be imitated—A question for Sherlock Holmes—The liberty of the press—Deadheads.

I HAVE come in contact with many journalists of the old school—the frock-coat and muffler type. The first of the class whom I met was for a few months a reporter on a newspaper in Ireland with which I was connected. He had at one time been a soldier, and had deserted. I tried, though I was only a boy, to get some information from him that I might use afterwards, for I recognised his value as the representative of a race that was, I felt, certain to become extinct. I talked to him as I talked—with the aid of an interpreter—to a Botjesman in the South African veldt: I wanted to learn something about the habits of a doomed type. I succeeded in some measure.

The result of my researches into the nature of both savages was to convince me that they were born liars. The reporter carried a pair of stage whiskers and a beard with him when sent to do any work in a country district; the fact being that the members of the Royal Irish Constabulary in the country barracks are the most earnest students of the paper known as *Hue and Cry*, and the man said that, as his description appeared in every number of that organ, he should most certainly be identified by a smart country policeman if he did not wear a disguise. Years afterwards I got a letter from him from one of her Majesty's gaols. He wanted the loan of some money and the gift of a hat.

This man wrote shorthand admirably, and an excellent newspaper English.

Another specimen of the race had actually attained to the dizzy eminence of editor of a fourth-class newspaper in a town of one hundred thousand inhabitants. In those days Mr. Craven Robertson was the provincial representative of Captain Hawtree in *Caste*, and upon the Captain Hawtree of Craven Robertson this "journalist" founded his style. He wore an eyeglass, a moustache with waxed ends, and a frock coat very carefully brushed. His hair was thin on the top—but he made the most of it. He was the sort of man whom one occasionally meets on the Promenade at Nice, wearing a number of orders on the breast of his coat—the order of Il Bacio di St. Judæus, the scarlet riband of Ste. Rahab di Jericho, the Brazen Lyre of SS. Ananias and Sapphira. He was the sort of man whom one styles "Chevalier" by instinct. He was the most plausible knave in the world, though how people allowed him to cheat them was a mystery to me. His masterpiece of impudence I have always considered to be a letter which he wrote to a brother-editor, from whom he had

borrowed a sum of money, to be repaid on the first of the next month. When the appointed day came he chanced to meet this editor-creditor in the street, and asking him, with a smile as if he had been on the lookout for him, to step into the nearest shop, he called for a sheet of paper and a pen, and immediately wrote an order to the cashier of his paper to pay Mr. G. the sum of five pounds.

"There you are, my dear sir," said he. "Just send a clerk round to our office and hand that to the cashier. Meantime accept my hearty thanks for the accommodation."

Mr. G. lost no time in presenting the order; but, as might have been expected, it was dishonoured by the cashier, who declared that the editor was already eight months in advance in drawing his salary. Mr. G. hastened back to his own office and forthwith wrote a letter of furious upbraidings, in which I have good reason to suspect he expressed his views of the conduct of his debtor, and threatened to "take proceedings," as the grammar of the law has it, for the recovery of his money.

The next day Mr. G. received back his own letter unopened, but inside the cover that enclosed it to him was the following:—

"My dear Mr. G.,—

"You may perhaps be surprised to receive your letter with the seal unbroken, but when you come to reflect calmly over the unfortunate incident of your sending it to me, I am sure that you will no longer be surprised. I am persuaded that you wrote it to me on the impulse of the moment, otherwise it would not contain the strong language which, I think I may assume, constitutes the major portion of its contents. Knowing your natural kindness of disposition, and feeling assured that in after years the consciousness of having written such a letter to me would cause you many a pang in your secret moments, I am anxious that you should be spared much self-reproach, and consequently return your letter unopened. You will, I am certain, perceive that in adopting this course I am acting for the best. Do not follow the next impulse of your heart and ask my forgiveness. I have really nothing to forgive, not having read your letter.

"With kindest regards, I remain

"Still your friend

"A. Swinne Dell."

If this transaction does not represent the high-water mark of knavery—if it does not show something akin to genius in an art that has many exponents, I scarcely know where one should look for evidence in this direction.

Five years after the disappearance of Mr. A. Swinne Dell from the scene of this *coup* of his, I caught a glimpse of him among the steerage passengers aboard a steamer that called at Madeira when I was spending a holiday at that lovely island. His frock-coat was giving signs (about the collar) of wear, and also (under the arms) of tear. I could not see his boots, but I felt sure that they were down at the heel. Still, he held his head jauntily as he pointed out to a fellow-passenger the natural charms of the landscape above Funchal.

Another of the old school who pursued a career of knavery by the light of the sacred lamp of journalism was, I regret to say, an Irishman. His powers of absorbing drink were practically unlimited. I never knew but one rival to him in this way, and that was when I was in South Africa. We had left our waggon, and were crouching in most uncomfortable postures behind a mighty cactus on the bank of a river, waiting for the chance of potting a gemsbok that might come to drink. Instead of the graceful gemsbok there came down to the water a huge hippopotamus. He had clearly been having a good time among the native mealies, and had come for some liquid refreshment before returning to his feast. He did not plunge into the water, but simply put his head down to it and began to drink. After five minutes or so we noticed an appreciable fall in the river. After a quarter of an hour great rocks in the river-bed began to be disclosed. At the end of twenty minutes the broad stream had dwindled away to a mere trickle of water among the stones. At the end of half an hour we began to think that he had had as much as was good for him—we wanted a kettleful of water for our tea—so I put an elephant cartridge ('577) into my rifle and aimed at the brute's eye. He lifted up his head out of pure curiosity, and perceiving that men with rifles were handy, slouched off, grumbling like a professional agitator on being turned out of a public house.

That hippopotamus was the only rival I ever knew to the old-school journalist whose ways I can recall—only he was never known to taste water. Like the man in one of H. J. Byron's plays, he could absorb any "given"—I use the word advisedly—any given quantity of liquor.

"Are you ever sober, my man?" I asked of him one day.

"I'm sober three times a day," he replied huskily. "I'm sober now. This is one of the times," he added mournfully.

"You were blind drunk this morning—I can swear to that," said I.

"Oh, yes," he replied promptly. "But what'se good of raking up the past, sir? Let the dead past burits dead." He took a step or two toward the door, and then returned. He carefully brushed a speck of dust off the rim of his hat. All such men wear the tallest of silk hats, and seem to feel that they would be scandalised by the appearance of a speck of dust on the nap. "D'ye know that I can take three crops out of myself in the day?" he inquired blandly.

"Three crops?"

"Three crops—I said so, of drunk. I rise in morn'n,—drunk before twelve; sleep it off by two, and drunk again by five; sleep it off by eight—do my work and go to bed drunk at two a.m. You haven't such a thing as half-a-crown about you, sir? I left my purse on the grand piano before I came out."

I was under the impression that this particular man was dead years ago; and I was thus greatly surprised when, on jumping on a tramcar in a manufacturing town in Yorkshire quite recently, I recognised my old friend in a man who had just awakened in a corner, and was endeavouring to attract the attention of the conductor. When, after much incipient whistling and waving of his arms, he succeeded in drawing the conductor to his side, he inquired if the car was anywhere near the Wilfrid Lawson Temperance Hotel.

"I'll let you down when we come to it," said the conductor.

“Do,” said the other in his old husky tones.

“Lemme down at the Wellfed Laws Tenpence Otell.”

In another minute he was fast asleep as before.

At present no penal consequences follow any one who calls himself a literary man. It is taken for granted, I suppose, that the crime brings its own punishment.

One of the most depressing books that any one straying through the King’s Highway of literature could read is Mr. George Gissing’s “The New Grub Street.” What makes it all the more depressing is the fact of its carrying conviction with it to all readers. Every one must feel that the squalor described in this book has a real existence. The only consolation that any one engaged in a branch of literature can have on reading “The New Grub Street,” comes from the reflection that not one of the poor wretches described in its pages had the least aptitude for the business.

In a town of moderate size in which I lived, there were forty men and women who described themselves for directory purposes as “novelists.” Not one of them had ever published a volume; but still they all believed themselves to be novelists. There are thousands of men who call themselves journalists even now, but who are utterly incapable of writing a decent “par.” I have known many such men. The most incompetent invariably become dissatisfied with life in the provinces, and hurry off to London, having previously borrowed their train fare. I constantly stumble upon provincial failures in London. Sometimes on the Embankment I literally stumble upon them, for I have found them lying in shady nooks there trying to forget the world’s neglect in sleep.

Why on earth such men take to journalism has always been a mystery to me. If they had the least aptitude for it they would be earning money by journalism instead of trying to borrow half-crowns as journalists.

I knew of one who, several years ago, migrated to London. For a long time I heard nothing about him; but one night a friend of mine mentioned his name, and asked me if I had ever known him.

“The fact is,” said he, “I had rather a curious experience of him a few months ago.”

“You were by no means an exception to the general run of people who have ever come in contact with him,” said I. “What was your experience?”

“Well,” replied he, “I came across him casually one night, and as he seemed inclined to walk in my direction, I asked him if he would mind coming on to my lodgings to have a bottle of beer. He found that his engagements for the night permitted of his doing so, and we strolled on together. I found that there was supper enough for two adults in the locker, and our friend found that his engagements permitted of his taking a share in the humble repast. He took fully his share of the beer, and then I offered him a pipe, and stirred up the fire.

“We talked until two o’clock in the morning, and, as he told me he lived about five miles away—he didn’t seem quite sure whether it was at Hornsey or Clapham—I said he could not do better than occupy a spare truckle that was in my bedroom. He said he thought that I was right, and we retired. We breakfasted together in the morning, and then we walked into Fleet Street, where we parted. That night he overtook me on my way to my lodgings, and in the friendliest manner possible accompanied me thither. Here the programme of the night before was repeated. The third night I quite expected to be overtaken by him; but I was mistaken. I was not overtaken by him: he was sitting in my lodgings waiting for me. He gave me a most cordial welcome—I will say that for him. The night following I had a sort of instinct that I should find him waiting for me again in my sitting-room. Once more I was mistaken. He was not waiting for me; he had already eaten his supper—*my supper*, and had gone to bed—*my bed*; but with his usual thoughtfulness, he had left a short note for me upbraiding me, but in a genial and quite a gentlemanly way, for staying out so late, and begging me not to awake him, as he was very tired, and—also genially—inquiring if it was absolutely necessary for me to make such a row in my bath in the mornings. He was a light sleeper, he said, and a little noise disturbed him. I did not awake him; but the next morning I was distinctly cool towards him. I remarked that I thought it unlikely that I should be at home that night. He begged of me not to allow him to interfere with my plans. When I returned that night, I found him sitting at my table playing cards with a bleareyed foreigner, whom he courteously introduced as his friend Herr Vanderbosch or something.

“‘Draw your chair to the table, old chap, and join in with us. I’ll see that you get something to drink in a minute,’ said he.

“I thanked him, but remarked that I had a conscientious objection to all games of cards.

“‘Soh?’ said the foreigner. ‘Das is yust var yo makes ze mistook. Ze game of ze gards it is grand—soblime!’

“He added a few well-chosen sentences about sturm und drang or something; and in about five minutes I found myself getting a complete slanging for my narrow-minded prejudices, and for my attempt to curtail the innocent recreation of others. I will say this for our friend, however: he never for a moment allowed our little difference on what was after all a purely academic question, to interfere with his display of hospitality to myself and Herr Vanderbosch. He filled our tumblers, and was lavish with the tobacco jar. When I rose to go to bed he called me aside, and said he had made arrangements for me to sleep in the truckle for the night, in order to admit of his occupying my bed with Herr Vanderbosch—the poor devil, he explained to me with many deprecating nods, had not, he feared, any place to sleep that night. But at this point I turned. I assured him that I was constitutionally unfitted for sleeping in a truckle, or, in fact, in any bed but my own.

“‘All right,’ he cried in a huff, ‘I’ll sleep in the truckle, and I’ll make up a good fire for him to sleep before on the sofa.’

“Well, we all breakfasted together, and the next night the two gentlemen appeared once more at the door

of the house. They were walking in as usual, when the landlady asked them where they were going.

"'Why, upstairs, to be sure,' said our friend. "'Oh no!' said the landlady, 'you're not doing that. Mr. Plantagenet has left his rooms and gone to the country for a month—maybe two—and the rooms is let to another gent.' "Well, our friend swore that he had been treated infernally, and Herr Vanderbosch alluded to me as a schweinhund—I heard him. I fancy the word must be a term of considerable opprobrium in the German tongue. Anyhow, they didn't get past the landlady,—she takes a large size in doors,—and after a while our friend's menaces dwindled down to a request to be permitted to remove his luggage.

"'I'll bring it down to you,' said the landlady; and she shut the hall door very gently, leaving them on the step outside. When she brought down the luggage—it consisted of three paper collars and one cuff with a fine carbuncle stud in it—they were gone.

"Our friend told some one the other day of the disgraceful way I had treated him and his foreign associate. But he says he would not have minded so much if the landlady had not shut the door so gently."

Another remarkable pressman with whom I came in contact several years ago was a member of the reporting staff of an Irish newspaper. One day I noticed him wearing what appeared to me to be an extremely fine ring. It was set with an antique polished intaglio surrounded by diamonds. The ring was probably unique, and would be worth perhaps £70 to a collector. I have seen very inferior mediaeval intaglios sold for that sum. I examined the diamonds with a lens, and then inquired of the youth where he had bought it, and if he was anything of a collector.

"I picked it up going home one wet night," he replied. "I advertised for the owner in all the papers for a week—it cost me thirty shillings in that way,—but no one ever came forward to claim it. I would gladly have sold the thing for thirty shillings at the end of a month; but then I found that it was worth close upon a hundred pounds."

"You're the luckiest chap I ever met," said I.

In the course of a short time another of the reporters asked me if I had ever seen the watch that the same youth habitually wore. I replied that I had never seen it, but should like to do so. The same night I was in the reporters' room, when the one who had mentioned the watch to me asked the wearer of the article if ten o'clock had yet struck. The youth forthwith drew out of his pocket one of the most charming little watches I ever saw. The back was Italian enamel on gold, both outside and within, and the outer case was bordered with forty-five rubies. A black pearl about the size of a pea was at the bow, right round the edge of the case were diamonds, and in the rim for the glass were twenty-five rubies and four stones which I fancied at a casual glance were pale sapphires. I examined these stones with my magnifier, and I thought I should have fainted when I found that they were blue diamonds.

"Le Temps est pour l'Homme,
L'Eternité est pour l'Amour"

was the inscription which I managed to make out on the dial.

I handed back the watch to the reporter—his salary was £120 per annum—and inquired if he had found this article also.

"Yes," he said, with a laugh. "I picked that up, curiously enough, during a trip that I once made to the Scilly Islands. I advertised it in the Plymouth papers the next day, for I believed it to have been dropped by some wealthy tourist; but I got no applicant for it; and then I came to the conclusion that the watch had been among the treasures of some of the descendants of the smugglers and wreckers of the old days. It keeps good enough time now, though a watchmaker valued the works at five shillings."

"Any time you want a hundred pounds—a hundred and fifty pounds," said I, "don't hesitate to bring that watch to me. Have you found many other articles in the course of your life?" I asked, as I was leaving the room.

"Lots," he replied. "When I was in Liverpool I lived about two miles from my office, and through getting into a habit of keeping my eyes on the ground, I used to come across something almost every week. Unfortunately, most of my finds were claimed by the owners."

"You have no reason to complain," said I.

I was set thinking if there might not be the potentialities of wealth in the art of walking with one's eyes modestly directed to the ground; and for three nights I was actually idiot enough to walk home from my office with looks, not "commercing with the skies," but—it was purely a question of commerce—with the pavements. The first night I nearly transfixed a policeman with my umbrella, for the rain was coming down in torrents; the second, I got my hat knocked into the mud by coming in contact with the branch of a tree overhanging the railings of a square, and the third I received the impact of a large-boned tipsy man, who was, as the idiom of the country has it, trying to walk on both sides of the road at once.

I held up my head in future.

The reporter left the newspaper in the course of a few months, and I never saw him again. But quite recently I was reading Miss Dougall's novel "Beggars All," and when I came upon the account of the reporter who carries out several adroit schemes of burglary, the recollection of the remarkable "finds" of the young man whose ring and watch had excited my envy, flashed across my mind; and I began to wonder if it was possible that he had pursued a similar course to that which Miss Dougall's hero found so profitable. I should like to consult Mr. Sherlock Holmes on this point when he returns from Switzerland—we expect him every day.

At any rate, it is certain that the calling of a reporter would afford many opportunities to a clever burglar,

or even an adroit pickpocket. A reporter can take his walks abroad at any hour of the night without exciting the suspicion of a policeman; or, should such suspicion be aroused, he has only to say “Press,” and he may go anywhere he pleases. The Press rush in where the public dare not tread; and no one need be surprised if some day a professional burglar takes to stenography as an auxiliary to the realisation of his illegitimate aims.

One of the countless St. Peter stories has this privilege of the Press for its subject, and a reporter for its hero. This gentleman was walking jauntily through the gate of him “who keeps the keys,” but was stopped by the stern janitor, who inquired if he had a ticket.

“Press,” said the reporter, trying to pass.

“What do you mean by that? You know you can’t be admitted anywhere without a ticket.”

“I tell you that I belong to the Press; you don’t expect a reporter to pay, do you?”

“Why not? Why shouldn’t you be treated the same as the rest of the people? I can’t make flesh of one and fish of another,” added St. Peter, as if a professional reminiscence had occurred to him.

The reporter suddenly brightened up. “I don’t want exceptional treatment,” said he. “Now that I come to think of it, aren’t they all *deadheads* who come here?”

I fancy that reporter was admitted.

CHAPTER III.—THE EDITOR OF THE PAST.

Proprietary rights—Proprietary wrongs—Exclusive rights—The “leaders” of a party—The fossil editor—The man and the dog and the boar—An unpublished history—The newspaper hoax—A premature obituary notice—The accommodating surgeon—A matter of business—The death of Mr. Robinson—The quid pro quo’.

IT is only within the past few years that the Editor has obtained public recognition as a personality; previously his personality was merged in the proprietor, and when his efforts were successful in keeping a Corporation from making fools of themselves—this is assuming an extreme case of success—or in exposing some attempted fraud that would have ruined thousands of people, he was compelled to accept his reward through the person of the proprietor. The proprietor was made a J.P., and sometimes even became Mayor or Chairman of the Board of Guardians, when the editor succeeded in making the paper a power in the county. Latterly, however, the editors of some provincial journals have been obtaining recognition.

They have been granted the dubious honour of knighthood; and the public have discovered that the brains which have dictated a policy that has influenced the destinies of a Ministry, may be entrusted with the consideration of sewage and main drainage questions on a Town Council, or with the question of the relative degrees of culpability of a man who jumps upon his wife’s face and is fined ten shillings, and the boy who steals a raw turnip and is sent to a reformatory for five years—a period quite insufficient for the adequate digestion of that comestible, which it would appear boys are ready to sacrifice years of their liberty to obtain.

I must say that, with one exception, the proprietors whom I have met were highly competent business men —men whose judgment and public spirit were deserving of that wide recognition which they nearly always obtained from their fellow-citizens. One, and one only, was not precisely of this type. He used to write with a blue pencil across an article some very funny comments.

I have before me at this moment a letter in which he asked me to abbreviate something; and he gave me an example of how to do it by cutting out a letter of the word—he spelt it *abrievate*.

He had a perfect passion for what he called “exclusives.” The most trivial incident—the overturning of a costermonger’s barrow, and the number of the contents sustaining fatal injuries; the blowing off of a clergyman’s hat in the street, with a professional opinion as to the damage done; the breaking of a window in a private house—he regarded as good foundation for an “exclusive”; and indeed it must be said that the information given to the public by the organ of which he was proprietor was rarely ever to be found in a rival paper. At the same time, upon no occasion of his obtaining a really important piece of news did he succeed in keeping it from the others. This annoyed him extremely He was in great demand as chairman of amateur reciting classes—a distinction that was certainly dearly purchased. I never knew of one of these reciting entertainments being refused a full report in his newspaper upon any occasion when he presided. He also aspired to the chairmanship of small political meetings, and once when he found himself in such a position, he said he would sing the audience a song, and he carried out his threat. His song was probably more convincing than his speech would have been. He had a famous story for platform use. It concerned a donkey that he knew when they were both young.

He said it made people laugh, and it surely did. At a public dinner he formulated the plausible theory that to be a good player of golf was to be a gentleman. He was a poor golfer himself.

Now, regarding London editors I have not much to say. I am not personally acquainted with any one of them. But for twelve years I read every political article that appeared in each of the six principal London daily

papers; I also read a report of every speech made in the House of Commons, and of every speech made by a statesman of Cabinet rank outside Parliament; and I am prepared to say that the great majority of these speeches bore the most unmistakable evidence of being—well, not exactly inspired by, but certainly influenced by some leading article. In one word, my experience is that what the newspapers say in the morning the statesmen say in the evening.

Of course Mr. Gladstone must not be included in the statesmen to whom I refer. His inspiration comes from another direction. That is how he succeeds in startling so many people.

The majority of provincial editors include, I have good reason to know, some of the best men in the profession. Only here and there does one meet with a fossil of journalism who is content to write a column of platitudes over a churchwarden pipe and then to go home to sleep.

With only one such did I come in contact recently. He was connected with a newspaper which should have had unbounded influence in its district, but which had absolutely none. The "editor" was accustomed to enter his room about noon, and he left it between seven and eight in the evening, having turned out a column of matter of which he was an earnest reader the next morning. And yet this same newspaper received during the night sometimes twelve columns of telegraphic news and verbatim reports of the chief speeches in Parliament.

The poor old gentleman had never been in London, and never could see why I should be so constantly going to that city. He was under the impression that George Eliot was a man, and he one day asked me what the Royal Academy was. Having learned that it was a place where pictures that richly deserved exposure were hung, he shortly afterwards assumed that the French Academy was a gallery in which naughty French pictures—he assumed that everything French was naughty—were exhibited. He occasionally referred to the *Temps* phonetically, and up to the day of his death he never knew why I laughed when I first heard his pronunciation of the name of that organ.

The one dread of his life was that I might some time inadvertently suggest that I was the editor of the paper. As if any sane human being would have such an aspiration! His opportunity came at last. A cabinet photograph of a man and a dog arrived at the office one day addressed to the editor. He hastened to the proprietor and "proved" that the photograph represented me and my dog, and that it had been addressed "to the editor." The proprietor was not clever enough to perceive that the features of the portrait in no way resembled those with which I am obliged to put up, and so I ran a chance of being branded as a pretender.

Fortunately, however, the fascinating little daughter of the proprietary household contrived to see the photograph, and on being questioned as to its likeness to a member of the staff, declared that there was no one half so goodlooking connected with the paper. On being assured that the original had already been identified, she expressed her willingness to stake five pounds upon her opinion; and the injured editor accepted her offer.

Now, all this time I had never been applied to by the disputants, though I might have been expected to know something of the matter,—people generally remember a visit to their photographer or their stockbroker,—but just as the young lady was about to appeal to me as an unprejudiced arbiter on the question at issue, the manager of the advertisement department sent to inquire if any one on the editorial staff had come upon a photograph of a man and a collie. An advertisement for a lost collie had, he said, been appearing in the paper, and a postcard had just been received from the owner stating that he had forwarded a photograph of the animal, in order that, should any one bring a collie to the office and claim the reward, the advertising department would be in a position to see that the animal was the right one.

The young lady got her five pounds, and, having a considerable interest in the stocking of a farm, purchased with it an active young boar which, in an impulse of flattery, she named after me, and which, so far as I have been able to gather, is doing very well, and has already seen his children's children.

When I asked the young lady why she had called the animal after me, she said it was because he was a bore. She had a graceful wit.

In a weak moment this editor confided to me that he was engaged in writing a book—"A History of the Orange" was to be the title, he told me; and he added that I could have no idea of the trouble it was causing him; but there he was wrong. After this he was in the habit of writing a note to me about once a week, asking me if I would oblige him by doing his work for him, as all his time was engrossed by his "History." It appears to me rather melancholy that the lack of enterprise among publishers is so great that this work has not yet been given a chance of appearing. I looked forward to it to clear up many doubtful points of great interest. Up to the present, for instance, no intelligent effort has been made to determine if it was the introduction of the orange into Great Britain that brought about the Sunday-school treat, or if the orange was imported in order to meet the legitimate requirements of this entertainment.

Human nature—-and there is a good deal of it in a large manufacturing centre—could not be restrained in the neighbourhood of such a relic of a past generation, and, consequently, that form of pleasantry known as the hoax was constantly attempted upon him. One morning the correspondence columns, which he was supposed to edit with scrupulous care, appeared headed with an account of the discovery of some ancient pottery bearing a Latin inscription—the most venerable and certainly the most transparent of newspaper hoaxes.

It need scarcely be said that there was an extraordinary demand for copies of the issue of that day; but luckily the thing was discovered in time to disappoint a large number of those persons who came to the office to mock at the simplicity of the good old soul, who fancied he had found a congenial topic when he received the letter headed with an appeal to archæologists.

Is there a more contemptible creature in the world than the newspaper hoaxer? The wretch who can see fun in obtaining the publication of some filthy phrase in a newspaper that is certain to be read by numbers of women, should, in my mind, be treated as the flinger of a dynamite bomb among a crowd of innocent people.

The sender of a false notice of a marriage, a birth, or a death, is usually difficult to bring to justice, but when found, he—or she—should be treated as a social leper. The pain caused by such heartless hoaxes is incalculable.

Sometimes a careless reporter, or foreman printer, is unwittingly the means of causing much annoyance, and even consternation, by allowing an obituary notice to appear prematurely. On every well-managed paper there is a set of pigeon-holed obituaries of eminent persons, local as well as national. When it is almost certain that one of them is at the point of death, the sketch is written up to the latest date, and frequently put in type, to be ready in case the news of the death should arrive when the paper is going to press. Now, I have known of several cases in which the "set-up" obituary notice contrived to appear before the person to whom it referred had breathed his last. This is undoubtedly a very painful occurrence, and in some cases it may actually precipitate the incident which it purports to record. Personally, I should not consider myself called on to die because a newspaper happened to publish an account of my death; but I know of at least one case in which a man actually succumbed out of compliment to a newspaper that had accidentally recorded his death.

That person was not made of the same fibre as a certain eminent surgeon with whom I was well acquainted. He was thoughtful enough to send for a reporter on one Monday evening, and said that as he did not wish the pangs of death to be increased by the reflection that a ridiculous sketch of his career would be published in the newspapers, he thought he would just dictate three-quarters of a column of such a character as would allow of his dying without anything on his mind. Of course the reporter was delighted, and commenced as usual:—

"It is with the deepest regret that we have to announce this morning the decease of one of our most eminent physicians, and best-known citizens. Dr. Theobald Smith, M.Sc., F.R.C.S.E., passed peacefully away at o'clock {last night/this morning} at his residence, Pharmakon House, surrounded by the members of the family to whom he was so deeply attached, and to whom, though a father, he was still a friend."

"Now, sir," said the reporter, "I've left a space for the hour, and I can strike out either 'last night,' or 'this morning,' when I hear of your death."

"That's right," said the doctor. "Now, I'll give you some particulars of my life."

"Thanks," said the reporter. "You will not exceed three-quarters of a column, for we're greatly crushed for space just now. If you could put it off till Sunday, I could give you a column with leads, as Parliament doesn't sit on Saturday."

It seemed a tempting offer; but the doctor, after pondering for a few moments, as if trying to recollect his engagements, shook his head, and said he would be glad to oblige, but the matter had really passed beyond his control.

"But there'll surely be time for you to see a proof?" cried the reporter, with some degree of anxiety in his voice.

"I'll take good care of that," said the doctor. "You can send it to me in the morning. I think I'll die between eleven and twelve at night."

"That would suit us exactly," said the reporter genially. "We could then send the obituary away in the first page at one o'clock. The foreman grumbles if he has to put obituaries on page 5, which goes down to the machine at half-past three."

The doctor said that of course business was business, and he should do his best to accommodate the foreman.

He died that night at twenty minutes past eleven.

I have suggested the possibility of the record of a death in a public print having a disastrous effect upon a sick man, and the certainty of its causing pain to his relatives. This view was not taken by the eccentric proprietor to whom I have already alluded. Upon one occasion he heard casually that a man named Robinson had just died. He hastened to his office, found a reporter, and told him to write a paragraph regretting the death of Mr. Richard Robinson. He assumed that it was Richard Robinson who was dead, but it so happened that it was Mr. Thomas Robinson, although Mr. Richard Robinson had been in feeble health for some time. Now, when the son of the living Mr. Robinson called upon the proprietor the next day to state that his father had read the paragraph recording his death, and that the shock had completely prostrated him, the proprietor turned round upon him, and said that Mr. Robinson and his family should rather feel extremely grateful for the appearance of a paragraph of so complimentary a character. Young Mr. Robinson, fearing that the next move on the part of the proprietor would be to demand payment for the paragraph at scale rates, begged that his intrusion might be pardoned; and hurried away congratulating himself at having escaped very easily.

Editors are always supposed to know nearly everything, and they nearly always do. In this respect they differ materially from the representatives of other professions. If you were to ask the average clergyman—if there is such a thing as an average clergyman—what he thought of the dramatic construction of a French vaudeville, he would probably feel hurt; but if an editor failed to give an intelligent opinion on this subject, as well as upon the tendencies to Socinianism displayed in the sermon of an eminent Churchman, he would be regarded as unfit for his business. You can get an intelligent opinion from an editor on almost any subject; but you are lucky if you can get an intelligent opinion on any one subject from the average professional man—

a lawyer, of course, excepted.

But undoubtedly curious specimens of editors might occasionally have been found in the smaller newspaper offices in the provinces long ago. More than twenty years have passed since the sub-editor of a rather important paper in a town in the Midlands interviewed, on a matter of professional etiquette, the editor—he was an Irishman—of a struggling organ in the same town.

It appeared that the chief reporter of the sub-editor's paper had given some paragraph of news to a brother on the second paper, and yet when the latter was respectfully asked for an equivalent, he refused it; hence the need for diplomatic representations.

"I say that our reporters must have a *quid pro quo* in every case where they have given a par. to yours," said the sub-editor, who was entrusted with the negotiations.

"Must have a what?" asked the Irish editor. "A *quid pro quo*," said the sub-editor. "Now I've come here for the *quid* and I don't mean to go until I get it."

The editor looked at him, then felt for something in his waistcoat pocket. Producing a piece of that sort of tobacco known as Limerick twist, he bit it in two, and offered one portion to the sub-editor, saying, "There's your quid for you; but, so help me Gad, I've only got what you see in my mouth to last me till morning."

CHAPTER IV.—THE UNATTACHED EDITOR.

The "casual" word—The mighty hunter—The retort discourteous—How the editor's chair was broken—An explanation on a clove—The master of a system—A hitch in the system—The two Alhambras—A parallel—The unattached parson—Another system—A father's legacy—The sermon—The imagination and its claims—The evening service—Saying a few words—Antique carved oak—How the chaplain's doubts were dispersed—A literary tinker—A tinker's triumph—The two Joneses.

THE "scratch" editor also may now and again be found to possess some eccentricities. He is the man who is taken on a newspaper in an emergency to fill the place of an editor who may perhaps be suffering from a serious illness, or who may, in an unguarded moment, have died. There is a class of journalists with whom being out of employment amounts almost to a profession in itself. But the "unattached" editor is usually no more brilliant a man than the unattached gentleman "in holy orders"—the clergyman who appears suddenly at the vestry door carrying a black bag, and probably with his nose a little red (the result of a cold railway journey), and who introduces himself to the sexton as ready to do duty for the legitimate, but temporarily incapacitated, incumbent, whose telegram he had received only the previous day.

As the congregation are glad to get any one who can read the prayers with an air of authority in the absence of their pastor, so the proprietors of a newspaper are sometimes pleased to welcome the "scratch," or casual, editor.

I have met with a few of the class, but never with one whose chronic unattached condition I could not easily account for, before we had been together long. Most of them hated journalism—-and everything else (with one important exception). All of them boasted of their feats as journalists. A fine crusted specimen was accustomed to declare nightly that he had once kept hunters; another that he had not always been connected with such a miserable rag as the journal on which he was temporarily employed.

"I've been on the best papers in the three kingdoms," he shouted one night.

"That's only another way of saying that you've been kicked off the most influential organs in the country," remarked a bystander.

"If you don't look out you'll soon be kicked off another."

No verbal retort is possible to such brutality of language. None was attempted.

When I was explaining, the next day, to the proprietor how the chair in the editor's room came to be broken, and also how the silhouette of an octopus came to be executed so boldly in ink upon the wall of the same apartment, the "scratch" editor (his appellation had a double significance this day) entered suddenly. He said he had come to explain something.

Now when a literary gentleman appears with long strips of sticking plaster loosely adhering to one side of his face, as white caterpillars adhere to a garden wall, and when, moreover, the perfume that floats on the air at his approach is that of a peppermint lozenge that has been preserved from decay in alcohol, any explanation that he may offer in regard to a preceding occurrence is likely to be received with suspicion, if not with absolute distrust. In this case, however, no opportunity was given the man for justifying any claim that he might advance to be credited.

The proprietor assured him that he had already received an account of the deplorable occurrence of the night before, and that he hoped mutual apologies would be made in the course of the day, so that, in diplomatic language, the incident might be considered closed before night.

The "scratch" man breathed again—heavily, alcoholically, peppermintally. And before night I managed to sticking-plaster up a peace between the belligerents.

At the end of a month some busybody outside the paper had the bad taste to point out to the proprietor that one of the leading articles—the one contributed by the "scratch" man—in a recent issue of the paper, was to a word identical with one which had appeared a fortnight before in a Scotch paper of some importance. The "scratch" man explained—on alcohol and a clove—that the Scotch paper had copied his article. But the proprietor expressed his grave doubts on this point, his chief reason for adopting this course being that the

Scotch paper with the article had appeared ten days previously. Then the “scratch” man said the matter was a singular, but by no means unprecedented, coincidence.

The proprietor opened the office door.

One of the most interesting of these “casuals” had been a clergyman (he said). I never was quite successful in finding out with what Church he had been connected, nor, although pressed for a reply, would he ever reveal to me how he came to find himself outside the pale of his Church—whatever it was. He had undoubtedly some of the mannerisms of a clergyman who is anxious that every one should know his profession, and he could certainly look out of the corners of his eyes with the best of them. Like the parson who is so very “low” that he steadily refuses to cross his t’s lest he should be accused of adopting Romish emblems, he declined to turn his head without moving his whole body.

He wore rusty cloth gloves.

He was also the most adroit thief whom I ever met; and I have lived among some adroit ones in my time.

I never read such brilliant articles as he wrote nightly—never, until I came upon the same articles in old files of the London newspapers, where they had originally appeared. The original articles from which his were copied *verbatim* were, I admit, quite as brilliant as his.

His *modus operandi* was simplicity itself. He kept in his desk a series of large books for newspaper cuttings, and these were packed with articles on all manner of subjects, clipped from the best newspapers. Every day he spent an hour making these extracts, by the aid of a pot of paste, and indexing them on the most perfect system of double entry that could be conceived.

At night I frequently came down to my office and found that he had written two columns of the most delightful essays. One might, perhaps, be on the subject of Moresco-Gothic Architecture and its influence on the genius of Velasquez, another on Battueshooting and the Acclimatisation of the Bird of Paradise in English coverts; but both were treated with equal grace. That such erudition and originality should be associated with cloth gloves astonished me. One day, however, the man wrote a column upon the decoration of one of the courts of the Alhambra, and a more picturesque article I never read—up to a certain point; and this point was reached when he commenced a new paragraph as follows:—

“Alas! that so lovely a piece of work should have fallen a prey to the devastating element that laid the whole structure in ruins, and eclipsed the gaiety, if not of nations, at any rate of the people of London, who were wont to resort nightly to this Thespian temple of Leicester Square, feeling certain that under the liberal management of its enterprising *entrepreneur* some brilliant stage spectacle would be brought before their eyes. Now, however, that the company for the restoration of the building has been successfully floated, we may hope for a revival of the ancient glories of the Alhambra.”

I inquired casually of the perpetrator of the article if he had ever heard of the Alhambra?

“Why, I wrote of it yesterday,” he said.

“I’ve been in it; it’s in Leicester Square.”

“Did you ever hear of another Alhambra?”

I asked blandly.

“Yes; there’s one in Glasgow.”

“Did you ever hear of one that wasn’t a music-hall?”

“Never. Maybe the temperance people give one of their new-fashioned coffee places the name to attract sinners on false pretences.”

“Did you ever hear of an Alhambra in Spain?”

“You don’t mean to say that they have music-halls in Spain? But why shouldn’t they? Spaniards are fond of dancing, I believe.”

“Why not indeed?” said I.

The next day he had an explanation to offer to the chief of the staff. In the evening he told me that he was going to leave the paper.

“How is that?” I inquired.

“I don’t like it,” he replied. “My ideas are cribbed, cabined, and confined here.”

“They are certainly cribbed,” said I. “Did you never hear of the Alhambra at Grenada?”

“Never; that’s what played the mischief with the article. You’ll see how the mistake arose. There was a capital article in the *Telegraph* about the Alhambra—I see now that it must have referred to the one in Spain—about four years ago; well, I cut it out and indexed it. A year ago, when the Alhambra in Leicester Square was about to re-open, there was an article in the *Daily News*. I found it in my index also, and incorporated the two articles in mine. How the mischief was I to know that one referred to Grenada and the other to London? These writer chaps should be more explicit. What do they get their salaries for, anyway?”

I have referred to a certain resemblance existing between the unattached parson and the unattached editor. This resemblance is the more impressed on me now that, after recalling a memory of an appropriator of another man’s literary work by the “casual” editor, I can recollect how I lived for some years next door to a “casual” parson, who had annexed a bagful of sermons left by his father, one of which he preached whenever he obtained an engagement. It was said that on receiving the usual telegram from a disabled rector on Saturday evening, he was accustomed to go to the sermon-sack, and, putting his hand down the mouth, take out a sermon with the same ease and confidence as are displayed by the professional rat-catcher in extracting

from his bag one of its lively contents for the gratification of a terrier. It so happened, however, that upon a fine Sunday morning, he set out to do duty for a clergyman at a distance, having previously felt about the sermon-sack until he found a good fat roll of manuscript, which he stuffed into his pocket. He reached the church—in which, it should be mentioned, he had never before preached—and, bustling through the service with his accustomed celerity, ascended the pulpit and flattened out with a slap or two the sermon on the cushion in front of him. The sermon proved to be the valedictory one preached by his father in the church of which he had been rector for half a century. It was unquestionably a very fine effort, but it might seem to some people to lack local colour. Delivered in a church to which the preacher was a complete stranger, it had a certain amount of inappropriateness about it which might reasonably be expected to diminish from its effect.

"It is a solemn moment for us all, my dear, dear friends. It is a solemn moment for you, but ah! how much more solemn for me! Sunday after Sunday for the past fifty years I have stood in the pulpit where I stand to-day to preach the Gospel of Truth. I see before me now the well-known faces of my flock. Those who were young when I first came among you are now well stricken in years. Some whom I baptised as infants, have brought their infants to me to be baptised; these in turn have been spared to bring their infants to be admitted into the membership of the Church Militant. For fifty years have I not taken part in your joys and your sorrows, and now who shall say that the hour of parting should not be bitter? I see tears on the faces before me——"

And the funny part of the matter was that he did. No one present seemed to see anything inappropriate in the sermon; and at the pathetic references to the hour of parting, there was not a dry eye in the church—except the remarkably bright pair possessed by a female scoffer, who told the story to me. It was not to be expected that the clergyman would become aware of the mistake—if it was a mistake—that he had made: he had for years been a preaching machine, and had become as devoid of feeling as a barrel organ; but it seemed to me incredible that only one person in the church should discover the ludicrous aspect of the situation.

So I remarked to my informant, and she said that it was all the same a fact that the people were weeping copiously on all sides.

"I asked the doctor's wife the next day what she thought of the sermon," added my informant, "and she replied with a sigh that it was beautifully touching; and when I put it straight to her if she did not think it was queer for a clergyman who was a total stranger to us to say that he had occupied the pulpit for fifty years, she replied, 'Ah, my dear, you're too matter of fact: sermons should not be taken too literally. *You should make allowance for the parsons imagination*.'"

It is told of the same "casual" that an attempt was made to get the better of him by a parsimonious set of churchwardens upon the occasion of his being engaged to do duty for the regular parson of the parish. The contract made with the "casual" was to perform the service and preach the sermon in the morning for the sum of two guineas. He turned up in good time on the Sunday morning and performed his part of the contract in a business-like way. In the vestry, after he had preached the sermon, he was waited on by the senior churchwarden, who handed him his fee and expressed the great satisfaction felt by the churchwardens at the manner in which the work had been executed. He added that as the clergyman's train would not leave the village until half-past eight at night, perhaps the reverend gentleman would not mind dining with him, the senior churchwarden, and performing a short evening service at six o'clock.

"That will suit me very well indeed," said the reverend gentleman. "I thank you very much for your hospitable offer. I charge thirty shillings for an evening service with sermon."

The hospitable churchwarden replied that he feared the resources of the church would not be equal to such a strain upon them. He thought that the clergyman might not object under the circumstances to give his services gratis.

"Do you dispose of your excellent cheeses gratis?" asked the clergyman courteously. The churchwarden was in the cheese business.

"Well, no, of course not," laughed the churchwarden. "But still—well, suppose we say a guinea for the evening service?"

"That's my charge for the service, leaving out the sermon," said the clergyman.

He explained that it was the cheapest thing in the market at the time. It was done with only the smallest margin of profit. Allowing for the wear and tear, it left hardly anything for himself.

The churchwarden shook his head. He feared that they would not be able to trade on the terms, he said. Suddenly, however, he brightened up. Could the reverend gentleman not give them a good, sound, second quality sermon? he inquired. They did not expect an A-1, copper-fastened, platinum-tipped, bevelled-edged, full-calf sermon for the money; but hadn't the reverend gentleman a sound, clump-soled, celluloid-faced, nickel-plated sermon—something evangelical that would do very well for one evening?

The clergyman replied that he had nothing of the sort in stock.

"Well, at any rate, you will say a few words to the congregation—not a sermon, you know—after the service, for the guinea?" suggested the churchwarden.

"Oh, yes, I'll say a few words, if that's all," said the clergyman.

And he did.

When he had got to that grand old Amen which closes the Evening Service, he stood up and said,—

"Dear brethren, there will be no sermon preached here this evening."

Having entered upon the perilous path that is strewn with stories of clergymen, I cannot leave it without recalling certain negotiations which a prelate once opened with me for the purchase of an article of furniture

that remained at the palace when he was translated (with footnotes in the vernacular by local tradesmen) to a new episcopate. I have always had a weakness for collecting antique carved oak, and the prelate, being aware of this, called my attention to what he termed an "antique carved oak cabinet," which occupied an alcove in the hall. He said he thought that I might be glad to have a chance of purchasing it, for he himself did not wish to be put to the trouble of conveying it to his new home—if a palace can be called a home. Now, there had been a three days' auction at the palace where the antiquity remained, and, apparently, all the dealers had managed to resist the temptation that was offered them of acquiring a rare specimen of old oak; but, assuming that the dignitary had placed a high reserve price upon it from which he might now be disposed to abate, I replied that it would please me greatly to buy the cabinet if it was not too large. By appointment I accompanied a seemingly meek domestic chaplain to the dis-.mantled palace; and there, sure enough, in a dark alcove of the long and narrow hall—for the palace was not palatial—I saw (dimly) a huge thing like a wardrobe with pillars, or it might have been a loose box, or perhaps a bedstead gone wrong, or a dismantled hearse.

"That's a dreadful thing," I remarked to the meek chaplain.

"Dreadful, indeed," he replied. "But it's antique carved oak, so I suppose it's a treasure."

"Have you a match about you?" I asked, for the place was very dark.

The meek chaplain looked scandalised—it was light enough to allow of my seeing that—at the suggestion that he carried matches. He said he thought he knew where some might be had. He walked to the end of the passage, and I saw him take out a box of matches from a pocket. He came back, saying he recollected having seen the box on a ledge "down there." I struck a match and held the light close to the fabric. I gave a portion of it a little scrape with my knife, and then tested the carving by the same implement.

"How did his lordship describe this?" I inquired.

"He said it was antique carved oak," said the meek chaplain.

"Did you ever hear of Cuvier and the lobster?" I inquired further.

He said he never had.

"That being so, I may venture to say that his lordship's description of this thing is an excellent one," I remarked; "only that it is not antique, it is not carved, and it is not oak."

"What do you mean?" asked the meek chaplain..

I struck another match, and showed him the white patch that I had scraped with my knife, and he admitted that old oak was not usually white beneath the surface. I showed him also where the carving had sprung up before the point of my knife, making plain the 'fact that the carving had been glued to the fabric.

"His lordship got that made by a local carpenter twenty-five years ago," said I; "and yet he tries to sell it to me for antique carved oak. It strikes me that in Wardour Street he would find a congenial episcopate."

The meek chaplain stroked his chin reflectively; then, putting his umbrella under one arm, he joined the tips of his fingers, saying,—

"Whatever unworthy doubts I may once have entertained on the difficult subject of Apostolic succession are now, thank God, set at rest."

"What do you mean?" I inquired.

"Is it possible," he asked, "that you do not perceive how strong an argument this incident furnishes in favour of our Church's claim to the Apostolic succession of her bishops?"

I shook my head.

"St. Peter was a Jew," said the meek chaplain.

Another of the casual ward of editors who appears on the tablets of my memory was a gentleman who came from Wales—and a large number of other places. He had a rooted objection to write anything new; but he was the best literary tinker I ever met. In Spitzhagen's story, "Sturmfluth," there is a most amusing account of the sculptor who made the statues of distinguished Abstractions, which he had carved in his young days, do duty for memorial commissions of lately-departed heroes. A bust of Homer he had no difficulty in transforming into one of Germania weeping for her sons killed in the war, and so forth. The sculptor's talent was the same as that of the editor. He had the draft of about fifty articles, and three obituary notices. These he managed to tinker up, chipping a bit off here and there, and giving prominence to other portions, until his purpose of the moment was served. I have seen him turn an article that purported to show the absurdity of free trade, into an attack upon the Irish policy of the Government; and in the twinkling of an eye upon another occasion he made one on the Panama swindle do duty for one on the compulsory rescue of Emin by Stanley. With only a change of a line or, two, the obituary notice of Gambetta was that which he had used for Garibaldi; and yet when the Emperor Frederick died, it was the same article that was furbished up for the occasion. Every local medical man who died was dealt with in the appreciative article which he had written some years before on the death of Sir William Gull; and the influence of the career of every just deceased local philanthropist was described in the words (slightly altered to suit topography) that had been written for the Earl of Shaftesbury.

It was really little short of marvellous how this system worked. It was a tinker's triumph.

I must supplement my recollections of these worthies by a few lines regarding a man of the same type who, I believe, never put pen to paper without being guilty of some extraordinary error. A high compliment was paid to me, I felt, when I had assigned to me, as part of my duties, the reading of his proof sheets nightly. In everyone that I ever read I found some monstrous mistake; and as he was old enough to be my grandfather, and extremely sensitive besides, I was completely exhausted by my expenditure of tact in pointing out to him what I called his "little inaccuracies." One night he laid his proof sheet before me, saying triumphantly, "You'll not find any of the usual slips in that, I'm thinking. I've managed to write one leader correct at last."

I read the thing he had written. It referred to a letter which Mr. Bence Jones had contributed to *The Times*

on the subject of the Irish Land League Agitation. After commenting on this letter, he wound up by saying that Mr. Bence Jones had proved himself to be as practical an agriculturalist as he was an expert painter.

“Are you certain that Bence Jones is a painter?” I asked.

“As certain as I can be of anything,” was the reply. “I’ve seen his work referred to dozens of times. I believe there’s a picture of his in the Grosvenor Gallery this very year. I thought you knew all about contemporary art,” he added, with a sneer.

“Art is long,” said I, searching for a Grosvenor Gallery catalogue, which I knew I had thrown among my books. “Now, will you just turn up the picture you say you saw noticed, and I’ll admit that you know more than I do?”

I handed him the catalogue. He adjusted his spectacles, looked at the index, gave a triumphant “Ha! I have you now,” and forthwith turned up “The Golden Stair,” by E. *Burne* Jones.

CHAPTER V.—THE SUB-EDITORS.

The old and the new—The scissors and paste auxiliaries—A night’s work—“A dorg’s life”—How to communicate with the third floor—A modern man in the old days—His migration—Other migrants—Some provincial correspondents—Forgetful of a Town Councillor—The Plymouth Brother as a sub-editor—A vocal effort—“Summary” justice—Place aux Dames—A ghost story—Suggestions of the Crystal Palace—The presentation.

IT would give me no difficulty to write a book about sub-editors with illustrations from those whom I have met. It is, perhaps, in this department of a newspaper office that the change from the old *regime* is most apparent. The young sub-editors are frequently graduates of universities; but, in spite of this, most of them are well abreast of French and German as well as English literature. They bear out my contention, that journalism is beginning to be taken seriously. The new men have chosen journalism as their profession; they have not, as was the case with the men of a past age, merely drifted into journalism because they were failures in banks, in tailors’ shops, in the drapery line, and even in the tobacco business—one in which failure is almost impossible.

I have met in the old days with specimens of such men—men who fancied, and who got their employers to fancy also, that because they had failed in occupations that demanded the exercise of no intellectual powers for success, they were bound to succeed in something that they termed “a literary calling.” They did not succeed as a rule. They glanced over their column or two of telegraphic news,—in those days few provincial papers contained more than a double column of telegrams,—they glanced through the country correspondence and corrected such mistakes in grammar as they were able to detect: it was with the scissors and paste, however, that their most striking intellectual work was done. In this department the brilliancy of the old sub-editor’s genius had a chance of being displayed. It coruscated, so to speak, on the rim of the paste pot, and played upon the business angle of the scissors, as the St. Elmo’s light gleams on the yard-arms.

“Ah!” said one of them to me, with a glow of proper pride upon his face, as he ran the closed scissors between the pages of the *Globe*. “Ah, it’s only when it comes to a question of cutting out that your true sub-editor reveals himself.”

And he forthwith annexed the “turn-over,” without so much as acquainting himself with the nature of the column.

“Do you never read the thing before you cut it out?” I inquired timidly.

He smiled the smile of the professor at the innocent question of a tyro.

“Not likely, young fellow,” he replied. “It’s bad enough to have to read all the cuttings when they appear in our next issue, without reading them beforehand.”

“Then how do you know whether or not the thing that you cut out is suitable for the paper?” I asked.

“That’s where the instinct of your true subeditor comes in,” said he. “I put in the point of the scissors mechanically and the right thing is sure to come between the blades.”

In a few minutes he had about thirty columns of cuttings ready for the foreman printer.

I began to feel that I had never done full justice to the sub-editor or the truffle hunter.

I have said that in those old days not more than two columns of wired news ever came to any provincial paper—*The Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, and a Liverpool and Manchester organ excepted. The private wire had not yet been heard of. In the present day, however, I have seen as many as sixteen columns of telegraphic news in a very ordinary provincial paper. I myself have come into my office at ten o’clock to find a speech in “flimsy,” of four columns in length, on some burning question of the moment. I have read through all this matter, and placing it in the printers’ hands by eleven, I have written a column of comment (about one thousand eight hundred words), read a proof of this column and started for home at half-past one. I may mention that while waiting for the last slips of my proof, I also made myself aware of the contents of the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, the *Standard*, and the *Morning Post*, which had arrived by the midnight train.

I suppose there are hundreds of editors throughout the provinces to whom such a programme is habitually no more a thing to shrink from than it was to me for several years of my life. But I am sure that if any one of

the sub-editors of the old days had been required to read even five columns of a political speech, and eight of parliament, he would have talked about slave-driving and a “dorg’s life” until he had fallen asleep—as he frequently did—with his arms on his desk and the “flimsies” on the floor.

Some time ago I was in London, and had written an article at my rooms, with a view of putting it on the special wire at the Fleet Street end for transmission to the newspaper on which I was then employed. It so happened, however, that I was engaged at other matters much longer than I expected to be that night, so that it was past one o’clock in the morning when I drove to the office in Fleet Street. The lower door was shut, and no response was given to my ring. I knew that the editor had gone home, but of course the telegraph operator was still in his room—I could see his light in the topmost window—and I made up my mind to rouse him, for I assumed that he was taking his usual sleep. After ringing the bell twice without result, it suddenly occurred to me that I might place myself in connection with him by some other means than the bell-wire. I drove to the Central Telegraph Office, and sent a telegram to the operator at the Irish end of the special wire, asking him to arouse the Fleet Street operator and tell him to open the street door for me.

When I returned to Fleet Street I found the operator waiting for me at the open door. In other words, I found that my easiest plan of communicating with the third floor from the street was by means of an office in Ireland.

I do not think that any of the old-time subeditors would have been likely to anticipate the arrival of a day when such an incident would be possible.

The only modern man of the old school, so to speak, with whom I came in contact at the outset of my journalistic life, now occupies one of the highest places on the London Press. I have never met so able a man since I worked by his side, nor have I ever met with one who was so accurate an observer, or so unerring a judge of men. He was everything that a subeditor should be, and if he erred at all it was on the side of courtesy. I have known of men coming down to the office with an action for libel in their hearts, and bitterness surpassing the bitterness of a Thomson whose name has appeared with a p, in the account of the attendance at a funeral, and yet going back to their wives and families quite genial, owing to the attitude adopted toward them by this subeditor; yes, and without any offer being made by him to have the mistake, of which they usually complained, altered in the next issue.

He was one of the few men whom I have known to go to London from the provinces with a doubt on his mind as to his future success. Most of those to whom I have said a farewell that, unfortunately, proved to be only temporary, had made up their minds to seek the metropolis on account of the congenial extent of the working area of that city. A provincial town of three hundred thousand inhabitants had a cramping effect upon them, they carefully assured me; the fact being that any place except London was little better than a kennel—usually a good deal worse..

I have come to the conclusion, from thinking over this matter, that, although self-confidence may be a valuable quality on the part of a pressman, it should not be cultivated to the exclusion of all other virtues.

The gentleman to whom I refer is now managing editor of his paper, and spends a large portion of his hardly-purchased leisure hours answering letters that have been written to him by literary aspirants in his native town. One of them writes a pamphlet to prove that there never has been and never shall be a hell, and he sends it to be dealt with on the following morning in a leader in the leading London newspaper. He, it seems, has to be written to—kindly, but firmly. Another wishes a poem—not on a death in the Royal Family—to be printed, if possible, between the summary and the first leader; a third reminds the managing editor that when sub-editor of the provincial paper eleven years before, he inserted a letter on the disgraceful state of the footpath on one of the local thoroughfares, and hopes that, now that the same gentleman is at the head of a great metropolitan organ, he will assist him, his correspondent, in the good work which has been inaugurated. The footpath is as bad as ever, he explains. But it is over courteously repressive letters to such young men—and old men too—as hope he may see his way to give them immediate and lucrative employment on his staff, that most of his spare time and all his spare stamps are spent.

Ladies write to him by the hundred—for it seems that any one may become a lady journalist—making valuable suggestions to him by means of which he may, if he chooses, obtain daily a chatty column with local social sketches, every one guaranteed to be taken from life.

He doesn’t choose.

The consequence is that the ladies write to him again without the loss of a post, and assure him that if he fancies his miserable paper is anything but the laughing-stock of humanity, he takes an absurdly optimistic view of the result of his labours in connection with it.

About five years after he had left the town where we had been located together, I met a man who had come upon him in London, and who had accepted his invitation to dinner.

“We had a long talk together,” said the man, recording the transaction, “and I was surprised to find how completely he has severed all his former connections and old associations. I mentioned casually the names of some of the most prominent of the people here, but he had difficulty in recalling them. Why, actually—you’ll scarcely believe it—when I spoke of Sir Alexander Henderson, he asked who was he! It’s a positive fact!”

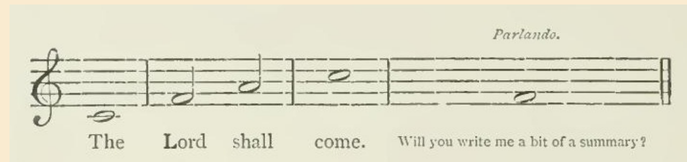
Now Sir Alexander Henderson was a Town Councillor.

The provincial successor to the sub-editor just referred to was undoubtedly a remarkable man. He was a

Plymouth Brother, and without guile. He was, for some reason or other, very anxious that I should join “The Church” also. I might have done so if I had succeeded in discovering what were the precise doctrines held by the body. But it would seem that the theology of the Plymouth Brethren is not an exact science. A Plymouth Brother is one who accepts the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren. So much I learned, and no more.

He possessed a certain amount of confidence in the correctness of his views—whatever they may have been, and he never allowed any pressman to enter his room without writing a summary on some subject; for which, it may be mentioned, he himself got credit in the eyes of the proprietor. He had no singing voice whatsoever, but his views on the Second Advent were so deep as to force him to give vocal expression to them thus:—

“Parlando. The Lord shall come. Will you write me a bit of a summary?”



The request to anyone who chanced to be in the room with him, following so hard upon the vocal assertion of the most solemn of his theological tenets, had a shocking effect; more especially as the newspaper offices in those old days were constantly filled with shallow scoffers and sceptics; and, of course, persons were not wanting who endeavoured to evade their task by assuring him that the Sacred Event was not one that could be legitimately treated within a lesser space than a full column.

He usually offered to discuss with me at 2 a.m. such subjects as the Immortality of the Soul or the Inspiration of Holy Writ. When he would signify his intention of proving both questions, if I would only wait for four hours.

I was accustomed to adopt the attitude of the schoolboy who, when the schoolmaster, after drawing sundry lines on the blackboard, asserted that the square described upon the diagonal of a double rectangular parallelogram was equal to double the rectangle described upon the other two sides, and offered to prove it, said, “Pray don’t trouble yourself, sir; I don’t doubt it in the least.”

I assured the sub-editor that there was nothing in the somewhat extensive range of theological belief that I wouldn’t admit at 2 a.m. after a long night’s work.

The most amusing experience was that which I had with the same gentleman at the time of the Eastern crises of the spring of 1878. During the previous year he had accustomed himself to close his nightly summary of the progress of the war between Russia and Turkey and the possibility of complications arising with England, with these words:—“Fortunate indeed it is that at the present moment we have at our Foreign Office so sagacious and far-seeing a statesman as Earl Derby. Every confidence may be reposed in his judgment to avert the crisis which in all probability is impending.”

Certainly once a week did this summary appear in the paper, until I fancy the readers began to tire of it. As events developed early in the spring, the paragraph was inserted with feverish frequency. He was at it again one night—I could hear him murmur the words to himself as he went over the thing—but the moment he had given out the copy I threw down in front of him a telegram which I had just opened.

“That will make a good summary,” I said. “The Reserves are called out and Lord Derby has resigned.”

He sprang to his feet, exclaiming, like the blameless George, “What—what—what?”

“There’s the flimsy,” said I. “It’s a good riddance. He never was worth much. The idea of a conscientious Minister at the Foreign Office! Now Beaconsfield will have a free hand. You’d better write that summary.”

“I will—I will,” he said. “But I think I’ll ask you to dictate it to me.”

“All right,” said I. “Heave ahead. ‘The news of the resignation of Earl Derby will be received by the public of Great Britain with feelings akin to those of relief.... The truth is that for several months past it was but too plain to even the least sagacious persons that Lord Derby at the Foreign Office was the one weakness in the *personnel* of the Ministry. In colloquial, parlance he was the square peg in the round hole. Now that his resignation has been accepted we may say farewell, a long farewell, to a feeble and vacillating Minister of whose capacity at such a serious crisis we have frequently thought it our duty to express our grave doubts.’”

He took a shorthand note of this stuff, which he transcribed, and ordered to be set up in place of the first summary. For the next three months that original metaphor of the square peg and the round hole appeared in relation to Lord Derby once a week in the political summary.

Among the minor peculiarities of this subeditor of the old time was an apparently irresistible desire for the companionship of his wife at nights. Perhaps, however, I am doing him an injustice, and the evidence available on this point should only be accepted as indicating the desire of his wife for the companionship of her husband. At any rate, for some reason or other, the lady occupied an honoured place in her husband’s room certainly three nights every week.

The pair never exchanged a word for the six or seven hours that they remained together. Perhaps here

again I am doing one of them an injustice, for I now remember that during at least two hours out of every night the door of the room was locked on the inside, so they may have been making up their arrears of silence by discussing the immortality of the soul, or other delicate theological points, during this “close” season.

The foreman printer was the only one in the office who was in the habit of complaining about the presence of the lady in the sub-editor’s room. He was the rudest-voiced man and the most untiring user of oaths ever known even among foremen printers, and this is saying a great deal. He explained to me in language that was by no means deficient in force, that the presence of the lady had a cramping and enervating effect upon him when he went to tell the sub-editor that he needn’t send out any more “copy,” as the paper was overset. How could any conscientious foreman do himself justice under such circumstances? he asked me.

The same sub-editor had a ghost story. He was the only man whom I ever met who believed in his own ghost story. I have come in contact with several men who had ghost stories in their *répertoire*, but I never met any but this one who was idiot enough to believe in the story that he had to tell. I am sorry that I cannot remember its many details. But the truth is that it made no more impression on me than the usual ghost story makes upon a man with a sound digestion. As a means of earning a livelihood the journalistic “spook” occupies a legitimate place among the other devices of modern enterprise to effect the same praiseworthy object; but a personal and unprofessional belief in the possibility of the existence in visible form of a “ghost” is the evidence either of a mind constitutionally adapted to the practice of imposture, or of a remarkable capacity for being imposed upon. My friend the sub-editor had not a heart for falsehood framed, so I believed that he believed that he had seen the spirit of his father make an effective exit from the apartment where the father had died. This was, I recollect, the foundation of his story. I remember also that the spirit took the form of a small but compact ball of fire, and that it rolled up the spout—on the outside—and then broke into a thousand stars.

The description of the incident suggested a lesser triumph of Messrs. Brock at the Crystal Palace rather than the account of the solution of the greatest mystery that man ever has faced or ever can face. When I had heard the story to the end—up to the moment that the old nurse came out of the house crying, “He’s gone, he’s gone!” preparatory to throwing her apron over her head—I merely asked,—

“How many nights did you say you had been watching by your father?”

“Three,” he replied. “But I don’t think that I said anything to you about watching.” Neither had he. Like the witness at the mysterious murder trial who didn’t think it worth while mentioning to the police that he had seen a man, who had a grudge against the deceased, leaving the room where the body was found, and carrying in one hand a long knife dripping with blood, my friend did not think that the circumstance of his having had no sleep for three nights had any bearing upon the question of the accuracy of his eyesight.

Of course I merely said that the story was an extraordinary one.

I have noticed that Plymouth Brotherhood, vegetarianism, soft hats, bad art, and a belief in at least one ghost usually are found associated.

This sub-editor emigrated several years ago to the South Sea Islands with evangelistic intentions. On his departure his colleagues made him a graceful and appropriate gift which could not fail to cause him to recall in after years the many pleasant hours they had spent together.

It took the form of an immense marble chimney-piece clock, weighing about a hundredweight and a half, and looking uncomfortably like an eighteenth-century mural tomb. It was such a nice present to make to an evangelist in the neophyte stage, every one thought; for what the gig was in the forties as a guarantee of all that was genteel, the massive marble clock was in the eyes of the past generation of journalists. I happen to know something about the sunny islands of the South Pacific and their inhabitants, and it has often occurred to me that the guarantees of gentility which find universal acceptance where the hibiscus blooms, may not be wholly identical with those that were in vogue among journalists long ago. Should these unworthy doubts which now and again occur to me when I am alone, be well founded, I fear that the presentation to my friend may repose elsewhere than on a chimney-piece of Upolu or Tahiti.

As a matter of fact, I read a short time ago an account of a remarkable head-dress worn by a native chief, which struck me as having many points in common with a massive dining-room marble clock.

CHAPTER VI—THE SUB-EDITORS (continued).

The opium eater—A babbler o’ green fields—The “Brither Scots”—A South Sea idyl—St. Andrew Lang Syne—An intelligent community—The arrival of the “Bonnie Doon,” Mackellar, master—Captain Mackellar “says a ‘sweer’”—A border raid on a Newspaper—It pays—A raid of the wild Irish—Naugay Doola as a Newspaper editor—An epic—How the editor came to buy my emulsion—The constitutionally quarlsome sub-editor—The melancholy man—Not without a cause—The use of the razor.

ANOTHER remarkable type of the subeditor of the past was a middle-aged man whom it was my privilege to study for some months. No one could account for a curious *distrait* air which he frequently wore; but I had only to look at his eyes to become aware of the secret of his life. I had seen enough of

opium smokers in the East to enable me to pronounce decisively on this "case." He was a most intelligent and widely-read man; but he had wrecked his life over opium. He could not live without it, and with it he was utterly unfit for any work. Night after night I did the wretched man's work while he lay in a corner of the room wandering through the opium eater's paradise. After some months he vanished, utterly from the town, and I never found a trace of him elsewhere.

He was much to be preferred to a curious Scotsman who succeeded him. It was not the effects of opium that caused this person to lie in a corner and babble o' green fields upon certain occasions, such as the anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, the anniversary of the death of the same poet, the celebration of the Annual Festival of St. Andrew, the Annual Dinner of the Caledonian Society, the Anniversary Supper of the Royal Scottish Association, the Banquet and Ball of the Sons of Scotia, the "Nicht wi' Our Ain Kin," the Ancient Golf Dinner, the Curlers' Reunion, the "Rink and Drink" of the "Free Bowlers"—a local festival—the Pipe and Bagpipe of the Clans Awa' Frae Harne—another local club of Caledonians. Each of these celebrations of the representatives of his nation, which took place in the town to which he came—I need scarcely say it was not in Scotland—was attended by him; hence the babbling o' green fields between the hours of one and three a.m. He babbled once too often, and was sent forth to fresh fields by his employer, who was not a "brither Scot." I daresay he is babbling up to the present hour.

In spite of the well-known and deeply-rooted prejudices of the Scottish nation against the spirit of what may be termed racial cohesion, it cannot be denied that they have been known now and again to display a tendency—when outside Scotland—to localise certain of their national institutions. They do so at considerable self-sacrifice, and the result is never otherwise than beneficial to the locality operated on. No more adequately attested narrative has been recorded than that of the two Shanghai merchants—Messrs. Andrew Gareloch and Alexander MacClackan—who were unfortunate enough to be wrecked on the voyage to England. They were the sole survivors of the ship's company, and the island upon which they found themselves was in the middle of the Pacific, and about six miles long by four across. In the lagoon were plenty of fish, and on the ridge of the slope cocoanuts, loquats, plantains, and sweet potatoes were growing, so that there was no question as to their supplies holding out. After a good meal they determined that their first duty was to name the island. They called it St. Andrew Lang Syne Island, and became as festive and brotherly—they pronounced it "britherly"—as was possible over cocoanut milk: it was a long time since either of them had tasted milk. The second day they founded a local Benevolent Society of St. Andrew, and held the inaugural dinner; the third day they founded a Burns Club, and inaugurated the undertaking with a supper; the fourth day they started a Scottish Association, and with it a series of monthly reunions for the discussion of Scotch ballad literature; the fifth day they laid out a golf links with the finest bunkers in the world, and instituted a club lunch (strictly non-alcoholic); the sixth day they formed a Curling Club—the lagoon would make a braw rink, they said, if it only froze; if it didn't freeze, well, they could still have the annual Curlers' supper—and they had it; the Seventh Day they *kept*. On the evening of the same day a vessel was sighted bearing up for the island; but, of course, neither of the men would hoist a signal on the Seventh Day, and they watched the craft run past the island, though they were amazed to find that she had only her courses and a foresail set, in spite of the fact that the breeze was a light one. The next morning, when they were sitting together at breakfast discussing whether they should lay the foundation stone—with a commemorative lunch—of a free kirk, a U.P. meeting-house, or an Auld Licht meeting-house—they had been fiercely discussing the merits of each at every spare moment during the previous twenty years at Shanghai—they saw the vessel returning with all sail set and a signal flying. To run up one of their shirts to a pole at the entrance to the lagoon was a matter of a moment, and they saw that their signal was responded to. Sail was taken off the ship, she was steered by signals from the shore through the entrance to the lagoons and dropped anchor.

She turned out to be the *Bonnie Doon*, of Dundee, Douglas Mackellar, master. He had found portions of wreckage floating at sea, and had thought it possible that some of the survivors of the wreck might want passages "hame."

"Nae, nae," said both the men, "we're no in need o' passages hame just the noo. But what for did ye no mak' for the passage yestere'en in the gloaming?"

"Ay," said Captain Mackellar, "I ran by aboot the mirk; but hoot awa'—hoot awa', ye wouldn't hae me come ashore on the Sawbath Day."

"Ye shortened sail, tho'," remarked Mr. MacClackan.

"Ay, on Saturday nicht. I never let her do more than just sail on the Sawbath. Why the eevil didn't ye run up a bit signal, ye loons, if ye spied me sae weel?"

"Hoot awa'—hoot awa', ye wouldn't hae us mak' a signal on the Sawbath day."

"Na', na', no regular signal; but ye might hae run up a wee bittie—just eneugh tae catch my e'en. Ay, an' will ye nae come aboard?"

"We'll hae to talk owre it, Captain."

Well; they did talk over the matter, cautiously and discreetly, for a few hours, for Captain Mackellar was a hard man at a bargain, and he would not agree to give them a passage at anything less than two pound a head. At last negotiations were concluded, the men got aboard the *Bonnie Doon* and piloted her out of the lagoon. They reached the Clyde in safety, having on the voyage found that Captain Mackellar was a religious man and never used any but the most God-fearing of oaths at his crew.

"Weel, ma freends," said he, as they approached Greenock—"Weel, I'm in hopes that ye'll be paying me the siller this e'en."

"Ay, mon, that we will, certes," said the passengers. "In the meantime, we'd tak' the liberty o' calling your attention to a wee bit claim we hae japped doon on a bit slip o' paper. It's three poon nine for harbour dues that ye owe us, Captain Mackellar, and twa poon ten for pilotage—it's compulsory at yon island, so maybe ye'll mak' it convenient to hand us owre the differs when we land. Ay, Douglas Mackellar, ye shouldn'a try to

get the better o' brither Scots."

Captain Douglas Mackellar was a God-fearing man, but he said "Dom!"

I once had some traffic with a newspaper office that had suffered from a border raid. In the month of June a managing editor had been imported from the Clyde, and although previously no "hand" from north of the Tweed had ever been located within its walls, yet before December had come, to take a stroll through any department of that office was like taking a walk down Sauchiehall Street, or the Broomielaw. The foreman printer used weird Scotch oaths, and his son was the "devil"—pronounced *deevil*. His brother-in-law was the day foreman, and his brother-in-law's son was a junior clerk. The stereotyper was the stepson of the night foreman's mother, and he had a nephew who was the machinist, with a brother for his assistant. The managing editor's brother was sub-editor, and the man to whom his wife had been engaged before she married him, was assistant-editor. The assistant-editor's uncle became the head of the advertising department, and he had three sons; two of them became clerks with progressive salaries, and the third became the chief reporter, also with a progressive salary. In fact, the paper became a one-family show—it was like a "nicht wi' Burns,"—and no paper was ever worked better. It never paid less than fifteen per cent.

A rather more amusing experience was of the overrunning of a newspaper office by the wild Irishry. The organ in question had a somewhat chequered career during the ten months that it existed. At one period—for even as long as a month—it was understood to pay its expenses; but when it failed to pay its expenses, no one else paid them; hence in time it came to be looked upon as a rather unsound property. The original editor, a man of ability and culture, declined to be dictated to in some delicate political question by the proprietor, and took his departure without going through the empty formality—it was, after all, only a point of etiquette—of asking for the salary that was due to him. For some weeks the paper was run—if something that scarcely crawled could be said to be run—without an editor; then a red-headed Irishman of the Namgay Doola type appeared—like a meteor surrounded by a nimbus of brogue—in the editor's room. His name was O'Keegan, but lest this name might be puzzling to the English nation, he weakly gave in to their prejudices and simplified it into O'Geogheghoiran. He was a Master of Arts of the Royal University in Ireland, and a winner of gold medals for Greek composition, as well as philosophy. He said he had passed at one time at the head of the list of Indian Civil Service candidates, but was rejected by the doctor on account of his weak lungs. When I met him his lungs had apparently overcome whatever weakness they may once have had. He had a colloquial acquaintance with Sanscrit, and he had also been one of the best billiard markers in all Limerick.

I fancy he knew something about every science and art, except the art and science of editing a daily newspaper on which the payment of salaries was intermittent. In the course of a week a man from Galway had taken the vacant and slightly injured chair of the sub-editor, a man from Waterford said he had been appointed chief of the reporting staff, a man from Tipperary said he was the new art editor and musical critic, and a man from Kilkenny said he had been invited by his friend Mr. O'Geogheghoiran to "do the reviews." I have the best of reasons for knowing that he fancied "doing the reviews" meant going into the park upon military field-days, and reporting thereupon.

In short, the newspaper *staff* was an Irish blackthorn.

It began to "behave as sich."

The office was situated down a court on my line of route homeward; and one morning about three o'clock I was passing the entrance to the court when I fancied I heard the sound of singing. I paused, and then, out of sheer curiosity, moved in the direction of the newspaper premises. By the time I had reached them the singing had broadened into recrimination. I have noticed that singing is usually the first step in that direction. The members of the literary staff had apparently assembled in the reporters' room, and, stealing past the flaring gas jet on the very rickety stairs, I reached that window of the apartment which looked upon the lobby. When I rubbed as much dust and grime off one of the panes as admitted of my seeing into the room, I learned more about fighting in five minutes than I had done during a South African campaign.

A dozen or so bottles of various breeds lay about the floor, and a variety of drinking vessels lay about the long table at the moment of my glancing through the window. Only for a moment, however, for in another second the editor had leapt upon the table, and with one dexterous kick—a kick that no amount of Association play could cause one to acquire; a kick that must have been handed down, so to speak, from father to son, unto the third and fourth generations of backs—had sent every drinking vessel into the air. One—it was a jug—struck the ceiling, and brought down a piece of plaster about the size of a cart-wheel; but before the mist that followed this transaction had risen to obscure everything, I saw that a tumbler had shot out through the window that looked upon the court. I heard the crash below a moment afterwards. A mug had caught the corresponding portion of the anatomy of the gentleman from Waterford, and it irritated him; a cup crashed at the open mouth of the reviewer from Kilkenny, and, so far as I could see, he swallowed it; a tin pannikin carried away a portion of the ear of the musical critic from Tipperary—it was so large that he could easily spare a chip or so of it, though some sort of an ear is essential to the conscientious discharge of the duties of musical critic.

For some time after, I could not see very distinctly what was going on in the room, for the dust from the dislodged plaster began to rise, and "friend and foe were shadows in the mist." Now and again I caught a glimpse of the red-head of the Master of Arts and Gold Medallist permeating the mist, as the western sun permeates the smoke that hangs over a battle-field; and wherever that beacon-fire appeared devastation was wrought. The subeditor had gone down before him—so much I could see; and then all was dimness and yells again—yells that brought down more of the plaster and a portion of the stucco cornice; yells that chipped flakes off the marble mantelpiece and sent them quivering through the room; yells that you might have driven tenpenny nails home with.

Then the dust-cloud drifted away, and I was able to form a pretty good idea of what was going on. The meeting in mid-air of the ten-light gasalier, which the dramatic critic had pulled down, and the iron fender, which the chief of the reporting staff had picked up when he saw that his safety was imperilled, was epic. The legs of chairs and stools flying through the air suggested a blackboard illustration of a shower of meteors; every now and again one crashed upon a head and cannoned off against the wall, where it sometimes lodged

and became a bracket that you might have hung a coat on, or else knocked a brick into the adjoining apartment.

The room began to assume an untidy appearance after a while; but I noticed that the editor was making praiseworthy efforts to speak. I sympathised with the difficulty he seemed to have in that direction. It was not until he had folded in two the musical critic and the chief reporter, and had seated himself upon them without straightening them out, that his voice was heard.

“Boys,” he cried, “if this work goes on much longer I fear there’ll be a breach of the peace. Anyhow, I’m thirsty. I’ve a dozen of porter in my room.”

The only serious accident of the evening occurred at this point. The reviewer got badly hurt through being jammed in with the other six in the door leading to the editor’s room.

The next morning the paper came out as usual, and the fact that the leaders were those that had appeared on the previous day, and that the Parliamentary report had been omitted, was not noticed. I met the red-haired editor as he came out of a chemist’s shop that afternoon. I asked, as delicately as possible, after his health.

“I’d be well enough if it wasn’t for the sense of responsibility that sometimes oppresses me,” said he. “It’s a terrible weight on a single man’s shoulders that a daily paper is, so it is.”

“No doubt,” said I. “Do you feel it on your shoulders now?”

“Don’t I just?” said he. “I’ve been buying some emulsion inside to see if that will give me any ease.”

He then told me a painfully circumstantial story of how, when walking home early in the morning, he was set upon by some desperate miscreant, who had struck him twice upon his left eye, which might account, he said, for any slight discolouration I might notice in the region of that particular organ if I looked closely at it.

“But what’s the matter with your hair?”

I inquired. “It looks as if it had been powdered.”

“Blast it!” said he, taking off his hat, and disclosing several hillocks of red heather with a patch of white sticking-plaster on their summits—like the illustration of the snow line on a geological model of the earth’s surface. “Blast it! It must have been the ceiling. It’s a dog’s life an editor’s is, anyhow.”

I never saw him again.

Of course, the foregoing narrative is only illustrative of the exuberance of the Irish nature under depressing circumstances; but I have also come in contact with sub-editors who were constitutionally quarrelsome. They were nearly as disagreeable to work with as those who were perpetually standing on their dignity—men who were never without a complaint of being insulted. I bore with one of this latter class longer than any one else would have done. He was the most incompetent man whom I ever met, so that one night when he growled out that he had never been so badly treated by his inferiors as he was just at that instant, I had no compunction in saying,—

“By whom?”

“By my inferiors in this office,” he replied.

“I’d like to know where your inferiors are,” said I. “They’re not in this office—so much I can swear. I doubt if they are in any other.”

He asked me if I meant to insult him, and I assured him that I invariably made my meaning so plain when I had occasion to say anything, there was no excuse for asking what I meant.

He never talked to me again about being insulted.

Another curious specimen of an extinct animal was subject to remarkable fits of depression and moroseness. He offered to make me a bet one night that he would not be alive on that day week. I took him up promptly, and offered to stake a five-pound note on the issue, provided that he did the same. He said he hadn’t a five-pound note in the world, though he had been toiling like a galley slave for twenty years. I pitied the poor fellow, though it was not until I saw his wife—a mass of black beads and pomatum—that I recognised his right to the consolation of pessimism. I believe that he was only deterred from suicide by an irresistible belief in a future state. He had heard a well-meant but injudicious sermon in which the statement was made that husband and wife, though parted by death, would one day be reunited. Believing this he lived on. What was the use of doing anything else?

I met with another sub-editor on whom for a period I looked with some measure of awe, being *in statu pupillari* at the time.

Every night he used to take a razor out of his press and lay it beside his desk, having opened it with great deliberation and a hard look upon his haggard face. I believed that he was possessed of strong suicidal impulses, and that he was placing the razor where it would be handy in case he should find it necessary to make away with himself some night or in the early hours of the morning.

I held him in respect for just one month. At the end of that time I saw him sharpening his pencil with the razor, and I ventured to inquire if he usually employed the instrument for that purpose.

“I do,” he replied. “I lost six penknives in this room within a fortnight; those blue-pencilled reporters use up a lot of knives, and they never buy any, so I brought down this old razor. They’ll not steal that.”

And they didn't.

But I lost all respect for that sub-editor.

CHAPTER VII.—SOME EXTINCT TYPES.

A perturbed spirit—The loss of a fortune—A broken bank—A study in bimetallism—Auri sacra fames—A rough diamond—A friend of the peerage—And of Dublin stout—His weaknesses—The Quarterly Review—The dilemma—An amateur hospital nurse—A terrible night—Benvenuto Cellini—A subtle jest—The disappearance of the jester—An appropriated leaderette—An appropriated anecdote—An appropriated quatrain.

ONCE I saw a sub-editor actually within easy reach of suicide. It was not the duplicating of a five-column speech in flimsy, nor was it that the foreman printer had broken his heart. It was that he had been the victim of a heartless theft. His savings of years had been carried off in the course of a single night. So he explained to me with "tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect," when I came down to the office one evening. He was walking up and down his room, with three hours' arrears of unopened telegrams on his desk and a *p.p.c.* note from the foreman beneath a leaden "rule," used as a paper weight; for the foreman, being, as usual, a conscientious man, invariably promised to hand in his notice at sundown if kept waiting for copy.

"What on earth is the matter?" I inquired.

"Is it neuralgia or——"

"It's worse—worse!" he moaned. "I've lost all my money—all—all! there's the tin I kept it in—see for yourself if there's a penny left in it." He threw himself into his chair and bowed down his head upon his hands.

Far off a solitary (speaking) trumpet blew.

"If the hands are to go home you've only got to say so and I release them," was the message that was delivered into my ear when I went to the end of the tube communicating with the foreman.

"Three columns will be out inside half an hour," I replied. Then I turned to the sobbing sub-editor. "Come," said I, "bear it like a man. It's a terrible thing, of course, but still it must be faced. Tell me how many pounds you've lost, and I'll put the matter into the hands of the police."

He looked up with a vacant white face.

"How many—there were a hundred and forty pence in the tin when I went home last night. See if there's a penny left."

A cursory glance at the chocolate tin that lay on the table was quite sufficient to convince me that it was empty.

"Cheer up," I said. "A hundred and forty pence. It sounds large in pence, to be sure, but when you think of it from the standard of the silver currency it doesn't seem so formidable. Eleven and eightpence. Of course it's a shocking thing. Was it all in pence?"

"All—all—every penny of it."

"Keep up your heart. We may be able to trace the money. I suppose you are prepared to identify the coins?"

He ran his fingers through his hair, and I could see that he was striving manfully to collect his thoughts.

"Identify? I could swear to them if I saw them in the lump—one hundred and forty—one—hundred—and—forty—pence! Yes, I'll swear that I could swear to them in the lump. But singly—oh, I'll never see them again!"

"Tell me how it came about that you had so much money in this room," said I, beginning to open the telegrams. "Man, did you not think of the terrible temptation that you were placing in the way of the less opulent members of the staff? Eleven and eight in a disused chocolate tin! It's a temptation like this that turns honest men into thieves."

Then it was that he informed me on the point upon which I confess I was curious—namely, how he came to have this fortune in copper.

His wife, he said, was in the habit of giving him a penny every rainy night, this being his tramcar fare from his house to his office. But—he emphasised this detail—she was usually weak enough not to watch to see whether he got into the tramcar or not, and the consequence was that, unless the night was very wet indeed, he was accustomed to walk the whole way and thus save the penny, which he nightly deposited in the chocolate tin: he could not carry it home with him, he said, for his wife would be certain to find it when she searched his waistcoat pockets before he arose in the morning.

"For a hundred and forty times you persevered in this course of duplicity for the sake of the temporary gain!" said I. "It is this craving to become quickly rich that is the curse of the nineteenth century. I thought that journalists were free from it; I find that they are as bad as Stock Exchange gamblers or magazine proprietors. Oh, gold! gold! Go on with your work or there'll be a blue-pencilled row to-morrow. Don't fancy you'll obtain the sympathy of any human being in your well-earned misfortune. You don't deserve to have so good a wife. A penny every rainy night—a penny! Oh, I lose all patience when I think of your complaining. Go on with your work."

He went on with his work.

Some months after this incident he thought it necessary to tell me that he was a Scotchman.

It was not necessary; but I asked him if his wife was one too.

“Not exactly,” said he argumentatively. “But she’s a native of Scotland—I’ll say that much for her.”

I afterwards heard that he had become the proprietor of that very journal upon which he had been sub-editor.

I was not surprised.

My memories of the sub-editor’s room include a three months’ experience of a remarkable man. He imposed upon me for nearly a week, telling me anecdotes of the distinguished persons whom he had met in the course of his career. It seemed to me—for a week—that he was the darling of the most exclusive society in Europe. He talked about noble lords by their Christian names, and of noble ladies with equal breezy freedom. Many of his anecdotes necessitated a verbatim report of the replies made by marquises and countesses to his playful sallies; and I noticed that, so far as his recollection served him, they had always addressed him as George; sometimes—but only in the case of over-familiar daughters of peers—Georgie. I felt—for a week—that journalism had made a sensible advance socially when such things were possible. Perhaps, I thought, some day the daughter of a peer may distort my name, so that I may not die undistinguished.

I have seen a good many padded peeresses and dowdy duchesses since those days, and my ambition has somehow drifted into other channels; but while the man talked of his intimacies with peers, and his friendship—he assured me on his sacred word of honour (whatever that meant) that it was perfectly Platonic—with peeresses.

I was carried away—for a week.

He was an undersized man, with a rooted prejudice against soap and the comb. He spoke like a common man, and wore clothes that were clearly second-hand. He posed as the rough diamond, the untamed literary lion, the genius who refuses to be trammelled by the usages—most of them purely artificial—of society, and on whom society consequently dotes.

What he doted on was Dublin stout. If he had acquired during his intercourse with the aristocracy their effete taste in the way of drinking, he certainly managed to chasten it. He drank six bottles of stout in the course of a single night, and regretted that there was not a seventh handy.

For a month he did his work moderately well, but at the end of that time he began to put it upon other people. He made excuse after excuse to shirk his legitimate duties. One night he came down with a swollen face. He was suffering inexpressible agony from toothache, he said, and if he were to sit down to his desk he really would not guarantee that some shocking mistake would not occur. He would, he declared, be serving the best interests of the paper if he were to go home to his bed. He only waited to drink a bottle of stout before going.

A few days after his return to work he entered the office enveloped in an odoriferous muffler, and speaking hoarsely. He had, he said, caught so severe a cold that the doctor was not going to allow him to leave his house; but so soon as he got his back turned, he had run down to tell us that it was impossible for him to do anything for a night or two. He wanted to bind us down in the most solemn way not to let the doctor know that he came out, and we promised to let no one know except the manager. This assurance somehow did not seem to satisfy him. But he drank a bottle of porter and went away.

The very next week he came to me in confidence, telling me that he had just received the proofs of his usual political article in the *Quarterly*, and that the editor had taken the trouble to telegraph to him to return the proofs for press without fail the next day. Now, the only question with him was, should he chuck up the *Quarterly*, for which he had written for many years, or the humble daily paper in the office of which he was standing.

I did not venture to suggest a solution of the problem.

He did.

“Maybe you wouldn’t mind taking a squint”—his phraseology was that of the rough genius—“through the telegrams for to-night,” said he. “I don’t like to impose on a good-natured sonny like you, but you see how I’m situated. Confound that *Quarterly!*”

“Do you do the political article for the *Quarterly?*” I asked.

“Man, I’ve done it for the past eleven years,” said he. “I thought every one knew that. It’s editor of the *Quarterly* that I should be to-day if William Smith hadn’t cut me out of the job. But I bear him no malice—bless your soul, not I. You’ll go over the flimsies?”

I said I would, and he wiped a bath sponge of porter-froth off his beard in order to thank me.

I knew that he was telling me a lie about the *Quarterly*, but I did his work.

Less than a week after, he entered my room to express the hope that I would be able to make arrangements to have his work done for him once again, the fact being that he had just received a message from Mrs. Thompson—the wife of young Thompson, the manager for Messrs. Gibson, the shippers—to ask him for heaven’s sake to help her to look after her husband that night. Young Thompson had been behaving rather wildly of late, it appeared, and was suffering from an attack of that form of heredity known as *delirium tremens*. He had been held down in the bed by three men and Mrs. Thompson the previous night, my informant said, and added that he himself would probably be one of a fresh batch on whom a similar duty would devolve inside an hour or so.

He had scarcely left the office—after refreshing himself by the artificial aid of Guinness—before a knock came to my door, and the next moment Mr. Thompson himself quietly entered. I saw that the poker was within easy reach, and then asked him how he was.

“I’m all right,” he replied. “I merely dropped in to borrow the *Glasgow Herald* for a few minutes. I heard to-day that a ship of ours was reported as spoken, but I can’t find it in any paper that has come to us.”

“You can have the *Herald* with pleasure,” said I. “You didn’t go to the concert last night?”

“No,” said he. “You see it was the night of our choir practice, and I had to attend it to keep the others up to their work.”

The next night I asked the sub-editor how his friend Mr. Thompson was, and if he had experienced much difficulty in keeping him from making an onslaught upon the snakes.

He shook his head solemnly, as if his experiences of the previous night were too terrible to be expressed in ordinary colloquialisms.

“Sonny,” said he, “pray that you may never see all that I saw last night.”

“Or all that Thompson saw,” said I. “Was he very bad?”

“As bad as they make them,” he replied. “I sat on his head for hours at a stretch.”

“When he was off his head you were on it?”

“Ay; but every now and again he would, by an almost superhuman effort, toss me half way up to the ceiling. Man, it was an awful night! It’s heartless of me not being with the poor woman now; but I said I’d do a couple of hours’ work before going.”

“All right,” said I. “Maybe Thompson will call here and you can walk up with him.”

“Thompson call? What the blue pencil do you mean?”

“Just what I say. If you had waited for five minutes last night you might have had his company up to that pleasant little *séance* in which you turned his head into a chair. He called to see the *Glasgow Herald* before you could have reached the end of the street.”

He gave a little gasp.

“I didn’t say Thompson, did I?” he asked, after a pause.

“You certainly did,” said I.

“I’ll be forgetting my own name next,” said he. “The man’s name is Johnston—he lives in the corner house of the row I lodge in.”

“Anyhow, you’ll not see him to-night,” said I.

The fellow failed to exasperate me even then. But he succeeded early the next month. He came to me one night with a magazine in his hand.

“I wonder if the boss”—I think I mentioned that he was a rough diamond—“would mind my inserting a column or so of extracts from this paper of mine in the *Drawing Room* on Benvenuto Cellini?” He pronounced the name “Selliny.”

“On whom is the paper?” I inquired.

“Selliny—Benvenuto Selliny. I’ve made Selliny my own—no man living can touch me there. I knocked off the thing in a hurry, but it reads very well, though I say it who shouldn’t.”

“Why shouldn’t you say it?” I inquired.

“Well when you’ve written as much as me,”—he was a rough diamond—“maybe you’ll be as modest,” he cried, gaily. “When you can knock off a paper——”

“There’s one paper that you’ll not knock off, but that you’ll be pretty soon knocked off,” said I; “and that paper is the one that you are connected with just now. If lies were landed property you’d be one of the largest holders of real estate in the world. I never met such a liar as you are. You never wrote that article on Benvenuto Cellini—you don’t even know how to pronounce the man’s name.”

“The boy’s mad—mad!” he cried, with a laugh that was not a laugh. “Mr. Barton,”—the managing editor had entered the room,—“this fair-haired young gentleman is a bit off his head, I’m thinking.”

“I’m not off my head in the least,” said I. “Do you mean to say, in the presence of Mr. Barton, that you wrote that paper in the *Drawing Room* on Benvenuto Cellini?”

“Do you want me to take my oath that I wrote it?” said he. “What makes you think that I didn’t write it?”

“Nothing beyond the fact that I wrote it myself, and that this slip of paper which I hold in my hand is the cheque that was sent to me in payment for it, and that this other slip is the usual form of acknowledgment—you see the title of the article on the side—which I have to post to-morrow.”

There was a silence in the room. The managing editor had seated himself in my chair and was scribbling something at the desk.

“My fair-haired friend,” said the sub-editor, “I thought that you would have seen from the first the joke I was playing on you. Why, man, the instant I read the paper I knew it was by you. Don’t you fancy that I know your fluent style by this time?”

“I fancy that there’s no greater liar on earth than yourself,” said I.

“Look here,” he cried, assuming a menacing attitude. “I can stand a lot, but——”

“And so can I,” said the managing editor, “but at last the breaking strain is reached. That paper will allow of your drawing a month’s salary to-morrow,”—he handed him the paper which he had scribbled,—“and I think that as this office has done without you for eleven nights during the past month, it will do without you for the twelfth. Don’t let me find you below when I am going away.”

He didn’t.

I cannot say that I ever met another man connected with a newspaper quite so unscrupulous as the man

with whom I have just dealt. I can certainly safely say that I never again knew of a journalist laying claim to the authorship of anything that I wrote, either in a daily paper, where everything is anonymous, or in a magazine, where I employed a pseudonym. No one thought it worth his while doing so. A man who was not a journalist, however, took to himself the honour and glory associated with the writing of a leaderette of mine on the excellent management of a local library. The man who was idiot enough to do so was a theological student in the Presbyterian interest. He began to frequent the library without previously having paid his fare, and on being remonstrated with mildly by the young librarian, said that surely it was not a great concession on the part of the committee to allow him the run of the building after the article he had written in the leading newspaper on the manner in which the institution was conducted. It so happened, however, that the librarian had, at my request, furnished me with the statistics that formed the basis of the leaderette, and he had no hesitation in saying of the divinity student at his leisure what David said of all men in his haste. But after being thrust out of the library and called an impostor, the divinity student went home and wrote a letter signed "Theologia," in which he made a furious onslaught upon the management of the library, and had the effrontery to demand its insertion in the newspaper the next day.

He is now a popular and deservedly respected clergyman, and I hear that his sermon on Acts v., 1-11 is about to be issued in pamphlet form.

Curiously enough quite recently a man in whose chambers I was breakfasting, pointed out to me what he called a good story that had appeared in a paper on the previous evening.

The paragraph in which it was included was as follows:—

"A rather amusing story is told by the *Avilion Gazettes* Special Commissioner in his latest article on 'Ireland as it is and as it would be.' It is to the effect that some of the Irish members recently wished to cross the Channel for half-a-crown each, and to that end called on a boat agent, a Tory, who knew them, when the following conversation took place:—

"'Can we go across for half-a-crown each?'

"'No, ye can't, thin.'

"'An' why not?'

"'Because'tis a cattle boat.'

"'Nevermind that, sure we're not particular.'

"'No, but the cattle are.'"

That was the entire paragraph..

"It's a bit rough on your compatriots," said my host. "You look as if you feel it."

"I do," said I; "I feel it to be rather sad that a story that a fellow takes the trouble to invent and to print in a pamphlet, should be picked up by an English correspondent in Dublin, printed in one of his letters from Ireland, and afterwards published in a London evening paper without any acknowledgment being made of the source whence it was derived."

And that is my opinion still. The story was a pure invention of my own, and it was printed in an anonymous skit, only without the brogue. It was left for the English Special Commissioner to make a feature of the brogue, of which, of course, he had become a master, having been close upon two days in Dublin.

But the most amusing thing to me was to find that the sub-editor of the newspaper with which I was connected had actually cut the paragraph out of the London paper and inserted it in our columns. He pointed it out to me on my return, and asked me if I didn't think it a good story.

I said it was first rate, and inquired if he had ever heard the story before. He replied that he never had.

That was, I repeat, the point of the whole incident which amused me most; for I had made the sub-editor a present of the original pamphlet, and he said he had enjoyed it immensely.

He also hopes to be one day an ordained clergyman.

When in Ireland during the General Election of 1892, I got a telegram one night informing me that Mr. Justin M'Carthy had been defeated in Derry that day by Mr. Ross, Q.C.

It occurred to me that if a quatrain could be made upon the incident it might be read the next day. The following was the result of the great mental effort necessary to bring to bear upon the task:—

"That the Unionists Derry can win
    Is a matter to-day beyond doubt;
For Ross the Q.C. is just in,
    And the one that's Justin is just out."

I put my initials to this masterpiece, and I need scarcely say that I was dizzy with pride when it appeared at the head of a column the next morning. Now, that thing kept staring me in the face out of every newspaper, English as well as Irish, that I picked up during the next fortnight, only it appeared without my initials, but in compensation bore as preface, lest the reader might be amazed at coming too suddenly upon such subtle humour, these words:—

"The following epigram by a Dublin wit is being widely circulated in the Irish metropolis." Some months afterwards, when I chanced to pay a visit to Dublin, the author of the epigram was pointed out to me.

"So it was he who wrote that thing about just in and just out?" I remarked.

“It was,” said my friend. “I’d introduce you to him only, between ourselves, though a nice enough fellow before he wrote that, *he hasn’t been very approachable since*.”

I felt extremely obliged to the gentleman. I thought of Mary Barton, the heroic lady represented by Miss Bateman long ago, who had accused herself of the crime committed by another.

CHAPTER VIII.—MEN, MENUS, AND MANNERS.

A humble suggestion—The reviewer from Texas—His treatment of the story of Joseph and his Brethren—A few flare-up headings—The Swiss pastor—Some musical critics—“Il Don Giovanni”—A subtle point—Newspaper suppers—Another suggestion—The bitter cry of the journalist—The plurality of porridge—An object lesson superior to grammatical rules—The bloater as a supper dish—Scarcely an unequivocal success.

I HOPE I may not be going too far when I express the hope in this place that any critic who finds out that some of my jottings are ancient will do me the favour to state where the originals are to be found. I have sufficient curiosity to wish to see how far the jottings deviate from the originals.

In the preparation of stories for the Press it is, I feel more impressed every day, absolutely necessary to bear in mind the authentic case of the young sailor’s mother who abused him for telling her so palpably impossible a yarn about his having seen fish rise from the water and fly along like birds, but who was quite ready to accept his account of the crimson expanse of the Red Sea. Some of the most interesting incidents that have actually come under my notice could not possibly be published if accuracy were strictly observed as to the details. They are “owre true” to obtain credence..

In this category, however, I do not include the story about the gentleman from Texas who, after trying various employments in Boston to gain a dishonest livelihood, represented himself at a newspaper office as a journalist, and only asked for a trial job. The editor, believing he saw an excellent way of getting rid of a parcel of books that had come for review, flung him the lot and told him to write three-quarters of a column of flare-up head-lines, and a quarter of reviews, and maybe some fool might be attracted to the book column. Now, at the top of the batch there chanced to be the first instalment of a new Polyglot Bible, after the plan so successfully adopted by Messrs. Bagster, about to be issued in parts, and the reviewer failed to recognise the Book of Genesis, which he accordingly read for fetching head-lines. The result of his labours by some oversight appeared in the next issue of the paper, and attracted a considerable amount of interest in religious circles in Boston.

HANNIBAL H. HOSKINS' SONS' LATEST.

A Firm of Some "Parts."

THE LAST BATCH.

ALL HOT FROM THE OVEN.

Hoskins thinks Boston wants to know all about the First Sheenies.

A Jew with a New Coat!!

Joseph, the Dude of Judee.

NO SHOW FOR JOE DOWN IN JUDEE.

Mrs. Potiphar Goes One Better than Joe.

The Colonel Fires Out his Butler!

He makes the Baker Git!

Brother Ben Arrives on the Hurricane-Deck of a Mule.

THE TWELVE BRETHREN.

ALL SHEENIES.

THEY SKIP.

JOE MAKES A CORNER IN BREADSTUFFS.

He Wins on the McKinley Ticket.

IS IT A SKIT UPON BOSTON SOCIETY?

ONLY HOSKINS' LITTLE JOKE!

BULLY HANNIBAL!!!!!

Only Don't Do It Again.

The remaining quarter of a column was occupied by a circumstantial and highly colloquial account of the incidents recorded in the Book of Genesis, and it very plainly suggested that the work had been published by Messrs. Hoskins as a satire upon the success of the Hebrew race in the New England States. The reviewer even made an attempt to identify Joseph with a prominent Republican politician, and Potiphar's wife with the Democratic party, who were alleged to be making overtures to the same gentleman.

But I really did once meet with a sub-editor who had reviewed "The Swiss Family Robinson" as a new work. He commenced by telling the readers of the newspaper that the book was a wholesome story of a worthy Swiss pastor, and so forth.

I also knew a musical critic who, on being entrusted with the duty of writing a notice of *Il Don Giovanni*, as performed by the Carl Rosa Company, began as follows: "Don Giovanni, the gentleman from whom the opera takes its name, was a licentious Spanish nobleman of the past century." The notice gave some account of the *affaires* of this newly-discovered reprobate, glossing over the Zerlina business rather more than Mozart thought necessary to do, but being very bitter against Leporello, "his valet and confidant," and finally expressing the opinion somewhat dogmatically that "few of the public would be disposed to say that the fate which overtook this callous scoundrel was not well earned by his persistence in a course of unjustifiable vice. The music is tuneful and was much encored."

Upon the occasion of this particular representation I recollect that I wrote, "An Italian version of a Spanish story, set to music by a German, conducted by a Frenchman, and interpreted by a Belgian, a Swiss, an Irishman and a Canadian—this is what is meant by English Opera."

My notice gave great offence; but the other was considered excellent.

The moral tone that pervaded it was most praiseworthy, the people said.

And so it was.

I have got about five hundred musical jottings which, if provoked, I may one day publish; but, meantime, I cannot refrain from giving one illustration of the way in which musical notices were managed long ago.

Madame Adelina Patti had made her first (and farewell) appearance in the town where I was located. I was

engaged about two o'clock in the morning putting what I considered to be the finishing touches to the column which I had written about the diva's concert, when the reporter of the leading paper burst into the room in which I was writing. He was in rather a dishevelled condition, and he approached me and whispered that he wanted to ask me a question outside—there were others in the room. I went through the door with him and inquired what I could do for him.

"I was marked for that blessed concert, and I went too, and now I'm writing the notice," said he. "But what I want to know is this—*Is Patti a soprano or a contralto?*"

I have just now discovered that it would be unwise for me to continue very much farther these reminiscences of editors and sub-editors, the fact being that I have some jottings about every one of the race whom I have ever met, and when one gets into a desultory vein of anecdotage like that in which I now find myself for the first time in my life, one is liable to exhaust a reader's forbearance before one's legitimate subject has become exhausted. I think it may be prudent to make a diversion at this period from the sub-editors of the past to the suppers of the newspaper office. Gastronomy as a science is not drawn out to its finest point within these precincts. There is still something left to be desired by such persons as are fastidious. I have for long thought that it would be by no means extravagant to expect every newspaper office to be supplied with a kitchen, properly furnished, and with the "good plain cook," who so constantly figures in the columns (advertising), at hand to turn out the suppers for all departments engaged in the production of the paper.

It is inconvenient for an editor to be compelled to cook his own supper at his gas stove, while the flimsies of the speech upon which he is writing are being laid on his desk by the sub-editor, and the foreman's messenger is asking for them almost before they have ceased to flutter in the cooling draught created by opening the door. Equally inconvenient is it for the sub-editor and the reporters to get something to prevent them from succumbing to starvation. The compositors in some offices have lately instituted a rule by which they "knock off" for supper at half-past ten; but what sort of a meal do they get to sustain them until four in the morning? I have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be almost as indifferent as that upon which the editor is forced to subsist for, perhaps, the same period. I have seen the compositors—some of them earning £5 a week—crouching under their cases, munching hunches (the onomatopæia is Homeric) of bread, while their cans of tea—that abomination of cold tea warmed up—were stewing over their gas burners.

In the sub-editors' room, and the reporters' room, tea was also being cooked, or bottles of stout drunk, the accompanying, comestibles being bread or biscuits. After swallowing tea that has been stewing on its leaves for half-an-hour, and eating a slab of office bread out of one hand while the other holds the pen, the editor writes an article on the grievances of shopmen who are only allowed an hour for dinner and half-an-hour for tea; or, upon the slavery of a barmaid; or, perhaps, composes a nice chatty half-column on the progress of dyspepsia and the necessity for attending carefully to one's diet.

Now, I affirm that no newspaper office should be without a kitchen. The compositors should be given a chance of obtaining all the comforts of home at a lesser cost than they could be provided at home; and later on in the night the reporters, sub-editors, and editor should be able to send up messages as to the hour they mean to take supper, and the dish which they would like to have. Here is an opportunity for the Institute of Journalists. Let them take sweet counsel together on the great kitchen question, and pass a resolution "that in the opinion of the Institute a kitchen in complete working order should form part of every morning newspaper office; and that a cook, holding a certificate from South Kensington, or, better still, Mrs. Marshall, should be regarded as essential to the working staff as the editor."

I do not say that a box of Partagas, or Carolinas, should be provided by the management for every room occupied by the literary staff; though undoubtedly a move in the right direction, yet I fear that public feeling has not yet been sufficiently aroused by the bitter cry of the journalist, to make the cigar-box and the club chair probable; but I do say that since journalism has become a profession, those who practise it should be treated as if they were as deserving of consideration as the salesmen in drapers' shops. Surely, as we have sent the bitter cry into all the ends of the earth on behalf of others, we might be permitted the luxury of a little bitter cry on our own account.

This brings me down to the recollections I retain of the strange ideas that some of the staff of journals with which I have been connected, possessed as to the most appropriate menu for supper. One of these gentlemen, for instance, was accustomed to make oatmeal porridge in a saucepan for himself about two o'clock in the morning. When accused of being a Scotchman, he indignantly denied that he was one. He admitted, however, that he was an Ulsterman, and this was considered even worse by his accusers. He invariably alluded to the porridge in the plural, calling it "them." I asked him one night why the thing was entitled to a plural, and he said it was because no one but a blue-pencilled fool would allude to it as otherwise. I had the curiosity to inquire farther how much porridge was necessary to be in the saucepan before it became entitled to a plural; if, for instance, there was only a spoonful, surely it would be rather absurd to still speak of it as "them." He replied, after some thought, that though he had never considered the matter in all its bearings, yet his impression was that even a spoonful was entitled to a plural.

"Did you ever hear any one allude to brose as 'it'?" he asked.

I admitted that I never had.

"Then if you call brose 'them,' why shouldn't you call stirabout 'them'?" he asked, triumphantly.

"I must confess that I never had the matter brought so forcibly before me," said I.

As he was going to "sup them," as he termed the operation of ladling the contents of the saucepan into his mouth, I hastily left the room. I have eaten tiffin within easy reach of a dozen lepers on Robben Island in

Table Bay, I have taken a hearty supper in a tent through which a camel every now and again thrust its nose, I have enjoyed a biltong sandwich on the seat of an African bullock waggon with a Kaffir beside me, I have even eaten a sausage snatched by the proprietor from the seething panful in the window of a shop in the Euston Road—I did so to celebrate the success of a play of mine at the Grand Theatre—but I could not remain in the room while that literary gentleman partook of that simple supper of his.

On my return when he had finished I never failed to allow in the most cordial way the right of the preparation to a plural. It was to be found in every part of the room; the table, the chairs, the floor, the fireplace, the walls, the ceiling—all bore token to the fact that it was not one but many.

In the hands of a true Ulsterman stirabout "are" a terrible weapon.

As a mural decorative medium "they" leave much to be desired.

Only one man connected with the Press did

I ever know addicted to the bloater as a supper dish. The man came among us like a shadow and disappeared as such, after a week of incompetence; but he left a memory behind him that not all the perfumes of Arabia can neutralise. It was about one o'clock in the morning—he had come on duty that night—that there floated through the newspaper office a dense blue smoke and a smell—such a smell! It was of about the same density as an ironclad. One felt oneself struggling through it as though it were a mass of chilled steel plates, backed with soft iron. On the upper floor we were built in by it, so to speak. It arose on every side of us like the wall of a prison, and we kept groping around it for a hole large enough to allow of our crawling through. Two of us, after battering at that smell for a quarter of an hour, at last discovered a narrow passage in it made by a current of air from an open window, and having squeezed ourselves through, we ran downstairs to the sub-editors' room.

Through the crawling blue smoke we could just make out the figure of a man standing in his shirt sleeves in front of the fire using a large two-pronged iron fork as a toothpick. On a plate on the table lay the dislocated backbone of a red herring (*harengus rufus*).

The man was perfectly self-possessed. We questioned him closely about the origin of the smoke and the smell, and he replied that, without going so far as to pronounce a dogmatic opinion on the subject, and while he was quite ready to accept any reasonable suggestion on the matter from either of us, he, for his part, would not be at all surprised if it were found on investigation that both smoke and smell were due to his having openly cooked a rather bloated specimen of the Yarmouth bloater. He always had one for his supper, he said; critically, when not too pungent—he disliked them too pungent—he considered that a full-grown bloater, well preserved for its years and considering the knocking about that it must have had, was fully equal to a beefsteak. There was much more practical eating in it, he should say, speaking as man to man. And it was so very simple—that was its great charm.

For himself, he never could bear made-up dishes; they were, he thought, usually rich, and he had a poor-enough digestion, so that he could not afford to trifle with it.

Just then the foreman loomed through the dense smoke, and, being confronted with the hydra-headed smell, he boldly grappled with it, and after a fierce contest, he succeeded in strangling one of the heads and then set his foot on it. He hurriedly explained to the subeditor that all the hands who had lifted the copy that had been sent out were setting it up with bowls of water beside them to save themselves the trouble of going to the water-tap for a drink.

The next day the clerks in the mercantile department were working with bottles of carbolic under their noses, and every now and again a note would be brought in from a subscriber ordering his paper to be stopped until a new consignment of printers' ink should arrive, in which the chief ingredient was not so pungent.

At the end of a week the sub-editor was given a month's salary and an excellent testimonial, and was dismissed. The proprietor of the journal had the sub-editors' room freshly painted and papered, and made the assistant-editor a present of two pounds to buy a new coat to replace the one which, having hung in the room for an entire night, had to be burnt, no cleaner being found who would accept the risk of purifying it. The cleaners all said that they would not run the chance of having all the contents of their vats left on their hands. They weren't as a rule squeamish in the matter of smells; they only drew the line at creosote, and the coat was a long way on the other side.

Seven years have passed since that sub-editor partook of that simple supper, and yet I hear that every night drag-hounds howl at the door of the room, and strangers on entering sniff, saying,—

"Whew! there's a barrel of red herrings somewhere about."

CHAPTER IX.—ON THE HUMAN IMAGINATION.

Mr. Henry Irving and the Stag's Head—The sense of smell—A personal recollection—Caught "tripping"—The German band—In the pre-Wagnerian days—Another illustration of a too-sensitive imagination—The doctor's letter—Its effects—A sudden recovery—The burial service is postponed indefinitely.

IT might be as well, I fancy, to accept with caution the statement made in the last lines of the foregoing chapter. At any rate, I may frankly confess that I have always done so, knowing how apt one is to be carried away by one's imagination in some matters. Mr. Henry Irving told me several years ago a curious story on this very point, and in regard also to the way in which the imagination may be affected through the sense of smell.

When he was very young he was living at a town in the west of England, and in one of the streets there was a hostelry which bore a swinging sign with a stag's head painted upon it, with a sufficient degree of legibility to enable casual passers-by to know what it was meant to simulate. But every time he saw this sign, he had a feeling of nausea that he could overcome only by hurrying on down the street. Mr. Irving explained to me that it did not appear to him that this nausea was the result of an offended artistic perception owing to any indifferent draughtsmanship or defective *technique* in the production of the sign. It actually seemed to him that the painted stag possesses some influence akin to the evil eye, and it was altogether very distressing to him. After a short time he left the town, and did not revisit it until he had attained maturity; and then, remembering the stag's head and the curious way in which it had affected him long before, he thought he would look up the old place, if it still existed, and try if the evil charm of the sign had ceased to retain its potency upon him. He walked down the street; there the sign was swinging as of old, and the moment he saw it he had a feeling of nausea. Now, however, he had become so impregnated with the investigating spirit of the time, that he determined to search out the origin of the malign influence of the neighbourhood; and then he discovered that the second house from the hostelry was a soap and candle factory, on a sufficiently extensive scale to make a daily "boiling" necessary. It was the odour arising from this enterprise that induced the disagreeable sensation which he had experienced years before, and from which few persons are free when in the neighbourhood of tallow in a molten state.

I do not think that this story has been published. But even if it has appeared elsewhere it scarcely requires an apology.

Though wandering even more widely than usual from my text—after all, my texts are only pretexts for unlimited ramblings—I will give another curious but perfectly authentic case of the force of imagination. In this case the imagination was reached through the sense of hearing.

At one time I lived in a town at the extremity of a very fine bay, at the entrance to which there was a small village with a little bay of its own and a long stretch of sand, the joy of the "tripper." I was a "tripper" of six in those days, and during the summer months an excursion by steamer on the bay was one of the most joyous of experiences. But the steamer was a very small one, and apt to yield rather more than is consistent with modern ideas of marine stability to the pressure of the waves, which in a north-easterly wind—the prevailing one—were pretty high in our bay. The effect of this instability was invariably disastrous to a maiden aunt who was supposed to share with me the enjoyment of being caught "tripping." With the pertinacity of a man of six carrying a model of a cutter close to his bosom, I refused to "go below" under the circumstances, with my groaning but otherwise august relative, and she was usually extremely unwell. It so happened, however, that the proprietors of the steamboat were sufficiently enterprising to engage—perhaps I should say, to permit—a German band to drown the groans of the sufferers in the strains of the beautiful "Blue Danube," or whatever the waltz of the period may have been—the "Blue Danube" is the oldest that I can remember. Now, when the "season" was over, and the steamer was laid up for the winter, the Germans were accustomed to give open-air performances in the town; so that during the winter months we usually had a repetition on land of the summer's *répertoire* at sea. The first bray that was given by the trombone in the region of the square where we lived was, however, quite enough to make my aunt give distinct evidence of feeling "a little squeamish"; by the time the oboe had joined hands, so to speak, with the parent of all evil, the trombone, she had taken out her handkerchief and was making wry faces beneath her palpably false scalpet. But when the wry-necked fife, and the serpent—the sea-serpent it was to her—were doing their worst in league with, but slightly indifferent to, the cornet and the Saxe-horn, my aunt retired from the apartment amid the derisive yells of the young demons in the schoolroom, and we saw her no more until the master of the music had pulled the bell of the hall-door, and we had insulted him in his own language by shouting through the blinds "schlechte musik!—sehr schlechte musik!" We were ready enough to learn a language for insulting purposes, just as a parrot which declines to acquire the few refined words of its mistress, will, if left within the hearing of a groom, repeat quite glibly and joyously, phrases which make it utterly useless as a drawing-room bird in a house where a clergyman makes an occasional call. For years my aunt could never hear a German band without emotion, since the crazy little steamer had danced to their strains. In this case, it must also be remarked, the feeling was not the result of a highly-developed artistic temperament. The blemishes of the musical performances were in no way accountable for my relative's emotions, though I believe that the average German band frequenting what theatrical-touring companies call "B. towns," might reasonably be regarded as sufficient to precipitate an incipient disorder. No, it was the force of imagination that brought about my aunt's disaster, which, I regret to say, I occasionally purchased, when I felt that I owed myself a treat, for a penny, for this was the lowest sum that the *impresario* would take to come round our square and make my aunt sick. The sum was so absurdly low, considering the extent of the results produced, I am now aware that no really cultured musician, no *impresario* with any self-respect, would have accepted it to bring his band round the corner; but when one reflects that the sum on the original *scrittura* was invariably doubled—for my aunt sent a penny out when her sufferings became intense, to induce the band to go away—the transaction assumes another aspect.

We hear of the enormous increase in the salaries paid to musical artists nowadays, and as an instance of this I may mention that a friend of mine a few months ago, having occasion for the services of a German band—not for medicinal purposes but for a philological reason—was forced to pay two shillings before he could effect his object! Truly the conditions under which art is pursued have undergone a marvellous change within a quarter of a century. I could have made my aunt sick twenty-four times for the sum demanded for a single

performance nowadays. And in the sixties, it must also be remembered, Wagner had not become a power.

Strong-minded persons, such as the first Lord Brougham, may take a sardonic delight in reading their own obituary notices, and such persons would probably scoff at the suggestion made in an earlier chapter, that the shock of reading the record of his death in a newspaper might have a disastrous effect upon a man, but there is surely no lack of evidence to prove the converse of "*mentem mortalia tangunt*."

I heard when in India a story which seemed to me to be, as an illustration of the effects of imagination, quite as curious as the well-known case of the sailor who became cured of scurvy through fancying that the clinical thermometer with which the surgeon took his temperature was a drastic remedy. A young civil servant at Colombo felt rather fagged after an unusually long stretch of work, and made up his mind to consult the best doctor in the place. He did so, and the doctor went through the usual probings and stethoscopings, and then looked grave and went over half the surface again. He said he thought that on the whole he had better write his opinion of the "case" in all its particulars and send it to the patient.

The next morning the patient received the following letter:—

"My dear Sir,—I think it only due to the confidence which you have placed in me to let you know in the plainest words what is the result of my diagnosis of your condition. Your left lung is almost gone, but with care you might survive its disappearance. Unhappily, however, the cardiac complications which I suspected are such as preclude the possibility of your recovery. In brief, I consider it to be my duty to advise you to lose no time in carrying out any business arrangements that demand your personal attention. You may of course live for some weeks; but I think you would do wisely to count only on days.

"Meantime, I would suggest no material change in your diet, except the reduction of your brandy pegs to seven per diem."

This letter was put into the hands of the unfortunate man when he returned from his early ride the next morning. Its effect was to diminish to an appreciable degree his appetite for breakfast. He sat motionless on his chair out on the verandah and stared at the letter—it was his death-warrant. After an hour he felt a difficulty in breathing. He remembered now that he had always been uneasy about his lungs—his left in particular. He put his hand over the place where he supposed his heart to lie concealed. How could he have lived so many years in the world without becoming aware of the fact that as an every-day sort of an organ—leaving the higher emotions out of the question altogether—his heart was a miserable failure? Sympathy, friendship, love, emotion,—he would not have minded if his heart were incapable of these, if it only did its business as a blood pump; but it was perfectly plain from the manner in which it throbbed beneath his hand, that it was deserving of all the reprobation the doctor had heaped upon it.

His difficulty of respiration increased, and with this difficulty he became conscious of an acute pain under his ribs. He found when he attempted to rise that he could only do so with an effort. He managed to totter into his bedroom, and when he threw himself on his bed, it was with the feeling that he should never rise from it again.

His faithful Khânsâmah more than once inquired respectfully if the Preserver of the Poor would like to have the Doctor Sahib sent for, and if the Joy of the Whole World would in the meantime drink a peg. But the Preserver of the Poor had barely strength to express the hope that the disappearance of the Doctor Sahib might be effected by a supernatural agency, and the Joy of the Whole World could only groan at the suggestion of a peg. The pain under his ribs was increasing, and he had a general nightmare feeling upon him. Toward evening he sank into a lethargy, and at this point the Khânsâmah made up his mind that the time for action had come; he went for the doctor himself, and was fortunate enough to meet him going out in his buggy to dine.

"What on earth have you been doing with yourself?" he inquired, when he had felt the pulse of the patient. "Why, you've no pulse to speak of, and your skin—What the mischief have you been doing since yesterday?"

"How can you expect a chap's pulse to be anything particular when he has no heart worth speaking of?" gasped the patient.

"Who has no heart worth speaking of?"

The patient looked piteously up at him.

"That's kicking a man when he's down," he murmured.

"What's the matter with you anyway?" said the doctor. "Your heart's all right, I know—at least, it was all right yesterday. Is it your liver? Let me have a look at your eyes."

He certainly did let the doctor have a look at his eyes. He lay staring at the good physician for some minutes.

"No, your liver is no worse than it was yesterday," said the doctor,

"Do you mean to say that your letter was only a joke?" said the patient, still staring.

"A joke? Don't be a fool. Do you fancy that I play jokes upon my patients? I wrote to you what was the exact truth. I flatter myself I always tell the truth even to my patients."

"Oh," groaned the patient. "And after telling me that I hadn't more than a few days to live you now say my heart's all right."

"You're mad, my good fellow, mad! I said that you must go without the delay of a day for a change—a sea voyage if possible—and that in a week you'd be as well as you ever were. Where's the letter?"

It was lying on the side of the bed. The patient had read it again after he had thrown himself down.

"My God!" cried the doctor, when he had brought it over to the lamp. "An awful thing has happened. This is the letter that I wrote to Lois Perez, the diamond merchant, who visited me yesterday just before you came. My assistant must have put the letter that was meant for Perez into the envelope addressed to you, and your letter into the other cover. Great heavens!"

The patient was sitting up in the bed.

“You mean to say that—that—I’m all right?” he gasped.

“Of course you’re all right. You told me you wanted a sea voyage, and naturally I prescribed one for you to give you a chance of getting your leave without any trouble.”

The patient stared at the doctor for another minute and then fell back upon his pillow, turned his face to the wall, and wept.

Only for a few minutes, however; then he suddenly sprang from the bed, caught the doctor by the collar of his coat, looked around for a weapon of percussion, picked up the pillow and forthwith began to belabour the physician with such vehemence that the Khânsâmah, who hurried into the room hearing the noise of the scuffle, fled from the compound, being certain that the Joy of the Whole World had become a maniac.

After the lapse of about a minute the doctor was lying on the floor with the tears of laughter streaming down his cheeks and on to his disordered shirt-front, while the patient sat limp on a chair yelling with laughter—a trifle hysterically, perhaps. At the end of five minutes both were sitting over a bottle of champagne—not too dry—discussing the extraordinary effect of the imagination upon the human frame.

“But, by Jingo! I mustn’t forget poor Lois Perez,” cried the doctor, starting up. “You may guess what a condition he is in when you know that the letter you read was meant for him.”

“By heavens, I can make a good guess as to his condition,” said the patient. “I was within measurable distance of that condition half an hour ago. But I’m hanged if you are going to make any other poor devil as miserable as you made me. Let the chap die in peace.”

“There’s something in what you say,” said the doctor. “I believe that I’ll take your advice; only I must rescue your letter from him. If it were found among his effects after his death next week, I’d be set down as little better than a fool for writing that he was generally sound but in need of a long sea voyage.”

He drove off to the house of the Portuguese dealer in precious stones, and on inquiring for him, learned that he had left in the afternoon by the mail steamer to take the voyage that the doctor had recommended. He meant to call at the Andamans, and then go on to Rangoon, the man in charge of the house said.

“There’ll be an impressive burial service aboard that steamer before it arrives at the Andaman Islands,” said the doctor to his wife as he told her what had occurred. The doctor was in a very anxious state lest the letter which the Portuguese had received should be found among his papers. His wife, however, took a more optimistic view of the situation. And she was right; for Lois Perez returned in due course from Rangoon with a very fine collection of rubies; and five years afterwards he had still sufficient strength left to get the better of me in the sale of a cat’s-eye to which he perceived I had taken a fancy that was not to be controlled.

CHAPTER X—THE VEGETARIAN AND OTHERS.

“Benjamin’s mess”—An alluring name—Scarcely accurate—A frugal supper—Why the sub-editor felt rather unwell—“A man should stick to plain homely fare”—Two Sybarites—The stewed lemon as a comestible—The midnight apple—The roasted crabs—The Zenana mission—The pibroch as a musical instrument—A curious blunder—The river Deccan—Frankenstein as the monster—The outside critics—A critical position—The curate as critic—A liberal-minded clergyman—Bound to be a bishop—The joy-bells.

TO return to the sub-editors and their suppers, I may say that I never met but one vegetarian pressman. He was particularly fond of a supper dish to which the alluring name of Benjamin’s Mess was given by the artful inventor. I do not know if the editor of this compilation had any authority—Biblical or secular—for assuming that its ingredients were identical with those with which Joseph, with the best of intentions, no doubt, but with very questionable prudence, heaped upon the dish of his youngest brother. I am not a profound Egyptologist, but I have a distinct recollection of hearing something about the fleshpots of Egypt, and the longing that the mere remembrance of these receptacles created in the hearts of the descendants of Joseph and his Brethren, when undergoing a course of enforced vegetarianism, though somewhat different in character from that to which, at a later period, Nebuchadnezzar—the most distinguished vegetarian that the world has ever known—was subjected. Therefore, I think it is only scriptural to assume that the original mess of Benjamin was something like a glorified Irish stew, or perhaps what yachtsmen call “lobscouce,” and that it contained at least a neck of mutton and a knuckle of ham—the prohibition did not exist in those days, and if the stew did not contain either ham or corned beef it would not be worth eating. But the compilation of which my friend was accustomed to partake nightly, and to which the vegetarian cookery book arrogates the patriarchal title, was wholly devoid of flesh-meat. It consisted, I believe, of some lentils, parsnips, a turnip, a head of cabbage or so, a dozen of leeks, a quart of split peas, a few vegetable marrows, a cucumber, a handful of green gooseberries, and a diseased potato to give the whole a piquancy that could not be derived from the other simple ingredients.

I was frequently invited by the sub-editor to join him in his frugal supper, but invariably declined. I told him that I had no desire to convert my frame into a costermonger’s barrow.

Upon one occasion the man failed to come down to the office when he was due. He appeared an hour later, looking very pale. His features suggested those of an overboiled cauliflower that has not been sufficiently strained after being removed from the saucepan. He explained to me the reason of his delay and of his overboiled appearance.

“The fact is,” said he, “that I did not feel at all well this morning. For my breakfast I could only eat one covered dishful of peasepudding, a head or two of celery and a few carrots, with a tureen of lentil soup and a raw potato salad; so my wife thought she would tempt me with a delicacy for my dinner. She made me a bran pie all for myself—thirty-two Spanish onions and four Swedish turnips, with a beetroot or two for colouring, and a thick paste of oatmeal and bran—that’s why it’s called a bran pie. Confound the thing! It’s too fascinating. I can never resist eating it all, and scraping the stable bucket in which it is cooked. I did so to-day, and that’s why I’m late. Well, well, perhaps I’ll gain sense late in life. I don’t feel quite myself even yet. Oh, confound all those dainty dishes! A man should stick to plain homely fare when he has work to do.”

But on reflection I think that the most peculiar supper menus of the sub-editorial staff were those partaken of by two journalists who occupied the same room for close upon a year—a room to which I had access occasionally. One of these gentlemen was accustomed to place in a saucepan on the fire a number of unpeeled lemons with as much water as just covered them. After four hours’ stewing, this dainty midnight supper was supposed to be cooked. It certainly was eaten, and with very few indications, all things considered, of abhorrence, by the senior occupant of the sub-editor’s room. He told me once in confidence that he really did not dislike the stewed lemons very much. He had heard that they were conducive to longevity, and in order to live long he was prepared to make many sacrifices. There could be little doubt, he said, that the virtue attributed to them was real, for he had been partaking of them for supper for over three years, and he had never suffered from anything worse than acute dyspepsia. I congratulated him. Nothing worse than acute dyspepsia!

His stable companion, so to speak, did not believe in heavy hot suppers such as his colleague indulged in. He said it was his impression that no more light and salutary supper could be imagined than a single apple, not quite ripe.

He acted manfully up to his belief, for every night I used to see him eating his apple shortly after midnight, and without offering the fruit the indignity of a paring. The spectacle was no more stimulating than that of the lemon-eater. My mouth invariably became so puckered up through watching the midnight banquets of these Sybarites, it was only with difficulty that I could utter a word or two of weak acquiescence in their views on a question of recognised difficulty.

It is somewhat remarkable that the apple-eating sub-editor should be the one who was guilty of the most remarkable error I ever knew in connection with an attempted display of erudition. He had set out to write a lively little quarter-of-a-column leaderette on a topic which was convulsing society in those days—namely, the cruelty of boiling lobsters alive. I am not quite certain that the question has even yet been decided to the satisfaction either of the humanitarian who likes lobster salad, or of the lobster that finds itself potted. Perhaps the latter may some day come out of its shell and give us its views on the question.

At any rate, in the year of which I write, the topic was almost a burning one: the month was September, Parliament had risen, and as yet the sea-serpent had not appeared on the horizon. The apple-eating sub-editor was doing duty for the assistant-editor, who was on his holidays; and as evidence of his light and graceful erudition, he asserted in his article that, however inhuman modern cooks might be in their preparation of Crustacea for the fastidious palates of their patrons, quite as great cruelty—assuming that it was cruelty—was in the habit of being perpetrated in cookery in the days of Shakespeare. “Readers of the immortal bard of Avon,” he wrote, “will recollect how, in one of the charming lyrics to ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost,’ among the homely pleasures of winter it is stated that ‘roasted crabs hiss in the bowl.’

“This reference to the preparation of crabs for the table makes it perfectly plain that it was quite common to cook them alive, for were it otherwise, how could they hiss? That listening to the expression of the suffering of the crabs should be regarded by Shakespeare as one of the joys of a household, casts a somewhat lurid light upon the condition of English Society in the sixteenth century.”

It was the lemon-eating sub-editor who, on being requested by the editor to write something about the Zenana Mission, pointing out the great good that it was achieving, and the necessity there was for maintaining it in an efficient condition, produced a neat little article on the subject. He assured the readers of the paper that, among the many scenes of missionary labour, none had of late attracted more attention than the Zenana mission, and assuredly none was more deserving of this attention. Comparatively few years had passed since Zenana had been opened up to British trade, but already, owing to the devotion of a handful of men and women, the nature of the inhabitants had been almost entirely changed. The Zenanese, from being a savage people, had become, in a wonderfully short space of time, practically civilised; and recent travellers to Zenana had returned with the most glowing accounts of the continued progress of the good work in that country. The writer of the article then branched off into the “labourer-worthy-of-his-hire” side of this great evangelisation question—in most questions of missionary enterprise this side has a special interest attached to it—and the question was aptly asked if the devoted labourers in that remote vineyard were not deserving of support. Were civilisation and Christianity to be snatched from the Zenanese just when both were within their grasp? So on for nearly half a column the writer meandered in the most orthodox style, just as he had done scores of times before when advocating certain missions.

I found him the next day running his finger down the letter Z, in the index to the Handy Atlas, with a puzzled look upon his face. I knew then that he had received a letter from the editor, advising him to look out Zenana in the Atlas before writing anything further about so ticklish a region.

I also knew a sub-editor who fancied that the pibroch was a musical instrument widely circulated in the Highlands.

But who can blame a humble provincial journalist for making an odd blunder occasionally, when a leading

London newspaper, in announcing the death, some years ago, of Captain Wallace, son of Sir Richard Wallace, stated that the sad event had occurred while he was "playing at bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne"? It might reasonably have been expected, I think, that the sub-editor of the foreign news should know of the existence of the historic mansion Bagatelle, which the Marquis of Hertford left to Sir Richard Wallace with the store of art treasures that it contained.

What excuse, one may also ask, can be made for the Dublin Professor who referred in print "to those populous districts of Hindostan, watered by the Ganges and the Deccan"?

In alluding to Frankenstein as the monster, and not merely the maker of the monster, the mistakes made by provincial journalists of the old school may certainly also be condoned, when we find the same ridiculous hallucination maintained by one of the most highly representative of modern journalists, as-well as by the editor of a weekly paper of large circulation, who enshrined it in the preface to a book for which he was responsible. In this case the writer could not have been pressed for time. But the marvel is, not that so many errors are run into by provincial journalists, but that so few can be laid to their charge. With telegrams pouring in by private wire, as well as by the P.A. and C.N., to say nothing of Baron Reuter's and Messrs, Dalziel's special services; with the foreman printer, too, appearing like a silent spectre and departing like one that is not silent, leaving the impression behind him that no newspaper, except that composed by a hated rival, can possibly be produced the next morning;—with all these drags upon the chariot wheels of composition, how can it be reasonably expected that an editor or a sub-editor will become Academic in his erudition? When, however, it is discovered the next day by some tenth-rate curate, who probably gets a free copy of the paper, that the quotation "*O tempora! O mores!*" is attributed to Virgil instead of Cicero, in a leading article a column in length, written upon a speech of seven columns, the writer is at once referred to as an ignorant boor, and an invitation is given to all that curate's friends to point the finger of scorn at the journalist.

A long experience has convinced me that the curate who gets a free copy of the paper, and who is most velvet-gloved in approaching any member of the staff when he wants a favour, such as a leaderette on the Zenana Mission, in which several of his lady friends are deeply interested, or a paragraph regarding a forthcoming bazaar, or the insertion of a letter signed "Churchman," calling attention to some imaginary reform which he himself has instituted—this very curate is the person who sends the marked copies of the paper to the proprietor with a gigantic *Sic* opposite every mistake, even though it be only a turned letter.

I put a stop to the tricks of one of the race who had annoyed me excessively. I simply inserted verbatim a long letter that he wrote on some subject. It was full of mistakes, and to these the next day, in a letter which he meant to be humorous, he referred as "printer's errors." I took the liberty of appending an editorial note to this communication, mentioning that the mistakes existed in the original letter, and adding that I trusted the writer would not think it necessary to attribute to the printer the further blunders which appeared in the humorous communication to which my note was appended.

The fellow sought an interview with me the next day, and found it. He was furiously indignant at the course which I had adopted, and said I had taken advantage of the haste in which he had written both letters. I brought out of my desk forthwith a paper which he had taken the trouble to re-edit with red ink for the benefit of the proprietor, who had, naturally, handed it to me. I recognised the handwriting of the red-ink editor the moment I received the first of his letters.

"Did you make any allowance for the haste of the writers of these passages that you took the trouble to mark and send to the proprietor?" I inquired blandly.

He said he did not know what it was that I referred to; and added that it was a gratuitous assumption on my part to say that he had marked and sent the paper.

"Very well," said I. "I'll assume that you deny having done so. May I do so?"

"Certainly you may," he replied. "I have something else to do beside pointing out the blunders of your staff."

"Then I ask your pardon for having assumed that you marked the paper," said I. "I was too hasty."

"You were—quite too hasty," said he, going to the door.

"I've acknowledged it," said I. "And therefore I'll not go to your rector until to-morrow evening to prove to him that his curate is a sneak and a liar as well as an extremely ignorant person."

He returned as I sat down.

"What paper is it that you allude to?" he asked.

"I showed it to you," said I. "It was the paper that you re-edited in red ink and posted anonymously to the proprietor."

"Oh, that?" said he. "Why on earth didn't you say so at once? Of course I sent that paper. My dear fellow, it was only my little joke. I meant to have a little chaff with you about the mistakes."

"Go away—go away," said I. "Go away, *Stiggins*."

And he went away.

I need scarcely say that such clergymen are not to be interviewed every day. Equally exceptional, I think, was the clergyman who was good enough to pay me a visit a few months after I had joined the editorial staff of a daily paper. Although I had never exactly been the leader of the coughers in church, yet on the other hand I had never been a leader of the scoffers outside it; and somehow the parson had come to miss me. I had an uneasy feeling when he entered my room that he had come on business—that he might possibly have

fancied I was afflicted with doubts on, say, the right of unbaptised infants to burial in consecrated ground, and that he had come prepared to lift the burden from my soul; but he never so much as spoke of business until he had picked up his hat and gloves, and had said a cheerful farewell. Only then he remarked, as if the thing had occurred to him quite suddenly,—

"Oh, by the way, I don't think I noticed you in church during the past few Sundays. I was afraid that you were indisposed."

"Oh, no," said I. "I was all right; but the fact is, you see, that I've become a sort of editor, and as I can never get to bed before three or four in the morning, it would be impossible for me to rise before eleven. To be sure I'm not on duty on Saturday nights, but the force of habit is so great that, though I may go to bed in decent time on that night, I cannot sleep until my usual hour."

"Oh, I see, I see," said he, beginning to draw on his gloves. "Well, perhaps on the whole—all things considered—the—ah—" here he was seized with a fit of coughing, and when he recovered he said he had always been an admirer of old Worcester, and he rather thought that some cups which I had on a shelf were, on the whole, the most characteristic as regards shape that he had ever seen.

Then he went away, and I perceived from the appearance that his back presented to me, that he would one day become a bishop. A clergyman with such tact as he exhibited can no more avoid being made a bishop than the young seal can avoid taking to the water.

Before five years had passed he was, sure enough, raised to the Bench, and every one is delighted with him. The celery from the Palace garden invariably takes the first prize at the local shows; his lordship smiles when you congratulate him on his repeated successes with celery, but when you talk about chrysanthemums he becomes grave and shakes his head.

This is his tact.

The church of which he was rector was situated in a fashionable suburb of the town, and it possessed one of the noisiest peals of bells possible to imagine. They were the terror of the neighbourhood.

Upon one occasion an elderly gentleman living close to the church contracted some malady which necessitated, the doctor said, the observance of the strictest quiet, even on Sundays. A message was sent to the chief of the bellringers to this effect, the invalid's wife expressing the hope that for a Sunday or two the bells might be permitted to remain silent. Of course her very reasonable wish was granted. The chief of the ringers thoughtfully called every Sunday morning to inquire after the sufferer's condition, and for three weeks he learned that it was unchanged, and the bells consequently remained silent. On the fourth Sunday, he was told that the man had died during the night. He immediately hastened off to the other seven bellringers, worse than the first, and telling them that their prohibition was removed, they climbed the belfry and rang forth the most joyous peal that had ever annoyed the neighbourhood.

"Ah," said the lady with whom I lodged, "there are the joy bells once more. Poor Mr. Jenkins must be dead at last."

CHAPTER XI.—ON SOME FORMS OF SPORT.

An invitation to shoot rooks—The sub-editors gun—A quotation from "The Rivals"—The rook in repose—How the gun came to be smashed—Recollections of the Spanish Main—A greatly overrated sport—The story of Jack Burnaby's dogs—A fastidious man—His keeper's remonstrance—The Australian visitor—-A kind offer—Over-willing dogs—The story of a muzzle-loader—How Mr. Egan came to be alive—Why Patsy Muldoon smiled—The moral—Degrees of dampness—Below the surface—The chameleon blackberry—A superlative degree of thirst.

A FRIEND of mine once came to my office to invite me to an afternoon's rook-shooting. I was not in my room and he found me in the sub-editor's. I inquired about the trains to the place where the slaughter was to be done, and finding that they were satisfactory, agreed to join him on the following afternoon.

Then he turned to the sub-editor—a pleasant young fellow who had ideas of going to the bar—and asked him if he would care to come also. At first the sub-editor said he did not think he would be able to come, though he would like very much to do so. A little persuasion was sufficient to make him agree to be one of our party. He had not a gun of his own, he said, but a friend had frequently offered to lend him one, so that there would be no difficulty so far as that matter was concerned.

The next day I managed, as usual, just to catch the train as it began to move-away from the platform. My colleague on the newspaper had the door of the compartment open for me, and I could see the leather of his gun-case under the seat. I put my rook rifle—it was not in a case—in the network, and we had a delightful run through the autumn landscape to the station—it seemed miles from any village—where my friend was awaiting us in his dogcart, driving tandem. The drive of three miles to the rook-wood was exhilarating, and as we skirted some lines of old gnarled oaks, I perceived in a moment that we could easily fill a railway truck with birds, they were so plentiful. I made a remark to this effect to my friend, who was driving, and he said that when we arrived at the shooting ground and gave the birds the chance to which they were entitled we mightn't get more than a couple of hundred all told.

The shooting ground was under a straggling tree about fifty yards from the ruin of an old castle, said to

have been built by the Knights Templar. Here we dismounted from the dogcart, sending it a mile or two farther along the road in charge of the man, and got ready our rifles.

"What on earth have you got there?" my friend inquired of the sub-editor, who was working at the gun-case.

"It's the gun and cartridges," replied the young man; "but I'm not quite certain how to make fast the barrels to the stock."

"Great heavens!" cried my friend. "You've brought a double-barrelled sporting gun to shoot rooks!"

And so he had.

We tried to explain to him that for any human being to point such a weapon at a rook would be little short of murder, but he utterly failed to see the force of our arguments. He very good-humouredly said that, as we had come out to shoot rooks, he couldn't see how it mattered—especially to the rooks—whether they were shot with his gun or with our rook rifles. He added that he thought the majority of the birds were like Bob Acres, and would as lief be shot in an ungentlemanly as a gentlemanly attitude.

Of course it is impossible to argue with such a man. We only said that he must accept the responsibility for the butchery, and in this he cheerfully acquiesced, slipping cartridges into both barrels—the friend from whom he had borrowed the weapon had taught him how to do this.

We soon found that at this point the breaking-strain of his information was reached. He had no more idea of sport than a butcher, or the *Sonttag jager* of the *Oberlander Blatter.*

As the rooks flew from the ruins to the belt of trees my friend and I brought down one each, and by the time we had reloaded, we were ready for two more, but I fired too soon, so that only one bird dropped. I saw the eyes of the man with the shot-gun gleam, "his heart with lust of slaying strong," and he forthwith fired first one barrel and then the other at an old rook that cursed us by his gods, sitting on a branch of a tree ten yards off.

The bird flapped heavily away, becoming more vituperative every moment.

"Look here," I shouted, "you mustn't shoot at a bird that's sitting on a branch."

"Oh. yes," said my friend, with a grim smile. "Oh, yes, he may. It'll do him no more harm than the birds."

Not a bird did that young sportsman fire at except such as had assumed a sitting posture, and, incredible though it may seem, he only succeeded in killing one. But from the moment that his skill was rewarded by witnessing the downward flap of this one, the lust for blood seemed to take possession of him, as it does the young soldiers when their officers have succeeded in preventing them from blazing away at the enemy while still a mile off. He continued to load and fire at birds that were swaying on the trees beside us.

"There's a chance for you," said my friend, "sarkastik-like," pointing to a rook that had flapped into a branch just above our heads.

The young man, his face pale and his teeth set, was in no mood for distinguishing between one tone of voice and another. He simply took half a dozen steps into the open and, aiming steadily at the bird, fired both barrels simultaneously. Down came the rook in the usual way, clawing from branch to branch. It remained, however, for several seconds on a bough about eight feet from the ground; then we had a vision of the sportsman clubbing his gun, and making a wild rush at his prey—and then came a crash and a cheer. The sportsman held aloft in one hand the tattered rook and in the other a double-barrelled gun with a broken stock.

He had never fired a shot in his life before this day, and all his ideas of musketry were derived from the stories of pirates and buccaneers of the Spanish Main—wherever that may be—which had come to him for review. He thought that the clubbing of his weapon, in order to prevent the escape of the rook, quite a brilliant thing to do.

He had, however, completely smashed the gun, and that, my friend said, was a step in the right direction. He could not do any more butchery with it that day.

It cost him four pounds getting that gun repaired, and he confessed to me that, according to his experience, fowling was a greatly overrated sport.

It was while we were driving to the train that my friend told me the story of Jack Burnaby's dogs—a story which he frankly confessed he had never yet got any human being to believe, but which was accurate in all its details, and could be fully verified by affidavit. He did not succeed in obtaining my credence for it. There are other forms of falsehood besides those verified by an affidavit, and I could not have given more implicit disbelief than I did to the story, even if it had formed the subject of this legal method of embodying a fiction.

It appeared that never was there a more fastidious man in the matter of his sporting dogs than one Algy Grafton. Pointers that called for outbursts of enthusiasm on the part of other men—quite as good sportsmen as Algy—failed to obtain more than a complimentary word from him, and even this word of praise was grudgingly given and invariably tempered by many words which were certainly not susceptible of a eulogistic meaning.

Among his friends—such as declined to resent the insults which he put upon their dogs—there was a consensus of opinion that the animal which would satisfy him would not be born—allowing a reasonable time for the various processes of evolution—for at least a thousand years, and then, taking into consideration the growth of radical ideas, and the decay of the English sport, there would be little or no demand for a first-class dog in the British Islands.

Algy Grafton had just acquired the Puttick-Foozler moor, and almost every post brought him a letter from his head-keeper describing the condition of the birds and the prospects of the Twelfth. Though the letters were written on a phonetic principle, the correctness of which was, of course, proportionate to the accuracy of a Scotchman's ear, and though the head-keeper was scarcely an optimist, still there was no mistaking the general tone of the information which Algy received through this source from the north: he gathered that he

might reasonably look forward to the finest shoot on record.

Every letter which he got from the moor, however, contained the expression of the keeper’s hope that his master would succeed in his search for a couple of good dogs. The keeper’s hope was shared by Algy; and he did little else during the month of July except interview dogs that had been recommended to him. He travelled north and south, east and west, to interview dogs; but so ridiculously fastidious was he that at the close of the first week in August he was still without a dog. He was naturally at his wit’s end by this time, for as the Twelfth approached there was not a dog in the market. He telegraphed in all directions in the endeavour to secure some of the animals which he had rejected during the previous month, but, as might have been expected, the dogs were no longer to be disposed of: they had all been sold within a day or two after their rejection by Mr. Grafton. It was on the seventh of August that he got a letter from his correspondent on the moor, and in this letter the tone of mild remonstrance which the keeper had hitherto adopted in referring to his master’s extravagant ideas on the dog question, was abandoned in favour of one of stern reprimand; in fact, some sentences were almost abusive. Mr. Donald MacKilloch professed to be anxious to know what was the good of his wearing out his life on the moor if his master did not mean to shoot on it. He hoped he would not be thought wanting in respect if he doubted the sanity of the policy of waiting without a dog until it pleased Providence—Mr. MacKilloch was a very religious man—to turn angels into pointers and saints into setters, a period which, it seemed to Mr. MacKilloch, his master was rather oversanguine in anticipating.

It was not surprising that, after receiving this letter from the Highlands, Algy Grafton was somewhat moody as he strolled about his grounds on the morning of the eighth, nor was it remarkable that, when the rectory boy appeared with a letter stating that the Reverend Septimus Burnaby was anxious for him to run across in time to lunch at the rectory, to meet Jack Burnaby, who had just returned from Australia, Algy said that the rector and his brother Jack and all the squatters in the Australian colonies might be hanged together. Mrs. Grafton, however, whose life had not been worth a month’s purchase since the dog problem had presented itself for solution, insisted on his going to the rectory to lunch, and he went. It was while smoking a cigar in the rectory garden with Jack Burnaby, who had spent all his life squatting, but with no apparent inconvenience to himself, that Algy mentioned that he was broken-hearted on account of his dogs. He gave a brief summary of his travels through England in search of trustworthy animals, and lamented his failure to obtain anything that could be depended on to do a day’s work.

“By George! you don’t mean to say there’s not a good dog in the market now?” said Mr. Burnaby, the squatter.

“But that’s just what I do mean to say,” cried Algy, so plaintively that even the stern and unbending MacKilloch might have pitied him. “That’s just what I do mean to say. I’d give fifty pounds to-day for a pair of dogs that I wouldn’t have given ten pounds for a month ago. I’m heart-broken—that’s what I am!”

“Cheer up!” said Mr. Burnaby. “I have a couple of sporting dogs that I’ll lend to you until I return to the Colony in February next—the best dogs I ever worked with, and I’ve had some experience.”

“It was Providence that caused you to come across to me to-day, Grafton,” said the rector piously, as Algy stood speechless among the trim rosebeds.

“You’re sure they’re good?” said Algy, his old suspicions returning.

“Good?—am I sure?—oh, you needn’t have them if you don’t like,” said the Australian.

“I beg your pardon a thousand times,” cried Algy. “Don’t fancy that I suggest that the dogs are not first rate. Oh, my dear fellow, I don’t know how to thank you. I am—well, my heart is too full for words.”

“There’s not a man in England except yourself that I’d lend them to,” said Mr. Burnaby. “I give you my word that I’ve been offered forty pounds for each of them. Oh, there isn’t a fault between them. They’re just perfect.”

Algy was delighted, and for the remainder of the evening he kept assuring his poor wife that he was not quite such a fool as some people, including the Scotch keeper, seemed to fancy that he was.

He had felt all along, he said, that just such a piece of luck as had occurred was in store for him, and it was on this account he had steadily refused to be gulled into buying any of the inferior animals that had been offered to him.

Oh, yes, he assured her, he knew what he was about, and he’d let MacKilloch know who it was that he had to deal with.

The Australian’s dogs were in the custody of a man at Southampton, but he promised to have them sent northward in good time. It was the evening of the eleventh when they arrived at the lodge. They were strange wiry brutes, and like no breed that Algy had ever seen. The head-keeper looked at them critically, and made some observations regarding them that did not seem grossly flattering. It was plain that if Mr. MacKilloch had conceived any sudden admiration for the dogs he contrived to conceal it. Algy said all that he could say, which was that Mr. Burnaby knew perfectly well what a dog was, and that a dog should be proved before it was condemned. Mr. MacKilloch, hearing this excellent sentiment, grunted.

The next day was a splendid Twelfth so far as the weather was concerned. Algy and his two friends were on the moor at dawn. At a signal from the head-keeper the dogs were put to their work. They seemed willing enough to work. Under their noses rose an old cock. To the horror of every one they made a snap for him, and missing him they rushed full speed through the heather in the direction he had taken, setting up birds right and left, and driving them by the score into the next moor. Algy stood aghast and speechless. It would be inaccurate to describe the attitude of Donald MacKilloch as passive. He was not silent. But in spite of his shouts—in spite of a fusi-lade of the strongest “sweers” that ever came from a God-fearing Scotchman with well-defined views of his own on the Free Kirk question, the two dogs romped over the moor, and the air was thick with grouse of all sorts and conditions, from the wary cocks to the incipient cheepers.

To the credit of Algy Grafton it must be stated that he resolutely refused to allow a gun to be put into the hands of Donald MacKilloch. There was a blood-thirsty look in the keeper’s eyes as now and again one of the dogs appeared among the clumps of purple heather. When they were tired out toward evening they were

captured by one of the keepers, and led off the moor, Algy following them, for he feared that they might meet with an accident. He sent a telegram that night to their owner, and the next morning received the following reply:—

"The infernal idiot at Southampton sent you the wrong dogs. The right ones will reach you to-morrow. You have got a pair of the best kangaroo hounds in the world—worth five hundred guineas. Take care of them.—Burnaby."

"*Kangaroo hounds! kangaroo hounds!*" murmured Algy with a far-away look in his eyes.

It seems that he is not quite so fastidious about dogs as he used to be.

When in the west of Ireland some years ago, pretending to be on the look-out for "local colour" for a novel, I heard, with about ten thousand others, a very amusing story regarding a gun. It was told to me by a man who was engaged in grazing a cow along the side of a ditch where I sat while partaking of a sandwich, fondly hoping that at sundown I might be able to look a duck or two straight in the face as the "fly" came over the smooth surface of the glorious lake along which the road skirted.

"Your honour," said the narrator—he pronounced the words something like "yer'an'r," but the best attempts to reproduce a brogue are ineffective—"Your honour will mind how Mr. Egan was near having an accident just as he drew by the bit of stone wall beyond the entrance to his own gates?"

"Yes," I replied, "I remember hearing that he was fired at by some ruffian, and that his horse ran away with him."

"It's likely that that's the same story only told different. Maybe you never heard tell that it was Patsy Muldoon that was bid to do the job for Mr. Egan, God save him!"

"I never heard that."

"Maybe not, sir. Ay, Patsy has repented for that shot, for it knocked the eye of him that far into the inside of his head that the doctors had no machine long enough to drag for it in the depths of his ould skull. Patsy wasn't a well-favoured boy before that night, and with the loss of his ear and the misplacement of his eye—it's not lost that it is, for it's somewhere in the inside of his head—he's not a beauty just now. You see, sir, Patsy Muldoon, Conn Moriarty, Jim Tuohy, and Tim Gleeson was all consarned in the business. They got the lend of a loan of ould Gleeson's gun, and the powder was in a half-pint whisky-bottle with a roll of paper for a cork, and every boy was supposed to bring his own bullets. Well, sir, ould Gleeson, before going quiet to his bed, had put a full charge of powder and a bullet down the throat of the gun, and had left her handy for Tim in the turf stack. But when Tim got a hoult of the wippon, he didn't know that the ould man had loaded her, and so he put another charge in her, and rammed it home to make sure. Then he slipped the bottle with the rest of the powder into his pocket and strolled down to the bit of dead wall—I suppose they call them dead walls, sir, because they're so convanient for such-like jobs. Anyhow, he laid down herself and the powder-bottle handy among the grass, and went back to the cabin, so as not to be suspected by the polis of interferin' with the job that was Patsy's by right. Well, sir, my brave Conn was the next to come to the place, just to see that Tim hadn't played a thrick on him. He knew that it was all right when he saw herself lying among the grass, and as he didn't know that Tim had loaded her, he gave her a mouthful of powder himself and rammed down the lead. After him came my bould Tuohy, and, by the Powers, if he didn't load herself in proper style too. Last of all came Patsy that was to do the job—he'd been consalin' himself in the plantation, and it was barely time he had to put another charge into the ould gun, when Mr. Egan came up on his horse. Patsy slipped a cap on the nipple, and took a good aim from the side of the wall. When he pulled the trigger it's a dead corp that the gentleman would ha' been only for the accident that occurred just then, for by some reason or other that nobody can account for, herself burst—a thing she'd never done before—and Patsy's eye was druv into his head, and he was left searching by the aid of the other for the half of his ear, while Mr. Egan was a mile away on a mad horse. That's the story, your honour, only nobody can account to this day for the quare way that Patsy smiles when he sees a single barr'l gun with the barr'l a bit rusty."

It was, I recollect, on the day following the rehearsal of this pretty little tale—the moral of which is that no man should shoot at a fellow man from the shelter of a crumbling wall, without having ascertained the exact numerical strength of the charges already within the barrel of the gun—that I was caught on the mountain in a shower of rain which penetrated my two coats within half-an-hour, leaving me in the condition of a bath sponge that awaits squeezing. While I was trickling down to the plains I met with the narrator of the story just recorded, and to him I explained that I was wet to the skin.

"And if your honour's wet to the skin, and you with an overcoat on, how much worse amn't I that was out through all the shower with only a rag on my back?"

It is said that it was in this neighbourhood that the driver of one of the "long cars," on being asked by a tourist what was the name of a berry growing among the hedges, replied, "Oh, them's blackberries, your honour."

"Blackberries?" said the tourist. "But these are not black, but pink."

"Oh, yes, sir; but blackberries is always pink when they're green," was the ready explanation.

I cannot guarantee the novelty of this story; but I can certainly affirm that it is far more reasonable than the palpable invention regarding the nervous curate who is said to have announced that, "next Tuesday, being Easter Monday, an open air meeting will be held in the vestry, to determine what colour the interior of the schoolhouse shall be whitewashed outside."

“Am I dhry? Is it am I dhry, that you’re afther askin’ me?” said a car driver to a couple of country solicitors, whom he was “conveying” to a court-house at a distant town on a summer’s day. “Dhry? By the Powers! I’m that dhry that if you was to jog up against me suddint-like, the dust would fly out of my mouth.”

CHAPTER XII.—SOME REPORTERS.

An important person—The mayor-maker—Two systems—The puff and the huff—“Oh that mine enemy were reported verbatim!”—Errors of omission—Summary justice—An example—The abatement of a nuisance—The testimony of the warm-hearted—The fixed rate—A possible placard—A gross insult—Not so bad as it might have been—The subdivision of an insult—An inadequate assessment—The Town Councillor’s bribe—Birds of a feather—A handbook needed—An outburst of hospitality—Never again—The reporters “gloom”—The March lion—The popularity of the coroner.

THE chief of the reporting staff is usually the most important person connected with a provincial newspaper. It is not too much to say that it is in his power to make or to annihilate the reputation of a Town Councillor, or even a Poor Law Guardian. He may do so by the adoption of either of two systems: the first is persistent attention, the second is persistent neglect. He may either puff a man into a reputation, or puff him out of it. There are some men who become universally abhorred through being constantly alluded to as “our respected townsman”; such a distinction seems an invidious one to the twenty thousand townsmen who have never been so referred to. If a reporter persists in alluding to a certain person as “our respected townsman,” he will eventually succeed in making him the most highly disrespected burgess in the municipality, if he was not so before.’ On the other hand a reporter may, by judicious neglect of a burgess who burns for distinction, destroy his chances of becoming a Town Councillor; and, perhaps, before he dies, Mayor. But my experience leads me to believe that if a reporter has a grudge against a Town Councillor, a Poor Law Guardian, or a Borough Magistrate, and if he is really vindictive, the most effective course of vengeance that he can adopt is to record verbatim all that his enemy utters in public. The man who exclaimed, at a period of the world’s history when the publishing business had not attained its present proportions, “Oh that mine enemy had written a book!” knew what he was talking about. “Oh that mine enemy were reported verbatim!” would assuredly be the modern equivalent of the bitter cry of the patriarch. The stutterings, the vain repetitions, and the impossible grammar which accompany the public utterances—imbecile only when they are not commonplace—of the average Town Councillor or Poor Law Guardian, would require the aid of the phonograph to admit of their being anly when they are not commonplace—of the average Town Councillor or Poor Law Guardian, would require the aid of the phonograph to admit of their being adequately depreciated by the public.

The worst offenders are those men who are loudest in their complaints against the reporters, and who are constantly writing to correct what they call “errors” in the summary of their speeches. A reporter puts in a grammatical and a moderately reasonable sentence or two the ridiculous maunderings and wanderings of one of these “public men,” and the only recognition he obtains assumes the form of a letter to the editor, pointing out the “omissions” made in the summary. Omissions! I should rather think there were omissions.

I have no hesitation in affirming that the verbatim reporting of their speeches would mean the annihilation of ninety-nine out of every hundred of these municipal orators.

Only once, on a paper with which I was connected, had a reporter the courage to try the effect of a literal report of the speech of a man who was greatly given to complaining of the injustice done to him in the published accounts of his deliverances. Every “haw,” “hum,” “ah,” “eh—eh;” every repetition, every reduplication of a repetition, every unfinished sentence, every singular nominative to a plural verb, every artificial cough to cover a retreat from an imbecile statement, was reported. The result was the complete abatement of this nuisance. A considerable time elapsed before another complaint as to omissions in municipal speeches was made.

To my mind, the ability and the judgment shown by the members of the reporting staff cannot be too warmly commended. It is not surprising that occasionally attempts should be made by warm-hearted persons to express in a substantial way their recognition of the talents of this department of a newspaper. I have several times known of sums of money being offered to reporters in the country, with a view of obtaining the insertion of certain paragraphs or the omission of others. Half-a-crown was invariably the figure at which the value of such services was assessed. I am still of the opinion that this was not an extravagant sum to offer a presumably educated man for running the risk of losing his situation. Curiously enough, the majority of these offers of money came from competitors at ploughing matches, at exhibitions of oxen and swine, and at flower shows. Why agriculturalists should be more zealous to show their appreciation of literary work than the rest of the population it would be difficult to say; but at one time—a good many years ago—I heard so much about the attempted distribution of half-crowns in agricultural districts, I began to fear that at the various shows it would be necessary to have a placard posted, bearing the words: “GRATUITIES TO REPORTERS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.”

Many years ago I was somewhat tired of hearing about the numerous insults offered to reporters in this way. A head-reporter once told me that a junior member of his staff had come to him after a day in the

country, complaining bitterly that he had been grossly insulted by an offer of money.

"And what did you say to him?" I inquired.

"I asked him how much he had been offered," replied the head-reporter, "and when he said, 'Half-a-crown,' I said, 'Pooh! half-a-crown! that wasn't much of an insult. How would you like to be offered a sovereign, as I was one day in the same neighbourhood? You might talk of your insults then.' That shut him up."

I did not doubt it.

"You think the juniors protest too much?" said I.

The reporter laughed shrewdly.

"You remember *Punch's* picture of the man lying drunk on the pavement, and the compassionate lady in the crowd who asked if the poor fellow was ill, at which a man says, 'Ill? 'im ill? I only wish I'd alf his complaint'?"

I admitted that I had a vivid recollection of the picture; but I added that I could not see what it had to say to the subject we were discussing.

Again the reporter smiled.

"If you had seen the chap's face to-day when I talked of the sovereign you would know what I meant; his face said quite plainly, 'I wish I had half of that insult.'"

That view was quite intelligible to me some time after, when a reporter, whose failings were notorious, came to me with the old story. He had been offered half-a-crown by a man in a good social position who had been fined at the police court that day for being drunk and assaulting a constable, and who was anxious that no record of the transaction should appear in the newspaper.

"Great heavens!" said I, "he had the face to offer you half-a-crown?"

"He had," said the reporter, indignantly. "Half-a-crown! The low hound! He knew that if I included his case in to-morrow's police news he would lose his situation, and yet he had the face to offer me half-a-crown. What hounds there are in the world! Two pounds would have been little enough."

I never heard of a Town Councillor offering a bribe to a reporter; but I have heard of something more phenomenal—a Town Councillor indignantly rejecting what he conceived to be a bribe. He took good care to boast of it afterwards to his constituents. It happened that this Councillor was the leader of a select faction of three on the Corporation, whose *métier* consisted in opposing every scheme that was brought forward by the Town Clerk, and supported by the other members of the Corporation. Now the Town Clerk had hired a shooting one autumn, and as the birds were plentiful, he thought that it would be a graceful act on his part to send a brace of grouse to every Alderman and every Councillor. He did so, and all the members of the Board accepted the transaction in a right spirit—all, except the leader of the opposition faction. He explained his attitude to his constituents as follows:

"Gentlemen, you'll all be glad to hear that I've made myself formidable to our enemies. I've brought the so-called Town Clerk down on his knees to me. An attempt was made to bribe me last week, which I am determined to expose. One night when I came home from my work, I found waiting for me a queer pasteboard box with holes in it. I opened it, and inside I found a couple of fat *brown pigeons*, and on their legs a card printed 'With Mr. Samuel White's compliments.' 'Mr. Samuel White! That's the Town Clerk,' says I, 'and if Mr. Samuel White thinks to buy my silence by sending me a pair of brown pigeons with Mr. Samuel White's compliments, Mr. Samuel White is a bit mistaken;' so I just put the pigeons back into their box, and redirected them to Mr. Samuel White, and wrote him a polite note to let him know that if I wanted a pair of pigeons I could buy them for myself. That's what I did." (Loud cheers.)

When it was explained to him some time after that the birds were grouse, and not pigeons, he asked where was the difference. The principle would be precisely the same, he declared, if the birds were eagles or ostriches.

It has often occurred to me that for the benefit of such men, a complete list should be made out of such presents as may be legitimately received from one's friends, and of those that should be regarded as insultive in their tendency. It must puzzle a good many people to know where the line should be drawn. Why should a brace of grouse be looked on as a graceful gift, while a pair of fowl—a "yoke," they are called in the West of Ireland—can only be construed as an affront? Why should a haunch of venison (when not over "ripe") constitute an acceptable gift, while a sirloin of prime beef could only be regarded as having an eleemosynary signification? Why may a lover be permitted to offer the object of his attachment a fan, but not a hat? a dozen of gloves, but not a pair of boots? These problems would tax a much higher intelligence—if it would be possible to imagine such—than that at the command of the average Town Councillor.

It was the same member of the Corporation who, one day, having succeeded—greatly to his astonishment—in carrying a resolution which he had proposed at a meeting, found that custom and courtesy necessitated his providing refreshment for the dozen of gentlemen who had supported him. His ideas of refreshment revolved round a public-house as a centre; but when it was explained to him that the occasion was one that demanded a demonstration on a higher level, and with a wider horizon, he declared, in the excitement of the moment, that he was as ready as any of his colleagues to discharge the duties of host in the best style. He took his friends to a first-class restaurant, and at a hint from one of them, promptly ordered a couple of bottles of champagne. When these had been emptied, the host gave the waiter a shilling, telling him in a lordly way to keep the change. The waiter was, of course, a German, and, with a smile and a bow, he put the coin into his

pocket, and hastened to help the gentlemen on with their overcoats. When they were trooping out, he ventured to enquire whom the champagne was to be charged to.

The hospitable Councillor stared at the man, and then expressed the opinion that all Frenchmen, and perhaps Italians, were the greatest rogues unhung.

"You savey!" he shouted at the waiter—for like many persons on the social level of Town Councillors, he assumed that all foreigners are a little deaf,—"You savey, I give you one shilling—one bob—you savey!"

The waiter said he was "much oblige," but who was to pay for the champagne?

The gentlemen who had partaken of the champagne nudged one another, but one of them was compassionate, and explained to the Councillor that the two bottles involved the expenditure of twenty-four shillings.

"Twenty-eight shillings," the waiter murmured in a submissive, subject-to-the-correction-of-the-Court tone. The wine was Heidsieck of '74, he explained.

The Councillor gasped, and then smiled weakly. He had been made the subject of a jest more than once before, and he fancied he saw in the winks of the men around him, a loophole of escape from an untenable position.

"Come, come," said he, "I've no more time to waste. Don't you flatter yourselves that I can't see this is a put-up job between you all and the waiter."

"Pay the man the money and be hanged to you!" said an impetuous member of the party.

Just then the manager of the restaurant strolled up, and received with a polite smile the statement of the hospitable. Councillor regarding what he termed the barefaced attempt to swindle on the part of the German waiter.

"Sir," said the manager, "the price of the wine is on the card. Here it is,"—he whipped a card out of his pocket. "'Heidsieck—1874—14s.'"

The generous host fell back on a chair speechless.

Had any of his friends ever read Hamlet they would certainly not have missed quoting the lines:

"Indeed this (Town) Councillor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life—"

Well—otherwise. However, *Hamlet* remained unquoted.

After a long pause he recovered his powers of speech.

"And that's champagne—that's champagne!" he said in a weak voice, "Champagne! By the Lord Harry, I've tasted better ginger-beer!"

He has lately been very cautious in bringing forward any resolutions at the Corporation. He is afraid that another of them may chance to be carried.

The reporter who told me the story which I have just recorded, was an excellent specimen of the class—shrewd, a capital judge of character, and a good organiser. He had, however, never got beyond the stereotyped phrases which appear in every newspaper—indeed, there was no need for him to get beyond them. Every death "cast a gloom" over the locality where it occurred; and a chronicle of the weather at any time during the month of March caused him to let loose the journalist's lion upon an unsuspecting public.

Once it occurred to me that he went a little too far with the gloom that he kept, as Captain Mayne Reid's Mexicans kept their lassoes, ready to cast at a moment's notice.

He wrote an account of a fire which had caused the death of two persons, and concluded as follows:—

"The conflagration, which was visible at a distance of four miles, and was not completely subjugated until a late hour, cast a gloom over the entire quarter of the town, that will be felt for long, more especially as the premises were wholly uninsured."

Yes, I thought that this was carrying the gloom a little too far.

I will say this for him, however: it was not he who wrote: "A tall but well-dressed man was yesterday arrested on suspicion of being concerned in a recent robbery."

Nor was it he who headed a paragraph, "Fatal Death by Drowning."

In a town in which I once resided the coroner died, and there was quite a brisk competition for the vacant office. The successful candidate was a gentleman whose claims had been supported by a newspaper with which I was connected. Three months afterwards the proofreader brought under the notice of the sub-editor in my presence a paragraph which had come from the reporter's room, and which had already been "set up." So nearly as I can remember, it was something like this:—"Yesterday, no fewer than three inquests were held in various parts of this town by our highly respected coroner. Indeed, any doubts that may possibly have existed as to the qualification of this gentleman for the coronership, among those narrowminded persons who opposed his selection, must surely be dispelled by reference to the statistics of inquests held during the three months that he has been in office. The increase upon the corresponding quarter last year is thirteen, or no less than 9.46 per cent. Compared with the immediately preceding quarter the figures are no less significant, showing, as they do, an increase of seventeen, or 12.18 per cent. In other words, the business of the coroner

has been augmented by one-eighth since he came into office. This fact speaks volumes for the enterprise and ability of the gentleman whose candidature it was our privilege to support."

Of course this paragraph was suppressed. The sub-editor told me the next day that it had been written by a junior reporter, who had misunderstood the instructions of his chief. The fact was that the coroner wanted an increase of remuneration,—he was paid by a fixed salary, not by "piece work," so to speak,—and he had suggested to the chief reporter that a paragraph calling attention to the increase of inquests in the town might have a good effect. The chief reporter had given the figures to a junior, with a few hasty instructions, which he had somehow misinterpreted.

CHAPTER XIII—THE SUBJECT OF REPORTS.

The lecture society—"Early Architecture"—The professional consultation—Its result—"Un verre d'eau"—Its story—Lyrics as an auxiliary to the lecture—The lecture in print—A well-earned commendation—The preservation of ancient ruins—The best preservative—"Stone walls do not a prison make"—The Parnell Commission—A remarkable visitor—A false prophet—Sir Charles Russell—A humble suggestion—The bashful young man—Somewhat changed—"Ireland a Nation"—Some kindly hints—The "Invincibles" in court—The strange advertisement—How it was answered—Earl Spencer as a patron—"No kindly act was ever done in vain!"

A REPORTER is now and again compelled to exercise other powers than those which are generally supposed to be at the command of the writer of shorthand and the paragraphist. I knew a very clever youth who in a crisis showed of what he was capable. There was, in the town where we lived, a society of very learned men and equally learned women. Once a fortnight a paper was read, usually on some point of surpassing dulness—this was in the good old days, when lectures were solemn and theatres merry. Just at present, I need scarcely say, the position of the two is reversed: the theatres are solemn (the managers, becoming pessimistic by reason of their losses, endeavour to impress their philosophy upon the public), but the lecture-room rings with laughter as some *savant* treats of the "Loves of Coleoptera" with limelight illustrations, or "The Infant Bacillus." The society which I have mentioned had engaged as lecturer for a certain evening a local architect, who had largely augmented his professional standing by a reputation for conviviality; and the subject with which he was to deal was "Early Architecture." A brother professional man, whose sympathies were said to extend in many directions, had promised to take the chair upon this occasion. It so happened, however, that, owing to his pressing but unspecified engagements, the lecturer found himself, on the day for which the lecture was announced, still in doubt as to the sequence that his views should assume when committed to paper. About noon on this day he strolled into the office of the gentleman who was advertised to take the chair in the evening, and explained that he should like to discuss with him the various aspects of the question of Early Architecture, so that his mind might be at ease on appearing before the audience.

They accordingly went down the street, and made an earnest inspection of the interior of a cave-dwelling in the neighbourhood—it was styled "The Cool Grot," and tradition was respected by the presence therein of shell-fish, oat-cake, and other elementary foods, with various samples of alcohol in a rudimentary form. In this place the brother architects discussed the subject of Early Architecture until, as a reporter would say, "a late hour." The result was not such as would have a tendency to cause an unprejudiced person to accept without some reserve the theory that on a purely æsthetic question, a just conclusion can most readily be arrived at by a friendly discussion amid congenial surroundings.

A small and very solemn audience had assembled some twenty minutes or so before the lecturer and chairman put in an appearance, and then no time was lost in commencing the business of the meeting. The one architect was moved to the chair, and seconded, and he solemnly took it. Having explained that he occupied his position with the most pleasurable feelings, he poured himself out a glass of water with a most unreasonable amount of steadiness, and laid the carafe exactly on the spot—he was most scrupulous on this point—it had previously occupied. He drank a mouthful of the water, and then looked into the tumbler with the shrewd eye of the naturalist searching for infusoria. Then he laughed, and told a story that amused himself greatly about a friend of his who had attended a temperance lecture, and declared that it would have been a great success if the lecturer had not automatically attempted to blow the froth off the glass of water with which he refreshed himself. Then he sat down and fell asleep, before the lecturer had been awakened by the secretary to the committee, and had opened his notes upon the desk. For about ten minutes the lecturer made himself quite as unintelligible as the most erudite of the audience could have desired; but then he suddenly lapsed into intelligibility—he had reached that section of his subject which necessitated the recitation of a poem said to be in a Scotch dialect, every stanza of which terminated with the words, "A man's a man for a' that!" He then bowed, and, recovering himself by a grasp of the desk, which he shook as though it were the hand of an old schoolfellow whom he had not met for years, he retired with an almost supernatural erectness to his chair.

In a moment the chairman was on his feet—the sudden silence had awakened him. In a few well-chosen phrases he thanked the audience for the very hearty manner in which they had drunk his health. He then told them a humorous story of his boyhood, and concluded by a reference to one "Mr. Vice," whom he trusted frequently to see at the other end of the table, preparatory to going beneath it. He hoped there was no objection to his stating that he was a jolly good fellow. No absolute objection being made, he ventured on the statement—in the key of B flat; the lecturer joined in most heartily, and the solemn audience went to their

homes, followed by the apologies of the secretary to the committee.

The chairman and the lecturer were then shaken up by the old man who came to turn out the lights. He turned them out as well.

Now, the reporter who had been “marked” for that lecture found that he had some much more important business to attend to. He did not reach the newspaper office until late, and then he seated himself, and thoughtfully wrote out the remarks which nine out of every ten chairmen would have made, attributing them to the gentleman who presided at the lecture; and then gave a general summary of the lecture on “Early Architecture” which ninety-nine out of every hundred working architects would deliver if called on. He concluded by stating that the usual vote of thanks was conveyed to the lecturer, and suitably acknowledged by him, and that the audience was “large, representative, and enthusiastic.”

The secretary called upon the proprietor of the paper the next day, and expressed his high appreciation of the tact and judgment of the reporter; and the proprietor, who was more accustomed to hear comments on the display of very different attainments on the part of his staff, actually wrote a letter of commendation to the reporter, which I think was well earned.

The most remarkable point in connection with this occurrence was the implicit belief placed in the statements of the newspaper, not only by the public—for the public will believe anything—but also by the architect-lecturer and the architect-chairman. The professional standing of the former was certainly increased by the transaction, and till the day of his death he was accustomed to allude to his lecture on “Early Architecture.” The secretary to the committee, for his own credit’s sake, said nothing about the fiasco, and the solemn members of the audience were so accustomed to listen to incomprehensible lectures in the same room that they began to think that the performance at which they had “assisted” was only another of the usual type, so they also held their peace on the matter.

Having introduced this society, I cannot refrain from telling the story of another transaction in which it was concerned. The ramifications of the society extended in many directions, and a more useful organisation could scarcely be imagined. It was like an elephant’s trunk, which can uproot a tree—if the elephant is in a good humour—but which does not disdain to pick up a pin—like the boy who afterwards became Lord Mayor of London. The society did not shrink from discussing the question “Is a Monarchy or a Republic the right form of Government?” on the same night that it dealt with a new stopper for soda-water bottles. The Carboniferous Future of England was treated of upon the same evening as the Immortality of the Soul; perhaps there is a closer connection than at first meets the eye between the two subjects. It took ancient buildings under its protection, as well as the most recently fabricated pre-historic axe-head; and it was the discharge of its functions in regard to ancient buildings that caused the committee to pass a resolution one day, calling on their secretary to communicate with the owner of a neighbouring property, in the midst of which a really fine ruin of an ancient castle, with many interesting associations, was situated, begging him to order a wall to be built around the ruins, so as to prevent them from continuing to be the resort of cows with a fine taste in archaeology, when the summer days were warm and they wanted their backs scratched.

The property was in Ireland, consequently the landlord lived in England, and had never so much as seen the ruins. It was news to him that anything of interest was to be found on his Irish estates; but as his son was contemplating the possibility of entering Parliament as the representative of an Irish borough, he at once crossed the Channel, had an interview with the society’s secretary, and, with the president, visited the old castle, and was delighted with it. He sent for his bailiff, and told him that he wanted a wall four feet high to be built round the field in the centre of which the ruins lay—he even went so far as to “peg out,” so to speak, the course that he wished the wall to take.

The Irish bailiff stared at his master, but expressed the delight it would give him to carry out his wishes.

The owner crossed to England, promising to return in three months to see how the work had been done.

He kept his word. He returned in three months, and found, sure enough, that an excellent wall had been built on the exact lines he had laid down, but every stone of the ruins of the ancient castle had disappeared.

The bailiff stood by with a beaming face as he explained how the ruins had gone.

He had caused the wall to be built out of the stones of the ancient castle, to save expense.

If reporters were only afforded a little leisure, any one of them who has lived in a large town could compile an interesting volume of his experiences. I have often regretted that I could never master the art of shorthand. I worked at it for months when a boy, and made sufficient progress to be able to write it pretty fairly; but writing is not everything. The capacity for transcribing one’s notes is something to be taken into account; and it was at this point that I broke down, and was forced to become a novelist—a sort of novelist. The first time that I went up country in Africa, my stock of paper being limited, I carried only two pocket-books, and economised my space by taking my notes in shorthand. I had no occasion to refer to these notes until I was writing my novel “Daireen,” and then I found myself face to face with a hundred pages of hieroglyphs which were utterly unintelligible to me. In despair I brought them to a reporter, and he read them off for me much more rapidly than he or anyone else could read my ordinary handwriting to-day. In fact, he read just a little too fast,—I was forced to beg him to stop. There are some occurrences of which one takes a note in shorthand in one’s youth in a strange country, but which one does not wish particularly to offer to the perusal of strangers years afterwards.

But although I could never be a reporter, I now and again availed myself of a reporter’s privileges, when I wished to be present at a trial that promised some interesting features to a student of good and evil. It seemed to me that the Parnell Commission was an epitome of the world’s history from the earliest date. No writer has yet done justice to that extraordinary incident. I have asked some reporters, who were present day

after day, if they intended writing a real history of the Commission; not the foolish political history of the thing, but the story of all that was laid bare to their eyes hour after hour,—the passions of patriotism, of power, of hate, of revenge; the devotion to duty, the dogged heroism, the religious fervour; every day brought to light such examples of these varied attributes of the Irish nature as the world had never previously known.

The reporters said they had no time to devote to such thankless work; and, besides, every one was sick of the Commission.

Often as I went into the court and faced the scene, it never lost its glamour for me. Every day I seemed to be wandering through a world of romance. I could not sleep at night, so deeply impressed was I with the way certain witnesses returned the scrutiny of Sir Charles Russell; with the way Mr. Parnell hypnotised others; with the stories of the awful struggle of which Ireland was the centre.

Going out of the courts one evening, I came upon an old man standing with his hat off and with one arm uplifted in an attitude of denunciation that was tragic beyond description. He was a handsome old man, very tall, but slightly stooped, and he clearly occupied a good position in the world.

We were alone just outside the courts. I pretended that I had suddenly missed something. I stood thrusting my hands into my pockets and feeling between the buttons of my coat, for I meant to watch him. At last I pulled out my cigarette-case and strolled on.

“You were in that court?” the old man said, in a tone that assured me I had not underestimated his social position.

He did not wait for me to reply.

“You saw that man sitting with his cold impassive face while the tears were on the cheeks of every one else? Listen to me, sir! I called upon the Most High to strike him down—to strike him down—and my prayer was heard. I saw him lying, disgraced, deserted, dead, before my eyes; and so I shall see him before a year has passed. ‘Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.’”

Again he raised his arm in the direction of the court, and when I saw the light in his eyes I knew that I was looking at a prophet.

Suddenly he seemed to recover himself. He put on his hat and turned round upon me with something like angry surprise. I raised my hat. He did the same. He went in one direction and I went in the opposite.

He was a false prophet. Mr. Parnell was not dead within the year. In fact, he was not dead until two years and two months had passed. In accordance with the thoughtful provisions of the Mosaic code, that old gentleman deserved to be stoned for prophesying falsely. But his manner would almost have deceived a reporter.

Having introduced the subject of the Parnell Commission, I may perhaps be permitted to express the hope that Sir Charles Russell will one day find sufficient leisure to give us a few chapters of his early history. I happen to know something of it. I am fully acquainted with the nature of some of its incidents, which certainly would be found by the public to possess many interesting and romantic elements; though, unlike the romantic episodes in the career of most persons, those associated with the early life of Sir Charles Russell reflect only credit upon himself. Every one should know by this time that the question of what is Patriotism and what is not is altogether dependent upon the nature of the Government of the country. In order to prolong its own existence for six months, a Ministry will take pains to alter the definition of the word Patriotism, and to prosecute every one who does not accept the new definition. Forty years ago the political lexicon was being daily revised. I need say no more on this point; only, if Sir Charles Russell means to give us some of the earlier chapters of his life he should lose no time in setting about the task. A Lord Chief Justice of England cannot reasonably be expected to deal with any romantic episodes in his own career, however important may be the part which he feels himself called on now and again to take in the delimitation of the romantic elements (of a different type) in the careers of others of Her Majesty’s subjects.

It may surprise some of those persons who have been unfortunate enough to find themselves witnesses for the prosecution in cases where Sir Charles Russell has appeared for the defence, to learn that in his young days he was exceedingly shy. He has lost a good deal of his early diffidence, or, at any rate, he manages to prevent its betraying itself in such a way as might tend to embarrass a hostile witness. As a rule, the witnesses do not find that bashfulness is the most prominent characteristic of his cross-examination. But I learned from an early associate of Sir Charles’s, that when his name appeared on the list to propose or to respond to a toast at one of the dinners of a patriotic society of which my informant as well as Sir Charles was a member, he would spend the day nervously walking about the streets, and apparently quite unable to collect his thoughts. Upon one occasion the proud duty devolved upon him of responding to the toast, “Ireland a Nation!” Late in the afternoon my informant, who at that time was a small shopkeeper—he is nothing very considerable to-day—found him in a condition of disorderly perturbation, and declaring that he had no single idea of what he should say, and he felt certain that unless he got the help of the man who afterwards became my informant he must inevitably break down.

“I laughed at him,” said the gentleman who had the courage to tell the story which I have the courage to repeat, “and did my best to give him confidence. ‘Sure any fool could respond to “Ireland a Nation!”’ said I; ‘and you’ll do it as well as any other.’ But even this didn’t give him courage,” continued my informant, “and I had to sit down and give him the chief points to touch on in his speech. He wrung my hand, and in the evening he made a fine speech, sir. Man, but it was a pity that there weren’t more of the party sober enough to appreciate it!”

I tell this tale as it was told to me, by a respectable tradesman whose integrity has never been questioned.

It occurred to me that that quality in which, according to his interesting reminiscence of forty years ago, his friend Russell was deficient, is not one that could with any likelihood of success be attributed to the narrator.

If any student of good and evil—the two fruits, alas! grow upon the same tree—would wish for a more startling example of the effect of a strong emotion upon certain temperaments than was afforded the people present in the Dublin Police Court on the day that Carey left the dock and the men he was about to betray to the gallows, that student would indeed be exacting.

I had been told by a constabulary officer what was coming, so that, unlike most persons in the court, I was not too startled to be able to observe every detail of the scene. Carey was talking to a brother ruffian named Brady quite unconcernedly, and Brady was actually smiling, when an officer of constabulary raised his finger and the informer stepped out of the dock, and two policemen in plain clothes moved to his side. Carey glanced back at his doomed accomplices, and muttered some words to Brady. I did not quite catch them, but I thought the words were, "It's half an hour ahead of you that I am, Joe."

Brady simply looked at his betrayer, whom it seems he had been anxious to betray. There was absolutely no expression upon his face. Some of the others of the same murderous gang seemed equally unaffected. One of them turned and spat on the floor. But upon the faces of at least two of the men there was a look of malignity that transformed them into fiends. It was the look that accompanies the stab of the assassin. Another of them gave a laugh, and said something to the man nearest to him; but the laugh was not responded to.

The youngest of the gang stared at one of the windows of the court-house in a way that showed me he had not been able to grasp the meaning of Carey's removal from the dock.

In half-an-hour every expression worn by the faces of the men had changed. They all had a look that might almost have been regarded as jocular. There can be no doubt that when a man realises that he has been sentenced to death, his first feeling is one of relief. His suspense is over—so much is certain. He feels that—and that only—for an hour or so. I could see no change on the faces of these poor wretches whom the Mephistophelian fun of Fate had induced to call themselves Invincible, in order that no devilish element might be wanting in the tragedy of the Phoenix Park.

I do not suppose that many persons are acquainted with the secret history of the detection of the "Invincibles." I think I am right in stating that it has never yet been made public. I am not at liberty to mention the source whence I derived my knowledge of some of the circumstances that led to the arrest of Carey, but there is no doubt in my mind as to the accuracy of my "information received" on this matter.

It may, perhaps, be remembered that, some months after the date of the murders, a strange advertisement appeared in almost every newspaper in Great Britain. It stated that if the man who had told another, on the afternoon of May 6th, 1882, that he had once enjoyed a day's skating on the pond at the Viceregal Lodge, would communicate with the Chief of the Detective Department at Dublin Castle, he would be thanked. Now beyond the fact that May 6th was the date of the murders, and that they had taken place in the Phoenix Park, there was nothing in this advertisement to suggest that it had any bearing upon the shocking incident; still there was a general feeling that it had a very intimate connection with the efforts that the police were making to unravel the mystery of the outrage; and this impression was well founded.

I learned that the strangely-worded advertisement had been inserted in the newspapers at the instigation of a constabulary officer, who had, in many disguises, been endeavouring to find some clue to the assassins in Dublin. One evening he slouched into a public-house bespattered as a bricklayer, and took a seat in a box, facing a pint of stout. He had been in public-house after public-house every Saturday night for several weeks without obtaining the slightest suggestion as to the identity of the murderers, and he was becoming discouraged; but on this particular evening he had his reward, for he overheard a man in the next box telling some others, who were drinking with him, that Lord Spencer was not such a bad sort of man as might be supposed from the mere fact of his being Lord-Lieutenant. He (the narrator) had been told by a man in the Phoenix Park on the very evening of the murders that he (the man) had not been ashamed to cheer Lord Spencer on his arrival at Dublin that day, for when he had last been in Dublin he had allowed him to skate upon the pond in the Viceregal grounds.

The officer dared not stir from his place: he knew that if he were at all suspected of being a detective, his life would not be worth five minutes' purchase. He could only hope to catch a glimpse of some of the party when they were leaving the place. He failed to do so, for some cause—I cannot remember what it was—nor could the barmaid give any satisfactory reply to his cautiously casual enquiries as to the names of any of the men who had occupied the box.

It was then that the advertisement was inserted in the various newspapers; and, after the lapse of some weeks, a man presented himself to the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, saying that he believed the advertisement referred to him. The man seemed a respectable artisan, and his story was that one day during the last winter that Earl Spencer had been in Ireland, he (the man) had left his work in order to have a few hours' skating on the ponds attached to the Zoological Gardens in the Phoenix Park, but on arriving at the ponds he found that the ice had been broken. "I was just going away," the man said, "when a gentleman with a long beard spoke to me, and enquired if I had had a good skate. I told him that I was greatly disappointed, as the ice had all been broken, and I would lose my day's pay. He took a card out of his pocket, and wrote something on it," continued the man, "and then handed it to me, saying, 'Give that to the porter at the Viceregal Lodge, and you'll have the best day's skating you have had in all your life.' He said what was true: I handed in the card and told the porter that a tall gentleman with a beard had given it to me. 'That was His Excellency himself,' said the porter, as he brought me down to the pond, where, sure enough, I had such a day's skating as I've never had before or since."

“And you were in the Phoenix Park on the evening of the murders?” said the Chief of the Department.

“I must have been there within half-an-hour of the time they were committed,” replied the man. “But I know nothing of them.”

“I’m convinced of it,” said the officer. “But I should like to hear if you met any one you knew in the Park as you were coming away.”

“I only met one man whose name I knew,” said the other, “and that was a builder that I have done some jobs for: James Carey is his name.”

This was precisely the one bit of evidence that was required for the committal of Carey.

An hour afterwards he offered to turn Queen’s Evidence.

CHAPTER XIV.—IRELAND AS A FIELD FOR REPORTERS.

The humour of the Irish Bench—A circus at Bombay—Mr. Justice Lawson—The theft of a pig—“Reasonably suspected”—A prima facie case for the prosecution—The defence—The judge’s charge—The scope of a judge’s duties in Ireland—Collaring a prisoner—A gross contempt of court—How the contempt was purged—The riotous city—The reporter as a war correspondent—“Good mixed shooting”—The tram-car driver cautioned—The “loot” mistaken for a violin—The arrest in the cemetery—Pommelling a policeman—A treat not to be shared—A case of discipline—The German infantry—A real grievance—“Palmam qui meruit ferat.”

THERE is plenty of light as well as gloom to be found in the law courts, especially in Ireland. Until recently, the Irish Bench included many humorists. Perhaps the last of the race was Mr. Baron Dowse. Reporters were constantly giving me accounts of the brilliant sallies of this judge; but I must confess it seemed to me that most of the examples which I heard were susceptible of being regarded as evidence of the judge’s good memory rather than of his original powers.

Upon one occasion, he complained of the misprints in newspapers, and stated that some time before, he had made the quotation in court, “Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay,” but the report of the case in the newspaper attributed to him the statement, “Better fifty years of Europe than a circus at Bombay.”

He omitted giving the name of the paper that had so ill-treated him and Lord Tennyson. He had not been a judge for fifteen years without becoming acquainted with the rudiments of story-telling.

Mr. Justice Lawson was another Irish judge with a strong vein of humour which he sometimes repressed, for I do not think that he took any great pleasure in listening to that hearty, spontaneous, and genial outburst of laughter that greets every attempt at humour on the part of a judge. It is a nasty thing to say, but I do believe that he now and again doubted the sincerity of the appreciation of even the junior counsel. A reporter who was present at one Cork Assizes when Lawson was at his best, told me a story of his charge to a jury which conveys a very good idea of what his style of humour was.

A man was indicted for stealing a pig—an animal common in some parts of Ireland. He was found driving it along, with no more than the normal amount of difficulty which such an operation involves; and on being spoken to by the sergeant of constabulary, he stated that he had bought the pig in a neighbouring town, and that he had paid a certain specified sum for it. On the same evening, however, a report reached the police barrack that a pig, the description of which corresponded with the recollection which the sergeant retained of the one which he had seen some hours before, had been stolen from its home in the neighbourhood. The owner was brought face to face with the animal that the sergeant had met, and it was identified as the one that had been stolen. The man in whose possession the pig was found was again very frank in stating where he had bought it; but his second account of the transaction was not on all fours with his first, and the person from whom he said he had purchased it, denied all knowledge of the sale—in fact, he was able to show that he was at Waterford at the time he was alleged to be disposing of it.

All these facts were clearly proved; and no attempt was made to controvert them in the defence. The counsel for the prisoner admitted that the police had a good *prima facie* case for the arrest of his client; there were, undoubtedly, some grounds for suspecting that the animal had disappeared from the custody of its owner through the instrumentality of the prisoner; but he felt sure that when the jury had heard the witnesses for the defence, they would admit that it was utterly impossible to conceive the notion that he had had anything whatever to do with the matter.

The parish priest was the first witness called, and he stated that he had known the prisoner for several years, and had always regarded him as a thrifty, sober, hard-working man, adding that he was most regular in his attendance to his religious duties. Then the episcopal clergyman was examined, and stated that the prisoner was an excellent father and a capital gardener; he also knew something about the care of poultry. Several of the prisoner’s neighbours testified to his respectability and his readiness to oblige them, even at considerable personal inconvenience.

After the usual speeches, the judge summed up as follows:—

“Gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the evidence in the case, and it’s not for me to say that any of it is

false. The police sergeant met the prisoner driving the stolen pig, and the prisoner gave two different accounts as to how it had come into his possession, but neither of these accounts could be said to have a particle of truth in it. On the other hand, however, you have heard the evidence of the two clergymen, to whom the prisoner was well known. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the character they gave him. Then you heard the evidence given by the neighbours of the prisoner, and I'm sure you'll agree with me that nothing could be more gratifying than the way they all spoke of his neighbourly qualities. Now, gentlemen, although no attempt whatever has been made by the defence to meet the evidence given for the prosecution, yet I feel it necessary to say that it is utterly impossible that you should ignore the testimony given as to the character of the prisoner by so many witnesses of unimpeachable integrity; therefore, gentlemen, I think that the only conclusion you can come to is that the pig was stolen by the prisoner and that he is the most amiable man in the County Cork."

Mr. Justice Lawson used to boast that he was the only judge on the Bench who had ever arrested a man with his own hand. The circumstances connected with this remarkable incident were related to me by a reporter who was present in the court when the judge made the arrest.

The *locale* was the court-house of an assize town in the South of Ireland. For several days the Crown had failed to obtain a conviction, although in the majority of the cases the evidence was practically conclusive; and as each prisoner was either sent back or set free, the crowds of sympathisers made an uproar that all the ushers in attendance were powerless to suppress. On the fourth day the judge, at the opening of the court, called for the County Inspector of Constabulary, and, when the officer was brought from the billiard-room of the club, and bustled in, all sabre and salute, the judge, in his quiet way, remarked to him, "I'm sorry for troubling you, sir, but I just wished to say that as the court has been turned into a bear-garden for some hours during the past three days, I intend to hold you responsible for the maintenance of perfect order to-day. Your duty is to arrest every man, woman, or child that makes any demonstration of satisfaction or dissatisfaction at the result of the hearing of a case, and to put them in the dock, and give evidence as to their contempt of court. I'll deal with them after that." The officer went down, and orders were given to his men, of whom there were about fifty in the court, to arrest any one expressing his feelings. The first prisoner to be tried was a man named O'Halloran, and his case excited a great deal of interest. The court was crowded to a point of suffocation while the judge was summing up, which he did with a directness that left nothing to be desired. In five minutes the jury had returned a verdict of "Not Guilty." At that instant a wild "Hurroo!" rang through the court. It came from a youth who had climbed a pillar at a distance of about a yard from the Bench. In a moment the judge had put out his hand and grasped the fellow by the collar; and then, of course, the policemen crushed through the crowd, and about a dozen of them seized the prehensible legs of the prisoner Stylites.

"One of you will be ample," said the judge. "Don't pull the boy to pieces; let him down gently."

This operation was carried out, and the excitable youth was placed in the dock, whence the prisoner just tried had stepped.

"Now," said the judge, "I'm going to make an example of you. You heard what I said to the Inspector of Constabulary, and yet I arrested you with my own hand in the very act of committing a gross contempt of court. I'll make an example of you for the benefit of others. What's your name?"

"O'Halloran, yer honour," said the trembling youth.

"Isn't that the name of the prisoner who has just been tried?" said the judge.

"It is, my lord," replied the registrar.

"Is the last prisoner any relation of yours?" the judge asked of the youth in the dock.

"He's me brother, yer honour," was the reply.

"Release the boy, and go on with the business of the court," said the judge.

I chanced to be in Belfast at the time of the riots in 1886, and my experience of the incidents of every day and every night led me to believe that British troops have been engaged in some campaigns that were a good deal less risky to war correspondents than the riots were to the local newspaper reporters. Six of them were more or less severely wounded in the course of a week. I found it necessary, more than once, to go through the localities of the disturbances, and I must confess that I was always glad when I found myself out of the line of fire. I am strongly of the opinion that the reporters should have been paid at the ratio of war correspondents at that time. When they engaged themselves they could not have contemplated the possibility of being forced daily for several weeks to stand up before a fusilade of stones weighing a pound or so each, and Martini-Henry bullets, with an occasional iron "nut" thrown in to make up weight, as it were. In the words of the estate agents' advertisements, there was a great deal of "good mixed shooting" in the streets almost nightly for a month.

Several ludicrous incidents took place while the town was crowded with constabulary who had been brought hastily from the country districts. A reporter told me that he was the witness of an earnest remonstrance on the part of a young policeman with a tram-car driver, whom he advised to take his "waggon" down some of the side streets, in order to escape the angry crowd that had assembled farther up the road. Upon another occasion, a grocer's shop had been looted by the mob at night, and a man had been fortunate enough to secure a fine ham which he was endeavouring, but with very partial success, to secrete beneath his coat. A whole ham takes a good deal of secreting. The police had orders to clear the street, and they were endeavouring to obey these orders. The man with the ham received a push on his shoulder, and the policeman by whom it was dealt, shouted out in a fine, rich Southern brogue (abhorred in Belfast), "Git along wid ye, now thin, you and yer violin. Is this any toime for ye to be after lookin' to foind an awjence? Ye'll get

that violin broke, so ye will."

The man was only too glad to hurry on with his "Strad." of fifteen pounds' weight, mild-cured. He did not wait to explain that there is a difference between the viol and "loot."

One of the country policemen made an arrest of a man whom he saw in the act of throwing a stone, and the next day he gave his evidence at the Police Court very clearly. He had ascertained that the scene of the arrest was York Street, and he said so; but the street is about a mile long, and the magistrate wished to know at what part of it the incident had occurred.

"It was just outside the cimitery, yer wash'p," replied the man.

"The cemetery?" said the magistrate. "But there's no cemetery in York Street."

"Oh, yes, yer wash'p—there's a foine cimitery there," said the policeman. "It was was just outside the cimitery I arrested the prisoner."

"It's the first I've heard of a cemetery in that neighbourhood," said the Bench. "Don't you think the constable is mistaken, sergeant?"

The sergeant put a few questions to the witness, and asked him how he knew that the place was a cemetery.

"Why, how would anybody know a cimitery except by the tombstones?" said the witness. "I didn't go for to dig up a corp or two, but there was the foinest array of tombstones I ever clapt oyes on."

"It's the stonecutter's yard the man means," came a voice from the body of the court; and in another moment there was a roar of laughter from all present.

The arrest had been made outside a stonecutter's railed yard, and the strange policeman had taken the numerous specimens of the proprietor's craft, which were standing around in various stages of progress, for the *bona fide* furnishing of a graveyard.

He was scarcely to be blamed for his error.

I believe that it was during these riots the story originated—it is now pretty well known, I think—of the man who had caught a policeman, and was holding his head down while he battered him, when a brother rowdy rushed up, crying,—

"Who have you there, Bill?"

"A policeman."

"Hold on, and let me have a thump at him."

"Git along out of this, and find a policeman for yourself!"

Having referred to the Royal Irish Constabulary, I may not perhaps be regarded as more than usually discursive if I add my expression of admiration for this splendid Force to the many pages of commendation which it has received from time to time from those whose opinion carries weight with it—which mine does not. The men are the flower of the people of Ireland. They have a *sense* of discipline—it has not to be impressed upon them by an occasional "fortnight's C.B." Upon one occasion, I was the witness of the extent to which this innate sense of discipline will stretch without the breaking strain being reached. One of the most distinguished officers in the Force was parading about one hundred men armed with the usual carbine—the handiest of weapons—and with swords fixed. He was mounted on a charger with some blood in it—you would not find the same man astride of anything else—and for several days it had been looking down the muzzles of the rifles of a couple of regiments of autumn manoeuvrers who had been engaged in a sham fight in the Park; but it had never shown the least uneasiness, even when the Field Artillery set about the congenial task of annihilating a skeleton enemy. It stood patiently while the constabulary "ported," "carried," and "shouldered"; but so soon as the order to "present" was given, a gleam of sunlight glanced down the long line of fixed swords, and that twinkle was just what an Irish charger, born and bred among the fogs of the Atlantic seaboard, could not stand. It whirled round, and went at full gallop across the springy turf, then suddenly stopped, sending its rider about twenty yards ahead upon his hands and knees. After this feat, it allowed itself to be quietly captured by the mounted orderly who had galloped after it. The orderly dismounted from his horse, and passed it on to the officer, who galloped back to the long line of men standing at the "present" just as they had been before he had left them so hurriedly. They received the order to "shoulder" without emotion, and then the parade went on as if nothing had happened. Subsequently, the officer remounted his own charger—which had been led up, and had offered an ample apology—and in course of time he again gave the order to "present." The horse's ears went back, but it did not move a hoof. After the "shoulder" and "port" the officer made the men "charge swords," and did not halt them until they were within a yard of the horse's head. The manouvre had no effect upon the animal.

I could not help contrasting the discipline shown by the Irish Constabulary upon this occasion with the bearing of a company of a regiment of German Infantry, who were being paraded in the Thiergarten at Berlin, when I was riding there one day. The captain and lieutenant had strolled away from the men, leaving them standing, not "at ease," but at "attention"—I think the officers were making sure that the carriage of the Crown Prince was not coming in their direction. But before two minutes had passed the men were standing as easy as could well be, chatting together, and suggesting that the officers were awaiting the approach of certain young ladies, about whose personal traits and whose profession they were by no means reticent. Of

course, when the officers turned, the men stood at “attention”; but I trotted on to where I lived In Den Zelten, feeling that there was but little sense of discipline in the German Army—so readily does a young man arrive at a grossly erroneous conclusion through generalising from a single instance.

It is difficult to understand how it comes that the splendid services of the Royal Irish Constabulary have not been recognised by the State. I have known officers who served on the staff during the Egyptian campaign, but who confessed to me that they never heard a shot fired except for saluting purposes, and yet they wore three decorations for this campaign. Surely those Irish Constabulary officers, who have discharged the most perilous duties from time to time, as well as daily duties requiring the exercise of tact, discretion, judgment, and patience, are at least as deserving of a medal as those soldiers who obtained the maximum of reward at the minimum of risk in Egypt, South Africa, or Ashantee. The decoration of the Volunteers was a graceful recognition of the spirit that binds together these citizen soldiers. Surely the services of some members of the Irish Constabulary should be similarly recognised. This is a genuine Irish grievance, and it is one that could be redressed much more easily than the majority of the ills that the Irish people are heir to. A vote for a thousand pounds would purchase the requisite number of medals or stars or crosses—perhaps all three might be provided out of such a fund—for those members of the Force who have distinguished themselves. The right adjudication of the rewards presents no difficulty, owing to the “record” system which prevails in the Force.

CHAPTER XV.—IRISH TROTTINGS AND JOTTINGS.

Some Irish hotels—When comfort comes in at the door, humour flies out by the window—A culinary experience—Plenty of new sensations—A kitchen blizzard—How to cook corned beef—A théoriser—Hare soup—A word of encouragement—The result—An avenue forty-two miles long—Nuda veritas—An uncanny request—A diabolic lunch—A club dinner—The pièce de resistance—Not a going concern—A minor prophecy—An easy drainage system—Not to be worked by an amateur—Après moi, le deluge—Hot water and its accompaniments—The boots as Atropos—A story of Thackeray—A young shaver.

WHEN writing for an Irish newspaper, I took some pains to point out how easily the country might be made attractive to tourists if only the hotels were improved. I have had frequent “innings,” and my experiences of Irish hotels in various districts where I have shot, or fished, or yachted, or boated, would make a pretty thick volume, if recorded. But while most of these experiences have some grain of humour in them, that humour is of a type that looks best when viewed from a distance. When it is first sprung upon him, this Irish fun is not invariably relished by the traveller.

Mr. Max O’Rell told me that he liked the Irish hotels at which he had sojourned, because he was acknowledged by the *maîtres* to possess an identity that could not be adequately expressed by numerals. But on the whole it is my impression that the numerical system is quite tolerable if one gets good food and a clean sleeping-place. To be sure there is no humour in a comfortable dinner, or a bed that does not require a layer of Keating to be spread as a sedative to the army of occupation; still, though the story of tough chickens and midnight hunts can be made genuinely entertaining, I have never found that these actual incidents were in themselves very inspiriting.

A friend of mine who has a capital shooting in a picturesque district, was compelled to lodge, and to ask his guests to lodge, at the little inn during his first shooting season. Knowing that the appetite of men who have been walking over mountains of heather is not usually very fastidious, he fancied that the inn cook would be quite equal to the moderate demands made upon her skill. The experiment was a disastrous one. The more explicit the instructions the woman was given regarding the preparation of the game, the more mortifying to the flesh were her achievements. There was, it is true, a certain amount of interest aroused among us every day as to the form that the culinary whim of the cook would assume. The monarch that offered a reward for the discovery of a new sensation would have had a good time with us. We had new sensations at the dinner hour every day. “Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be,” was an apothegm that found constant illustration when applied to that woman’s methods: we knew that we gave her salmon, and grouse, and hare, and snipe; but what was served to us, Heaven and that cook only knew—on second thoughts I will leave Heaven out of the question altogether. The monstrous originalities, the appalling novelties, the confounding of substances, the unnatural daring manifested in every day’s dinner, filled us with amazement, but, alas! with nothing else. We were living in a sort of perpetual kitchen blizzard—in the centre of a culinary chaos. The whirl was too much for us.

Our host took upon him to allay the fiend. He sent to the nearest town for butcher’s supplies. The first joint that arrived was a fine piece of corned beef.

“There, my good woman,” cried our host, putting it into the cook’s hands, “I suppose you can cook that, if you can’t cook game.”

“Oh, yes, your honour, it’s misself that can cook it tubbe sure,” she cried in her lighthearted way.

She did cook it.

She roasted it for five hours on a spit in front of the kitchen fire.

As she laid it on the table, she apologised for the unavoidable absence of gravy.

It was the driest joint she had ever roasted, she said; and I do believe that it was.

One of the party, who had theories on the higher education of women, and other methods of increasing the percentage of unmarriageable females, said that the cook had never been properly approached. She could not be expected to know by intuition that the flavour of salmon trout was impaired by being stewed in a cauldron with a hare and many friends, or that the prejudices of an effete civilisation did not extend so far as to make the boiling of grouse in a pot with bacon a necessity of existence. The woman only needed a hint or two and she would be all right.

He said he would give her a hint or two. He made soup the basis of his first hints.

It was so simple, he said.

He picked up a couple of hares, an old cock grouse and a few snipe, and told the woman to put them in a pot, cover them with water, and leave them to simmer—“Not to boil, mind; you understand?”—“Oh, tubbe sure, sorr,”—for the six hours that we would be on the mountain. He showed her how to cut up onions, and they cut up some between them; he then taught her how to fry an onion in the most delicate of ribbon-like slices for “browning.” All were added to the pot, and our friend joined us with a very red face, and carrying about him a flavour of fried onions as well defined as a saint’s halo by Fra Angelico. The dogs sniffed at him for a while, and so did the keeper.

He declared that the woman was a most intelligent specimen, and quite ready to learn. We smiled grimly.

All that day our friend shot nothing. We could see that, like Eugene Aram, his thought was otherwhere. We knew that he was thinking over the coming soup.

On returning to the inn after a seven hours’ tramp, he hastened to the kitchen. A couple of us loitered outside the door, for we felt certain that a surprise was awaiting our friend—the pot would have leaked, perhaps; but the savoury smell that filled the kitchen and overflowed into the lobby and the room where we dined made us aware that everything was right.

Our friend turned a stork’s eye into the pot, and then, with a word of kind commendation to the cook—“A man’s word of encouragement is everything to a woman, my lad, with a wink to me—he called for a pint of port wine and placed it handy.

“Now,” said he to the woman, “strain off that soup in a quarter of an hour, add that wine, and we’ll show these gentlemen that between us we can cook.”

In a quarter of an hour we were sitting round the table. Our friend tried to look modest and devoid of all self-consciousness as the woman entered with a glow of crimson triumph on her face, and bearing in her hands an immense dish with the well-known battered zinc cover concealing the contents.

Down went the dish, and up went the cover, disclosing a rugged, mountainous heap of the bones of hare, with threads of flesh still adhering to them, and the skeletons of some birds.

“Good Lord!” cried our host. “What’s this anyway? The rags of what was stewed down for the soup?”

Our theorising friend leapt up.

“Woman,” he shouted, “where the devil is the soup?”

“Sure, didn’t ye bid me strain it off, sorr?” said the woman.

“And where the blazes did you strain it off?” he asked, in an awful whisper.

“Why, where should I be after straining it, sorr, but into the bog?” she replied.

The bog was an incident of the landscape at the back of the inn.

I recollect that upon the occasion of this shooting party, a new under-keeper arrived from Connaught, and I overheard him telling a colleague who came from the county Clare, that the avenue leading to his last employer’s residence was forty-two miles long.

“By me sowl,” said the Clare man, “it’s not me that would like to be set down at the lodge gates on an empty stomach within half-an-hour of dinner-time.”

After some further conversation, the Connaught man began to dilate upon the splendour of his late master’s family. He reached a truly dramatic climax by saying,—

“And every night of their lives at home the ladies strip for dinner.”

“Holy Moses!” was the comment.

“Do your master’s people at home strip for dinner?” enquired the Connaught man.

“No; but they link in,” was the thoughtful reply.

Sometimes, it must be acknowledged, an unreasonable strain is put upon the resources of an Irish inn by an inconsiderate tourist. Some years ago, my brother-in-law, Bram Stoker, was spending his holiday in a picturesque district of the south-west. He put up at the usual inn, and before leaving for a ramble, oh the morning of his arrival, the cook (and waitress) asked him what he would like for lunch. The day was a trifle chilly, and, forgetting for the moment that he was not within the precincts of the Green-room or the Garrick, he said, “Oh, I think that it’s just the day for a devil—yes, I’ll cat a devil at two.”

“Holy Saints!” cried the woman, as he walked off. “What sort of a man is that at all, at all? He wants to lunch off the Ould Gentleman.”

The landlord scratched his chin and said that this was the most unreasonable demand that had ever been made upon his house. He expressed the opinion that the gastronome whose palate was equal to this

particular *plat* should seek it elsewhere—he even ventured to specify the *locale* at which the search might appropriately begin with the best chances of being realised. His wife, however, took a less despondent view of the situation, and suggested that as the powers of exorcising the Foul Fiend were delegated to the priest, it might be only reasonable to assume that the reverend gentleman would be equal to the much less difficult feat involved in the execution of the tourist's order.

But before the priest had been sent for, the constabulary officer drove up, and was consulted on the question that was agitating the household. With a roar of laughter, the officer called for a couple of chops and the mustard and cayenne pots—he had been there before—and showed the cook the way out of her difficulty.

But up to the present hour I hear that that landlord says,—

"By the powers, it's misself that never knew what a divil was till Mr. Stoker came to my house."

However piquant a comestible the Foul Fiend might be, I believe that in point of toughness he would compare favourably with a fully-matured swan. Among the delicacies of the table I fear that the swan will not obtain great honour, if any dependence may be placed upon a story which was told to me at a fishing inn in Connemara, regarding an experiment accidentally tried upon such a bird. I repeat the story in this place, lest any literary man may be led to pamper a weak digestion by indulging in a swan supper. The specimen in question was sent by a gentleman, who lived in a stately home in Lincolnshire, as a gift to the Athenæum club, of which he was a member. The bird was addressed to the secretary, and that gentleman without delay handed it over to the cook to be prepared for the table. There was to be a special dinner at the end of the week, and the committee thought that a distinctive feature might be made of the swan. They were not mistaken. As a *coup d'oil* the swan, resting on a great silver dish, carried to the table by two servitors, could scarcely have been surpassed even by the classical peacock or the mediaeval boar's head. The croupier plunged a fork with a steady hand into the right part—wherever that was situated—and then attacked the breast with his knife. Not the slightest impression could he make upon that portion of the mighty structure that faced him. The breast turned the edge of the knife; and when the breast did that the people at the table began to wonder what the drum-sticks would be like. A stronger blade was sent for, and an athlete—he was not a member of the Athenæum—essayed to penetrate the skin, and succeeded too, after a vigorous struggle. When he had wiped the drops from his brow he went at the flesh with confidence in his own powers. By some brilliant wrist-practice he contrived to chip a few flakes off, but it soon became plain that eating any one of them was out of the question. One might as well submit as a *plat* a drawer of a collector's geological cabinet. The club cook was sent for, and he explained that he had had no previous experience of swans, but he considered that the thirteen hours' boiling to which he had submitted the first specimen that had come under his notice, all that could reasonably be required by any bird, whether swan or cassowary. He thought that perhaps with a circular saw, after a steam roller had been passed a few times over the carcass, it might be possible....

"Well, I hope you got my swan all right," said the donor a few days after, addressing the secretary.

"That was a nice joke you played on us," said the secretary.

"Joke? What do you mean?"

"As if you didn't know! We had the thing boiled for thirteen hours, and yet when it was brought to the table we might as well have tried to cut through the Rock of Gibraltar with a pocket-knife."

"What do you mean? You don't mean to say that you had it cooked?"

"Didn't you send it to be cooked?"

"Cooked! cooked! Great heavens, man! I sent it to be stuffed and preserved as a curiosity in the club. That swan has been in my family for two hundred and eighty years. It was one of the identical birds fed by the children of Charles I.—you've seen the picture of it. My ancestor held the post of 'master of the swans and keeper of the king's cygnets sure.' It is said that a swan will live for three hundred years or thereabouts. And you plucked it, and cooked it! Great heavens! It was a bit tough, I suppose?"

"Tough?"

"Yes; I daresay you'd be tough, too, about a.d. 2200. And I thought it would look so well in the hall!"

At the same time that the tale just recorded was told to me, I heard another Lincolnshire story. I do not suppose that it is new. A certain church was situated at a place that was within the sphere of influence of some fens when in flood. The consequence was that during a severe winter, divine service was held only every second Sunday. Once, however, the weather was so bad that the parson did not think it worth his while going near the church for five Sundays. This fact came to the ears of the Bishop, and he wrote for an explanation. The clergyman replied as follows:—

"Your lordship has been quite correctly informed regarding the length of the interval that has elapsed since my church was open; but the fact is that the devil himself couldn't get at my parishioners in the winter, and I promise your lordship to be before him in the spring."

That parson took a humbler view of his position and privileges in the world than did a Presbyterian minister in Ulster whose pompous way of moving and of speaking drew toward him many admirers and imitators. He paid a visit to Palestine at one time of his life, and on his return, he preached a sermon introducing some of his experiences. Now, the only inhabitants of the Holy Land that the majority of travellers can talk about are the fleas; but this Presbyterian minister had much to tell about all that he had seen. It was, however, only

when he began to show his flock how strictly the inspiriting prophecies of Jeremiah and Joel and the rest had been fulfilled that he proved that he had not visited the country in vain.

“My dear friends,” said he, “I read in the Sacred Book the prophecy that the land should be in heaps: I looked up from the page, and there, before my eyes, were the heaps. I read that the bittern should cry there: I looked up; lo! close at hand stood a bittern. I read that the Minister of the Lord should mourn there: *I was that minister.*”

Upon one occasion, when sojourning at a picturesquely situated Connemara inn, hot water was left outside my bedroom door in a handy soup tureen, in which there was also a ladle reposing. One morning in the same “hotel” I called the attention of the official, who discharged (indifferently) the duties of boots and landlord, to the circumstance that my bath (recollecting the advertisement of the entertainment which it was possible to obtain under certain conditions at the Norwegian inn, I had brought the bath with me) had not been emptied since the previous day. The man said, “It’s right that you are, sorr,” and forthwith remedied the omission by throwing the contents of the bath out of the window.

I was so struck by the convenience of this system of main drainage, and it seemed so simple, that the next morning, finding that the bath was in the same condition as before, I thought to save trouble by performing the landlord’s operation for myself. I opened the window and tilted over the bath. In a moment there was a yell from below, and the air became sulphurous with Celtic maledictions. These were followed by roars of laughter in the vernacular, so that I thought it prudent to lower both the window and the blind without delay.

“Holy Biddy!” remarked the landlord when I had descended to breakfast—not failing to observe that a portly figure was standing in a *semi-nude* condition in front of the kitchen fire, while on the back of a chair beside him a black coat was spread-eagled, sending forth a cloud of steam—“Holy Biddy, sorr, what was that ye did this morning, anyway?”

“What do you mean, Dennis?” I asked innocently. “I shaved and dressed as usual.”

“Ye emptied the tin tub [*i.e.*, my zinc bath] out of the windy over Father Conn,” replied the landlord. “It’s himself that’s being dried this minute before the kitchen fire.”

“I’m very sorry,” said I. “You see, I fancied from the way you emptied the bath yesterday that that was the usual way of doing the business.”

“So it is, sorr,” said he. “But you should always be after looking out first to see that all’s clear below.”

“Why don’t you have those directions printed and hung up in the bedroom?” said I, assuming—as I have always found it safe to do upon such occasions—the aggressive tone of the injured party.

“We don’t have so many gentlemen coming here that’s so dirty that they need to be washed down every blessed marnin’,” he replied; and I thought it better to draw upon my newspaper experience, and quote the three-starred admonition, “All communications on this subject must now cease.”

However, the trout which were laid on the table in front of me were so numerous, and looked so tempting, that I went into the kitchen, and after making an elaborate apology to Father Conn, the amiable parish priest, for the mishap he had sustained through my ignorance of the natural precautions necessary to be taken when preparing my bath, insisted on the reverend gentleman’s joining me at breakfast while his coat was being dried.

With only a superficial reluctance, he accepted my invitation, remarking,—

“I had my own breakfast a couple of hours ago, sir, but in troth I feel quite hungry again. Faith, it’s true enough that there’s nothing like a morning swim for giving a man an appetite.”

Two lady relatives of mine were on their way to a country house in the county Galway, and were compelled to stay for a night at the inn, which was a sort of half-way house between the railway station and their destination. On being shown to their bedroom while their dinner was being made ready, they naturally wished to remove from their faces the traces of their dusty drive of sixteen miles, so one of them bent over the banisters—there was no bell in the room, of course—and inquired if the servant would be good enough to carry upstairs some hot water.

“Surely, miss,” the servant responded from below.

In a few minutes, the door of the bedroom was knocked at, and the woman entered, bearing in her hand a tray with two glasses, a saucer of loaf sugar, a lemon, a ladle, and a small jug of hot water.

It appeared that in this district the use of hot water is unknown except as an accompaniment to whisky, a lemon, and a lump of sugar. The combination of the four is said to be both palatable and popular.

It was at a much larger and more pretentious establishment in the south-west that I was staying when a box of books arrived for me from the library of Messrs. Eason & Son. It was tied with stout, tough cord, about as thick as one’s little finger. I was in the act of dressing when the boots brought up the box, so I asked him to open it for me. The man fumbled for some time at the knot, and at last he said he would have to cut the cord.

When I had rubbed the soap out of my eyes,

I noticed him in the act of sawing through the tough cord with one of my razors which I had laid on the dressing-table after shaving.

“Stop, stop,” I shouted. “Man, do you know that that’s a razor?”

“Oh, it’ll do well enough for this, sir. I’ve forgot my knife downstairs,” said the man complacently.

If the razor did for the operation, the operation certainly did for the razor.

And here I am led to recall a story told to me by the late Dr. George Crowe, the husband of Miss Bateman, the distinguished actress, and brother to Mr. Eyre Crowe, A.R.A. It will be remembered by all who are familiar with the chief incidents in the life of Thackeray, that in 1853 he adopted Miss Amy Crowe (her father, an historian and journalist of eminence in his day, had been one of the novelist’s closest friends), and she became one of the Thackeray household. Her brother George was at school, but he had “the run of the house,” so to speak, in Onslow Square. Next to the desire to become an expert smoker, the desire to become an accomplished shaver is, I think, the legitimate aspiration of boyhood; and George Crowe had his longings in this direction, when examining Thackeray’s razors with the other contents of his dressing-room one day. The means of gratifying such an aspiration are (fortunately) not invariably within the reach of most boys, and young Crowe was not exceptionally situated in this matter. The same spirit of earnest investigation, however, which had led him to discover the razors, caused him to find in one of the garrets an old but well-preserved travelling trunk, bound with ox-hide, and studded with brass nails. To spread a copious lather over a considerable part of the lid, and to set about the removal, by the aid of a razor, of the hair of the ox-hide, occupied the boy the greater part of an afternoon. Though not exactly so good as the real operation, this shave was, he considered, a move in the right direction; and it was certainly better than nothing at all. By a singular coincidence, it was about this time that Thackeray began to complain of the difficulty of putting an edge upon his razors, and to inquire if any one had been at the case where they were kept. Of course, no one except the boy knew anything about the business, and he, for prudential reasons, preserved silence. The area of the ox-hide that still remained hirsute was pretty extensive, and he foresaw many an hour of fearful joy, such as he had already tasted in the garret. Twice again he lathered and shaved at the ox-hide; but the third attempt was not a success, owing to the sudden appearance of the housekeeper, who led the boy to the novelist’s study and gave evidence against him, submitting as proofs the razor, the shaving-brush, and a portion of George Crowe’s thumb which he had inadvertently sliced off. Thackeray rose from his desk and mounted the stairs to the garret; and when the housekeeper followed, insisting on the boy’s accompanying her—probably on the French principle of confronting a murderer with the body of his victim—Thackeray was found seated on an unshaved portion of the trunk, and roaring with laughter.

So soon as he had recovered, he shook his finger at the delinquent (who, twenty-five years afterwards, told me the story), and merely said:

“George, I see clearly that in future I’ll have to buy my trunks bald.”

CHAPTER XVI.—IRISH TOURISTS AND TRAINS.

The late Emperor of Brazil—An incredulous hotel manager—The surprised A.R.A.—The Emperor as an early riser—The habits of the English actor—A new reputation—Signor Ciro Pinsuti—The Prince of Bohemia—Treatment au prince—The bill—An Oriental prince—An ideal costume for a Scotch winter—Its subsequent modification—The royal sleeping-place—Trains and Irish humour—The courteous station-master—The sarcasm of the travellers—“Punctually seven minutes late”—Not originally an Irishman—The time of departure of the 7.45 train—Brahke, brake, brake—The card-players—Possibility of their deterioration—The dissatisfied passenger—Being in a hurry he threatens to walk—He didn’t—He wishes he had.

ONCE I was treated very uncivilly at an hotel in the North of Ireland, and as the occasion was one upon which I was, I believed, entitled to be dealt with on terms of exceptional courtesy, I felt the slight all the more deeply. The late Emperor of Brazil, in yielding to his desire to see everything in the world that was worth seeing, had appeared suddenly in Ireland. I had had the privilege of taking tiffin with His Majesty aboard a man-of-war at Rio Janeiro some years previously, and on calling upon him in London upon the occasion of his visit to England, I found to my surprise that he remembered the incident. He asked me to go with him to the Giant’s Causeway, and I promised to do so if he did not insist on starting before sunrise,—he was the earliest riser I ever met. His idea was that we could leave Belfast in the morning, travel by rail to Portrush (sixty-seven miles distant), drive along the coast to the Giant’s Causeway (eight miles), and return to Belfast in time to catch the train which left for Dublin at three o’clock.

This programme was actually carried out. On entering the hotel at Portrush—we arrived about eight in the morning—I hurried to the manager.

“I have brought the Emperor of Brazil to breakfast,” said I, “so that if you could let us have the dining-room to ourselves I should be much obliged to you.”

“Who is it that you say you’ve brought?” asked the manager sleepily.

“The Emperor of Brazil,” I replied promptly.

“Come now, clear off out of this, you and your jokes,” said the manager. “I’ve been taken in before to-day. You’ll need to get up earlier in the morning if you want to do it again. The Emperor of Brazil indeed! It’ll be the King of the Cannibal Islands next!”

I felt mortified, and so, I fancy, did the manager shortly afterwards.

Happily the hotel is now managed by the railway company, and is one of the best in all Ireland.

I fared better in this matter than the messenger who hurried to the residence of a painter, who is now a member of the Royal Academy, to announce his election as Associate in the days of Sir Francis Grant. It is said that the painter felt himself to be so unworthy of the honour which was being thrust upon him, that believing that he perceived an attempt on the part of some of his brother-artists to make him the victim of a practical joke, he promptly kicked the messenger downstairs.

The manager of the hotel did not quite kick me out when I explained to him that his house was to be honoured by the presence of an Emperor, but he looked as if he would have liked to do so.

Regarding the early rising of the Emperor Dom Pedro II., several amusing anecdotes were in circulation in London upon the occasion of his first visit. One morning he had risen, as usual, about four o'clock, and was taking a stroll through Covent Garden market, when he came face to face with three well-known actors, who were returning to their rooms after a quiet little supper at the Garrick Club. The Emperor inquired who the gentlemen were, and he was told. For years afterwards he was, it is said, accustomed to declare that the only men he met in England who seemed to believe with him that the early morning was the best part of the day, were the actors. The most distinguished members of the profession were, he said, in the habit of rising between the hours of three and four every morning during the summer.

A story which tends to show that in some directions, at any rate, in Ireland the hotel proprietors are by no means wanting in courtesy towards distinguished strangers, even when travelling in an unostentatious way, was told to me by the late Ciro Pinsuti, the well-known song writer, at his house in Mortimer Street. (When he required any changes in the verses of mine which he was setting, he invariably anticipated my objections by a story, told with admirable effect.) It seems that Pinsuti was induced some years before to take a tour to the Killarney Lakes. On arriving at the hotel where he had been advised to put up, he found that the house was so crowded he had to be content with a sort of china closet, into which a sofa-bed had been thrust. The landlord was almost brusque when he ventured to protest against the lack of accommodation, but subsequently a compromise was effected, and Pinsuti strolled away along the lakes.

On returning he found in the hall of the hotel the genial nobleman who was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and an old London friend of Pinsuti's. He was on a visit to the Herberts of Muckross, and attended only by his son and one aide-de-camp.

Now, at one time the same nobleman had been in the habit of contracting Pinsuti's name, when addressing him, into "Pince"; in the course of time this became improved into "Prince"; and for years he was never addressed except in this way; so that when he entered the hall of the hotel, His Excellency lifted up his hands and cried,—

"Why, Prince, who on earth would have fancied meeting you here of all places in the world?"

Pinsuti explained that he had merely crossed the Channel for a day or two, and that he was staying at the hotel.

"Come along then, and we'll have lunch together," said the Lord Lieutenant; and Pinsuti forthwith joined the Viceregal party.

But when luncheon was over, and the Viceroy was strolling through the grounds for a smoke by the side of the musician, the landlord approached His Excellency's son, saying,—

"I beg your lordship's pardon, but may I ask who the Prince is that lunched with you and His Excellency?"

"What Prince?" said Lord Ernest, somewhat puzzled.

"Yes, my lord; I heard His Excellency address him as Prince more than once," said the landlord.

Then Lord Ernest, perceiving the ground for a capital joke, said,—

"Oh, the Prince—yes, to be sure; I fancied you knew him. Prince! yes, that's the Prince of Bohemia."

"The Prince of Bohemia! and I've sent him to sleep on an iron chair-bed in a china closet!" cried the landlord.

Lord Ernest looked grave.

"I wouldn't have done that if I had been you," he said, shaking his head. "You must try and do better for him than that, my man." Shortly afterwards the Viceregal party drove off, and then the landlord approached Pinsuti, and bowing to the ground, said,—

"I must humbly apologise to your Royal Highness for not having a suitable room for your Royal Highness in the morning; but now I'm proud to say that I have had prepared an apartment which will, I trust, give satisfaction."

"What do you mean by Highnessing me, my good man?" asked Pinsuti.

"Ah," said the landlord, smiling and bowing, "though it may please your Royal Highness to travel *incognito*, I trust I know what is due to your exalted station, sir."

For the next two days Pinsuti was, he told me, treated with an amount of respect such as he had never before experienced. A waiter was specially told off to attend to him, and every time he passed the landlord the latter bowed in his best style.

It was, however, an American lady tourist who held an informal meeting in the drawingroom of the hotel, at which it was agreed that no one should be seated at the *table d'hote* until the Prince of Bohemia had entered and taken his place.

On the morning of his departure he found, waiting to take him to the railway station, a carriage drawn by four horses. Out to this he passed through lines of bowing tourists—especially Americans.

“It was all very nice, to be sure,” said Pinsuti, in concluding his narrative; “but the bill I had to pay was not so gratifying. However, one cannot be a Prince, even of Bohemia, without paying for it.”

This story more than neutralises, I think, the impression likely to be produced by the account of the insolence of the official at the northern hotel. Universal civility may be expected even at the largest and best-appointed hotels in Ireland.

As I have somehow drifted into these anecdotes about royal personages, at the risk of being considered digressive—an accusation which I spurn—I must add one curious experience which some relations of mine had of a genuine prince. My cousin, Major Wyllie, of the Madras Staff Corps, had been attached to the prince’s father, who was a certain rajah, and had been the instrument employed by the Government for giving him some excellent advice as to the course he should adopt if he were desirous of getting the Star which it was understood he was coveting. The rajah was anxious to have his heir, a boy of twelve, educated in England, and he wished to find for him a place in a family where his morals—the rajah was great on morals—would be properly looked after; so he sought the advice of Major Wyllie on this important subject. After some correspondence and much persuasion on the part of the potentate, my cousin consented to send the youth to his father’s house near Edinburgh. The rajah was delighted, and promised to have an outfit prepared for his son without delay. The result of the consultation which he had with some learned members of his *entourage* on the subject of the costume daily worn in Edinburgh by gentlemen, was peculiar. I am of the opinion that some of its distinctive features must have been exaggerated, while the full value of others cannot have been assigned to them; for the young prince submitted himself for the approval of Major Wyllie, and some other officers of the Staff, wearing a truly remarkable dress. His boots were of the old Hessian pattern, with coloured silk tassels all round the uppers. His knees were bare, but just above them the skirt of a kilt flowed, in true Scotch fashion, only that the material was not cloth but silk, and the colours were not those of any known tartan, but simply a brilliant yellow. The coat was of blue velvet, crusted with jewels, and instead of the flowing shoulder-pieces, there hung down a rich mantle of gold brocade. The crowning incident of this ideal costume of an unobtrusive Scotch gentleman whose aim is to pass through the streets without attracting attention, was a crimson velvet glengarry cap worn over a white turban, and containing three very fine ostrich feathers of different, colours, fastened by a diamond aigrette.

Yes, the consensus of opinion among the officers was that the rajah had succeeded wonderfully in giving prominence to the chief elements of the traditional Scottish national dress, without absolutely extinguishing every spark of that orientalism to which the prince had been accustomed. It was just the sort of costume that a simple body would like to wear daily, walking down Prince’s Street, during an inclement winter, they said. There was no attempt at ostentation about it; its beauty consisted in its almost Puritan simplicity; and there pervaded it a note of that sternness which marks the character of the rugged North Briton.

The rajah was delighted with this essay of his advisers at making a consistent blend of Calicut and Caledonia in *modes*; but somehow the prince arrived in Scotland in a tweed suit.

I afterwards heard that on the first morning after the arrival of the prince at his temporary home, he was missing. His bed showed no signs of having been slept in during the night; but the eiderdown quilt was not to be seen. It was only about the breakfast hour that the butler found His Highness, wrapped in the eiderdown quilt, *under the bed.*

He had occupied a lower bunk in a cabin aboard the P. & O. steamer on the voyage to England, and he had taken it for granted that the sleeping accommodation in the house where he was an honoured guest was of the same restricted type. He had thus naturally crept under the bed, so that some one else might enjoy repose in the upper and rather roomier compartment.

The transition from Irish inns to Irish railways is not a violent one. On the great trunk lines the management is sufficiently good to present no opportunities for humorous reminiscences. It is with railways as with hotels: the more perfectly appointed they are, the less humorous are the incidents associated with them in the recollection of a traveller. It is safe to assume that, as a general rule, native wit keeps clear of a line of rails. Mr. Baring Gould is good enough to explain, in his “Strange Survivals and Superstitions,” that the fairy legend is but a shadowy tradition of the inhabitants during the Stone Age; and he also explains how it came about that iron was accepted as a potent agent for driving away these humorous folk. The iron road has certainly driven the witty aborigines into the remote districts of Ireland. A railway guard has never been known to convulse the passengers with his dry wit as he snips their tickets, nor do the clerks at the pigeon-holes take any particular trouble to Hash out a *bon mot* as one counts one’s change. The man who, after pouring out the thanks of the West for the relief meal given to the people during the last failure of the potato and every other crop, said, “Troth, if it wasn’t for the famine we’d all be starving entirely,” lived far from the sound of the whistle of an engine.

Still, I have now and again come upon something on an Irish railway that was droll by reason of its incongruity. There was a station-master at a small town on an important line, who seemed a survival of the leisurely days of our grandfathers. He invariably strolled round the carriages to ask the passengers if they were quite comfortable, just as the conscientious head waiter at the “*Trois Frères*” used to do in respect of his patrons. He would suggest here and there that a window might be closed, as the morning air was

sometimes very treacherous. He even pressed foot-warmers upon the occupants of the second-class carriages. He was the friend of all the matrons who were in the habit of travelling by the line, and he inquired after their numerous ailments (including babies), and listened with dignified attention while they told him all that should be told in public—sometimes a trifle more. A medical student would learn as much about a very interesting branch of the profession through paying attention to the exchange of confidences at that station, as he would by walking the hospitals for a year. The station-master was greatly looked up to by agriculturists, and it was commonly reported that there was no better judge of the weather to be found in the immediate neighbourhood of the station.

It was really quite absurd to hear English commercial travellers and other persons in the train, who had not become aware of the good qualities of this most estimable man, grumbling because the train usually remained at this platform for ten minutes instead of the two minutes allotted to it in the "A B C." The engine-drivers, it was said, also growled at being forced to run the twenty miles on either side of this station at as fast a rate as forty miles an hour, instead of the thirty to which they had accustomed themselves, to save their time. The cutting remarks of the impatient passengers made no impression upon him.

"Look here, station-master," cried a commercial gentleman one day when the official had come across quite an unusual number of acquaintances, "is there a breakdown on the line?"

"I don't know indeed, sir, but I'll try and find out for you," said the station-master blandly. He went off hurriedly (for him), and did not return for five minutes.

"I've telegraphed up the line, sir," said he to the gentleman, who only meant to be delicately sarcastic, "and I'm happy to assure you that no information regarding a breakdown has reached any of the principal stations. It has been raining at Ballynamuck, but I don't think it will continue long. Can I do anything more for you, sir?"

"No, thank you," said the commercial gentleman meekly.

"I can find out for you if the Holyhead steamer has had a good passage, if you don't mind waiting for a few minutes," suggested the official. "What! you are anxious to get on? Certainly, sir; I'll tell the guard. Good morning, sir."

When the train was at last in motion a wiry old man in a corner pulled out his watch, and then turned to the commercial traveller.

"Are you aware, sir," he said tartly, "that your confounded inquiries kept us back just seven minutes? You should have some consideration for your fellow-passengers, let me tell you, sir."

A murmur of assent went round the compartment.

Upon another occasion a passenger, on arriving at the station over whose destinies this courteous official presided, put his head out of the carriage window, and inquired if the train had arrived punctually.

"Yes, sir," replied the station-master, "very punctually: seven minutes late to a second."

Upon another occasion I heard him say to an inquirer,—

"Oh no, sir; I wasn't originally an Irishman. I am one now, however."

"By heavens!" said some one at the further end of the compartment, "that reply removes all doubt on the subject."

Several years ago I was staying at Lord Avonmore's picturesque lodge at the head of Lough Dearg. A fellow-guest received a telegram one Sunday afternoon which compelled his immediate departure, and seeing by the railway time-table that a train left the nearest station at 7.45, we drove in shortly before that hour. There was, however, no sign of life on the little platform up to 7.50. Thereupon my friend became anxious, and we hunted in every direction for even the humblest official. After some trouble we found a porter asleep on a pile of cushions in the lamp-room. We roused him and said,—

"There's a train marked on the time-table to leave here at 7.45, but it's now 7.50, and there's no sign of a train. What time may we expect it?"

"I don't know, sir, for myself." said the porter, "but I'll ask the station-master."

We followed him down the platform, and then a man, in his shirt sleeves, came out of an office.

"Mr. O'Flaherty," cried the porter, "here's two gentlemen that wants to know, if you please, at what o'clock the 7.45 train leaves."

"It leaves at eight on weekdays and a quarter past eight on Sundays," was the thoughtful reply.

It is reported that on the same branch, an engine-driver, on reaching the station more than usually behind his time, declared that he had never known "herself"—meaning the engine—to be so sluggish before. She needed a deal of rousing before he could get any work whatever out of her, he said; and she had pulled up at the platform without a hand being put to the brake. When he tried to start the engine again he failed utterly in his attempt. She had "rusted," he said, and when an engine rusted she was more stubborn than any horse.

It was a passenger who eventually suggested that perhaps if the brakes were turned off, the engine might have a better chance of doing its work.

This suggestion led to an examination of the brake wheels of the engine.

"By me sowl, that's a joke!" said the engine-driver. "If I haven't been driving her through the county

Tipperary with the brakes on!”

And so he had.

On a branch line farther north the official staff were said to be so extremely fond of the Irish National game of cards—it is called “Spoil Five”—that the guard, engine-driver, and stoker invariably took a hand at it on the tool-box on the tender—a poor substitute for a table, the guard explained to an interested passenger who made inquiries on the subject, but it served well enough at a pinch, and it was not for him to complain. He was right: it was for the passengers to complain, and some of them did so; and a remonstrance was sent to the staff which practically amounted to a prohibition of any game of cards on the engine when the train was in motion. It was very reasonably pointed out by the manager that, unless the greatest watchfulness were observed by the guard, he might, when engaged at the game, allow the train to run past some station at which it was advertised to stop—as a matter of fact this had frequently occurred. Besides, the manager said, persistence in the practice under the conditions just described could not but tend to the deterioration of the staff as card-players; so he trusted that they would see that it was advisable to give their undivided attention to their official duties.

The staff cheerfully acquiesced, admitting that now and again it was a great strain upon them to recollect what cards were out, and at the same time what was the name of the station just passed. The fact that the guard had been remiss enough, on throwing down the hand that had just been dealt to him on the arrival of the train at Ballycruiskeen, to walk down the platform crying out “Hearts is thrumps!” instead of the name of the station, helped to make him at least see the wisdom of the manager’s remonstrance; and no more “Spoil Five” was played while the engine was in motion.

But every time the train made a stoppage, the cards were shuffled on the engine, and the station-master for the time being took a hand, as well as any passenger who had a mind to contribute to the pool. Now and again, however, a passenger turned up who was in a hurry to get to his journey’s end, and made something of a scene—greatly to the annoyance of the players, and the couple of policemen, and the porter or two, who had the *entrée* to the “table.” Upon one occasion such a passenger appeared, and, in considerable excitement, pointed out that the train had taken seventy-five minutes to do eight miles. He declared that this was insufferable, and that, sooner than stand it any longer, he would walk the remainder of the distance to his destination.

He was actually showing signs of carrying out his threat, when the guard threw down his hand, dismounted from the engine and came behind him.

“Ah, sir, you’ll get into the train again, won’t you?” said he.

“No, I’ll be hanged if I will,” shouted the passenger. “I’ve no time to waste, I’ll walk.”

“Ah, no, sir; you’ll get into the train. Do, sir; and you’ll be at the end of the journey every bit as soon as if you walked,” urged the official.

His assurance on this point prevailed, and the passenger returned to his carriage. But unless the speed upon that occasion was a good deal greater than it was when I travelled over the same line, it is questionable if he would not have been on the safe side in walking.

CHAPTER XVII—HONORARY EDITORS AND OTHERS.

Our esteemed correspondent—The great imprinted—Lord Tennyson’s death—“Crossing the Bar”—Why was it never printed in its entirety?—The comments on the poem—Who could the Pilot have been?—Pilot or pilot engine?—A vexed and vexing question—Erroneous navigation—Tennyson’s voyage with Mr. Gladstone—Its far-reaching results—Tennyson’s interest in every form of literary work—“My Official Wife”—Amateur critics—The Royal Dane—Edwin Booth and his critic—A really comic play—An Irving enthusiast—“Gemini and Virgo”—“Our sincerest laughter”—The drollest of soliloquies—“Eugene Aram” for the hilarious—The proof of a sincere devotion.

THE people who spend their time writing letters to newspapers pointing out mistakes, or what they imagine to be mistakes, and making many suggestions as to how the newspaper should be conducted in all its departments, constitute a branch of the profession of philanthropy, to which sufficient attention has never been given.

I do not, of course, allude to the type whom Mr. George Du Maurier derided when he put the phrase *J’écrirai à le Times* into his mouth on being compelled to pay an extravagant bill at a French hotel; there are people who have just grievances to expose, and there are newspapers that exist for the dissemination of those grievances; but it is an awful thought that at this very moment there are some hundreds—perhaps thousands—of presumably sane men and women sitting down and writing letters to their local newspapers to point out to the management that the jeu d’esprit attributed in yesterday’s issue to Sydney Smith, was one of which Douglas Jerrold was really the author; or that the quotation about the wind being tempered to the shorn lamb is not to be found in the Bible, but in “the works of the late Mr. Sterne”; or perhaps suggesting that no country could rightly be regarded as exempted from the list of lands forming a legitimate sphere for

missionary labour, whose newspapers give up four columns daily to an account of the horse-racing of the day before. A book might easily be written by any one who had some experience, not of the letters that appear in a newspaper, but of those that are sent to the editor by enthusiasts on the subject of finance, morality, religion, and the correct text of some of Burns dialect poems.

When Lord Tennyson died, I printed five columns of a biographical and critical sketch of the great poet. I thought it necessary to quote only a single stanza of "Crossing the Bar." During the next clay I received quite a number of letters asking in what volume of Tennyson's works the poem was to be found. In the succeeding issue of the paper I gave the poem in full. From that day on during the next fortnight, no post arrived without bringing me a letter containing the same poem, with a request to have it published in the following issue; and every writer seemed to be under the impression that he (or she) had just discovered "Crossing the Bar." Then the clergymen who forwarded in manuscript the sermons which they had preached on Tennyson, pointing out the "lessons" of his poems, presented their compliments and requested the insertion of "Crossing the Bar," *in its entirety*, in the place in the sermons where they had quoted it. All this time "poems" on the death of Tennyson kept pouring in by the hundred, and I can safely say that not one came under my notice that did not begin,

"Yes, thou hast cross'd the Bar, and face to face
Thy Pilot seen,"

or with words to that effect.

After this had been going on for some weeks a member of the proprietorial household came to me with a letter open in his hand.

"I wonder how it was that we missed that poem of Tennyson's." said he. "It would have done well, I think, if it had been published in our columns at his death."

"What poem is that?" I inquired.

"This is it," he replied, offering me the letter which he held. "A personal friend of my own sends it to me for insertion. It is called 'Crossing the Bar.' Have you ever seen it before?"

The aggregate thickness of skull of the proprietorial household was phenomenal.

When writing on the subject of this poem I may perhaps be permitted to express the opinion, that the remarks made about it in some directions were the most astounding that ever appeared in print respecting a composition of the character of "Crossing the Bar."

One writer, it may be remembered, took occasion to point out that the "Pilot" was, of course, the poet's son, by whom he had been predeceased. The "thought" was, we were assured, that his son had gone before him to show him the direction to take, so to speak. Now whatever the "thought" of the poet was, the thought of this commentator converged not upon a pilot but a pilot-engine.

Then another writer was found anxious to point out that Tennyson's navigation was defective. "What would be the use of a pilot when the bar was already crossed?" was the question asked by this earnest inquirer. This gentleman's idea clearly was that Tennyson should have subjected himself to a course of Mr. Clark Russell before attempting to write such a poem as "Crossing the Bar."

The fact was that Tennyson knew enough navigation for a poet, just as Mr. Gladstone knows enough for a premier. When the two most picturesque of Englishmen (assuming that Mr. Gladstone is an Englishman) took their cruise together in a steam yacht they kept their eyes open, I have good reason to know. I question very much if the most ideal salt in the mercantile marine could make a better attempt to describe some incidents of the sea than Tennyson did in "Enoch Arden"; and as the Boston gentleman was doubtful if more than six men in his city could write "Hamlet," so I doubt if the same number of able-bodied seamen, whose command of emphatic language is noted, could bring before our eyes the sight, and send rushing through our ears the sound, of a breaking wave, with greater emphasis than Tennyson did when he wrote,—

"As the crest of some slow-arching wave
Heard in dead night along that table-shore
Drops flat; and after the great waters break,
Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves
Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud
From less and less to nothing.''

It was after he had returned from his last voyage with Mr. Gladstone that Tennyson wrote "Crossing the Bar."

It was after Mr. Gladstone had returned from the same voyage that he consolidated his reputation as a statesman by a translation of "Rock of Ages" into Italian. He then made Tennyson a peer.

Perhaps it may not be considered an impertinence on my part if I give, in this place, an instance, which came under my notice, of the eclectic nature of Lord Tennyson's interest in even the least artistic branches of literary work. A relative of mine went to Aldworth to lunch with the family of the poet only a few weeks before his death saddened every home in England. Lord Tennyson received his guest in his favourite room; he was seated on a sofa at a window overlooking the autumn russet landscape, and he wore a black velvet coat,

which made his long delicate fingers seem doubly pathetic in their worn whiteness. He had been reading, and laid down the book to greet his visitor. This book was “My Official Wife.”

Now the author of the story so entitled is not the man to talk of his “Art,” as so many inferior writers do, in season and out of season. He knows that his stories are no more deserving of being regarded as high-class literature than is the scrappy volume at which I am now engaged. He knows, however, that he is an excellent exponent of a form of art that interests thousands of people on both sides of the Atlantic; and the fact that Tennyson was able to read such a story as “My Official Wife” seems to me to show how much the poet was interested in a very significant phase of the constantly varying taste of the great mass of English readers.

It is the possession of such a sympathetic nature as this that prevents a man from ever growing old. Mr. Gladstone also seems to read everything that comes in his way, and he is never so busy as to be unable to snatch a moment to write a word of kindly commendation upon an excessively dull book.

It is not only upon the occasion of the death of a great man or a prince that some people are obliging enough to give an editor a valuable hint or two as to the standpoint from which the character of the deceased should be judged. They now and again express themselves with great freedom on the subject of living men, and are especially frank in their references to the private lives of the best-known and most highly respected gentlemen. It is, however, the performances of actors that form the most fruitful subject of irresponsible comment for “outsiders.” It has often seemed to me that every man has his own idea of the way “Hamlet” should be represented. When I was engaged in newspaper work I found that every new representation of the play was received by some people as the noblest effort to realise the character, while others were of the opinion that the actor might have found a more legitimate subject than this particular play for burlesque treatment. Mr. Edwin Booth once told me a story—I dare say it may be known in the United States—that would tend to convey the impression that the study of Hamlet has made its way among the coloured population as well as the colourless—if there are any—of America.

Mr. Booth said that he was acting in New Orleans, and when at the hotel, his wants were enthusiastically attended to by a negro waiter. At every meal the man showed his zeal in a very marked way, particularly by never allowing another waiter to come within hailing distance of his chair. Such attention, the actor thought, should be rewarded, so he asked Caractacus if he would care to have an order for the theatre. The waiter declared that if he only had the chance of seeing Mr. Booth on the stage, he (the waiter) would die happy when his time came. The actor at once gave him an order for the same night, and the next morning he found the man all teeth and eyes behind his chair.

“Well, Caractacus, did you manage to go to the theatre last night?” asked Booth.

“Didn’t I jus’, Massa Boove,” cried the waiter beaming.

“And how did you enjoy the piece?”

“Jus’ lubly, sah; nebber onjoyed moself so well—it kep’ me in a roar o’ larfta de whole ebening, sah. Oh, Massa Boove, you was too funny.”

The play that had been performed was *Hamlet.*

I chanced to be residing for a time in a large manufacturing town which Mr. Irving visited when “touring” some twelve years ago. In that town an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Irving’s lived, and he was, with Mr. Irving and myself, a guest of the mayor’s at a dinner party on one Sunday night. In the drawing-room of the mayoress the great actor repeated his favourite poem—“Gemini and Virgo,” from Calverley’s “Verses and Translations,” dealing with inimitable grace with the dainty humour of this exquisite trifle; and naturally, every one present was delighted. For myself I may say that, frequently though I had heard Mr. Irving repeat the verses.

I felt that he had never before brought to bear upon them the consummate art of that high comedy of which he is the greatest living exponent. But I could not help noticing that the gentleman who had protested so enthusiastic an admiration for the actor, was greatly puzzled as the recitation went on, and I came to the conclusion that he had not the remotest idea what it was all about. When some ladies laughed outright at the delivery of the lines, with matchless adroitness,

“I did not love as others do—
None ever did that I’ve heard tell of,”

the man looked angrily round and cried “Hsh!” but even this did not overawe the young women, and they all laughed again at,

“One night I saw him squeeze her hand—
There was no doubt about the matter.
I said he must resign, or stand
My vengeance—and he chose the latter.”

But by this time it had dawned upon the jealous guardian of Mr. Irving’s professional reputation that the poem was meant to be a trifle humorous, and so soon as he became convinced of this, he almost interrupted the reciter with his uproarious hilarity, especially at places where the humour was far too subtle for laughter;

and at the close he wiped his eyes and declared that the fun was too much for him.

I asked a relative of his if he thought that the man had the slightest notion of what the poem was about, and his relative said,—

"It might be in Sanskrit for all he understands of it. He loves Mr. Irving for himself alone. He has got no idea of art."

Later in the night the conversation turned upon the difference between the elocutionary modes of expression of the past and the present day. In illustration of a point associated with the question of effect, Mr. Irving gave me at least a thrill such as I had never before experienced through the medium of his art, by repeating,—

> "To be or not to be: that is the question."

Before he had reached the words,—

> "To die: to sleep:
> No more,"

I felt that I had suddenly had a revelation made to me of the utmost limits of art; that I had been permitted a glimpse behind the veil, if I may be allowed the expression; that I had been permitted to take a single glance into a world whose very name is a mystery to the sons of men.

Every one present seemed spellbound. A commonplace man who sat next to me, drew a long breath—it was almost a gasp—and said,—

"That is too much altogether for such people us we are. My God! I don't know what I saw—I don't know how I come to be here."

He could not have expressed better what my feeling was; and yet I had seen Mr. Irving's Hamlet seventeen times, so that I might have been looked upon as unsusceptible to any further revelation on a point in connection with the soliloquy.

When I glanced round I saw Mr. Irving's enthusiastic admirer once more wiping the tears of laughter from his eyes. It was not, however, until Mr. Irving was in the act of reciting "The Dream of Eugene Aram," that the same gentleman yielded to what he conceived to be the greatest comic treat of the evening.

Happily he occupied a back seat, and smothered his laughter behind a huge red handkerchief, which was guffaw-proof.

He was a little lower than the negro waiter in his appreciation of the actor's art.

A year afterwards I met the same gentleman at an hotel in Scotland, and he reminded me of the dinner-party at the mayor's. His admiration for Mr. Irving had in no degree diminished. He was partaking of a simple lunch of cold beef and pickled onions; and when he began to speak of the talents of the actor, he was helping himself to an onion, but so excited did he become that instead of dropping the dainty on his plate, he put it into his mouth, and after a crunch or two, swallowed it. Then he helped himself to a second, and crunched and talked away, while my cheeks became wrinkled merely through watching him. He continued automatically ladling the onions into his mouth until the jar was nearly empty, and the roof of my mouth felt crinkly. Fortunately a waiter came up—he had clearly been watching the man, and perceived that the hotel halfcrown lunch in this particular case would result in a loss to the establishment—and politely inquired if he had quite done with the pickle bottle, as another gentleman was asking for it.

I wondered how the man felt after the lapse of an hour or so. I could not but believe in the sincerity of a devotion that manifested itself in so striking a manner.

I have mentioned "The Dream of Eugene Aram." Has any one ever attempted to identify the "little boy" who was the recipient of the harrowing tale of the usher? In my mind there is no doubt that the "gentle lad" whom Hood had in his eye was none other than James Burney, son of Dr. Burney, and brother of the writer of "Evelina." He was a pupil at the school near Lynn which was fortunate enough to obtain the services of Eugene Aram as usher; and I have no doubt that, when he settled down in London, after joining in the explorations of Captain Cook, he excited the imagination of his friend Hood by his reminiscences of his immortal usher.

Gessner's "Death of Abel" was published in England before the edition, illustrated by Stothard, appeared in 1797. Perhaps, however, young Master Burney carried his Bible about with him.

CHAPTER XVIII.—OUTSIDE THE LYCEUM BILL.

Mr. Edwin Booth—Othello and Iago at supper—The guest—Mr. Irving's little speech—Mr. Booth's graceful

reply—A striking tableau—A more memorable gathering—The hundredth night of "The Merchant of Venice"—The guests—Lord Houghton's speech—Mr. Irving's reply—Mr. J: L. Toole supplies an omission—Mr. Dion Boncicault at the Lyceum—English as she is spoke—"Trippingly on the tongue"—The man who was born to teach the pronunciation of English—A Trinity College student—The coveted acorn—A good word for the English.

I DID not mean to enter upon a course of theatrical anecdotage in these pages, but having mentioned the name of a great actor recently dead, I cannot refrain from making a brief reference to what was certainly one of the most interesting episodes in his career. I allude to Mr. Edwin Booth's professional visit to London in 1881. It may truthfully be said that if Mr. Booth was not wholly responsible for the financial failure of his abbreviated "season" at the Princess's Theatre, neither was he wholly responsible for his subsequent success at the Lyceum. I should like, however, to have an opportunity of bearing testimony to his frank and generous appreciation of the courtesy shown to him by Mr. Henry Irving, in inviting him to play in *Othello*. when it became plain that the performances of the American actor at the Princess's were not likely to make his reputation in England. It would be impossible for me to forget the genuine emotion shown by Mr. Booth when, on the Saturday night that brought to a close the notable representations of *Othello* at the Lyceum, he referred to the kindness which he had received at that theatre. Although the occasion to which I refer was the most private of private suppers, I do not feel that I can be accused of transgressing the accepted *codex* of the Beefsteak Room in touching upon a matter which is now of public interest. Early in the week Mr. Irving had been good enough to invite me to meet Mr. Booth at supper on the Saturday. After the performance, in which Mr. Irving was Othello and Mr. Booth Iago, I found in the supper-room, in addition to the host and the guest of the evening, Mr. John McCullough, who, it will be remembered, paid a visit to England at the same time as Mr. Booth; and a member of Parliament who subsequently became the Leader of the House of Commons. Mr. J. L. Toole and Mr. Bram Stoker subsequently arrived. We found a good deal to talk about, and it was rather late—too late for the one guest who was unconnected with theatrical matters (at least, those outside St. Stephen's)—when Mr. Irving, in a few of those graceful, informal sentences which he seems always to have at his command, and only rising to his feet for a moment, asked us to drink to the health of Mr. Booth. Mr. Irving, I recollect, referred to the fact that the representations of *Othello* had filled the theatre nightly, and that the instant the American actor appeared, the English actor had to "take a back seat."

The playful tone assumed by him was certainly not sustained by Mr. Booth. It would be impossible to doubt that he made his reply under the influence of the deepest feeling. He could scarcely speak at first, and when at last he found words, they were the words of a man whose eyes are full of tears. "You all know how I came here," he said. "You all know that I went to another theatre in London, and that I was a big failure, although some newspaper writers on my side of the water had said that I would make Henry Irving and the other English actors sit up. Well, I didn't make them sit up. Yes, I was a big failure. But what happened then? Henry Irving invites me to act with him at his theatre, and makes me share the success which he has so well earned. He changes my big failure into a big success. What can I say about such generosity? Was the like of it ever seen before? I am left without words. Friend Irving, I have no words to thank you." The two actors got upon their feet, and as they clasped hands, both of them overcome, I could not help feeling that I was looking upon an emblematic tableau of the artistic union of the Old World and the New. So I was.

I could not help contrasting this graceful little incident with the more memorable episode which had taken place in the same building some years previously. On the evening of February 14th, 1880, Mr. Irving gave a supper on the stage of the Lyceum, to celebrate the hundredth representation of *The Merchant of Venice*. I do not suppose that upon any occasion within the memory of a middle-aged man so remarkable a gathering had assembled at the bidding of an actor. Every notable man in every department of literature, art, and science seemed to me to be present. The most highly representative painters, poets, novelists, play-writers, actors of plays, composers of operas, singers of operas, composers of laws, exponents of the meaning of these laws, journalists, financiers,—all this goodly company attended on that moist Saturday night to congratulate the actor upon one of the most signal triumphs of the latter half of the century. Of course it was well understood by Mr. Irving's personal friends that an omission of their names from the list of invitations to this marvellous function was inevitable. Capacious though the stage of the Lyceum is, it would not meet the strain that would be put on it if all the personal friends of Mr. Irving were to be invited to the supper. So soon as I heard, however, that every living author who had written a play that had been produced at the Lyceum Theatre would be invited, I knew that, in spite of the fact that I only escaped by the skin of my teeth being an absolute nonentity—I had only published nine volumes in those days—I would not be an "outsider" upon this occasion. Two years previously a comedietta of mine had been played at this theatre for some hundred nights, while the audience were being shown to their places and were chatting genially with the friends whom they recognised three or four seats away. That was my play. No human being could deprive me of the consciousness of having written a play that was produced at the Lyceum Theatre. It was not a great feat, but it constituted a privilege of which I was not slow to avail myself.

The invitations were all in the handwriting of Mr. Irving, and the *menu* was, in the words of Joseph in "Divorçons," *délicat, distingué—très distingué*. While we were smoking some cigars the merits of which have never been adequately sung, though they would constitute a theme at least equal to that of the majority of epics, our host strolled round the tables, shaking hands and talking with every one in that natural way of his, which proves conclusively that at least one trait of Garrick's has never been shared by him.

> "Twas only that when he was off he was acting,"

wrote Garrick's—and everybody else's—friend, Goldsmith. No; Mr. Irving cannot claim to be the inheritor of all the arts of Garrick.

More than an hour had passed before Lord Houghton rose to propose the toast of the evening. He did so

very fluently. He had evidently prepared his speech with great care; and as the *doyen* of literature—the true patron of art and letters during two generations—his right to speak as one having authority could not be questioned. No one expected a commonplace speech from Lord Houghton, but few of Mr. Irving's guests could have looked for precisely such a speech as he delivered. It struck a note of far-reaching criticism, and was full of that friendly counsel which the varied experiences of the speaker made doubly valuable. Its commendation of the great actor was wholly free from that meaningless adulation, which is as distasteful to any artist who knows the limitations of his art, as it is prejudicial to the realisation of his aims. In his masterly biography of the late Lord Houghton, Mr. Wemyss Reid refers to the great admiration which Lord Houghton had for Mr. Irving; and this admiration was quite consistent with the tone of the speech in which he proposed the health of our host. It was probably Lord Houghton's sincere appreciation of the aims of Mr. Irving that caused him to make some delicate allusion to the dangers of long runs. Considering that we had assembled on the stage of the Lyceum to celebrate a phenomenal run on that stage, the difficulty of the course which Lord Houghton had to steer in order to avoid giving the least offence to even the most susceptible of his audience, will be easily recognised. There were present several playwriters who, by the exercise of great dexterity, had succeeded in avoiding all their lives the pitfall of the long run; and these gentlemen listened, with mournful acquiescence, while Lord Houghton showed, as he did quite conclusively, that, on the whole, the interests of dramatic art are best advanced by adopting the principles which form the basis of the Théâtre Français. But there were also present some managers who had been weak enough to allow certain plays which they had produced, to linger on the stage, evening after evening, so long as the public chose to pay their money to see them. I glanced at one of these gentlemen while Lord Houghton was delivering his tactful address, and I cannot say that the result of my glance was to assure me that the remarks of his lordship were convincing to that manager. Contrition for those past misdeeds that took the form of five-hundred-night runs was not the most noticeable expression upon his features. But then the manager was an actor as well, so that he may only have been concealing his remorse behind a smiling face.

Mr. Irving's reply was excellent. With amazing good-humour he touched upon almost every point brought forward by Lord Houghton, referring to his own position somewhat apologetically. Lord Houghton had, however, made the apologetic tone inevitable; but after a short time Mr. Irving struck the note for which his friends had been waiting, and spoke strongly, earnestly, and eloquently on behalf of the art of which he hoped to be the exponent.

We who knew how splendid were the aims of the hero of a hundred nights, with what sincerity and at how great self-sacrifice he had endeavoured to realize them; we who had watched his career in the past, and were hopefully looking forward to a future for the English drama in a legitimate home; we who were enthusiastic almost to a point of passion in our love and reverence for the art of which we believed Irving to be the greatest interpreter of our generation,—we, I say, felt that we should not separate before one more word at least was spoken to our friend whose triumph we regarded as our own.

It was Mr. J. L. Toole, our host's oldest and closest friend, who, in the Beefsteak Room some hours after midnight, expressed, in a few words that came from his heart and were echoed by ours, how deeply Mr. Irving's triumph was felt by all who enjoyed his friendship—by all who appreciated the difficulties which he had surmounted, and who, having at heart the best interests of the drama, stretched forth to him hands of sympathy and encouragement, and wished him God-speed.

Thus closed a memorable gathering, the chief incidents in which I have ventured to chronicle exactly as they appeared to me.

Only to one more Lyceum performance may I refer in this place. It may be remembered that ten or eleven years ago the late Mr. Dion Boucicault was obliging enough to offer to give a lecture to English actors on the correct pronunciation of their mother-tongue. The offer was, I suppose, thought too valuable to be neglected, and it was arranged that the lecture should be delivered from the stage of the Lyceum Theatre. A more interesting and amusing function I have never attended. It was clear that the lecturer had formed some very definite ideas as to the way the English language should be spoken; and his attempts to convey these ideas to his audience were most praiseworthy. His illustrations of the curiosities of some methods of pronouncing words were certainly extremely curious. For instance, he complained bitterly of the way the majority of English actors pronounced the word "war."

"Ye prenounce the ward as if it wuz spelt w-a-u-g-h," said the lecturer gravely. "Ye don't prenounce it at all as ye shud. The ward rhymes with 'par, 'are,' and 'kyar,' and yet ye will prenounce it as if it rhymed with 'saw' and 'Paw-' Don't ye see the diffurnce?"

"We do, we do!" cried the audience; and, thus encouraged by the ready acquiescence in his pet theories, the lecturer went on to deal with the gross absurdity of pronouncing the word "grass," not to rhyme with "lass," which of course was the correct way, but almost—not quite—as if it rhymed with "laws."

"The ward is 'grass,' not 'graws,'" said our lecturer. "It grates on a sinsitive ear like mine to hear it misprenounced. Then ye will never be injuced to give the ward 'Chrischin' its thrue value as a ward of three syllables; ye'll insist on calling it 'Christyen,' in place of 'Chrischin.' D'ye persave the diffurnce?"

"We do, we do!" cried the audience.

"Ay, and ye talk about 'soots' of gyar-ments, when everybody knows that ye shud say 'shoots'; ye must give the full valye to the letter 'u'—there's no double o in a shoot of clothes. Moreover, ye talk of the mimbers of the polis force as 'cunstables,' but there's no 'u' in the first syllable—it's an 'o,' and it shud be prenounced to rhyme with 'gone,' not with 'gun.' Then I've heard an actor who shud know better say, in the part of Hamlet, 'wurds, wurds, wurds'; instead of giving that fine letter 'o' its full value. How much finer it sounds to prenounce it as I do, 'wards, wards, wards'! But when I say that I've heard the ward 'pull' prenounced not to rhyme with 'dull,' as ye'll all admit it shud be, but actually as if it was within an ace of being spelt 'p double o l,' I think yell agree with me that it's about time that actors learnt something of the rudiments of the art of

ellycution.”

I do not pretend that these are the exact instances given by Mr. Boucicault of the appalling incorrectness of English pronunciation, but I know that he began with the word “war,” and that the impression produced upon my mind by the discourse was precisely as I have recorded it.

There is a tradition at Trinity College, Dublin, that a student who spoke with a lovely brogue used every art to conceal it, but with indifferent success; for however perfect the “English accent” which he flattered himself he had grafted upon the parent stem indigenous to Kerry may have been when he was cool and collected, yet in moments of excitement—chiefly after supper—the old brogue surrounded him like a fog. This was a great grief to him; but his own weakness in this way caused him to feel a deep respect for the natives of England.

After a visit to London he gave the result of his observations in a few words to his friends at the College.

“Boys,” he cried, the “English chaps are a poor lot, no matter how you look at them. But I will say this for them,—no matter how drunk any one of them may be, he never forgets his English accent.”

CHAPTER XIX.—SOME IMPERFECT STUDIES.

A charming theme—The new tints—An almost perfect descriptive system—An unassailable position—The silver mounting of the newspaper staff—An unfair correspondcnt—A lady journalist face to face—The play-hawkers Only in two acts—An earnest correspondent—A haven at last—Well-earned repose—The “health columns”—Answers to correspondents—Other medical advisers—The annual meeting—The largest consultation on record over one patient—He recovers!—A garden-party—A congenial locale—The distinguished Teuton—The local medico—Brain “sells”—A great physician—Advice to a special correspondent—Change of air—The advantages of travel—The divergence of opinion among medical men—It is due to their conscientiousness.

AS this rambling volume does not profess to be a guide to the newspaper press, I have not felt bound to follow any beaten track in its compilation. But I must confess that at the outset it was my intention to deal with that agreeable phase known as the Lady Journalist. Unhappily (or perhaps I should say, happily), “the extreme pressure on our space” will not permit of my giving more than a line or two to a theme which could only be adequately treated in a large volume. It has been my privilege to meet with three lady journalists, and I am bound to say that every one of the three seemed to me to combine in herself all the judgment of the trained journalist (male) with the lightness of touch which one associates with the doings of the opposite sex. All were able to describe garments in picturesque phrases, frequently producing by the employment of a single word an effect that a “gentleman journalist”—this is, I suppose, the male equivalent to a lady journalist—could not achieve at any price. They wrote of ladies being “gowned,” and they described the exact tint of the gowns by an admirable process of comparison with the hue of certain familiar things. They rightly considered that the mere statement that somebody came to somebody else’s “At Home” in brown, conveys an inadequate idea of the colour of a costume: “postman’s bag brown,” however, brings the dress before one’s eye in a moment. To say that somebody’s daughter appeared in a grey wrap would sound weak-kneed, but a wrap of *eau de Tamise* is something stimulating. A scarlet tea-jacket merely suggests the Book of Revelation, but a Clark-Russell-sunset jacket is altogether different.

They also wrote of “picture hats,” and “smart frocks,” and many other matters which they understood thoroughly. I do not think that any newspaper staff that does not include a lady journalist can hope for popularity, or for the respect of those who read what is written by the lady journalist, which is much better than popularity. I have got good reason to know that in every newspaper with which I was associated, the weekly column contributed by the lady journalist was much more earnestly read than any that came from another source.

Yes, I feel that the position of the lady in modern journalism is unassailable; and the lady journalists always speak pleasantly about one another, and occasionally describe each other’s “picture hats.”

In brief, the lady journalist is the silver mounting of the newspaper *staff*.

I once, however, received an application from a lady, offering a weekly letter on a topic already, I considered, ably dealt with by another lady in the columns of the newspaper with which I was connected. I wrote explaining this to my correspondent, and by the next post I got a letter from her telling me that of course she was aware that a letter purporting to be on this topic was in the habit of appearing in the paper, but expressing the hope that I did not fancy that she would contribute “stuff of that character.”

I did not have the faintest hope on the subject.

Now it so happened that the lady who wrote to me had some months before gone to the lady whose weekly letters she had derided, and had begged from her some suggestions as to the topics most suitable to be dealt with by a lady journalist, and whatever further hints she might be pleased to offer on the general subject of lady journalism. In short, all that she had learned of the profession—it may be acquired in three lessons, most young women think—she had learned from the lady at whom she pointed a finger of scorn.

This I did not consider either ladylike or journalist-like, so that I can hardly consider it lady-journalist-like.

Lady journalists have recently taken to photographing each other and publishing the results.

This is another step in the right direction.

Once I had an opportunity of talking face to face with a lady journalist. It happened at the house of a distinguished actress in London. By the merest chance I had a play which I felt certain would suit the actress, and I went to make her acquainted with the joyful news. To my great chagrin I found that I had arrived on a day when she was "receiving." Several literary men were present, and on some of their faces.

I thought I detected the hang-dog look of the man who carries a play about with him without a muzzle. I regret to say that they nearly all looked at me with distrust.

I came by chance upon one of them speaking to our charming hostess behind a *portiere*.

"I think the part would suit you down to the ground." he was saying. "Yes, six changes of dress in the four acts, and one of them a ballroom scene."

I walked on.

Ten minutes afterwards I overheard a second, who was having a romp with our hostess's little girl, say to that lady,—

"Oh, yes, I am very fond of children, when they are as pretty as Pansy here. By the way, that reminds me that I have in my overcoat pocket a comedy that I think will give you a chance at last. If you will allow me when those people go…."

I passed on.

"The piece I brought with me is very strong. You were always best at tragedy, and I have frequently said that you are the only woman in London who can speak blank verse," were the words that I heard spoken by the third literary gentleman at the further side of a group of palms on a pedestal.

I thought it better not to say anything about my having a play concealed about my person. It occurred to me that it might be well to withhold my good news for a day or two. Meantime I had a delightful chat with the lady journalist, and confided in her my belief that some of the literary men present had not come for the sake of the intellectual treat available at every reception of our hostess's, but solely to try and palm off on her some rubbish in the way of a play.

She replied that she could scarcely believe that any man could be so base, and that she feared I was something of a cynic.

When she was bidding good-bye to our hostess I distinctly heard the latter say,—

"I am sorry that you have only made it in two acts; however, you may depend on my reading it carefully, and doing what I can with it for you."

The above story might be looked on as telling against myself in some measure, so I hasten to obviate its effect by mentioning that the play which I had in my pocket was acted by the accomplished lady for whom I designed it, and that it occupied a dignified place among the failures of the year.

There was a lady journalist—at least a lady so describing herself—who sent me long accounts of the picture shows three days after I had received the telegraphed accounts from the art correspondent employed by the newspaper. She wanted to get a start, she said; and it was in vain that I tried to point out to her that it was the other writers who got the start of her, and that so long as she allowed this to happen she could not expect anything that she wrote to be inserted.

It so happened, however, that her art criticisms were about on a level with those that a child might pass upon a procession of animals to or from a Noah's Ark. Then the lady forwarded me criticisms of books that had not been sent to me for review, and afterwards an interview or two with unknown poets. Nothing that she wrote was worth the space it would have occupied.

Only last year I learned with sincere pleasure that this energetic lady had obtained a permanent place on the staff of a lady's halfpenny weekly paper. I could not help wondering on what department she could have been allowed to work, and made some inquiry on the subject. Then it was I learned that she had been appointed superintendent of the health columns. It seems that the readers of this paper are sanguine enough to expect to get medical advice of the highest order in respect of their ailments for the comparatively trilling expenditure of one halfpenny weekly. By forwarding a coupon to show that they have not been mean enough to try and shirk payment of the legitimate fee, they are entitled to obtain in the health columns a complete reply as to the treatment of whatever symptoms they may describe. As this reply is seldom printed in the health columns until more than a month or six weeks after the coupon has been sent in to the newspaper, addressed "M.D.," the extent of the boon that it confers upon the suffering—the long-suffering—subscribers can easily be estimated.

As the superintendent of the column signed "M.D.," the lady who had failed as an art critic, as a reviewer, and as an interviewer, had at last found a haven of rest. Of course, when she undertook the duties incidental to the post she knew nothing whatever of medicine. But since then, my informant assured me that she had been gradually "feeling her way," and now, by the aid of a half-crown handbook, she can give the best medical advice that can be secured in all London for a halfpenny fee.

I had the curiosity to glance down one of her columns the other day. It ran something like this:—

"Gladys.—Delighted to hear that you like your new mistress, and that the cook is not the tyrant that your last was. As scullery-maid I believe you are entitled to every second evening out. But better apply (enclosing coupon) to the Superintendent of the Domestic Department. Regarding the eruptions on the forehead, they

may have been caused by the use of too hot curling tongs on your fringe. Why not try the new magnetic curlers? (see advertisement, p. 9). It would be hard to be compelled to abandon so luxurious a fringe for the sake of a pimple or two. Thanks for your kind wishes. Your handwriting is striking, but I must have an impression of your palm in wax, or on a piece of paper rubbed with lamp-black, before I can predict anything certain regarding your chances of a brilliant marriage."

"Airy Fairy Lilian.—What a pretty pseudonym! Where did you contrive to find it? Yes, I think that perhaps the doctor who visited you was right after all. The symptoms were certainly those of typhoid. Have you tried the new Omniherbal Typhoid Tablets (see advertisement, p. 8). If not too late they might be of real service to you."

"Harebell.—I should say that if your waist is now forty-two inches, it would be extremely imprudent for you to try and reduce it by more than ten or eleven inches. Besides, there is no beauty in a wasp-like waist. The slight redness on the outside tegument of the nose probably proceeds from cold, or most likely heat. Try a little *poudre des fées* (see advertisement, p. 9)."

"Shy Susy.—It is impossible to answer inquiries in this column in less than a month. (1) If your tooth continues to ache, why not go to Mr. Hiram P. Prosser, American Dental Surgeon (see advertisement, p. 8), and have it out. (2) The best volume on Etiquette is by the Countess of D. It is entitled 'How to Behave' (see advertisement outside cover). (3) No; to change hats in the train does not imply a promise to marry. It would, however, tell against the defendant in the witness-box. (4) Decidedly not; you should not allow a complete stranger to see you to your door, unless he is exceptionally good-looking. (5) Patchouli is the most fashionable scent."

I do not suppose that this enterprising young woman is an honoured guest at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association. Certainly no lady superintendent of the health columns of a halfpenny weekly paper was pointed out to me at the one meeting of this body which I had the privilege of attending, and at which, by the way, some rather amusing incidents occurred.

An annual, meeting of the British Medical Association seemed to me to be a delightful function. For some days there were *fêtes* (with fireworks), receptions (with military bands playing), dances (with that exhilarating champagne that comes from the Saumur districts), excursions to neighbouring ruins of historic interest, and the common or garden-party in abundance. In addition to all these, a rumour was circulated that papers were being read in some out-of-the-way hall—no one seemed to know where it was situated, and the report was generally regarded as a hoax—on modern therapeutics, for the entertainment of such visitors as might be interested in the progress of medical science.

No one seemed interested in that particular line.

A concert took place one evening, and was largely attended, every seat in the building being occupied. The local amateur tenor—the microbe of this malady has not yet been discovered—sang with his accustomed throaty incorrectness, and immediately afterwards there was a considerable interval. Then the conductor appeared upon the platform and said that an unfortunate accident had happened to the gentleman who had just sung, and he should feel greatly obliged if any medical gentleman who might chance to be present would kindly come round to the retiring room.

It seemed to me that the audience rose *en masse* and trooped round to the retiring room. I was one of the few persons who remained in the hall.

"Say, why didn't some strong man throw himself between the audience and the door?" a stranger shouted across the hall to me in an American accent.

"With what object?" I shouted back.

"Wal," said the stranger, "I opine that if this community is subject to such visitations as we have just had from that gentleman who sang last, his destruction should be made a municipal affair."

"We know what we're about," said I. "How would you like to look up and find two hundred and forty-seven fully qualified medical men standing by your bed-side."

"Not much," said he.

"I wonder if the story of the opossum that was up a gum tree, and begged a military man beneath not to fire, as he would come down, had reached the States before you left," said I.

He said he hadn't heard tell of it.

"Well," said I, "there was an opossum——"

But here the hall began to refill, and the concert was proceeded with. The sufferer had recovered, we heard, in spite of all that was against him. A humorist said that he had merely slipped from a ladder in endeavouring to reach down his high C.

When he was told that he had to pay two hundred and forty-seven guineas for medical attendance he nearly had a relapse.

It was at the same meeting of the Medical Association that a garden-party was given by the Superintendent of the District Lunatic Asylum. This was a very pleasant affair, and was attended by about five hundred persons. A detestable man who was present, however, thought fit to make an effort to give additional spirit to the entertainment by pointing out to some of his friends the short, ungainly figure of a German *savant*, who was wandering about the grounds in a condition of loneliness, and by telling a story of a homicide of a bloodcurdling type, to account for the gentleman's presence at the institution.

The jester gave free expression to his doubts as to the wisdom of the course adopted by the medical

superintendent in permitting such freedom to a man who was supposed to be confined during Her Majesty's pleasure,—this was, he said, because of the merciful view taken by the jury before whom he had been tried. He added, however, that he supposed the superintendent knew his own business.

As this story circulated freely, the German doctor, whose appearance and dress undoubtedly lent it a certain plausibility, became easily the most attractive person in view. Young men and maidens paused in the act of "service" over the lawn tennis nets, to watch the little man whose large eyes stared at them from beneath a pair of shaggy eyebrows, and whose ill-cut grey frieze coat suggested the uniform of the Hospital for the Insane. Strong men grasped their walking sticks more firmly as he passed, and women, well gowned, and wearing picture hats—I trust I am not infringing the copyright of the lady journalist—drew back, but still gazed at him with all the interest that attaches itself to a great criminal in the eyes of women.

The little man could not but feel that he was attracting a great deal of attention; but being probably well aware of his own attainments, he did not shrink from any gaze, but smiled complacently on every side. Then a local medical man, whose self-confidence had never been known to fail him in an emergency, thought that the moment was an auspicious one for exhibiting the extent of his researches in cerebral phenomena, beckoned the German to his side, and, removing the man's hat, began to prove to the bystanders that the shape of his head was such as precluded the possibility of his playing any other part in the world but that of a distinguished homicide. But the German, who understood English very well, as he did everything else, turned at this point upon the local practitioner and asked him what the teuffil he meant.

"Don't be alarmed, ladies," said the practitioner assuringly, as there was a movement among his audience. "I know how to treat this form of aberration. Now then, my good man——"

But at this moment a late arrival in the form of a great London surgeon strolled up accompanied by the medical superintendent of the Asylum, and with an exclamation of pleasure, pounced upon the subject of the discourse and shook him warmly by the hand. The Teuton was, however, by no means disposed to overlook the insult offered to him. He explained in the expressive German tongue what had occurred, and any one could see that he was greatly excited.

But Sir Gregory, the English surgeon, had probably some experience of cases like this. He put his hand through the arm of the German, and then giving a laugh that in an emergency might obviate the use of a lancet, he said loudly enough to be heard over a considerable area,—

"Come along, my dear friend; there is no visiting an hospital for the insane without coming across a lunatic, —a medical practitioner without discretion is worse."

The local physician was left standing alone on the lawn.

He shortly afterwards went home.

If you wish to anger him now you need only talk about brain "sells."

At the same meeting it was my privilege to be presented to a really great London physician. He was the medical gentleman who was consulted by a special correspondent on his return from making a tour with the Marquis of Lome, when the latter became Viceroy of Canada. The special correspondent had left for Canada on the very day that he arrived in England from the Cape, having gone through the Zulu campaign, and he had reached the Cape direct from the Afghan war. After about two years of these experiences he felt run down, and acting on the suggestion of a friend, lost no time in consulting the great physician.

On learning that the man was suffering from a curious impression of weariness for which he could not account, but which he had tried in vain to shake off, the great physician asked him what was his profession. He replied that he was a literary man—that he wrote for a newspaper.

"Ah, I thought so," cried the great physician. "Your complaint is easily accounted for. I perceived in a moment that you had been leading a sedentary life. That is what plays havoc with literary men. What you need just now is a complete change—no half measures, mind you—a complete change—a sea voyage would brace you up, or,—let me see—ah, yes, Margate might do. Try a fortnight at Margate."

I am bound to say that it was another doctor who, when a naval captain who had been in charge of a corvette on the South Pacific station for five years, went to him for advice, gravely remarked,—

"I wonder, sir, if at any time of your life you got a severe wetting?"

The modern physician is most earnest in recommending changes of air and scene and employment. He is an enemy to the drug system. But the last enemy that shall be destroyed is the drug system. The "masses" believe in it as they believe no other system, whether in medicine, religion, or even gambling.

I shall never forget the ring of contempt that there was in the voice of a servant of mine at the Cape, when, on the army surgeon's giving him a prescription to be made up, he found that the whole thing only cost fourpence, and he said,—

"That there coor can't be much of a coor, sir; only corst fourpence, and me ready to pay 'arf-a-crown."

In the smoking-room of an hotel in Liverpool some years ago a rather self-assertive gentleman was dilating to a group in a cosy corner on the advantages of travel, not merely as a physical, but as an intellectual stimulant.

"Am I right, sir?" he cried, turning to me. "Have you ever travelled?"

I mentioned that I had done a little in that way.

"Where do you come from now, sir?" he asked.

"South America," said I meekly.

“And you, sir,” he cried, turning to another stranger; “have you travelled?”

“Well, a bit,” replied the man. “I was in ‘Frisco this day fortnight, and I’ll be in Egypt on this day week.”

“I knew by the look of those gentlemen that they had travelled,” said the loud man, turning to his group. “I believe in the value of travel. I travel myself—just like those gentlemen. Yes; a week ago I was at Bradford. Here I am at Liverpool to-day, and Heaven knows where I may be next week—at Manchester, may be.”

So far as I can gather, the impression seems to be pretty general that some divergence of opinion is by no means impossible among physicians in their diagnosis of a case. Doctors themselves seem to have at last become aware of the fact that the possibility of a difference being manifested in their views on some cases is now and again commented on by the irresponsible layman. An eminent member of that profession which makes a larger demand than any other upon the patience, the judgment, and the self-sacrifice of those who practise it, defended, a short time ago, in the course of a very witty speech, the apparent want of harmony between the views of physicians on some technical points. He said that perhaps he might not be going too far if he remarked that occasionally in a court of law the technical evidence given by two doctors seemed at first sight not to agree. This point was readily conceded by the audience; and the professor then went on to say that surely the absence of this mechanical agreement on all points should be accepted as powerful testimony to the conscientiousness of the profession. One of the rarest of charges brought against physicians was that of collusion. In fact, while he believed that, if put to it, his memory would be quite equal to recall some instances of a divergence of opinion between doctors in a witness-box, he did not think that he could remember a single case in which a charge of collusion against two members of the profession had been brought home to them.

Most sensible people will, I am persuaded, take this view of a matter which has called for comment in all ages. It is because doctors are so singularly sensitive that, sooner than run the chance of being accused of acting in collusion in any case, they now and again have been known to express views that were—well, not absolutely in harmony the one with the other.

The distinguished physician who made so reasonable a defence of the profession which he adorns, told me that it was one of his early instructors who made that excellent summary of the relative values of medical attendance:—

“I have no hesitation in saying that it’s not better to be attended by a good doctor than a bad doctor; but I won’t go the length of saying that it’s not better to be attended by no doctor at all than by either.”

CHAPTER XX.—ON SOME FORMS OF CLEVERNESS.

The British Association—The late Professor Tyndall—His Belfast address—The centre of strict orthodoxy—The indignation of the pulpits—Worse than atheism—Biology and blasphemy allied sciences—The champion of orthodoxy—The town is saved—After many days—The second visit of Professor Tyndall to Belfast—The honoured guest of the Presbyterians—Public opinion—Colour blindness—Another meeting of the British Association—A clever young man—The secret of the ruin—The revelation of the secret—The great-grandfather of Queen Boadicea—The story of Antonio Giuseppe—Accepted as primo tenore—The birthday books—A movable feast—A box at the opera—Transferable—The discovery of the transfers—An al fresco operatic entertainment—No harm done.

THE annual meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science can be made quite as delightful functions as those of the British Medical Association, if they are not taken too seriously; and I don’t think that there is much likelihood of that happening. I have had the privilege of taking part in several of the dances, the garden parties, and the concerts which have taken place under the grateful protection of science. I have also availed myself of the courtesy of the railway companies that issued cheap tickets to the various places of interest in the locality where the annual festivities took place under the patronage of the British Association. The only President’s address which I ever heard delivered was, however, that of Professor Tyndall at Belfast.

I was little more than a boy at the time, and that is probably why I was more deeply interested in Biology and Evolution than I have been in more recent years. It is scarcely necessary to say that Professor Tyndall’s utterance would take a very humble place in the heterodoxy of the present day, for the exponents of theology have found it necessary to enlarge their borders as the century draws to a close, and I suppose that if poor Tyndall had offered to lecture in St. Paul’s Cathedral his appearance under the dome would have been welcomed by the authorities, as it certainly would have been by the public. But Belfast had for long been the centre of strict orthodoxy, and so soon as the address of Professor Tyndall was printed a great cry arose from every pulpit. The excellent Presbyterians of Ulster were astounded at the audacity of the man in coming into the midst of such a community as theirs in order to deliver an address that breathed of something worse than the ancient atheists had ever dreamed of in their most heterodox moments. If the man had wanted to blaspheme—and a good *primâ facie* case was made out in favour of the assumption that he had—could he not have taken himself off to some congenial locality for the purpose? Why should he come to Belfast with such an object? Would the town ever get rid of the stigma that would certainly be attached to it as the centre from

which the blasphemies of Biology had radiated upon this occasion?

These were the questions that afflicted the good people for many days, and the consensus of opinion seemed to be in favour of the theory that unless the town should undergo a sort of moral fumigation, it would not be restored to the position it had previously occupied in the eyes of Christendom. The general idea is that to slaughter a pig in a Mohammedan mosque is an act the consequences of which are so far-reaching as to be practically irreparable; the act of Professor Tyndall at Belfast was of precisely this nature in the estimation of the inhabitants.

Fortunately, however, a champion of orthodoxy appeared in the form of a Professor at the Presbyterian College who wrote a book—I believe some copies may still be purchased—to make it impossible for Tyndall or any other exponent of Evolution to face an audience of intelligent people. This book was the saving of the town. Belfast was rehabilitated, and the people breathed again.

But the years went by; Darwin's funeral service was held in Westminster Abbey, and Professor Tyndall's voice was now and again heard like an Alpine echo of his master. In Belfast a University Extension Scheme was set on foot and promised to be a brilliant success—it collapsed after a time, but that is not to the point. What is to the point, however, is the fact that the inaugural lecture of the University Extension series was on the subject of Biology, and the chosen exponent of the science was Professor Tyndall. He came to Belfast as the honoured guest of the city—it had become a city since his memorable visit—and he passed some days at the official residence of the Presbyterian President of the Queen's College, who had been a pupil at the divinity school of the clergyman who had written the book that was supposed to have re-consecrated, as it were, the locality defiled by the British Association address of 1874.

This incident appears to me to be noteworthy—almost as noteworthy as the reception given in honour of Monsieur Emile Zola in the Guildhall a few years after Mr. Vizetelly had been sent to gaol for issuing a purified translation of a work of Zola's.

I think it was Mr. Forster who, in the spring of 1882, when Mr. Parnell and his friends were languishing in Kilmainham, said that the Irish Channel was like the water described by Byron: a palace at one side, a prison on the other. The Irish members left Kilmainham, and in a few hours found themselves in Westminster Palace —at least, Westminster Palace Hotel.

Public opinion knows but the two places of residence—a palace and a prison. When a man leaves the one he is considered fit for the other. Public opinion knows but black and white, and vacillates from one to the other with the utmost regularity.

The only constant thing in the world is change.

At another meeting of the British Association I was a witness of a remarkable piece of cleverness on the part of a young man who has since proved his claim to be regarded as one of the most adroit men in England. Among the excursions the chief was to the locality of a ruin, the origin of which was, like the origin of the De la Pluche family, lost in the mists of obscurity. The ruin had been frequently visited by distinguished archæologists, but none had ventured to do more than guess—if one could imagine guesswork and archaeology associated—what period should be assigned to the dilapidated towers. It so happened, however, that an elderly professor at the local college had, by living laborious days, and mastering the elements of a new language, succeeded in wresting their secret from the lichened stones, and he made up his mind that when the British Association had its excursion to the ruin, he would reveal all that he had discovered regarding it, and by this *coup de théâtre* become famous.

But the clever young man had an interesting young brother who had gained a reputation as a poet, and who dressed perhaps a trifle in excess of this reputation; and when the old professor was about to make his revelation regarding the ruin, the clever young man put up his brother in another part of the enclosure to recite one of his own poems on the locality. In a few moments the professor, who had commenced his discourse, was practically deserted. Only half a dozen of the excursionists rallied round him, and permitted themselves to be mystified; the cream of the visitors, to the number of perhaps a hundred, were around the reciter on an historic hillock fifty yards away, and his mellow cadences sounded very alluring to the few people who listened to the jerky delivery of the lecturer in the ruin.

But the clever young man did not yield to the alluring voice of his brother. He had heard that voice before, and was well acquainted with its cadences. He was also well acquainted with the poem that was being recited —he had heard it more than once before. What he was not acquainted with was the marvellous discovery made by the professor who was in the act of revealing it to ten ears—that is allowing that only one person of those around him was deaf. The clever young man sat concealed behind a wall covered with ivy and listened to every word of the revelation. When it was over he unostentatiously joined the crowd around his brother, and heard with pleasure that the delivery of the poem had been very striking.

"But we must not waste our time," said the clever young man, with the air of authority of a personal conductor. "We have several other interesting points to dwell upon"—he spoke as if he and his brother owned the ruins and the natural landscape into the bargain. "Oh, yes, we must hurry on. I do not suppose there is any lady or gentleman present who is aware of the fact that we are within a few yards of the place where the great-grandfather of Queen Boadicea lies buried."

A murmur of negation passed round the crowd.

"Follow me," said the clever young man; and they followed him.

He led them to the very place where the professor had made his revelation, and then, standing on a portion of the ruined structure, he gave in choice language, and with many inspiring quotations from the literature of the Ancient Britons, the substance of the professor's revelation.

For half an hour he continued his discourse, and quite delighted every one who heard him, except, perhaps, the elderly professor. He was among the audience, and he listened, with staring eyes, to the clever young

man’s delightful mingling of the deepest archaeological facts with fictions that had a semblance of truth, and he was speechless. The innocent old soul actually believed that the clever young man had surpassed him, the professor, in the profundity of his researches into the history of the ruin; he knew that the face of the clever young man had not been among the faces of the few people who had heard his revelation, but he did not know that the clever young man was hidden among the ivy a few yards away.

When the people were applauding the delightful discourse, he pressed forward to the impromptu lecturer and shook him warmly by the hand.

“Sir!” he cried, “you have in you the stuff that goes to make a great archæologist. I have worked at nothing else but this ruin for the last eight years, and yet I admit that you know more about it than I do.”

“Oh, my dear sir,” said the clever young man, “the world knows that in your own path you are without a rival. I am content to sit at your feet. It is an honourable position. Any time you want to know something of this locality and its archæology do not hesitate to command me.”

The only rival in adroitness to the young man whose feats I have just recorded was one Antonio Giuseppe. I came upon this person in London, but only when I was in Milan did I become acquainted with the extent of his capacity. One of the stories I heard about him is, I think, worth repeating, illustrating, as it does, the difference between the English and the Italian systems of imposture.

Antonio Giuseppe certainly was attached to the State Opera Company, but it would be difficult to define with any degree of exactness his duties in connection with that Institution. He had got not a single note in his voice, and yet—nay, on this account—he had passed during a season at Homburg as a distinguished tenor—for Signor Giuseppe was careful to see that his portmanteau was inscribed in white letters of considerable size, “Signor Antonio Giuseppe, State Opera Company.” He gave himself as many airs as a professional—nay, as an amateur, tenor, and he was thus assigned the most select apartment in the hotel during his sojourn, and a large folding screen was placed between his seat at the *table d’hote* and the window. There was, indeed, every excuse for taking Signor Giuseppe for a distinguished operatic tenor. He spoke all European languages with equal impurity, he went about in a waistcoat that resembled, in combination of colours, the drop scene of a theatre, he wore a blue velvet tie, made up in a knot to display a carbuncle pin about the size of a tram-car light, and his generosity in wristband was equalled only by his prodigality of cigarette paper. These characteristics, coupled with the fact that he had never been known to indulge in the luxury of a bath, gave rise to the rumour that he was the greatest tenor in Europe; consequently he was looked upon with envy by the Dukes with incomes of a thousand pounds a day, who were accustomed to resort for some months out of the year to Homburg; while Countesses in their own right sent him daily missives expressive of their admiration for his talents, and entreating the favour of his autograph in their birthday books. Poor Signor Giuseppe was greatly perplexed by the arrival of a birthday book at his apartment every morning; but so soon as its import was explained to him, he never failed to respond to the request of the fair owners of the volumes. His caligraphy did not extend beyond the limits of his autograph, and his birthday seemed to be with him a movable feast, for in no two of the books did his name appear on the pages assigned to the same month. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible for a man who has never been acquainted with his father or mother, to know with any degree of accuracy the exact day on which he was born, so that Signor Giuseppe, who was discovered by a priest in a shed at the quay at Leghorn on St. Joseph’s day, was not to blame for his ignorance in respect of his nativity.

Of course, when Mr. Fitzgauntlet, the enterprising impresario of the State Opera, turned up at Homburg in the course of a week or two, it became known that whatever position Signor Giuseppe might occupy in the State Opera Company, it was not that of *primo tenore*, for the most exacting impresario has never been known to include among the duties of a *primo tenore* the unpacking of a portmanteau and the arrangement of its contents around the dressing room of the impresario. The folding screen was removed from behind Signor Giuseppe on the day following the arrival of Mr. Fitzgauntlet at Homburg, and from being *feted* as Giuseppe the tenor, he was scorned as Giuseppe the valet.

But in regarding Signor Giuseppe as nothing beyond the valet to the impresario the sojourners at the hotel were as greatly in error as in accepting him as the tenor. To be sure Signor Giuseppe now and again discharged the duties that usually devolve upon the valet, but the scope of his duties extended far beyond these limits. It was his task to arrange the *claque* for a new *prima donna*, and to purchase the bouquets to be showered upon the stage when the impresario was anxious to impress upon the public the admirable qualities possessed by a *débutante* whose services he had secured for a trifle. It was also Giuseppe’s privilege to receive the bouquets left at the stage door by the young gentlemen—or the old gentlemen—who had become struck with the graceful figure of the *premiere danseuse* or perhaps *cinquantième danseuse*, and the emoluments arising from this portion of his duties were said to be equal to a liberal income, exclusive of what he made by the disposal of the bouquets to the florist from whom they had been originally purchased. This invaluable official also made a little money for himself by his ingenuity in obtaining the photographs and autographs of the chief artists of the company, which he distributed for sale every evening in the stalls; but not quite so profitable was that part of his business which consisted in inventing stories to account for the absence of the impresario when tradesmen called at the State theatre with their bills; still, the thoughtfulness and ingenuity of Signor Giuseppe were quite equal to the strain put upon them in this direction, and Mr. Fitzgauntlet had no reason to be otherwise than satisfied. When it is understood that Giuseppe transacted nearly all their business for the chief artists in the company, engaged their apartments, and looked after their luggage when on tour in the provinces, it will readily be believed that he had, as a rule, more money at his banker’s than any official connected with the State Opera.

The confidence which had always been placed in Signor Giuseppe’s integrity by the artists of the company was upon one occasion rudely shaken, and the story of how this disaster occurred is about to be related. Signor Giuseppe did a little business in wine and cigars, principally of British manufacture, and he had, with his accustomed dexterity, hitherto escaped a criminal prosecution under the Sale of Drugs Act for the

consequences of his success in disposing of his commodities in this line of business. He also did a little in a medical way, a certain bottle containing a bright crimson liquid with a horrible taste being extremely popular among the members of the extensive chorus of the State Opera. When a “cyclus” of modern German opera was contemplated by Mr. Fitzgauntlet, Giuseppe increased his medical stock, feeling sure that the result of the performances would occasion a run upon his drugs; but the negotiations fell through, and it was only by the force of his perseverance and persuasiveness he contrived to get rid of his surplus to the gentlemen who played the brass instruments in the orchestra. It was not, however, on account of his transactions in the medical way that he almost forfeited the respect in which he was held by the artists, but because of the part he played with regard to the disposal of a certain box of cigars. After the production of the opera *Le Diamant Noir*, Signor Boccalione, the great basso, went to Giuseppe, saying,—

“Giuseppe, I want your advice: you know I have made the success of the opera, but I do not read music very quickly, and Monsieur Lejeune has had a good deal of trouble with me. I should like to make him some little return; what would you suggest?”

Giuseppe was lost in thought. He wondered, could he suggest the propriety of the basso’s offering the *maestro di piano* a case of Burgundy—Giuseppe had just received three cases of the finest Burgundy that had ever been made in the Minories.

“A present to the value of how much?” he asked of Signor Boccalione.

“Oh,” said the basso airily, and with a gesture of indifference, “about sixty francs. Monsieur Lejeune had not really so much trouble with me—no one else in the company would think of acknowledging his services, but with me it is different—I cannot live without being generous.”

Giuseppe mused.

“If the signor would only go so far as seventy francs, I could get him a box of the choicest cigars,” he said after a pause; and then he went on to explain that the cigars were in the possession of a friend of his own, whom he had passed into the opera one night, and who consequently owed him some compliment, so that the box, which in the ordinary way of business was really worth eighty francs, might be obtained for seventy. The generosity of the basso, however, was not without its limits; it would, sustain the tension put upon it by the expenditure of sixty francs, but it was not sufficiently strong to face the outlay suggested by Giuseppe..

“Sixty francs!” he cried, “sixty francs is a small fortune, and I myself smoke excellent cigars at thirty. I will give no more than sixty.”

Giuseppe did not think the box could be purchased for the money, but he said he would try and induce his friend to be liberal. The next day he came to Signor Boccalione with the box containing the hundred cigars of the choicest brand—the quality of the cigars will be fully appreciated when it is understood that the hundred cost Giuseppe originally close upon thirteen shillings.

“Per Bacco!” cried the basso, “Monsieur Lejeune should be a happy man—he had hardly any trouble with me, now that I come to reflect. Oh, I am the only man in the company who would be so foolish as to think of a present—and such a present—for him.”

“Oh, Signor!” said Giuseppe, “such a present! The perfume, signor, wonderful! delicious! celestial!” He then explained how he had persuaded his friend, by soft words and promises, to part with the box for sixty francs, and Signor Boccalione listened and laughed; then, on a sheet of pink notepaper, the basso wrote a dedication, occupying twelve lines, of the box of cigars to the use of the supremely illustrious *maestro di piano*, Lejeune, in token of the invaluable assistance he had afforded to the most humble and grateful of his friends and servants, Alessandro Boccalione.

When Giuseppe promised to send the box to the maestro on the following day he meant to keep his word, and he did keep it. On the same evening he was met by Maestro Lejeune. The maestro looked very pale in the face.

“Giuseppe, my friend,” he said with a smile, “you were very good to me upon our last tour, looking after my luggage with commendable zeal; I have often thought of making you some little return. You will find a box of cigars—one hundred all but one—on my dressing table; you may have them for your own use.”

Giuseppe was profuse in his thanks, and, on going to the dressing-room of the maestro, obtained possession once more of the box of cigars he had sold to the basso. On the mat was the half-smoked sample which Monsieur Lejeune had attempted to get through.

Not more than a week had passed after this transaction when Signor Giuseppe was sent for by Madame Speranza, the celebrated soprano.

“Giuseppe,” said the lady, “as you have had twenty-seven of my photographs within the past month, I think you may be able to help me out of a difficulty in which I find myself.”

Giuseppe thought it rather ungenerous for a soprano earning—or at least getting paid—two hundred pounds a week, to make any reference to such a paltry matter as photographs; he, however, said nothing on this subject, but only expressed his willingness to serve the lady. She then explained to him what he knew already, namely, that she had had a serious difference with Herr Groschen, the conductor, as to the *tempo* of a certain air in *Le Diamant Noir*, and that the conductor and she had not been on speaking terms for more than a fortnight.

“But now,” said Madame Speranza in conclusion, “now that I have made the opera so brilliant a success, I should like to make my peace with the poor old man, who must be miserable in consequence of my treatment of him,—especially as I got the best of the dispute. I mean to write to him this evening, and send him some present—something small, you know—not extravagant.”

“What would Madame think of the appropriateness of a box of cigars?” asked Giuseppe after an interval of thought. “I heard Herr Groschen say that he had just smoked the last of a box, and meant to purchase another when he had the money,” he added.

“How much would a box of cigars cost?” asked the *prima donna*.

“Madame can have cigars at all prices—even as low as sixty-five francs,” replied her confidential adviser.

“Mon Dieu! what extravagant creatures men are!” cried the lady. “Sixty-five francs’ worth of cigars would probably not last him more than a few months. Never mind; I do not want a cheap box,—my soul is a generous one: procure me a box at sixty-six francs, and we will say nothing more about the photographs.”

Signor Giuseppe said he would try what could be done. A man whom he had once obliged had a sister married to one of the most intelligent cigar merchants in the city; but he did not think he had any cigars under seventy francs.

“Not a sou more than sixty-six will I pay,” cried the soprano with emphasis. Giuseppe gave a shrug and said he would see what could be done.

What he saw could be done was to expend the sum of twopence English in the purchase of a cigar, to put in the centre of the package from which the maestro had taken his sample, and to bring the box sealed to Madame Speranza, whom he congratulated on being able to present her late enemy with a box of cigars of a quality not to be surpassed in the island of Cuba. The lady put her face down to the box and made a little grimace, and Giuseppe left her apartment with three guineas English in his pocket.

Two days afterwards he encountered Herr Groschen.

“Giuseppe,” said the conductor, “you may remember that when you so cleverly contrived to have my luggage with the fifteen pounds of tobacco amongst it passed at the Custom House I said I would make you a present. Forgive me for my negligence all this time, and accept a box of choice cigars, which you will find on my table. May you be happy, Giuseppe—you are a worthy fellow.”

It is needless to say that Signor Giuseppe recovered his box. On the hearth-rug lay a half-smoked specimen, and by its side the portion of Madame Speranza’s letter to the conductor which he had used to light the one cigar out of the hundred.

Before another week had passed, the same box had been sold to the tenor, to present to Mr. Fitzgauntlet, who, on receiving it, put his nose down to the package, and threw the lot into a corner among waste papers, and went on with his writing. The box was rescued by Giuseppe, and presented by him to the husband of Madame Galatini-Purissi, the contralto, in exchange for three dozen copies of the fair *artiste’s* portrait. Then Signor Purissi sent the box to the flautist in the orchestra, who played the obbligato to some of the contralto’s arias, and as this gentleman did not smoke he made it over once more to Signor Giuseppe. As the box had by this time been in the hands of every one in the company likely to possess a box of cigars, Giuseppe thought it would show a grasping spirit on his part were he to attempt to dispose of it again; so he merely made up the ninety-nine cigars in packages of three, which he sold to thirty-three members of the chorus at a shilling a head.

It so happened, however, that Herr Groschen, Signor Boccalione, and Signor Purissi met in a tobacconist’s shop about a week after the final distribution of the cigars, and their conversation turned upon the comparative ease with which bad cigars could be procured. Herr Groschen boasted how he had repaid his obligations to Giuseppe with a box of cigars, which he was certain satisfied the poor devil.

“Corpo di Bacco!” cried the basso, “I bought a box from Giuseppe to present to Maestro Lejeune.”

“And I,” said the husband of the contralto, “bought another from him. Can it have been the same box?”

Suspicion being thus aroused, Boccalione sought out Monsieur Lejeune, who confessed that he had given the box to Giuseppe; and Signor Purissi learned from the flautist that his gift had been disposed of in the same direction. The story went round the company, and poor Giuseppe was pounced upon by his indignant and demonstrative countrymen, and an explanation demanded of him on the subject of his repeated disposal of the same box. Giuseppe was quite as demonstrative as the most earnest of his interrogators in declaring that he had not disposed of the same box. His friend had obliged him with several boxes, and he had himself been greatly put about to oblige the ungrateful people who now turned upon him. He swore by the tomb of his parents that the obligations he had already discharged towards the ingrates would never be repeated; they might in future go elsewhere (Signor Giuseppe made a suggestion as to the exact locality) for their cigars; but for his part he washed his hands clean of them and their cigars. For three-quarters of an hour the basso-profundo, the soprano, and the husband of the contralto gesticulated before Giuseppe in the portico of the Opera House, until a crowd collected, the impression being general that an animated scene from a new opera was being rehearsed by the artists of the State Opera. A policeman who arrived on the scene could not be persuaded to take this view of the matter, and he politely requested the distinguished members of the State Opera Company either to move on or to go within the precincts of the building. The basso attempted to explain to the policeman in very choice Italian what Giuseppe had done, but he was so demonstrative the officer thought he was threatening the police force generally, and took his name and address with a view to issuing a summons for this offence. In the meantime Giuseppe got into a hansom and drove off, craning his neck round the side of the vehicle to make a parting allusion to the maternity of the husband of the contralto, to which the soprano promptly replied by a suggestion which, if true, would tend to remove the mystery surrounding the origin of Giuseppe. A week afterwards of course all were once again on the most friendly terms; but Giuseppe now and again feels that his want of ingenuousness in the cigar-box transaction well-nigh jeopardised the reputation for integrity he had previously enjoyed among the principals of the State Opera Company. He has been much more careful ever since, and flatters himself that not even the *tenore robusto*, who is the most suspicious of men, can discover the points on which he gets the better of him. As a practical financier Signor Antonio Giuseppe thinks of himself as a success; and there can hardly be a doubt that he is fully justified in taking such a view of his career.

CHAPTER XXI.—“SO CAREFUL OF THE TYPE.”

Why the chapter is a short one—Straw essential to brick-making—A suggestion regarding the king in “Hamlet”—The Irish attendant—The overland route—“Susanna and the editors”—“The violets of his wrath”—The clergyman’s favourite poem—A horticultural feat—A tulip transformed—The entertainment of an interment—The autotype of Russia—A remarkable conflagration and a still more remarkable dance—Paradise and the other place—Why the concert was a success—The land of Goschcn—A sporting item—A detective story—The flora and fauna—The Moors dictum—Absit omen!

IF this chapter is a short one, it is so for the best of reasons: it is meant to record some blunders of printers and others which impressed themselves upon me. It would obviously be impossible to make a chapter of the average length out of such a record. The really humorous faults in the setting up of anything I have ever written have been very few. In the printing of the original edition of my novel *Daireen* one of the most notable occurred in a first proof. Every chapter of this book is headed with a few lines from *Hamlet*, and one of these headings is from the well-known scene with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,

> *Gull.*—The King, sir——
> *Hamlet.*—Ay, sir, what of him?
> *Gull.*—Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.
> *Hamlet.*—With drink, sir?
> *Gull.*—No, my lord, rather with choler.

This was the dialogue as I had written it. The humorous printer added a letter that somewhat changed the sense. He made the line,—

> “No, my lord, rather with *cholera*.”

This was probably an honest attempt on the compositor’s part to work out a “new reading,” and it certainly did not appear to me to be more extravagant than the scores of attempts made in the same direction. If this reading were accepted, the perturbation of Claudius during the players’ scene, and his hasty Bight before its conclusion, would be accounted for.

Another daring new reading in *Hamlet* was suggested by a compositor, through the medium of a comma and a capital. In the course of a magazine article, he set up a line in the third scene of the third act, in this way,—

> *Hamlet.*—Now might I do it, Pat!

It is somewhat curious that some attempt has not been made before now to justify such a reading. Could it not be suggested that Hamlet had an Irish servant who was in his confidence? About the time of Hamlet, the Danes had an important settlement in Ireland, and why might not Hamlet’s father have brought one of the natives of that island, named Patrick, to be the personal attendant of the young prince? The whole thing appears so feasible, it almost approaches the dimensions of an Irish grievance that no actor has yet had the courage to bring on the Irish servant who was clearly addressed by Hamlet in the words just quoted.

So “readings” are made.

Either of those which the compositors suggested is much more worthy of respect than the late Mr. Barry Sullivan’s,—

> “I know a hawk from a heron. Pshaw!”

But if compositors are sometimes earnest and enterprising students of Shakespeare, I have sometimes found them deficient on the subject of geography. Upon one occasion, for instance, I accompanied a number of them on an excursion to the Isle of Man. The day was one of a mighty rushing wind, and the steamer being a small one, the disasters among the passengers were numerous. There was not a printer aboard who was not in a condition the technical equivalent to which is “pie.” I administered brandy to some of them, telling them to introduce a “turned rule,” which means, in newspaper instructions, “more to follow.” But all was of no avail. We reached the island in safety, however, and then one of the compositors who had been very much discomposed, seeing the train about to start for Douglas, told me in a confidential whisper that he had suffered so much on the voyage, he had made up his mind to return to Ireland by train.

Quite a new reading, not to *Hamlet*, but to one of the lyrics in *The Princess*, was suggested by another compositor. The introduction of a comma in the first line of the last stanza of “Home they brought her warrior dead” produced a quaint effect.

> “Rose a nurse of ninety years,
> Set his child upon her knee,”

appears in every edition of *The Princess*. But my friend, by his timely insertion of a comma, made it read thus:

> "Rose, a nurse of ninety years."

Perhaps the nurse's name was Rose, but Tennyson kept this a secret.

One of the loveliest of Irish national melodies is that for which Moore wrote the stanzas beginning:—

> "Silent, O Moyle, be the roar of thy waters!"

The title of this song appeared in the programme of a St. Patrick's Day Concert, which was published in a leading London newspaper, as though the poem were addressed to one Mr. O'Moyle,—"Silent, O'Moyle."

Another humorist set up a reference to "Susanna and the Elders,"

"Susanna and the Editors," which was not just the same thing. Possibly the printer had another and equally apocryphal episode in his mind's eye.

I felt a warm personal regard for the man who made a lecturer state that a critic had "poured out the violets of his wrath upon him." The criticism did not, under these circumstances, seem particularly severe.

I must frankly confess, however, that I had nothing but reprobation for the one who made a clergyman state in a lecture to a class of young ladies, that his favourite poem of Wordsworth's was "Invitations to Immorality." Nor had I the least feeling except of indignation for the one who set up the title of a picture in which I was interested, "a rare turnip," instead of "a rare tulip." The printer who at the conclusion of an obituary notice was expected to announce to the readers of the paper that "the interment will take place on Saturday," but who, instead, gave them to understand that "the entertainment will take place on Saturday," did not, I think, cause any awkward mishap. He knew that the idea was that of entertainment, whatever the word employed might be.

The compositor who caused an editor to refer to "the autotype of the Russian people," when the word *autocrat* was in the "copy" before him, was less to be blamed than the reader who allowed such a mistake to pass without correction.

When I read on a proof one night that the most striking scene in *The Dead Heart* at the Lyceum was "the burning of the Pastille and the dance of the Rigmarole," I asked for the "copy" that had been telegraphed; and I found that the printer was not responsible for this marvellous blunder.

It will be remembered that at one of his lectures in the United States, Mr. Richard A. Proctor remarked that in the course of a few million years something remarkable would happen, but that its occurrence would not inconvenience his audience, as he supposed they would all be in Paradise at that time.

In one paper the reporter made him say that he supposed his audience would all be in Paris at that time.

The next evening Mr. Proctor turned the mistake to a good "scoring" account, by stating that he fancied at first an error had been made; but that shortly afterwards, he remembered that the tradition was, that all good Americans go to Paris when they die, so that the reporter clearly understood his business.

The enterprising correspondent who sows his telegrams broadcast is a frequent cause of the appearance of mistakes. I recollect that one sent a hundred words over the wire regarding some village concert, the great success of which was due to the zeal of the Reverend John Jones, "the *locus standi* of the parish." He had probably heard something at one time of a *pastor loci,* and made a brave but unsuccessful attempt to reproduce the phrase.

Another correspondent telegraphed regarding the arrival of two American cyclists at Queenstown, that their itinerary would be as follows: "They will travel on their bicycles through Ireland and England, and then crossing from Dover to Calais they will proceed through Europe, and from Turkey they will pass through Asia Minor into Xenophon and the Anabasis, leaving which they will travel to Egypt and the Land of *Goschen*."

The reference to Xenophon was funny enough, but the spelling of the last word, identifying the country with the statesman, seemed to me to represent the highwater mark of the flood-tide of modernism. A few years before, when the correspondent was doubtless more in touch with the vicissitudes of the Children of Israel than with the feats of cyclists from the United States, he would probably have assimilated Mr. Goschen's name with the Land of Goshen; but soon the fame of the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer had become of more immediate importance to him, and it was the land that changed its name in his mind to the name of the ex-Finance Minister.

It was probably the influence of the same spirit of modernism that caused a foreman, in making up the paper for the press, to insert under the title of "Sporting," half a column of a report of a lecture by a clergyman on "The Races of Palestine."

It was, however, the telegraph office that I found to be responsible for a singular error in the report of the arrest of a certain notorious criminal. The report should have stated that “a photograph of the prisoner had been taken by the detective camera,” but the result of the filtration of the message through a network of telegraph wires was the statement that the photograph “had been taken by Detective Cameron.”

Some years ago a too earnest naturalist was drowned when canoeing on a lake in the west of Ireland. An enterprising correspondent who clearly resided near the scene of the accident, forwarded to the newspaper with which I was connected, a circumstantial account of the finding of the capsized canoe. In the course of his references to the objects of the naturalist’s visit to the west, the reporter made the astounding statement that “he had already succeeded in getting together a practically complete collection of the *flora* and *fauna* of Ireland,”—truly a “large order.”

I feel that I cannot do better than bring to a close with this story my desultory jottings, which may bear to be regarded as a far from complete collection of the *flora* and *fauna* of journalism. Perhaps my researches into these highways and byways may induce some more competent and widely experienced brother to publish his notes on men and matters.

“Not a jot, not a jot,” protested the *Moor*.

Am I setting the omen at defiance in publishing these Jottings? Perhaps I am; though I feel easier in my mind on this point when I recall how, on my quoting in an article the proverb, “*Autres temps, mitres mours”* a wag of a printer caused it to appear, “*Autres temps, autres* Moores!”

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A JOURNALIST'S NOTE-BOOK ***

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