

Literary Success:
BEING
A GUIDE TO
PRACTICAL JOURNALISM.

By A. ARTHUR READE,

AUTHOR OF "STUDY AND STIMULANTS,"
"TEA AND TEA-DRINKING," ETC.



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PREFACE.

I N the Spring of 1880 the writer published a small work for the benefit of literary aspirants, giving examples of men who have climbed the ladder of literature, describing their struggles, and pointing out the best ways of gaining a footing there. The book was, however, printed in semi-phonotypy, and, in consequence, was vigorously attacked by some critics; but it seemed to meet a want, and many testimonies to its usefulness were received. It involved the writer in a good deal of correspondence with persons anxious to tread the thorny paths of literature. It appeared to him, however, that the best preparation for literature was Journalism, and his advice has invariably been—"Leave the magazines alone, and lay yourselves out for newspaper work, which is not only the most sure, but the most remunerative." But Journalism, unlike most other professions, possesses no handbook. A youth who desires to enter it is without any account of the training required to achieve success in any of its branches; he does not know what books he should study, or what languages would be the most serviceable to him. In consequence of the absence of a book of this character, an attempt has been made in the following chapters to supply the want. As the work embodies the experience of reporters engaged on weekly and daily newspapers, of editors and contributors, it is hoped that the book will be

of practical value to all who contemplate entering the profession of Journalism. Whilst the work is primarily intended for literary beginners and junior reporters, the facts which it records, and the light it throws upon the labours of men engaged in the production of newspapers, will render it, perhaps, not less interesting to a wider circle of readers.

The author is indebted to Mr. W. H. Mudford, editor of the *Standard*; to Mr. T. Wemyss Reid, editor of the *Leeds Mercury*; to Mr. E. R. Russell, editor of the *Liverpool Post*, for valuable letters; and to Mr. William Hunt, editor of the *Eastern Morning News*; Mr. Philip Kerney, of the *Dublin Daily Express*; Mr. Alexander Paterson, editor of the *Barnsley Chronicle*; Mr. Cornelius Walford, Mr. C. H. Wall, Mr. T. Tully, Mr. R. Bailey Walker, for literary assistance; and to other journalists throughout England for contributions. To each of these gentlemen he tenders his best thanks.

January, 1885.

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there, adding, "as smoking does for the same reason." This was converted into the words, "as sucking does for the snow season!" He could not find it in his heart to correct the mistake, and thus it stands as a theme for the speculations of commentators. Mr. R. A. Proctor reminds us, in *Knowledge*, how the line, "He kissed her under the silent stars," was altered by a cruel compositor into "He kicked her under the cellar stairs," and how the words, "Lines, bands, and striæ near the violet end of spectra," were altered into "Links, bonds, and stripes for the violent kind of spectres."

In a smaller degree, it is equally annoying to a reporter to have nonsense made of his reports, and to be ridiculed wherever he appears; but he has it in his power to minimise the number of errors by writing legibly. Mr. William Saunders, speaking at the annual meeting of the United Kingdom Alliance in October, 1883, said that, "A little while ago a member of the House of Commons, referring to a friend of John Bright's, said he was a man who was accustomed to 'sit at the feet of the Gamaliel of Birmingham.' Reporters did not always write good copy, and next morning, when the statement appeared in the newspapers, he was reported to have 'sat at the feet of the gamecock of Birmingham!'"

It is a curious fact that some "readers," when advanced to the position of providing "copy" themselves, seem to forget their own troubles with bad writing, and to add fresh burdens to the already heavy load borne by the patient compositor. It would be by no means misplaced expenditure to insist upon all copy coming in on ruled sheets of a given size, which should be provided by the publishers free of cost. This would pay in the long run.

CHAPTER IV.

ON PARAGRAPH-WRITING.

Shorthand only one of the Reporter's Qualifications—A good Memory Invaluable—Paragraph Writing an Art—The inexperienced Phonographer—Discretion necessary in a Reporter—What to guard against in Reporting—A knowledge of the subject essential—The besetting sin of the Local Reporter—Bayard Taylor's Advice—The American Style of Reporting.

SHORTHAND-WRITING, as we have already explained, is only one of the reporter's qualifications, and not always the most important. Some good work has been done without it. "There are gentlemen of the press who still remember brilliant instances of reporting competency on the part of professionals who were entirely unacquainted with any kind of stenography. In an abbreviated longhand, but quite legible enough to avail for the use of the compositor, there were men in the profession some thirty years ago, who could keep up with a rapid speaker, though omitting all his mere verbiage, and have ready for the press, soon after he sat down, a remarkably accurate and long, though, of course, condensed report of his harangue. We knew a gentleman of such powerful and well-trained memory, that he could write at his leisure a wonderfully correct report of a meeting entirely from recollection, without a note; and another who, in our presence, in an assize court, having been diligently transcribing from notes the report of a previous meeting, was yet able to write from memory a correct paragraph, giving the details of the trial of each prisoner immediately on its conclusion."

A good memory, of course, is invaluable to a reporter; and, indeed, to all connected with the press. It is said of M. de Blowitz, the Paris correspondent of the *Times*, that he never takes notes, and that his memory is so accurate

that he can boast of never having been accused of inaccuracy by any speaker whose words he has recorded.

But neither the ability to write verbatim, nor the possession of a good memory, is so much to be desired as an aptitude for neat paragraph-writing. We ourselves know several good shorthand writers who are utterly unable to furnish a condensed report, or to write a paragraph concisely and intelligibly. "The most troublesome class of men professing to be reporters I have had to deal with as an editor," writes Mr. Hunt, of the *Eastern Morning News*, "have been shorthand writers who cannot, or will not, condense. One man, who was a splendid note-taker, and who succeeded as a legal shorthand writer, gave me a great deal of trouble. He would bring in a speech, extending to three columns if written out fully, of which I could only use half a column. My instructions to give me that quantity would result, after laborious efforts, in his taking a sentence or two from the earlier, and an equal quantity from a later part of the speech—a most unsatisfactory, and, in some cases, a misleading process. But from a want of the power to condense he never succeeded in newspaper work, and eventually found his vocation as a legal shorthand writer."

The question of the value of shorthand to the reporter is ably discussed by a writer in *Brown's Phonographic Monthly* (New York). "Condensation being so much counted on," he points out, "and fidelity to the idea, and not the exact language, being in the main all that is required of the reporter, a knowledge of shorthand is by no means essential to his success. As a matter of fact, among the metropolitan newspapers, which employ an aggregate of perhaps two hundred reporters, there will be found less than a dozen shorthand writers. Still, it is nevertheless true, that the thoroughly-equipped newspaper reporter, who is armed for all emergencies, ought to know shorthand. There are occasions when the reporter finds it desirable to get a man's exact language. There are occasions, rare indeed, when a knowledge of it is almost indispensable. . . . Like the artist with rules of perspective, the reporter who writes shorthand must use his shorthand with discretion; and in this respect the phonographer, inexperienced in newspaper work, often blunders. He is sent to report a meeting of which, say,

only a half-column report is required. He returns with notes enough to fill three or four columns, and has to wade through them to get at the 'points.' In consequence, his copy gets in late, and is cut all to pieces, and he finds that a longhand reporter has a much better report than he next morning, because the longhand man took fewer notes, and only such as he could use. It is a piteous spectacle to see a phonographer with notes sufficient for an almost verbatim report, and with space allowed him only for a fraction of that, bewilderingly threading the mazes of his notes, looking for the 'main points,' and the night editor increasing his confusion by adjuring him to 'hurry up.' If wise, when caught in such a plight, he will close his note-book, write his report from memory, and never again commit the blunder of taking too much. This is the great danger that the shorthand newspaper reporter has to guard against. The temptation to do so is great when he can follow the speaker with facility. The experienced newspaper phonographer avoids this error. When he is required to report but little, he takes few notes. Generally he writes a summary of the speeches in longhand as they are delivered, ready to turn in as copy when he gets to the office. When he catches a few sentences or phrases that he wants verbatim, he jots them down in shorthand, and transcribes them while the speaker is talking about something of minor importance. This is one of the advantages he has over the longhand reporter."

In order to write a good paragraph, a knowledge of the subject is essential. "When," says Mr. Cornelius Walford, "only a simple note has to be rendered on what is said on any given occasion, some previous familiarity with the subject is found to be of immense advantage. But when a reporter is expected to give a summary of what is seen, as well as of what is said, his resources will be put to a severe test. Every subject has its own peculiar phraseology and terminology. Some previous acquaintance with these is of the greatest advantage." Sometimes a lecturer gives a summary of his argument at the close, but he can never be relied upon to do this, and the reporter must always take notes of the divisions of the subject.

The reporter should never express his own opinion.—The

besetting sin of the local reporter is that he either puts his own opinions into every paragraph he writes, or makes remarks about individuals. He seems to have a difficulty in comprehending that it is his mission to reproduce a faithful transcript of the opinions of others, and not to express his own. Hence such phrases as the following are frequently met with in what ought to be strictly impartial reports.

Mr. Brown clearly demonstrated the fallacy of Mr. Jones's arguments.

Mr. Robinson conclusively proved the assertions of Mr. Smith to be untenable.

Now, these estimable gentlemen may have done all that the reporter credits them with doing, but the opposite side may have been of a contrary opinion; and it is no part of the reporter's duty to act as umpire. In America political feeling runs so high that the reporter is with difficulty restrained from expressing his convictions. "All *expressions of opinion* on any matter, *all comment*, all political, religious, or social *biases*, and especially all personal feeling on any subject, must be avoided." This is one of the instructions of the New York Associated Press to its correspondents; and the following is a copy of a remonstrance addressed to one who had telegraphed a faulty paragraph:—

In the following specification the sentence underlined should not have been given, because it is not a matter of news and is worthless except as a reflection on the Republican party. It is, of course, out of our province to disseminate biased partisan statements, or those *of all coloured one way or the other*:—

Columbus, Ga., Sept. 2.

A. T. Calhoun, Post-office clerk this city, detected taking money registered letters. Admits taking \$92. Chairman Republican Committee, Muscogee Co., Chairman Republican Convention, 4th Cong. Dist. Ga., and delegate from that district to Republican State Convention. Is now in custody. Postmaster Johnson discovered it and caused arrest. Calhoun tried commit suicide.

Bayard Taylor's advice to the American reporter is equally applicable to the English reporter:—"If you want to succeed as a newspaper correspondent, write just the things that your readers would look for and talk about if they were in your place, and be very careful about putting your opinion into your letters. People want the facts, and

to be allowed to form their own opinions. You have all the world with you if you state simple facts ; everybody has to agree with facts, whether they will or not."

As to the style in which a paragraph should be written, the simpler the better. American newspapers, however, prefer a florid style. "This will never do," said a local editor to a new reporter. "You say that 'the man was killed.' That is too tame. You should have said that 'he was crushed into a shapeless mass,' or his 'reeking corpse presented a ghastly sight.' Then you make the bald statement that 'the doctor was not needed.' 'The services of the physician were not called into requisition,' that's how you should have put it. That's journalism, that is. Then you say nothing of the 'sickening spectacle,' and you are painfully neglectful of the fact that 'the man's features were distorted out of all semblance to humanity,' and you haven't a word to say of 'scattered fragments,' or of 'blood,' or of 'bruises,' or 'the screams of the horrified spectators.' No, it will never do ; journalism has no use for you, young man."

In Canada the newspapers follow the American style of reporting meetings, and make a feature of any incident which occurs, rather than give a report of the meeting itself. One paper thus describes the effects of a fire :—

In the midst of Major Alford's lecture at the Town Hall, and when his auditors were deeply interested in an account of the small feet of Chinese ladies, the far-off, almost indistinct, intonations of some small boy's voice was heard proclaiming "Fire !" Instantly there was a panic. Men, who had never been in a hurry before in their lives, showed unmistakable signs of activity, while many were as nimble in reaching the door as if they had taken a course in athletic training for that particular occasion. The female part of the audience did not seem very much frightened until a number of the coarser sex went through a sort of circus performance in an endeavour to get out of the building.

This, it will be admitted, is a very graphic, but a very incomplete, account. Nothing is said, for instance, as to, 1, the cause of the fire ; 2, extent of the damage ; 3, whether any one was injured ; 4, whether the building was insured ; or, finally, what the lecturer said.

If we read carefully our own newspapers, we cannot come to any other conclusion than that the shorthand writing is done better than the paragraphing. Both Mr.

Reid and Mr. Russell bear testimony to this fact. How should a paragraph be written? may be asked. The question is difficult to answer without giving a lecture or a speech verbatim side by side with an abstract. Paragraphing is an art, and, like all other arts, is difficult to acquire; but excellent specimens of condensed and intelligent reporting appear in the *Standard*, the *Daily News*, the *Scotsman*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Leeds Mercury*, and a few other papers.

DNYANPRAKASH OFFICE,

No. 4, BOMBAY.

CHAPTER V.

THE REPORTER'S ENGLISH.

Newspaper English—A Defence—Hackneyed Quotations condemned—Bayard Taylor's Taste—Coleridge's Deliberation—A London Liner's English—Careless Sub-editors—Fineries in Speech to be avoided—Dangers of fine Writing—"Hymeneal Onion"—A Plea for simple language—A Brighton Genius—Curiosities of Journalism—Opening a British Workman—The late William Cullen Bryant's list of forbidden words—Anglo-Saxon *versus* Latin words—Dr. Freeman and the Bishop of Liverpool quoted—Mr. Proctor's example worth following—Importance of Accuracy—Hints to Reporters by Mr. William Hunt—Words and Phrases to be avoided—Books on English commended.

THE late Dean Alford complained of the "vitiating and pretentious style which passes current in our newspapers," and quoted many instances of what he called "slipshod English." That there were grounds for complaint, his critic, Mr. Washington Moor, did not deny; but he contended that the circumstances under which newspapers are produced prevent the writers from securing accuracy and nicety of expression. Every effort should, however, be made by a press-writer to express himself clearly, intelligently, and *gracefully*. To this end he should first and foremost—

1. *Be brief*:—Hackneyed quotations should be avoided. For instance, do not fancy it will brighten your page or emphasise your meaning to quote from Shakespeare about "a divinity that shapes our ends," or "compunctious visitings," or "physic to the dogs," or "the pity of it, Iago"; or any one of the three or four hundred passages that were worn threadbare by service in general literature before the present generation of men came into existence.

Do not quote Burns on the "best laid schemes of mice and men," or seeing "ourselves as others see us," or manhood and the "guinea stamp." Do not quote Milton about a soul or an appetite, or what not, "under the ribs of death"; or Butler about the "drum ecclesiastic." Do not think it is fine to write that happiness is "our being's end and aim," or that "domestic happiness" is the "only bliss of Paradise that has survived the fall." Mr. Reid strongly condemns the line "the cup that cheers, but not inebriates," which is too frequently used by people in describing a tea-meeting. Sometimes the phrase "tea was partaken of" is used; but this is as awkward as the other is hackneyed. "Tea was served" is a better phrase. Of course time will not always allow a leader writer to polish his article, but he strives to make it as perfect as possible; and the reporter should do the same.

As an illustration of Mr. Bayard Taylor's taste, Mr. Charles T. Congdon relates the following anecdote of that versatile journalist:—"As I was submitting to its final revision my 'Carmen Seculare'—for I wrote about the Centennial Anniversary of the Republic, as so many of the verse-makers, not to mention the real poets, did,—objection was made to the word 'flogs' in the line, 'from where the sun *flogs up* his golden steeds';—it being determined, greatly against my own judgment that the word should come out. I wandered around in rather a helpless state, asking everybody what I should put in its place. Some were for 'drives,' others suggested 'whips'; but when I consulted Mr. Taylor he instantly said 'goads,' and 'goads' it stands to-day. Perhaps a better word than 'flogs' because less hackneyed and colloquial." To find the right word often requires deep thinking; but sometimes it comes by chance, as in the following case. One day, we are told, Coleridge was standing in a picture gallery, absorbed in gazing at a new painting. After looking at it for fifteen minutes, he deliberately came to the conclusion that the only epithet which could be applied to the picture was the adjective "majestic." Just as he reached this conclusion a gentleman entered the saloon with two ladies. "What a majestic scene!" exclaimed the gentleman, as he stopped before the painting.

Coleridge walked up to him, and bowing, said, "My name is Coleridge. I thought I knew the English language, but it has taken me fifteen minutes to discover that the word 'majestic' applied to this picture. You have hit upon the right word at once." "Yes, yes," replied the gentleman, with a gratified simper; "it is a splendid, a beautiful, a lovely painting!" "Ah," rejoined Coleridge immediately, "I retract my previous statement! You used the word 'majestic' only by chance, and not after deliberation;" and the great man walked away with a thoughtful smile.

As a specimen of faulty English, and as an illustration of the ability of some of the "literary men" found in Bohemian resorts in Fleet-street, the following paragraph was once quoted by Mr. Archibald Forbes:—"Although the Prince of Wales is *this year* in England, it was scarcely anticipated that he would honour the show *this year* with a visit; but, much to the surprise and gratification of the Earl of Chesham, *this year's* president, and the council of the Smithfield Club, on Saturday mid-day Mr. Sidney, the secretary and manager, received from Mr. R. Leeds, chairman *this year* of the Agricultural Hall Company, who resides near Sandringham, a telegram announcing that the Prince would visit the show *this day* (Monday) at 3.30 p.m." This paragraph is said to have formed part of a description of the opening of the fat stock show, in a London evening paper. Why it should have been allowed to appear without revision is one of those mysteries of newspaper editorship which cannot be solved; for all that was necessary was to delete the words "this year" in every case.

"Frequently, on more than one occasion!" "He has hitherto *always* escaped with his life!" "Pray," asks the *Leeds Mercury*, "how many lives had the person here alluded to that it should thus be hinted that he might sometimes have lost one in the past? 'Until news of his death comes, do not feel certain that he is dead!' Was there ever such a farrago of bad English penned before? And it is all to be found in big type in a London evening paper, which is nothing if not critical."

2. *Use short words.*—In an article on fineries in speech,

the *Pictorial World* condemns a large number of words and phrases used by reporters. We copy the list:—

"Recently dead"	for	"lately dead"
"Monumental marble"	"	"tombstone"
"Residence"	"	"house"
"Paraphernalia"	"	"clothes"
"Emporium"	"	"shop"
"Encomium"	"	"praise"
"Location"	"	"place"
"Locate"	"	"put"
"Attired"	"	"clad"
"Individual"	"	"person"
"Window draperies"	"	"curtains"
"Entertainment"	"	"supper"
"Sacred edifice"	"	"church"
"Conflagration"	"	"fire"
"Vociferation"	"	"cry"
"Available resources"	"	"income"
"Lower limb"	"	"leg"
"Peregrination"	"	"walk"

To this list we make the following additions:—

"The Bard of Avon"	for	"Shakespeare"
"The devouring element"	"	"fire"
"The weaker sex"	"	"woman"
"The juvenile portion of humanity"	"	"the young"
"They partook of some refreshment"	"	"lunched or dined"
"A female possessing considerable personal attractions"	for	"a pretty woman"
"An interesting assortment of the feathered creation"	for	"a fine lot of poultry."

It would be easy to lengthen this list; let it not be assumed that we condemn the use under any circumstances of the words just quoted. They have their appropriate place. What we wish to do is to caution the young reporter against using, as a regular thing, hackneyed words and phrases, which from their very commonness easily suggest themselves to his mind. We advise him to seek a word which, as accurately and, perhaps, more fittingly, expresses his meaning. It is amazing to what an extent the habit of fine writing has grown. There are some people who never go to bed; they "retire." They never take a glass of beer, or a cup of coffee at a railway station: they "have refreshments." With them a man does not swear; he uses "objectionable language." They are never ill; they are

“slightly (or seriously) indisposed.” They never die, they “expire.” They are never buried; their “mortal remains are deposited in their final resting-place” in some burial-ground.

There is another objection to be urged against “fine” writing, the printers in their hurry are apt to misinterpret the reporter’s meaning, and give a perfectly fresh and unlooked-for version of his report. It is to this mixture of fine writing on the part of the reporter, and hurry on the part of the printer that many of the mistakes that creep into the papers are to be attributed. One reporter, for instance, anxious to flatter a clergyman in his district, spoke of his “cheery face beaming with satisfaction,” but must have been taken aback when he found it printed “cherry face,” &c. Another reporter, thinking no doubt that it would be too commonplace to state that a newly-married couple had started for the Continent to spend their honeymoon, announced this interesting event by the phrase “had gone to taste the sweets of their hymeneal union.” We cannot say whether this ambitious flight of his proved as satisfactory as he had anticipated, seeing that the compositor read the expression as “hymeneal onion,” and so printed it. Many reporters seem to have a peculiar and quite erroneous notion of the duties they have to perform. Judging from the gushing nonsense that is often published, it would seem as if they felt themselves called upon to write romance or poetry, instead of chronicling simple facts and events that come to their knowledge. Were they to understand more clearly that this is all they are expected to do, and were they to aim at writing their reports in a more matter-of-fact style, a great improvement would be effected. The simpler the language employed, the more easily is the report read, and the greater the pleasure experienced. It is not a mark of good, or clever, writing to use grandiose expressions, but rather the contrary. That this gushing style is affected most by persons who have an imperfect knowledge of the language, is seen from the continual use of mixed metaphors and false quotations that appear in their reports.

It is hardly surprising if the compositor, in reading the copy of such ambitious reports, should find some

difficulty in appreciating their lofty language; still less surprising is it that he should give a perfectly fresh version to that of the original, when, owing to the careless writing of the reporter, he is forced to exercise his judgment as to the meaning of particular sentences. In a Brighton paper there appeared a report which for absurd and gushing language fairly stands unrivalled. This report is worth reproduction:—

There is no finer passage in Ruskin's writings than that in which he treats of the marvellous way in which the changing outlines of the clouds express the varied emotions and passions of the human mind. We were strongly reminded of this the other night walking along the Cliff. The moon was at the full, and the whole surface of the heavens was covered with white clouds, which, drifting before a gentle wind, changed and changed again in endless variety, like the glass in a kaleidoscope. Gentle, melancholy, and boisterous mirth were most expressively portrayed in unceasing succession by the bright shapes which were whirled across the scene. It may have been that unconsciously our mind was influenced by a forthcoming event, but we could not help seeing in the constant array of forms a foreshadowing of the joyous and pathetic, &c. . . . The pleasures of the imagination are said by philosophers to be the highest of which the human senses are capable; but much as we enjoyed the cloudy moon-painted panorama, we cannot agree with philosophy in this instance, because we know that next week the sense of hearing will convey to us a greater enjoyment. We must also take exception to another ancient belief, namely, that while the anticipation of evil is often worse than the evil itself, pleasure frequently falls short of the anticipation. Many a child, when being dragged to the dentist's, like a lamb to the slaughter, has been soothed by the first part of this old saw, and the latter portion has often been administered as consolation to the unlucky who have been deprived of some anticipated treat; but experience teaches that both are frequently fallacies, &c.

What does the reader think that all this verbiage was about? *The Moore and Burgess Minstrels' visit to Brighton!*

The slovenliness of some reporters is incredible; no care is taken in describing even a simple occurrence clearly and concisely. In the weekly newspapers the reports are simply astonishing for their slipshod, negligent style. One paper stated that "a British workman is about to be opened at Morpeth"; another that "a pony carriage passing down New Bond-street, Bath, when in turning into Northgate-street, it fell down and broke both of its legs"; whilst a third in speaking of a man killed in a Belfast riot stated

that "they fired two shots at him ; the first killed him, but the second was not fatal."

The late William Cullen Bryant, when editor of the *New York Evening Post*, drew up a list of words which he forbade his contributors to use. It is printed in "Columbia and Canada," by Mr. Fraser Rae, who states that Mr. Bryant's example has been as salutary as his precept. On the other hand Mr. N. W. Hazeltine, an American writer, considers it characteristic of Bryant that while he imagined himself to be a purist in the writing of English, and prepared a list of errors which were to be rigorously excluded from the columns of his newspaper, his private letters and published writings were thickly strewn with solecisms which had escaped his imperfectly instructed ear. The list of forbidden words included aspirant, authoress, début, employé, jeopardise, loafer, oration, roughs, rowdies, and talented ; but unfortunately he suggested no-equivalent words. He preferred "trustworthy" to "reliable," and "common friend" to "mutual friend." He also objected to "banquet," when "dinner" or "supper" would do as well. But the word "banquet," as the *Daily News* once pointed out, besides having the authority of Shakespeare and most of the Elizabethan writers, has the distinct merit of expressing an idea which the substituted words do not convey ; and the same criticism applies to the words "raid," "telegram," and "issue," for which he would use "attack," "despatch," and "question."

As a rule, words of Anglo-Saxon origin are more forcible than those of Latin origin ; and Dr. E. A. Freeman is reported to have expressed his belief that any thought worth thinking about can be put forth clearly in English, without the use of any foreign help, or the use of strange, out-of-the-way words, the jargon of diplomacy, &c. This kind of talk is used by cunning people who want to conceal what they think, and by silly people because they think it sounds fine. He saw no use in "donate" and "locate," and thought "begin" much better than either "commence," "inaugurate," or "initiate." He once wrote with a good deal of care this sentence : "The time had now come when the man who had done all this good to his native land was to undo it with his own hand." There was only one

foreign word, "native," in the sentence; and he might have used "father" land, but this, he added, was the other extreme.

The Bishop of Liverpool contends, however, that a vast number of words of other than Saxon origin are used by writers of acknowledged simplicity, and he instances "The Pilgrim's Progress." Neither of the leading words in that title is Saxon, and he asks, "Would Bunyan have improved matters if he had called it 'The Wayfarer's Guide?'" He freely admits that words of Latin and French origin are generally inferior to Saxon, and quotes the following good advice of Dr. Gee:—"Talk of happiness rather than felicity, and of almighty rather than of omnipotent, use lessen rather than diminish, forbidden rather than proscribed, hateful rather than noxious, seeming rather than apparent, afterwards rather than subsequently, call out and draw forth, instead of evoke and educe." A striking instance of the superiority of English over Latin was shown in the heading given to a paragraph of a police-court case: the *Sheffield Telegraph* calling it "Attempt to Pass a Counterfeit Coin," and the *Sheffield Independent*, "Attempt to Pass a Bad Shilling,"—which is more forcible, as well as a more picturesque expression.

3. *Use plain English.*—The same rules of avoiding commonplace phrases and fine language apply to the use of quotations from foreign or dead languages. It was said of Swift by Dr. Johnson that he always understood himself, and his readers always understood him. Whether or not the reporter understands his French quotation himself, he ought not to put his readers to any trouble in endeavouring to decipher his meaning. It ought to be clear as daylight. When Mr. Proctor announced the scientific journal, *Knowledge*, he said his aim was to present the truth of science in plain language, avoiding abstruse and technical terms. For instance, instead of speaking about the "mean equatorial horizontal solar parallax," he would refer to the sun's distance, and, instead of "microseme and dolichocephalic," he intended to use the words small-faced and long-headed. If Mr. Proctor found it necessary to use plain English in writing for educated persons, how much more necessary is it that the reporter who writes for

uneducated readers should avoid the use of technical or foreign words.

4. *Be accurate.*—A reporter, in a midland town, in relating the exploits of a thief, astonished his readers by stating that, having secured the booty, the thief “took up the pavement, and disappeared!” A very clever performance certainly, but too clever to be true. What the reporter meant was, that the thief *ran along* the pavement. A curious style of expression occurs in the reports of inquests. “On Friday Mr. F. Price, the district coroner, held an inquest at the Three Boars’ Heads, *on the body of Timothy Stiggins,*” &c. It may be that the words we have italicised are in accordance with legal forms, but “touching the death of,” or “concerning the death of,” would better convey the reporter’s meaning.

In 1864, Mr. William Hunt, editor of the *Eastern Morning News*, drew up some “Hints to Reporters,” for the use of the reporters and correspondents of his own paper. From the second edition, published in 1869, we give the following extracts:—

WORDS AND PHRASES TO BE AVOIDED.

Female, as a substitute for woman; it being an adjective, not a noun.

Individual, as a substitute for person; for the same reason.

Party also should not be used for *person*.

“He sank to rise no more,” “watery grave,” “vital spark,” “destroying element,” and all such penny-a-line expressions. [Read and digest Dean Alford’s book on “The Queen’s English.”]

Avoid all fine writing, and all such expressions as “pregnant with results,” “the womb of the future,” &c.

Be careful in distinguishing the imperfect from the past participle. Thus you ought to say “Calcraft hung Palmer,” and that Palmer was hanged by Calcraft.” Remember too, that the imperfect of *eat* is *ate*, and not “eat,” as frequently spelt.

Avoid confusion between certain active and similar neuter verbs. Thus it is wrong to ask a person to “set down,” when you mean him to take a chair—the word should be “sit.” If, however, you meant a cabman to put you down at any street, you would say “set me down.” The same rule applies to the verbs “lie” and “lay;” the first being neuter, and the second active. The imperfect tenses of these verbs are “lay” and “laid.”

The use of adjectives without nouns is inelegant. For instance, it is better to say “the same rule applies” than “the same applies,” in the paragraph preceding this.

Two or more singular nominatives require the plural verb, just as much as one plural nominative does. Thus the town and the trade of Hull *have*, not *has*, increased.

A "disjunctive" conjunction requires a singular verb even when there are two nominatives. Thus "neither you nor I *was* there" is right, *were* there is wrong; so, too, neither of them *was* there is right; *were* there is wrong. None of them *was* there is generally right, although as *none* is sometimes used as a noun of multitude *were* may sometimes be right.

Prepositions *always* govern the objective case, even though the objective be at the beginning of a sentence. Thus, "Who was it by?" should be "Whom was it by?"

Avoid a confusion of metaphors, such as Lord Castlereagh's famous bungle, "Let us *embark* upon the *feature*, upon which this question *hinges*." It is equally absurd to talk of the "zenith of manhood," or of a ship on being launched, "plunging into her *native* element."

Avoid long sentences. It is far easier both for the reader to read, and for the writer to write, short sentences, than to string a number together by means of relative pronouns.

Avoid such words as *reliable* and *talented*; *trustworthy* and *gifted* are the proper words.

To place prepositions at the end of a sentence, is not good writing. Thus, "how can the future be gloomily spoken of?" would be much better expressed as follows:—"How can we speak gloomily of the future?"

As a rule when a statement can be made in the active or the passive voice, the former is preferable.

It is better also to use a positive instead of two negatives. Thus, "he was connected with the press" is better than "he was not unconnected with the press."

THE MOST DIRECT WAY IS ALWAYS THE BEST.

The definite article should be repeated when the nouns to which they refer are different things. Thus we ought to say "the King and the Queen," "a girl and a boy,"—not "the King and Queen," "a girl and boy."

Words beginning with a U, in which the "U" is pronounced as in the words union, Utopia, &c., should have the article *a* not *an* before them. Where the U is not pronounced as though there were a *y* before it, as in unction, utterance, urgency, &c., *an* should of course be used.

Be careful to distinguish between the past participle and the imperfect tenses of such verbs as the following—spring, drink, sing. The following are correct:

He sprang into the sea.

He has sprung into the sea.

He drank the toast.

He has drunk the toast, or the toast was drunk,
or drunken.

He sang a song.

He has sung a song.

Neuter verbs, such as the verb *to be*, take the same case after them as before them. "It was you and I," not "you and *me*." It is a very common mistake in answer to the question "who is there?" to answer "me;" "I" is correct, though for certain reasons too long to enter upon here, "me" has its supporters among educated grammarians. The adverb should always be placed as nearly as possible to the word it is intended to qualify. "I only asked him to wait a minute," means I asked him only to *wait*, not to walk, or sit; "I asked him to wait only a minute," means I asked him to wait not five or ten minutes, but only one.

The final letter of a verb is doubled in becoming a past participle only, when the accent is on the last syllable, or when the word is a monosyllable. "*Benefitted*" should be "*benefited*," "*combatted*" "*combated*."

For *sanitary* and *sanatory*, see Alford's "The Queen's English," p. 34. The verb *shew* is commonly confused with the noun *show*.

The young reporter will find any of the following books of great assistance to him in the study of English:—

1. "How to Write Clearly." By the Rev. Edwin A. Abbott, D.D., Head Master of the City of London School. (Seeley, Jackson, & Halliday.) Price 1s. 6d.

2. "English Composition." By John Nichol, M.A., Oxon. (London: Macmillan & Co.) Price 1s.

This work is brief, singularly perspicuous, and goes direct to first principles without any superfluous verbiage. The divisions relative to purity of style and to composition in general are admirable, and there is also an exhaustive section devoted to prosody. Professor Nichols has done his work thoroughly, and in the compass of but 128 pages furnished a really exhaustive treatise, which should be in the hands of everyone.—*Brief*.

3. "Bad English Exposed." A series of criticisms on the errors of grammarians. By George Washington Moon. (Hatchard's.) Price 3s. 6d.

We welcome as a benefactor every man who sets himself conscientiously to prune out of our language those unsightly excrescences of style, violations of syntax, and inaccuracies of expression, which disfigure so much of the literature of the day. This is the task which Mr. Washington Moon has imposed upon himself. It would be unjust to him not to acknowledge that his two little books, "The Dean's English" and "Bad English Exposed," are a useful contribution to the art of writing the English language with accuracy.—*Times*.

4. "Errors in the Use of English." By the late William B. Hodgson. (Edinburgh: David Douglas.) Price 3s. 6d.

Professor Hodgson's book has no resemblance to the many hand-books of "popular errors;" he is rather suggestive than dogmatic; he does not always state his own opinion, but oftener brings forward examples of the different uses of a word, or of the various turns of a phrase, and he leaves the student to form his own conclusion. The book, indeed, is a mine of quotation, drawn from very extensive and miscellaneous reading during many years.—*Manchester Examiner*.

5. "Spelling and Punctuation." A manual for authors, students, and printers; together with a list of foreign words and phrases in common use and their explanations. By Henry Beadnell, printer, author of "A Guide to Typography: Literary and Practical," "A Key to One of the Main Difficulties of English Orthography," &c. Useful to business men, authors, printers, and apprentices. (Wyman & Sons.) Price 2s. 6d.

Even some of the best educated persons are occasionally at a loss as to the spelling of words somewhat out of the common run, while the proper method of punctuation is understood by comparatively few persons. All such benighted mortals—and they are not confined to any one rank or class—will find the work before us a veritable treasure-house of useful information. It helps to solve all those knotty points that occasionally arise in reading and writing, and for which ordinary dictionaries are consulted in vain. . . . The book is neatly printed, and may well be regarded as an indispensable adjunct to the ordinary dictionary.—*Furniture Gazette*.

6. "How to Write English." By A. Arthur Reade. (John Marshall & Co.) Price 1s. 6d.

It is a positive relief to turn to Mr. Reade's unpretentious little book. To say that it rivals Dr. Abbott's "How to Write Clearly," would be undue praise; but it is clear that the author has worked through his difficulties for himself, and some of his hints are valuable. He realises that two things are essential for the formation of a good English style; that the writer should know how to be accurate, and that he should be willing to take trouble to secure accuracy. These two main principles are expressed with vigour, and with a variety of illustration.—*The Literary World*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COUNTRY REPORTER.

Amateur Reporters—Dangers arising from their Employment—What is a Libel?—Local Correspondents—Experiences of a Junior Reporter—Country Newspaper Proprietors—Their want of Enterprise—Lancashire the best field for Reporters—How District Men are paid—Performances at Local Board Meetings.

WITH the large increase of newspapers in country districts there has been an increase of news correspondents; and every village, however remote, has its newspaper representative in the person of the village schoolmaster, bookseller, shopkeeper, or barber. In some cases an editor is able to secure the services of a clerk, who is only too glad to supplement his slender income by writing paragraphs about school feasts, tea-meetings, and penny readings. A knowledge of shorthand is rarely one of the accomplishments of these amateur reporters. Whether they use it or not, they often impose a good deal of labour upon the over-worked sub-editor by their inability to write decent English. But as a copy of the paper is frequently thought sufficient recompense for the labour of the correspondent, good workmanship cannot be expected. In most cases, however, a small annual salary is paid, and in others a penny a line. The latter rate of payment is considered more satisfactory by employers; but to conscientious correspondents, who aim at conciseness and brevity, it is very unsatisfactory, as it acts as an inducement to enlarge the material at command. Under this stimulus fire appears as "the devouring element"; water as "the aqueous flood"; tea as the "cup that cheers but not inebriates"; a high wind becomes a "fierce tornado," &c.

There is another danger arising from the employment of

untrained correspondents, whose "copy" requires to be closely read, and often re-written. Men of pronounced views upon any question are apt to give expression to their convictions in their reports of meetings, and to comment upon local occurrences. This is the chief failing in village reporters, and has not unfrequently plunged a newspaper proprietor into difficulties. It is hard to say what constitutes a libel. Even judges differ on the subject. One takes a broad and comprehensive view of the duties and responsibilities of the press; another, a narrow and technical view. But it was certainly a very grave error of judgment on the part of a Yorkshire newspaper to assert that the provisions supplied by a confectioner for a school treat "were of poor quality"; and it is not surprising that the proprietor of the paper was fined £50 for the offence. The higher the position of the newspaper, the greater the libel; or, at any rate, the greater the ground of complaint. In 1876, the owner of a menagerie sought to obtain damages from the *Birmingham Daily Mail* for describing an elephant (which had escaped) as "little larger than a Newfoundland dog." The magistrate held, however, that there was no ground for the proceedings, and dismissed the case, the plaintiff paying all costs; yet the description of the elephant was, without doubt, calculated to injure the showman, by reflecting upon the size of his quadrupeds.

It is clear from the following letter from the editor of a Lancashire county paper to a clerk residing in one of the Manchester suburbs, that good local correspondents are not easy to obtain: "I am obliged by your offer to undertake the office of our representative in — and the immediate district. So far I have been very unfortunate in my — relations, but I judge from what I hear of you that you are well fitted to do the work satisfactorily, and I shall be glad to arrange with you to do so. It is seldom we should need long reports, but I much feel the need of nice accounts of all the more important matters that crop up amongst you—necessarily condensed, as we have not very much space to spare. As to remuneration, I am willing to pay anything that is fair, but think lineage would probably work best on both sides. I shall be glad to know your

mind on this subject." The end of this engagement was an appointment as district manager of the paper at a salary of £4 a week. Without the preliminary training of a local correspondent, it would have been utterly impossible to have fulfilled the duties of a manager, whose work included attendance at all kinds of meetings from scientific assemblies to tea-meetings. This, however, is quite an exceptional case of good luck. It would be difficult to find many cases of similar treatment on weekly newspapers. In the eastern and western counties a district reporter's salary rarely exceeds £2, and sometimes not £1.

The experiences of a junior reporter are worth quoting, because they illustrate the unenterprising character of many proprietors of small newspapers and the nature of the duties devolving upon the beginner at reporting. "I began life," says our correspondent, "as a printer's devil, learned shorthand, and assisted a district reporter. After a while, I secured a district reportership at eighteen shillings a week. The paper was localised in a town of 3,000 inhabitants, but was such a miserable sheet that its sale amounted to only two dozen copies weekly. The reporting was the least important part of my duties. A fortnightly Petty Sessions, a County Court about every two months, and an occasional tea-meeting, or a meeting of the agricultural labourers, were the extent of the scope for reporting. Canvassing for advertisements, establishing agencies in the villages, collecting accounts, instituting County Court proceedings, distributing contents' bills, writing local notes, hunting up boys to sell the paper, reading bullying letters from the proprietor of the paper, writing explanatory replies and earnest applications for arrears of salary,—constituted pretty nearly all I had to do. My appeals for my salary generally resulted in a command: 'Collect the enclosed account, take out your salary, and hand the balance at once.' After twelve months' experience in this district I was promoted to a larger one at a salary of twenty-one shillings a week, and for this munificent sum I had to work harder than ever. At the end of six months, however, I secured a situation in a small but busy seaport in the north. Here I had much more actual reporting and sub-editorial work, but I had also to engage in canvassing, collecting,

book-keeping, making out accounts, and occasionally assisting in the shop. Proof-reading, of course, was included in the schedule of duties. In fact, it was a place in which the reporter was required to 'assist the proprietor'—a very elastic term. My salary, for the performance of all these duties, was twenty-five shillings a week, which was increased to thirty shillings at the end of three years' service. My next situation was that of junior reporter on an evening 'daily,' at a salary of thirty-five shillings a week. Here, for the first time, I was occupied with the legitimate duties of a reporter; but I had to read my own proofs. This, however, is a decided advantage, for I have endured no end of 'chaff' through stupid mistakes that would have been detected if I could have seen the proofs. As to salaries, some papers in the Midland counties pay well, but the north is the place where the work of the reporter is most highly valued."

The picture of the duties of a local reporter in the eastern counties is by no means a bright one; and if our contributor's experience were general, we fear the number of candidates for the journalistic profession would slightly decrease. Fortunately, more handsome treatment prevails in the north. One Lancashire newspaper has no fewer than eight district reporters at salaries ranging from 35s. to £2. 10s. a week. As the reporting does not occupy more than half their time, they engage in other work. One member of the staff, for instance, is a rate collector at a salary of £1 a week, and occupies the largest stationery and tobacco shop in the district in which he works as reporter. As a matter of fact, some country reporters are better off than town reporters. Where the district manager devotes his whole time to the duties of a localised newspaper, the work, of course, is hard and the hours are long; but, occasionally, he is rewarded by hearing an orator, or is treated to a performance at a Local Board meeting. Some idea of the character of the composition of rural Boards may be gathered from the following incident. As one genius could not have his own way at a meeting he brought a pair of cymbals on which he began playing, occasionally pausing to deliver some forcible remark bearing on the question at issue. The Board at last called

in, the police, who removed the performer. Such diversions, however objectionable, help to relieve the monotony of the proceedings of such meetings, and make a reporter's life endurable. But the work itself is a capital training for the higher branches of the profession.

On the whole, it may be said that it is the chief function of a local correspondent to convey a clear and truthful picture of such events as occur in his district, provided they be of a character calculated to create local or general interest. And it is astonishing how many such events do occur even in remote localities. Facts in natural history, or in botany; events occurring to former residents in the district, who have migrated; local marriages in high life; or funerals of persons who have been famous in any pursuit: in fact all such matters as go to make up local gossip, and which may be supposed to prove of interest to those who live in the district or have migrated from it. It is in this manner that local histories are built up.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TOWN REPORTER.

Number of Morning Papers—The Qualifications of a Reporter on a "Daily"—Slipshod reporting in London—A Reporter's Acuteness—The character of the early Teetotallers—A bloodless Passage-at-arms—The next great revolution in Journalism—Mr. Whitelaw Reid quoted—A Staff of Greens and Froudes to tell the Story of the Day—A new Departure in selecting the News of the Day—The best features of our Civilisation ignored.

THERE are, according to "May's Press Guide," not fewer than sixty morning daily newspapers in the United Kingdom. The reporters on the staffs of these papers have nearly all been drawn from the ranks of the reporters on weekly newspapers; and whenever a vacancy occurs on any of the first-class provincial dailies, like the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Leeds Mercury*, &c., the competition for the position is keen. As the competitors are in most cases "all round men," it becomes a difficult question to settle the rival claims of the candidates. But fortunate is the man selected. The work which devolves upon him is, of course, far from easy; but it is wonderfully varied. The demands upon his intelligence are equally as great as the demands upon his bodily powers. The qualifications he should possess have already been described. They should include a knowledge of every science, of every art, of theology, of law, of Church history,—in a word, the reporter ought to be a walking encyclopædia; for, if he makes a slip on any technical subject, he is accused of ignorance. Mr. R. A. Proctor, for instance, has frequently complained of the manner in which his science lectures have been reported in London; and it is contended that the matter which is supplied is too

“inferior and slipshod to satisfy any demand, and that it is seldom read and rarely trusted.” It cannot be expected, however, that a reporter, no matter how well informed, can give in a paragraph a report which would satisfy a lecturer who alone, it may be presumed, understands his subject.

A reporter's acuteness will often be manifested by his readiness to seize the salient points in a discussion. An illustration of this faculty occurred at the National Temperance Congress at Liverpool. In the course of the proceedings, Dr. Richardson hinted that the early leaders of the temperance movement possessed too much of the ascetic spirit to commend their cause to the public generally. He urged that temperance people should never lose sight of the social side of a man's character, remarking that in his own case he continued a member of all the clubs with which he had formerly been associated. This suggestion, that the early temperance leaders were unsociable, stung to the quick one or two veterans in the cause; and, after Mr. Taylor, Chairman of the Committee of the National Temperance League, had disclaimed the impeachment, and thereby elicited from Dr. Richardson the withdrawal of his supposed allegations, Mr. Thomas Whittaker, one of the earliest and most redoubtable of teetotal champions, sprang into the arena, and, in a characteristic address in which his admirable skill in rhetoric was finely displayed, contrived, without giving offence to any one, to repel the insinuation, and triumphantly vindicate his coadjutors from the charge of asceticism. He recognised to the full, he said, the value of the services rendered to the temperance movement by such men as Dr. B. W. Richardson; and expressed his pleasure in finding them taking the position they did. “But,” he added, “it breaks my heart when I hear a charge of this kind brought against men who were advocates of temperance when temperance was unpopular.” He went on to aver that the early leaders in the movement were the “liveliest crickets alive.” This bloodless passage-at-arms was *the* incident of the day's proceedings, yet it was wholly ignored by the Liverpool and other newspapers, except one. This notable exception was the *Manchester Guardian*, whose

representative gave the readers of that journal a brief but clear account of the proceedings.

Great as are the demands upon the intelligence of the reporter at the present time, these demands are likely to increase ; and it is probable that in the future he will not only have to give the facts of a case, but be called upon to give them in a picturesque manner. According to Mr. Whitelaw Reid, the next great revolution in journalism will be in style ; and the "enterprise that now exhausts itself on costly cable despatches will go to men who can make a great news-feature valuable rather from the story it tells than from the money spent in carrying it to you." "Why?" he asks, "should the busy man read the history of yesterday at a greater disadvantage than the history of a hundred years ago? Yet that of a hundred years ago has." he says, "been most carefully collated, sifted, and winnowed, relieved of surplusage, arranged in proper perspective. You are not forced to read the official documents, to burrow among the dry reports, to study with minute and painstaking care the *dissecta membra*. You are not loaded with facts that are useless, particulars that give no form or colour to the picture. All this waste is removed. Thousands of pages are searched to give you one, but on that one is all you need to know. A moderately industrious man might spend his lifetime reading the authorities on which Motley constructed the 'History of the Dutch Republic,' yet who, speaking of intelligent people in the mass, not of individual investigators—who cares for the authorities? Who wants anything but Motley?"

"The greatest of recent narrative successes was Green's 'Short History of the English People.' Why shall not the most enterprising journal of the next decade be that which shall still employ colossal capital to gather all the news, and then crown and fructify its expenditure by having a staff of Greens and Froudes to tell it? The *Saturday Review* called Macaulay the 'father of picturesque reporters.' It is in getting such reporters that the ultimate success of the wisest and most munificent newspaper enterprise must yet display itself. . . . It will be the highest achievement of the most enterprising journalism to make, day by day, for the morning reader such a picture of his own city, of his

own country—such a picture for him of the world, indeed, of the day before. . . . We shall have better newspapers; the story better told; better brains employed in the telling; briefer papers; papers dealing with the more important of current matters in such style and with such fascination that they will command the widest interest. There will be more care and ability in selecting, out of the myriad of things you might tell, the things that the better people want to be told, or ought to be told. There will be greater skill in putting these things before them in the most convenient and attractive shape. Judgment in selecting the news; genius in telling it,—that is the goal for the highest journalistic effort of the future.”

In England, as well as in America, it is believed that there will shortly be a revolution in journalism. The dry, uninteresting speeches of politicians will either be entirely excluded or very much shortened, and more space will be given to questions affecting the real welfare of the people, not of Timbuctoo, but of England; and smartly-written paragraphs will be substituted for long-winded reports. “The business of a daily newspaper,” to quote Mr. Whitelaw Reid again, “is to print the news of the day, in such compass that the average reader may fairly expect to master it during the day without interfering with his regular business.” “The *news of the day!*” At present no newspaper does print the news of the day. The squabbles of political parties, the latest murder or hanging, the silliest breach of promise case, the latest betting, the condition of race-horses,—these form the principal contents of the daily paper. Every nerve is strained in order to photograph the worst features of our civilisation, day by day, whilst the best are almost ignored.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER.

Value of a Training in the "Gallery"—A Parliamentary Reportership declined—The Refuge of unfortunate Men of Genius—"Heads, London; tails, anywhere else"—James Withers' Experience—Allan Cunningham as a Reporter—Dr. Johnson, a Sceptic—Salaries of Reporters—Charles Dickens—Mr. Gladstone's Opinion of Reporting—"London Letters"—Charles Ross.

MANY distinguished men have been employed in the "Gallery," including Lord Chancellor Campbell, Charles Dickens, and the late Mr. Delane, editor of the *Times*; and several editors of leading "dailies" have testified to the value of the training received there. Mr. Wemyss Reid, for instance, says that he found his Parliamentary reporting of inestimable value in teaching him the forms of the House, &c. As a rule, the number of candidates for employment in the Gallery is large; but we believe the competition for places is not now so keen. When the Reporters' Gallery was enlarged in 1880, not fewer than three reporters on a daily in the North declined the offer of a Parliamentary reportership. The reasons for their refusal were that living in London was too expensive, and that the engagement was for the session only.

The Reporters' Gallery of the House of Commons seems to have been the refuge of many unfortunate men of genius, as well as the training school of men eminent in literature and journalism. "Fifty-two years ago," says Mr. W. Hodgson, of the *Fifeshire Journal*, "a trifling but singular spectacle might have been witnessed on the streets of Belfast. It was that of a gentleman, proceeding from the door-step of an hotel to the edge of the street, and there casting up a half-crown piece into the air, at the same time

uttering, "Heads, London; tails, anywhere else!" The coin on the causeway showed heads and London, whatever was the meaning of it. There was a kind of maniacal laugh at the result—a sort of chuckling smile, as when something apart from us adjudicates puzzling issues. The gentleman hastily retraced his steps to the hotel, hurriedly shook some one's hands, walked as if conscious of a new enterprise down the street, and then disappeared."

The hero of this incident was James Withers, who was ruined by speculating in bank stock. How he got to London on thirty pence, Mr. Hodgson could never learn; but four days after his arrival he sat side by side with Charles Dickens in the "Gallery," reporting for the *Morning Chronicle*. According to Mr. Hodgson, James Withers got employment because of being able to write shorthand, when without it he might have gone idle; and that little accomplishment fixed his fate for his remaining years. On the other hand, Allan Cunningham had not the slightest knowledge of shorthand when he entered the "Gallery." Like many of his countrymen, he left Scotland for London in consequence of an assurance that work was plentiful and fame certain. After being idle for weeks, with no prospect of employment, he turned to his trade. His wages were twenty-five shillings a week, which were afterwards increased to thirty-two on account of his skill as a workman. The work of a stonemason, was, however, not suited to his tastes. He sought more congenial employment, and was at last successful in finding it. Calling upon Roche, the editor of the *Day*, with whom he had had correspondence when in Scotland, he was offered a permanent situation as a reporter as soon as the Parliamentary session began. What the duties required of him were, Cunningham says, he could form no opinion, but as he concluded that Roche knew he was qualified to fulfil them, he was easy on that point. That Cunningham, who knew nothing of shorthand, and had never learned grammar in his life, should undertake the heavy and responsible duties of a Parliamentary reporter, is almost beyond the belief of his biographer, who explains, however, that reporting had not then attained its present high state of efficiency.

In our day neither Withers nor Cunningham would

stand the slightest chance of securing admission into the "Gallery." Dr. Johnson used to ridicule the pretension of verbatim reporting. A person being mentioned who, it was said, could take down in shorthand the speeches in Parliament with perfect exactness, the doctor insisted, "Sir, it is impossible. I remember one Angel," he added, "who came to me to write for him a preface or dedication to a book upon shorthand, and he professed to write as fast as a man could speak. In order to try him, I took down a book and read while he wrote, and I favoured him, for I read more deliberately than usual. I had proceeded but a very little way when he begged I would desist, for he could not follow me." *Nous avons changé tout cela.*

As the public interest in partisan politics is waning, less space is now given to the reports of Parliament, the *Times* being the only paper which reports the proceedings at length; but so long as Parliament sits, there will be work of some kind for Parliamentary reporters. Their salaries range from four guineas to seven guineas, and the engagement is usually for the Parliamentary session only; but some of the reporters supplement their salaries by writing letters for country papers, and others act as private secretaries. Their total income, therefore, must be considerable in some cases; but large as it is, it was exceeded by that of the "Gallery" men fifty years ago. Writing of Charles Dickens as a journalist, Mr. Charles Kent says:—

During the three sessions in which he worked for the *Mirror of Parliament*—that is, in 1832, in 1833, and in 1834—he earned by his pencil an average of fifteen guineas a week. Parliamentary reporting, it should be borne specially in mind, was about that time at its very acme. It was so in effect, for, as nearly as possible, three lustres—from 1830 to 1844 or 1845. The galleries of the Lords and Commons were packed within that interval by men of exceptional capacity, and for the most part even, it should be said, of ripe scholarship. Yet, suddenly thrown as he was, by virtue of his extraordinary skill as a shorthand writer, into their midst while he was yet a beardless youth, who had scarcely any book-learning at all, Charles Dickens held his ground from the very outset with the best and ablest of his surroundings. He did so almost equally by right of his astonishing readiness and of his irrepressible vivacity. How it was, that, in common with the more skilled of his associates, he was enabled to earn upon an average fifteen guineas a week all through the session while enrolled upon the staff of the *Mirror of Parliament* may be readily explained. It arose

out of the system which prevailed in the carrying out of that copious and splendid record of the debates in both Houses. The sixteen or seventeen picked reporters upon that staff were worked in guinea turns of three-quarters of an hour each. Everything, even to the little parenthetic interruptions, being recorded in the first person, the strain, the stress, the whirling wear and tear upon the stenographers thus engaged was, by necessity, excessive. It was so excessive, indeed, that only those who were very rarely qualified to sustain it were enabled to bear the brunt of it without succumbing. Those rarest few, among whom Charles Dickens, in spite of his youth, took his place from the commencement with unfaltering zeal and unconquerable energy, on field nights took turn after turn in bewilderingly rapid sequence; insomuch that during the hottest time of the discussions they found themselves—these exceptional few—enabled to earn within the week twenty, or even as much as five and twenty, guineas.

It appears from the "Diary of an Old Man" that Dickens was also employed on the *True Sun*; for Mr. J. Payne Collier says:—"Mr. John Barrow, who is engaged on the *Times*, where there is no vacancy, told me that he has a clever nephew named Charles Dickens, who has been employed, I believe, on the *True Sun*, and for whom he is anxious to obtain a situation on the *Morning Chronicle*. Barrow wants me to give him a letter to the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*. . . . I asked him how he had been employed before he had connected himself with the *True Sun*. He told me that he had assisted Warren, the blacking man, in the conduct of his extensive business, and, among other things, had written puff verses for him. Mr. Collier quotes a little further on one of these verses:—

I pitied the dove, for my bosom was tender,
 I pitied the sigh that she gave to the wind;
 But I ne'er shall forget the superlative splendour
 Of Warren's Jet Blacking, the pride of mankind.

Dickens, of course, got the situation." He became a Parliamentary reporter when only eighteen years old, and was noted for the conciseness of his reports, and the judicious, though somewhat ruthless, style with which he cut down verbiage. Out of ninety reporters in the House, he was acknowledged to be the best. "To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work, when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my success," he said to the New York editors, when he last took leave of them. "It opened to him," remarks Mr. Forster, "a wide

and varied range of experience, which his wonderful observation, exact as it was humorous, made entirely his own."

The present method of reporting the debates is well known. Some two hundred journalists have the right of admission into the "Gallery." A few are summary writers, but the majority are shorthand-writers who write according to the requirements of the papers which they represent. They are mostly men of wide knowledge, and are well suited for their work. With few exceptions, they have been trained in the country, where they have gained that knowledge of Parliamentary men and of political questions which cannot be gained in London. We differ from Mr. Gladstone when he says that Parliamentary reporting is not a work of high art or fine art; reporting *is* an art, and excellence in it is as difficult to attain as excellence in any other art; and although the reporters of the last twenty years may not have distinguished themselves in literature as greatly as some of their predecessors, it is not because their abilities are smaller, but because they have turned them into other channels more lucrative than book-making. Many of them act as "London Correspondents," or contribute paragraphs to "London Letters;" for it is utterly impossible for one man, however extensive his acquaintance among literary men, artists, politicians, and religious leaders, to write his letter without assistance. We could name one London letter which costs £60 a week; but it is the work of men in every department of art, science, literature, religion, and politics. Its contributors include members of Parliament, lawyers, doctors, and even noblemen. Of the "London Letters" supplied to *weekly* papers the less said the better. One of the best-informed Press men we know once tried to secure clients for an *original* letter, but the answers to his offer were so few that the project had to be abandoned. He could not understand the cause of the non-success of his scheme until it was explained that in some cases the "London Letter" was written by advertising agents in exchange for space for the insertion of business announcements. The proprietors of country papers, sanctioning this process are, as a rule, too uneducated themselves to see the harm done by adopting it. If they employed a better class of reporters,

printed a paper free from typographical errors, inserted more original matter, fewer long-winded reports of speeches which no one reads but the speakers themselves, the circulation of their papers would be immensely increased.

Those who desire to know more of the mysteries of Parliamentary Reporting should read the Report of the House of Commons Committee, which sat in 1878, and before which nearly all who were qualified to speak on the subject gave evidence; but we cannot close this chapter without a reference to the late head of the *Times* staff. We refer to Mr. Charles Ross, who died in December, 1884, at the age of 84. Entering the reporters' gallery on the very day of George III.'s death, in 1820, he remained in constant attendance, with a short interval, until 1883. His active career as a journalist extended, therefore, to the extraordinary length of sixty-three years. He was held in the highest respect, not only by his *confrères*, but by Members of Parliament, with whom his duties brought him into frequent contact. He was a man of remarkable activity, shrewdness, and humour, and retained his faculties almost to the last. He was, however, of a conservative turn of mind, and did not believe in verbatim reporting except in the case of men of the highest position. He thought that for ordinary speakers the best report was an intelligent summary prepared without much regard to the language or style of the speaker.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LEADER WRITER.

Origin of Leading Articles—Prices paid—The Pen of a ready Writer needed—The Qualifications of a Journalist—Mr. T. H. S. Escott and Dr. Newman quoted—Trollope unfitted for Newspaper work—Dickens as an Editor—Professor Palmer as a Leader Writer—How he obtained his Appointment on the *Standard*—The Importance of Care and Promptitude—An ignorant Leader Writer—The value of Leading Articles—Mr. Sala's Experience as a Leader Writer.

WHO introduced the leading article? According to Mr. Charles Pebody, the *Morning Chronicle* had the credit of "inventing the leading article, as it had the credit of inventing Parliamentary reporting." But an earlier writer—Mr. Alexander Andrews, in his "History of British Journalism"—states that the leading article was first introduced by Mr. Flower, of the *Cambridge Journal*, and brought out in the North by Mr. Baines, of the *Leeds Mercury*, in 1801. He explains, however, that the title of "leading" articles did not arise from their being the principal articles in the paper, but from their being "leaded"—a well-known technical term for the practice of leaving wider spaces than usual between the lines by placing leads between the rows of type. Such articles, he tells us, gave to the country newspaper the weight and power which it had not enjoyed in a commensurate degree with its London contemporary. "Literature was cultivated more and gossip less; a better style of composition was observable, and a higher tone adopted, and more worthy topics selected for consideration."

The leader writer is now the best paid man on the staff of a daily paper, five hundred pounds a year being no unusual remuneration for his services, whilst outside con-

tributions used as leaders are not unfrequently valued at five pounds. On two or three of the provincial "dailies" the scale is considerably lower. In an action recently brought by Mr. Frederick Espinasse against the *Yorkshire Post*, it transpired that he had been paid £1. 11s. for a leading article, and £1. 1s. for a London Letter.

The work of leader writing involves ready powers of expression, as well as wide and accurate knowledge, "You may go the rounds of the Universities and the Colleges, the Churches, and all the places which men of culture frequent, and how many men," asks Mr. Charles T. Congdon, "will you find who can write a leading article? Outside of the newspaper offices, I venture to say, few indeed. There is no trouble in getting essays; but well do I remember how Mr. Greeley used to condemn some of our articles as 'too essayish.'"

In describing the true qualifications of a journalist, Mr. T. H. S. Escott observes:—"The best writer of leading articles, both for the reader and the newspaper proprietor, is the man who has least of the literary habit and temperament, and who lives in the midst of the whirl of contemporary existence. So long as he can write clearly and pointedly, it is not necessary or even desirable that he should be a student of books. Indeed, book-knowledge, *quâ* book-knowledge, ought not to assert its presence in the leading article on the theme of the time. References to immortal works and quotations from them are blemishes rather than merits—purple patches on the texture of timeous commentary, whose presence reminds the reader of his 'Maunder's Treasury' or his catechism. In other words, the first quality which we look for in the leading article is the thought and manner of the man of the world; the last quality which we wish is that of priggishness—and for journalistic purposes priggishness may be defined as the display of knowledge in such a way as makes the reader feel that the writer is his superior."

The demands upon the brain of the journalist are well expressed by that talented writer, Dr. J. H. Newman, who would have been a leader writer himself had he been allowed to express his own convictions. "The journalist," he remarks, "lies under the stern obligation of extemporising his lucid

views, leading ideas, and nutshell truths for the breakfast table. The very nature of periodical literature, broken into small wholes, and demanded punctually to an hour, involves the habit of this extempore philosophy. 'Almost all the *Ramblers*,' says Boswell of Johnson, 'were written just as they were wanted for the press; he sent a certain portion of the copy of an essay, and wrote the remainder while the former part of it was printing.' Few men have the gifts of Johnson, who, to great vigour and resource of intellect, when it was fairly roused, united a rare common sense and a conscientious regard for veracity which preserved him from flippancy or extravagance in writing. Few men are Johnsons, yet how many men at this day are assailed by incessant demands on their mental powers, which only a productiveness like his could suitably supply. I am speaking of such writers with a feeling of real sympathy for men who are under the rod of a cruel slavery. I have never, indeed, been in such circumstances myself, nor in the temptations which they involve; but most men who have had to do with composition must know the distress which at times it occasions them to have to write—a distress sometimes so keen and so specific that it resembles nothing else than bodily pain. That pain is the token of the wear and tear of mind; and if works done comparatively at leisure involve such mental fatigue and exhaustion, what must be the toil of those whose intellects are to be flaunted daily before the public in full dress, and that dress ever new and varied, and spun, like the silkworm's, out of themselves. Still, whatever true sympathy we may feel for the ministers of this dearly-purchased luxury, and whatever sense we may have of the great intellectual power which the literature in question displays, we cannot honestly close our eyes to its direct evil." Dr. Newman was as true as Gospel on this point.

Neither Coleridge nor De Quincey could write against time; and Anthony Trollope, although such a facile writer, confessed that he found himself unfit for work on a newspaper, for reasons which he thus explains:—"I had not taken to it early enough in life to learn its ways and bear its trammels. I was fidgety whenever any word was altered in accordance with the judgment of the editor, who, of course

was responsible for what appeared. I wanted to select my own subjects, not to have them selected for me; to write when I pleased, and not when it suited others. As a permanent member of a staff I was no use, and after two or three years I dropped out of the work." Dickens equally failed as editor of the *Daily News*, although, unlike Trollope, he had received some years' experience as a newspaper reporter. Within a fortnight of the publication of the paper he resigned. "It was discovered that the brilliant sketching pen of Dickens was not blunted enough to be steeped in the gall of political writing—that the steel was too true and too highly tempered to carry the envenomed fluid, which ran off it like limpid water, and made the leading articles simply wishy-washy." Such is the explanation offered by Mr. Alexander Andrews, who was, doubtless, not far from the mark. In our days, however, it is not necessary, on any respectable paper, that a leader writer should dip his pen in gall, and revile everybody with whom he does not agree.

Nor is it at all necessary that *all* leading articles should be written in a hurry. Harriet Martineau, although she lived at Ambleside, frequently wrote for the *Daily News*, and Mr. Knight Hunt told her that he had been looking back through her connexion with the paper and found that, out of three hundred articles she had written, only eight had not been used. The addresses of Lord Derby are generally in type some days before delivery. Many other public men are in the habit of writing their speeches and sending them to their favourite newspapers in advance. All the addresses of Mr. H. M. Stanley are printed beforehand, and are in the hands of the reporting and editorial staff long before they are delivered.

Mr. Walter Besant has written an interesting account of the circumstances under which the late Professor Palmer became connected with the *Standard*, and of the qualifications required in leader writers.* "It is well-known," he says, "that it is an extremely difficult thing for a man to force his way into the upper ranks of journalism. There

* "Life of E. H. Palmer." By Walter Besant. London: Macmillan & Co. 1883.

are, to begin with, so many men before him—perhaps men as good, certainly men who have been trained in a sharp, practical school, who know the lobbies, who are behind the scenes, and can write articles which are full of hidden meanings, suppressions, and hints to those who know. Journalism has become a close profession, into which a man must enter early, and make of it the business of a life. At the age of forty-one, then, Palmer became a journalist. He became a journalist just as he became an Arabic scholar, by dint of pluck and perseverance. He was always to be found at the office of the paper at the right time. He was discovered to be one of those useful men who can write pleasantly on almost any subject. As a specialty, there was Turkey and the East; there was also Italy; he had travelled, he had read, he had observed. He preserved in his writing, as well as in his talk, the elasticity of youth; he was one of those men who would never have become old.

“He did not care how late he sat up writing; he picked up the points of a subject with astonishing swiftness; in fact, he seemed born to be a journalist, just as he was born to be an Oriental. From August 1881, till his departure for Egypt, he was employed upon the *Standard*, going to the office of the paper every afternoon and evening when he was wanted. Sometimes he was able to get away early; oftener it was two o'clock in the morning before his work was finished. It is fatiguing work; one has to be always ready to produce an intelligent and pleasant article, taking the right view, on any subject which may occur. Sometimes there are no subjects; then one must be invented. Sometimes, when the work has been already half completed, a telegram comes which alters the aspect of the case, or presents a new subject of paramount importance. Then all has to be begun again, with the boy standing at your elbow to snatch the slips as they are completed and carry them off with the ink still wet to the compositors. Palmer liked the work, and did not at all mind the late hours.”

Not less interesting is the light thrown upon the work of leader writing by Mr. Robert Wilson, at one time assistant-editor of the *Standard*, who remarks:—“When a man like Palmer wants to form a connection with the London press,

he has only one difficulty, that of getting known to the conductors of some newspaper. The possession of solid information about a few special subjects, combined with even a very moderate ability to give it readable expression, will do the rest for him. In Palmer's case the difficulty of introduction was got over in rather an odd way. He became, like many eminent journalists—notably another Oriental scholar, Edwin Arnold, of the *Daily Telegraph*—a newspaper writer by simply answering an advertisement.

“The conductors of the *Standard* wanted a good, ready, all-round writer. They advertised for one, and selected Palmer from a shoal of candidates as being worth a trial. At first he did not ‘promise well.’ He had little knowledge of, and no interest in, politics; but, luckily at the time he began his newspaper work, a good many questions relating to the East were at the front, and upon these Palmer had always something to say that was not only worth saying, but worth reading. If he had nothing to say, he invariably knew where to go for information; and as he himself never spared either time or trouble in helping other people, everybody seemed to enter into a kind of conspiracy to help him. At first he had no very regular connexion with the *Standard*. His capacity for writing on certain phases of the Eastern Question, on matters connected with political geography, and on a great variety of social topics, however, determined the conductors of the paper ‘not to lose sight of him.’ So he was every now and then invited to contribute an article, and it was noticed that he always did it with care and promptitude. He was so scrupulous about his newspaper work that he made a point of coming in at night and delivering his ‘copy’ with his own hand, and this led to his becoming very friendly with the men on night duty in the editorial department.

“He would sit chatting with them in his cheery, prattling way for half an hour, until his visits began to be looked for with pleasure. One night ‘something happened,’—I forget what, a railway or mining accident—some sudden disaster which demanded editorial comment. There was nobody at hand to write about it, and, accordingly, when one of the assistant editors suggested that they should ‘try Palmer,’ who happened to be in the way, he was tried and

not found wanting. There and then he sat down, and by aid of a hasty scamper through some books of reference hurriedly collected for him, he scribbled off a very neatly-written and interesting article in something like an hour and a half. This habit he had of 'dropping in' at nights for a little chat caused him to be appealed to in similar emergencies, and gradually it came to pass that he was regarded as an institution in the office. Nobody knew exactly—he used to say he did not know himself—how he dropped almost insensibly into a position on the staff, just as if he had been formally engaged as a regular contributor.

"To the excellence of his journalistic work his colleagues all bear frank and hearty testimony. He was not, perhaps, a strong writer, but he wrote rapidly and readily, and his style was smooth and elegant. He never was very successful as a political critic—in fact, about what may be called party politics he never wrote at all. The only exception to this has already been given, namely, where reference has been made to the points of Oriental policy, concerning which he had special information. He had a marvellous faculty for swiftly grasping the pith of any instructions given him, and his quickness in 'getting up' a subject was very remarkable. Men used to say of the late Sir William Hamilton—whose metaphysical writings prove the extent of his omnivorous reading—that he never read a book. He simply 'tore the heart out of it' in less time than an ordinary man would require to make his way through the opening chapters. Palmer at his newspaper work somewhat resembled the great Edinburgh metaphysician. He would now and then sit down in a state of almost blank ignorance to write on a subject, and Blue Books and works of reference were soon piled up beside him. After some plunging about among them, he would emerge in less than an hour with a most extraordinary collection of facts, all useful and to the point. These seemed to arrange themselves in his mind without any apparent effort on his part; in a few minutes his busy pen would scamper over the paper. In an hour and a half a little heap of beautifully clear manuscript was to be found lying by his side, which, when 'touched up' here and there by the writer, represented what he proudly called 'my leader.'"

Men of Palmer's stamp are exceedingly rare ; for, on a sudden order to spin, spider-like, a column of readable matter is a difficulty only appreciable by those who do it. Oddly enough, to those who do not, and cannot do it, this work appears easy.

As a rule, subjects are assigned to persons who are supposed to understand them in all their bearings ; but it is clear, from the way in which social questions are discussed by some papers, that this rule has many exceptions. Apropos of this, the Rev. W. L. Blackley pleads for "a little more thought, and a little less haste" from the London editors in judging his National Insurance scheme. "Just as we were going on the platform at Holborn," he says, "a gentleman came up to me and said, 'Is there anything in print about your scheme? I have to write a leader on it for the _____' (an important London morning paper). 'Oh,' I said, 'certainly; I'll send you all the literature about it to-morrow.' 'But,' he rejoined, 'I must write the article *to-night*.' And a wonderful article he wrote, *considering*."

Repeating this anecdote to a leader-writer of our acquaintance, he replied that, for his own part, he had listened to one of Mr. Blackley's addresses, and had read six or seven of his pamphlets and magazine articles, as well as the replies to them, without ever having written a word upon the subject, or ever expecting to do. But if it became necessary for him to write upon this topic, he would not, at all events, be entirely unprepared for the emergency which Mr. Blackley has described. It is not possible, however, for one leader-writer to discuss the bearings of every subject or question with the same fulness and accuracy as a specialist. As an illustration of the extent and variety of subjects which a leader-writer of a Northern "daily" is called upon to discuss, we may quote the following list of articles which he wrote in about twelve successive issues of his paper :—

1. Increase of Myopia.
2. Intemperance amongst Children.
3. The Universal Language.
4. The History of Teetotalism.
6. Trading Powers of Corporations.

5. Mechanics' Institutes,—Past and Present.
7. Shorthand and its History.
8. Penny Dinners for Children.
9. The History and Folk-lore of Salt.
10. Town Children's Ignorance of Nature.
11. Ballooning.
12. Circassian Proverbs.
13. Present Position of the Welsh Language.
14. Holidays at Home and Abroad.
15. Cremation.
16. Education in Japan.
17. The Dog in History and in Art.
18. The Jews as Emigrants.
19. Some Early Works of Great Authors.
20. Birds with Teeth.
21. Shakespeare's Autograph.
22. The Genealogy of Popular Stories.

An impression is gaining ground even among editors that newspaper opinions are, as a rule, expressed with too much haste to be valuable. This, at least, was the proposition which Mr. T. Gibson Bowles sought to enforce in the *Fortnightly Review* (July, 1884). He thinks that, in the future, the newspapers will be confined to news; and, judging from the value put upon leading articles by the public, we have come to the same conclusion. The public want the facts, and to be allowed to think for themselves. They do not want to be influenced either one way or the other by an editor. They can tolerate the preaching of a minister, but not that of an editor. At any rate, brief is the existence of a leading article. It is read one minute, and forgotten the next. It is the most costly production in a daily newspaper, and yet is the most lightly valued. The labour involved in its composition, and the shortness of its life are thus referred to by Mr. Sala :—

“The exercise last named must of necessity be deliberately planned, carefully thought out, and written with the greatest care and attention. It fills only a column and one-eighth of largish type; its actual composition does not occupy more than two hours; but, at least, preliminary three hours—and often more—must be devoted to the mental adjustment of its form and manner. In the course of twenty-four hours it is completely forgotten. I have written some seven thousand of these ephemeral essays;

and I can conscientiously declare that very few of their number have been hurried in their composition. If an artisan is to be allowed to judge of his own work, I may say that the very best of the poor stuff which I have produced has appeared in the leading columns of a daily newspaper to which, during a period of twenty-seven years, I have been a constant contributor; and now that I am growing old and past service, I sometimes reflect, with no small amount of bitterness, that the papers, to the preparation and execution of which I have devoted all the knowledge and all the capacity which I may possess, and which contain the whole marrow of what mind I may have, will never see the light again; and that I shall only be remembered—if I am remembered at all—only as a writer of a mass of desultory essays and sketches of foreign travel, of a mass of bald chat, and four bad novels. The last, perhaps, show more than do any other of the things which I have written the marks of slovenliness and haste; for when I am in England I work at my trade as a journalist many hours every day, except Saturday; and the few romances which the proprietors of periodicals have induced me to write have been flung off in the brief intervals between the daily spells of grinding newspaper toil; flung off so rapidly that I have often, while rushing through an instalment of a tale for the 'copy' of which the printer's boy has been clamouring in the passage, forgotten the very names of the characters whom I had introduced in the preceding portion.'

CHAPTER X.

THE SUB-EDITOR.

Qualifications of a Sub-Editor—Different offices, different systems—The Morse machine—Curious Telegrams—Professor Ramsay—A peep into a Sub-Editor's Den—The P.A.—How an Evening "Daily" is made up—White Slavery in England—A short Life and a hard one.

AMONGST the drudges of the Press no one is more to be pitied than the sub-editor. It is he who has to decipher the hieroglyphics of the telegraph clerk, to condense reports of the penny-a-liners, and to edit the mass of telegrams which are nightly sent to the newspaper offices from every point of the compass. Each newspaper has its own public, and, therefore, its own individuality; hence, the necessary qualifications of a sub-editor vary on different papers. One paper requires him to take his turn occasionally in reporting; on another he has to act as chief reporter; on a third he has to review books and write leading articles, as well as sub-edit.

Some first-class offices have their own telegraph code, whilst others use a printed code. The principle of these codes is, that a certain word shall represent an entire phrase. Great ingenuity is shown in the construction of the phrases which, in the former case, are entered into a book, a copy being kept at each of the ends between which the wire works. When news requires to be forwarded, the correspondent searches for the words which convey his meaning. For instance, a Calcutta correspondent telegraphs the following words:—"Acrimony anadromous adding pliability aftermost Alguazil caloricity beautiless bedstead," which the sub-editor, by the aid of his key, translates into English. Mr. W. L. Field, of the *Daily*

News, considers that the medium most fruitful of strange and ludicrous errors is the Morse telegram printing machine, which certainly sends in printed "copy," but "copy" vilely spelled. The eccentric spelling, and the "cutting down" by the sender of the message in order to save expense, will occasionally produce something like the following :

"Bey sugceotion Roustan decrud treating redagtion carreny in-decimar courage telegrafd Mustapha Paris subjegt French inspeotor finance left Paris stated Grévy decidud nothing treated presents Temisian Mission Frange simply diptolmatic visit Taar Zauch aide cap took refoge British consulale cause fligt unkevn yed."

Now, what would the English public be able to make of such "news" if it were printed as it had been received? Yet a few moments' reflection, and the sub-editor's pen will transform the jumble into the following intelligible items :

"The Bey, at the suggestion of M. Roustan, has decided to introduce a decimal currency. He has telegraphed to the Prime Minister, Mustapha, in Paris, on the subject. The French Inspector of Finance has left for Paris. It is stated that M. Grévy has decided that nothing shall be discussed during the presence of the Tunisian Mission in France, it being simply a diplomatic visit. General Taar Zauch and his aide-de-camp have taken refuge at the British Consulate. The cause of their flight is not yet known."

In some cases, the sub-editor is entrusted with enormous power. "When I come below the editorial rank," said Professor Ramsay, at the *Glasgow Herald* centenary, "I find a new hierarchy, a journalistic power in the sub-editor and the sub-editorial staff. The sub-editor is a gentleman whose duty, I understand, it is at times to edit the editor himself; because it is the sub-editor's business to assign to the Olympian Jove the very ground on which he stands, to control the space of the paper, to cut it, to clip it, and to perform all those other technical operations of which I do not know the proper names."

A peep into the sub-editor's den at, say, midnight, will show that he is a busy man. But, soft! one must not gossip, as this is the busiest time of the whole night, and exhaustive questions about the "latest" at this

hour might make one's head the butt of the gum-bottle, or the highly-decorated inkstand. One after another the telegraph messengers come tramping in. "They come not in single files, but in whole battalions," evoking the muttered maledictions of the hapless "sub," for he of the belt and buttons is as much the sworn enemy of the knight of the scissors as the veritable P.D. himself. There are big debates passing in both Houses of Parliament, and consequent "specials" from the News Agency. We will take it that the "P.A.," as the Press Association is technically termed, is supplying the ordinary report of Parliament. This it does at fair length, but to-night, owing to the importance of the matter occupying the attention of Parliament, verbatim reports of the leading speeches are sent, and these have to be introduced into the usual supply of Parliamentary news. The utmost care is needed. These long speeches are sent in sections—sections A, B, C, &c., and great watchfulness is required, so that these "sections" do not get intermixed. But the yards of Parliamentary oratory do not come in alone. There are often in the same envelopes paragraphs for the London letter, special provincial telegrams, stock exchange reports, sporting news, Reuter's telegrams, murders and suicides from the news organisations—and most newspapers take the supplies of both the Central News and the Press Association. All these classes of intelligence are carefully sorted and put aside for dealing with as opportunity offers—and often the opportunity for dealing with some of the telegrams offers not till late in the morning. At length, however, the last bit of "flimsy" has been sent either up to the compositors or dropped into the waste-drawer; and the jaded sub-editor marches slowly homewards devoutly wishing that chancery, who has his abode next door, may be in a fit of the croup, which will prevent his wonted exuberance, or that his neighbour's yelping puppy may have found its way into a home for dogs a thousand miles distant.

The sub-editor of a provincial evening paper furnishes the following account of his day's work:—"The sub-editor has to be at the office by nine o'clock in the morning, and has to go through the district dailies, and then, for Parlia-

ment and general news, through four or five London papers. Here it may be remarked that the *Standard's* Parliamentary summary is invariably of great use to the 'sub,' being usually just the length and just the character suited to an evening paper, even if the politics are not identical with those professed by the *Standard*. After these papers have been dealt with, and the essence of the news extracted, it must be carefully served up for the evening paper. In the meantime telegrams have been coming in, and must be dealt with, and not infrequently a short leader must be written, and at one o'clock the first edition comes out. Then the sub-editor takes his luncheon; say half an hour for this indulgence. The first edition has then to be 'marked'; that is, all items that are too scrappy or too long, or otherwise unsuited for the weekly have to be marked out. This work is easy enough at times; but when a war is proceeding, or some event that changes its aspect every day, it is very trying to the 'sub's' temper; for he must always bear in mind that he should not leave too much to be set at the end of the week for the weekly, and he must still have his news in it as fresh as possible.

"Telegrams and reporters' copy are coming in all the afternoon pretty thickly, and keep the sub-editor going until the second edition is out at five o'clock. Even then his labours for the day are not ended. He must come back to the office an hour later, or remain there, to see if any important item of news has been wired that will justify a special edition. Instances have often occurred where one paper has done a big sale with a special edition containing some startling telegram, and the others have not been 'in it.' Proprietors and editors expect the sub-editors to guard against this kind of thing. He must be as much on the *qui vive* inside the office as the reporters are outside; for, of course, an evening paper is nothing if it do not present the latest news at the earliest moment. The second edition must be 'marked,' the 'latest' standing for the next day's first edition, all the 'to-days' and 'yesterdays' in the other matter carefully put right, and the whole arranged with an eye to the weekly. To these duties the sub-editor often has to add revising proofs, and taking turns with the reporters at big night meetings in towns where no morning

dailies are published. Every conscientious man will be anxious to see the revise of the telegrams and most of the other matter. Scanning the exchanges, arranging the reporters' work, getting a trustworthy idea of the space open from the overseer (no easy thing, as a rule; for whenever did an overseer really know 'how he stood'?), and being interviewed by many of the visitors, also come within the sub-editor's schedule of duties. With regard to the weekly, of course he has to see it to press, and sometimes to write a portion of the original matter, such as the leaderettes, the editor usually supplying the more serious 'thunder' for the more influential publication."

Some idea of the way in which this work taxes mind and body may be gathered from the following letters:—"Pray excuse my delay in writing. This is a dreadful grind, and a fellow is *always* in the mill." "Fancy working nine hours every night," writes another sub-editor, "and working hard all the time too! Of course, a man must get played out with such toil, and I can tell you that about Friday night I am pretty well used up. I have many a time thought of pitching up my appointment, and trusting to Providence for the wherewithal to obtain bread and butter; but so far I task have managed to continue at the oar, hard as the is." A clearer idea of its hardness is expressed in the following letter:—"For twelve months I have done the local sub-editing. My work commences at seven in the evening, and until after midnight there is a constant inflow of news from the various centres of population throughout the counties in which our paper circulates. To read through these reports, to summarise, and re-write when necessary, takes me until three o'clock. Then there are odd jobs to do, such as marking a paper showing what news should be used for the weekly. Of course, the local work includes the supervision of the reporter's copy, and you may form some estimate of this when I say that we have five resident reporters, and quite as many stationed at different places in our extensive district. The general news includes Parliamentary, foreign, British telegrams through the news' agencies, 'specials' from reporters in different towns, the whole being very heavy. The sub-editorial work here is practically done by two men, so that

you may guess the sub-editor's office on the daily Press is no sinecure." Such work, it will readily be believed, continued night after night, has an unfavourable influence on health; and Sala was not very far wrong when he declared that the career leads eventually to premature old age.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REVIEWER.

The Fate of Books—Reviewing as a Profession—The Reviewer's Opinion discounted—The Influence of a Review—Mr. Payn's Opinion—Mr. R. A. Proctor's Experience—Reviewing in the "Good Old Times"—The Duty of the Reviewer—An Appeal to the Law—An aggrieved Author—Better attacked than ignored—Forbidden Fruit—Reviewers hired to denounce a Book—Reviewing in Country Papers.

THE reviews of books form a special feature of some daily newspapers, and they are generally written by specialists. For instance, one man reviews books on art; another on science; a third on literature; a fourth on social questions, and so on. The number of books received every day by important daily newspapers is surprising; and it would be safe to say that not more than one in fifty is ever noticed, much less reviewed. As a rule, reviewing is not a well-paid branch of newspaper work. "The fault I find with writing as a profession is," remarks Mr. Philip G. Hamerton, "that it does not pay to do your best. I don't mean to insinuate that downright slovenly or careless work is the most profitable; but I do mean to say that any high degree of conscientiousness, especially in the way of study and research, is a direct injury to the professional writer's purse. Suppose, for example, that he is engaged in reviewing a book, and is to get £3. 10s. for the review when it is written. If by the accident of previous accumulation, his knowledge is already fully equal to the demand upon it, the review may be written rapidly, and the day's work will have been a profitable one; but if, on the other hand, it is necessary to consult several authorities—to make some laborious researches—then the reviewer is placed in a dilemma between literary thoroughness and duty to his

family. He cannot spend a week in reading up a subject for the sum of £3. 10s. Is it not much easier to string together a few phrases which will effectually hide his ignorance from everybody but the half-dozen enthusiasts who have mastered the subject of the book?"

This is exactly what is done in cases, and the consequence is that no book-buyer now trusts the judgment of a critic. His rule is to taste the book himself before he buys it, whereas in former times the fate of the book depended largely upon the opinion of its critics. Mr. Payn thinks that the influence of even the most favourable notice upon the sale of a book is now but small, but he can remember when a review in the *Times* was calculated by the "Row" to sell an extra edition. "Those halcyon days—if halcyon days they were—are over. People read books for themselves now, judge for themselves, and buy only when they are absolutely compelled, and cannot get them from the libraries. In the case of an author who has already secured a public, it is indeed extraordinary what little effect reviews have upon his circulation. Those who like his works continue to read them, no matter what evil is written of them; and those who don't like them are not to be persuaded, alas! to change their minds, though his latest effort should be described as though it had dropped from the heavens. As for fiction, its success depends more upon what Mrs. Brown says to Mrs. Jones as to the necessity of getting that charming book from the library while there is yet time, than on all the reviews in Christendom. . . . On the other hand, a good review is still the very best advertisement to a new author, and even a bad one is better than no review at all."

Returning to the question of remuneration, Mr. R. A. Proctor's experience on this point is worthy quoting:—"When I was but a very young beginner in literary work, books used to be sent to me for review. I learned then something of the generosity with which such work is rewarded—the reason why it is done so well. I remember a wealthy Scottish publisher, who had recently started a weekly journal of science, sending me a thick octavo volume of about 500 pages for review—'about a quarter of a column, and the book to be returned.' In other words, I

was to examine and honestly criticise in a quarter of a column, for 2s. 6d. (or to be more precise, 2s. 7½d.), a book of that size, and to return the book. Why, the mere time occupied in untying and retying the book in brown paper, and writing the generous publisher's name and address, would have been ill-paid at the price."

As a matter of fact, few reviewers spend a week in reading one book; and even their longest notice is rarely a review from beginning to end. When Boswell mentioned to Johnson the very liberal payment which he had been receiving for reviewing, and that it had been proved in a trial, that a doctor had received six guineas a sheet for that kind of literary labour, Johnson is reported to have said, "Sir, he might get six guineas for a particular sheet, but not *communibus sheetibus*." Whereupon Boswell put another question: "Pray, sir, by a sheet of review is it meant that it shall be all the writer's own composition? or are extracts made from the book reviewed deducted?" Johnson: "No, sir, it is a sheet, no matter of what." Boswell: "I think that is not reasonable." Johnson: "Yes, sir, it is. A man will more easily write a sheet all his own than read an octavo volume to get extracts."

The real requisite of a review is that it shall be a candid opinion, by a competent man, of the value of the book under notice to those who may be inclined to purchase it. No display of the learning of the writer of the review is necessary. He must be competent to detect errors in the work he is reviewing. His duty is to be the friend (*i.e.* adviser) of the intending purchaser.

It is the duty of the reviewer to taste the quality of the books submitted to him for notice, and to tell the public his honest opinion of them; but the fear of the lawyer often deters him from performing this duty. To say that a book is immoral, or worthless, is to suggest an action-at-law by the aggrieved author. But an appeal to the law does not always result in a turning of the tables on the critic. In February, 1883, Mr. Alexander Watt, a consulting chemist, brought an action against the proprietors of the *Mechanical World* for injuring the sale of his book on "Mechanical Industries Explained," which was described as being such a work as a fifth standard schoolboy might

write after perusing an old volume of the "Penny Encyclopædia." The material portion of the alleged libel was in these terms:—"This kind of writing may be made a useful exercise for Mr. Watt, and if kept in foolscap could injure nobody, and would keep him from further mischief, but it becomes a gross nuisance to publish such stuff, and only one remove from a fraud on the public to sell it." The publication was admitted, but the defendants pleaded that the matter complained of was written without malice, and as a *bonâ fide* comment on a matter of public interest. "To sensitive authors," observed the *Echo* in commenting upon this action, "the case may convey a useful lesson. Had the plaintiff taken his punishment quietly, the sale of his work would have been only injured among the limited constituency to which the periodical appealed; as it is, he is not only saddled with the costs of the action which he has lost, but has succeeded in advertising the defects of his book in almost every leading newspaper."

On the whole, however, most authors would agree with Dr. Johnson, that it is better to be attacked than ignored. Not unfrequently a violent attack upon a book makes the fortune of its author. To call it immoral is to impel everybody to read it for themselves; for, even in these reforming times, a longing for forbidden fruit still clings to human nature. In some cases men are paid to say their worst of a book in order to excite the curiosity of the public. For instance, M. de Lesseps, speaking at the annual meeting of the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris, in February, 1884, caused much amusement by stating that on his first visit to England the publisher who brought out the report of his meetings charged, as the first item of his bill, "£50 for attacking the book in order to make it succeed." "Since then," observed M. de Lesseps, "I have been attacked gratuitously, and have got on without paying."

Whatever may be said against the value of reviews generally, reviewing forms part of the work of a reporter on a country paper. When there are no meetings to report, the proprietor will hand him a large parcel of periodicals and books and tell him to review them! A mere notice, however, is all that is possible to give concerning them; but some of the notices of books and periodicals in country "week-

lies" are, in reality, reviews. Take, for instance, the "Literary Notices" of the *Barnsley Chronicle*, one of the best weekly papers we know. They are written by the editor himself, and indicate careful reading and extensive information. There is nothing so preposterous, however, as to expect that for a copy of a half-a-crown, or even a shilling magazine, an editor is to give up an hour's time and perhaps devote a quarter of a column of his valuable space to a review.

One word of advice to young reviewers seems necessary: Point out all the good, as well as the bad points of a book. Review the book itself; and, whatever ill will you may have against its author, don't express it in your notice of his work. If you have anything to say against an author's character, say it to his face, or write to him, and have the manliness to give your name and address. None but a coward will stab a man in the dark. John Stuart Blackie commends to the attention of our educated youth the chapter on "Criticism," in the second volume of Anthony Trollope's excellent *Autobiography*, and says that the following verses flowed from his pen spontaneously when fresh from the perusal of that chapter:—

If you are young, and wish to flap your pinion;
 If you know little and would seem to know
 Much: if you listen to your crude opinion,
 Echoed tenfold where every wind may blow,
 Tickles your ears, and lends stilts to your pride,
 Then be a critic: you might gain a penny
 In some less honest way; and you will guide
 At your blind will the blind, unthinking many.
 But would you cherish in your faithful breast
 The seed of truth, and by that virtue grow
 To manhood's bravest stature with the best,
 Judge not: but look with love and reverence low—
 Just homage of the lesser to the greater—
 On God's two-fronted image—LIFE and NATURE!

CHAPTER XII.

THE INTERVIEWER.

An American Creation—Opinions as to the Value of the System—The most useful Invention conceivable—A novel Interviewer—Interviewing valuable for Advertising Purposes—Henry Irving's Opinion of it—Degrading the Dignity of the Press—Interviewing adopted by the most enterprising Paper in England—The Value of a Good Memory—Mr. W. T. Stead's Experience.

THE interviewer is a creation of American civilisation, and arises out of the universal curiosity among Americans for the details of private life and the opinions of public men. In America every public man is regarded as public property, and every visitor who has made himself famous is put into the witness-box often before he sets his foot on the shore. What does he think about free trade? What does he think of American Institutions? What has he come for? and a hundred other questions are put to him by an inquisitive reporter in the pay of an inquisitive public.

As to the value of the system, different men hold different views. Mr. Herbert Spencer considers it an invasion of personal liberty; Sir Stafford Northcote would like the interviewer "kept within moderate and manageable bounds"; Mr. W. D. Howells characterises interviewing as an "abominable practice"; whilst Oliver Wendell Holmes describes the interviewer as a "product of over-civilisation, who does for the living what the undertaker does for the dead," and suggests that he should wear a badge like a war correspondent, and produce a certificate from three orthodox clergymen of the same belief. Oscar Wilde furnished the interviewers with a fine subject for the display of their peculiar descriptive faculty. Never had there been a visitor who had afforded them more amusement and more "copy." Every newspaper interviewed him, and every-

body contrived to invent something fresh about him. It may be imagined, therefore, that Mr. Wilde's opinion of his friends who advertised him so freely is not very flattering. "There are no idle men in America," he says, "every man has something to do, and very few take any interest in politics. One career they go into extensively is journalism; for the first thing a baby does in America when he is able to read and write is to start a newspaper. It seems strange to English people their intrusion into private life. I was asked by an interviewer at Chicago for some details of my private life, but I told him I had not got one—it was stopped at the Custom-house in New York."

On the other hand, the Hon. Russell Lowell admits its usefulness in so far as it "enables public men out of power to make speeches from which they would otherwise be precluded." Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, who has visited America twice in the interests of emigrants, considers it the most useful invention conceivable, as well as the most amusing. "The interviewer is an inquirer," he points out, "and, if he asks you questions upon subjects which he thinks may interest the readers of his journal, if he inquires where you are going, and what your object may be in visiting certain places, and reports the particulars, the persons likely to promote your object will communicate with you, and people in the towns mentioned become aware of your visit, and bestow attentions and courtesy which otherwise could never be rendered. If you have special ideas you want to propagate, the interviewer is your best friend." On one occasion, when travelling in Massachusetts, a gentleman who had met Mr. Holyoake at an hotel joined the train at a wayside station. "Having calculated that I should be in that train," says Mr. Holyoake, "he dropped in quite 'promiscuously.' In the most casual manner he found an opportunity of entering into conversation with me, and incidentally asked me about my early religious life, and then concerning social and political affairs in which I had been engaged. His inquiries were in no way obtrusive, nor were they one-sided, as I, glad at falling in with a communicative passenger, asked many questions myself.

The next morning I read in the *Boston Herald* an article beginning, 'There arrived last night at Adams's House an English visitor'; and then followed a description of my career and views, and what the writer was pleased to consider my public services, expressed with perfect good taste. The character of the article laid me under obligation to the writer, who was clearly a master in the art of interviewing. His materials were retained in a trained memory; he respected what might be counted as private particulars of an unguarded and friendly conversation, and presented to the public what a gentleman might relate, and what a visitor concerned might even find gratification in seeing told."

From a commercial point of view, interviewing is extremely valuable. Interviewers helped to make the fortunes of Mr. Henry Irving. "I remember," says Mr. Joseph Hatton, "taking off a gang of Press men in my yacht to meet Irving on his arrival. I should say that there were thirty of them, representing the most important papers in America. There Irving sat surrounded by them. One fired off a question; it was answered, and thirty pencils were hard at work in a moment. I should say the interview lasted an hour. The next day nearly every paper had a report of three or four columns. On a less scale this sort of thing has been going on during his visit, and the system has been most useful to him, for it enabled him to put forward his ideas and his thoughts as no other method would have done." It is not always convenient, however, to use a note-book, therefore the possession of a good memory is one of the essential conditions of success in interviewing.

At present, interviews have not become features of English newspapers, for a reason explained by Mr. Henry Labouchere. "Are you aware," he asked, as he composed himself comfortably in an arm-chair in the editorial room of the *Pall Mall Gazette*,—"are you aware how much you are degrading the dignity of the Press by the introduction of interviewers? The dignity of the Press is a strange and inscrutable thing, which suffers severely at your hands. The other day at a club I heard two estimable gentlemen conversing, as is their wont, upon the de-

cadence of all contemporary things. 'What are we coming to?' asked one; 'interviews in the *Pall Mall Gazette*!' 'Yes,' said the other, in sympathetic unison, 'and not only interviews, but pictures!' As for myself," continued Mr. Labouchere, with his genial smile, "I once created a perfect insurrection at the office of a London daily with which I was connected financially by suggesting that it might be well to display an advertisement across two columns. Every one rose up in arms, down to the printer's boy at the door, and there was no one who was not ready to protest that to carry an advertisement across two columns, breaking the line for that purpose, was an innovation which would be fatal to the 'dignity of the Press.' It is a superstition, a fetish, which is invoked whenever anything is proposed to be done that has not been done by our ancestors." It is not unlikely, however, that interviewing will, in the course of a few years, be adopted by all newspapers; and the reporter who can extract information on burning questions will, at all times, increase the value of his services to any newspaper.

Reference has been made to the value of a good memory; and we may, therefore, fittingly conclude this chapter with a brief account of the means adopted by Mr. W. T. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, to strengthen his memory. In a biographical sketch of his father, a well-known northern Congregational minister, this enterprising editor wrote:—"Another most useful habit which my father inculcated was that of remembering the leading points of whatever we heard, and repeating them over to him when he came home. Many a painful moment I have had when I forgot the heads of a sermon, but the training was most useful. Afterwards, when we grew older we were set to take notes. My brother Herbie taught himself shorthand in this fashion. I, less fortunate, was confined to longhand; but the habit of taking a condensed précis of a speech or sermon stood me in good stead in after life. To this hour, if I want a condensed report of a speech, I would rather have my longhand summary than the cut-down report of the most efficient reporter. These reports at first were read over on Sunday night to the family, criticised, approved or condemned, as the case might be. I remember once

having to take a speech of Mr. Goschen's at Ripon myself, our reporter having missed the train. I did three columns single-handed before the paper went to press, and I remember thinking that it would have been simply impossible but for the exercise in rapid note-taking gained in taking down father's sermons. This faculty of remembering what has been said to you in order to repeat it at home has been of great use to me in many ways. In interviewing it is invaluable. I have frequently, without taking a single note, been able to dictate or write out three columns of close print report of an interview, to the accuracy of which the person interviewed has given his most emphatic testimony. The report of the interview which was the means of securing the despatch of General Gordon to the Soudan was dictated entirely from memory at two o'clock in the morning, after a long and fatiguing day."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

The Nestor of the London Press—An exhaustive Inquiry into the Condition of the Poor—Modern Enterprise—Utilising a War Correspondent—Interviewing the Cannibals—Mr. Forbes as a Special—How exclusive Information was obtained—An army of Journalists waiting to board the *Nyanza*—Forbes charts a Tug-boat—Is suspected by a Rival Correspondent—Daring spring on Board—Fifty Pounds for Macdonald's Story—Thomas Littleton Holt as a "Special"—Mistaken for a German Baron—The Lord Mayor's Show—The late Mr. E. O'Donovan.

SOME papers make a feature of special correspondence, of articles on various subjects supplied by experts, or by graphic writers. The reporter supplies the facts; the "special" dresses them up in a picturesque style, and the article appears from "our special correspondent" in long-primer type. It was by means of special work that the proprietors of the *Morning Chronicle* endeavoured to galvanise the "Nestor of the London Press into life." "Some time towards the close of the year 1849," writes Dr. Mackay, "a grand enterprise was suggested to the managers by Mr. Henry Mayhew, no less than an exhaustive inquiry into the condition of the poor, and of the labourers and handicraftsmen of the British Isles, and of the whole of the nations of Europe. The scheme was vast and costly; but, nothing daunted by the difficulties that lay in the way of its successful execution, the new proprietors of the *Chronicle* resolved to undertake it. No enterprise of such magnitude had ever before been attempted by a newspaper, although it has subsequently been dwarfed by the *Daily Telegraph* and the *New York Herald* in sending the gallant Mr. Stanley at the head of a little army of explorers

to discover Livingstone, the sources of the Nile, and lay bare the hidden secrets of the heart of Africa.

The *New York Herald*, one of the most enterprising papers in the world, was cleverly outwitted on one occasion by a rival paper. The expenses of the Franklin search expedition were paid by the *Herald* and Lady Franklin; and by this arrangement the paper hoped to secure exclusively the narrative of the vessel's trials and discoveries. However, a rival paper had secured the services of one of the crew, a "sea lawyer," who undertook to keep a diary during the voyage and to send off portions of it whenever an opportunity offered. The *Herald* reporter, who accompanied the search party, secure as he thought in his monopoly of news, delayed the completion of his report until nearly home, and found on landing that a full report had already appeared.

The special work we have in mind, however, is the description of the effects of a colliery explosion, of a wedding, a funeral, a coronation, or a criminal trial. Sometimes the services of a war correspondent are utilised in this kind of work. "When I jumped on board the *Nyanza* from my tug to capture the mate of the *Cospatrick*, and get his story first, I was told," says Mr. Archibald Forbes, "that 'wily turns and desperate bounds' of this kind were not journalism. When I volunteered to go down with the exploring party into the Pelsall colliery, I was told that it was not journalism. It is a matter of temperament I believe; but I like to see what is going on." Under the title of "Interviewing the Cannibals," Mr. Forbes has himself told the story of the survivors of the *Cospatrick*, an emigrant ship bound for New Zealand, which was burnt at sea, and all hands of which perished but three, who owed their lives to a recourse to cannibalism. One of these was the second mate, Macdonald, and the others were ordinary seamen. The fact that they were being sent home by the mail steamer, the *Nyanza*, was telegraphed to England, and two previous stories of shipwreck which Mr. Forbes had written for the *Daily News* had put the other papers on their mettle to compete for the earliest details of the story of the disaster to the *Nyanza*. Although long, we cannot refrain from giving a portion of Mr. Forbes' story, as it

illustrates the readiness of the resources of that famous special, and of the necessity of similar tactics to secure exclusive information. Mr. Forbes says:—

One day the manager of my paper sent for me. "I am in trouble," said he. "P——, the man I have down at Plymouth watching for the arrival of the *Nyanza*, telegraphs that he has no hope to anticipate competitors. There are some thirty journalists waiting there, and after all sorts of scheming, the conclusion has been finally unanimously arrived at that the only way is for all to board the *Nyanza* together in the mail-tug, and get Macdonald to tell his story in their midst, for the common good.

"Now I would regard it as an important service if you would take the matter up, and see if you cannot help us to retain the prestige you earned for us on the two previous occasions." I went down to Plymouth, and put up at an obscure inn in a suburb, keeping as much out of sight as possible. I sent privily for my colleague, P——, and directed him to continue a subscriber with the communistic scheme, and to posture as the sole representative of our paper in the field, not breathing a hint that I was attempting a diversion. Then I went to a shipbroker, whom I knew, bent on chartering a tug. It turned out that there was but one tug—the *Volunteer*—available for my purpose. I sent for its skipper—a rough but genuine diamond—whom I engaged to be at my service as long as I wanted him. Without telling him the nature of the duty, I ordered him to be in readiness, with steam up, at an unfrequented jetty on the further side of the harbour. This arranged, I settled that my shipbroking friend would let me know as soon as telegraphic intelligence arrived that the *Nyanza* had passed the Lizard Light, about twenty-five miles out from Plymouth. This news came about three o'clock, whereupon I at once went to the railway station and engaged a whole first-class compartment in the train that was to leave for London at midnight.

It was the last day of the year 1874. There was snow on the ground, and the face of Plymouth Sound was roughened by a bitter winter wind. As dusk was growing into darkness, I walked round to where the *Volunteer* was lying, and found that the honest skipper was as good as his word, and that all was in readiness for an immediate start. As we steamed out towards that mighty breakwater which is one of the wonders of the old country, I confided to the skipper that my intention was to board the *Nyanza* as she came in, in advance of the mail-tug that would put out to her as soon as her anchor was down. Soon we had cleared the breakwater and were out in the open water of the Sound. "It will never do here," quoth the skipper. "No man, seaman or landsman, could board a ship under way with this tossing jumble of a sea on; we must go back inside the breakwater and lie in wait there;" so we put about, and getting under the lee of the breakwater, put all the lights out save those enforced by law, and waited for events. Presently through the darkness we saw a light moving towards us across the water from the direction of the harbour. As the light came close I heard the hail,—"*Volunteer*, ahoy!"

"Keep quiet!" I whispered to the skipper. His whispered reply was, "I know her; she's the *Waterloo*, a Devonport tug. Somebody has suspected your scheme and gone and chartered her." Presently came another hail—"Forbes! Forbes!" I recognised the voice—that of a gentleman attached to another London newspaper; and I let him shout without a word of reply. But my presence and my plot, then, had got wind, I realised; so there remained only the question who should have the luck first to board the *Nyanza*.

The *Waterloo* sheered away from us in disgust, and crossed the gap in the breakwater, so as to get on the lee-side of the *Nyanza* when that big ship should come inside. The *Volunteer*, with me on board, remained where she was; my skipper, like Trochu, during the siege of Paris, had his plan. About eight o'clock, the great hull of the *Nyanza*, sparkling with lights, came forging through the gap in the breakwater. Immediately three tugs were converging on that hull—my *Volunteer* on her weather-side, the *Waterloo* on her lee-side, and the mail-tug, with the mass of journalists on her, from the shore. Soon my skipper had ranged up alongside the big hull. Our tug danced and leaped on the broken water, like a cork on a mill race. "You'll have to make a jump and take your chance," said the skipper, as we stood on the bridge. "When I sing out, make a run across the bridge and spring with all your might, and the Lord be good to you!" "Now!" shouted the skipper, as our tug rose on the top of a wave and all but grated on the black hull. I took my run and made my spring. With one hand I caught the bottom of the mizzen chains, just where they make fast to the ship's side, and my legs dangled down into the water. I was helpless, and my only thought was how long could I hold on.

A hand caught me by the collar and dragged me up. "Who are you, and what do you want?" said the owner of that saving hand, as soon as I stood on the deck.

"Where can I find Macdonald, the mate of the *Cospatrick*? Quick!" was my breathless reply. "Below—forward—but—" I didn't wait for the "but," but sprang forward. After a hurried search I found Macdonald in the steward's pantry. Giving the steward a sovereign not to reveal our whereabouts, I immediately tackled Macdonald. He was a pallid, sullen-looking Scotchman, and not one word would he utter till he had made his bargain.

"I'll give you fifty pounds down," cried I, "if you will tell me your whole story, and tell it to me alone." "Done!" he replied. "Then," said I, "here's the money, and now fire away!"

He was a good narrator, having an eye for points. To my pleased surprise, I had an hour of him all to myself. At length our term of seclusion was up. A rival journalist, he of the *Waterloo*, had found out our whereabouts, and he put his head inside the door, with Paul Pry's pet phrase on his lips,—"I hope I don't intrude!" "Horribly!" was my rather savage response; and then I told him I had bought Macdonald,—stock, lock, and barrel,—and he'd better see after the two seamen. Of these, I may remark here, nobody could make anything; they were too utterly imbecile.

Then the captain of the *Nyanza* struck in. "Are you aware, sir, that you have laid yourself open to a penalty of £300 for boarding this

steamer in advance of the health officers?" I fear I was rather insolent in my triumph. "I haven't got the money about me, sir; send the bill in to the *Daily News!*" The whole crowd of us embarked for shore on board the mail-tug. There, a dead set was made on Macdonald to be communicative. But if he had driven a hard compact, he was staunch to it—imperturbably staunch. "The public," quoth a local editor, "have a right to learn the details of your story." "A' weel," doucely replied Macdonald, "a' weel, they'll can read it i' the mornin's *Daily News*; it'll be aa there." And that was all, spite of portentous denunciation, that could be made of Macdonald. My scheme was to hurry to the Plymouth telegraph-office, and wire thence to London all I had gathered. But I had not exhausted Macdonald's story, and it was to meet such a contingency that I had chartered the compartment in the railway train. I found my colleague, who had come out with the rest in the mail-tug. I introduced him to Macdonald and bade him take that person off to the train, get him into our compartment, pump him dry between Plymouth and Exeter, and, leaving the train at the latter station, hurry to the telegraph-office there and wire to London the completion of the narrative. But at this point my plot broke down. My colleague did, indeed, get Macdonald into our compartment, but although he fought hard, he could not prevent its being stormed through the windows by rival journalists. So these had the benefit of the fag end of the man's story between Plymouth and Exeter. My skipper, I afterwards learned, had behaved gloriously. After he had got rid of me, he quickly steamed round to the lee-side of the *Nyanza*, and by dodging and manœuvring he had hindered, for quite half an hour—indeed, until the big ship had finally anchored—the two other tugs from getting sufficiently close alongside for any of their passengers to board the mail steamer.

Scarcely less daring was the conduct of Thomas Littleton Holt on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Royal of England to the Prussian Crown-Prince. According to the author of the "Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian," Holt attended as reporter for a London daily paper. He looked so grand and imposing that he actually managed to proceed to the steamer in one of the Royal carriages, the English attendants evidently taking him for a German baron at the very least, whilst the German attendants must have taken him for a noble English lord,—and, in very truth, he would have done honour in every way to the Upper House. Seeing Prince Albert overcome by his emotion on parting from his so dearly-beloved daughter, Holt walked up to him in an uncontrollable burst of sympathy, warmly grasped the Prince Consort's hands, saying most earnestly, "These tears do honour to your Royal Highness's heart. I am a father—I can feel for

your Royal Highness." There is reason to believe that the Prince never knew who he was that had so warmly sympathised with him. By an equally original and ingenious trick, a reporter managed to give the best account of the Lord Mayor's Show three or four years ago. He dressed himself in Indian costume, and took part in the show, seated on the back of one of the elephants, thereby obtaining a complete view of the show, and the scene along the route.

Sometimes, however, the effort to secure exceptional news ends disastrously to the man who undertakes it, and several painful cases of this nature are upon record; but this article would scarcely be complete without, at least, a reference to that daring special, Mr. E. O'Donovan. Among special correspondents no one has had a stranger experience, or told a more exciting tale, than the hero of Merv, whose career prematurely closed in the Soudan. But something needs to be said about the most "special," the "war correspondent," which we reserve for our next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WAR CORRESPONDENT.

Introduction of War Correspondence—The Pioneer of War Correspondents—Forbes the Prince of Correspondents—His wonderful Power of Word-painting, Pluck, and Endurance—His Training as a Soldier—Qualifications of a Correspondent—The "Baby of War Correspondents"—The Effect of Hardship and Exposure—The Influence and Power of a Correspondent.

JOURNALISTIC enterprise has produced several curious developments during the last few years. Foremost among them must be placed the War Correspondent. Not until the years 1849-1850 had battles been described in the newspapers specially by men despatched for that purpose. From the time of the Danish war, described by Dr. William Howard Russell, who is regarded as the pioneer of war correspondents, the *Times* had the field almost entirely to itself until the outbreak of the Franco-German war in 1870, when Mr. Archibald Forbes came to the front, and assisted very materially to make the fortunes of the *Daily News*, while at the same time he earned for himself the title of the "prince of newspaper correspondents."

Presiding at a complimentary dinner given to Mr. Forbes by his brother journalists in December, 1877, Mr. Sala said that, comparatively speaking, seven years ago Mr. Forbes was an unknown man; but since then, by his wonderful power of word-painting, by his minute faculty of composition, his rare and racy humour, by the strict honour and integrity with which he had performed his laborious work, and, more than all, by the personal courage, pluck, and endurance which he had shown, he had won one of the highest positions which is possible for an English journalist.

Mr. Forbes had, of course, an advantage over some other correspondents. Besides having had a university education, he had served five years in a regiment of Dragoons. "As a scholar he burned to be a dragoon; as a dragoon he could not forget his literary tastes. Reading in every leisure hour all the technical works he could find in the barrack library, he, like many men who write well, felt the necessity of writing on his own account." Success crowning his efforts at magazine-writing, he exchanged the sword for the pen. Mr. Forbes has recently told (the *English Illustrated Magazine*, April, 1884), the story of how he became a war correspondent; and it is unnecessary, therefore, to do more than refer to one or two points for the sake of completeness. As the ranks of war correspondents are not unfrequently recruited from the Parliamentary reporters, it is clear that a military training is not an absolute condition of success as a war correspondent; but it is quite obvious that a good knowledge of languages and a strong body are essential. Mr. Forbes considers a war correspondent should be a Mezzofanti as regards language, qualified to ride anything from a giraffe to a rat, and to be totally above such trifles as reflection and sleep. Every war correspondent, he adds, must have been imprisoned several times. He had himself been thus lodged in France, Spain, Austria, Armenia, and Bulgaria, and could not recommend any of those countries from this point of view.

Mr. Forbes was described in 1878 as the picture of a man with an iron constitution and nerves of steel, but he declares that, if he had never been a war correspondent, "I might have been a better man than I am to-day at forty-five, my nerves gone, and my physical energy but a memory." Mr. Forbes may consider himself lucky that he is alive, for he has seen the inside of a good many foreign prisons. To a question lately put to him he replied, "I cannot tell you how often I have been under fire. A correspondent cannot see anything while hanging in the rear. For my part I have always found the front the safest place. I have had some close shaves, of course; but was only wounded twice, and then slightly, although I was once left for dead in the street at the hands of a Paris mob."

Other famous specials have not been so successful. Mr. Ogle, a *Times* correspondent, was shot by a Turk; Mr. MacGahan, of the *Daily News*, died of typhus fever at Constantinople, and Mr. E. O'Donovan, who was also employed by the *Daily News*, went to the Soudan in November, 1883, and has never returned. The "baby of war correspondents" is Mr. Frank Scudamore, who is said to owe his appointment on the *Times* not less to his pluck and "go" than to his linguistic attainments. Having been practically educated at Constantinople he possesses all the polyglot acquirements usually displayed by natives of that place. These include a good deal of French, a good deal of modern Greek, a considerable smattering of German, Italian, Turkish, and Arabic, together with an acquaintance with human nature which can scarcely be acquired in any other locality. If a man has health, strength, pluck and "nous," this is the best possible outfit for a war correspondent. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the work of the late Mr. Cameron, of the *Standard*; of the late Mr. Lander Crosse, of the *Daily News*; of the late Mr. St. Leger Herbert, of the *Morning Post*; Mr. Burleigh, of the *Daily Telegraph*; Mr. Charles Williams, of the *Daily Chronicle*; Mr. Mackenzie Wallace, of the *Times*; of Colonel Colburne, who succeeded Mr. O'Kelly as correspondent of the *Daily News* in the Soudan, who has recently published an account of his strange experiences under the title of "With Hicks Pasha in the Soudan"; and others who have won fame in this field of enterprise. Enough has been said to indicate the character of the qualifications required to succeed in this branch of the profession.

Much might be written of the value of the services of war correspondents to the country. The *Standard* says that no one who has thought about the question can fail to perceive that a large part of the sound military spirit which pervades this country, now more, perhaps, than at any time in our history, is due to the writings of correspondents who have at various times accompanied both English and foreign armies in the field. After alluding to the difficulties thrown in their way by the War Office, it adds: "The correspondent is the living embodiment of public opinion, and takes rank as such. He is the am-

bassador of a power stronger than any Government; a power which grows in strength as Governments one after another decay and fall. He feels the responsibility of his situation, and often possesses secrets much more important than those which ever fall into the keeping of more than a very small number of officers in the largest army. There is not a known case of the betrayal of such secrets. It is of the highest importance that correspondents should be men of high ability and honour; and the best way to keep them such is to recognise their position, and give them those moderate facilities which they require."

CHAPTER XV.

THE ART CRITIC.

Special Education needed—Painters unqualified for Art-criticism—Their Envy of each other—Qualifications of Art Critics—Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton's Definition of their Functions and Duties—Conscientious Reporters—Mr. Ruskin's Counsel to them.

THE art critic, like the dramatic critic, is generally a man specially educated for this branch of the profession. In a notice of Mr. G. Beavington Atkinson, who died in December, 1877, it is stated that he pursued artistic studies in early life, and acquired the practical knowledge desirable for the career in which he became known to the public. It is frequently contended that the critic of art should be an artist himself in order to understand the merits and defects of pictures. "Painters assume," said Hazlitt, "that none can judge of pictures but themselves. Many do this avowedly, some by implication, and all in practice. They exclaim against any one writing about art who has not served his apprenticeship to the craft, who is not versed in the detail of its mechanism."

But he denies the exclusive right and power of painters to judge pictures. What is a picture meant for? he asks. "To convey certain ideas to the mind of painters; that is, of one man in the thousand. No; but to make them apparent to the eye and mind of all. "If a picture be admired by none but painters," he adds, "I think it a strong presumption that the picture is bad. A painter is no more a judge, I suppose, than another man of how people feel and look under certain passions and events. Everybody sees as well as we whether certain figures on the canvas are like such a man, or like a cow, a tree, a bridge,

or a windmill ; and all that the painter can do more than the *lay* spectator is to tell *why* and how the merits and defects of a picture are produced. I see that such a figure is ungraceful, and out of nature. He shows me that the drawing is faulty, or the foreshortening incorrect. He then points out to me whence the blemish arises ; but he is not more aware of the existence of the blemish than I am."

A further objection to the above argument of painters is made by Hazlitt, who says that the way in which they are devoured and consumed by envy would be ludicrous, if it were not lamentable. It is folly, he considers, to talk of the divisions and backbitings of authors and poets while there are such people as painters in the world. "I never, in the whole course of my life, heard one speak in hearty praise of another. Generally they blame downrightly ; but, at all events, their utmost applause is with a damning reservation." "God help the artists !" exclaimed Tom Taylor, in acknowledgment of Mr. Whistler's pamphlet "Art and Art Critics," "if ever the criticism of pictures falls into the hands of painters ! It would be a case of vivisection all round." From a public point of view, the evil would be equally great. "An art critic, who himself paints," wrote Bayard Taylor, "judges everything from the standpoint of his own methods and prejudices. Still," he contended, "an art critic should practically know enough about the *technique* of art to understand its difficulties ; he should paint just enough to be reckoned a clever amateur, but not enough to be reckoned a clever artist."

Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton considers it would be interesting to have an authentic list of anonymous art critics, to know what are their usual avocations, and what proportion of their lives has been devoted to the study of art. He declares that there is no subject in the world of which the mere writer-of-all-work is less competent to treat than art, and says, "It is eminently a subject requiring practical experience and especial study. It cannot be grasped in its large relations by minds habitually occupied with other matters, and whose only claim to treat of it is their faculty of verbal expression. It demands great personal devotion and untiring enthusiasm. It requires also

much technical knowledge. The devotion and the enthusiasm are occasionally found in men who are not practically artists, the technical experience never." But Mr. Hamerton does not therefore argue that artists should write criticism. He agrees with Hazlitt and Tom Taylor, that their criticism would be too likely to degenerate into personal recrimination; and in a later note to his "Thoughts about Art," he writes, "The objection to artists as writers on art, is their injustice; the objection to literary men who write on art is their ignorance of technical conditions and difficulties, and their consequent incapacity for making the necessary allowances. The plain truth is," adds Mr. Hamerton, "that to write on art requires two distinct educations; one in literature and philosophy, the other in practical art-work." In short, Mr. Hamerton comes to the same conclusions as Bayard Taylor, and thus summarises the functions and duties of an art-critic:—

1. To utter unpopular truths.
2. To instruct the public in the theoretical knowledge of art.
3. To defend true living artists against the malice of the ignorant.
4. To prevent false living artists from acquiring an influence injurious to the general interests of art.
5. To exalt the fame of dead artists whose example may be beneficial.
6. To weaken the fame of dead artists whose names have an injurious degree of authority.
7. To speak always with absolute sincerity.
8. To give open expression to vicissitudes of opinion, not fearing the imputation of inconsistency.
9. To make himself as thoroughly informed as his time and opportunities will allow about everything concerning the Fine Arts, whether directly or indirectly.
10. To enlarge his own powers of sympathy.
11. To resist the formation of prejudices.

To be a true art critic Mr. Hamerton contends that it is necessary, first, to be in possession of an enormous amount of information about art and nature, as well as a natural talent or disposition for criticism.

It may, therefore, be taken for granted that no one who has not a knowledge of art, and who has not had some experience as a painter, is qualified for the work of art criticism. In large towns the reporter is rarely called upon to "do" the pictures; and, in our opinion, he ought never to be asked. Some conscientious reporters positively shrink from criticising even the humblest collection of pictures, but to refuse would be to render themselves liable to dismissal as incompetent. Mr. Ruskin writes as follows as to the points to be observed by a country reporter in noticing local collections of pictures:

Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire,
26th June, '84.

MY DEAR SIR,—Supposing—which I hope your question *does* suppose—the country reporter to be a man of natural sense and intelligence, the best thing he can do is to describe carefully the subjects of the pictures he thinks likely to please simple people, if they are shown what is in them, and as far as the editor will allow him, to take no notice of pictures attracting merely by their tricks of painting. I do not think the public value the affectations of art-knowledge in a newspaper reporter, but they would always be grateful to him for the indication of elements of interest in a picture, which they would have missed without his help.—Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DRAMATIC CRITIC.

An all-round Journalist—A Marvel of Criticism—John Oxenford—Dutton Cook—Criticisms written in the interests of Managers and Actors—Champagne and Chicken—The Policy of the *Times*—A Reporter as a Critic—Qualifications of a Dramatic Critic.

THE dramatic critic, like the art critic and the musical critic, is generally a specialist; and no one who has not special knowledge can hope to succeed in this capacity. In the early days of journalism, it is true, a newspaper man had to do many things of which he had no special knowledge; and Mr. Congdon, in his "Reminiscences of a Journalist," describes in the following paragraph how he criticised a French play by Mademoiselle Rachel, at Boston:—

"One little peculiarity of this engagement was, that I wrote all the articles on Mademoiselle Rachel's acting in our newspaper without knowing a word of French. I looked these marvels of criticism over lately, and was much astonished at the superiority of my job work. A really good journalist never betrays his ignorance of anything. He carries the whole encyclopædia, so to speak, in his vest pocket. How did I do it? I did it much as Captain Shandon in the debtor's prison did the prospectus of the magazine, when he asked for Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' and wished to be left to his abominable devices. Mr. Goodrich, the foreman of the office, whom I still remember gratefully as the best proof-reader this erroneous world ever saw, happened to know French well, and helped me kindly. I bought the translation of 'Phèdre,' of 'Adrienne,' and the rest; I threw in all manner of profound and acute critical observations; I followed the play carefully at the theatre, and I accomplished the work beauti-

fully. We saved the fifty dollars which would have hired a really competent critic, and given our readers something which it might have been worth their while to read. They found no fault with my ingenious reports of the wonderful *tragédienne* in Boston. Why not? Because, I suppose, they knew no more about the matter than I did." There are daily newspapers even in our day which cannot afford to employ specialists; in consequence, the reporters are called upon to "do" the theatres, the art-galleries and the musical festivals; but all the London, as well as the majority of provincial papers, employ special men for special work.

Among dramatic critics, the late John Oxenford held the foremost place, though the *Athenæum*, in a notice of his death, declared that he was never just to himself. "Excessive kindness of disposition induced such leniency of judgment as was fatal to the value of the verdict. It was his boast that none of those he censured went home disconsolate or despairing on account of anything he had written. Those who read between the lines of his criticism would probably arrive at an opinion with consideration." Mr. Oxenford was a scholarly man, a dramatic author himself as well as an amateur actor, and was, therefore, better able to appreciate the difficulties of acting and the success of the actors in any play he criticised.

The late Mr. Dutton Cook was equally successful as a dramatic critic; but it must be remembered that he had been a playgoer from his infancy, and had learned to interest himself in the stage and its professors long before the responsibilities of systematic criticism devolved upon him. On his own behalf he urges that, as a critic, he has not spared painstaking, and that he has sought to be candid. It seemed to him when he entered upon his duties as a theatrical reviewer, that the criticisms of the time were too often written in the interests of managers and actors, rather than to serve or inform the public. But he explains that the journals with which he had been connected owed nothing to the managers, had ignored or remained insensible to the influence they exercised as advertisers. "I have," he added, "always been at liberty to express my opinions unreservedly, and I have so expressed them, with no desire to offend or injure individuals, but with a con-

viction that occasionally our stage has needed a more caustic treatment than it has been wont to receive."

According to Mr. Wm. Archer, "the critic is very often a man of immense experience; but, as a rule, he has no fundamental principles, no fixed, not to say lofty, standards—in short, no ideal . . . involuntarily, too, but quite inevitably, he is trammelled by feelings of personal kindness and good-fellowship,—feelings which are very admirable, but destructive to criticism. The theatrical clubs which bring together authors, managers, actors, and critics, are the bane of critical frankness and impartiality." Mr. Mowbray Morris seems to share Mr. Archer's views; for he tells us that there are some who are to be bought with champagne and chicken. There are others, he says, who write to order, according to the length of the advertisements in the newspapers they adorn, or the social exigencies of its proprietor; and there are some who run down Jenny because they adore Polly, who find fault with Jack because they hobnob with Bob, and who are about as intellectually fitted to form a just estimate even of the humblest theatrical performance in a barn as they are to rule an empire.

To be absolutely impartial, therefore, it seems essential that the critic should have no connexion with green-room clubs. Some reform has already taken place. The *Times* is now adopting the same policy as the *Daily News* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in appointing young men in preference to old stagers. "The *Times*," says the London correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News*, "seems to have given mortal offence by not choosing a permanent successor to Mr. Oxenford from among an inner circle of dramatic critics, all of whom must at some time have been novices, and must have gained their experience gradually. Finding that it had on its own staff a reporter of considerable aptitude for such work, and probably desiring that its theatrical notices should differ from others, in being written for the public rather than for managers and actors, it permitted this reporter to train himself for theatrical description and criticism. It is admitted that he displays considerable ability and judgment in dealing with a new play on its substantial merits, and fairness in the appreciation of individual ability. But he may be innocent of

stage tricks and technicalities, or ignorant of the traditions of the green room ; and any slip in these respects, or any inadvertent assumption, exposes him at once to personal attacks having reference to his Scotch descent, or his stature, or the size of his feet. It is a pity that a critic cannot maintain his *incognito*. With the object of preserving the independence of the man and of the paper, the *Times* insists on its representatives paying for admission as private individuals, and this is done almost invariably, unless cards of invitation have been previously received. It, therefore, often happens that the conductors of a theatre do not know whether the reporter of the *Times* is present or not, and they have no right to inquire."

It is clear, therefore, that whoever would succeed as a dramatic critic must begin early, read all the books on the subject, visit the theatres, write critiques, and contrast them with the performances of the professional critic. We commend to the notice of the amateur Mr. Dutton Cook's "Nights at the Play" and Mr. Wm. Archer's "English Dramatists of To-day." A Leeds journalist, in reply to the question, What are the qualifications necessary for a dramatic critic? furnishes the following answer :—"A dramatic critic must, as a first and positive requirement, be familiar with the pieces produced on the modern stage for at least the last fifteen years. He must have been a constant and intelligent student of the stage of to-day, its changes, developments, and retrogressions. He must be familiar with the temperament of audiences, in order that he may not be led away either by too liberal applause or by too hasty condemnation. He must closely follow all theatrical events, read as many plays, ancient and modern, as he can, and should know something of the art of dramatic construction. If he has tried to write pieces himself, it will be all the better—he will know the difficulty of expressing ideas dramatically and in logical sequence. The same rule would apply to acting, and he will be better able to judge and appreciate good work if he has been an amateur actor, particularly if the stage manager has been a man of experience. He must be a constant student of Schlegel. This is absolutely necessary, for in Schlegel he will get a learned and critical history of the rise and progress of the drama in all ages and countries,

from the time of the early Greeks down to our present time.

“He must also devote time to the intelligent study of Lessing, and must on no account neglect to study with keen appreciation the criticisms of George Henry Lewes on modes of expression in the dramatic art. If he knows his Goethe and Schiller (through translations will do) all the better. He ought to know his Shakespeare by heart, and should also possess a fair knowledge of the works of the Elizabethan and Restoration dramatists—Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Congreve, Wycherley, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, Dryden, and so on. There are carefully-compiled works by the late Dr. Doran, from which he will learn much—notably, ‘Their Majesty’s Servants,’ published shortly before the learned doctor’s death. He should know something of general history, and have some idea as to historical costume. He should be a man of general culture outside the range of the drama, and, in particular, should be able to give an opinion upon art in painting and decoration. He should learn how plays frequently “grow” and are built up after they leave the author’s hands, and should have a nice discrimination as to the balance of character. A musical ear and an acquaintance with modern music will stand him in good stead; and it is absolutely necessary that he should have a good temper, a large stock of patience, a good digestion, a facile literary style, a genuine love for the drama in itself, and a modicum of Christian charity and consideration for the feelings of others.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EDITOR.

The "Christian" Newspapers—Ignorance of Cockneys as to Salaries of Country Editors—Old Times and New—Thomas Frost's "Recollections"—An Editor of the Old School—A Modern Editor—£300 a Year—A sensible Newspaper Proprietor—Dr. Smiles's Testimony—The First Prize of English Journalism—Management by a Committee—"Two Columns about a D—d Opium-eater"—The Editorial Thorn in the Flesh—The Character of Country Newspaper Proprietors—Divided Counsels fatal to Journalism—The *London Gazette*—The Story of Mr. Thomas Walker's Struggles—Mr. Delane as an Editor—The King of Modern Journalists.

FROM the reporter's desk the next stage upward is generally the editor's chair. Here, again, there are degrees of equality. One editor is said to receive £5,000 a year; some editors receive as much as £3,000, others not more than £100. The "Christian" newspapers are, with very few exceptions, edited by ministers, who receive from £2 to £4 a week. The latter amount is considered a handsome salary by the men employed on this class of newspapers. The editors of the various trade journals are, as a rule, paid highly, as they possess technical knowledge for which there is a ready market. But whoever would succeed in journalism must lay himself out for work in connexion with the general press.

There is a notion in some Cockney circles that the editor of a country newspaper is an impecunious individual, and that his position is no better than that of an office boy. Thirty years ago, it is true, the country editor was not paid very liberally. Robert Nicoll, a Scotch poet, thought he had reached the top of the literary ladder when he secured the editorship of the *Leeds Times* at a salary of £100 a year. "I received a letter in the year

1855," writes Mr. Thomas Frost, in his "Forty Years' Recollections," "from the proprietor of a newspaper issued in a small town in a south midland county, inviting me to a preliminary conference with him at a tavern in the City. I kept the appointment with the punctuality which is one of my acknowledged qualities, and had waited *solus* in the parlour until I had begun to consider whether I should have another glass of ale or leave, when there entered a stout, red-faced man, of the type to be encountered at every step at the Agricultural Hall during the cattle-show week, and who, in his broad-rimmed hat and top-boots, might have sat to Leech for one of the many portraits of John Bull with which he enlivened the pages of *Punch*.

"Are you the young man who advertised for an editorship?" he inquired, looking at me steadfastly. I answered affirmatively, and, having rung the bell, and ordered a pint of ale, he sat down. Some remarks of the kind strangers thus situated are apt to exchange when an interval has to be filled up were all that were ventured upon until the ale was brought, and he had filled and lighted a long clay pipe. Thus primed, he entered upon the business which had brought us together. He was the proprietor, editor, printer, and publisher of a moderately Liberal paper, and he required the assistance of a young man capable of sub-editing, reporting, and reading. There was a nice little cottage in the neighbourhood, which he thought would just suit me, and he had no doubt that I should suit him, and that we should get on very comfortably together. And, now, what wages did I expect? 'Two pounds,' I replied; that amount, he it observed, being the then ordinary remuneration of a printer's reader in London offices, and less than was paid in news offices. 'Two pounds a week!' he repeated, opening his eyes to their utmost capacity. 'Why, I give my overseer only five-and-twenty shillings!' 'What was your expectation on the subject?' I asked, as gravely as possible. 'I couldn't give anything like that money,' he rejoined, shaking his head. 'Then I must beg to decline your offer, and wish you good morning,' said I, rising. The old gentleman returned my salutation somewhat gruffly, and in another moment he was alone with his pipe and his pint."

This gentleman was a newspaper proprietor of the old school, and represented a class now almost extinct. Unquestionably, there are men whose treatment of their editors is niggardly in the extreme, but these are exceptions to the rule. Commenting upon the work and salaries of editors of provincial newspapers, an editor writes as follows:—"The work of an editor of a weekly newspaper is very hard, but one gets accustomed to it in time, and there are so many incompetent men in the field that one who does his duty conscientiously and well need have but slight fears of being long out of a situation. Besides, the pay is a great deal better than many imagine it to be. I could not have brought my family up as I have done had I been working for the miserable pittance that some imaginative but not over well-informed scribes fancy to be the standing income of a country editor—35s. a week! Why, I had ten shillings more than that when I commenced here, seventeen years ago, and for several years my income has been £300 a year. My reporter, a young man of twenty-five, makes, with correspondence, nearly £150 a year. Local journalism is capable of improvement, and those proprietors stand in their own light who either decline to allow the members of their respective staffs sufficient remuneration, or to expect them to fill up their time by performing all sorts of *infra dig.* jobs. I never checked newspaper accounts or canvassed for advertisements in my life, save during a few months in the early period of my career, about twenty-five years ago; and my employer would as soon think of asking me to do such work as he would think of asking me to groom his horse, or don the livery and wait at table. You must not, however, understand me as recommending you to adopt country journalism as a profession. It has its drawbacks and disadvantages not a few; but if a newspaper conductor has a mind of his own, does his work conscientiously to the best of his ability, and maintains his independence, he need not care a great deal for the slander and misrepresentation to which he will most assuredly be subjected."

The question naturally arises, how can such good situations be obtained? As a rule, the editors have grown with the paper; in fact, they have made the paper a success,

and have, therefore, a strong claim upon the liberality of their employers. But these are not exceptional cases. Numbers of country editors receive a larger salary than some of the London editors, who live in a big house and make a big show. When good situations become vacant, they are rarely advertised. Proprietors of newspapers keep their eye upon diligent and steady men, who drop into places as they become vacant.

Much might be said upon the intellectual benefits resulting from the work of editing a newspaper. As an instrument of self-culture, it has been strongly commended by Dr. Smiles, who declares that his experience acquired as editor of the *Leeds Times* was the best education he had ever had, and that from his connexion with the press he had acquired habits of observation and facility in writing.

Turning from the weekly to the daily press, it is worthy of note that the "first prize of English Journalism has been won" by a young man, Mr. Buckle, whose salary, as editor of the *Times*, is £5,000 a year. It is equally worthy of note that the *Times* has had but four professional editors since its foundation on the first of January, 1785. The first was Dr. Stoddart, who was appointed in 1810, and left in 1815 to start a rival paper. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Barnes, who died in 1841, and his assistant, Mr. John Thaddeus Delane, was then raised to the chief place, which he held until 1877. His successor was Mr. Thomas Chenery, who died in February, 1884. At the time of Mr. Buckle's appointment speculation was rife as to the powers which would be entrusted to him. Much was said about divided arrangements; but neither the editor of the *Times*, nor that of any other daily paper is able to read all the articles submitted to him. He cannot dispense with the assistance of his sub-editors, or refuse the counsel of those whose judgment is generally sound. As a general rule, however, the interference of the proprietor with the editorial arrangements is fatal to the success of any paper. A striking illustration of the effects of the dual system of control is given in a little work published some years ago, entitled "Starting a 'Daily' in the Provinces," in which the writer says:—"The allusion to the Hull *Free Press* reminds one of a little incident in connexion with this paper at the time Mr. Philipps ('January

Searle") was its editor. Mr. Philipps had written a long and elaborate review, in leader type, of a recently-published work by De Quincey. The copy lay on the table marked ready for the printers; but before it got into their hands, Mr. Isaac Ironside, the then proprietor of the journal, saw and read the review, across which he wrote the following characteristic and laconic instruction: 'Two columns about a d—d opium-eater; not to go in.' We need scarcely add that, shortly after this occurrence, the editor and the proprietor parted company; their opinions of journalism were widely different. The editor wrote for the general good; the other thought only to serve crotchety, selfish objects, and thereby disabled the journal beyond recovery."

The interference of the proprietor in the editorial arrangements of his newspaper is "*the* thorn in the flesh" of an editor's existence; and the weekly newspapers of the country will never be read by all classes until their editors are allowed more liberty in the selection of articles which *they* consider would enhance the value of their masters' property. The proprietors of local papers are, as a rule, unacquainted, not only with the routine of newspaper work, but also with the wants and tastes of the general public. Yet their editors are not allowed to spend a shilling in special articles or news, or in reporting, without consent, which can rarely be obtained. The result of this cheeseparating policy is, that editors reject nearly everything for which payment is expected. In short, interference with the editorial management is fatal to the success of any paper. "I have often thought, and think still," remarks Dr. Charles Mackay, "that a newspaper cannot be conducted on the principle of a republic,—where many men have their say,—but can only exist as a despotism, with one will at the head, to whom all other wills are bound to submit. Divided counsels are fatal to journalism; and a true editor, worthy of the name, ought to be the master and not the servant, and be as imperial or imperious in his own sphere as the Autocrat of all the Russians."

The editorship of the *London Gazette* is considered one of the very few sinecures which dangle as prizes before the English journalist; but the salary is really very small, amounting only to £800 a year. Mr. John Morley is

understood to have had £2,000 a year as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*; and there are at least three editors of provincial newspapers, each of whom receives quite that amount. The present editor of the *London Gazette* is Mr. Thomas Walker, the story of whose life is interesting and encouraging to literary aspirants. "At the *Medical and Pharmaceutical Times* office," says the author, who writes under the *nom de plume* of "The Old Bohemian," "I made the acquaintance of another remarkable man—Thomas Walker, who, I believe, originally a stocking-loom weaver from Northampton, rose to be editor of the *Daily News*. Walker was simply an extraordinary man. When I first knew him he was publishing clerk at the office. He asked me to give him lessons in Latin, French, and German, and in English composition. I was afraid he was attempting too many subjects of study at once. Not a bit of it. The man was a very cormorant at learning. His pluck and perseverance in plodding his way through difficulties were beyond comparison. I will not even say I *taught* him. He was one of those rare men who have the faculty of acquiring knowledge. He learned sufficient in six months to lay a sound foundation for self-study after. Whilst making truly prodigious progress in the four or five difficult branches which he was studying with me *pari passu*—and let it be borne in mind that he had only his evenings and nights to bestow upon this most arduous task which he had undertaken—he taught himself shorthand, until he became one of the best *verbatim* reporters I have ever known; and I have known many of the most eminent of the craft. At a later period he had occasion to go in for art criticism. Now he was colour-blind. Well, what of that? Thomas Walker was not the man to let such a mere trifle stand in his way. He simply educated his sight to distinguish in the end, with unerring certainty, among the subtlest tints and shades of colour. He was, indeed, a strong illustration of the truth of the old axiom, *volenti nil difficile*."

In some cases the editor of a daily newspaper writes very little himself. Mr. Delane, when editor of the *Times*, who was credited with the possession of the editorial faculty, scarcely ever wrote an article; but it is said that

old and practised writers recognised the justice of his criticisms, and agreed cordially to his revisions, alterations, and suppressions. On the other hand, Mr. W. H. Hurlbert, formerly editor of the *New York World*, whom Sala describes as the "King of modern journalists," writes incessantly. It is his favourite habit, it is reported, to sit at his desk and commence writing several editorials, paragraphs, and short articles, page by page at the same time, handing each page to the "copy" boy, with the ink still wet from his pen, and without making any memorandum, though the pages end wherever they may, often in the middle of sentences; and all this is done without any strain, and without interfering with the flow of ideas or elegance of language in any one of the various subjects.

The following list of the principal daily newspapers in the United Kingdom, and the names of their editors, may be of interest :

ENGLAND.	EDITORS.
<i>Birmingham Daily Gazette</i> (1862) ...	B. H. GRINDLEY.
<i>Birmingham Post</i> (1857)	J. THACKRAY BUNCE.
<i>Bristol Mercury and Post</i> (1860) ...	HAROLD LEWIS, B.A.
<i>Bristol Times and Mirror</i> (1865) ...	GEORGE CARRINGTON.
<i>Daily Chronicle</i> (1876)	R. WHELAN BOYLE.
<i>Daily News</i> (1846)	FRANK HILL.
<i>Daily Telegraph</i> (1859)	EDWIN ARNOLD.
<i>Derby Express</i> (1884)	JAMES POOLE MAUNSELL, M.A.
<i>East Anglian Daily Times</i> (1874) ...	FREDERICK W. WILSON.
<i>Eastern Daily Press, Norwich</i> (1870)	JAMES SPILLING.
<i>Eastern Morning News, Hull</i> (1864)...	WILLIAM HUNT.
<i>Echo</i> (1868)	HOWARD EVANS.
<i>Globe</i> (1803)	R. E. FRANCILLON.
<i>Huddersfield Chronicle</i> (1871)	G. HARPER.
<i>Hull Daily News</i>	R. GALE.
<i>Hull Express</i> (1876)	HENRY ROSE.
<i>Leeds Daily Express</i> (1857)	FRED. B. SPARK.
<i>Leeds Mercury</i> (1861)	T. WEMYSS REID.
<i>Leicester Daily Post</i> (1872)	F. HEWITT.
<i>Liverpool Albion</i> (1871)	DR. MACKIE.
<i>Liverpool Courier</i> (1863)	JOHN WILLOX.
<i>Liverpool Echo</i> (1879)	L. PEARSON.
<i>Liverpool Evening Express</i> (1870) ...	W. PARSONAGE.
<i>Liverpool Mercury</i> (1858)	JOHN LOVELL.
<i>Liverpool Post</i> (1855)	E. R. RUSSELL.
<i>Manchester Courier</i> (1864)	S. B. IVAN MÜLLER.
<i>Manchester Evening Mail</i> (1874) ...	EDWIN PRATT.
<i>Manchester Evening News</i> (1868) ..	J. PARKINSON.

ENGLAND—(continued).

EDITORS.

<i>Manchester Examiner</i> (1846)	HENRY DUNCKLEY ("Vernax")
<i>Manchester Guardian</i> (1857)	C. P. SCOTT.
<i>Morning Advertiser</i> (1794)	CAPT. HAMBER.
<i>Morning Post</i> (1772)	SIR ALGERNON BORTHWICK.
<i>Newcastle Chronicle</i> (1858)	R. RUDDOCK.
<i>Newcastle Journal</i> (1832)	A. D. MURRAY.
<i>North Star</i> , Darlington (1881)	W. M. LESLIE.
<i>Northern Echo</i> , Darlington (1869) ...	J. H. BELL.
<i>Nottingham Daily Guardian</i> (1861) ...	JESSE R. FORMAN.
<i>Nottingham Journal</i> (1860)	WILLIAM BRADSHAW.
<i>Pall Mall Gazette</i> (1865)	W. T. STEAD.
<i>St. James's Gazette</i> (1880)	FREDERIC GREENWOOD.
<i>Sheffield and Rotherham Independent</i> (1861)	J. D. AND R. E. LEADER
<i>Sheffield Daily Telegraph</i> (1855) ...	W. C. LENG.
<i>Standard</i> (1857)	W. H. MUDFORD.
<i>Sussex Daily News</i> (1868)	H. J. INFIELD.
<i>Times</i> (1788)	G. E. BUCKLE.
<i>Western Daily Mercury</i> (1860)	H. J. WHITFIELD.
<i>Western Daily Press</i> , Bristol (1858) ...	W. REID.
<i>Western Morning News</i> , Plymouth (1860)	ALBERT GROSER.
<i>Western Times</i> , Exeter (1866)	STEPHEN GLANVILLE.
<i>York Herald</i> (1874)	E. GOADBY.
<i>Yorkshire Post</i> , Leeds (1866)	CHARLES PEBODY.

WALES.

<i>Western Mail</i> , Cardiff (1869)	LASCELLES CARR.
<i>South Wales Daily News</i> , Cardiff (1872)	F. SONLEY JOHNSTONE.

SCOTLAND.

<i>Aberdeen Free Press</i> (1853)	WILLIAM ALEXANDER.
<i>Aberdeen Journal</i> (1748)	CHARLES MACASKIE.
<i>Dundee Advertiser</i> (1861)	JOHN LENG.
<i>Edinburgh Courant</i>	W. R. LAWSON.
<i>Edinburgh Review</i> (1861)	JOHN MACKIE.
<i>Glasgow Herald</i> (1859)	J. H. STODDART.
<i>Glasgow News</i> (1873)	F. WICKS.
<i>North British Daily Mail</i> (1847) ...	DR. CAMERON, M.P.
<i>Scotsman</i> , Edinburgh	CHARLES COOPER.

IRELAND.

<i>Belfast News Letter</i> (1855)	RICHARD LILBURN.
<i>Cork Examiner</i>	THOMAS CROSBIE.
<i>Cork Herald</i>	JOHN HOOPER.
<i>Daily Express</i> (1851)	G. V. PATTON, LL.D.
<i>Dublin Evening Mail</i> (1861)	
<i>Freeman's Journal</i>	EDMUND DWYER GRAY, M.P.
<i>Irish Times</i> (1859)	JAMES A. SCOTT.
<i>Northern Whig</i> (1858)	THOMAS W. MACKNIGHT.
<i>Ulster Echo</i>	A. MCMONAGLE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

The Difference between Journalism and Literature—Introductions to Editors—Editors blind to their own Interests—Mr. Payn's first Efforts—Personal Applications to Editors—De Quincey, Anthony Trollope and Jules Claretie—A Novelist who doesn't smoke—Casual Contributions—Struggles of Authors—Generosity of Blackwood—Editors as Anglers—Hunting for Big Names—Royal Authors—Why Magazines are Published—Gullibility of the Public—Mr. Gladstone's Explanation—No time to write well—Testing the Value of their Literary Wares—A Publisher caught napping—The Essence of Nonsense.

THOSE who are unfitted for journalism may find openings in literature. The difference between the two professions has been thus defined:—"Journalism requires an instinct for news, the capacity to digest events and form a correct opinion quickly. Literature demands wide culture, fertility of ideas, calm judgment, and purity of taste. The one needs a mind active to what is going on, and a perpetual readiness; the other, a capacity to grasp and comprehend intellectual subjects and present them in the best form."

Mr. Wm. Black, who has a world-wide reputation as a novelist, started life as a journalist, but gave up journalism for the more profitable work of a novelist. So did Zola. Mr. John Morley exchanged journalism for literature when he gave up the editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette* for that of *Macmillan's Magazine*. By literature, roughly understood in this place, we mean the magazines, periodicals, and books, whether treating on literary, scientific, sporting, or religious subjects. Confining ourselves here to the magazines, we would strongly urge a beginner in

literature not to seek introductions to editors. Authors themselves do not like to recommend the articles of their friends, and editors do not like to read them. "There is another kind of application," said Mr. Anthony Trollope, "to which editors, or those supposed to have access to them, are liable, and which often proves trying and painful. One is appealed to in behalf of some person in needy circumstances who wishes to make a living by the pen. A manuscript accompanying the letter is offered for publication. It is not commonly brilliant—too often lamentably deficient." Men and women who secure introductions are the bane of editors; their manuscripts would certainly have a much better chance of acceptance if submitted in the ordinary way. Carlyle wrote thus to a young man who was asking for advice: "If he turn out to have the fit talent, he will decidedly *find* an editor"; and Mr. James Payn seems to be of the same opinion. "A great deal," he says, "has been said about editors being blind to the worth of unknown writers; but if so, they are blind to their own interests. The opportunities for action in the field of literature are now so very numerous, that it is impossible that any able volunteer should be long shut out of it; and I have observed that the complaints about want of employment come almost solely from those unfit for service. Nay, in the ranks of the literary army there are very many who should have been excluded. Few, if any, are there through favour." Mr. Payn admits, however, that it was to Harriet Martineau that he owed his first introduction to "heavy-metalled literature." She tells us, he says, "in her autobiography that, with the exception of Mrs. Marsh's 'Two Old Men's Tales,' 'I have never once, so far as I remember, succeeded in getting a manuscript published for anybody. This has been a matter of great concern to me, but such is the fact . . . I have striven hard on behalf of others, but without the slightest success.' Notwithstanding this disclaimer, I cannot but think I was somewhat indebted to her for my appearance, at what was certainly an unusually early age, in the columns of the *Westminster Review*. The article was called 'Ballads of the People,' and I got twenty guineas for it, which seemed to me a princely remuneration."

Nor should personal application be made to editors. There are, it is true, some precedents for submitting manuscripts personally to editors. For instance, De Quincey offered articles to *Hogg's Instructor*, and the editor wrote an amusing account of his distinguished contributor, in which he said:—"With an air of quiet, good breeding, he told me who he was, and the object of his visit, which was to offer me an article for the *Instructor*. He expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which that work had been conducted; said he was pleased with its non-political and non-sectarian character; and, if there was a vacancy on the staff, he would like to become an occasional contributor. I was pleased at the offer of the services of so distinguished a writer. The contribution which he had brought with him was forthwith drawn from the capacious inner pocket of his coat; but, before being handed to me, I was both surprised and amused at a small hand-brush being drawn from the same receptacle, and the manuscript carefully brushed before it was handed to me. This operation was one which I afterwards found that he invariably performed. The contribution was then and there accepted."

Anthony Trollope offered a series of letters to John Forster when editor of the *Examiner*, and thus reports the interview:—"The great man, who loomed very large to me, was pleased to say that if the letters should recommend themselves by their style and matter, if they were not too long,—and if—every reader will know how on such occasions an editor will guard himself, if this and if that—they should be favourably entertained. They were favourably entertained,—if printing and publication be favourable entertainment. But I heard no more of them. The world in Ireland did not declare that the Government had at last been adequately defended, nor did the treasurer of the *Examiner* send me a cheque in return."

A French novelist received better treatment at the hands of the *Le Gaulois*:—"M. Jules Claretie, dramatist, novelist, poet, and pre-eminently journalist, first became known in the newspaper world in 1858, when one morning, slender, beardless, blushing, with an umbrella under his arm, and wearing a good suit of clothes, he entered the office of *Le Gaulois*. 'Messieurs,' he said, with high-bred courtesy, to

the assembled editors, 'I have ventured to bring an article for your estimable journal.' They glared at him through clouds of tobacco smoke. He became confused, dropped his umbrella, and laid his manuscript—a poem in prose—upon the table. The chief editor took it up and read it. 'It will be used next week.' 'Next week?' echoed Claretie in delight; 'ten thousand thanks.' 'Will you have a cigarette?' asked one of the editors. 'No, thank you, I never smoke.' Then nervously consulting a handsome watch, he added: 'Pardon, messieurs; my family expect me to dinner'; and bowed himself out. The moment he was out of hearing, the editors joined in a chorus: 'He has a watch!' 'And an umbrella!' 'Good clothes!' 'A family!' 'He dines—and at home!' 'He never smokes!' Then all together, fortissimo: 'He will never amount to anything!'"

These cases are, however, exceptional. It would be utterly impossible for a voluntary contributor, however eminent, to secure a personal interview with the editor of the *Times*; and in other daily newspaper offices, even regular contributors communicate with the editor by letter. It is well known to be extremely difficult to secure the acceptance of an article by the *Times*, yet the connexion of the late Mr. E. Dallas arose out of a casual contribution in literary criticism forwarded to the editor without any introduction. The article impressed Mr. Delane so favourably that he sent for his correspondent, and gave him constant employment. Mr. R. E. Francillon is one of the popular novelists of the day, yet was indebted to no one for his introduction to editors. "He took no council," says a writer in the first number of the *Biograph*, "but he resolved that he would make one hundred consecutive failures before fixing upon India or whatever else might suggest itself meanwhile, and each of the hundred was to be as nearly as possible made in some new direction. Poems and social articles having, as he expected, failed to find places, it came—somewhere about the fifth time—to the chance of fiction; he had never tried to imagine a story since he was a child; but he contrived to write one in January, 1868, and sent it, for no special reason, to *Blackwood's Magazine*. To his utter amazement he received in return

a most complimentary acceptance of his tale"; and he has continued writing tales and novels ever since.

Blackwood always held the reputation of being first among magazines for fairness and generosity to contributors. The *Athenæum* says that the late Mr. Blackwood took great pains in being the means of bringing forward young authors of talent through the magazine, and he spared no pains to advance the reputation of those who committed their works to his charge. He never paid for names, and till his death he steadily and wisely vindicated the advantages which anonymous writing, as opposed to the system of signed articles, affords to the rising generation of writers. Many proofs of the value of his judgment and generosity might be quoted, but there has been no change in the principle upon which the magazine is conducted; and in the January number, 1883, of the magazine, an article appeared in favour of impersonal journalism and unsigned articles. The practice of parading the names of writers is, the writer truly thinks, demoralising. The quality of the supply becomes a subordinate consideration with an editor occupied in hunting up social and political celebrities. "Angling for an archbishop, or hunting for a duke is not a very dignified occupation; yet, in the circumstances in which he is placed, he can hardly be blamed if he prefer an article signed by a duke or an archbishop to an article signed by Jones or Smith. It is big names that are needed; and so the really capable craftsmen are thrust aside. The writer virtually abdicates the functions of an editor, and becomes little better than the itinerant showman who stands at the door of his caravan of dwarfs and giants and two-headed babies to take the money."

"The world is apt to esteem works more from the reputation of the author than from their intrinsic merit." This declaration of Horace Walpole has reference to Royal authors, but it is also true of some of our popular authors. When a magazine can secure stories from the Queen of Roumania, and articles with illustrations from the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne, it is obvious that an unknown writer, however great his merits, has little chance of being noticed. Magazines are published, not for the benefit of the human race, not for the benefit of beginners

in literature, but for the benefit of publishers, who employ the labour of men whose productions the public care to read.

In January, 1876, Mr. Gladstone delivered a speech on art and industry, and admitted that it might be shown that he himself did not do everything in the best manner. "My answer is," he says, "that in the position I have held as a public man I have had no choice as between quantity and quality, for work forced itself upon me in such quantity that it was scarcely ever possible to give to quality more than a thought and a regret. For me, then, the choice between good and bad has been a narrow one, and my offences, if many, are not wilful." Referring to the want of finish in his Parliamentary speeches, Mr. Gladstone says: "I possess the manuscript of one of Mr. Canning's speeches, corrected with labour almost incredible, and by himself. By no possibility, except by breach of public duty, could I, even if I had had the same materials, have bestowed on them the like labour."

The good old days, when leisure was abundant, are gone for ever. As Austin Dobson, in his preface to "Eighteenth Century Essays," says:

With slower pen men used to write
Of old, when "letters" were "polite";
In Anne's or in George's days
They could afford to turn a phrase
Or trim a straggling theme aright.

They knew not steam; electric light
Not yet had dazed their calmer sight;
They meted out both blame and praise
With slower pen.
More swiftly now the hours take flight,
What's read at morn is dead at night;
Scant space have we for art's delays,
Whose breathless thought so briefly stays;
We may not work—ah, would we might,
With slower pen!

The principle, however, of employing well-known men seems to pay; and every new magazine gives proofs of the tendency to run after great names. In many cases the acceptance of an article turns upon the position of the contributor, rather than the merits of his contribution.

Magazine contributors, as well as authors, have often tested the exact worth of their productions in the market. The readiest instance is that of the Hon. Russell Lowell, who was a favourite contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*. He wrote an article on "The Essence of American Humour," which was declared by some of his friends, to whom he read it in manuscript, to be one of the best of his essays. He then had it copied and signed "W. Perry Paine." A few weeks after Lowell called on the editor, James T. Fields, and adroitly turned the conversation to American humour. Fields remarked: "We get a good deal of manuscript on humour, but it is so poor we cannot use it. I threw into the waste-basket the other day a long screed christened the 'Essence of American Humour,' which should have been styled the 'Essence of Nonsense,' for a more absurd farrago of stuff I have never seen." When Lowell acknowledged the authorship, the surprise of Fields was, it is said, greater than his pleasure.

DNYANPRAKASH OFFICE.

No. 4, BOMBAY.

CHAPTER XIX.

HINTS TO BEGINNERS.

Introductions unnecessary—Why Articles are rejected—The Supply of Articles unlimited—Strange Confession of the Rev. H. R. Haweis—How Percy Fitzgerald succeeded—The Wellington-street Paradise—A Tribe of Contributors—What Beginners should do—Tarts *versus* Bread and Cheese—£20,000 cleared by a Whipper-up of Trifles—A kind-hearted Editor—George Dyer's Odes—Newspapers *versus* Magazines.

WHAT, then, should a beginner in literature do? "In all trades," remarks the Rev. H. R. Haweis, "there is one rule—watch; work at your art; see what is wanted; adapt your work, supply the want; if you are original, you may create it. Writers think editors don't print without an introduction from some one else; that is a mistake. Editors are eager for anything that suits them. You get the faculty in literature or in trade of hitting upon what is marketable. No one will print what they don't want, however excellent." Unquestionably it is better for the literary beginner to rely upon his own merits. If his articles be rejected, there are, doubtless, cogent reasons for the rejection. The principal reason is that each magazine has its own staff of contributors, who supply the editor with more "copy" than he can use. To rely upon voluntary contributions would be to ruin a magazine, and an editor would rather have an inferior contribution from a known and trusted writer than run the risk of inserting a brilliant contribution from an outsider, who may have stolen such article. It is only in cases of exceptional merit, or to supply a gap, that voluntary contributions are accepted. Dickens denies that there are impenetrable barriers against "outsiders," and "charmed

circles" to which admission can only be obtained by favour, and adds:—"I know that any one that can write what is suitable to the requirements of my own journal, for instance, is a person I am heartily glad to discover, and do not very often find."

It is quite true, however, that the chances of securing a hearing are very small; for the professional "readers" for *Harper's Monthly* peruse, on an average, fifteen original contributions a day, and, on an average, reject twelve of them. Even a larger number of manuscripts are offered to the *Century Magazine*. "A record," says the editor, "is kept of the incoming and outgoing of every manuscript, and since the magazine cannot print more than fifty out of the 700 or 800 received in a month, it is apparent that the sifting process requires great care, and is the chief business of the editors. . . . Not all poorly-written articles are rejected, nor all good ones accepted. While the editors are continually suggesting topics to experienced writers, and to persons having special knowledge, many of the best articles printed come unsolicited. In a word, an article must be fresh in idea, masterly in treatment, or novel or important in information to meet with acceptance when so many active minds are seeking expression in print."

Having written upon a "taking" subject and forwarded the article to the most likely magazine, the beginner must not be disheartened if the article be returned to him. Thackeray said that Blackwood refused the best story he ever wrote—"The 'Great Hoggarty Diamond'"; Colburn refused "Vanity Fair"; and "The Tales of Village Life," by Miss Mitford, were rejected by the editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*. Even Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt" was rejected by three London journals, and its famous author was so disheartened at its unfavourable reception, that he confessed to Mark Lemon that he was sick of the sight of it. Although the editor's colleagues opposed its insertion, it appeared in *Punch*, and at once trebled the sale of the paper. "When *Macmillan*," says Mr. Frederick Locker, "refused 'My Neighbour Rose,' I sent it to the *Cornhill*, and when *Fraser* declined 'A Nice Correspondent,' I sent it to *St. Paul's*." The name of the Rev. H. R. Haweis is familiar to all magazine readers, but

he confesses that his contributions have been refused by nearly every newspaper and magazine in the kingdom.

The number of contributions received by editors is now so large that it is impossible in some cases to do more than glance at an article. For instance, the editor of *Chambers's Journal* received in one year not fewer than 3,225 manuscripts. Supposing he had published all, he would have had enough material for exactly eleven volumes, instead of one. Percy Fitzgerald's first contribution appeared in *Chambers's Journal*, but he considers its acceptance was due to the turn of a card. His connexion with *Household Words* was of a more substantial character; but it was not secured without the adoption of a clever trick, which he thus describes:—"There was at this time a well-known *littérateur*, a critic and writer of authority and Johnsonian prestige, who was engaged upon a most important work, the very materials for which had cost him, I believe, very large sums of money. I was at the time much interested in him and his subject; and as I lived in the city where his hero had flourished, I set to work to collect matter that would be useful to him. In particular, I nearly blinded myself in deciphering some *marginalia*, as they are called, in some huge folios preserved in an old library, made neat water-colour sketches of localities, collected traditions, and, in short, made myself exceedingly useful and earned his grateful acknowledgment. That was the beginning of a long friendship. At that time, the no less amiable than gifted Dickens was flourishing in the height of his popularity, and directing his *Household Words* with great success. To be a writer in that journal and associated with so great a master was in itself an enormous advantage which writers in other periodicals were devoid of. I ventured to presume on the grateful feelings of my new friend in this useful direction.

"Previously I had, indeed, essayed an entrance to the Wellington-street paradise, but had been firmly but courteously repulsed by that Peri at the gate, the late Mr. W. H. Wills, who returned rejected contributions with a lithographed circular in which the contributors were assured that their efforts had been read and weighed as was the custom of the office. This may have been a good-

natured exaggeration for reading an extract or glancing at the whole; but the daily post brought pounds of such matter which no staff could have grappled with. It was long, however, a tradition of the place, how my patron strode in one morning, and, laying down the document, required that it should be 'seen to at once; set up in type, and dealt with.' He was a man not to be trifled with. Within a fortnight it appeared. It was a not undramatic tale, in the vein of Mr. Wilkie Collins, then in high fashion. I had been again lucky in the subject and treatment; it was short and telling. I was asked at once to supply something of the kind for the Christmas number. On that hint I set to work, and from that moment to the present have never ceased to work for the pleasant journal, my connexion with which, under the *régime* of father and son, has always been agreeable and satisfactory. The word 'satisfactory' recalls me to the point of this paper, for it represents many thousand pounds, as the ledgers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* can tell. The moral, also, is that other agency besides literary merit is essential in earning money; there must be knowledge of men and things. I do not believe in the assiduous showering in of papers. One might apply this method for a whole life with, of course, the chance that a stray paper on some timely and seasonable subject might arrest the editor's eye and gain adoption.

"There must be some contrived personal relation between the contracting parties, otherwise there is no more interest in you than in the MS. itself. You are one of many bundles of MS., always an object of repulsion, to be put aside or held over as long as possible, like the poor patients at a doctor's. Hence the indifferent chance of the tribe of governesses, clergymen's wives and daughters, clerks, and others, who write from provincial towns, who are made sick all the year round with deferred hope, and whose productions, 'declined with thanks,' are sent back as a sort of favour. Hence, too, some courageous fellows who have come to London to push their way personally, like Johnson and others, have shown more wisdom and policy than they have obtained credit for. I have known not a few to succeed, not by their literary merit, which was indifferent, but by the art of making themselves useful and necessary, and of

doing some little job, which a bare chance threw in their way, in a style that they made specially satisfactory. In short, friends and connexions are the basis. Once established at *Household Words*, I found that the mere connexion with that journal was a passport to other magazines. For the first year, I think, my returns were some fourteen or fifteen pounds. The next year they rose to sixty or seventy; the next, the amount grew into hundreds. As to the paper itself, I saw that what was required was originality of subject, something fresh and taking. I gave great thought to the selection of what would be desirable. This is really in itself an art, and one of the highest importance; for if it be found that you are sending in what is unsuitable, your credit sinks, and your—at last—really suitable article may share the fate of others. Where, too, the contributor is to be depended on, his paper often goes unread to the printers to 'set up.' Nothing used to be pleasanter than the visit to the office to 'settle subjects' with the editor."

As a rule, beginners in literature should write about subjects of general interest, and avoid controversial questions. An editor has to consider, not his own tastes, but the tastes of his readers, in the selection of articles. "I often say," said Thackeray, "I am like the pastry-cook,—and don't care for tarts, but prefer bread and cheese; but the public love the tarts, and we must bake and sell them." Thackeray's novels are immensely superior to Trollope's, but both hit the tastes of the public, and therefore of the publishers. It is little use manufacturing goods for which there is no demand. The demand, it is true, may be created, but few producers *can* wait. It pays better to manufacture goods for which there is a demand.

Whatever may be said of the literary merits of Percy Fitzgerald's productions, he boasts of having cleared £20,000 by them. Speaking of his early efforts, he says that two or three papers were accepted, "but then began checks, not for cash, but 'unsuitable,' 'no space,' 'so much in type'—which conveyed the first lesson in writing profitably, that you must not merely put all your eggs in one basket, but must have about as many baskets as eggs. What will not suit one will suit another; what there is not room for in one there will be room for in another. . . . So now I cast

about for new channels, and tried and tried until I was heart-sick and angry, meeting for my investment in paper and postage-stamps certainly, large returns. I very soon saw that this system would not do, and that one might go on posting contributions for the term of one's natural life without result. . . . A total reversion of this policy and a brilliant *coup* in quite a new direction was rewarded with success; and set me on the road to fortune."

In other words, he wrote for the market, and literary aspirants should do the same. Fertile writers have been charged with a want of originality. Creation, it is said, is the highest and rarest human effort. No doubt; but Shakespeare himself describes much of his own work, and that of most other knights of the pen, in the words: "I am but a gatherer and a disposer of other men's stuff." "Since the famous compiler commemorated in an epigram by Voltaire," says the *Daily News*, "we do not remember to have met with so indefatigable and inexhaustible a whipper-up of unconsidered trifles as Mr. Percy Fitzgerald. Pantomimically, he might be represented presiding over an enormous pot of paste and armed with a colossal pair of scissors. Nor is it given to every industrious *littérateur* to know how to wield such enormous implements with dexterity and grace."

Only a few of the magazines are open to outside contributors, and these prefer articles of general interest, and of an amusing character. If well written, articles are, at any rate, carefully considered; and, occasionally, an editor will explain why he cannot use an article which impresses him favourably. For instance, a kind-hearted editor wrote to us as follows:—"The paper does not deal sufficiently with the subject. It is a sensible paper, but written more as for a leader in a newspaper. In a magazine, such an article should be enlivened by numerous illustrative anecdotes." The suggestion was made note of, and has been carried out in every article we have written for the magazines.

It is impossible to name subjects likely to "take" with an editor, but we would strongly urge that poetry be not forwarded to a magazine editor. "Poets" are the curse of an editor's life, and we would strongly recommend them

to do what Crabb Robinson's friend advised George Dyer to do with his odes. Dyer wrote one good book, "The Life of Robert Robinson," which Wordsworth declared to be one of the best biographical works in the language. But Dyer put his name to several volumes of poetry, respecting which one of his associates made the following epigram :—

The world will say, my gentle Dyer,
Thy odes do very much want fire,—
Repair thy fault, my gentle Dyer,
And throw thy odes into the fire !

But the advice, although good, was not taken, and will be equally disregarded when we repeat it.

In our day, magazine articles are not paid for so highly as they were a quarter of a century ago, when competition was less keen. Journalism pays better. "Years ago," writes the editor and proprietor of a trade journal, "I tried the higher class of literature, but found matter-of-fact and every-day news and technical work more profitable." That is exactly our own experience. The daily papers pay as much for a paragraph of news as some of the magazines pay for a page of carefully-written matter.

CHAPTER XX.

ON EDITORIAL REVISIONS.

Honest Critics—Dr. Johnson's good Nature—Is Consulted by Authors—Composes Sermons for Clergymen—The Sensitiveness of Authors—Gifford a Review Gelder—Southey in a bad Temper—Carlyle's Scrupulosity—The Editor's Pruning-knife—Yoking together a Horse and an Ass—Grinding the Wind.

AN important point to be observed by a beginner is the advisability of securing professional assistance in the revision of his manuscripts. He has been advised repeatedly to correct and polish his compositions; but, before forwarding them to an editor or a publisher, he would do well to submit them to a practised hand for revision. The question then arises, where is the critic who would honestly revise such manuscripts? In the literary journals advertisements appear frequently from persons offering to read and prepare manuscripts for the press. One advertisement reads:—"Amateur authors are informed that opinions as to the literary value of their MSS. will be given at a uniform charge of 5s. for every twenty foolscap pages—the minimum fee being 5s. and the maximum one guinea; for which the MS. of a three-volume novel may be examined, criticised, and advised upon. Recommendations to a suitable publisher will also be given. MS. should be addressed, with fee, to —."

The fee is so small in comparison with the labour involved that we should question the value of an opinion upon a MS. submitted to the advertiser; but something more than an opinion is required. An inquiry addressed to another advertiser for his terms brought a reply that they were 5s per hour. He found, he said, that

he could in that time, as a general rule, correct carefully, and supplement as much manuscript as would fill a sheet of foolscap paper if the errors and deficiencies were not very numerous. At first sight these terms appear high, and there may be men of real critical ability who would charge less. But we do not consider the terms extravagant for conscientious work, and doubt whether the literary critic can be found who will, without compensation, read carefully and revise conscientiously the manuscripts of aspirants.

In the "good old times," when men had leisure, young writers were frequently assisted by old ones. Dr. Johnson appears to have been as good-natured to authors as to beggars. Boswell said it was wonderful what a number and variety of writers, some of them unknown to him, prevailed on his good nature to look over their works and suggest corrections and improvements. But even Johnson grew tired of advising amateur authors, and criticising their productions. Boswell tells us that Johnson did not like his friends to bring their manuscripts for him to read, and he liked still less to read them when they were brought. Sometimes, however, when he could not refuse, he would take a play or a poem and give the people his opinion from some one page. As his reputation increased, Dr. Johnson seems to have treated manuscripts as a famous literary man of the present day is sometimes said to treat letters—he never read them. To a lady who had sent him her poem, and afterwards called upon him for his opinion of it, he said, "Madam, I have not cut the leaves, I have not even peeped between them. I met her again in company," he went on to say, "and she again asked me after the trash; I made no reply, and began talking to another person. The next time we met she asked me if I had read her poem. I answered, 'No, madam, nor ever intend it.'" Dr. Johnson is also reported to have said, "I have been troubled for a long time with authors desiring my opinion of their works. I used once to be sadly plagued with a man who wrote verses, but who latterly had no other notion of a verse but that it consisted of syllables."

It is clear, however, that in some cases he was remunerated for his criticisms, and several instances are given by his

contemporaries, one of whom says:—"Sitting with Dr. Johnson one morning alone, he asked me if I had known Dr. Madden, who was author of the premium scheme in Ireland. On my answering in the affirmative, and also that I had for some years lived in his neighbourhood, &c., he begged of me that when I returned to Ireland I would endeavour to procure for him a poem of Dr. Madden's, called 'Boulter's Monument.' 'The reason,' said he, 'why I wish for it is this: when Dr. Madden came to London he submitted that work to my castigation, and I remember that I blotted a great many lines, and might have blotted many more without making the poem worse. However, the Doctor was very thankful and very generous, for he gave me ten guineas, *which was to me at that time a great sum.*' Such casual emoluments as these Johnson frequently derived from his profession as an author. For the dedication to his present Majesty of Adams's 'Book on the Use of the Globes,' he was, as he himself informed me, gratified with a present of a very curious meteorological instrument of a new and ingenious construction. About this time, as it is supposed, for sundry benefited clergymen that requested him, he composed pulpit discourses, and for these he made no scruple of confessing he was paid; his price, I am informed, was a moderate one—a guinea; and, such was his notion of justice, that having been paid, he considered them the absolute property of the purchaser, and renounced all claim to them. He reckoned that he had written about forty sermons; but, except as to some, knew not in what hands they were. 'I have,' said he, 'been paid for them, and have no right to inquire about them.'"

The confession of the worthy doctor that he was very thankful, reminds us of another aspect of the subject. It is not often that the beginner expresses his thanks to his critic. Dr. Johnson said that Wycherley's esteem for Pope was such that he submitted some poems to his revision, and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms, and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendments of his faults. They parted! The

sensitiveness of authors is referred to in an excellent article in *Chambers's Journal* on "Literary Beginners." "Another fertile source of literary shipwreck to young writers," the author says, "is their aversion to submit their compositions to the amending hands of experienced, and therefore competent persons. They are naturally partial to their own productions. They have resolved to set up at once for a genius. And have they not read that every word of genius is a treasure not to be touched by the hands of the prosaically profane?" It is not only the young writer, but very often the old one, who feels annoyed at the interference of editors. Southey, in particular, was very sensitive upon this point. He wrote for the *Quarterly Review*, and called Gifford, its editor, a "review gelder," who had, he said, "a heart full of kindness for all living creatures except authors; them he regarded as a fish-monger regards eels, and as Isaak Walton did worms and frogs." Gifford seems, however, to have conciliated Southey at last; for, writing two years later, he said:

"For the first time Gifford has printed a paper of mine without mutilation, and I am responsible for it as it stands, with a singular exception not unworthy of notice. I had said that Hampden might have left behind him a name *scarcely inferior to Washington*; and he has most absurdly altered this to a *memorable name*, as if the name were not sufficiently memorable." He declared that no future editor should ever treat his papers as Gifford did; but Gifford's successor, Lockhart, considered his predecessor's corrections judicious and warrantable. "It may be possible that he now and then altered for the worse phrases which Southey had deliberately pondered and trimmed; he was obliged to decide, perhaps, in a moment. The correspondence, however, points out but one instance in which this was clearly the case; and we firmly believe that, on the whole, even as to mere words, Southey, like the rest, owed a great deal to that sharp superintendent who, after all, bore the responsibility." Gifford treated all his contributors alike,—even Charles Lamb, who bitterly complained of his alterations. He wrote a review of Wordsworth's "Excursion" for the *Quarterly Review*, but Gifford altered it in such a manner that Lamb compared the alterations to

pulling out the eyes and leaving only the bleeding sockets. "I cannot give you an idea what he (Gifford) has done to it," he wrote to Wordsworth. "The language he has altered throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was, in point of composition, the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ."

Carlyle was equally sensitive in regard to editorial revision, but he did not express his disapproval so strongly as Southey. Writing to Napier of the *Edinburgh Review*, he said, "My respected friend, your predecessor, had some difficulty with me in adjusting the respective prerogatives of author and editor, for though not, as I hope, insensible to fair reason, I used sometimes to rebel against what I reckoned mere authority. And this partly, perhaps, as a matter of literary conscience; being wont to write nothing without studying it if possible to the bottom, and writing always with an almost painful feeling of scrupulosity, that light editorial hacking and hewing to right and left was in general no wise to my mind." Macaulay expressed his belief that Carlyle ceased to write for the *Edinburgh Review*, because the oddities of his diction and his new words drew such strong remonstrances from Napier. Macaulay, on the other hand, valued Napier's corrections, expressing a hope that he would not hesitate to exercise his prerogative, adding, "You will not find me a refractory subject." Macaulay contributed to the same *Review*, and was equally subjected to the pruning knife of the editor, to whom he wrote:—"I have just received and acknowledge, with many thanks, your bankers' bill. From them, as from you, I shall always be delighted to receive communications of this nature. From your liberal payment I can't but conclude that you reward me not only for labouring, but for being mutilated in your service. I assure you I suffer cruelly by the amputation which you were obliged to inflict upon my poor dear paper. I mourn still—as what father can help doing for his children?—for several lovely jokes and promising *facetiæ* which were born and might have lived but for your scissors, waged by ruthless necessity. I trust, however, there are many more which the future may bring forth, and which will meet with more favour in your eyes. I quite agree with your friends, who say Willis was

too leniently used. Oh, to think of my pet passages gone for ever!"

On the whole, however, the judgment of an editor is respected, and his corrections and improvements accepted gratefully by contributors. It is well known that Mr. Delane made numerous alterations in the leading articles written by the *Times'* staff, and the editors of other leading papers take the same liberties with articles written for them.

One word of advice we should like to press upon those ambitious to appear in print. *Don't trouble editors or busy authors* for advice. There may be cases, it is true, where busy men have left their own work in order to help a needy beggar. A youth to fortune and to fame unknown is said to have sent Dumas the manuscript of a new play, asking the great dramatist to become his collaborateur. Dumas was for a moment petrified, then seized his pen and replied:—"How dare you, sir, propose to yoke together a horse and an ass?" The author answered, by return of post: "How dare you, sir, call me a horse?" Dumas, by next mail, wrote: "Send me your play, my young friend." The wit of the young playwright saved him from rejection; but this is an exceptional case. "What business have young scribblers," writes Oliver Wendell Holmes, "to send me their versés and ask my opinion of the stuff? They have no more right to ask me than they have to stop me on the street, run out their tongues, and ask what the matter is with their stomachs, and what they shall take as a remedy." On another occasion he said: "Everybody that writes a book must needs send me a copy. It's very good of them, of course, but they're not all successful attempts at book-making, and most of them are relegated to my hospital for sick books upstairs."

We repeat, that if beginners are determined upon testing the value of their literary wares in the market, they had better obtain competent opinion and criticism beforehand from one who lays himself out for such work; for the quality of many of the manuscripts offered to editors is open to very great improvement. To one of the numerous tribe of would-be authors, who pestered Thackeray, the following letter was forwarded:—"Kensington, W., June 2nd, 1860.—Dear sir,—I scarcely know what to say to you;

save what I have already told you, I am at a loss. However, I can only entreat you to abandon your literary aspirations. You would never write your way, at present at any rate. Besides, your grammar is defective; your style is bad; your composition is very bad. And my profession, in truth, is not fitted for a man possessed of bad health. Pray seek some light employment. Do not grind the wind.—Yours truly,
W. M. THACKERAY."

As an editor, Thackeray cannot be said to have been successful; for, like Charles Dickens, he appears to have had a tender heart. "Contributions from his contributors, and especially the would-be ones," remarks Mr. James Payn, "annoyed and even distressed him to an almost incredible degree. I remember his complaining of one of them with a vigour and irritation which amused me exceedingly. A young fellow had sent him a long story, for which he demanded particular attention 'from the greatest of novelists,' upon the ground that he had a sick sister entirely dependent upon him for support. Thackeray was touched by the appeal, and, contrary to his custom, wrote his correspondent a long letter of advice, enclosing also (which was by no means contrary to his custom) some pecuniary assistance. 'I feel for your position,' he said, 'and appreciate your motive for exertion; but I must tell you at once that you will never do anything in literature. Your contribution is worthless in every way, and it is the truest kindness, both to her for whom you are working and to yourself, to tell you so outright. Turn your mind at once to some other industry.' This produced a reply from the young gentleman which astonished Thackeray a great deal more than it did me. It was couched in the most offensive terms conceivable, and ended by telling 'the greatest of novelists' that, though he had attained by good luck 'the top of the tree, he would one day find himself where he deserved to be, at the bottom of it.' 'For my part,' said Thackeray (upon my showing some premonitory symptoms of suffocation), 'I see little to laugh at. What a stupid, ungrateful creature the man must be! and if ever I waste another half-hour again in writing to a creature of that sort "call me horse," or worse.' He was not so accustomed to the vagaries of rejected contributors as I was."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE JOURNALIST'S LIBRARY.

The Literature of Journalism—The best Course of Reading of a young Reporter—Increasing Demands upon the Reporter—Books of Reference—Common-place Books—The Secret of Mr. Sala's Success—Methods of different Authors—Reading for Culture.

AS the young architect should read many books on architecture, as the young doctor should make himself acquainted with the best that has been written on medicine, so the young journalist should read all the serviceable literature on journalism within his reach. The story of the rise and progress of English journalism has never been told in full, and probably never can be; but the task of writing a dictionary of periodical publications has been courageously undertaken by Mr. Cornelius Walford. When it will be completed it is impossible to say; but "I have in my mind," remarks Mr. Walford, "numbers to be issued, say monthly, and at such a price as will bring the work within the reach of all who have need or fancy for such a compendium." Meanwhile, we may fittingly draw attention to a number of works bearing on the subject of journalism and "the men who have made it." Most of the books in the following list are, however, out of print, but may be consulted at any public library:—

1. "The Life of Edward Baines." By his son, Edward Baines. (London: Longmans & Co.) 1859.
2. "The Fourth Estate": contributions towards a History of Newspapers, and of the Liberty of the Press. 2 vols. By Knight Hunt. (London: David Bogue.) 1850.
3. "History of British Journalism." 2 vols. By Alexander Andrews. (London: Richard Bentley.) 1859.
4. "The Gallery": a sketch of the History of Parliamentary Reporting and Reporters. By Charles J. Gratton. (London: F. Pitman.) 1860.

5. "The Newspaper Press": its Origin, Progress, and Present Position. 3 vols. By James Grant. (London: Tinsley Bros.) 1871.

6. "Starting a 'Daily' in the Provinces." By William Shepherdson. (London: William Reeves.) 1876.

7. "Forty Years' Recollections." 2 vols. By Charles Mackay, LL.D. (London: Chapman & Hall.)

8. "Journals and Journalism": with a Guide for Literary Beginners. By John Oldcastle. (London: Field & Tuer.) 1880.

9. "Forty Years' Recollections." By Thomas Frost. (London: Cassell & Co.) 1880.

10. "Life of George Troup." (Glasgow: Macniven & Wallace.) 1881.

11. "Journalistic London." By Joseph Hatton. (London: Sampson Low & Co.) 1882.

12. "English Journalism, and the Men who have made it." By Charles Pebody. (London: Cassell & Co.)

"I have sometimes reflected," said Mr. Cornelius Walford, at a meeting of the Shorthand Society, "upon the question of the best course of reading for the training of a young reporter in view of his future duties. I trust some of our experienced members will, in due course, offer a paper upon this subject." The suggestion has, however, never been acted upon, and it seems unlikely that it ever will be; for a journalist needs to know so much that it is extremely difficult to say what books he should *not* read. The question, "What books in particular should the young journalist read?" was answered by Mr. Edwin Arnold in the following letter:—

"Daily Telegraph, Fleet-street, London,

"June 23, 1884.

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry not to have time to answer your note at the length necessary for a profitable reply. I should be inclined—hyperbolically—to say that a young journalist should read—

"First, all books.

"Second, all newspapers.

"By how much he can't do this, by so much he will be wanting, as we all are.—Yours very truly,

"EDWIN ARNOLD."

This, at least, may be safely said, that there is no subject and no question upon which information will not be of value at some time of his career. The requirements of the reporter are constantly increasing. "The vocation of

the Press," as Mr. Walford remarks, "must rank higher as the standard of education advances. The reporter will rise to the increasing demands upon him in the future, as he has done in the past." Unlike other classes, he must read not only books for which he has an inclination, but books for which he has no inclination, in order to be well equipped for his work. "Early and late," Mr. Sala told the Birmingham journalists, "in sickness and in health, in travel and at home, I have tried to read more and more books, in the full belief that there was no book—be it even Hobbes's 'Ten Thousand Cab-fares'—from which something might not be extracted which would interest and benefit mankind; and, for the rest, of months and years I have devoted to mental labours, going through dry and dusty tomes, I have received a rich reward."

Replying to the question, "What books of reference would be found useful to a young journalist?" a country editor replies:—"In many cases the problem is not what books would be found most useful, but what can be most easily obtained out of the young journalist's often very limited means. When I commenced my career as a reporter for a north of England journal, over twenty-six years ago, the only books of reference I owned were a pocket Bible, a Cruden's Concordance (abridged), an old school geography, which had to do duty as a gazetteer and atlas; a Newspaper Reader's Companion, containing a list of familiar Latin and French phrases; and Walker's Dictionary. My first substantial addition was Chambers's 'Information for the People'; and this was followed by Maunders's 'Treasury of Knowledge' (a most comprehensive *vade mecum*), Albany Fonblanque's 'How we are Governed' (a useful little manual), and Beeton's 'Dictionary of Universal Information.' The latter is now somewhat out of date, no new edition having, I believe, been issued for more than twenty years, but it is a most useful work, answering to a large extent the purposes of an encyclopædia. I will now endeavour to give a list of works of reference, which, to quote a familiar phrase, 'no library should be without':—Chambers's Encyclopædia, Haydn's 'Dictionary of Dates,' Brewer's 'Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,' Beeton's 'Dictionary of Universal Information,' Maunders's

'Treasury of Knowledge,' Bartlett's 'Familiar Quotations,' 'How we are Governed,' by Fonblanque, 'Men of the Time,' Nuttall's Dictionary, Cassell's French and Latin Dictionaries, Lemprière's 'Classical Dictionary,' Roget's 'Thesaurus,' Bohn's 'Dictionary of Classical Quotations,' Cruden's Concordance, Eadie's 'Bible Cyclopædia,' the Financial Reform Almanack, and Whitaker's Almanack. The list might be considerably enlarged, but any one who possesses the above will not be badly off. But the local journalist should also possess local and county histories, gazetteers, county directories of ancient and modern date."

On the other hand, a well-informed reporter on one of the leading "dailies" tells us that he seldom has occasion to use a book of reference. "A reporter," he says, "almost invariably gets his facts outside, and never comes to the office with the intention of eking out anything, or correcting anything, from books he will find in the office. If a speaker makes a quotation the reporter doesn't know, it is secured from him on the spot. In the case of a quotation the reporter knows, he generally turns it up to see to its literal accuracy. He can seldom trust that the speaker has it exactly right. The commonest quotations are oftenest wrong, and nobody, of course, is more abused than Shakespeare. I took a speech the other day of a well-known member of Parliament, who put his opinion of the Redistribution Bill in the words of Mercutio about his wound, but he gave them in this form: 'It is not so wide as a church door, nor so deep as a well, but it will serve.' The exact substance of the quotation was given, but note how far he was from the exact form of it. Mercutio says: 'No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve.' In such a case the reporter would not think of applying to the speaker, and even if he had the result would not in this case have been satisfactory. It is sometimes a matter of doubt to him whether he ought to put a speaker right. If Mr. Gladstone, for instance, had transposed the well and the church door, and mixed up the quotation, I would have given it as he said it. When the Premier in Midlothian fell into the blunder of pointing to Scotland as 'the land o' the leal,' it would clearly have been a mistake on

the part of the reporter to set him right. The public are interested in knowing what is the state of information on these things in high places. Anything amiss in facts or figures is seldom set right in the office. If the speaker cannot be referred to, the doubtful fact is left out." This, of course, applies to the reporter only. Books of reference are indispensable to the editor and his assistants.

In addition to books of reference, the journalist should have his own common-place books, in which should be pasted every cutting likely to be of value to him in the future. Our great journalists have all some system, by means of which they are able to turn up any fact, statement, or date, in a moment's time. Our great preachers also, have their common-place books, and the freshness of their utterances may be traced in part to their industry in docketing every illustration and fact which comes under their notice. Mr Sala's "Echoes of the Week" in the *Illustrated London News* deal with such a variety of subjects as to surprise even his fellow-scribes. Like Goldsmith's urchins around the village schoolmaster,—

And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head should carry all he knew.

The secret of his versatility lies, to a large extent, in the fact that he systematically pigeon-holes every cutting and indexes every fact which interests him. In his case, as in many others, genius is only another name for hard and systematic work. "They've called me a dashing, go-ahead writer sometimes," says Mr. Sala; "a man to whom the art came easily and is practised without difficulty; whereas I owe my position and usefulness and all I love in the world to incessant and never-ending toil, and to the method I follow of arranging and codifying for reference the knowledge this toil has enabled me to accumulate. Look here, and here, and here—(opening folio after folio, all in MS., and filled with quotations and original thoughts, after Swift, on various subjects)—look at these, and these notes on the political and social history of England from the beginning of the century down to to-day, and you will readily understand how much work, unknown and little

understood, has to be performed before a public writer is qualified for his profession."

Mr. Sala has printed an account of his system of indexing, but it is so complicated that it would serve no useful purpose to quote it. Every methodical writer for the Press has his own system. One man keeps a separate book for every subject, which he indexes day by day, whilst another finds it best for his purpose to put his cuttings into big envelopes, each subject having a separate envelope. An *index rerum* is, however, absolutely essential. The adoption of the plan recommended by a writer in *Modern Thought* has the advantage of cheapness. "After two or three shots which did not hit the mark, on account of imperfection or narrowness of plan, I at length adopted the following method. I procured four of Letts's Diaries (without cash columns, if possible, though this is immaterial), quarto size, and one day to the page. Not new, O impecunious student, for that would mean £2 right away, but second-hand. After studying various plans, I came to the conclusion that that recommended by Todd of adhering to the arrangement of the *vowels*, in a word, classifying them under the first vowel used, must be relegated to oblivion, because, if followed, you would get *Statuary* coming before *Sects*, and numerous other non-alphabetical arrangements. I resolved, therefore, to adhere to the strictly alphabetical arrangement, and to obviate the difficulties that Todd finds in this in another way. I then went through a good Dictionary (Stormonth's is the best for the purpose), and portioned out the space according to the words therein found, and I may note in passing that there are many ways of spending time much less profitably than in going systematically through a dictionary. And here I found what I believe to be an innovation in *index rerum* making, very necessary and advantageous. Not only did I put syllabic references to the top of the pages, but sometimes devoted a page in some cases, or many pages, to a single word. And it is in the selection of such words that a dictionary becomes valuable."

Whatever plan be adopted, every young journalist should keep a record of his reading, and read with his note-book at hand and his scissors by his side. But much as he may

need to read for what may be called professional purposes, he must on no account neglect the perusal of the highest literature, at any rate of the English classics. He must read for *culture*, and for this purpose he should read the best authors only. As the busiest of men, his time is precious, and his moments are few. As a careful teacher puts it, life is short and time is fleeting. The busy professional man, to whom culture is all-important, is often painfully conscious of this truth. He has little leisure, yet he must read. The field of literature is wide, and intersected by many paths, each of which has manifold fascinations. The newspaper and the review, authors modern and ancient, books useful and books fashionable, books of professional and books of general interest, all invite his attention, and suggest their rival claims. But the thing is impossible; he has not even time to investigate their claims, to arbitrate on the several courses presented to him; he too often gives up in despair of finding just that course of faithful and serviceable reading which he especially needs.

Out of this dilemma there is but one safe way of escape. Without hesitation, without compromise, he must resolutely choose the best books, and read them only. Classic authors, and none other, should form his library, should keep him daily company, should be at his side, on his table, in his pocket, ready for the few moments or half-hours of pause or interval which the course of daily duty affords him. At morning dawn, at noonday rest, at evening twilight, at the little breaks in the labours of the day, or at the well-earned leisure at its close, comes that best friend, a book, to yield its willing treasures at his call. The best books should be our only books, and no cultivated reader should omit perusal of the works of our great English classic, Mr. Ruskin. Lists of these works may be obtained from Mr. Ruskin's publisher, Mr. George Allen, Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PERILS OF JOURNALISM.

Endurance needed in a Reporter—The Strain upon Mind and Body—Journalists dying before their Time—Fast Writing the desire of all Leader Writers—The Dangers of drinking—Bohemianism in Glasgow—"Who will do the Shows this year?"—The worst drunkards in London—Reporters who drank Sherry—A Model Editor—Champagne for Journalists—An exploded Idea.

THE possession of a robust body is one of the essential conditions of success in journalism. Without it, no matter how well qualified in other respects, the literary aspirant had better enter some other profession; for a reporter needs the strength of a horse and the endurance of a camel in order to discharge his duties satisfactorily. Reporting has well been described as white slavery, for we do not know any work more laborious. By day and night, in fine weather and in foul, Sunday and week-day alike, the reporter must be ready to go wherever duty calls him. He must also be prepared to go without regular meals; to expose himself to varieties of temperature; and to toil when others play. Such conditions, to which all reporters must submit, are, it is quite obvious, unfavourable to health and long life. Even strong men not unfrequently break down, and retire into less laborious occupations.

In the higher branches of the profession, the strain upon mind and body is even greater; and, as a rule, journalists die many years before their time. For instance, Mr. Delane was only sixty-two when he died, the same age as Tom Taylor. Mr. James Hamilton Fyfe, who was an assistant-editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* under its old management, and, later, of the *Saturday Review*, was only forty-five years of age; but for two years before his death,

"his health utterly gave way under the severe strain to which it had been subjected." Robert Donald, London correspondent of the *Leeds Mercury*, was forty-four; James Macdonell, a leader-writer on the *Times*, thirty-seven; James Rice, thirty-six; while Mr. R. G. O'Shea, London editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, had only reached his twenty-eighth year.

It is the tremendous strain of this fast writing which slays more journalists than anything else. "A friend of mine," remarks the "Rambling Philosopher" of the *Leeds Mercury*, "a brilliant and cultivated writer, was once tempted to give himself up to the service of a daily newspaper. When he began, he found that his leaders cost him five or six hours of incessant labour. When written, they were remarkable for ease, polish, *verve*, grace of style, and originality of thought, and they did much to increase the reputation of the journal with which he was connected. But the editor under whom he served had to tell him that he took too long over his articles, and that half the value of his services was destroyed by his inability to write on the spur of the moment, at the point of the pen, on the news received after midnight; so he girded himself up for the task thus imposed upon him, and gradually he acquired the art of writing more rapidly; though as he did so not a few of the finer qualities which marked his style began to fade away. One day I had a letter from him, in which he said triumphantly, 'I can write a leader now in less than two hours, and I am trying to write more quickly still.' Two days after, I heard that he was dead. 'He died of *strain*,' said the doctor who attended him. The race-horse speed demanded of all journalists of the first class nowadays had killed him. He broke down before he even reached that goal of 'a column an hour,' which is the desire of all leader-writers."

Besides the perils to health which accompany the profession of journalism, there are perils arising from his contact with public officials. Drink is pressed upon him by good-natured though unthinking people at public dinners and on many other occasions; but whenever an appetite for drinking has been acquired, it is more frequently the result of the unhealthy conditions under which the re-

porter labours. He is often without time to take food properly, and an impromptu meal at a railway-station or in the street, has too often largely to take a liquid form. That this appetite has existed amongst literary men, there can be no doubt. Glasgow shares with London the reputation of having been the most Bohemian city in the United Kingdom. Mr. William Hodgson, the editor of the *Fifeshire Journal*, has just published some "Sketches: Personal and Pensive," in which many references to Press life in Glasgow, about a quarter of a century ago, occur. In a city where whisky flowed like water at almost every religious festival, and where every minister, if he did not actually join in the revels which followed ordinations and meetings of the General Assembly, set the example of drinking, it is scarcely likely that a Scotch reporter would make himself singular by totally abstaining from the national drink. The life of these Bohemian reporters was very merry while it lasted, but it ended tragically in most cases. "During the thundrous rattle of a cab down Union-street, one shot himself; another, after parting with his guitar, the companion of his many wanderings,—he got only ninepence for it,—died in a garret. This was James Withers, the Parliamentary reporter whom we have already referred to, an able man who earned plenty of money, but drank it as fast as he earned it. Another of the band was Thomas Clark, who had been a clergyman. He became a journalist because he had 'taken a drop too much.' A few hours before this Bacchanalian reporter died, Mr. Hodgson saw the lips move, and, bending down, listened, and what they said was:—'Who will do the shows this year?' 'It had been his custom for four years to write a description of the shows in Glasgow Green at the Fair time, and he wanted to know, since he was dying, who was going to do the shows next month. In this pathos,' adds Mr. Hodgson, 'this nearly equals Quin's famous saying on the morning of his death—Quin, who never lost the chance of a joke. 'I find, Mr. Quin,' said the solemn-visaged doctor, 'that your cough is no better this morning.' 'That is strange,' replied the dying actor, 'for I've been practising all night.' We poor reporters did all we could for our Addisonian friend. We bought for him a grave all

to himself in the crowding cemetery over the water; but it is one of my keenest sorrows that I have forgotten the spot."

If we are to believe a certain prominent temperance advocate, the sobriety of the Press men of the Metropolis is not what it ought to be. "The worst drunkards in London," said Mr. William Noble, the founder of the Blue Ribbon Army, "are broken-down literary men." The statement may have been made for stage effect, and, although we have no data for comparison, we are nevertheless disposed to question its accuracy. Certainly, all who have written upon the habits of journalists refer to drinking as an evil. "I have known many drunkards among literary men," remarks Mr. Hyde Clarke, "and it was only because they were men of exceptionally strong brain that their excesses did not incapacitate them."* As a rule, however, reporters and journalists of our day are men of sober habits, though their predecessors, it cannot be denied, could scarcely lay special claim to such virtues. Fifty years ago, it was firmly believed that stimulants gave strength, and the reporter transcribed his notes under the influence of alcohol. For instance, Mr. J. W. Green, writing in 1836, said:—"I have for some years been employed as a reporter for the public Press, chiefly in connexion with various religious periodicals. At the anniversary meetings which are held in London in May and June, I am very busily employed, having to attend sometimes two meetings in one day, and then to spend a considerable portion of the night in preparing my reports for immediate publication. At these periods I uniformly abstain from the use of malt liquors, wines, or spirits—my drink at dinner is water, and at other times coffee. The result has been much comfort during my fatiguing labours of body and mind; while many of my brethren who drink plentifully of malt liquors, and prepare their reports with a bottle of sherry or a glass of spirits and water by their side, complain of being *completely fagged*, and often unable to

* "Study and Stimulants, or the use of Intoxicants and Narcotics in relation to Intellectual Life," as illustrated by personal communications on the subject by Men of Letters and of Science. Edited by A. Arthur Reade. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co.

resume their labours at an early hour in the morning." Whatever reporters do off duty, none now drink whilst engaged in reporting and transcribing.

It was also firmly believed that indulgence in alcohol was essential to brilliancy, and Jerdan, in his "Autobiography," gives us a full-length sketch of one who is described as a model editor. "The editor of the *Aurora*," he says, "was originally intended for the Kirk, and was well informed; but to see him at or after midnight, in his official chair, writing his 'leader,' was a treat for a philosopher. With the slips of paper before him, a pot of porter close at hand, and a pipe of tobacco in his mouth, or casually laid down, he proceeded *secundum artem*. The head hung with the chin on his collar-bone, as in deep thought. A whiff,—another—a tug at the porter, and a line and a half or two lines committed to the blotting-paper. By this process, repeated with singular regularity, he would continue to produce as scant a newspaper column as the ignorant public required." But the demand for a more intelligent treatment of public questions has arisen, and absolute sobriety has become indispensable on the part of newspaper writers. Yet in "Study and Stimulants," there appears a letter from M. Taine, who says that he has seen "English journalists writing their articles by night with the aid of a bottle of champagne." The statement must not, however, be accepted unreservedly; but there can be no doubt that alcohol has played a part in the productions of leader-writers as well as in those of some famous authors. In 1856, a versatile journalist hit off some of the weaknesses of certain great men in the following quatrain:—

The King of Prussia drinks champagne;
 Old Porson drank whate'er was handy;
 Maginn drank gin, Judge Blackstone port,
 And many famous wits drink brandy.

Bohemianism, however, is almost extinct in England as well as in America; but one of the reckless knight-errants of journalism has just emerged from retirement to give us reminiscences of his Bohemian life, which all should read, for a darker picture of the seamy side of literature has never been drawn.

Independently of any other consideration, the reporter should avoid "drink," in order to keep his brain clear, for accurate reporting requires excessive care and the possession of a man's whole faculties. Whatever may be said for alcohol, "Dagonet" admits that the idea that drink quickly excited the brain to brilliancy is exploded ; and he says that amongst men who practise drinking there is not so much of the "early gay" as the "early grave."

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON AGREEMENTS.

Religious Periodicals—Difference of Opinion as to length of Notice—
 The case of the *Liverpool Daily Mail*—Mr. J. Rentoul Mitchell
 —The Custom of the Profession—*Farm and Home*—An Editor
 entitled to six months' Notice—A Reporter to one—A National
 Association of Journalists.

THE frequent actions at law by reporters and journalists to secure justice from employers suggest the necessity of written agreements in all cases. This suggestion applies more particularly to London newspapers, and especially to religious periodicals. Even before accepting an agreement in London, the position and character of the proprietor of the paper should be ascertained. There are dishonest men among newspaper-proprietors, as well as among lawyers; and the discovery cannot always be made without personal contact. What, however, it may be asked, is the custom of the profession in regard to notices? The replies to our inquiry among journalists indicate a slight difference of opinion as to the length of notice required. For instance, Mr. D. A. Peachey, the editor of the *Northampton Mercury*, says that an editor, in default of agreement to the contrary, is entitled to three months' notice. "I have given evidence, in company with other editors," he adds, "that the custom allots three months." But the principle that an editor is entitled to six months' notice, and a sub-editor to three, was recognised by the judge of the Liverpool Bankruptcy Court, in a case which came before him on January 4, 1883. The following is a report of the circumstances:—

It was an application by Mr. J. Rentoul Mitchell, formerly chief sub-editor and leader-writer of the *Liverpool Daily Mail*, for an order

of the court reversing the decision of the trustee of the estate of that paper—which came to an abrupt stoppage in October, 1881—by which the claim of the applicant for three months' salary in lieu of notice to terminate his engagement had been disallowed. The trustee contended that a month's salary only could be claimed by a sub-editor in lieu of notice. Mr. T. H. James, barrister, who appeared for Mr. Mitchell, stated that his client before joining the *Liverpool Daily Mail*, had acted as editor of the *Western Mail* and *Manchester Courier*, and after the decease of the Liverpool paper became editor of two newspapers in Manchester. His engagement upon the *Liverpool Daily Mail* was a verbal one, and the claim for three months' salary in lieu of notice was based upon the custom of the profession. He further contended that the amount of the three months' salary should be admitted as a preferential claim upon the estate of the paper. Mr. James then read affidavits to prove the custom of the profession to be that in the absence of any express stipulation to the contrary, an editor of a newspaper is entitled to six months' and a sub-editor to three months' notice to determine an engagement, and in default thereof to the salary for that period. Amongst the affidavits were those of Mr. Joseph Hatton, the novelist and journalist; Mr. John Lovell, late manager of the "Press Association," and now editor of the *Liverpool Mercury*; Mr. A. G. Jeans, manager of the *Liverpool Daily Post*; and Mr. Lascelles Carr, editor of the *Western Mail*. Mr. R. Neville, barrister, who appeared on behalf of the trustee, said he had to withdraw that portion of his case which denied the custom of the profession to be as stated by the applicant. He would contend, however, that although the amount of salary due to Mr. Mitchell was for three months, and not one month, it could not be admitted as a preference claim, but must rank as an ordinary debt against the estate. The case was then fully argued upon this point. The judge held that while salary due for services actually rendered had preference, compensation in lieu of notice must rank only as an ordinary debt. An order was then made reversing the decision of the trustee as to the custom of the profession, but directing the applicant's claim to be admitted as an ordinary and not a preferential claim.

A clearer illustration of the principle laid down by Mr. Thompson, the judge who heard the above application, was given at the Court of Queen's Bench, in February, 1884, in the case of *Hollings v. Robinson*, the circumstances under which the action arose being stated in the following report:—

This was an action to recover arrears of salary and payment for extra work done as the editor of a paper, also to recover damages for wrongful dismissal. Mr. Willis, Q.C., and Mr. Hollings were counsel for the plaintiff, Mr. Wheeler representing defendant. Mr. Hollings opened the case, stating that the defendant owned some newspapers connected with gardening, and in March, 1882, he founded a paper called *Farm and Home*, which was devoted to matters relating to agriculture. The plaintiff had had considerable experience as an

agriculturist, and he was engaged to edit the new venture. It was arranged that his salary should be 50s. per week to begin with, but that if at the end of the year the circulation of the journal had reached between 12,000 and 13,000, the salary should be increased to five guineas. It was further agreed that if the paper attained a circulation of from 25,000 to 50,000, the plaintiff should have a proportionate increase of salary from five to ten guineas. It was stipulated that his hours of labour should be from nine in the morning till six in the evening, and that he should have the assistance of a sub-editor and a shorthand-writer. The latter part of the agreement was not carried out, and the result was that the plaintiff's labours were much increased. After a while plaintiff ascertained that the circulation of the paper was increasing even beyond the point that had been anticipated. He therefore applied for the promised increase of salary, but the defendant deferred the matter again and again. At length, in September, 1883, the plaintiff asked for £100 in settlement of arrears of salary and for extra work. The defendant became annoyed at this, and afterwards gave the plaintiff a month's notice. The defendant tendered the plaintiff a month's "wages," as he called it, but the plaintiff declined to accept it, and on the following day he found that the rooms which he had usually occupied at the office were closed against him. The defendant gave evidence denying the greater part of the evidence for the plaintiff. He asserted that he only promised the plaintiff an increase if he realised a profit on the paper, and, as a matter of fact, on the first year he sustained a considerable loss. Even if he had made the promises alleged, the net circulation of the paper when the plaintiff applied for an increase was not so large as was asserted. Further, he dismissed the plaintiff because he considered that he had made a false claim upon him. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, damages £281. 10s., expressly stating it as their opinion that the plaintiff, as an editor, was entitled to six months' notice. His lordship gave judgment accordingly, with costs.

On the other hand, it is doubtful whether a reporter can claim more than a month's notice; and Mr. Pitt Taylor, in adjudicating upon a case submitted to him at the Greenwich County Court, ruled that if a reporter is paid by the week he is entitled only to a week's notice. On daily papers, however, a month's notice on either side is the rule; but when an employer discharges a reporter a three months' notice is not unusual.

It is a curious circumstance, however, that journalism, unlike other professions, has never had any organisation for the protection of its interests. There has been no bond of union between the members of the various branches of the profession, no central authority to appeal to in case of dispute between servant and master, no fund for the relief of those in sickness or out of employment. The News-

paper Press Fund, it is true, has done something for the "relief of necessitous members of the literary departments of the Press," but we understand that its grants of money have been largely confined to unfortunate authors. Even if it extended its charity to those for whom it was originally founded, the Fund would not meet all the varied requirements of the reporters, sub-editors, and editors throughout the United Kingdom. Hence a feeling has long been entertained that it is desirable, in the common interests of the profession, to establish an association of journalists under their own control. To the Manchester Press Club, however, belongs the honour of originating a scheme ; and, after a conference with other brethren, it was finally determined, at a representative meeting at Birmingham, October, 1884, to form an association "for the purpose of protecting and advancing the common interests of the profession, under the title of the National Association of Journalists." From the draft of the scheme we learn that the objects of the Association are the following :—

"To protect the common interests of the journalistic profession by resisting any attempt which may be made to encroach upon its rights and privileges, to advance the status of the profession, and to secure those advantages which in the case of other professions have been found to accrue from union ; it being distinctly understood that the Association does not contemplate interference in any dispute which may arise relating solely to the rate of payment or remuneration of any member of the Association, but will at all times be prepared to afford to members, through the medium of its branches, information as to the status and general character of newspapers and journals on which they may be seeking employment, and will also, when practicable, lend assistance in procuring such employment." It is also under consideration to establish a benefit branch ; and it is hoped that at the next conference, which will be held in London, some definite scheme for giving assistance to members of the Association will be adopted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LITERATURE AS A PROFESSION.

Literature the worst of all Professions—Earnings of a Magazine-writer—David Cox the Painter—Corn in Egypt and Cash in Leadenhall-street—Writing a Recreation—The Opinion of the World—The value of Style—Writing in Office Hours—John Stuart Mill—The Banker-historian—Authors who rose with the Lark—Value of Morning Hours—Spare Moments—Why Literature should be followed—Anthony Trollope's advice to the Literary Aspirant.

LITERATURE has its rewards, but they rarely take the form of a balance at the bankers. If adopted as a profession, it is to most men the worst of all professions. Referring to De Quincey's gains, Professor Masson declares that a writer for magazines and reviews can hardly, by his utmost industry, unless he is on the staff of a newspaper, or is exceptionally retained as Southey and Macaulay were, make more than £250 a year, and Mr. Edmund Yates says that the income of the late Mr. Abraham Hayward, though always at work, never exceeded £200 a year. The untrained and unknown writer, therefore, stands very little chance of earning bread-and-butter as a contributor to magazines. There are, it is admitted, a few men whose incomes from literary work are very large, but it is undeniable that these men have worked their way to the top of their profession. Professor F.W. Newman remarks that in every profession a man labours with very scanty and inadequate pay for years, but when his merits are known he gets too much work. Among artists, the most striking illustration is that of David Cox, who, up to his sixtieth year, never received more than twenty guineas for a large drawing.

In journalism the prizes come earlier. The editors of some of our great daily papers are quite young men,

and in literature the successful novelists and dramatists of the day are considerably younger than David Cox when he made his great hit as an artist. From a careful perusal of literary biographies we have come to the conclusion that literature as a profession is undesirable. Gibbon, De Quincey, Southey, Lamb, Sir Walter Scott, and many other men of note, condemned reliance upon literature for support. The classics in our literature were, with few exceptions, not written for bread. Lamb was well paid for the best of his literary work, but there was no pressure upon him to write. "Thank God," he wrote to Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, "you and I are something besides being writers. There is corn in Egypt while there is cash in Leadenhall-street." Referring to Lamb's play "John Woodvill," which had been refused by John Kemble and attacked by the *Edinburgh Review*, Thomas Craddock wrote:—

"After this ill success Lamb paused. Literature was his choice, not his necessity. His daily bread was provided. He could do without the plaudits of theatres or the welcome of booksellers. When he wrote, he wrote from that state of mind which makes writing a relief, which discharges, as it were, a debt of brain, and makes its functions haler and sounder for the effort. But while this condition of the intellect was in course of forming he had no cause to whip it into action. He left it to grow uneasy by accumulation; and when he felt a strain on the nerves of thought, which a little composition would relieve, he sat down to compose. It was not a part of Lamb's nature to work hard for renown, nor did he put much value on popular opinion. But he seemed to set a high value on a little money derived from the brain, though it might be only as farthings compared with gold to what he received from Leadenhall-street. Yet, in his mind, it would reverse itself, and be as gold compared with farthings in his secret estimation. Had he had half the solicitude and perseverance of inferior men, he might have reached a name through poetry. But the first check was enough. He declined to dispute the opinion of the world, and for twenty-three years he had written nothing new, nothing that he

thought fit for separate publication in poetry. This is the real and only method of producing high-class writing; but it is a method which young authors have no patience to adopt, and old ones generally cannot afford to do so."

Lamb was most successful with his essays, which will never lose their mark. A man of quite an opposite turn of mind—Dr. Bain—holds that in a transition time, when a man of very original views in philosophy, or in sociology, has little chance of being listened to, it would be a mistake to depend for one's livelihood on writing books; he contends that the same objection does not apply to literature, and remarks:—"Any born man whose genius lies in style, can make a living with comparative ease: such a man would not better his condition by serving eight hours a day in a counting-house, and using the few remaining hours for literary work." Much, of course, depends upon the occupation. John Stuart Mill was nominally engaged six hours a day; but probably never gave more than half of that time to his office routine. His two great works—"Logic" and "Political Economy"—were written during his office-hours. If he had been serving under a private master, he would not have been allowed to give up his business time to extraneous work. Grote took a much better measure of the situation of a business man with erudite tastes. He found that while engaged in the work of the banking-house he could not only pursue an extensive course of reading, but also work up essays on limited subjects; yet when he began the Herculean labours of remodelling the entire "History of Greece," he needed to have his whole time at his disposal for twelve years.

Dr. Bain is right as to the necessity of devoting days as well as nights when engaged upon such undertakings as Grote's; but a vast amount of literary work has been accomplished by business men. Anthony Trollope was a prolific writer, but his best novels were written during his connexion with the post office. When he removed to London, he rose at five o'clock every morning, and generally worked until eleven. Macaulay wrote his brilliant essays under similar conditions. The Rev. Charles Kingsley wrote several good novels, but he never allowed his literary work to interfere with his pulpit or

parish work. He rose at five and wrote till breakfast time.

It is hardly possible to over-estimate the value of the morning hours for purposes of study. The house is quiet and the mind is fresh. Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, considered that a single hour of composition won from the business of the day is worth more than the whole day's toil of him who works at the trade of literature; and what a great deal might be done by using spare moments! M. Littré composed the preface to his dictionary whilst his bedroom was being put in order daily, and Chancellor D'Aguesseau wrote a book whilst his wife was preparing dinner. The "Light of Asia" was written in the respites from toil of a man at the head of a great daily newspaper. Sir Arthur Helps wrote his essays in the intervals of business. Sir John Lubbock is an authority in pre-historic history; and a short time ago he published a valuable work on ants and wasps; yet most of his observations were made in the hours secured to him by early rising. It is, nevertheless, pleaded by some literary aspirants that they have not time to do good work; but the plea cannot be sustained by argument. As the Rev. H. R. Haweis says:—"It is the really active-minded, busy people who can find time for everything. Bacon, though Chancellor, had time to found modern science; Herbert Spencer, though, I believe, holding an arduous Government appointment, has had time to inspire half the philosophy and metaphysics of the age in that masterly series of works beginning with 'First Principles,' and of which the essay on 'Ethics,' is the latest instalment; Judge Grove has had time to produce the 'Correlation of the Physical Sciences'; Creasy, an active barrister, was a voluminous historian and essayist; Sam Warren, a brilliant novelist; Lord Beaconsfield produced his novels when actively engaged in political life; and when you come to Mr. Gladstone you come to a man who can write on any subject with equal fluency—*de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*—therefore I repeat, the excuse of 'no time' ought to weigh with no true educator."

At any rate, it is better not to rely upon literature for a living. It should be followed for its own sake, not for what it will bring; for, as Samuel Rogers, the banker-

poet said, when literature is the sole business of life, it becomes drudgery; but when it is resorted to only at certain hours, it is a charming relaxation. It is impossible, however, to lay down rules for the guidance of beginners, because if a young man be unable to find his right place in one branch of literary work, he may in another. "Shall I succeed?" is often asked. The question is answered by Anthony Trollope. "Oh, my young aspirant," he exclaims, "be sure that no one can tell you! To do so it would be necessary not only to know what there is now within you, but also to foresee what time will produce there. This, however, I think may be said to you, without any doubt as to the wisdom of the counsel given, that if it be necessary for you to live by your work, do not begin by trusting to literature. Take the stool in the office as recommended to you by the hard man; and then, in such leisure hours as may belong to you, let the praise which has come from that soft man induce you to persevere in your literary attempts. Should you fail, then your failure will not be fatal—and what better could you have done with the leisure hours had you not so failed? Such double toil, you will say, is severe. Yes; but if you want this thing, you must submit to severe toil."

CHAPTER XXV.

AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS.

Failures in Literature—The Value of a Name—Mr. Payn's Experience—How a Publisher's Opinion is influenced—The Value of Books on Questions of Reform—An Irish Landlord's experience—Herbert Spencer's "Descriptive Sociology"—The Personalities of History—Holyoake's History of Co-operation—Fiction the most remunerative branch of Literary work—The Requirements of Mudie—Modern Jeremiahs—Recent Literary Hits—"Vice Versâ"—"Called Back"—What to do with rejected Manuscripts.

READERS of Kingsley will remember that when Alton Locke refers with the hopeful pride of youth to the "innumerable glories of great Englishmen who have risen from the lowest ranks," his complacency is wrecked by the bitter question, "Where are the stories of those who have not risen; of all the noble geniuses who have ended in desperation, drunkenness, starvation, and suicide?" To no calling and profession is this question more applicable than to that of literature. Failure in it is certainly more common than success. But it should be remarked, that, unlike most other professions or trades, it requires little capital. As Anthony Trollope said:—"A man may, or may not, have another employment to back him, or means of his own; or, as was the case with Thackeray, when after his first misadventure, he had to look out for the means of living—he may have nothing but his friends. The idea comes to the man that as he has the pen and ink, and time on his hand, why should he not write and make money?" Because Macaulay, Dickens, or Scott made princely incomes by literature, many a man flatters himself that he may possibly do the same. He does not appear to know that these are exceptional cases, and that the great majority of

authors are perhaps in some respects worse off than a common labourer.

"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare. "In books," answered Mr. Payn, "it has almost the same weight in this country as a title has in the case of an individual. A good name may not be 'better than riches' on the back of a good book, but it greatly enhances its pecuniary value. The name of the author, if he is a popular one, is also a tower of strength. Again and again have well-known writers, having composed a work which has especially taken their fancy, attempted to make a new departure with it, and by publishing it anonymously to gain a second reputation. Bulwer, for example, tried it, and Trollope tried it, both with unsatisfactory results. No one can afford to give up the momentum of their popularity, and start afresh without it up the hill." Mr. Payn tried it in the case of "A Perfect Treasure," which, he says, was a complete failure. The treatment of an author by a publisher depends entirely upon his position in the literary world. "Make yourself a name, and I will publish anything you write," was the answer of a Paris publisher to Dumas; and that is practically what every English publisher says to a beginner in authorship.

A long list of great works which have been refused by publishers might be given; and, standing alone, would seem to show a remarkable want of judgment on the part of the publishers who rejected them. But a larger list might be made of equally great works which they accepted at first sight. It is easy to call publishers shortsighted; but, as a rule, their judgment is sound. They know the taste of their public better than an inexperienced author, and it is unreasonable to expect them to publish the efforts of every unknown man. As a matter of fact, it seems impossible for a publisher to read the mass of manuscripts sent to him every day; and, unless submitted by men of mark, they stand little chance of being carefully read. A publisher's opinion of a work is, in fact, influenced by the position of the author. An unscrupulous person is said to have found one of Jules Sandeau's manuscripts, sent it to a publisher as a production of his own; but the publisher refused it as being a poor work. Sandeau came

to hear of this, and, mild as he was in temper, he could not stomach the affront. He sent back the manuscript to the publisher in his own name, and, of course, it was accepted this time. Upon this he wrote a bitter letter; but the publisher explained that the first manuscript had been put into the hands of a reader, whereas the second had been perused, "with the utmost admiration," by himself. "This makes the matter worse," said poor Sandeau; "the reader may be of the same opinion still," and he was so much affected that he revised the book all through before he would let it be printed. The same thing happened to Alphonse Daudet, who, like Trollope, was anxious to test the exact worth of his novel in the market.

We would, therefore, warn a beginner in authorship against expecting a publisher to take the risk of publishing a first work, not to say paying a good sum for the privilege. This warning especially applies to those who are ambitious to reform the world by the publication of their views on any question. Many years ago, Mr. G. H. Lewes declared that the man who has an urgent impulse to instruct his fellows on the great problems, must not expect to be paid for doing so; *he* must pay for the privilege, and after paying for it, he may find the privilege waste-paper. Sir George Cornwall Lewis published an "Essay on the Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion." Notwithstanding the position of the author and the excellence of the reviews, only 230 copies were sold. Charles Dickens said that it was not his best work which sold best, but the one which followed his best, and had thus the advantage of its popularity. This was not the experience of Lord Dufferin. In 1857, he wrote "Letters from High Latitudes," which became very popular. Becoming an Irish landlord, he wrote a small work on the Irish Land Question, which has always been a burning question, but, notwithstanding the most eloquent and expensive advertisements "not a single copy had been purchased by an undiscerning public."

Mr. Herbert Spencer belongs to the first rank of writers on mental philosophy, but so small was the demand for his "Descriptive Sociology," that he had to discontinue its publication in 1881. With the issue of the eighth part he printed the following "notice of cessation":—"The col-

lecting, classifying, and abstracting of the materials contained in the parts now completed, was commenced in 1867; and the work, carried on at first by one compiler, subsequently by two, and for some years by three, has continued down to the present time. On going through his accounts, Mr. Spencer finds that during the fourteen years which have elapsed since the undertaking was commenced, the payments to compilers, added to the cost of printing, &c., have amounted to £4,425. 15s. 7d., while up the present time the returns—including those from America—have been £1,054. 12s. 1d.; returns which, when they have been increased by the amount derived from the first sales of the part now issued, will leave a deficit of about £3,250. Even had there been shown considerable appreciation of the work, it would still have been out of the question to continue it in face of the fact that after the small sales which immediately follow publication, the returns, so far from promising to pay expenses in course of time, do not even yield five per cent. interest on the capital sunk. Should the day ever come when the love for the personalities of history is less, and the desire for its instructive facts greater, those who occupy themselves in picking out the gold from the dross will perhaps be able to publish their results without inflicting on themselves losses too grievous to be borne—nay, may possibly receive some thanks for their pains.”

Another illustration of the fact that the books which cost the greatest labour and the largest amount of money do not always sell, is furnished in Mr. Holyoake's "History of Co-operation in England from 1812 to 1878." This valuable work took him ten years to write, and cost £1,000. "Counting," he says, "what I might have earned otherwise in the time, and the cost of printing it—I never expect to see my money again,—gain by it never entered my mind."

Fiction is by far the most remunerative branch of literary work, and has become a leading feature of nearly every weekly newspaper. The payment, for an original tale written by a popular novelist, varies from £100 to £1,200, the author retaining the right to publish the work subsequently in book form; but it is, of course, impossible for a

beginner to obtain such prices. If his first efforts were published in the orthodox three-volume form, they would probably not pay expenses. A short time ago a publisher stated in the *Daily News* that over 3,000 novels are written in one year, of which 350 see the light, and of these, only about 120 pay the expenses of production! It is a mistake, however, on the part of a new author to conform to the requirements of Mudie. Let him publish his book in readable form, in one volume; and his chances of success will be greatly increased. If we are to believe some modern Jeremiahs, there is a tremendous falling off in the quality of the novels of the present day. This is accounted for by the *World* thus:—"Where Charles Reade or Wilkie Collins wrote one novel, the professional novelist of the period, knocks off half a dozen. It does not pay him to spend on his book more time than is just necessary to satisfy the public."

That the public are not wedded to certain popular men is shown in the success attending "*Vice Versâ*," the author of which is said to be the son of a London tailor. Before the appearance of his book, he was utterly unknown to fame. It is declared that no such literary success has been achieved since the publication of "*Jane Eyre*," and some enthusiasts boldly place him by the side of Dickens. Many editions of "*Vice Versâ*" have been exhausted. Yet it was refused by several of the leading publishers; and, even when in type, two of the largest firms in the United States declined to have anything to do with it. "*John Inglesant*" is another case in point. The story of the publication of Mr. Shorthouse's romance, is one of the most remarkable of modern literary histories. It was written for private amusement, and printed for private circulation. Nobody set less value upon it in a popular sense, than the author. It had, he thought, something good for those who understood it, but for the world at large it was unfitted. Mr. Macmillan, the publisher, however, saw a copy of the private publication, and was so struck by it, that he asked to be allowed to give it to the larger world. So little did the author believe in it, even after it appeared, that finding a heap of copies in a bookseller's one day, he laughingly declared that they would never sell, but offered to buy them if they remained a burden to the

counter. Since then, edition has followed edition. Mr. Gladstone declared that the power to appreciate the romance is a criterion of the power to appreciate real literature; and it was pronounced the greatest book of the new literature if we conceive of the old as having died with George Eliot.

The most recent literary success is "Called Back," by Mr. Hugh Conway. His real name is Fred. J. Fergus, and he was formerly engaged in the naval service, serving on board H.M.S. *Conway*. After leaving the service, he assisted his father, an auctioneer at Bristol. In the intervals of business he wrote sketches and poems; and at Christmas, 1883, appeared "Called Back," for which, we understand, he was paid £80 by the publisher, Mr. Arrowsmith, of Bristol. This book made the fortunes of the publisher and the author, who quickly gave up business in order to devote himself to a literary career. Like Byron, he awoke one morning, and found himself famous, with an army of editors knocking at his door for stories, and crowds at the theatres to see the dramatised version of his remarkable novel. Yet "Called Back" is the work of an unprofessional writer, who had none "of the usual aids and influences by which an author's popularity is maintained and promoted." Who would dare to say that the public do not care for good work when it is placed within their reach? Placing it is the difficulty; but if a publisher will not put it into the market, the only course left for the author is to issue it himself. Full information on this and many other subjects of interest and importance to literary aspirants and journalists, is given in "Authorship and Publication," published by Messrs. Wyman & Sons.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WORDS OF CONSOLATION.

A Newspaper Training not Essential—The cases of Mr. Henry Dunckley, Dr. Carruthers, Mr. George Troup, and Mr. Sala—How are Situations to be obtained—The Value of Introductions—Men who fought their own Battles—Always room for Good Work—The Experience of a “European Journalist”—Phenomenal Creatures in the *Athenæum*—A Man who kept his Eyes open—Travelling an important part of Education—Blackie’s Advice—How Bayard Taylor prepared himself for Journalism—Mr. Delane’s Training.

FOR the consolation of those who are no longer young, or unable to accept the pay of a junior whilst learning the profession of journalism, we may mention that Mr. Henry Dunckley, one of the most accomplished journalists in England, underwent no newspaper training for the work of editing the *Manchester Examiner and Times*. For several years he was minister of an obscure Baptist church in Salford; but, possessing literary ability, he used it for the purpose of supplementing the slender income derived from his pastorate. The high character of his literary work eventually brought him under the notice of the proprietors of the paper with which his name is associated; and in a very short time afterwards he exchanged the pulpit for the press. Another illustration of the non-necessity of a regular training for the work of an editor is furnished in the career of the late Dr. Carruthers, who for fifty years edited the *Inverness Courier*. He left the desk of the schoolmaster for the desk of the editor; and the influence of the paper is said to have grown rapidly under his skilful direction. The first daily newspaper in Scotland was edited by a man who had in early life followed the trade of an ironmonger. We refer to Mr. George Troup.

Another illustration is furnished in the career of Mr. George Augustus Sala, who was an insurance agent, as well as an engraver, before he became a leader-writer on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*.

How are situations to be obtained? is a not unnatural question. Some by means of advertisements, and others by means of introductions to editors. Mr. Edwin Arnold obtained the editorship of the *Daily Telegraph* by answering an advertisement, and Professor Palmer, as previously mentioned, obtained work as a leader writer on the *Standard* by the same means. On the other hand, Dickens became a reporter on the *Morning Chronicle* through the instrumentality of Thomas Littleton Holt; Dr. Mackay became sub-editor of the same newspaper through the influence of Mr. Robert McWilliam, a Middlesex magistrate; Shirley Brooks owed his connexion with the press "to the good offices of Angus Reach;" and Charles Lamb to Hazlitt.

If the aspirant to journalism can secure an introduction to an editor, it may help him; but it need scarcely be urged that an introduction, even if it lead to anything, cannot ensure him success. That depends entirely upon his own abilities and his own individual exertions. It may be well to remind those who are craving for introductions that most of those now at the top of the profession have fought their own battles in getting to the front. The case of Mr. Walker, the editor of the *London Gazette*, we have already noticed. Perhaps a more striking instance is that of Mr. Andrew Halliday, whose career well illustrates the difficulties experienced by literary men in their struggles for fame. A student at Aberdeen University, he determined in his nineteenth year, and before his graduation, to visit London. A desire to be independent induced him to seek literary work, and to postpone his degree to a more convenient season. "This resolve of the youth was characteristic of the man. He entered the great city unknown and unfriended, supported by a consciousness of power and a determination to succeed. Nor was this confidence misplaced. He became connected with important daily journals, his contributions attracted wide attention, and his pen was early sought for by the giants of the press." It would, however, be considered foolhardy for a young man;

however brilliant, to come to London without some prospect of employment; but our advice to all who seek situations on the Press is:—Rely upon your own powers and your own work, rather than upon introductions.

It is well known that journalism, like other professions, is greatly overcrowded, but there is always room for good work. This, at least, is the conclusion of a "European Journalist," who has written an account of his experiences. Resolving to make himself a journalist, the question arose how? "When," he says, "I looked over the advertisements in the *Athenæum* and saw how many clever fellows,—men who could write anything at a moment's notice, from a "five line-paragraph" to a three-volume novel,—verbatim reporters, brilliant leader-writers, accomplished critics, university graduates with a knowledge of all the modern languages, and other phenomenal creatures, were offering their services for next to nothing, my heart sank within me, and I had serious thoughts of turning my attention to something else. But I did not, and after giving the matter due consideration, I decided to go abroad, study foreign languages, and otherwise prepare myself for the calling which I had chosen. This I did, and besides studying assiduously, especially the German language and literature, I read the newspapers and kept my eyes open. One day an event occurred that gave me an opportunity for which I had been long watching. An Englishman, quite innocent of offence, fell into the hands of the police of the city in which I was living, and was brutally maltreated. I wrote an account of the affair, and sent it to an English paper. My letter had a great success; it was quoted far and wide. I followed it up with others, and so became an acknowledged and paid correspondent of the paper in question. I wrote very carefully, generally going over the ground twice, and never minding whether my articles were accepted or not. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why, after our connexion had lasted a few months, the editor offered me a permanent place at headquarters. I accepted it; less on account of the salary, which was ridiculously small, than that it afforded me the long-desired chance of becoming a 'professional journalist.' My duties in my new situation were rather multifarious than

arduous: I did translations; wrote reviews, leading articles, and even musical critiques, for which last my qualifications were an indifferent ear and a profound ignorance of music."

Though a newspaper training is not absolutely essential for success, even in the higher ranks of journalism, it is quite obvious that a knowledge of the world and the possession of extensive information are indispensable. Buckle held travelling a necessary and important part of education; and Professor Blackie, addressing his students in the spring of 1880, urged them, above all things, to make large use of the great facilities provided for travelling; to travel even hastily through a new country is, he says, to impress the mind vividly with a whole world of new pictures, and to sow the seeds of a whole harvest of new and fruitful reflections. Bayard Taylor prepared himself for the work of journalism by travelling. "I cannot," he said, "disconnect my early longings for a knowledge of the Old World from a still earlier passion for art and literature. To the latter was added a propensity, which I have never unlearned, of acquiring as much knowledge as possible through the medium of my own experience, rather than to accept it, unquestioned, from anybody else."

Mr. John Thaddeus Delane, who was for thirty-six years editor of the *Times*, underwent an exhaustive training in order to enable him to discharge the onerous duties of his office. Immediately on leaving Oxford—indeed before taking his degree—he was qualifying himself for almost any profession. He walked the London hospitals for several terms, and, having a natural taste for the art of medicine and for operative surgery, he made more real progress than many who have no other aim than the exercise of the medical profession. He kept his terms at the Middle Temple, where he was called to the Bar. He reported both on circuit and at the House of Commons, where for two years he took his turn in the gallery. There was no necessary training which he did not undergo with as much spirit as if his career were to begin and end there—an example to those who imagine that important positions are to be jumped into or to be had for the asking, and that luck is the arbiter of eminence.

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