

# Walking-Stick Papers eBook

## Walking-Stick Papers

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# Contents

<a href="#">Walking-Stick Papers eBook.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Table of Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Page 1.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Page 2.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Page 3.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Page 4.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Page 5.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Page 6.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Page 7.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Page 8.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Page 9.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Page 10.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Page 11.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Page 12.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Page 13.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Page 14.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Page 15.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Page 16.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Page 17.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Page 18.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Page 19.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Page 20.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Page 21.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Page 22.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>



[Page 23..... 36](#)

[Page 24..... 37](#)

[Page 25..... 38](#)

[Page 26..... 39](#)

[Page 27..... 40](#)

[Page 28..... 41](#)

[Page 29..... 43](#)

[Page 30..... 44](#)

[Page 31..... 45](#)

[Page 32..... 46](#)

[Page 33..... 47](#)

[Page 34..... 48](#)

[Page 35..... 49](#)

[Page 36..... 50](#)

[Page 37..... 51](#)

[Page 38..... 53](#)

[Page 39..... 55](#)

[Page 40..... 56](#)

[Page 41..... 58](#)

[Page 42..... 60](#)

[Page 43..... 61](#)

[Page 44..... 62](#)

[Page 45..... 63](#)

[Page 46..... 64](#)

[Page 47..... 65](#)

[Page 48..... 66](#)



[Page 49..... 67](#)

[Page 50..... 68](#)

[Page 51..... 69](#)

[Page 52..... 71](#)

[Page 53..... 73](#)

[Page 54..... 75](#)

[Page 55..... 76](#)

[Page 56..... 78](#)

[Page 57..... 80](#)

[Page 58..... 81](#)

[Page 59..... 82](#)

[Page 60..... 83](#)

[Page 61..... 84](#)

[Page 62..... 86](#)

[Page 63..... 87](#)

[Page 64..... 88](#)

[Page 65..... 89](#)

[Page 66..... 90](#)

[Page 67..... 92](#)

[Page 68..... 93](#)

[Page 69..... 94](#)

[Page 70..... 95](#)

[Page 71..... 96](#)

[Page 72..... 97](#)

[Page 73..... 99](#)

[Page 74..... 100](#)



[Page 75..... 101](#)

[Page 76..... 102](#)

[Page 77..... 103](#)

[Page 78..... 105](#)

[Page 79..... 107](#)

[Page 80..... 109](#)

[Page 81..... 111](#)

[Page 82..... 113](#)

[Page 83..... 115](#)

[Page 84..... 116](#)

[Page 85..... 117](#)

[Page 86..... 118](#)

[Page 87..... 119](#)

[Page 88..... 120](#)

[Page 89..... 121](#)

[Page 90..... 122](#)

[Page 91..... 124](#)

[Page 92..... 126](#)

[Page 93..... 128](#)

[Page 94..... 129](#)

[Page 95..... 131](#)

[Page 96..... 132](#)

[Page 97..... 133](#)

[Page 98..... 134](#)

[Page 99..... 135](#)

[Page 100..... 136](#)



[Page 101..... 137](#)

[Page 102..... 138](#)

[Page 103..... 139](#)

[Page 104..... 141](#)

[Page 105..... 142](#)

[Page 106..... 143](#)

[Page 107..... 144](#)

[Page 108..... 145](#)

[Page 109..... 146](#)

[Page 110..... 148](#)

[Page 111..... 149](#)

[Page 112..... 150](#)

[Page 113..... 151](#)

# Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
WALKING-STICK PAPERS		1
PROLOGUE		1
I		6
II		13
III		17
IV		23
V		29
VI		37
VII		42
VIII		45
IX		51
X		56
XI		60
XII		66
XIII		72
XIV		77
XV		79
XVI		82
XVI		86
XVIII		92
XIX		94
XX		97
XXI		102
XXII		108
EPILOGUE		109



# Page 1

## WALKING-STICK PAPERS

### PROLOGUE

#### ON CARRYING A CANE

Some people, without doubt, are born with a deep instinct for carrying a cane; some consciously acquire the habit of carrying a cane; and some find themselves in a position where the matter of carrying a cane is thrust upon them.

Canes are carried in all parts of the world, and have been carried—or that which was the forefather of them has been carried—since human history began. Indeed, a very fair account of mankind might be made by writing the story, of its canes. And nothing that would readily occur to mind would more eloquently express a civilisation than its evident attitude toward canes. Perhaps nothing can more subtly convey the psychology of a man than his feeling about a cane.

The prehistoric ape, we are justified in assuming, struggled upright upon a cane. The cane, so to speak, with which primitive man wooed his bride, defended his life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, and brought down his food, was (like all canes which are in good taste) admirably chosen for the occasion. The spear, the stave, the pilgrim's staff, the sword, the sceptre—always has the cane-carrying animal borne something in his hand. And, down the long vista of the past, the cane, in its various manifestations, has ever been the mark of strength, and so of dignity. Thus as a man originally became a gentleman, or a king, by force of valour, the cane in its evolution has ever been the symbol of a superior caste.

A man cannot do manual labour carrying a cane. And it would be a moral impossibility for one of servile state—a butler, for instance, or a ticket-chopper—to present himself in the role of his occupation ornamented with a cane. One held in custody would not be permitted to appear before a magistrate flaunting a cane. Until the stigma which attaches to his position may be erased he would be shorn of this mark of nobility, the cane.

Canes are now carried mostly by the very youthful and the very aged, the powerful, the distinguished, the patrician, the self-important, and those who fancy to exalt themselves. Some, to whom this privilege is denied during the week by their fear of adverse public opinion, carry canes only on Sundays and holidays. By this it is shown that on these days they are their own masters.

Custom as to carrying canes varies widely in different parts of the world; but it may be taken as a general maxim that the farther west you go the less you see of canes. The instinct for carrying a cane is more natural in old civilisations, where the tradition is of

ancient growth, than in newer ones, where frequently a cane is regarded as the sign of an effete character. As we have been saying, canes, we all feel, have an affinity with the idea of an aristocracy. If you do not admit that the idea of an aristocracy



## Page 2

is a good one, then doubtless you are down on canes. It is interesting to observe that canes have flourished at all especially chivalrous periods and in all especially chivalrous communities. No illustrator would portray a young planter of the Old South without his cane; and that fragrant old-school figure, a southern "Colonel," without his cane is inconceivable. Canes connote more or less leisure. They convey a subtle insinuation of some degree of culture.

They always are a familiar article of a gentleman's dress in warm climates. The cane, quite strictly speaking, in fact has its origin in warm countries. For properly speaking, the word cane should be restricted in its application to a peculiar class of palms, known as ratans, included under the closely allied genera *Calamus* and *Daemonorops*, of which there are a large number of species. These plants, the Encyclopedia tells us, are found widely extended throughout the islands of the Indian Archipelago, the Malay Peninsula, China, India and Ceylon; and examples have also been found in Australia and Africa. The learned Rumphius describes them, under the name of *Palmijunci*, as inhabitants of dense forests into which the rays of the sun scarce can penetrate, where they form spiny bushes, obstructing the passage through the jungle. They rise to the top of the tallest trees and fall again so as to resemble a great length of cable, adorned, however, with the most beautiful leaves, pinnated or terminating in graceful tendrils. The plants creep or trail along to an enormous length, sometimes, it is said, reaching five hundred feet. Two examples of *Calamus verus*, measuring respectively two hundred and seventy feet and two hundred and thirty feet, were exhibited in the Paris exhibition of 1855.

The well-known Malacca canes are obtained from *Calamus Scipionum*, the stems of which are much stouter than is the case with the average species of *Calamus*. Doubtless to the vulgar a Malacca cane is merely a Malacca cane. There are, however, in this interesting world choice spirits who make a cult of Malacca canes, just as some dog fanciers are devotees of the Airedale terrier. Such as these know that inferior Malacca canes are, as the term in the cane trade is, "shaved"; that is, not being of the circumference most coveted, but too thick, they have been whittled down in bulk. A prime Malacca cane is, of course, a natural stem, and it is a nice point to have a slight irregularity in its symmetry as evidence of this. The delicious spotting of a Malacca cane is due to the action of the sun upon it in drying. As the stems are dried in sheaves, those most richly splotched are the ones that have been at the outside of the bundle. What new strength to meet life's troubles, what electric expansion of soul, come to the initiated upon the feel of the vertebra of his Malacca cane!

The name of cane is also applied to many plants besides the *Calamus*, which are possessed of long, slender, reed-like stalks or stems, as, for instance, the sugar-cane, or the reed-cane. From the use as walking-sticks to which many of these plants have

been applied, the name cane has been given generally to “sticks” irrespective of the source from which they are derived.



## Page 3

Our distinguished grandfathers carried canes, frequently handsome gold-headed ones, especially if they were ministers. Bishops, or "Presiding Elders;" when, in those mellow times, it was the custom for a congregation to present its minister with a gold-headed cane duly inscribed. Our fathers of some consequence carried canes of a gentlemanly pattern, often ones with ivory handles. Though in the days when those of us now sometime grown were small one had to have arrived at the dignity of at least middle-age before it was seemly for one to carry a cane. In England, however, and particularly at Eton, it has long been a common practice for small aristocrats to affect canes.

The dandies, fops, exquisites, and beaux of picturesque and courtly ages were, of course, very partial to canes, and sometimes wore them attached to the wrist by a thong. It has been the custom of the Surgeon of the King of England to carry a "Gold Headed Cane." This cane has been handed down to the various incumbents of this office since the days of Dr. John Radcliffe, who was the first holder of the cane. It has been used for two hundred years or more by the greatest physicians and surgeons in the world, who succeeded to it. "The Gold Headed Cane" was adorned by a cross-bar at the top instead of a knob. The fact is explained by Munk, in that Radcliffe, the first owner, was a rule unto himself and possibly preferred this device as a mark of distinction beyond the knob used by physicians in general. Men of genius now and then have found in their choice of a cane an opportunity for the play of their eccentricity, such a celebrated cane being the tall wand of Whistler. Among the relics of great men preserved in museums for the inspiration of the people canes generally are to be found. We have all looked upon the cane of George Washington at Mount Vernon and the walking-stick of Carlyle in Cheyne Walk. And is each not eloquent of the man who cherished it?

Freak canes are displayed here and there by persons of a pleasantly bizarre turn of mind: canes encased in the hide of an elephant's tail, canes that have been intricately carved by some Robinson Crusoe, or canes of various other such species of curiosity. There is a veteran New York journalist who will be glad to show any student of canes one which he prizes highly that was made from the limb of a tree upon which a friend of his was hanged. In our age of handy inventions a type of cane is manufactured in combination with an umbrella.

Canes are among the useful properties of the theatre. He would be a decidedly incomplete villain who did not carry a cane. Imaginative literature is rich in canes. Who ever heard of a fairy godmother without a cane? Who with any feeling for terror has not been startled by the tap, tap of the cane of old Pew in "Treasure Island"? There is an awe and a pathos in canes, too, for they are the light to blind men. And the romance of



## Page 4

canes is further illustrated in this: they, with rags and the wallet, have been among the traditional accoutrements of beggars, the insignia of the “dignity springing from the very depth of desolation; as, to be naked is to be so much nearer to the being a man, than to go in livery.” J. M. Barrie was so fond of an anecdote of a cane that he employed it several times in his earlier fiction. This was the story of a young man who had a cane with a loose knob, which in society he would slyly shake so that it tumbled off, when he would exclaim: “Yes, that cane is like myself; it always loses its head in the presence of ladies.”

Canes have figured prominently in humour. The Irishman's shillelagh was for years a conspicuous feature of the comic press. And there will instantly come to every one's mind that immortal passage in “Tristram Shandy.” Trim is discoursing upon life and death:

“Are we not here now, continued the Corporal (striking the end of his stick perpendicularly upon the floor, so as to give an idea of health and stability)—and are we not (dropping his hat upon the ground) gone! in a moment!—’Twas infinitely striking! Susannah burst into a flood of tears.”

Canes are not absent from poetry. Into your ears already has come the refrain of “The Last Leaf”:

“And totters o’er the ground,  
With his cane.”

And, doubtless, floods of instances of canes that the world will not willingly let die will occur to one upon a moment's reflection.

Canes are inseparable from art. All artists carry them; and the poorer the artist the more attached is he to his cane. Canes are indispensable to the simple vanity of the Bohemian. One of the most memorable drawings of Steinlen depicts the quaint soul of a child of the Latin Quarter: an elderly Bohemian, very much frayed, advances wreathed in the sunshine of his boutonniere and cane. Canes are invariably an accompaniment of learning. Sylvester Bonnard would of course not be without his cane; nor would any other true book-worm, as may be seen any day in the reading-room of the British Museum and of the New York Public Library. It is, indeed, indisputable that canes, more than any other article of dress, are peculiarly related to the mind. There is an old book-seller on Fourth Avenue whose clothes when he dies, like the boots of Michelangelo, probably will require to be pried loose from him, so incessantly has he worn them within the memory of man. None has ever looked upon him in the open air without his cane. And is not that emblem of omniscience and



authority, the schoolmaster's ferule, directly of the cane family? So large has the cane loomed in the matter of chastisement that the word cane has become a verb, to cane.

There was (in the days before the war) a military man (friend of mine), a military man of the old school, in whom could be seen, shining like a flame, a man's great love of a cane. He had lived a portion of his life in South America, and he used to promenade every pleasant afternoon up and down the Avenue swinging a sharply pointed, steel-ferruled swagger-stick. "What's the use of carrying that ridiculous thing around town?" some one said to him one day.



## Page 5

“That!” he rumbled in reply (he was one of the roarers among men), “why, that’s to stab scorpions with.”

They’ve buried him, I heard, in Flanders; on his breast (I hope), his cane.

“When a Red Cross platoon,” says a news despatch of the other day, “was advancing to the aid of scores of wounded men. Surgeon William J. McCracken of the British Medical Corps ordered all to take cover, and himself advanced through the enemy’s fire, bearing a Red Cross flag on his walking-stick.”

Indeed, the Great War is one of the most thrilling, momentous and colourful chapters in the history of canes. “The officers picked up their canes,” says the newspaper, and so forth, and so forth. Captain A. Radclyffe Dugmore, in a spirited drawing of the Battle of the Somme, shows an officer leading a charge waving a light cane. As an emblem of rank the cane among our Allies has apparently supplanted the sword. Something of the dapper, cocky look of our brothers in arms on our streets undoubtedly is due to their canes. One never sees a British, French or Italian officer in the rotogravure sections without his cane. We should be as startled to see General Haig or the Prince of Wales without a cane as without a leg. With our own soldiers the cane does not seem to be so much the thing, at least over here. I have a friend, however, who went away a private with a rifle over his shoulder. The other day came news from him that he had become a sergeant, and, perhaps as proof of this, a photograph of himself wearing a tin hat and with a cane in his hand. It is also to be observed now and then that a lady in uniformed service appears to regard it as an added military touch to swing a cane.

Women as well as men play their part in the colourful story of the cane. The shepherdess’s crook might be regarded as the precursor of canes for ladies. In Merrie England in the age when the May-pole flourished it was fashionable, we know from pictures, for comely misses and grandes dames to sport tall canes mounted with silver or gold and knotted with a bow of ribbon. The dowager duchess of romantic story has always appeared leaning upon her cane. Do not we so see the rich aunt of Hawden Crawley? And Mr. Walpole’s Duchess of Wrexhe, certainly, was supported in her domination of the old order of things by a cane. The historic old croons of our own early days smoked a clay or a corn-cob pipe and went bent upon a cane.

In England to-day it is swagger for women to carry sticks—in the country. And here the thoughtful spectator of the human scene notes a nice point. It is not etiquette, according to English manners, for a woman to carry a cane in town. Some American ladies who admire and would emulate English customs have not been made acquainted with this delicate nuance of taste, and so are very unfashionable when they would be ultra-fashionable.



## Page 6

Anybody returning from the Alps should bring back an Alpine stock with him; every one who has visited Ireland upon his return has presented some close friend with a blackthorn stick; nobody has made a walking tour of England without an ash stick. In London all adult males above the rank of costers carry "sticks"; in New York sticks are customary with many who would be ashamed to assume them did they live in the Middle West, where the infrequent sticks to be seen upon the city streets are in many cases the sign of transient mummers. And yet it is a curious fact that in communities where the stick is conspicuously absent from the streets it is commonly displayed in show-windows, in company with cheap suits and decidedly loud gloves. Another odd circumstance is this: trashy little canes hawked by sidewalk venders generally appear with the advent of toy balloons for sale on days of big parades.

In Jamaica, Long Island, the visitor would probably see canes in the hands only of prosperous coloured gentlemen. And then this fact probably nothing throws more light on the winning nature of the coloured race, and on the character and function of canes. In San Francisco—but the adequate story, the Sartor Resartus—the World as Canes, remains to be written.

This, of course, is the merest essay into this vast and significant subject.

I

### THE FISH REPORTER

Men of genius, blown by the winds of chance, have been, now and then, mariners, bar-keeps, schoolmasters, soldiers, politicians, clergymen, and what not. And from these pursuits have they sucked the essence of yarns and in the setting of these activities found a flavour to stir and to charm hearts untold. Now, it is a thousand pities that no man of genius has ever been a fish reporter. Thus has the world lost great literary treasure, as it is highly probable that there is not under the sun any prospect so filled with the scents and colours of story as that presented by the commerce in fish.

Take whale oil. Take the funny old buildings on Front Street, out of paintings, I declare, by Howard Pyle, where the large merchants in whale oil are. Take salt fish. Do you know the oldest salt-fish house in America, down by Coenties Slip? Ah! you should. The ghost of old Long John Silver, I suspect, smokes an occasional pipe in that old place. And many are the times I've seen the slim shade of young Jim Hawkins come running out. Take Labrador cod for export to the Mediterranean lands or to Porto Rico via New York. Take herrings brought to this port from Iceland, from Holland, and from Scotland; mackerel from Ireland, from the Magdalen Islands, and from Cape Breton; crabmeat from Japan; fishballs from Scandinavia; sardines from Norway and from France; caviar from Russia; shrimp which comes from Florida, Mississippi, and Georgia, or salmon from Alaska, and Puget Sound, and the Columbia River.



## Page 7

Take the obituaries of fishermen. "In his prime, it is said, there was not a better skipper in the Gloucester fishing fleet." Take disasters to schooners, smacks, and trawlers. "The crew were landed, but lost all their belongings." New vessels, sales, etc. "The sealing schooner *Tillie B.*, whose career in the South Seas is well known, is reported to have been sold to a moving-picture firm." Sponges from the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. "To most people, familiar only with the sponges of the shops, the animal as it comes from the sea would be rather unrecognisable." Why, take anything you please! It is such stuff as stories are. And as you eat your fish from the store how little do you reckon of the glamour of what you are doing!

However, as it seems to me unlikely that a man of genius will be a fish reporter shortly I will myself do the best I can to paint the tapestry of the scenes of his calling. The advertisement in the newspaper read: "Wanted—Reporter for weekly trade paper." Many called, but I was chosen. Though, doubtless, no man living knew less about fish than I.

The news stands are each like a fair, so laden are they with magazines in bright colours. It would seem almost as if there were a different magazine for every few hundred and seven-tenth person, as the statistics put these matters. And yet, it seems, there is a vast, a very vast, periodical literature of which we, that is, magazine readers in general, know nothing whatever. There is, for one, that fine, old, standard publication, *Barrel and Box*, devoted to the subjects and the interests of the coopering industry; there is, too, *The Dried Fruit Packer and Western Canner*, as alert a magazine as one could wish—in its kind; and from the home of classic American literature comes *The New England Tradesman and Grocer*. And so on. At the place alone where we went to press twenty-seven trade journals were printed every week, from one for butchers to one for bankers.

*The Fish Industries Gazette*—Ah, yes! For some reason not clear (though it is an engaging thing, I think) the word "gazette" is the great word among the titles of trade journals. There are *The Jewellers' Gazette* and *The Women's Wear Gazette* and *The Poulterers' Gazette* (of London), and *The Maritime Gazette* (of Halifax), and other gazettes quite without number. This word "gazette" makes its appeal, too, curiously enough, to those who christen country papers; and trade journals have much of the intimate charm of country papers. The "trade" in each case is a kind of neighbourly community, separated in its parts by space, but joined in unity of sympathy. "Personals" are a vital feature of trade papers. "Walter Conner, who for some time has conducted a bakery and fish market at Hudson, N.Y., has removed to Fort Edward, leaving his brother Ed in charge at the Hudson place of business."

## Page 8

*The Fish Industries Gazette*, as I say, was one of several in its field, in friendly rivalry with *The Oyster Trade and Fisherman* and *The Pacific Fisheries*. It comprized two departments: the fresh fish and oyster department, and myself. I was, as an editorial announcement said at the beginning of my tenure of office, a “reorganisation of our salt, smoked, and pickled fish department.” The delectable, mellow spirit of the country paper, so removed from the crash and whirr of metropolitan journalism, rested in this, too, that upon the *Gazette* I did practically everything on the paper except the linotyping. Reporter, editorial writer, exchange editor, make-up man, proof-reader, correspondent, advertisement solicitor, was I.

As exchange editor, did I read all the papers in the English language in eager search of fish news. And while you are about the matter, just find me a finer bit of literary style evoking the romance of the vast wastes of the moving sea, in Stevenson, Defoe, anywhere you please, than such a news item as this: “Capt. Ezra Pound, of the bark *Elnora*, of Salem, Mass., spoke a lonely vessel in latitude this and longitude that, September 8. She proved to be the whaler *Wanderer*, and her captain said that she had been nine months at sea, that all on board were well, and that he had stocked so many barrels of whale oil.”

As exchange editor was it my business to peruse reports from Eastport, Maine, to the effect that one of the worst storms in recent years had destroyed large numbers of the sardine weirs there. To seek fish recipes, of such savoury sound as those for “broiled redsnapper,” “shrimps bordelaise,” and “baked fish croquettes.” To follow fishing conditions in the North Sea occasioned by the Great War. To hunt down jokes of piscatory humour. “The man who drinks like a fish does not take kindly to water.—Exchange.” To find other “fillers” in the consular reports and elsewhere: “Fish culture in India,” “1800 Miles in a Dory,” “Chinese Carp for the Philippines,” “Americans as Fish Eaters.” And, to use a favourite term of trade papers, “etc., etc.” Then to “paste up” the winnowed fruits of this beguiling research.

As editorial writer, to discuss the report of the commission recently sent by congress to the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, to report on the condition of our national herd of fur seals; to discuss the official interpretation here of the Government ruling on what constitutes “boneless” codfish; to consider the campaign in Canada to promote there a more popular consumption of fish, and to brightly remark apropos of this that “a fish a day keeps the doctor away”; to review the current issue of *The Journal of the Fisheries Society of Japan*, containing leading articles on “Are Fishing Motor Boats Able to Encourage in Our Country” and “Fisherman the Late Mr. H. Yamaguchi Well Known”; to combat the prejudice against dogfish as food, a prejudice

## Page 9

like that against eels, in some quarters eyed askance as “calling cousins with the great sea-serpent,” as Juvenal says; to call attention to the doom of one of the most picturesque monuments in the story of fish, the passing of the pleasant and celebrated old Trafalgar Hotel at Greenwich, near London, scene of the famous Ministerial white-bait dinners of the days of Pitt; to make a jest on an exciting idea suggested by some medical man that some of the features of a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, that is, baths, be introduced into the fo’c’s’les of Grand Banks fishing vessels; to keep an eye on the activities of our Bureau of Fisheries; to hymn a praise to the monumental new Fish Pier at Boston; to glance at conditions at the premier fish market of the world, Billingsgate; to herald the fish display at the Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto, and, indeed, *etc.*, and again *etc.*

As general editorial roustabout, to find each week a “leader,” a translation, say, from *In Allgemeine Fishcherei-Zeitung*, or *Economic Circular No. 10*, “Mussels in the Tributaries of the Missouri,” or the last biennial report of the Superintendent of Fisheries of Wisconsin, or a scientific paper on “The Porpoise in Captivity” reprinted by permission of *Zoologica*, of the New York Zoological Society. To find each week for reprint a poem appropriate in sentiment to the feeling of the paper. One of the “Salt Water Ballads” would do, or John Masefield singing of “the whale’s way,” or “Down to the white dipping sails;” or Rupert Brooke: “And in that heaven of all their wish. There shall be no more land, say fish;” or a “weather rhyme” about “mackerel skies,” when “you’re sure to get a fishing day;” or something from the New York *Sun* about “the lobster pots of Maine;” or Oliver Herford, in the *Century*, “To a Goldfish;” or, best of all, an old song of fishing ways of other days.

And to compile from the New York *Journal of Commerce* better poetry than any of this, tables, beautiful tables of “imports into New York”: “Oct. 15.—From Bordeaux, 225 cs. cuttlefish bone; Copenhagen, 173 pkgs. fish; Liverpool, 969 bbls. herrings, 10 walrus hides, 2,000 bags salt; La Guayra, 6 cs. fish sounds; Belize, 9 bbls. sponges; Rotterdam, 7 pkgs. seaweed, 9,000 kegs herrings; Barcelona, 235 cs. sardines; Bocas Del Toro, 5 cs. turtle shells; Genoa, 3 boxes corals; Tampico, 2 pkgs. sponges; Halifax, 1 cs. seal skins, 35 bbls. cod liver oil, 215 cs. lobsters, 490 bbls. codfish; Akureyri, 4,150 bbls. salted herrings,” and much more. Beautiful tables of “exports from New York”. “To Australia” (cleared Sep. 1); “to Argentina;”—Haiti, Jamaica, Guatemala, Scotland, Salvador, Santo Domingo, England, and to places many more. And many other gorgeous tables, too, “Fishing vessels at New York,” for one, listing the “trips” brought into this port by the *Stranger*, the *Sarah O’Neal*, the *Nourmahal*, a farrago of charming sounds, and a valuable tale of facts.



## Page 10

As make-up man, of course, so to “dress” the paper that the “markets,” Oporto, Trinidad, Porto Rico, Demerara, Havana, would be together; that “Nova Scotia Notes”—“Weather conditions for curing have been more favourable since October set in”—would follow “Halifax Fish Market”—“Last week’s arrivals were: Oct. 13, schr. *Hattie Loring*, 960 quintals,” etc.—that “Pacific Coast Notes”—“The tug *Tatoosh* will perform the service for the Seattle salmon packers of towing a vessel from Seattle to this port via the Panama Canal”—would follow “Canned Salmon”; that shellfish matter would be in one place; reports of saltfish where such should be; that the weekly tale of the canned fish trade politically embraced the canned fish advertising; and so on and so on.

Finest of all, as reporter, to go where the fish reporter goes. There the sight-seeing cars never find their way; the hurried commuter has not his path, nor knows of these things at all; and there that racy character who, voicing a multitude, declares that he would rather be a lamp post on Broadway than Mayor of St. Louis, goes not for to see. Up lower Greenwich Street the fish reporter goes, along an eerie, dark, and narrow way, beneath a strange, thundering roof, the “L” overhead. He threads his way amid seemingly chaotic, architectural piles of boxes, of barrels, crates, casks, kegs, and bulging bags; roundabout many great fetlocked draught horses, frequently standing or plunging upon the sidewalk, and attached to many huge trucks and wagons; and much of the time in the street he is compelled to go, finding the side walks too congested with the traffic of commerce to admit of his passing there.

You probably eat butter, and eggs, and cheese. Then you would delight in Greenwich Street. You could feast your highly creditable appetite for these excellent things for very nearly a solid mile upon the signs of “wholesale dealers and commission merchants” in them. The letter press, as you might say, of the fish reporter’s walk is a noble paean to the earth’s glorious yield for the joyous sustenance of man. For these princely merchants’ signs sing of opulent stores of olive oil, of sausages, beans, soups, extracts, and spices, sugar, Spanish, Bermuda, and Havana onions, “fine” apples, teas, coffee, rice, chocolates, dried fruits and raisins, and of loaves and of fishes, and of “fish products.” Lo! dark and dirty and thundering Greenwich Street is to-day’s translation of the Garden of Eden.

Here is a great house whose sole vocation is the importation of caviar for barter here. Caviar from over-seas now comes, when it comes at all, mainly by the way of Archangel, recently put on the map, for most of us, by the war. The fish reporter is told, however, if it be summer, that there cannot be much doing in the way of caviar until fall, “when the spoonbill start coming in.” And on he goes to a great saltfish house, where many men in salt-stained garments

## Page 11

are running about, their arms laden with large flat objects, of sharp and jagged edge, which resemble dried and crackling hides of some animal curiously like a huge fish; and numerous others of "the same" are trundling round wheelbarrow-like trucks likewise so laden. Where stacks of these hides stand on their tails against the walls, and goodness knows how many big boxes are, containing, as those open show, beautifully soft, thick, cream-coloured slabs, which is fish. And where still other men, in overalls stained like a painter's palette, are knocking off the heads of casks and dipping out of brine still other kinds of fish for inspection.

Here it is said by the head of the house, by the stove (it is chill weather) in his office like a ship-master's cabin: "Strong market on foreign mackerel. Mines hinder Norway catch. Advices from abroad report that German resources continue to purchase all available supplies from the Norwegian fishermen. No Irish of any account. Recent shipment sold on the deck at high prices. Fair demand from the Middle West."

So, by stages, on up to turn into North Moore Street, looking down a narrow lane between two long bristling rows of wagons pointed out from the curbs, to the facades of the North River docks at the bottom, with the tops of the buff funnels of ocean liners, and Whistleranean silhouettes of derricks, rising beyond. Hereabout are more importers, exporters, and "producers" of fish, famous in their calling beyond the celebrities of popular publicity. And he that has official entree may learn, by mounting dusky stairs, half-ladder and half-stair, and by passing through low-ceilinged chambers freighted with many barrels, to the sanctums of the fish lords, what's doing in the foreign herring way, and get the current market quotations, at present sky-high, and hear that the American shore mackerel catch is very fine stock.

Then roundabout, with a step into the broad vista of homely Washington Street, and a turn through Franklin Street, where is the man decorated by the Imperial Japanese Government with a gold medal, if he should care to wear it, for having distinguished himself in the development of commerce in the marine products of Japan, back to Hudson Street. An authentic railroad is one of the spectacular features of Hudson Street.

Here down the middle of the way are endless trains, stopping, starting, crashing, laden to their ears with freight, doubtless all to eat. Tourists should come from very far to view Hudson Street. Here is a spectacle as fascinating, as awe-inspiring, as extraordinary as any in the world. From dawn until darkness falls, hour after hour, along Hudson Street slowly, steadily moves a mighty procession of great trucks. One would not suppose there were so many trucks on the face of the earth. It is a glorious sight, and any man whose soul is not dead should jump with joy to see it. And the thunder of them altogether as they bang over the stones is like the music of the spheres.



## Page 12

There is on Hudson Street a tall handsome building where the fish reporter goes, which should be enjoyed in this way: Up in the lift you go to the top, and then you walk down, smacking your lips. For all the doors in that building are brimming with poetry. And the tune of it goes like this: "Toasted Corn-Flake Co.," "Seaboard Rice," "Chili Products," "Red Bloom Grape Juice Sales Office," "Porto Rico and Singapore Pineapple Co.," "Sunnyland Foodstuffs," "Importers of Fruit Pulps, Pimentos," "Sole Agents U.S.A. Italian Salad Oil," "Raisin Growers," "Log Cabin Syrups," "Jobbers in Beans, Peas," "Chocolate and Cocoa Preparations," "Ohio Evaporated Milk Co.," "Bernese Alps and Holland Condensed Milk Co.," "Brazilian Nuts Co.," "Brokers Pacific Coast Salmon," "California Tuna Co.," and thus on and on.

The fish reporter crosses the street to see the head of the Sardine Trust, who has just thrown the market into excitement by a heavy cut in prices of last year's pack. Thence, pausing to refresh himself by the way at a sign "Agency for Reims Champagne and Moselle Wines—Bordeaux Clarets and Sauternes," over to Broadway to interview the most august persons of all, dealers in fertiliser, "fish scrap." These mighty gentlemen live, when at business, in palatial suites of offices constructed of marble and fine woods and laid with rich rugs. The reporter is relayed into the innermost sanctum by a succession of richly clothed attendants. And he learns, it may be, that fishing in Chesapeake Bay is so poor that some of the "fish factories" may decide to shut down. Acid phosphate, it is said, is ruling at \$13 f.o.b. Baltimore.

And so the fish reporter enters upon the last lap of his rounds. Through, perhaps, the narrow, crooked lane of Pine Street he passes, to come out at length upon a scene set for a sea tale. Here would a lad, heir to vast estates in Virginia, be kidnapped and smuggled aboard to be sold a slave in Africa. This is Front Street. A white ship lies at the foot of it. Cranes rise at her side. Tugs, belching smoke, bob beyond. All about are ancient warehouses, redolent of the Thames, with steep roofs and sometimes stairs outside, and with tall shutters, a crescent-shaped hole in each. There is a dealer in weather-vanes. Other things dealt in hereabout are these: chronometers, "nautical instruments," wax gums, cordage and twine, marine paints, cotton wool and waste, turpentine, oils, greases, and rosin. Queer old taverns, public houses, are here, too. Why do not their windows rattle with a "Yo, ho, ho"?

There is an old, old house whose business has been fish oil within the memory of men. And here is another. Next, through Water Street, one comes in search of the last word on salt fish. Now the air is filled with gorgeous smell of roasting coffee. Tea, coffee, sugar, rice, spices, bags and bagging here have their home. And there are haughty bonded warehouses filled with fine liquors. From his white cabin at the top of a venerable structure comes the dean of the salt-fish business. "Export trade fair," he says; "good demand from South America."



# Page 13

## II

### ON GOING A JOURNEY

One of the pleasantest things in the world is “going a journey”—but few know it now. It isn’t every one that can go a journey. No doubt one that owns an automobile cannot go. The spirit of the age has got him fast. Begoggled and with awful squawks, feverish, exultant, ignorant, he is condemned to hoot over the earth. Thus the wealthy know nothing of journeys, for they must own motors. Vain people and envious people and proud people cannot go, because the wealthy do not. Silly people do not know enough to go. The lazy cannot, because of their laziness. The busy hang themselves with business. The halt nor the aged, alas! cannot go. In fine, only such as are whole anywise and pure in heart can go a journey, and they are the blessed.

“We arrive at places now, but we” (most of us) “travel no more.” The way a journey is gone, to come to the point, is walking. Asking many folks’ pardon, to tear through the air in an open car, deafened, hilariously muddled by the rush and roar of wind, is to drive observation from the mind: it is to be, in a manner, complacently, intellectually unconscious; is to drink an enjoyment akin to that of the shooters of the chute, or that got on the very latest of this sort of engine of human amusement called the “Hully-Gee-Whizz,” a pleasure of the ignorant, metaphorically, a kind of innocents’ rot-gut whiskey. The way a journey is gone, which is walking, is a wine, a mellow claret, stimulating to observation, to thought, to speculation, to the flow of talk, gradually, decently warming the blood. Rightly taken (which manner this paper attempts to set forth), walking is among the pleasures of the mind. It is a call-boy to wit, a hand-maiden to cultivation. Sufficiently indulged in, it will make a man educated, a wit, a poet, an ironist, a philosopher, a gentleman, a better Christian (not to dwell upon improving his digestion and prolonging his life). And, too, like true Shandyism “it opens the heart and the lungs.” Whoso hath ears, let him hear! Once and for all, if the mad world did but know it, the best, the most exquisite automobile is a walking-stick; and one of the finest things in life is going a journey with it.

No one, though (this is the first article to be observed), should ever go a journey with any other than him with whom one walks arm in arm, in the evening, the twilight, and, talking (let us suppose) of men’s given names, agrees that if either should have a son he shall be named after the other. Walking in the gathering dusk, two and two, since the world began, there have always been young men who have time to one another plighted their troth. If one is not still one of these, then, in the sense here used, journeys are over for him. What is left to him of life he may enjoy, but not journeys. Mention should be made in passing that some have been found so ignorant of the nature of journeys as to suppose that they might be taken in company with members, or a member, of the other sex. Now, one who writes of journeys would cheerfully be

burned at the stake before he would knowingly underestimate women. But it must be confessed that it is another season in the life of man that they fill.

## Page 14

They are too personal for the high enjoyment of going a journey. They must be forever thinking about you or about themselves; with them everything in the world is somehow tangled up in these matters; and when you are with them (you cannot help it, or if you could they would not allow it), you must be forever thinking about them or yourself. Nothing on either side can be seen detached. They cannot rise to that philosophic plane of mind which is the very marrow of going a journey. One reason for this is that they can never escape from the idea of society. You are in their society, they are in yours; and the multitudinous personal ties which connect you all to that great order called society that you have for a period got away from physically are present. Like the business man who goes on a vacation from business and takes his business habits along with him, so on a journey they would bring society along, and all sort of etiquette.

He that goes a journey shakes off the trammels of the world; he has fled all impediments and inconveniences; he belongs, for the moment, to no time or place. He is neither rich nor poor, but in that which he thinks and sees. There is not such another Arcadia for this on earth as in going a journey. He that goes a journey escapes, for a breath of air, from all conventions; without which, though, of course, society would go to pot; and which are the very natural instinct of women.

The best time for going a journey (a connoisseur speaks it) is some morning when it has rained well the day or night before, and the soil of the road, where it is not evenly packed, is of about that substance of which the fingers can make fine "tees" for golfing. This is the precise composition of earth and dampness underfoot most sympathetic to the spine, the knee sockets, the muscles, tendons, ligaments of limb, back, neck, breast and abdomen, and the spirit of locomotion in the ancient exercise of walking. On this day the protruding stones have been washed bald in the road; the lines and marks of drainage are still clearly, freshly defined in the soil; in the gutters light-coloured sand has risen to the surface with the dark moist soil in a grained effect not unlike marbled chocolate cake; and clean, sweet gravel is laid bare here and there in the wagon ruts. This is the chosen time for the nerves and senses. On such a day the whole world greets one cleansed and having on a fresh bib-and-tucker. It is a conscious pleasure to have eyes. It is as if one long near-sighted without knowing it had suddenly been fitted with the proper spectacles. It is sweet to have olfactories. Whoso hath lungs, let him breathe. Man was made to rejoice!



## Page 15

How green, on such a day, are the greens; the distant purples how purple! The stone walls are cool. The great canvas of the sky has been but newly brushed in, as if by some modern landscape painter (the tube colours seem yet hardly dry); the technique, the brush-marks, show in the unutterably soft, warm-white clouds; or, like a puff of beaten-egg white, wells above that orchard hill. Higher up, thinly touched across the blue, a great sweep of downy, swan breast-breast feathers spreads. But not one canvas is this sky; ceaselessly it changes with the minutes. To observe is to walk through an endless gallery of countless pictures. It is alone a life-study. Now the wind has blown it clear as blue limpidness; now scattered flakes appear; now it is deep blue; now pale; now it tinges darkly; now it is a layer of cream. Again, it breaks into shapes—decorative shapes, odd shapes, lovely shapes, shapes always fresh. Its innovations are unflagging, inexhaustable. Always art, its genius is infinite.

One must go a journey to discover how vast the sky really is, and the world. To mount, bending forward, up by a long, tree-walled ascent from some valley, and come upon this spectacular sight—the fair globe that man inhabits lying away before one like a gigantic physical map, a map in relief, cunningly painted in the colours of nature, laid off by woods and orchards and roads and stone walls into many decorative shapes until it melts into purple, and fainter and fainter and still fainter purple Japanese hills. The sight is some of the noble quarry, the game; this is the anise-seed bag of him that goes a journey. Some glimmering of the nobility of the plan of which he is a fell, erring speck comes over one as he looks. This is the religious side of going a journey.

It is best to go a journey on a road that you do not know; on a road that lures you on to peep over the crest of yonder hill, that ever flees before you in a game of hide-and-seek, disappearing behind great, jutting rocks and turns and trees, to leap out again at your approach and laughingly, elusively, continually slip before you; a road that winds anon where some roaring brook pours near by; a road that may deceive you and trick you into miles out of your way.

A high breeze rushes through the trees and fans the traveller's opened pores. With a sudden, startling whir, mounting with their hearts, a bird flushes from the tangled growth at the roadside.

The worst roads for walking are such as are commonly called the best; that is, macadam. A macadam pavement is a piece of masonry, wholly without elasticity, built for vehicles to roll over. To go a journey without a walking-stick much would be lost; indeed it would be folly. A stick is the fly-wheel of the engine. Something is needed to whack things with, little stones, wormy apples, and so forth, in the road. It can be changed from one hand to the other, which is a great help. Then if one slips a trifle on a down-grade turn it is a lengthened arm thrown out to steady one. It is the pilgrim's staff. On the up-grades it assists climbing. It is a weapon of defence if such should ever be needed. It is a badge of dignity, a dress sword. It is the sceptre of walking.

## Page 16

Dipping the dales, riding the swells, the automobiles come, like gigantic bugs coming after the wicked. With a sucking rush of wind and dust and an odour of gasoline they are past. Stray pieces of paper at the roadside arise and fly after them, then, further on, sink impotent, exhausted.

“I have found that no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another!” One who goes much a-journeying cannot understand how Thoreau got it so completely turned around. But after the first effervescence of going a journey (of speech a time of times) has passed, and when, next, the fine novelty of open observation has begun to pale, there are still copious resources left; one retires on the way, metaphorically speaking, into one’s closet for meditation, for miles of silent thought—when one’s stride is mechanical, and is like an absent-minded drumming with the fingers; but that it is better, for it pumps the blood for freer thought than in lethargic sitting.

In this rhythmic moving one thinks as to a tune. To sit thus absolutely silent, absent in thought completely, even with that friend one wears in one’s heart’s core, will at length become dull for one or other; sitting thus one is tempted, too, to speech. Walking, it is not so. One may talk or one may not. If both wish to think, both feel as if something sociable is being done in just walking together. If one does not care to go wool-gathering, the other does not leave him without entertainment; walking alone is entertainment. It is assumed, of course, that one goes a journey in silence as in speech with the companion with whom one has been best seasoned. Silently walking, the movement of the mind keeps step in thought exactly with the movement of the man, so that the pace is a thermometer of the temperature at that moment of one’s brain.

One who has written on going a journey as well perhaps as the world will ever see it done owned that he never had had a watch. Further, he intimated that the possession of one was an indication of poverty of mental resource. It was his own wont, he said, to pass hours, whole days, unconscious of the night of time. He described his father as taking out his watch to look at whenever he could think of nothing else to do. His father, our author says, was no metaphysician. It must be confessed that one now writing of journeys, sometimes, somewhat unmetaphysician-like, conscious of the flight of time, has communication with a watch; and, finding the day well advanced, decides, speaking very figuratively, to lay the cloth, beneath some twisted, low, gnarled apple tree.

“At the next shadow,” he suggests.

“Let’s wait until we get to the top of this hill, first.”

“Here we are.”

Sweet rest! when one throws one’s members down upon the turf and there lets them lie, as if they were so many detached packages dropped. Then one feels the exquisite



nerve luxury of having legs: while one rests them. One's back could lie thus prone forever. One feels, sucking all the rich pleasure of it, that one couldn't move one's arms, lift one's hand, if one had to. What are the world's rewards if this is not one!



## Page 17

At length in going a journey comes a time when one tiredly shrinks from the work of speech, when observation dozes, and thought lolls like a limp sail that only idly stirs at the passing zephyrs; the legs like piston-rods strike on; when the pleasure is like that almost of dull narcotics; one realises only dimly that one is moving. At such times as these, coming from one knows not whence, and one feels too weak to search back to discover, there flit across the mind strange fragments, relevant, as they seem, to nothing whatever present.

When a journey has been made one way, the trick has been done; the superfluous energy which inspired it has found escape; the way to return is not by walking. A friend to fatigue is this, that in walking back one is not on a voyage of discovery; one knows the way and very much what one will see on it; one knows the distance. In fact, the fruit has been plucked: the bloom is gone; to walk back would be like tedious marching with a regiment. One should return resting. On trains one *returns* from a journey.

Whoso hath life, one thinks as his journey draws to its close, let him live it! What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and never know his own soul?

### III

#### GOING TO ART EXHIBITIONS

There are two opposing views as to going to art exhibitions. And much with a good deal of reason may be said on both sides. There is one very vigorous attitude which holds that the pictures are the thing. This, indeed, is a perfectly ponderable theory. But it may be questioned whether in its ardour it does not go a little far. For it affirms that people are a confounded nuisance at art exhibitions, and should not be permitted to be there, to distract one's attention from the peaceful contemplation of works of art, and to infuriate one by their asinine remarks in the holy presence of beauty. I have heard it declared with very impressive spirit, and reasoned with much force, that only one person, or at most only one person and his chosen companion, should be allowed in an art gallery at a time. It is debatable, however, whether this intellectually aristocratic idea is altogether practicable. On the other hand, was it not even Little Billie who found the people at art exhibitions frequently more interesting than the pictures?

Anyhow, persons who write about art exhibitions confine themselves exclusively to the subject of art. When they gossip it is about the pictures, the painters, and the sculpture. True, of course, this is their job, and then, these persons go on press days and so only see, outside of that which is intentionally exhibited, other critics.



## Page 18

Now, there is nothing in all the world quite like art exhibitions. Beyond any other sort of show they possess a spirit which (to use a pet and an excellent critical expression of one of our foremost art critics) is “grand, gloomy, and peculiar.” You feel this charged atmosphere at once at an art exhibition. You walk softly, you speak low, and you endeavour to become as intelligent as possible. Art exhibitions, in short, present various features indigenous to themselves which, so far as I am aware, have not before been adequately commented upon. The principal observations which they solicit are as follows:

First, art exhibitions are attended by two classes of people: very fine-looking people, and funny-looking people. There is a very striking kind of a young man goes to art exhibitions that I myself never accomplish seeing anywhere else, though sometimes I see pictures of him. This young man is superbly patrician. You may have remarked this singular phenomenon. All the young men in all the advertisements in the magazine *Vanity Fair* are the same young man, whether riding in a splendid motor car, elegantly attending the play, or doing a little shooting of birds. You know him, for one thing, by his exquisite moustache. This fastidiously groomed, exclusively tailored young man, to be seen in the pages spoken of and at art exhibitions, is certainly not of Art, nor is he of business. He takes no account whatever, apparently, of time, as men of business do; and manifestly one could not work in such a moustache and such clothes without mussing them. He is, in fine, of *Vanity Fair*. Oscar Wilde was, as usual, wrong when he said that all beautiful things were quite useless. This immaculate young man's practical function at art exhibitions, as perhaps elsewhere, is that of escort.

He is escort to groups of very handsome and very expensive-looking young ladies; and these fragrant, rustling groups, with the waxen, patrician young man in tow, stroll slowly about, catalogues unnoticed in hand, without pause skirting the picture-hung walls. They are very still, and they gaze upon the art that they pass with the look of a doe contemplating the meaning of the appearance of a man. The perfect escorts of these groups, who would seem naturally to be rather gay young men, look very serious indeed. Now one of them gracefully, though as if careful not to make any noise, bends to one of the young ladies; and, indicating by a solemn look one of the paintings, he whispers to her apparently concerning it. She silently nods: it is, evidently, quite as he says. When an art exhibition is so undertakery a thing you wouldn't think that one would come. Though perhaps it is that one ought.

At any rate, there is quite a turn-out to-day moving beneath the ghostly glow of the shrouded sky-light ceiling. Half the Avenue seems to be here. What a play it is, this highly urban throng! Let us sit here on this divan down the middle of the room. With what a stately march the pictures go in their golden frames along the symphonious, burlap walls! There, by that copious piece of intelligence, Manet's “Music Lesson,” is—

## Page 19

But see! What has come over our earnest group? Those who compose it are all quite changed. They look as happy as can be, all beaming with smiles, their backs to the neighbouring walls. Friends, it seems, have greeted them. How they all bubble on, all about the outside world! But goodness! Now what is the matter? Suddenly one of the newcomers is struck by a startled look. She sees, that is it, one of the pictures. In an arrested voice she says: "Oh, isn't that perfectly lovely!" At once the happy light fades from the faces of all. An awed hush falls upon them as stiffly they turn their heads in the direction of her view. "Charming!" one of the young men breathes, staring intently at the painting which has come upon them. That it is awkward for everybody is plain. But, happily, there is much rebound to youth. One of the young ladies, at length, shakes herself free from the pall upon her spirits; the mesmeric spell is broken; and presently all are chatting again, gaily oblivious to Art.

By the way, there is the proprietor of the gallery, just before the three Renoir pastels. Is there anything about art exhibitions that more enlists the imagination than the study of the "dealers" themselves? The gentlemen who preside at art exhibitions fall, rather violently, into three, perhaps four, classes. You have, I dare say, been repeatedly struck by the quaintly inappropriate character in appearance of those of one of these classes. I mean, of course, those very horsey-looking men, with decidedly "hard" faces, loudly dressed, and dowered with hoarse voices. They would seem to be bookmakers, exceedingly prosperous publicans, bunco-brokers, militant politicians—anything save of the Kingdom of Art. Are their polished Bill Sykes' exteriors but bizarre domiciles for lofty souls? I cannot tell.

Here and there, it is true, you find the aesthete in effect among dealers: the wired moustaches, the spindle-legged voice, and the ardent spirit in discussing his wares with lady visitors. Our horsey type seems rather ponderous and phlegmatic in this matter. Then there is, too, a land of art exhibition which is very close indeed to Art, a kind of spirited propaganda, in fact, which is presided over by those of hierarchical character, beings as to hair and cravat, swarthy complexion and mystic gesticulation, holy from the world and mocked by the profane.

But, to my mind, the most satisfying sort of a host to observe at an art exhibition is that of the description of this admirable dealer before us. Benign, frock-coated, hands clasped behind him, he stands, symbol of gentlemanly, merchantly dignity. Occasionally he rises upon his toes, and then sinks again to his heels obviously with satisfaction. But that which proclaims the perfect equity of his mind is this: his nice recognition of the nuances in human kind. You perceive that his bow to each of his guests, that he recognises at all, is graduated according to the

## Page 20

precise degree of that person's value to Art; that to some few, royal patrons presumably, being at an angle of forty-five degrees; while a common amateur of Art is acknowledged by one of five. Where—to continue the paraphrase of a pleasant observation upon Mr. George Brummell—it is a mere question of recognising the fact that a certain person dwells on the same planet with Art “a slight relaxation of the features” is made to suffice.

So! This profound bow is plainly meant for a particular tribute to one who wears the richest purple. Lo! He advances with unclasped hands. Pleasure beams from his countenance. Without such as she Art, and dealers, and galleries, and the recorded beauty of the world would perforce pass away. This entertaining personage, who is the great flurry at art exhibitions, is of the novelists' dowager Duchess type. A short, obese, and jovial figure, or dried and withered but imperious distinction, as the case may be. There is much crackling of fine garments, a brilliant display of lorgnette, and this penetrating and comprehensive royal critical dictum: “Isn't that interesting! So full of feeling.”

Two outstanding features, you mark, of art exhibitions everywhere are here presented. Is any one who doesn't know what he is talking about at art exhibitions (and which of us does?) properly equipped for attendance there without this happy esoteric phrase “full of feeling”? It is safe, or as safe as anything can be, to say about any picture. It graphically indicates in the speaker delicate sensitivity and emotional responsiveness to Art. And, most beneficently, it subtly evades anything like the trying ordeal of an analysis of a work of art. It is, indeed, invaluable.

The other thing is this: There is no place going which is so well adapted to the exhibition of handsome, fashionable, or eccentric eye-glasses as an art exhibition. You observe there all that is newest and classy in glasses, and you are insistently invited to admiring study of the art of wearing queer glasses effectively, and of taking them off, letting them bound on their leash, doubling them up, opening them out, and putting them on with a gesture.

The complimentary type to the storied Duchess at art exhibitions is represented by yonder portly blood, in this case a replica of the late King Edward. The fruitful spectacle of art exhibitions, I think, presents nothing which gives one a more gratifying sense of their dignity and of the imperial character of Art than the presence there of these patently highly solvent, ruddy jeweled, admirably tailored, and impressively worldly looking connoisseurs of painting to be seen scrutinising the pictures at close range, in a near-sighted way, and rather grimly, as though somewhat sceptically appraising possibly dubious merchandise.

## Page 21

Hello, there's Mr. Chase! And that's a fortunate thing, too, as no sympathetic picture of a representative American art exhibition should omit Mr. Chase. Whether or not we think of him as our premier painter, we should be inordinately proud of him. Undoubtedly he is a great artist. He has wrought himself in the grand manner. In person he delights the eye, and satisfies the imagination. With his inevitable top-hat, his heavy eye-glasses cord, his military moustaches and upward pointing beard, his pouter-pigeon carriage, his glowing spats and his boutonniere, his aroma of distinction, and his ruddy consciousness of his prestige, he is our great tour-de-force as a figure in the artistic scene. He is here, naturally, now the target of popular interest.

The practice of having artists shown at their own exhibitions is one too little cultivated. The Napoleonic brow and the Napoleonic forelock (famous in their circle) of George Luks, the torrential Luksean mirth, how would not their actual presence open the spiritual eyes of visiting school-children to the humane qualities of the works of the Luksean genius! And why should we who procure for our better perception of their works illuminating biographies of the Old Masters not be permitted the intellectual stimulation of beholding the Ten American Painters seated along on a bench at their annual show? The subject of the artists themselves, however, brings us around to the line between the two kinds of people having to do with art exhibitions: fine-looking people and funny-looking people.

Come; let us trot along. Artists themselves are, in a most pronounced degree, of both kinds. And a very singular thing is this: the funnier an artist's pictures are, the funnier-looking is the artist that made them. We'll stop in here, at The Advanced Gallery.

"Ah! How are you?"

That, just going out, is one of the newest groups of painters, known as the Homeopaths. I used to know him before he went abroad. And the curious thing is, that at that time he was very good-looking. He was clean shaven. This strange assortment of whiskers of different fashions on various parts of his face, imperial, goatee, burnsides, he brought back with him.

Notice as we step from the car at the gallery floor the numerous others here who also were at the show we just left. And those who are thus making the rounds, you perceive, are not of what is called society, but of the kind known in these circles, doubtless, as interesting. Nearly everybody in this gallery, in fact, is of the interesting sort. At once it is apparent that there is nothing of the perfunctory here. Art is vital. Art is earnest. The atmosphere is tense. The young women are clad in a manner giving much freedom to the movement of their bodies. They walk with a stride. Their clothes are not of the mode of the Avenue, but they have—how shall I say? To twist what Whistler said of his model: Character, character is what these clothes have. They suggest, many of these young women, the type that has never got back from—

## Page 22

“Do you know Chelsea at all?” asks one of them, of an anarchic-looking young man.

Never got back, as I was about to say, from Chelsea. A couple of other anarchic-looking young men are viewing a painting in the manner that a painting, or perhaps this particular painting, is intended to be viewed; that is by squinting at it first over the tops of their hands and then through their fingers. They discuss it darkly, in low, passionate tones. They advance upon it; and, a few inches before it, one, as though holding a brush in his hand, sweeps eloquently with his arm, following the contour of the painted figure. Legerdemain kind of thing, painting, isn't it? Sort of a black art, when you see into the science of it.

Well, I declare! Here's a friend of mine—there, talking with the Titian-haired lady in the exotic gown. Now, he is coming over to us.

He says he wants us to know Ben-Gunn, who is here, “one of the new crowd,” he says. My friend is very keen on the new crowd; everything else he declares is “passe.” Anyhow, it is a very valuable experience to talk with an exhibitor at an art exhibition. Your mind is impregnated, until it swells dizzily in your head. That would be he, the illiterate-looking little creature with the uncombed and unsanitary-looking mop.

There! I knew he would say something, something that would never leave you again the same. “Nothing is shiny in Nature,” says Mr. Ben-Gunn as though rather depressed, surveying a canvas in this respect unhappily divorced from the truth. “Nature,” he adds with Brahminic finality, “is always dull.”

Mr. Ben-Gunn is greeted affectionately by a gentleman you always see at every art exhibition. This is Mr.—I forget his name—it is French; I know he writes on Art for *Demos*; a remarkable being who apparently talks, hears, and sees nothing else but aestheticism. For as there are types peculiar to art exhibitions, so there are certain individuals apparently quite peculiar to art exhibitions. Come, let us go on down to see some Old Masters. Notice there in the corner the foreign-looking gentleman with the three foreign-looking children. That, the quiet, cultivated, foreign father and his children, is one of the pleasantest sights frequently to be seen at art exhibitions. Thus he is to be seen, easily and intimately discussing the pictures with his attentive followers.

The great point about the study of art exhibitions from the point of view of the humanist is the affinity between pictures and people. Here, for instance, on Madison Square, amid the art heritage of times past, what is it that at once strikes you? Why, that old paintings evidently are quite passe to the new crowd. At these exhibitions preliminary to the big auction sales of venerable masters, and of middle-aged masters, and of venerable and middle-aged not-quite-masters, there is a very attractive class of people, a class of funny-looking, fine-looking people, a class, that is, of rather shabby-looking people who look as if they might be very rich, of dull-looking people who look as if they

might be very bright. They buy huge catalogues at a dollar or so apiece, which they consult continually. They arrive early and remain a long time.

## Page 23

The women of this audience frequently are rather dowdy, and shapen in very individual fashions. The men generally are elderly beings, now and then reminiscent of the period of Horace Greeley. They are very bald, or with untrimmed white (not grey) hair, and, sometimes, Uncle-Sam-like whiskers. They are usually very wrinkled as to trowsers and overcoats. Here and there among the gentlemen of this company is to be seen one who looks strikingly like Emile Zola, or the late Mr. Pierpont Morgan slightly gone to seed. All these charming folk make of looking at old-fashioned pictures a very busy occupation, and also in effect a rather mundane occupation, as though they were alertly considering the possibility of making a selection from among a variety of serviceable kitchen chairs.

Argumenting the throng are authentic representatives of the world of fashion; some who appear to be students; the ever present foreigners, including the frequently present Jap; a number of those enigmatic beings who continually take notes at art exhibitions; and a respectable quota of those ladies we always have with us at art exhibitions who in the presence of pictures and it necessary to say: "Isn't that wonderful, marvellous tone quality!" Occasionally a decidedly quaint student of Art strolls in, past the imposing flunky (in finery a bit faded) at the door, strolls in in the form of a lodger in Madison Square. He looks at the pictures as if thoughtfully, but without animation.

Well, we have now covered, in an elementary way, about every important species of art show, except one, the most human perhaps of all, that held annually on Fifty-seventh Street. We should hardly have time to go up there to-day. I'll tell you about it. There are several reasons why this exhibition is the most human perhaps of all. One is that more people go than to any other. And these people, taken by and large, are more human, too, than one sees at most art exhibitions, that is more like just ordinary people. This may be, for one thing, because the pictures as a rule are more ordinary pictures. And a very human touch, indeed, is this: when you see the card "Sold" on a painting it is fairly certain to be one of the most ordinary pictures of the lot.

That reminds one of museums. People who are called in the world to the curious pursuit of copying pictures in museums, for some reason or other which I have been unable as yet to work out, apparently always copy the most bourgeois pictures there. But museums, with their throngs of subdued holiday makers and their crowds of weary gaping aliens of the submerged order, museums comprise a separate study.

At any rate, I hope in our stroll I have been able to give you a new insight into the fascination of the great world of Art.

## IV

### A ROUNDABOUT PAPER



## Page 24

No reader of *The Spectator* will have forgotten an article which appeared there some years ago entitled "As to Bears." Or ever will forget it until his shall be "the shut lid and the granite lip of him who has done with sunsets and skating, and has turned away his face from all manner of Irish," as William Vaughn Moody says. Not only because it was one of the finest things ever in *The Spectator*, or anywhere else (after, possibly, that imperishable dissertation of the great Dean's—or was it Sir William Temple's—"On a Broomstick"), but also because it was one pure flower in our day of a kind of art little cultivated any more. "As to Bears." All, me! How engaging, simple, gracious, and at ease; what perfection of literary breeding; what an amused and genial wave of the finger tips; how marked by good-humoured acuteness, and animated nonchalance; how saturated with a distinguished, humane tradition of letters—that title!

That is just the note I would strike in the great book I have been brooding for years, "Bums I Have Known." It has been my felicity to have known more bums, I think, than any living man. But I fear I shall never get that book written. And this is a pity. It is a pity because this book would be of great value in the years to come. With our modern passion for efficiency, and with efficiency rapidly becoming compulsory everywhere, that colourful class of ancient lineage, the bums, is quickly becoming *persona non grata* to our civilisation, and will soon be extinct. To the next generation, in all probability, the word bum will be but an empty name. I doubt whether it would be a feasible plan for Dr. Hornaday to undertake to preserve a small number of this species in the Bronx Park. The bum nature, I fear, would languish in captivity. The creature would likely lose its health, and, worse, its spirits. It is a nomad, a child of nature. It takes no thought for the morrow, as our modern prophets teach us to do. I remember well an excellent bum (I mean excellently conforming to type), one Bain, who, growing restive under restraint, lost a position which he happened to have. I asked him what he was going to do now. There was something sublime about that being. He had faith that the Lord would provide. His simple reply was: "Well, the ravens fed Elijah."

Stuffed bums in the American Museum of Natural History would not be any good. Any good, that is, as objects of study. Our children will require to know, to see the past steadily and see it whole, the *habits* of bums, their manners and customs. So, as I say, my work would be invaluable. The wastrel (as they say in England) has, of course, been celebrated in the literature of the past from time immemorial. I can't at the moment put my finger on any, but I have no doubt there are bums in the pages of Homer, That Persian philosopher who found paradise enow with a jug of wine and a book of verse beneath a bough, Falstaff, Richard Swiveller,

## Page 25

how they flock to the mind, they of the care-free kidney! They are in the Books of the great Hebrew literature. There was he that took his journey into a far country. "Gil Blas" and all the early picaresque novels on into the pages of "The Romany Rye" swarm with them. But what is wanting, what will be needed, is a richly informed picture of the last of the race, those now, like the Indian and the buffalo, fast passing away. There is only one way in which such a book could be, or should be written.

"Peace be with the soul of that charitable and Courteous Author who introduced the ingenious way of miscellaneous writing," wrote Lord Shaftsbury in the opening paragraph of his "Miscellaneous Reflections." Peace be with the souls of all those who, for the delight of the anointed, have practised that most debonair of all the arts, the ingenious way of miscellaneous writing! Now, as highly successful novelists always say nowadays when interviewed for highly successful newspapers, "I know very little about literature," but I fancy this benign way of writing had its well-spring in those preposterous days, now long fled, when men of reading were content to give their best thoughts first to their friends and then—ten years or so afterwards—to the "publick." Its period was the day of the "wits"—those beaux of the mind.

I guess the reason it has gone by the board is that it was what would be called "literary." And there is nothing we are so scared of to-day as the literary. It was not those dons the critics, we are told on the subway cards, who made Dickens immortal—it was YOU. And our foremost magazines advertise the "un-literary essay." "Literary expression," that Addisonian English stuff, whose elegance pleasantly conceals the lack of ideas beneath, is taboo in these parts. What we want is writers who have something to say, and who say it naturally and without any beating about the bush.

While the spell of miscellaneous writing, for those who savour it, is the author's joyous inability, it would seem, to get any "forrader," to stick to the point, to carry anything with a rush. See the greatest miscellaneous writer who ever lived, as an admirable later miscellaneous writer the late (in a literary sense) Hon. Augustine Birrell calls him, the Rev. Laurence Sterne. See positively the most buoyant book in all the world; I mean, of course, "The Path to Rome," by Hilaire Belloc. That glorious newspaper article, "Is Genius Conscious of Its Power?" starts off, indeed, with an allusion to the subject of genius. But the genius of this writer, of such unsurpassed and ingratiating savagery, soon turns to its true business of getting lost in the woods, and we take it from William Hazlitt that all in power are a lot of crooks.

## Page 26

So one born under the miscellaneous writer's star who purposed to write on, say, bums he had known would quite likely begin with a disquisition upon the importance of a good shape of human ear, and very naturally would conclude, with some warmth, with a denunciation of tight trowsers. And he would, of course, wander by the way into pleasant reminiscences of his childhood—how, for instance, the child gets his idea of what a native is from the cuts in his geography book. I well remember the first time I was alluded to in my presence as a native. I was very indignant. I knew what natives looked like from the cuts I had pored over. They were a fine, spirited race, very picturesquely attired, mostly in bows and arrows, and as creatures of romance I admired them greatly. Persons such as I and my parents were generally depicted in this connection as fleeing from them. And it did strike me as an ignoramus kind of thing that I should be called a native. When I was reasoned with to the effect that I was a native of Indiana, my resentment but grew. There were no natives in Indiana.

Speaking of efficiency reminds me of the real estate business. I have recently come somewhat into contact with this business and I have observed certain outstanding facts about it which I have not seen commented upon before. To set up in the real estate business one thing above all else is necessary, that is uncommon familiarity with the word "imagination." If you are thinking of buying a lot you will meet a tall, fair man, or a short, dark man (as the case may be), but in any case as unimaginative-looking a man as you could readily imagine. From this person you will learn that the thing at the bottom of every great fortune was imagination. If the location of the lot which you view strikes you as rather a desolate and barren-looking part of the world the trouble is not with the location but with you. Forty-second Street looked worse than that at one time. Thus, I imagine, if you have sufficient imagination you buy the lot.

It is a remarkable thing that the most startling spectacle in New York has never struck any one but myself. Forty-second Street puts me in mind of this. If you were a native of the Sandwich Islands and had never before been in town and were standing at the South-East corner of Broadway and Fulton Street at nine o'clock in the morning and were facing West, you would cry out aghast at this sight: You would see the quiet, old world grave-yard of St. Paul's Chapel, the funereal stone urn upon its stone post marking the corner and the leaning headstones beyond. There is no trumpet sound. But from a mouth at the grave-yard's side the earth belches forth a host which springs quick into the new day. It is a remarkable spectacle to contemplate, fraught with portent and symbol, though the mouth is a subway kiosk, my Sandwich friend.

## Page 27

Now, there are men who walk about London just as some men collect books. They are amateurs of London. Year by year they add precious souvenirs to their rich collections, the find of an old passage way here, there the view when the light is quite right from one precise spot, say, on Waterloo Bridge. Sometimes, indeed, they write books about their hobby, more or less useful to the neophyte: as "A Wayfarer's London," or "A Wanderer in London," or "Ghosts of Piccadilly," or some such thing; but more frequently they are of the highest type of amateur, the connoisseur who will gladly share his joy in his treasures with a cultivated friend but has nothing of his love to sell. I doubt whether there are any such amateurs of New York, any who for thirty years and more have walked our streets as an intellectual sport with unabated zest. London, of course, has the drop on us in the matter of richness of material for this sort of collector, but there is plenty to bag at home. Not far from the corner of Broadway and Fulton Street, I recollect, is a queer place called Vandewater Street.

Some twenty years or so ago you used to go to melodramas, real melodramas. There are aesthetic revivals of melodrama in Boston, I hear. There was nothing aesthetic about the ones I mean, and the enjoyment of them was untainted by the malady of thought. Come along now. We'll dive through Park Row and turn here down Frankfort Street. Few do turn down Frankfort Street, and I fear its admirable points are unappreciated. For one thing, it goes down, down, down a very steep incline; which is a spirited thing for a street to do, I think. And it is very narrow, at the beginning, with sidewalks that hug the walls, and is always in shadow, so that it has a fine, wild, villainous look. Horses climbing it always come with a plunge and a grinding of sparks. And the roar from the cobble stones is deafening, very stimulating to the imagination. The atmosphere is one of typefounders, leather, hides, and oyster houses.

Very few people, I fancy, could tell you where there is a portcullis in New York just like the one at a gateway in The Tower. But if you snook around the arches of the Brooklyn Bridge you'll find one, with a winding stair disappearing beyond it, and mounting, presumably, to a dungeon. Newswomen, I think, are pleasanter to see than newsboys. There is a newsgirl who minds a stand here at the corner of Rose and Frankfort Streets who is charming as a type of 'Arriet. She always wears an enormous hat. A fine thing for a 'Arriet to do, I think. Sometimes the stand is minded by her mother. (I take it, it is her mother.) An old body who always has her head wrapped in a knitted affair. A fine thing for an old body to do, I think. Phil May would have delighted in Frankfort Street. So would Rembrandt. Here comes an elderly person, evidently George Luk's "My Old Pal," who is balancing a large bundle of sticks on her head.



## Page 28

Across the way is a Whistler etching; Whistler did not happen to etch it; but it is a Whistler etching all the same. You look up a frowsy little courtyard, the walls of which are more graceful than plumb, and you see a horse's head sticking out into the etching. Also, across the way the "k" has dropped out of steak on the window of a chop-house. The public-houses down this way, many of them, are very low places. The thing to do in this world is to get as much innocent pleasure out of the spectacle as possible.

Well, the streets here twist about beneath the Bridge, so that you do not know what's beyond the turning. People going and coming through the arches are silhouettes. Overhead it is like the grumbling of a thunder storm. Wagons going over the stones rattle tremendously, and they carry lanterns swung beneath to be lighted at night. The streets have fine names: there is Gold Street, and then Jacob Street. Frankfort Street widens out and becomes a generous thoroughfare, all in sunlight. There is a huge, gay hoarding to the right as you go down. On your left you see one of the towers of the Bridge rising high in the air. Directly ahead the "JL" crosses the way!

Now comes the point which I have been getting at. You dip and turn into Vandewater Street. Under the Bridge at once you go, where all sounds are weird, hollow sounds, and then out again. The atmosphere has been becoming more and more charged with the character of the printing business. Now may be felt the tremour and heard the sound of moving presses. Printing houses, dealers in "litho inks," linotype companies, paper makers, "publishers and jobbers of books," "photo engraving" establishments are all about. Here is a far-famed publishing house the sight of which takes you back with a jump to your boyhood, your youthful, arrant, adventurous reading. Those were the happy days when the flavour of Crime was like ginger i' the mouth. Perhaps the recollection of this affects your thoughts now, and makes your mind more active than want.

All the people going through Vandewater Street appear to be composers. Fine, strapping, romantic people, composers, smeared with ink! Though there are other interests in this street besides printing. There is a big schoolhouse with every window in it broken; grand, desolate look to it! There is a delightful sign which says: "Horse collars, up stairs." There are little homes toward the end of the street—it is one block long—little, old, two-story, brick dwelling houses, in charmingly bad repair, with fire escapes, little stairs twisting up to the doors and iron railings there, and window-boxes at the windows.

As you turn at Pearl Street to go back again something comes over you. It is melodrama that comes over you. The vista of this queer, cold, lonesome, hard little street, down by the great city's river front, was painted, or something very like it was painted, on back curtains long ago. The great, gloomy pile of the Bridge rises before over all. To make it right there should be a scream. A female figure with hair streaming

upward should shoot through the air to black waters below, where there is a decrepit boat with a man in a striped jersey pulling at the oars.



## Page 29

### V

#### THAT REVIEWER "CUSS"

There are very young, oh absurdly young! reviewers; and there are elderly reviewers, with whiskers. There are also women reviewers. Absurdly young reviewers are inclined to be youthful in their reviews. Elderly reviewers usually have missed fire with their lives, or they wouldn't still be reviewers. The best sort of a reviewer is the reviewer that is just getting slightly bald. He is not a flippertigibbet, and still an intelligent man—if he is a good reviewer.

Book reviews are in nearly all the papers. Proprietors of newspapers don't read these things: they think they are deadly stuff. Many authors don't: because they regard them as ill-natured and exceedingly stupid. Book clerks don't read them much: for that would be like working overtime. Business men infrequently have time for such nonsense. University professors are inclined to pooh-pooh them as things beneath them. Still somebody must read them, as publishers pay for them with their advertising. No publishers' advertising, no book reviews, is the policy of nearly every newspaper; and the reviews are generally in proportion to the amount of advertising. Now publishers are sagacious men who generally live in comfortable circumstances, and who occasionally get quite rich and mingle in important society. They set considerable store by reviews; they employ publicity men at good wages who continually supply reviewers with valuable information by post and telephone; they are fond of quoting in large type remarks from reviews which please them; and sometimes, at reviews they don't like, they stir up a fuss and have literary editors removed from office.

Yes, reviews have much power. They are eagerly read by multitudes of people who write very indignantly to the paper to correct and rebuke the reviewer when, owing to fatigue, he refers to Miss Mitford as having written "Cranford," or otherwise blunders. They are the wings of fame to new authors. They can increase the sale of a book by saying that it should not be in the hands of the young. They are tolerated by the owners of papers, who are very powerful men indeed, engaged in the vast modern industry of manufacturing news for the people, and in constant effort to obtain control of politics. Reviewers are paid space rates of, in some instances, as much as eight dollars a column, with the head lines deducted. When there is no other payment they always get the book they review free for their libraries, or to sell cheap to the second-hand man. Reviewers are spoken of as "the critics"—by simple-minded people; when their printed remarks are useful for that purpose, the remarks are called "leading critical opinions"—by advertisements; and reviewers are sometimes invited to lunch by astute authors, and are treated to pleasant dishes to cheer them, and given good cigars to smoke.



## Page 30

Occasionally somebody ups and discusses the nature of our literary journalism and what sort of a creature the reviewer is. Dr. Bliss Perry was at this not long ago in the *Yale Review*. Editor for a couple of decades of our foremost literary journal, and now a professor in one of our great universities, Dr. Perry certainly knows a good deal about various branches of the book business. His highly critical review of the reviewing business has somewhat the character of a history that a great general might write of a war. A man who had served in the trenches, however, would give a more intimate picture, though of course it would not be as good history.

I will give an intimate picture of the American reviewer at work to-day: the absurdly young, the slightly bald, and the elderly with whiskers; and of his hard and picturesque trade.

There was an old man who had devoted a great many years to a close study of engraved gems. He embodied the result of his elaborate researches in a learned volume. I never had a gem of any kind in my life; at the time of which I write I did not have a job. A friend of mine, who was a professional reviewer, and at whose house I was stopping, brought home one day this book on engraved gems, and told me he had got it for me to review. "But," I said, "I don't know anything about engraved gems, and" (you see I was very inexperienced) "I can write only about things that particularly interest me." "You are a devil of a journalist," was my friend's reply; "you'd better get to work on this right away. You studied art, didn't you? I told the editor you knew all about art. And he has to have the article by Thursday."

He instructed me in certain elementary principles of the art of successful reviewing; such, for example, as getting your information out of the book itself; and he cautioned me against employing too many quotation marks, as the editor did not like that.

My review, of a couple of columns, cut a bit here and there by the literary editor, appeared in a prominent New York paper. Speaking quite impartially, simply as now a trained judge of these things, I will say that it was a very fair review: it "gave the book," as the term is. I discovered that I had something of a talent for this work; and so it was that I entered a profession which I have followed, with divers vicissitudes, for a number of years.

I became good friends with that literary editor, and began to contribute regularly week by week to his paper. He liked my style, and always gave me a good position in the paper. He liked me personally, and always put my name to my reviews; which was a thing against the rule of the paper—that being that only articles by celebrated persons were to be signed.



## Page 31

This is a point sometimes questioned. It seems to me that it is a good thing for the reviewer to have his work signed, particularly for the young reviewer, whose yet ardent spirit craves a place in the sun. It contributes to his pleasant conception of reviewing as a fine thing to do. It makes him more alive than the anonymous thing. He meets people who brighten at the recollection of having read his name. I know a man who was a very witty reviewer (when he was young); that fellow used to get love letters from ladies he had never seen, just like a baseball pitcher, or a tenor; there was a rich man who ate meals at the Century Club had him there to dinner, because he thought him funny; he got a note from a Literary Adviser asking him for a book manuscript; and two persons wrote him from San Francisco. I myself have had courteous letters thanking me from authors here and in England. That fellow of whom I just spoke undoubtedly was on the threshold of a brilliant career; he was full of courage and laughter, though very poor. Then a great man offered him a Position as a literary editor. His name ceased to be seen; I heard of him after a year, and it was said of him that he was dreadfully bald and had a long beard, I mean of course metaphorically speaking.

Whether signed reviewers are conducive to honesty I am not sure. There was a man (I know him well) wrote a book on Alaska or some such place, claimed he had been there. There was another man, his friend, who was a reviewer. Now the Alaskaian said to the critic: "Why don't you get my book from the paper? I'll write the review—I know more about the book than anybody else, anyway; and you sign it and get the money." And this was done; and it was an excellent review; and the paper (which you read every day) was no wiser.

The literary editor who signed my reviews for me was a youth of an independent turn of mind. He encouraged the expression in reviews of exactly what one thought; he liked an individual note in them; he had an enthusiasm for books of literary quality, somewhat to the neglect of other branches of the publishing business; he gathered about him a group of writers of a spirit kindred to his own; and he was rapidly moulding his department of his paper into a thing, perhaps a plaything, of life and colour.

But he lacked commercial tact. He wanted to make something like the English lighter literary journals. He offended the powers behind the man higher up. I saw him last on a Wednesday; he outlined his plans for the future. On Friday, I know he "made up" his paper. Saturday I looked for him, but he had gone from that place. There was in it a dried man of much hard experience of newspapers, who reigned in that youth's stead. The wrath of authority grinds with exceeding quickness.

This which I have written is history, as many excellent of mind know, and should be put into a book: for it reveals how close we came to having in this country a Literary Doings that could be read for pleasure. I continued to learn the business.



## Page 32

Sometimes reviewers are poets also. I know fifteen. Sometimes they are Irishmen. Sometimes both. I knew one who was one of those Celtic Poets. His name had all the colour of the late Irish literary movement. That is, after he became a man of letters; before that it was Bill Somethingorother. He was an earnest person, without humour (strange for an Irishman!), eloquent, very pronounced in his opinions; and he had never read anything at all (outside of Columbia University) before he was called to the literary profession. Later he went into politics, and became something at Washington. Some reviewers, again, are lexicographers. I know about a dozen of these, ranging in age from twenty-seven years to seventy. When they had finished writing the dictionary, they joined the army of the unemployed, and became reviewers. I am acquainted with one reviewer who has been everything, almost, under the sun—a husband, a father, and a householder; he has been successively a socialist, an aesthete, a Churchman, and a Roman Catholic. He is an eager student of the universe, a prodigiously energetic journalist, a lively and a humorous writer, a person of marked talent. He will be thirty shortly.

Sometimes reviews are charmingly written by veteran literary men, such as, for instance, Mr. Le Gallienne, and Mr. Huneker. Dr. Perry mentions among reviewers a group of seasoned bookmen, including Mr. Paul Elmer More and Professor Frank Mather, Jr. Mr. Boynton is another sound workman. On the other hand, by some papers, books are economically given out for review to reporters. And again (for the same reason), to editorial writers and to various editors. In America, you know, practically everybody connected with a newspaper is an editor. The man who sits all day in his shirt sleeves smoking a corncob pipe, clipping up with large scissors vast piles of newspapers, is exchange editor. There was a paper for which I worked from morn till dewy eve, reviewing hooks, where we used to say that we had an elevator editor and a scrub editor, and a nice charwoman she was.

Reviewers of course frequently differ widely in their conceptions of a book. I said one time of a book of Lady Gregory's that it was a highly amusing affair; and I gave numerous excerpts in support of my statement. I had enjoyed the book greatly. It was delightful, I thought. It was then a bit of a jolt to me to read a lengthy article by another reviewer of the same book, who set forth that Lady Gregory was an extremely serious person, with never a smile, and who gave copious evidence of this point in quotations. Each of us made out a perfectly good case.



## Page 33

Now suppose you read in the New York *This*, a daily paper, that Such-and-Such a book was the best thing of its kind since Adam. And suppose you found the same opinion to be that of the New York *Weekly That* and of the New York *Weekly Other*.

Notwithstanding that the New York *Something-Else* declared that this was the rottenest hook that ever came from the press, you would be inclined to accept the conclusion of the majority of critics, would you not? Well, I'll tell you this: the man who "does" the fiction week by week for the New York *This* and for *The That* and for *The Other*, is one and the same industrious person. I know him well. He has a large family to support (which is continually out of shoes) and his wife just presented him with a new set of twins the other day. He is now trying to add the job on *The Something-Else* to his list.

Let us farther suppose that you are a magazine editor. You wrote this Such-and-Such book yourself. You are a very disagreeable person (we will imagine). You rejected three of my stories about my experiences as a vagabond. Farthermore, when I remonstrated with you about this over the telephone, you told me that you were very busy. When your book came out I happened to review it for three papers. I tried to do it justice although I didn't think much of the book, or of anything else that you ever did.

Now, reflecting upon the vast frailty of human nature, and considering the power of the reviewer to exercise petty personal pique, I think there is little dishonesty of this nature in reviews. The prejudice is the other way round, in "log rolling," as it is called, among little cliques of friends. Though I have known more than one case more or less like that of a reviewer man, otherwise fairly well balanced, who had a rabid antipathy to the work of Havelock Ellis. Whenever he got hold of a book of Havelock Ellis's he became blind and livid with rage.

In the period when I was a free lance reviewer, I used to review generally only books that I was particularly interested in, books on subjects with which I was familiar, books by authors whom I knew all about. And in writing my reviews I used to wait now and then for an idea. Those were happy, innocent, amateur days. That is: when my thoughts got stalled I would throw myself on a couch for a bit, or I would look out at my window, or I took a turn about Gramercy Park for a breath of air. Reviews sometimes had to be in by the following day, or, so my editor would declare to me with much vigour over the telephone, the paper would go to smash; and then he would hold them in type for three weeks. But they rarely had to be done within a couple of hours or less.

## Page 34

In the course of time I got down to brass tacks; I took a staff position, a desk job. It was up to me to review everything going, in a steady ceaseless grind. I began work at half past nine in the morning. When I was commuting I began earlier, taking up a book on the train. Between nine thirty and a quarter to eleven I did a book, say, on the extermination of the house-fly; from then until lunch time, three hundred words on a very pleasant novel called, for instance, "Roast Beef, Medium"; in the afternoon, three-quarters of a column on a "History of the American Negro"; winding up the day, perhaps, with a lively article about a popular book on "Submarine Diving and Light Houses"; and taking home at night the "Note Books of Samuel Butler." I began the morrow, very likely, with an "omnibus article" lumping together five books on the Panama Canal. And then, as the publishers of the latest book on art had turned in a double-column hundred-agate-line "ad" the week before, it was necessary to do something serious "for" that masterpiece. I reviewed a dictionary and a couple of cookery books. At the holiday season I polished off a jumble of Christmas and New Year's cards, a pile of picture calendars, and a table full of "juveniles." Woman suffrage, alcoholism, New Thought, socialism, minor poetry, big game hunting, militarism, athletics, architecture, eugenics, industry, European travel, education, eroticism, red blood fiction, humour, uplift books, white slavery, nature study, aviation, bygone kings (and their mistresses), statesmen, scientists, poverty, disease, and crime, I had always with me. I became a slightly bald reviewer.

Books of theology and of philosophy were given out to a theologian; books concerning the dramatic art were done by the dramatic critic; and those on music went to the music critic. We had an occasional letter from Paris on current French literature.

In addition to writing (for I was an editor), I read the "literary" galley proofs; "made up" once a week down in the composing room late at night; compiled the feature variously called in different papers *Books Received*, *Books of the Week*, or *The Newest Books*; and got out the correspondence of the literary department—with publishers and with fools who write in about things. I also went over the foreign exchange, that is: clipped literary notes out of foreign papers. Once a month I surveyed the current magazines. I worked in the office on every holiday of the year except Christmas and New Year's, and frequently on Sundays at home.

With a view to attracting the intellectual elite to a profession where this class is needed, I will tell you what I got for this. It should be understood, however, that I was with one of the great papers, which paid a scale of generous salaries. Mine was forty dollars a week. That is a good deal of money for a literary man to earn regularly. But—



## Page 35

I did, indeed, have an assistant in this office; there was a person associated with me who took the responsibility of everything in the department that was excellent. That is, I was “assistant literary editor.” Few newspapers can afford to employ a chief solely for each department. It is recognised that the work of the literary editor can be economically combined with that of the dramatic editor, or with that of the art critic; or the art critic runs the Saturday supplement, or some such thing. My chief looked in every day or so, and frequently, perhaps in striving for exact honesty I should say regularly, contributed reviews. He directed the policy of the department, subject, of course, to criticism from “down stairs.”

But (as I was about to say above) that regular income is very uncertain. Universities cultivate a sense of security in their professors, in order to obtain loyal service and lofty endeavour. The editorial tenure, as all men know, is a house of sand—a summer’s breeze, a wash of the tide, and the editor is a refugee. I know the editor of literary pages that go far and wide, who has held down that job now for over a year. That man is troubled: none has ever stood in his shoes for much longer than that.

“Don’t fool yourself,” I heard a successful young journalist say the other day to a very conscientious young reviewer. “Good work won’t get you anything. Play politics, office politics all the while.” Doubtless sound advice, this, for any gainful employment.

Now about that prime department of the press called the business office. Many people firmly believe that all book reviews—and dramatic criticisms and editorials—are bought by “the interests.” One of the principal librarians of New York holds this view of reviews. I never knew a reviewer who was bound to tell anything but the truth as he saw it. Nor have I ever written in any review a word that I knew to be false; and I believe that few reviewers do. Because, however, this or that publishing house was “a friend of ours,” or because the husband of this author used to work for the paper (pure sentiment!), or that one is a friend of the wife of The Editor (caution!), it has been suggested to me by my chief that I “go easy” with certain books.

The good reviewer does go easy with most books. It is a mark of his excellence as a reviewer that he has a catholic taste, that he sees that books are written to many standards, and that every book, almost, is meet for some. It is not his business to break things on the wheel; but to introduce the book before him to its proper audience; always recognising, of course, sometimes with pleasant subtle irony, its limitations. It is only when a book pretends to be what it is not, that he damns it. All that is not business, but sensible, sensitive criticism.

## Page 36

To return. The business office exerts not a direct but a moral influence, so to put it, upon the literary department. Business tact must be recognised. A hostile review already in type and in the plan of the next issue may be “killed” when a large “ad” announcing books brought out by the publisher of this one so treated comes in for the next paper; and then search is made for a book from the same publisher which may be favourably reviewed. Or a hostile review may be held over until a time more politic for its release, say following several enthusiastic reviews. And there is no sense in noticing in one issue a disproportionate number of books published by one house.

In concluding my discussion I will draw two portraits of professional reviewers, one composite of a class, the other a picture of a man who stands at the top of his profession.

Seated at his desk is a little man with a pointed beard and a large bald spot on top of his head. This man has been all his life a literary hack. He has read manuscript for publishing houses; he has novelised popular plays for ha-penny papers, and dramatised trashy novels for cheap producers; he has done routine chore writing in magazine offices, made translations for pirate publishers, and picked up an odd sum now and then by a “Sunday story.” He has always been an anonymous writer. He has never had sufficient intellectual character to do anything well. The downward side of middle age finds him afflicted with various physical ailments, entirely dependent upon a precarious position at a moderate salary, without influential friends, completely disillusioned, with a mediocre mind now much fagged, devoid of high ambition, and with a most unstimulating prospect before him. His attitude toward the business of book reviewing is that he wishes he had gone into the tailor business or that his father had left him a grocery store. He would not have succeeded, however, as either a tailor or a grocer, as he has even less business than literary ability. Farther, he regards himself as a gentleman, and books strike him as being more gentlemanly than trade. He has got along as well as he has, by bluff about his extensive acquaintance with literature, and his long experience in writing and publishing.

This type of reviewing man says that he does the thing “mechanically.” About the new crop of juvenile books, let us say, he says the same thing again now that he said four years ago. “One idea every other paragraph,” is his principle, and he thinks it sufficient in a review. Sufficient, that is, to “get by.” And whatever gets by, in his view, “pleases them just as well as anything else.” Our friend of this character has a considerable number of stock remarks which may at any time be written very rapidly. One of these sentences is: “This book furnishes capital reading;” another says that this book “is welcome;” and he holds as a general principle that, “the reviewer who reads the book is lost.”



## Page 37

Occasionally, very occasionally, there is found among reviewers the type of old-fashioned person who used to be called a “man of letters.” This is a wild dream, but it would be a grand thing for American reviewing if every one of our young reviewers could have for an hour each week the moral benefit of the society of such a man. I know one who now has been active in New York literary journalism for something like thirty years—a fine intellectual figure of a man. He makes his living out of this, indeed, but his interest is in the thing itself, in literature. He has all that one really needs in the world, he has the esteem of the most estimable people, and he follows with unceasing pleasure a delightful occupation. He is as keen to-day, he declares, on the “right way of putting three words together” as he was when he began to write. His mellow, witty, and gentlemanly style is saturated with the sounds, scents and colours of literature. The exercise of his cultivated judgment is not a trade, but a sacred trust. To look at him and to think of his admirable career is to realise the dignity of his calling—discussing with authority the books of the world as they come from the press.

## VI

### LITERARY LEVITIES IN LONDON

Now it's a funny thing, that, come to think of it. Some folks have questioned whether, the other way round, it could be done in this country at all. It's a pleasant view anyhow that the matter presents of that curious affair the English character.

There is a notion knocking about over here that considerable rigmarole is required to meet an Englishman. And very probably few who have tried it would dispute that it is somewhat difficult to “meet” an ordinary Englishman to whom you are not known in a railway carriage. With the big 'uns, however, the business appears to be simple enough. Foolish doings do clutter up one's luggage with letters of introduction when all that is needed to board round with the most celebrated people in England is a glance at a “Who's Who” in a public library to get addresses.

For the purpose of convenience the writer of these souvenirs will refer to himself as “I” and “me.” I was all done up in health and was advised by doctors to clear out at once. So I bought a steamship ticket, packed a kit bag, crossed the water and took a couple of strolls about that island over there; when, feeling fitter, I turned up in London for a look about.

It sort of came over me that in my haste of departure I had neglected to bring any of my friends along, or to equip myself with the means of making others here. I was unarmed, so to say—a “Yank” in an obviously hostile country. This, you see, was before the war, before we and Britain had got so genuinely sweet on one another.



At that time I had two acquaintances resident in London. One, a Bostonian, whose attention was quite occupied with a new addition to his family; the other was the errand man stationed before my place of abode. He was an amiable soul, whose companionable nature, worldly wisdom and topographical knowledge I much appreciated. He instructed me in the culinary subject of “bubble and squeak” and many other learned matters; but unfortunately his social connections were limited to one class.



## Page 38

One time not a great while back I happened to review in succession for a New York paper several books by Hilaire Belloc. Mr. Belloc had written me a note thanking me for these reviews. I decided to write Mr. Belloc that I was in London and to ask if he could spare a moment for me to look at him, Mr. Belloc being one of my literary passions.

Then an ambitious idea popped into my head. I determined to write the same request to all the people in England I had ever reviewed. Reviewing, mostly anonymous, had been my business for several years, with other literary chores on the side. I communicated to Mr. Chesterton the fact that I had come over to look about, told him my belief that he was one of the noblest and most interesting monuments in England, and asked him if he supposed that he could be “viewed” by me, at some street corner, say, at a time appointed, as he rumbled past in his triumphal car.

Writing to famous people that you don’t know is somewhat like the drink habit. It is easy to begin; it is pleasurable stimulating; it soon fastens itself upon you to the extent that it is exceedingly difficult to stop indulgence and it leads you straight to excess. I wound up, I think, with Hugh Walpole. I had liked that “Fortitude” thing very much.

My Englishised Boston friend—he’s the worst Englishman I saw over there—simply threw up his hands. He groaned and fell into a chair.

“Holy cat!” he cried, or English words to that effect, “you can’t come over here and do that way. It’s not done,” he declared. “You can’t meet Englishmen in that fashion. These people will think you are a wild, bounding red Indian. They’ll all go out of town until you leave the country.”

Well, I saw it was awfully bad. I have disgraced the U.S.A. That’s what comes of having crude notions about meeting people. I felt pretty cheap. I felt sorry for my friend too, because he had to stay there where he lived and try to hold his head up while I could slink off back home. My friend pointed out to me that Mr. Chesterton and the other gentlemen had only my word for it that I had any connection with literature, and that as far as they were aware I might be the worst kind of crook, and at the very best was in all likelihood a very great bore.

Annie, the maid at my lodgings, handed me a bunch of mail. Mr. Belloc was particularly eager to see me, he said. He gave me an intimate two page account of his movements for the past couple of weeks or so. He had just been out to sea in his boat, the *Nona*, and had only got back after a good deal of difficulty outside; this he hoped would account for the delay of a day or so in his reply.

During the Whitsun days he had to travel about England to see his children at their various schools, and after that he had to go to settle again about his boat, where she lay in a Welsh port. Then he must speak at Eton. He would be “available,” however, at the beginning of the next week, when he hoped I would “take a meal” with him. Perhaps he

could be of some use in acquainting me with England; it would be such a pleasure to meet me, and so on. Very nice attitude for a man so slightly acquainted with one.



## Page 39

Mr. Chesterton wished to thank me for my letter and to say that he would be pleased if I cared to come down to spend an afternoon with him at Beaconsfield. Mr. Walpole apologised very greatly for seeming so curtly inhospitable, but he was only in London for a short time and had difficulty in squeezing his engagements in. This week, too, was infernally complicated by Ascot. But couldn't I come round on Monday to lunch with him at his club?

Mr. Chesterton is a grand man. Smokes excellent cigars. But first, as you come up the hill, from the railway station toward the old part of the village and to the little house Overroads, you enter, as like as not, as I did, a gate set in a pleasant hedge, and you knock at a side door, to the mirth later of Mrs. Chesterton.

This agreeable entrance is that for tradesmen. The way you should have gone in is round somewhere on another road. A maid admits you to a small parlour and in a moment Mrs. Chesterton comes in to inquire if you have an appointment with her husband. She always speaks of Mr. Chesterton as "my husband." It develops that the letter you sent fixing the appointment got balled up in some way. It further develops that a good many things connected with Mr. Chesterton's life and house get balled up. Mrs. Chesterton's line seems to be to keep things about a chaotic husband as straight as possible.

Mr. Chesterton is a very fat man. His portraits, I think, hardly do him sufficient honour in this respect. He has a remarkably red face. And a smallish moustache, lightish in colour against this background. His expression is extraordinarily innocent; he looks like a monstrous infant. A tumbled mane tops him off. He sits in his parlour in a very small chair.

Did I write him when I was coming? Wonder what became of the letter? Doesn't remember it. Perhaps it is in his dressing gown. Has a habit of sticking things that interest him into the pocket of his dressing gown. Where, do you suppose, is his dressing gown? However, no matter. "Have a cigar. Do have a cigar. Wonder where my cigars are! Where are my cigars?" Mrs. Chesterton locates them.

Now about that poem, "The Inn at the End of the World," or some such thing. He is inclined to think that he did write it, but he cannot remember where it was published. Now he has lost his glasses, ridiculously small glasses, which he has been continually attempting to fix firmly upon his nose. Slapping yourself about the chest is an excellent way to find glasses.

Well, it is very flattering to be told that one is so well known in America. But so he had heard before. Describes himself as a "philosophical journalist." Did not know that there was an audience in America for his kind of writing. Wonders whether democracy as carried on there "on such a gigantic scale" can keep right on successfully. Admits a division between our two peoples. "Trenches have been dug between us," he declares.



## Page 40

Rises to a remark about the Englishman's everlasting garden. "He likes to have a little fringe about him," he says. And then tells a little story, which one might say contains all the elements of his art.

When he first came to Beaconsfield, Mr. Chesterton said, the policemen used to touch their helmets to him, until he told them to stop it. Because, he said, he felt that rather he should touch his hat to the policemen. "Saluting the colours, as it were," he explained. "For," he added, "are they not officers of the King?"

Mr. Chesterton apologised for being, as he put it, excessively talkative. This was occasioned, he said, by "worry and fatigue." I declined to stay for tea, as I noticed a chugging car awaiting in front of the house. "You must come to see me again," said the grand young man of England. The last I saw of him he was rolling through his garden, tossing his mane; the famous garden that rose up and hit him, you remember, at the time of his unfortunate fall.

Fine time I had with young Walpole. Those English certainly have the drop on us in the matter of clubs. They live about in the haunts beloved of Thackeray, and everybody else you ever heard of. Pleasant place, the Garrick. Something like our Players, but better. Slick collection of old portraits. Fine bust there of Will Shakespeare, found bottled up in some old passage.

Fashionable young man, Walpole. I can't remember exactly whether or not he had on all these things; but he's the sort that, if he had on nothing, would look as if he had: silk topper, spats, buttonhole bouquet. Asked me if I had yet been to Ascot. "Oh, you must go to Ascot." Buys his cigarettes, in that English way, in bulk, not by the box. "Stuff some in your pocket," he said. "Won't you have a whiskey and soda?"

Difficult person to talk with, as the only English he knows is the King's English. I was endeavouring to explain that I had left New York rather suddenly. "I just beat it, you know," I said.

"You beat it?" said Mr. Walpole.

"Yes, I just up and skidooed."

"You skidooed?"

I saw that I should have to talk like John Milton. "Sure," I said, "I left without much preparation." And then we spoke of some writer I do not care for. "I don't get him," I said.

"You don't get him?" inquired Mr. Walpole.

"No," I said, "I can't see him at all."



“You can’t see him?” queried Mr. Walpole.

More Milton, I perceived. “I quite fail,” I said, “to appreciate the gentleman’s writings.”

Mr. Walpole got that.

“Fortitude” had done him very well. The idea of Russia had always fascinated him; he had enough money to run him for a couple of years, and he was leaving shortly for Russia. “Is there any one here you would like me to help you to see?” he asked. Queer way for a gentleman to treat a probable crook. “Have you met Mr. James?” Walpole was very strong with Mr. James, it seemed.



## Page 41

Read aloud a letter just received from Mr. James, which he had been fingering, to show that his informal, epistolary style was identical with that of his recent autobiographical writings, which we had been discussing. "Bennett, of course you should see Arnold Bennett." Great friend of Walpole's. "And Mrs. Belloc Lowndes," said Mr. Walpole, "you really must know her; knows as much about the writing game as any one in England. I'll write those three letters to-night."

Suddenly he asked me if I were married. "All Americans are," was his comment. He had to be going. Some stupid affair, he said, for the evening. We walked together around into the Strand. "Well, good-bye," said Mr. Walpole, extending his hand, "I've got to beat it now."

There was an awesome sort of place where Thackeray went, you remember, where he was scared of the waiters. This probably was not the Reform Club, as he was very much at home there and loved the place. However, just the outside of this "mausoleum" in Pall Mall scared Mr. Hopkinson Smith, who had been inside a few clubs here and there, and who spoke, in a sketch of London, of its "forbidding" aspect, "a great, square, sullen mass of granite, frowning at you from under its heavy browed windows—an aloof, stately, cold and unwelcome sort of place."

An aristocratic functionary, probably a superannuated member of Parliament, placed me under arrest at the door, and in a vast, marble pillared hall I was held on suspicion to await the arrival of Mr. Belloc.

A large, brawny man he is, with massive shoulders, a prizefighter's head, a fine, clean shaven face and a bull neck. Somehow he suggested to me—though I do not clearly remember the picture—the portrait of William Blake by Thomas Phillips, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery, frequently reproduced in books.

He gives your hand a hearty wrench, turns and strides ahead of you into another room. You—and small boys in buttons, with cards and letters on platters, to whom he pays no attention—trot after him. A driving, forceful, dominating character, apparently. Looks at his watch frequently. Perpetually up and down from town, he says, and continually rushing about London. Keen on the job, evidently, all the while.

He does not know how far you are acquainted with England; "there is a wonderful lot of things to be seen in the island." Tells you all sorts of unusual places to go; how, somewhere in the north, you can walk along a Roman wall for ever so long, "a wonderful experience." Makes your head spin, he knows so much that you never thought of about England.

Discussing a tremendous meeting later on, where all the literary nobility of London are to be with you, he follows you down the steps when you go. Later forgets, in the crush

of his affairs, all about this arrangement. Then sends you telegrams and basketfuls of letters of apology, with further invitations.



## Page 42

“Here you are, sir! All the winners! One penny.” This had been the cry of the news lads but the week before.

“England to fight! Here you are, sir. Britain at war!” suddenly they began to yell through the streets.

It was not an hour now, I felt, to trouble Englishmen with my petty literary adventures. Also, I became a refugee, to some extent. And, well—I “beat it” back ‘ome again. This was the only way I knew, as a neutral (then), to serve the countries at war.

## VII

### HENRY JAMES, HIMSELF

We have now to record an extraordinary adventure. Our later education was derived in some considerable measure from the writings of Mr. Henry James. This to explain our emotion. We had never expected to behold himself, the illustrious expatriate who had so far enlightened an unkempt mind. But the night before we had been talking of him. Indeed, it is impossible for us to fail to perceive here something of the supernatural.

But hold! “William Edwards,” says a newspaper notice, “who used to drive a post stage between New York and Albany, died on Saturday at his home. He was born in Albany,” and so and so, “and many were the stories he had to tell of incidents connected with the famous men who were his passengers.” Even so. We were ourselves a clerk. That is, for a number of years we waited on customers in a celebrated book shop. This is one of the stories we have to tell of the personages who were, so to say, our passengers. Or perhaps we are more in the nature of those unscrupulous English footmen to high society, of whom we have heard, who “sell out” their observation and information to the society press.

Anyhow, we are of a loquacious, gossipy turn; and we were booksellers, so to speak, to crowned heads. We have recently heard, too, of another precedent to our garrulous performance, the publication in Rome of the memoirs of an old waiter, who carefully set down the relative liberality of prominent persons whom he served. After having served Cardinals Rampolla and Merry del Val, this excellent memoirist entered opposite their names, “Both no good.” With this we drop the defensive.

We noticed Mr. Wharton sitting down, legs crossed, smoking a cigar. Awaiting, we presumed, his wife. A not unpicturesque figure, tall, rather dashing in effect, ruddy visage, dragoon moustache, and habited in a light, smartly-cut sack suit of rather arresting checks, conspicuous grey spats; a gentleman manifesting no interest whatever in his surroundings.

Mr. Brownell, the critic, entered through the front door and moved to the elevator.

## Page 43

There stepped from the elevator car a somewhat portly little man who joined Mr. Wharton. He wore a rather queer looking, very big derby hat, oddly flat on top. His shoulders were hooped up somewhat like the figure of Joseph Choate. A rather funny, square, box-like body on little legs. An English look to his clothes. Under his arm an odd-looking club of a walking-stick. Mr. Brownell turned quickly to this rather amusing though not undistinguished figure, and said, "Mr. James—Brownell." The quaint gentleman took off his big hat, discovering to our intent curiosity a polished bald dome, and began instantly to talk, very earnestly, steadily, in a moderately pitched voice, gesticulating with an even rhythmic beat with his right hand, raised close to his face.

Joined presently by Mrs. Wharton, the party, bidding Mr. Brownell adieu, took a somewhat humorous departure (we felt) from the shop; Mr. James, with some suddenness, preceding out the door. Moving nimbly up the Avenue, he was overhauled by Mrs. Wharton under full sail, who attached herself to his arm. Her husband by an energetic forward play around the end achieved her other wing. In this formation, sticks flashing, skirt whipping, with a somewhat spirited mien, the august spectacle receded from our rapt view, to be at length obliterated as a unit by the general human scene.

We saw Mr. James after this a number of times. Accompanied again by Mrs. Wharton, and later in the charge (such was the effect) of another lady, who, we understood, drives regularly to her social chariot literary lions. In something like six years' observation of the human being in a book shop, we have never seen any person so thoroughly in a book store, a magazine, that is, of books, as Mr. James. One can be, you know—it is most common, indeed—in a book store and at the same time not be in a book store—any more than if one were in a hotel lobby. Mr. James "snooked" around the shop. He ran his nose over the tables, and inch by inch (he must be very shortsighted) along the walls, stood on tiptoe and pulled down volumes from high places, rummaged in dark corners, was apparently oblivious of the presence of anything but the books. He was not the slightest in a hurry. He would have been, we felt, content and quite happy, like a child with blocks, to play this way by himself all day.

Happening, by our close proximity, to turn to us the first time in the shop that he required attention, upon each succeeding visit he sought out us to attend to his wishes. The position of retail salesman "on the floor" is one completely exposed to every human attitude and humour. Against arrogance, against contempt of himself as a shop person, a species of "counter-jumper," against irascibility, against bigoted ignorance, against an indissoluble assumption, perhaps logical, that he is of inferior mentality, this factotum has no defence. His very business is to meet all with amenity. It is his daily portion, included in the material with which he works.



## Page 44

It (he finds) injures him not, essentially; it ceases to particularly affect him, beyond his inward appraisal of the character before him. Toward him one acts simply in accordance with the instincts of one's nature. His status counsels no constraint, invites no display, has no property of stimulation. Thus the view of a famous man's character from the position of retail clerk is valuable. Mr. James's manner with Mr. Brownell would hardly be the same as toward us. But it was, exactly. There was present in his mind at the moment, was quite apparent, absolutely no consciousness of any distance of mind, or position, between him and us. He sought conversation (any suggestion of so equalising a thing as conversation with a clerk is not uncommonly repressed by the important as preposterous). In his own talk with us, he seemed to us to be a man consciously striving with the material of words and sentences to express his thought as well as he could.

He was very earnest. He looked up at us constantly (we are a little tall) with fixed concentration of gaze, and moved his hand to and fro as though seeking to balance his ideas. He asked questions with deference. Among other things, he desired very much to know what per cent. of the novels on the fiction table was the product of writers in England. "I live in England myself," he said, very simply, "and I am curious to know this." He expressed a little impatience at the measureless flood of mediocre fiction, making a fluttering gesture conveying a sense of impotence to give it attention. He barely glanced at the pile of his own book, and did not mention it. He did not seem at first (though we believe later he changed this opinion) to think highly of Arnold Bennett (this was at the first bloom of Mr. Bennett's vogue here), nor to have read him. "Oh, yes, yes; he is an English journalist," in a tone as though, merely a journalist. Clear artist in fibre. When he took his departure he bade us "Good day," and lifted his hat.

Succeeding visits caused us to suspect that Mr. James's ideas of the machinery of business are somewhat naive. He seemed to regard us as, so to say, the whole works. It entered our head that maybe Mr. James thought we received and answered all manner of correspondence, editorial as well as that connected with the retail business, opened up in the morning, read, accepted, and rejected manuscript, nailed up boxes for shipment, swept out the shop, and were acquainted perfectly with all confidential matters of the House. "I wrote you" (us), "you know," he said. And he referred by the way, apparently upon the assumption that the matter had been laid before us, to business of which we could not possibly have cognizance. And then he desired to send some books. Fumbling in his breast pocket, he produced a letter, from which he read aloud a list of his own works apparently requested of him. Carefully replacing his letter, he said: "I should like to send these books to my sister-in-law." With that he started out.



## Page 45

Now, it was not a difficult problem to assume that this could be no other than Mrs. William James, still, it is customary for purchasers to state the name of the person to whom goods are to go, and many people are sceptical that the salesman has it down right even then. "Your sister-in-law, Mr. James, is-----?" we suggested. "Oh, yes, of course—of course; Mrs. William James; of course—of course," Mr. James said. Now, certainly, he supposed (it was evident) he had got finally settled a difficult and complicated piece of business. Mrs. William James's regular address we might reasonably infer. Still it might be that she was at the moment somewhere else, on a visit. It were better to have Mr. James give his order in the regular way. "And the address?" we mentioned. "Oh, yes—oh, yes; of course—of course," Mr. James said apologetically. Then, pausing a moment to see if there was anything more in this bewildering labyrinth of details to such a complex transaction, he departed, taking, as he drew away, his hat, as Mrs. Nickleby says, "completely off."

Instead of ascending directly to that regal domain which is unaware of our existence, Mr. James, with the inclination of a bow, approached us one day and inquired, in a manner as though the decision rested largely with us, whether he "could see" the head of the firm. The lady who was his escort swept past him. "Oh, I am sure he will see him," she declared; "this" (with impressive awe) "is Mr. James." Had we said, No, right off the bat, so to say, like that, we believe (unchampioned) Mr. James would have gently withdrawn.

## VIII

### MEMORIES OF A MANUSCRIPT

I was born in Indiana. That was several years ago, and I have since seen a good deal of the world. I was reading in a newspaper the other day of a new film which shows on the screen the innumerable adventures of a book in the making, from the time the manuscript is accepted to the point where the completed volume is delivered into the hands of the reader. And it struck me that the intimate life of a manuscript before it is accepted might be even more curious to the general public. The career of many an obscure manuscript, I reflected, doubtless is much more romantic than its character. I wonder why, I said, manuscripts have all been so uncommonly reticent concerning themselves. But manuscripts, one recollects, have sensitive natures; and their experiences, at least the experiences of those not born to a great name, could hardly be called flattering to their feelings. Indeed, manuscripts suffer much humiliation, doubtless little suspected of the world. And it requires a manuscript strong in the spirit of detachment to lay bare its heart.



## Page 46

My parent—manuscripts commonly have but one parent—bore me great love; indeed I think he loved me beyond everything else in the world. He was a young man apprenticed to the law, but he cared more for me, I think, than for his calling, which I suspect he decidedly neglected for my sake. I know that in his family he was held a rather disappointing young man; but his family did not know the fervour of his heart, or the tenacity of purpose of which he was capable. He toiled over my up-bringing for two years, and often and often into the very small hours. I think I was never altogether absent from his thoughts, even when he was abroad about his business or his pleasure. I was his first manuscript—his first, that is, that ever grew up. And though I know he was not ashamed but very proud of me, he attempted to keep my existence something of a secret. I could not but feel that as I developed I was a great happiness to him, and yet at times he would give way to black discouragement about me. I know that I have passages which caused him intense pain to bring about. Throughout the time of my growth my dear parent alternated between periods of high exultation and of keen torture. As time passed he became more and more completely absorbed in me. When my climax came into sight he fell to working upon me with exceeding fury, and in the construction of my climax it was plain that he wrestled with much agony—an agony, however, which seemed to be a kind of strange, mad joy.

And then one night (I remember a storm raged without) my parent came to me with a wild, yet happy, light on his face. He pounded at me harder than ever before; and at intervals paced the floor, up and down, up and down, like a man demented, throwing innumerable half-smoked cigarettes over everywhere. The wind blew, and the little frame house strained and groaned in its timbers. As he bent over me a face enwrapt, striking the keys with a quick, nervous touch, great tears started from my dear parent's eyes. Then, it must have been near dawn and the little room hung and swayed in a golden fog of tobacco smoke, I knew that I was finished. My parent was bending over my last page like a six-day bicycle racer over his machine, when he straightened up, raising his hands, and drove his right fist into his left palm. "Done!" he cried, and started from his chair to pace the room in such a frenzy as I had never seen him in before. It was fully half an hour before his excitement abated, when he fell back into his chair, and smoked incessantly until the light of morning paled our lamp. At length I noticed he had ceased to smoke, his head gradually slipped backward, his eyes closed, and he slept. Thus I was born and brought up and grew to manuscript's estate in a little Middle-Western town, on a rented typewriter.



## Page 47

One day shortly after this I was packed up with great care and very carefully addressed, and under my parent's arm I boarded an interurban car. We new over the friendly-looking Hoosier landscape, and at length rolled into the interurban station of the bustling capital, the largest city I had as yet seen. I did not see much of it, however, on this first visit, as we went quickly around the handsome Soldiers' Monument to the office of the American Express Company on Meridian Street. I was given over in charge of a man there who very briskly weighed me and asked my parent my value. My parent seemed to be in a good deal of a dilemma as to this. He hemmed and hawed and finally replied: "Well, I hardly know."

"Is its value inestimable?" inquired the clerk. "Why, in a way I guess you might say it is," said my parent.

Finally, against the clerk's mounting impatience, an estimate was effected, and I was declared to be worth \$500. I was cast carelessly on to a pile of other packages of various shapes and sizes, and my parent, giving me a farewell lingering look of love, went out the door.

Of my journey there is not much to say. I arrived in New York amid a prodigious crush of packages, and was delivered, in company with about a dozen others, which I knew to be brother or rival, manuscripts, at the office of a great publishing house. Here I was signed for, and, in the course of the day, unwrapped. I was ticketed with a number and my title, and placed in a tall cabinet, where I remained in the society of several shelves full of other manuscripts for a number of days. Here I was delighted to find quite a coterie of fellow-Hoosiers. But a remarkable proportion of my associates, I discovered, was from the South. The majority of us hailed from small towns. In our company were three or four of somewhat distinguished lineage.

As time passed and nothing happened, I grew somewhat nervous, as I knew with what anxiety my dear parent in Indiana would be counting the days. One of my new-found friends, a portly manuscript (a story of sponge-fishers) that had been out of the cabinet and had had a reading before my arrival, told me in the way of gossip something of the situation at the moment in this house. My friend was an old campaigner, very ragged and battered in appearance, and had been (I was appalled to hear) submitted to seventeen publishing houses before arriving here. It had lost all hope of any justice in the publishing world, and was very cynical. Heavens! would I-----

However, it appeared that at this house the first reader had just been obliged to take a vacation owing to ill-health occasioned by too assiduous application to her task of attempting to keep somewhere abreast of the incoming flood of manuscripts. She was, it seems, a large elderly lady who had tried out her own talents as a novelist without marked success some twenty years ago. Her niece, a miss of twenty

## Page 48

or so, who had a fancy for an editorial career and who had vainly been seeking a situation of this character for some time, found a windfall in the instant need for a substitute first reader. It was with some petulance, it struck me, that she yanked the door open one day. She was, apparently, showing some one about her office. "All that," she said, waving her hand toward my case, "practically untouched; and mountains besides. I don't know how I'm to get away with it. I suppose I'll have to do a couple every night." I don't know what time it was, but the light was going and the young lady had got into bed when she began to read me, propped up against her knees. She yawned now and then and sighed repeatedly as she shifted back my pages. I thought I noticed that her, knees swayed, just perceptibly, at times. Then suddenly my support sank to one side; I started to slide, and would have plunged to the floor, very nearly pulling her after me, if the disturbance had not as suddenly caught the young lady back into wild consciousness, and she grabbed me and her knees and the slipping bedclothes all in a lump. Shortly after this she turned back to see how I ended, and then went to sleep comfortably, lights out.

I did not see the report the young lady wrote of me, but I had occasion to think that she declared I was rather stupid. However, I got another reading. I was given next to a young man, not, so I understood, a regular reader, but a member of the advertising department who was frequently called on to help weed out manuscript, who took me home with him and threw me onto a couch littered with books and papers. Here I stayed for ever so long. One day I heard the young man say to his wife, nodding toward me: "I ought to try to get that unfortunate thing off my hands before my vacation, but I never seem to get around to it." As, alack-a-day! he did not get around to me before that occasion, I went, packed in the bottom of a trunk, with the young man and his wife on their annual holiday. In my pitchy gaol I had, of course, no means of calculating the flight of time, but when I next saw the light, after what seemed to me an interminable spell, I appeared to be the occasion of some excitement. The young man brought me up after several vigorous dives into the bottom of the trunk, as his wife was saying with much energy: "Well, of course, you can do as you please, but if I were you I'd telegraph an answer right straight back that I did not propose to spend my vacation working for them. The idea! After all you do!" "Oh, well," was the young man's reply, "some poor dog of an author wrote the thing, and it's only right that he should have some kind of an answer within a reasonable time. I ought to have got around to it long ago."

## Page 49

Whatever the kind-hearted young man may have said about me I was given yet another chance. A very business-like chap “took a shot at me,” as he expressed it, one forenoon at his desk, I was considerably distressed, however, by the confusion and the multiplicity of interruptions to which his attention to me was subject. When I thought of the sacred privacy devoted to my creation, the whole-hearted consecration of my dear parent’s life-blood to my being, I felt that such a reading was little short of criminally unjust. And how could any one be expected to savour my power and my charm in the midst of such distractions? The business-like chap sat somewhere near the middle of a vast floor ranged with desks. In his immediate neighbourhood a score or more of typewriters were clicking and perhaps half as many telephones were going. The chap’s own telephone rang, it seemed to me, every five or six pages, and, resting me the while on his knee, he expectantly awaited the outcome of his secretary’s answering conversation. At frequent intervals he was consulted by colleagues as to this and that: covers, jackets, electros, fall catalogues, what not? Nevertheless, he got through me in rather brisk order. At my conclusion I observed no tears in his eyes. And, it was evident, he settled my hash, as the phrase is, at this house.

I certainly felt sick at heart in that express car back to the corn belt. My poor parent, when I again met him, unwrapped me very tenderly, and sat for a long time turning me through very dully. I stayed on his desk for several days, and then fared forth again on my quest, valued this trip at a hundred dollars.

After the initial formalities, I fell this time first into the hands of a driving sort of fellow who had the air of being perpetually up to his neck in work, and who handed me to his wife with the remark: “Here’s another job for you tomorrow. Make a careful, working synopsis of the story, and I’ll dip into the manuscript here and there when I come home to get a line on the style and general character of the thing.” The next night, after rustling energetically through me, he wrote out his report, and, passing it to his wife, said: “There are no outright mis-statements of fact as to the plot in that, are there?”

I next fell in the way of a fashionable character just leaving for a week-end, who read me in the smoking-car on his way up into the country. He burned several holes in my pages with the falling ash of his cigarettes. He read me in bits between scraps of conversation with his seat neighbour and recesses of enjoyment of the flying scenery. And he found it rather awkward holding me balanced on his legs crooked up against the seat in front of him. This, my precarious position, led to a grievous calamity. I toppled and fell, and my reader, making a swooping clutch at me as I went, but the more scattered my pages over the polluted floor of the car. An evil draught carried my third page underneath a seat, the third forward from my reader. It was an anguishing thing, but I could not cry out, I could not tell him: as my reader, cursing me heartily (for what I cannot admit was my fault) gathered me up, he neglected to crawl far enough under the seat before him to perceive my page three.



## Page 50

But it does not fall within the scope of my present design to extend this chronicle to the length of an autobiography. With what pain and labour my poor parent recovered from his memory, and then very imperfectly, of course, my third page; how he grew more melancholy of countenance at each of my successive returns to the house of my birth and formative years; how I sometimes remained away for months at a time, and how once an office boy mis-addressed me to a lady in New Jersey who very graciously herself forwarded me to my parent; how my poor parent was obliged at length by the increasing dilapidation of my appearance to go to the expense of having me completely re-typed by a public typist, and how directly after this he entirely re-wrote, expanded, and elaborated me at the instigation of one firm of publishers; how I was read by a delightful old lady who knitted in her office as she read; by a lady of cosmopolitan mien who had me together with many other manuscripts sent to her home in a box, and who consumed innumerable cigarettes as she perused me; by a young gentleman who I am sure had a morning “hang over” at his desk; by a tough-looking customer who wore his hat at his desk; by a young lady of futurist aspect who took me home to her studio; by an old, old man who seemed to “see” me quite, and by many more—all this I may merely indicate.

One very striking phenomenon I should by no means fail to mention, and this uncanny fact may be illustrated thus: If an object is blue or if it is yellow it will be recognised by all men as being blue or yellow, as the case may be. One will not say of it, “See that lurid yellow object,” to have another reply, “What! that object directly before us? I see nothing yellow about it; it is as black as ink.” But I was apparently exactly like such an impossible object. I was, figuratively speaking, no colour of my own and I was all colours. One, so to speak, saw me as green, another as white, and yet another as orange, while some saw quite red as they looked at me. That is, my character consisted altogether, it seemed, in the amazingly diverse reactions I inspired in my successive readers. I was intolerably dull, I was abundantly entertaining, I was over-subtle, I was painfully obvious, I was exceedingly humorous, and I lacked all humour.

How, at length, a group of editorial gamblers succeeded in coming sufficiently into harmony about me to render a composite verdict that I would be a fair publishing risk; but how the title my poor parent had given me it was unanimously held wouldn’t do at all; and how I got another in book committee meeting; how, after I was (wonderful thing!) “accepted,” I lay in a safe until I thought I should crumble away with age; and how I was suddenly brought forth and hastily read by the manufacturing department for ideas for my cover to be, and then by the advertising department for “copy dope,” before being rushed to the composing room—of these things I have not time to speak further, as I am now on the press, and am rapidly ceasing to be merely a manuscript.



# Page 51

## IX

“YOU ARE AN AMERICAN”

“Lavender, sweet lavender,  
Who will buy my sweet blooming lavender?  
Buy it once, you’ll buy it twice,  
And make your clothes sweet and nice!”

She was a wretched-looking creature, with a great basket; and it was so she sang through the street. By this you know where we are, for this is one of the old cries of London town.

For the sake of my clothes, and for the noble pleasure of associating for an instant with the original of a coloured print of old London types, I bought a sprig of lavender. “Thank you, sir,” she said.

I saw it coming; ah! yes, by now I knew she would. “You are an American, sir,” she added, eyeing me with interest.

You would think that since the “American invasion” first began ever so long ago, some time after Dicky Davis “discovered” London, they, the British, would have seen enough of us to have become accustomed to us by now. But, as you have found, it is not so—we are a strange race from over the sea.

“You are an American, sir,” said the barmaid. She was a huge young woman who could have punched my head in. I am not so delicate, either. And she had a pug nose.

“I do not so much care for American ladies,” she said. “I think they are a bit hard, don’t you?” Then, perhaps feeling that she may have offended me, she quickly added: “Not of course that I doubt that there are maidenlike ladies in America.”

They are a curious people, these English, with their nice ideas, even among barmaids, of the graces of a mellow society. For some time I could not understand why she was so beautiful. Then I perceived that it was because of her nose. She looked just like the goddesses of the Elgin marbles, whose noses are broken, you know. Still I doubt whether it would be a good idea for a man to break his wife’s nose in order to make her more beautiful.

I will grave her name here on the tablet of fame, so that when you go again to London you may be able to see her. It is Elizabeth.

He was a cats’ meat man. And on his arm he carried a basket in which was a heap of bits of horse flesh (such I have been told it is), each on a sliver of stick. There was a



little dog playing about near by. "Would you care to treat that dog to a ha'penny's worth of meat, sir?" asked the man.

I had never before treated a dog to anything, though treating is an American habit. So I "set up" the dog to a ha'penny's worth of meat. "Thank you, sir," said the cats' meat man. I saw by the light come into his eye that he had recognised me. "You are-----" he began. "I know it," I said; "I am."

I looked at the wretched dog. Would he too accuse me? But he ate his meat and said never a word. Perhaps he was not an Englishman. No, I think he was a tourist, too, like myself. I was glad I had befriended him in an alien land.



## Page 52

“What is the price of this?” I asked. “Thri’pence?” I inquired, reading a sign.

“Three pence,” pronounced the attendant very distinctly. It was but his way of saying, “You are an American.”

I went into an office to see a man I know. “How are you?” I said in my democratic way to the very small office boy. “You are looking better than when I saw you last,” I remarked with pleasant home humour.

“I never saw you before, sir,” replied the office boy. “He is an American,” I heard him, apologising for me, tell the typist.

Some considerable while after this I went to this office again. I had quite forgotten the office boy. I handed him my card. A bright lad, he. “I’m feeling much better, sir,” he said.

In Pall Mall there is a steamship office in the window of which is displayed a miniature sheet of water. At opposite sides of this little ocean are small dabs of clay, one labelled England, the other America. Tiny ships ply back and forth between the two countries. Observers cannot make out how it is that these little boats turn about as they do, apparently of their own accord. And the scene has continually a number of spectators. (This was before the war.)

One day I was looking in at this window, very much interested in this problem. Standing next to me was a fine specimen of a Pall Mallian, with his silk “topper,” his black tail coat, his buttonhole, his checked trowsers, his large grey spats, his shining boots, his stick and his glass on its ribbon, apparently equally absorbed. I turned to him after a hit—a quite natural thing to do, I thought—and, “How the deuce do you suppose that thing works?” I said.

The tall gentleman slowly turned. Slowly, stiffly, with an aristocratic gesture, he raised his arm and placed his glass in his eye, for a moment. I was frozen by his blank stare, quite through. Then he lifted his eyebrow; the glass dropped and bounded before him on its ribbon. And he turned and walked away. Walked away, I dare say, to his frowning club, to tell how he had just been set upon in the street and insulted by some strange ruffian. But, you see, I didn’t know; I was an American.

To Epsom I went in a cart to see the Derby. It was at Epsom, you know, that the King’s horse was thrown several seasons ago by a suffragette who lost her life in the act. Well, most of the fine gentlemen of England, I think, were there, all in splendid tall grey hats and with their field glasses slung over their shoulders. And a horde of the cleverest crooks in Europe also.



There I had my pocket “cut” by a pickpocket. That is the way they go through you in England, neatly lift your pocket out. I thought this was an interesting thing, so I told it about that I had had my pocket cut, but I did not see any international significance in the affair.

The achievement, however, I discovered was much relished by my hearers in England. I, an American, had come over there and had my pocket cut. He, the crook, an Englishman very probably, had been “cuter” than I; he had “had” me, an American.



## Page 53

It is a curious thing, and a fact not generally known, I believe, that all decayed taxicab drivers in London, those who are unfortunate, have fallen from a high estate. Each and every one of them used to drive the London to Oxford coach in the days of 'orses.

I met a number of these personages, fat, with remarkably red faces and large honeycombed noses. Not at all like the alert, athletic lads, a type of mechanical engineer, who have arisen as cabbies with the advent of taxis. What do they know about 'orses?

It was such an old boy who drove me from the neighbourhood of Russell Square, where I was stopping, to Chelsea, where I went into lodgings. He frequently had the pleasure of driving Americans, he remarked. "Thank you, sir," he said.

I required to have my shoes repaired, and I inquired of my landlord where might be found a good cobbler. He told me that there was an excellent one in Battersea. "In Battersea!" I said. "Is there none in Chelsea? How am I to get my shoes clear over to Battersea?"

"Why," he replied, "we will send the cobbler a card and he'll send some one over for the boots and——"

"And then, I suppose," I said, "he will send us another card saying that the boots are done and so on. And in the meantime I could have had the boots repaired and worn out again."

Naturally I was for wrapping up the shoes in a piece of newspaper and setting out straight off to find a cobbler. But my landlord would not hear of such a thing at all. "Of course you are an American," he said.

I gathered that while such a proceeding might be all right in my country it wouldn't do in England. He did not want lodgers, I understood, going in and out of his house with parcels under their arms. It would reflect on him. He was a man with a lively mind, and he told me a little story.

"How do you like the new lodger?" asked the first housemaid of the second.

"Oh, he's very nice indeed," replied the second housemaid. "But he's not a gentleman. He helped me carry the coals upstairs yesterday."

"Could you spare me a trifle, sir?" asked the errand man in my street. "I haven't had tea today."

It's a funny thing, that; isn't it?—our just being all "Americans" (when we are not referred to as "Yankees" or "Yanks"). We are never United Statesians. It is the "American



Ambassador,” and the “American Consul-General.” I have even heard Dr. Wilson referred to as the “President of America.”

One day I saw a tourist. He was an American, a young man I knew in New York. I found him going into the Houses of Parliament. I was fond of going in there frequently, and said I would accompany him.

With an easy stride, at a speed I should say of about two miles an hour, he walked straight through the Houses of Parliament; through the Norman porch, through the King’s robing room, the Royal or Victoria gallery, the Prince’s chamber, the sumptuously decorated House of Peers, the Peers’ lobby, the spacious central hall, the Commons’ corridor and the House of Commons; glancing about him the while at art and architecture, lavish magnificence and the eternal garments and symbols of history. Returning to the central hall, we passed through St. Stephen’s and Westminster Hall and arrived again in the street.



## Page 54

“How long did it take us to do that?” said my friend, questioning his watch.

“Oh, about fifteen minutes,” I replied.

He said he thought he would go across the way and “do” the Abbey next while he was in the neighbourhood.

I suppose I could have helped him in the matter of despatch, but I didn’t think of it at the time. Later I heard of two Americans who drove up to the abbey in a taxi. Leaping out, one said to the other: “You do the outside and I’ll do the inside, and that way we’ll save a lot of time.”

The thing a man does in America, of course, when he gets into a railroad train is to light a cigar and begin talking to the fellow next to him. There were two of us in the railway carriage compartment on my way down into Surrey. I made a number of amiable observations; I asked a number of pleasant questions. My object was to while away the time in human companionship. “Quite so,” was his reply to observations.

In replying to questions he would commit himself to nothing; he wouldn’t even say that he didn’t know. “I shouldn’t undertake to say, sir,” was his answer. And then, certainly, there was no possibility of pursuing the subject further.

He wasn’t reading a paper; he wasn’t doing anything but gaze straight in front of him. I concluded that he was “sore” at me; I concluded that he was a surly bear, anyway. And so an hour or so passed in utter silence.

The pretty landscape whirled by; we went through a hundred tunnels (more or less); the little engine gave a shrill little squeak now and then; at old, old railway stations, that remind one agreeably of jails, rough-looking men in black shirt sleeves and corduroy waistcoats ran out to the train to open the carriage doors, and I forgot the gentleman altogether. Till at length we came to his station.

When he had got out he turned to latch the door, and putting his head in at the window, he said to me in the pleasantest manner possible: “Good afternoon, sir.” He wasn’t sore at me a bit! That was simply his fashion of travelling, in silence.

I was going into the countryside, to the country places where the old men have pleasant faces and the maidens quiet eyes. To fare forth upon the King’s highway, to hedgerows and blossoms and the old lanes of Merrie England, to mount again the old red hills, bird enchanted, and dip the valleys bright with sward, to the wind on the heath, brother, to hills and the sea, to lonely downs, to hold converse with simple shepherd men, and, when even fell, the million tinted, to seek some ancient inn for warmth in the inglenook, and bite and drop, and where, when the last star lamp in the valley had expired, I would rest my weary bones until the sweet choral of morning birds called me on my way.

## Page 55

There was an ancient character going along the road. He walked with a staff, a crooked stick. His coatless habit was the colour of clay; his legs were bound about just below the knee by a strap (wherein, at one side, he carried his pipe), so that his trowsers flared at the bottom like a sailor's; over his shoulder he bore a flat straw basket. Under his chin were whiskers; his eyes were merry and bright and his cheeks just like fine rosy apples, with a great high light on each. I asked of him the way and we trudged along together. "You are from Mericy," he said with delight.

He told me about himself. He was seventy-four and he had never had "a single schooling" in his life. Capel was his home, a village of about twenty houses which we were approaching, thirty miles or so from London. The last time he been to London was when he was fifteen. He had then seen some fireworks there. No fireworks in Capel, he said, had ever been able to touch him since. He had been pushing on, he said, pushing on, pushing on all the while.

"You were not born in Capel, then?" I said.

Born in Capel! Why, he had been born seven miles from Capel.

The difficulty was that I had overlooked the fact that everybody goes out of London town at Whitsuntide. Village and county town I tried and I could not find where to lay my head. Everything was, as they say in England, "full up." It was coming on to rain and the night fell chill and black. Would I have to use my rucksack for a pillow and sleep in the fields?

At length I found a man—it was at quaint Godalming, I think, where the famous Charterhouse School is—who could not give me a room, but offered me a bed and breakfast at half a crown. "There's another fellow up there," he said. "But he's a nice, quiet fellow; something like yourself," he said. "I think you'll like him."

"You are an American," remarked my landlord. I sat with him in his little parlour behind the bar. It had a gun over the mantelpiece, a great deal of painted china and a group of stuffed birds in a glass case. He asked me if I liked reading, because, if I did, he had an old dictionary to which I was welcome at any time.

At length it was the hour for bed. I followed my heavy host with his candle up difficult stairs. "I think they're all asleep," he said.

"They're all asleep!" I exclaimed. "Who are?"

"Why," replied my landlord, "there are five of them, you know. But they are nice quiet fellows. Something like yourself," he added. "I think you will like them."

In that shadowed, gabled room were the noises of many sunk in slumber. Well, they were, I found in the morning, rather inoffensive young fellows, all cyclists, and indeed



not altogether unlike myself. It was after my bacon and eggs that I found on my way a place for a “wash and brush up, tuppence.”

“Traveller, sir?” inquired the publican, in response to my knock and peering cautiously out at his door. For it was Sunday, after three o’clock in the afternoon and not yet six; and to obtain refreshment at a public house at that hour one must be a “traveller over three miles’ journey.” “I’m a traveller all the way from the U.S.A.,” said I.



## Page 56

I stood my battered shilling ash stick in a corner and looked out again from my window over the old red roofs and at the back of the house where he dwelt who when the Queen had commanded his presence said, "I'm an old man, ma'am, and I'll take a seat." When Annie, the maid, had brought my "shaving water, sir," in a kind of a tin sprinkling can and when I had used it I took up my Malacca town cane and went out to see how old Father Thames was coming on.

I thought I would buy some writing paper and I went into a drug store kind of a place. "I see you are an American, sir," said the shopman. "This is a chemist's shop," he explained; "you get paper at the stationer's, just after the turning, at the top of the street."

Hurrying for my passport, I inquired as to the location of such and such a street—whatever the name of it is—where, I understood, the place was where this was to be had. "Ah!" said he whom I addressed, "you want the American Consul-General."

## X

### WHY MEN CAN'T READ NOVELS BY WOMEN

George Moore once presented the idea that the only thing of interest and value about the creative art of a woman was the feminine quality of that art. The novels of Jane Austen come readily to mind as an argument in support of this provocative idea. Quite first among their charms, every one will admit, is the indisputable fact that no man could possibly have written them. They have the lightness, brightness, sparkle, perfume, flavour, grace, fun, sensitivity of a young feminine mind. No one more than Miss Austen has captivated the roarers among men. A man admires, say, Conrad. He—if he is a manly man—falls in love with Jane Austen. Very well.

Now, then, it is a curious and a paradoxical thing that no man of masculine character can read the novels written by women to-day, unless he has to; that is, unless he is a book-reviewer, publisher's reader, magazine editor, proofreader, or some such thing. And the reason he can't do it, in view of George Moore's idea and Miss Austen's renowned magnetism, is curious indeed. It is because of the peculiarly feminine attitude of mind of our present women-novelists. At least, this is the arresting pronouncement delivered with much robust eloquence by my leonine friend, Colonel Bludgeon.

The present writer (a pale, spectacled, middle-aged young man) is too conscious of the wondrous nature of women to question their ability in anything. But of one of whom he stands in greater awe than of anything else in the world he is a humble friend. The dictum of this my friend comes from a quite different character than myself. He is a great man; he has read everything; seen everything; known everybody. Exception to him could be taken only on one ground. He is perfectly awful. He belongs to an old



school; splenetic, choleric. He is Sir-Anthony-Absolute-like; a critic in the spirit of the thundering days of William Ernest Henley. His face is like a beefsteak. His frame is like "a mountain walking." His voice, Johnsonian. He knows more about literature than probably any other living man.



## Page 57

“No, sir,” he rumbled, “you cannot find to-day a cigar-smoking animal” (though the Colonel is so erudite a man, his language is terrible) “who could be lured into the pages of our women novelists without snorts—snorts, sir—of disgust, or bellows of derisive mirth. Why? Because these pages no longer contain an acute transcript of life as only a sensitive feminine mind would have the cunning to observe it, and of a form of human life in itself highly feminine in its character, but they now present a singularly insular travesty of man, an unconscious caricature of man as he could only appear to a feminine mind bound by the romantic limitations of sex, a mind, that is, devoid of masculine understanding, unable to recognise by virtue of affiliation of instinct that which is fine in the male character and that which is false to type.

“Sir,” continued the Colonel, “these pictures are coloured, on one hand, by ludicrous prejudice against masculine qualities which the feminine nature temperamentally feels to be antagonistic, or dangerous, to itself; and, on the other hand, by sentimental worship of masculine attributes conceived to be desirable complements to the frailty of women. This amusing view of man springs not only from the element of sex, as I have said, but from the very marrow of sex. We do not get from the contemporary authoress creative literature at all; that is, a disinterested criticism of mankind; we get in each picture of a male character her instinctive, and intensely interested, feeling as to whether or not he is a man whom it would be desirable, and safe, for a young woman to marry. Paradoxically enough, it would seem that women have less and less knowledge of the world as they have contrived to see more of it; that as they have become more emancipated in liberty of action they have become more clannish in thought; and that as the range of their opportunities has widened and their interests have multiplied, their concern with the most elemental female instinct, their preoccupation with their immemorial business of the chase, has but intensified. By word of mouth the modern woman tells us that in her practical and intellectual capacities she has advanced far beyond her sisters of an earlier day; we chance to look into that pool of fiction wherein she mirrors her heart, and we find her the same self-centred huntress as of yore.

“Sir,” cried the Colonel, jolting some tobacco ash off the ledge made by his abdomen, which he did by pounding the side of his torso with a bulky volume of the “Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini,” “what is the theme of the most conspicuous portion of our fiction by feminine hands? In large measure it is a peevish criticism of husbands. We have the popular creator of a type of husband held up to the scorn and ridicule of the sorority of her readers, remarking by way of commentary on her satirical pictures that there should be ‘a school for husbands.’ It is, apparently, this lady’s complacent belief

## Page 58

that the origin of the domestic difficulties of the world is in the inadequate training of husbands for their delicate office. One of 'the essential requirements' for marriage which 'men should go to school to learn' she mentions as 'understanding.' Wives, presumably, are born perfectly equipped for their functions and do not require to be made. At any rate, as the production of fiction nowadays is so largely a feminine industry, and as a dominant trait of the male, even when recording his observations, is his chivalrous point of view, there is little or no opportunity given us on the benches, as you might say, to catch a glimpse of life pointing a way for us to see it steadily and see it whole."

The Jovian Colonel blew a heavy cloud of tobacco smoke from out his massive ebony beard, and sat for a moment looking like some portentous smouldering volcano; then continued:

"Men with hair on their chests would find the most agreeable society in the pages of our women novelists to be that of the horrible or, as the case may be, pitiful scoundrels at whom the authors themselves are most indignant. These miserable beings, generally amiable though rather purposeless spirits, are, as Colonel Harvey not long ago remarked of one of them, of a sort that almost all men like and hardly any woman can tolerate. Men are free to enjoy their engaging qualities because men are not subject to possible misfortune by reason of the corresponding infirmities of such characters, that is, men are not dependent upon them for their own safety. Women, on the other hand, fear such characters because instinct tells women that they could not trust their own comfortable security to them; and, consequently, women heartily dislike such as these and find them villainous, beings to be branded in any feminine discussion of life as enemies of the sex.

"In the latest novel by one of our most prominent women novelists," the Colonel went on, "for months the best-selling book in the country, and also undoubtedly the work of an artist sincerely interpreting the world according to her lights, we are presented with a distressing scene, an incident holy horror at which would make a thrilling and delicious success of any tea party. An undisciplined young pup who is the husband comes home a bit late one night, and, as a man would describe it, somewhat 'lit up.' An earnest student of this story cannot find that this misguided youth was any worse than is ordinarily the case in such delinquencies. It is intimated, however, that he has been this way before. The horror, the loathing, which the humorous young scamp's weakness inspires in his wife, a young woman of thoroughly feminine loftiness of character, is dramatic indeed, and partakes of the nature of that which so frequently is occasioned by the nervous organism of women, a 'scene.' The total lack of large-hearted and intelligent 'understanding' of human nature displayed by the conduct of the young man would send any connubial craft on to the rocks."

## Page 59

The Colonel mopped his brow with a large bandanna handkerchief. "Sir," he resumed, "obnoxious as it is to a sensible man to do so, let us glance at the hero type of the most popular recent novels by women, the figure which strikes admiration into the feminine soul. Now," he roared (and I declare, my hair rose on end), "the most awful thing any nigger can call another is a 'nigger.' So we all rebel against what we feel to be the weaknesses of our own position. None so quick as the vulgar to denounce 'no gentleman.' And so on. Thus, as we see, there is nothing the weaker sex so much despises in a man as weakness of character, and, as is consistent with all such reactions of feeling, nothing which so much attracts it as a firmness and strength of will beyond itself. Naturally, the adored figures in the popular women's fiction are always of the 'strong man' type, in feminine eyes. And here we come to a most extraordinary obliquity of the feminine eye.

"What," he demanded, "are the marks by which you are to know a 'strong man'—in the feminine picture? A strong man, of course, is a man with the bark on; polish is incompatible with rugged strength. An exhilarating air of brusqueness breathes from all strong men. They are as ignorant of manners as they are of the effete conventions of grammar. They have fought their way up, and no one can down them. They can be depended upon absolutely as what are called 'good providers.' In short, by the written confession of her heart, woman's idea of a 'dear,' after several centuries more or less of civilisation, remains precisely the primitive conception that it was in the days when man wooed her by grabbing her by the hair and handing her one with a club."

The Colonel was breathing heavily with the exertion of animated speech as he added: "In real life a man of any stability of judgment would be decidedly suspicious of the hero of a modern woman's novel if one should walk into his office, or, doubtless, he would observe this whimsical caricature with something of the amusement he would find in the ludicrously false comic Irishman of the vaudeville stage. This irreverent flight of fancy on our part, however, is yanking the strong man from his appropriate and supporting setting, where paste is given the glow of an authentic stone; in the sympathetic pages created by feminine intuition he dominates the machine. When the heroine takes into her own hands the right of the individual to a second chance for happiness," the Colonel declaimed with a demoniac grin, "she turns to experience with such a one perfect love, as the honoured wife of a splendid and prosperous man and the mother of beautiful children.



## Page 60

“The ethics of that engrossing theme of divorce,” the Colonel went on, lighting another corpulent and very black cigar, “as decided by the Supreme Court of our contemporary women novelists suggests that justly celebrated principle of perfect equity: ‘What’s yours is mine and what’s mine is my own.’ Listen,” he demanded; “listen (as the author of ‘The Gentle Art of Making Enemies’ was wont to introduce his lectures) to the story of the unfolding of a woman’s heart through marriage, as it is unfolded in the recent book of a novelist whom both the million-headed crowd and shoals of reviewers, of very uneven critical equipment, place ‘well forward among America’s novelists.’ A penniless young woman brought up amid the standards of very common people marries for money, and comes to face the collapse of her dreams. She realises that she is tied to a man for whom she cares nothing. Also he is a brute, a typical bad egg of a husband from the extensive though rather monotonous stock of this article dealt in by our women novelists. Is it right for this young woman to throw away the chances of her whole life for happiness—and so on? It certainly should not seem so to readers of the book. And it is natural enough, as her husband has totally failed to hold her, that this young woman’s mind, and heart, too, should convince her that she may make what she regards as a wiser disposition of her life.

“The inevitable strong man whom she eventually marries seems unfortunately to have a bit of a flaw in his granite character; at any rate, something is wrong with him, as the heroine fails to hold him altogether, and matters even begin to look as though she might lose him. But with her great happiness had come a new standard of honour, and a distrust of divorce as the solution of any marital problem. Would it be right for her to lose a husband who has tired of her? Not by a long shot! Marriage is the one vow we take before God. It is a contract. Is it not against all moral law to break a contract? And all the rest of it. So feminine logic disposes of what is described as one of the great problems of the day.”

Suddenly the Colonel broke into a terrifying smile. “This novelist of whom we have just been speaking,” he said, “somewhere remarked in an interview that it was too bad about poor George Gissing—where she picked up Gissing, God only knows—as, writing away all his life at stuff people didn’t care for, he was one of the tragedies of literature. Well, Gissing may be dead and gone, but his works stick on. I could tell her”—the Colonel glared as he pawed his enormous hand through his mane—“of a more profound tragedy of literature.”

## XI

### THE DESSERT OF LIFE

Birds of a feather flock together, you can tell a dog by its spots, a man is known by the company he keeps—and all that sort of thing.



## Page 61

It is quite astonishing that nobody has before been struck by what I have in my eye. People go round all the while writing about Old Greenwich Village, the harbour, the Ghetto, the walk uptown. Coney Island, the Great White Way, the subway ride, Riverside Drive, the spectacle of Fifth Avenue, the Night Court, the “lungs” of the metropolis, the “cliff dwellers,” “faith, hope, and charity” on University Heights—a cathedral, a university, and a hospital, “lobster palace society,” the “grand canons” of lower Manhattan, and about every other part of and thing in New York except this most entertaining section which I am about to discuss.

Now, I never lived on Mars——

You know “Sunday stories” in the newspapers are continually bringing a gentleman resident on Mars to marvel, with his fresh vision, at the wonders of this world.

As I say, I never lived on Mars, but, what amounts to the same thing in this case, perhaps, I did live all of my New York life, up to a short time ago, below Forty-second Street. I gathered from reading and conversation that there were districts of the city above this where people dwelt and went about their daily affairs, just, I supposed, as fish do at the bottom of the ocean, and beasts in the jungle. But I knew that I could not breathe at the bottom of the ocean, nor be comfortable in the jungle.

However, it’s this way. The person to whom I am married declared that she could not live below Forty-second Street; said that that was not done at all, nobody “lived” below Forty-second Street. So the matter was settled. I moved “uptown.” Of course, by stealth I continue to visit the neighbourhood of Gramercy Park, as a dog, it is said, will return to that which is not nice.

The beauties and the advantages of the region in which I now live have been pointed out to me. It is quite true that everything hereabout is new and “clean.” Here the streets are not infested by “old bums” as those are in that dirty old downtown. Here one is just between the beautiful Drive on the one hand and our handsome Central Park on the other. Here there is fresh air. Here Broadway is a boulevard, and, further, it winds about in its course like the roads, as they call them there, in London, and does not have that awful straight look of everything in that checker-board part of town. Here everybody is well dressed. And even the grocers’ and butchers’ shops are quite smart. All this is indisputable.

But all this is a description of the physical aspects of this part of town. What I purpose to do is an esoteric thing. Through the outward aspects of this part of town, its vestments, the features of its physiognomy, I will show, as through a glass, the beatings of its heart. I will exhibit the soul of it, interpret its spirit, make plain for him that runs its inner, hidden meaning.

The part of town that I mean may be said to begin at Seventy-second Street; it runs along Broadway, and comprises the neighbourhood of Broadway, to, say, a bit above One Hundred and Tenth Street. Now we shall see what we shall see.



## Page 62

You remember what a celebrated irascible character said about a circulating library in a town. Be that as it may. As you stroll along Broadway, up from Seventy-second Street, you observe, being a person of highly alert mind, an astonishing number of circulating libraries, devoted exclusively to the latest fiction. And you note that all corner drug stores and all stationers' shops present a window display of "50-cent fiction." Ah! refinement. Reading people are nice people; they are not rough people. There is, you feel at once, an air, there is taste—how shall I say?—selectness, about this part of town. It is not as other parts of town are.

You perceive, as you continue your stroll with a brightened and a more perfumed mind, that there are no shoe stores here. Shoo stores!! "Booteries," these are. Combined with "hosieries." Countless are the smart hat shops for women. That is to say, the establishments of "chapeaux importers." In the miniature parlours framed by the windows' glass these chic and ravishing creations, the chapeaux, rise in a row high upon their slim and lovely stems. This one is the establishment of *Mlle. Edythe*, that of *Mme. Vigneau*. Countless, too, are the terrestrial heavens devoted to "gowns." Headless they stand, these symphonies in feminine apparel, side by side here in the windows of the *Maison la Mode*, there of the *Maison Estelle*. Frequent are the places where the figure is cultivated with famous corsets, the retreats of "corsetieres"; this one before you bears the name *Fayette*; it is where the model "Madame Pompadour" is sold. And numerous are shops luxuriating in waists, "blouses," lingerie, and "novelties" of dress. Conspicuous among them, the "Dolly Dimple Shop." The many "furriers" here all deal in "exclusive" furs and their names all end in "sky."

And there are roses, roses all the way. That is to say, "roseries," "violeteries," and the like—what we call florists' shops, you know. Spots of gorgeous colour and intense fragrance, heaped high with orchids, violets, roses, gardenias, or, in some cases, "artificial flowers."

See! the luscious wax busts in the window. With their grandes coiffures. And their pink and yellow bosoms resplendent with gems. It is a hair-dresser's, just as in London, with a gentlemen's parlour at the back. "Structures" are made here in human hair, and "marcel waving" is done, not, however, we may suppose, for gentlemen. Here may be had an "olive oil shampoo," and a "facial massage." One could be "manicured" in the stroll you are taking every ten minutes or so, if one wished. And "hair cutting" is done along this way by artistes from various lands. There is, for instance, the *Peluqueria Espanola*. "Service," too, is offered "at residence." Beauty here is held in esteem as it was among the Greeks. Upon one side of the "chemist's" window "toilet requisites" are announced for sale. The "valet system" is extensively advertised. The industry of "dry cleansing" nourishes, and the "shoe renovator" abounds. And hats are "renovated," and "blocked," and "ironed," in places without number.



## Page 63

What a delightful tea-room is this! With its woodwork, its panelling, and its little window lattices, all in beautiful enamelled white. *That* is not a tea-room! I'm 'sprised at you. That is a laundry. A laundry? Shades of Hop Loo! It is even so. There are a variety of types of laundry in this part of the world, but the great point of them all is their "sanitary" character. All things are sanitary here; the shaving brushes at the barber's are proclaimed sanitary; "sanitary tailoring" is announced; and the creameries of this district, it would seem, go beyond anything yet achieved elsewhere in the way of sanitation. It might be imagined from a study of window signs that a perverse person bent upon procuring un-"pasteurized" milk in this part of town would be frustrated of his design.

I was sent to what my understanding conceived to be the "bakery" in our immediate neighbourhood, on an errand. This place, I found, was called the "Queen Elizabeth." I was dreadfully abashed when I got inside. I was afraid that there might be some bit of mud on my shoes which would soil the polished floor; and I became keenly conscious that my trowsers were not perfectly pressed. I should, of course, have worn my tail-coat. There were several ladies there receiving guests that afternoon. I had a tete-a-tete with one of these, who gossiped pleasantly about the cakes—I was to get some cakes. The nicest cakes at the "Queen Elizabeth," it seems, are of two kinds: "Maids of Court" and "Ladies in Waiting." Our neighbourhood is rich in shops given to "pastry," "sweets," "bon bons." Shops of charming names! There is the "Ambrosia Confection Shop," and the place of the "Patisserie et Confiserie."

In our neighbourhood there are, too, a vast number of "caterers" and "fruiterers," and, particularly, delicatessen shops. Delicatessen shops in our neighbourhood are described upon the windows as places dealing in "fancy and table luxuries." I have heard my wife say that many people "just live out of them." They are certainly handsome places. Why, you wouldn't think there was any food in them. Everything is so dressed up that it doesn't look at all as if it were to eat, it is so attractive.

Restaurants hereabouts are commonly named "La Parisienne," or something like that, or are called "rotisseries." There are some just ordinary restaurants, too, and many immaculate, light-lunch rooms. "Afternoon Tea" is a frequent sign, and one often sees the delicate suggestion in neat gilt, "Sandwiches." Grocers in this part of town, it would seem, handle only "select," "fancy," and "choice" groceries, and "hot-house products." There are a number of fine "markets" in this district, very fine markets indeed. In the season for game, deer and bears may be seen strung up in front of them; all their chickens appear to come from Philadelphia, their ducks are "fresh killed Long Island ducks," and they make considerable of a feature of "frogs' legs." These markets are usually called the "Superior Market," or the "Quality Market," or something like that. Great residential hotels here bear the name of "halls," as "Brummel Hall" on the one hand and "Euripides Hall" on the other.

## Page 64

You will by now have begun to perceive the note, the flair, of my part of town. Its care is for the graces, the things that sweeten life, the refinements of civilisation, the embellishments of existence. Nothing more clearly, strikingly, bespeaks this than the proofs of its extraordinary fondness for art—I have mentioned literature. Painting and sculpture, music, the drama, and the art of “interior decoration,” these things of the spirit have their homes without number along this stretch of Broadway.

“Art” shops and art “galleries” are on every hand. In the windows of these places you will see: innumerable French mirrors; stacks of empty picture frames of French eighteenth-century design, at an amazingly cheap figure each; remarkably inexpensive reproductions in bright colours of Sir Joshua, Corot, Watteau, Chardin, Fragonard, some Italian Madonnas; an assortment of hunting prints, and prints redolent of Old English sentiment; many wall “texts,” or “creeds”; a variety of the kind of coloured pictures technically called, I believe, “comics”; numerous little plaster casts of anonymous works and busts of standard authors; frequently an ambitious original etching by an artist unknown to you; and an occasional print of the “September Morn” kind of thing; together with many “art objects” and a great deal of “bric-a-brac.” Upon the windows you are informed that “restoring,” “artistic framing,” “regilding,” and “resilvering” are done within. And, in some cases, that “miniatures” are painted there. There are, too, a number of “Japanese art stores” along the way, containing vast stocks of Japanese lilies living in Japanese pans, other exotic blossoming plants, pink and yellow slippers from the Orient, and striking flowered garments like a scene from a “Mikado” opera.

In this part of town photography, too, is made one of the fine arts. You do not here have your photograph taken; you have, it seems, your “portrait” made. “Home portraiture” is ingratiatingly suggested on lettered cards, and, further, you are invited to indulge in “art posing in photographs.” The “studios” of the photographers display about an equal number of portraits of children and dogs. The people of this community take joy not only in the savour of art, and in taking part in its professional production, but they would themselves produce it, as amateurs. The sign “Kodaks” is everywhere about, and “enlarging” is done, and “developing and printing for amateurs” every few rods. So we come to the subject of music.

Caruso, Melba, Paderewski, Mischa Elman, Harry Lauder, Sousa, Liszt, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, Brahms, Grieg, Moszkowsky, the “latest song hit” from anything you please. Ask and you will find along this thoroughfare. There are no more prosperous looking bazaars on this street than those consecrated to the sale of “musical phonographs” of every make. And if the name of these places is not exactly legion, it is something very like that. Besides every species of Victophone and Olagraph, the music lover may muse upon the wonders and the variety of “mechanical piano players.” All of de luxe “tone quality.”



## Page 65

As for the drama. The brightest word at night in this galaxy of ultra signs is the gracious word "Photo Play House." Deep beyond plummet's sound is the interest of this part of town in the human story, as revealed upon the "screen." Grief and mirth, good and evil, danger and daring, and the horizon from Hatteras to Matapan may be scanned upon the poster boards before the entrances of these showy temples of the mighty film. Here one is invited to witness "Carmen," and also a "drama of life," "Tricked by a Victim," and also "a comedy drama full of pep" entitled "Good Old Pop," productions of the "Premier Picture Corporation." Announcements of scenes of tornadoes, the Great War, of "Paris fashions," and, ah, yes! of "beauty films" line the way.

To turn to the home. The people of this part of town dwell, according to their shops, entirely amid "period and art furniture." And it would seem, by the remarkable number of places in this quarter where this is displayed for sale, that they dwell amid a most amazing amount of it. These marts of household gods are of two kinds: ones of imposing size, with long windows stretching far down the cross street, and dealing in shining "reproductions," and the tiny, quaint, intimate, delightful kind of thing, where it is said on a sign on a gilded chair that "artistic picture hanging by the hour" is done.

The fascinating places are the more alluring. Herein rich jumbles are, of tapestries, clocks of all periods—including a harvest of those of the "grandfather" era—fire-screens, brass kettles, andirons, stained-glass, artistic lamps in endless variety, the latest things in pillow cushions, book racks, wall papers, wall "decorations" and "hangings," draperies, curtains, cretonnes. The "decorators" deal, too, in "parquet floors," and flourish and increase in their kind in response, evidently, to the volume of demand for "upholstering" and "cabinet work." And the floors of this part of town must hold rich stores of Oriental rugs, as importers of these are frequent on our way.

The higher civilisations turn, naturally, to refinements of religious thought. What the Salvation Army is to Fourteenth Street, what the Rescue Mission is to the Bowery, the Christian Science Reading Room is to this stretch of Broadway, and there is no trimmer place to be seen on your stroll. Then, one of the marks of our culture to-day is the aesthetic cultivation of the primitive. Our neighbourhood is invited, on placards in windows, to assemble "every Sunday evening" to enjoy the "love stories of the Bible."

For the rest, you would see on your stroll, for man cannot live by taste and the spirit alone, sundry places of business concerned with real estate, electrical accoutrement, automobile accessories, toys, the investment and safeguarding of treasure, and so on, and particularly with ales, wines, liquors, and cigars. Each and all of these, however, are affirmed to be "places of quality."



## Page 66

Now, the social customs of this part of town, as they may be abundantly viewed on our thoroughfare, are agreeable to observe. At night our boulevard twinkles with lights like a fairyland. The view of across the way through the gardens, as they should be called, down the middle of the street, is enchanting. All aglow our spic-and-span trolley cars—all our trolley cars are spic-and-span—ride down the way like “floats” in a nocturnal parade. Upon the sidewalks are happy throngs, and a hum of cheery sound. The throngs of our neighbourhood are touched with an indescribable character of place; they are not the throngs of anywhere else. They are not exactly Fifth Avenue; they are not the Great White Way. They are nice throngs, healthy throngs, care-free throngs, modish throngs in the modes of magazine advertisements. And all their members are young.

You will notice as you go and come that you pass the same laughing groups in precisely the same spot, hour after hour. Those who compose these groups seem to be calling upon one another. Apparently, on pleasant evenings, it is the form here for you to receive your guests in this way, in the open air. And you jest, and converse, and while the time amiably away, just as many people do at home. “Well,” says my wife, “the rooms in the apartments in this part of town are so small that nobody can bring anybody into them.”

## XII

### A CLERK MAY LOOK AT A CELEBRITY

A clerk may look at a celebrity. For a number of years, we, being diligent in our business, stood and waited before kings in a celebrated book shop. Now (like Casanova, retired from the world of our triumphs and adventures) we compose our memoirs. “We know from personal experience that a slight tale, a string of gossip, will often alter our entire conception of a personality,”—from a contemporary book review. This, the high office of tittle-tattle, is what we have in our eye. We are Walpolian, Pepysian.

“These Memoirs, Confessions, Recollections, Impressions (as the title happens) are extremely valuable in the pictures they contain of the time. Especially happy are they in the intimate glimpses they give us of the distinguished people, particularly the men of letters, of the day. The writer was an attache of the court,” the writer was this, the writer was that, but always the writer had peculiar facilities for observing intimately—and so forth. So it was with the writer here.

We remember with especial entertainment, we begin, the first time we saw F. Hopkinson Smith. (We are ashamed to say that he was known among our confrere, the salesman, as “Hop” Smith.) He introduced himself to us by his moustache. Looming rapidly and breezily upon us—“Do you know me?” he said, swelling out his “genial” chest (so it

seemed) and pointing, with a militarish gesture, to this decoration. We looked a moment



## Page 67

at this sea gull adornment, somehow not unfamiliar to us, and said, "We do." Mr. Hopkinson Smith, we perceived, regards this literary monument, so to say, as a household word (to put it so) in every home in the land. Mr. Smith, a very robust man, wore yellow, sulphur-coloured gloves, a high hat, a flower in his buttonhole, white piping to his vest. A debonair figure, Chanticleerian. Fresh complexion. Exhaling a breeze of vigour. Though not short in stature, he is less tall than, from the air of his photographs, we had been led to expect. A surprise conveying a curious effect, reminded one of that subconscious sensation experienced in the presence of a one-time tall chair which has been lowered a little by having had a section of its legs sawed off.

Mr. Smith's conversation with book clerks we found to be confined to inquiries (iterated upon each reappearance) concerning the sale of his own books. We appreciate that this may not be the expression of an irrestrainable vanity, or obsessing greed, realising that very probably his professional insight into human character informs him that the subject of the sales of books is the range of the book clerk's mind. He expressed a frank and hearty pride (engaging in aspect, we felt) in the long-sustained life of "Peter," which remarkably selling book survived on the front fiction table all its contemporaries, and in full vigour lived on to see a new generation grow up around it there. In a full-blooded, sporting spirit Mr. Smith asked us if his new book was "selling faster than John Fox's." Heartiness and geniality is his role. A man built to win and to relish popularity. With a breezy salute of the sulphur-gloved hand, he is gone. Immediately we feel much less electric.

Alas, what an awful thing! Oliver Herford, with heavily dipped pen poised, is about to autograph a copy of his "Pen and Ink Puppet," when, lo! a monstrous ink blot spills upon the fair page. Hideous! Mr. Herford is nonplused. The book is ruined. No! Mr. Herford is not Mr. Herford for nothing. The book is enriched in value. Sesame! With his pen Mr. Herford deftly touches the ink blot, and it is a most amusing human silhouette. How characteristic an autograph, his delighted friend will say.

We were quite satisfied in the introduction given us in our sojourn as a book clerk with Mr. Herford. That is to say, our early education was received largely from the pages of *St. Nicholas Magazine*; and when grown to man's estate and brought to mingle with the great we might easily have suffered a sentimental disappointment in Mr. Herford. But no, he is as mad as a March hare. He never, we should say, has any idea where he is. An absolutely blank face. Mind far, far away. Doesn't act as though he had any mind. A smallish, clean-shaven man, light sack suit, somewhat crumpled. A fine shock of greyish-hair. Cane hooked over crooked arm. List to starboard,



## Page 68

like a postman. Approaches directly toward us. We prepare to render our service. Perceives something in his path (us) just in time to avert a collision, swerves to one side. Takes an oblique tack. But speaks (always particular to avoid seeming to slight us) in a very friendly fashion. Though gives you the impression that he thinks you are some one else. A pleasant, unaffected man to talk to. Somewhat dazed, however, in effect. Curious manner of speech, of which evidently he is unconscious, partly native English accent, partly temperamental idiosyncrasy. A very simple eccentric, what in the eighteenth century was called “an original.” Reads popular novels.

It was given to us to see the launching throes of a nouveau novelist. We noticed day after day a well-built young man come in to gaze at the fiction table, a sturdy, spirited, comely chap. A fine snap to his eye we particularly noticed, and admired. He seemed to derive much satisfaction from this occupation and to be in an excellent frame of mind. And then, it struck us, he grew of troubled mien. He asked us one day how “Predestined” was selling. So we had the psychology of the situation. He asked, on another, if we had sold a copy of “Predestined” yet. A few days following he inquired, “How long does it take before a book gets started?” Dejected was his mien. It took “Predestined” some time. Then it went very well. We sold a joyous-looking Stephen French Whitman, an embodiment of gusto—there was a positive crackle to his fine black eyes—a pile of books concerning themselves with Europe, and did not see him again for some time. Then he flashed upon us a handsome new moustache.

Our acquaintance with Mrs. Wharton was—merely formal. “Oh, very pleased,” exclaimed an equiline lady, patrician unmistakable, of aristocratic features which we recognised from the portraits of magazines, “I’ll take this.” She had in her hand a copy of the then quite new pocket edition “Poems” of George Meredith. She was very fashionably, strikingly, gowned, somewhat conspicuously; a large pattern in the figure of the cloth. She carried a little dog. There was about her something, difficult to denote, brilliant and hard in effect, like a polished stone. And we felt the rarefied atmosphere of a wealthy, highly cultivated, rather haughty society. “Charge to Edward Wharton,” she said, very nicely, bending over us as we wrote “Lenox, Mass.” She pronounced it not Massachusetts, but Mass, as is not infrequent in the East. “Thank you,” she said; she swept from us. Our regard was won to this incarnation of distinction by the pleasant humanity of her manners, her very gracious “Good morning” to the elevator man as she left.



## Page 69

“Dicky” Davis we always called him behind his back. And such he looks. A man of “strapping” physique, younger in a general effect than probably he is; immense chest and shoulders, great “meaty” back; constructed like (we picture) those gladiators Borrow lyrically acclaims the “noble bruisers of old England”; complexion, (to employ perhaps an excessive stylistic restraint) not pale. A heavy stick. A fondness for stocks. Very becoming. A vitality with an aversion, apparently, to wearing an overcoat in the coldest weather; deeming this probably an appurtenance of the invalid. Funny style of trowsers as if made for legs about a foot longer. In the reign of “high waters”!

We had picked up the notion that Mr. Davis was a snobbish person; we found him a very friendly man; gentle, describes it, in manner. Very respectful to clerks. “One of the other gentlemen here ordered another book for me,” he mentions. But more. A sort of camaraderie. Says, one day, that he just stepped in to dodge some people he saw coming. Inquires, “Well, what’s going on in the book world?” Buys travel books, Africa and such. Buys a quart of ink at a clip. He conveyed to us further, unconsciously, perhaps, a subtle impression that he was, in sympathy with us, on our side, so to say; in any difficulty, that would be, that might arise; with “the boys,” in a manner of speaking. Veteran globe trotter and soldier of fortune on the earth’s surface, Mr. Davis suffered a considerable shock to discover in *tete-a-tete* that we had never been in London. *London?* Such a human vegetable, we saw, was hardly credible.

“Charge,” he said, “to James Huneker.” He pronounced his name in a very eccentric fashion, the first syllable like that in “hunter.” In our commerce with the world we have, with this rather important exception, invariably heard this “u” as in “humid.” A substantial figure, very erect in carriage, supporting his portliness with that physical pride of portly men, moving with the dignity of bulk; a physiognomy of Rodinesque modelling. His cane a trim touch to the ensemble. Decidedly affable in manner to us. “Very nice man,” comments our hasty note. “One of our young gentlemen here, black eyes, black hair.”—describes with surprising memory of exact observation a fellow-serf—“was to get a book for me a couple of months ago.” Bought the Muther monograph on Goya. Referred humorously to his new book—one on music. Said, “Many people won’t believe that one can be equally good, or perhaps bad, at many things.” Spoke of Arnold Bennett; said he was “a hard-working journalist as well as a novel writer.” Seemed to possess the greater respect, great esteem, for the character of journalist. We felt a reminiscence of that solid practicality of sentiment of another heavy man. “Nobody but a blockhead,” said Dr. Johnson, “ever wrote except for money.”

Mentioned the novel then just out, “Predestined.” “He [the author] is one of our [*Sun*] men, you know.” Fraternal pride and affection in inflection, though he said he did not know Mr. Whitman. “Thank you very much indeed,” he said at leaving.

## Page 70

From his carriage, moving slowly in on the arm of a Japanese boy, his servant, came one day John La Farge. Tales of the Far East. Profound erudition, skin of sear parchment, Indian philosophies, exotic culture, incalculable age, inscrutable wisdom, intellectual mystery, a dignity deep in its appeal to the imagination—such was the connotation of this presence. (Fine as that portrait by Mr. Cortissoz.) An Oriental scholar, all right, we thought. Mr. La Farge was in search of some abstruse art books. He did not care, he said, what language they were in, except German. He said he hated German. “Well, we have to go to the German for many things, you know,” we said. “Yes,” said Mr. La Farge, “we have to die, too, but I don’t want to any sooner than I can help.”

But it is not famous authors only that are interesting. We were approached one day by a tall, exceedingly solemn individual who asked for a copy of a book the name of which sounded to us like the title of what “the trade” knows as “a juvenile.” “Who wrote it?” we inquired, puzzled. In a deep, hollow voice the unknown gentleman vibrated, “I did.”

A very light-coloured new Norfolk suit, with a high hat; an exceedingly neat black cutaway coat and handsome checked trowsers, a decidedly big derby hat (flat on top), an English walking coat, with plaid trowsers to match, the whole about a dozen checks high. This? An inventory of the wardrobe of Dr. Henry van Dyke, as it has been displayed to our appreciation. Has not the handsome wardrobe been a familiar feature in the history of literature? And does anybody like Dr. Goldsmith the less for having loved a lovely coat?

A slight figure, very erect and alert. A dapper, dignified step. Movement precise. An effect of a good deal of nose glasses. Black, heavy rims. A wide, black tape. Head perpendicular, drawn back against the neck. Grave, scholarly face, chiselled with much refinement of technique; foil to the studious complexion, a dark, silken moustache. Holding our thumb-nail sketch up to the light, we see it thus.

We regret that our view of this figure so prominent in our literature is perforce so entirely external. But for this Dr. van Dyke has no one to blame but himself, his fastidiousness in clerks. Ignoring, as he passes, our offer of service, at the desk where he seats himself he removes his hat—a large head, we note, for the figure, a good deal of back as well as top head—and, preparing to write, to fill out the order forms himself, fumbles a great deal with his glasses, taking off and putting on again. A friend discovering him here, he springs up and greets him with much vivacity. His orders written out, he delivers them into the hands of the manager of the shop with whom he chats a bit. . . .

## Page 71

Nature imitated art, indeed, when she designed William Gillette, remarkable fleshly incarnation of the literary figment, Sherlock Holmes. In the soul of Mr. Gillette, as on a stage, we witnessed a dramatic moral conflict. Two natures struggled before us within him. Which would prevail? Mr. Gillette was much interested in Rackham books. Bought a great many. In stock at this time was a very elaborate set in several quarto volumes of "Alice in Wonderland," most ornately bound, with Rackham designs inlaid in levant of various colours in the rich purple levant binding. The illustrations within were a unique, collected set of the celebrated drawings made by various hands for this classic. The price, several hundred dollars. Mr. Gillette was torn with temptation here. And yet was it right for him to be so extravagant? Periodically he came in, impelled to inquire if the set had yet been sold. If somebody only would buy the set—why, then, of course—it would be all over.

In our contemplation of the literari we have amused ourselves with philosophic reflection. We recalled that old saw of Oscar Wilde's (as George Moore says of something of Wordsworth's) about the artist tending always to reproduce his own type. And we thought what an excellent model to the illustrator of his own "Married Life of the Frederic Carrolls" Jesse Lynch Williams would have been. No name itself, it struck us, would be happier for Mr. Williams than Frederic Carroll—if it were not Jesse Lynch Williams. A "colletch" chap alumnus. A typical, clever, exceedingly likable young American husband, fairly well to do: it is thus we behold him. Slender, in an English walking coat, smiling agreeably. One, we thought, you would think of as a popular figure in a younger "set."

It is irrelevant, certainly, but we must acknowledge our indebtedness to a lady customer who supposed that the "Married Life of the Frederic Carrolls" was an historic work, dealing with the domestic existence of the author of "Alice."

Thomas Nelson Page, autographing presentation copies of "A Coast of Bohemia," remarks, "This is one of the rewards of poetry." At this task, or, rather, pleasure, Mr. Page spent a good part of several successive days in the store. A gentleman, with a flavour of "the South" in his speech, very like his well-known pictures; stocky; an effect of not having, in length, much neck. Light, soft suit, or very becoming Prince Albert, and high hat. "He will wear you out," whispers a colleague to us; "he has no idea where any of his friends live. I doubt if he knows where he lives himself." The junior Mr. Weller, we recollect, when an inn "boots" referred to humankind in terms natural to his calling. "There's a pair of Hessians in thirteen," he said. Viewing Mr. Page with the eye of an attendant, we should remark that he is a Tartar. But a kindly, patient, courteous Tartar.



## Page 72

City directories, telephone “books,” social registers, “Who’s Whos,” all are necessary to enable him to tell the addresses of his friends. And these are inadequate. He wishes to send, as a token of his regard, a book, affectionately inscribed, to his friend, let us say, J. M. D——, Esq. We learn by the agency of the machinery to which we have recourse that there reside in the City of New York four gentlemen of this identical name: one on Madison Avenue, one on Ninety-first Street, another in Brooklyn, the other somewhere else. Mr. Page is completely bewildered as to which is his friend. “Well, I don’t know,” he says, “but this man married former Senator So-and-So’s daughter.” Now, can’t we solve that, somehow? Historic Spirit! we cried that day, impracticality of literary men for petty, mundane details, here hast thou still thy habitat, a temple in Mr. Page!

Lor’, how we do run on!

### XIII

#### CAUN’T SPEAK THE LANGUAGE

Whenever we go to England we learn that we “caun’t” speak the language. We are told very frankly that we can’t. And we very quickly perceive that, whatever it is that we speak, it certainly is not “the language.”

Let us consider this matter. A somewhat clever and an amusingly ill-natured English journalist, T. W. H. Crosland, not long ago wrote a book “knocking” us, in which he says “that having inherited, borrowed or stolen a beautiful language, they (that is, we Americans) wilfully and of set purpose distort and misspell it.” Crosland’s ignorance of all things American, ingeniously revealed in this lively bit of writing, is interesting in a person of, presumably, ordinary intelligence, and his credulity in the matter of what he has heard about us is apparently boundless.

However, he does not much concern us. Well-behaved Englishmen would doubtless consider as impolite his manner of expression regarding the “best thing imported in the Mayflower.” But however unamiably, he does voice a feeling very general, if not universal, in England. You never get around—an Englishman would say “round”—the fact over there that we do not speak the English language.

Well, to use an Americanism, they,—the English,—certainly do have the drop on us in the matter of beauty. Mr. Chesterton somewhere says that a thing always to be borne in mind in considering England is that it is an island, that its people are insulated. An excellent thing to remember, too, in this connection, is that England is a flower garden. In ordinary times, after an Englishman is provided with a roof and four meals a day, the next thing he must have is a garden, even if it is but a flowerpot. They are continually talking about loveliness over there: it is a lovely day; it is lovely on the river now; it is a lovely spot. And so there are primroses in their speech. And then they have inherited

over there, or borrowed or stolen, a beautiful literary language, worn soft in colour, like their black-streaked, grey-stone buildings, by time; and, as Whistler's Greeks did their drinking vessels, they use it because, perforce, they have no other. The humblest Londoner will innocently shame you by talking perpetually like a storybook.



## Page 73

One day on an omnibus I asked the conductor where I should get off to reach a certain place. "Oh, that's the journey's end, sir," he replied. Now that is poetry. It sounds like Christina Rossetti. What would an American car conductor have said? "Why, that's the end of the line." "Could you spare me a trifle, sir?" asks the London beggar. A pretty manner of requesting alms. Little boys in England are very fond of cigarette pictures, little cards there reproducing "old English flowers." I used to save them to give to children. Once I gave a number to the ringleader of a group. I was about to tell him to divide them up. "Oh, we'll share them, sir," he said. At home such a boy might have said to the others: "G'wan, these're fer me." Again, when I inquired my way of a tiny, ragged mite, he directed me to "go as straight as ever you can go, sir, across the cricket field; then take your first right; go straight through the copse, sir," he called after me. The copse? Perhaps I was thinking of the "cops" of New York. Then I understood that the urchin was speaking of a small wood.

Of course he, this small boy, sang his sentences, with the rising and falling inflection of the lower classes. "Top of the street, bottom of the road, over the way"—so it goes. And, by the way, how does an Englishman know which is the top and which is the bottom of every street?

Naturally, the English can't understand us. "When is it that you are going 'ome?" asked my friend, the policeman in King's Road.

"Oh, some time in the fall," I told him.

"In the fall?" he inquired, puzzled.

"Yes, September or October."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "in the autumn, yes, yes. At the fall of the leaves," I heard him murmur meditatively. Meeting him later in the company of another policeman, "He," he said to his friend, nodding at me, "is going back in the fall." Deliciously humorous to him was my speech. Now it may be mentioned as an interesting point that many of the words imported in the *Mayflower*, or in ships following it, have been quite forgotten in England. Fall, as in the fall of the year, I think, was among them. Quite so, quite so, as they say in England.

Yes, in the King's Road. For, it is an odd thing, Charles Scribner's Sons are on Fifth Avenue, but Selfridge's is in Oxford Street. Here we meet a man on the street; we kick him into it. And in England it is a very different thing, indeed, whether you meet a lady in the street or on the street. You, for instance, wouldn't meet a lady on the street at all. In fact, in England, to our mind, things are so turned around that it is as good as being in China. Just as traffic there keeps to the left kerb, instead of to the right curb, so whereas here I call you up on the telephone, there you phone me down. It would be awkward, wouldn't it, for me to say to you that I called you down?



## Page 74

England is an island; and though the British government controls one fifth, or something like that, of the habitable globe, England is a very small place. Most of the things there are small. A freight car is a goods van, and it certainly is a goods van and not a freight car. So when you ask what little stream this is, you are told that that is the river Lea, or the river Arun, as the case may be, although they look, indeed, except that they are far more lovely, like what we call "cricks" in our country. And the Englishman is fond of speaking in diminutives. He calls for a "drop of ale," to receive a pint tankard. He asks for a "bite of bread," when he wants half a loaf. His "bit of green" is a bowl of cabbage. He likes a "bit of cheese," in the way of a hearty slice, now and then. One overhearing him from another room might think that his copious repast was a microscopic meal. About this peculiarity in the homely use of the language there was a joke in *Punch* not long ago. Said the village worthy in the picture: "Ah, I used to be as fond of a drop o' beer as any one, but nowadays if I do take two or dree gallons it do knock I over!"

Into the matter of the quaint features of the speech of the English countryside, or the wonders of the Cockney dialect, the unlearned foreigner hardly dare venture. It is sufficient for us to wonder why a railroad should be a railway. When it becomes a "rilewie" we are inclined, in our speculation, "to pass," as we say over here. And ale, when it is "ile," brings to mind a pleasant story. A humble Londoner, speaking of an oil painting of an island, referred to it as "a painting in ile of an oil."

An American friend of mine, resident in London, insists that where there is an English word for a thing other than the American word for it, the English word is in every case better because it is shorter. He points to tram, for surface-car; and to lift, for elevator. Still though it may be a finer word, hoarding is not shorter than billboard; nor is "dailybreader" shorter than commuter. I think we break about even on that score.

This, however, would seem to be true: where the same words are employed in a somewhat different way the English are usually closer to the original meaning of the word. Saloon bar, for instance, is intended to designate a rather aristocratic place, above the public bar; while the lowest "gin mill" in the United States would be called a "saloon." I know an American youth who has thought all the while that Piccadilly Circus was a show, like Barnum and Bailey's. With every thing that is round in London called a circus, he must have imagined it a, rather hilarious place.



## Page 75

The English “go on” a good deal about our slang. They used to be fond of quoting in superior derision in their papers our, to them, utterly unintelligible baseball news. Mr. Crosland, to drag him in again, to illustrate our abuse of “the language,” quotes from some tenth-rate American author—which is a way they have had in England of judging our literature—with the comment that “that is not the way John Milton wrote.” Not long ago Mr. Crosland became involved in a trial in the courts in connection with Oscar Wilde, Lord Alfred Douglas and Robert Ross. He defended himself with much spirit and considerable cleverness. Among other things he said, as reported in the press: “What is this game? This gang are trying to do me down. Here I am a poor man up against two hundred quid (or some such amount) of counsel.”

Well, that wasn’t the way John Milton talked, either.

The English slang for money is a pleasant thing: thick’uns and thin’uns; two quid, five bob; tanners and coppers. And they have a good body of expressive and colourful speech. “On the rocks” is a neat and poetic way of saying “down and out.” It is really not necessary to add the word “resources” to the expression “on his own.” A “tripper” is a well-defined character, and so is a “flapper,” a “nipper,” and a “bounder.” There had to be some word for the English “nut,” as no amount of the language of John Milton would describe him; and while the connotation of this word as humour is different with us, the appellation of the English, when you have come to see it in their light, hits off the personage very crisply. To say that such a one “talks like a ha’penny book” is, as the English say, “a jolly good job.” And a hotel certainly is presented as full when it is pronounced “full up.” A “topper” would be only one kind of a hat. Very well, then it is quite possible, we see, to be “all fed up,” as they say in England, with English slang.

Humorous Englishmen sometimes rather fancy our slang; and make naive attempts at the use of it. In England, for instance, a man “gets the sack” when he is “bounced” from his job. So I heard a lively Englishman attracted by the word say that so and so should “get the bounce.”

In writing, the Englishman usually employs “the language.” He has his yellow journals, indeed, which he calls “Americanised” newspapers. But crude and slovenly writing certainly is not a thing that sticks out on him. What a gentlemanly book reviewer he is always! We have here in the United States perhaps a half dozen gentlemen who review books. Is it not true that you would get tired counting up the young English novelists who are as accomplished writers as our few men of letters? The Englishman has a basketful of excellent periodicals to every one of ours. And in passing it is interesting to note this. When we are literary we become a little dull. See our high-brow journals! When we frolic we are a little, well, rough. The Englishman can be funny, even hilarious, and unconsciously, confoundedly well bred at the same time. But he does have a rotten lot of popular illustrated magazines over there compared to ours.



## Page 76

When you return from a sojourn of several months in the land of “the language” you are immediately struck very forcibly by the vast number of Americanisms, by the richness of our popular speech, by the “punch” it has, and by the place it holds in the printed page at home. In a journey from New York I turned over in the smoking-car a number of papers I had not seen for some time, among them the New York *Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Harper's*, *Puck*, and the *Indianapolis News*. Here, generally without quotation marks and frequently in the editorial pages, I came across these among innumerable racy phrases: nothing doing, hot stuff, Right O!, strong-arm work, some celebration, has 'em all skinned, mad at him, this got him in bad, scared of, skiddoo, beat it, a peach of a place, get away with the job, been stung by the party, got by on his bluff, sore at that fact, and always on the job. I learned that the weather man had put over his first frost last night, that a town we passed had come across with a sixteen-year-old burglar, and that a discredited politician was attempting to get out from under. Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that the Englishman frequently fails to get us.

You note a change in the whole atmosphere of language. A pronounced instance of this difference is found in public signs. You have been seeing in English conveyances the placards in neat type posted about which kindly request the traveller not to expectorate upon the floor of this vehicle, as to do so may cause inconvenience to other passengers or spread disease, and so forth and so on. Over here:

*Don't Spit?*  
*This means You!*

This is about the way our signs of this kind go. Now what about all this? I used to think many person just returned from England ridiculously affected in their speech. And many of them are—those who say can't when they can't do it unconsciously. That is, over here. In Britain, perhaps, it is just as well to make a stagger at speaking the way the Britains do. When you accidently step on an Englishman's toe, it is better to say “I'm sorry!” or simply “sorry,” than to beg his pardon or ask him to excuse you. This makes you less conspicuous, and so more comfortable. And when you stay any length of time you fall naturally into English ways. Then when you come back you seem to us, to use one of the Englishman's most delightful words, to “swank” dreadfully. And in that is the whole story.

Mr. James declares that in the work of two equally good writers you could still tell by the writing which was that of the Englishman and which that of the American. The assumption of course is that where they differed the American would be the inferior writer. Mr. James prefers the English atmosphere. And the Englishman is inclined to regard us in our deviation as a sort of imperfect reproduction of himself. What is his ours, it is true; but what's



## Page 77

ours is our own. That is, we have inherited a noble literature in common. But we write less and less like an Englishman all the while. Our legacy of language brought over in the Mayflower has become adapted to our own environment, been fused in the “melting-pot,” and quickened by our own life to-day. Whether for better or for worse—it may be either—the literary touch is rapidly going by the board in modern American writing. One of the newer English writers remarks: “A few carefully selected American phrases can very swiftly kill a great deal of dignity and tradition.”

Why should we speak the very excellent language spoken in the tight little isle across the sea? In Surrey they speak of the “broad Sussex” of their neighbours in the adjoining county. Is it exactly that we can’t? Or that we just don’t? Because we have an article more to our purpose, made largely from English material, but made in the United States?

### XIV

#### HUNTING LODGINGS

Some people say that it is the most awful trial.

But it isn’t so at all.

One of the most entertaining things that can be done in the world, so full of interesting things, is to go hunting lodgings. Also, it is one of the most enlightening things that can be done, for, pursued with intelligence and energy, it gives one an excellent view of humankind; that is, of a particularly human kind of humankind. It is a confoundly Christian thing to do—hunting lodgings—because it opens the heart to the queer ways, and speech, and customs of the world.

Now, I myself hunt lodgings as some men hunt wild game.

Nothing is better when one is out of sorts, somewhat run down, and peevish with the world generally than to go out one fine afternoon and hunt lodgings in some remote part of town.

When in a foreign city, especially, the first thing I myself do, as soon as I am comfortably settled somewhere—and after, of course, having looked up the celebrated sights of the place, the Abbey, the Louvre, Grant’s Tomb—is to put in a day or so hunting lodgings.

Even to read in the papers of lodgings to let is refreshing and educational. All lodgings are “sunny”—in the papers. They are let mainly by “refined” persons, and are wonderfully “quiet.” I remember last summer in London there was “a small sitting to let



to a young lady." Lodgings, by the way, are usually "apartments" in England, as you know. Though, indeed, it is true that when a gentleman rents over there what we call a "furnished room" he is commonly said to "go into lodgings." A fine phrase, that; it is like to that fine old expression "commencing author." And that reminds me: the most fascinating lodgings to hunt, perhaps, anywhere, are called "chambers." These which I mean are in the old Inns of Court in London. And the most charming of these remaining is Staple Inn, off Holborn. I used frequently to hunt chambers in "the fayrest Inne of Chancerie." There are no "modern conveniences" there. You draw your own water at a pump in the venerable quadrangle, and you "find" your own light. But to return:



## Page 78

There was also last summer an apartment to let to a “respectable man” or, the announcement said, it “might do for friends.” One of the reasons why many people are bored by hunting lodgings is that they are not humble in spirit. They seek proud lodgings.

As to apartment houses, which are a very different matter: the newspapers publish at various seasons of the year copious Apartment-House Directories, with innumerable half-tone illustrations of these more or less sumptuous places. And these directories are competent commentaries on their subject. George Moore remarked, “With business I have nothing to do—my concern is with art.” Except that I live in one, with apartment houses I have nothing to do—my concern is with lodgings.

There is only one philosophical observation to be made upon apartment houses. And that is this: How can all these people afford to live in them? When you go to look at apartments you are shown a place that you don’t like particularly. You don’t think, Oh, how I’d just love to live here if I could only afford it! But you ask the rental as a matter of form. And you learn that this apartment rents for a sum greater (in all likelihood) than your entire salary. And yet, there are miles and miles of apartment houses even better than that. And goodness knows how many thousand people live in them! People whose names you never see in the newspapers as ones important in business, in society, art, literature, or anything else. Obscure people! Very ordinary people! Now where do they get all that money? But about lodgings:

I one time went to look at lodgings in Patchin Place. I had heard that Patchin Place was America’s Latin Quarter. I thought it would be well to examine it. Patchin Place is a cul-de-sac behind Jefferson Market. A bizarre female person admitted me to the house there. It was not unreasonable to suppose that she had a certain failing. She slip-slod before me along a remarkably dark, rough-floored and dusty hall, and up a rickety stair. The lodging which she had to let was interesting but not attractive. The tenant, it seemed, who had just moved away had many faults trying to his landlady. He was very delinquent, for one thing, in the payment of his rent. And he was somewhat addicted to drink. This unfortunate propensity led him to keep very late hours, and caused him habitually to fall upstairs.

Well, I told her, by way of making talk, that I believed I was held to be a reasonably honest person, and that I was frequently sober.

“Oh,” she said, “I can see that you are a gentleman—in your way,” she added, in a murmur.

So, you see, in hunting lodgings you not only see how others live, but how you seem to others.



It is certainly curious, the places in which to dwell which one is shown in hunting lodgings. Once I was given to view a room in which was a strange table-like affair constructed of metal. "You wouldn't mind, I suppose," said the lady of the lodging, "if this remained in the room?"



## Page 79

“Oh, not at all,” I replied. “But what is it?”

“Why, it’s an operating table,” she explained. “Of course, you know,” she added, “that I’m a physician. And,” she continued, “of course I should want to make use of it now and then, but not regularly, not every day.”

To a lady with a patch over her eye with lodgings to let in Broome Street I one time stated, by way of being communicative, that I was often in my room a good deal doing some work there. Ah! With many ogles and grimaces, she whispered hoarsely, with an effort at a sly effect, that “that was all right here. She understood,” she said. Perfectly “safe place for that,” it was. “The gentlemen who had the room before were something of the same kind.”

As you know, “references” frequently are demanded of one hunting lodgings. To get into a really nice place one must really be a very nice person. “You know, I have a daughter,” sighs the really nice landlady.

To obtain lodgings in Kensington one must be very well-to-do, particularly if one would be on the “drawing room floor.” “I like these rooms very much,” I said to a prim person there, and I hesitated.

“But I suppose they are too dear for you,” she said.

How careful one must be hunting lodgings in England about “extras.” Lodgings made in the U.S.A. are all ready to live in, when you have paid your rent. But over on the other side, you recall, the rent, so amazingly cheap, is merely an item. Light, “coals,” linen, and “attendance” are all “extra.”

I met an interesting person letting lodgings in Whitechapel. She was not attractive physically. Her chief drapery was an apron. This, indeed, was fairly adequate before. But—I think she was like the ostrich who sticks his head in the sand.

My sister-in-law, a highly intelligent woman----- There are, by the way, people who will think anything. Some may say that I am ending this article rather abruptly.

My sister-in-law, a highly intelligent woman, used to say, in compositions at school when stumped by material too much for her, that she had in her eye, so to say, things “too numerous to mention.”

Anybody who would chronicle his adventures in hunting lodgings is confronted by incidents, humorous, wild, bizarre, queer, strange, peculiar, sentimental, touching, tragic, weird, and so on and so forth, “too numerous to mention.”



## XV

### MY FRIEND, THE POLICEMAN

To the best of my knowledge and belief (as a popular phrase has it), I am the only person in the United States who corresponds with a London policeman. About all you know about the London policeman is that he is a trim and well-set-up figure and an efficient-looking officer. When you have asked him your way he has replied somewhat thus: "Straight up the road, sir, take your first turning to the right, sir, the second left, sir, and then at the top of



## Page 80

the street you will find it directly before you, sir.” You have, perhaps, heard that the London police force offers something like an honourable career to a young man, that “Bobbies” are decently paid, that they are advanced systematically, may retire early on a fair pension, and that frequently they come from the country, as their innocent English faces and fresh complexions indicate. Sometimes also you have observed that in directing you they find it necessary to consult a pocket map of the town. Your general impression doubtless is that they are rather nice fellows.

It was in Cheyne Walk that I met my policeman. I had got off the 'bus at Battersea Bridge, and was seeking my way to Oakley Street, where I had been directed to lodgings described as excellent. He was a large, fat man, with a heavy black moustache; and he had a very pleasant manner. When I came out that evening for a walk along the Embankment I came across him on Albert Bridge, at the “bottom,” as they say over there, of my street.

“You’re still here, sir,” he remarked cheerfully. I asked him how long Mr. Whistler’s Battersea Bridge had been gone, and he told me I forget how many years. He had seen it and had been here all the while. In the course of time he directed me a good deal about in Chelsea, and so it was that I came to chat with him frequently in the evenings, for he “came on” at six and was “off” some time early in the morning.

I was a source of some considerable interest to him with my odd foreign ways. “When are you going 'ome?” he asked me one day when our friendship had ripened.

“Oh, some time in the fall,” I replied.

“In the fall?” he queried in a puzzled way.

“Why, yes,” I said; “September or October.”

“Oh,” he remarked, “in the autumn.” And I heard him murmur musingly, “In the fall of the leaves.”

Sometimes I met him in the company of his colleague, the “big un,” or “baby,” as I learned he was familiarly called, a very tall man with enormous feet clad in boots that glistened like great mirrors, who rocked as he walked, like a ship. My friend had very bright eyes. They sparkled with merriment one day when he said to the big un, nodding toward me, “He’s going 'ome in the fall.”

It was a warm evening along the side of old Father Thames. My friend, with much graceful delicacy, made it known to me that a drop of “ile” now and then did not go bad with one tried by the cares of a policeman. So we set out for the nearby “King’s Head and Eight Bells.” When we came to this public house I discovered that it was apparently



absolutely impossible for my friend to go in. He instructed me then in this way: I was to go in alone and order for my friend outside a pint of “mull and bitter, in a tankard.” The potman, he informed me, would bring it out to him. The expense of this refreshment was not heavy; it came to one penny ha’penny. The services of the obliging potman were gratuitous.



## Page 81

I found my friend in the pathway outside with the tankard between his hearty face and the sky. When he had concluded his draught, he thanked me, smacked his lips, wiped his mouth with a large handkerchief, and hurried away, as, he said, "the inspector" would be along presently. Just why the inspector would regard "ile" in the open air in view of the whole world less an evil than a tankard of mull and bitter in a public house I cannot say. But it may be that as long as one is in the open one can still keep one eye on one's duty.

I was hailed several days after this by my friend, who approached rapidly. Well, I thought, he has been very useful to me, and three ha'pennies are not much.

"I have something for you," said my friend, somewhat heated by his haste.

"You have?" I said. "What is it?"

"It's a rose," replied my friend.

"A what?" I asked.

"A flower," said my friend, recognising that we did not speak exactly the same language. "You know what that is?"

"Oh, yes. I know what a flower is," I said. "Where have you got it?"

"I have secreted it in the churchyard, sir," he replied. "I'll fetch it directly?" he added, and was off.

When he returned through the gloaming he put the flower through my buttonhole. "A lady dropped it out of her carriage," he said; "and I thought of you when I picked it up." He stooped and smelled it. "Hasn't it," he said, "a lovely scent?"

I had lived in New York a good while and I had somehow come to think of policemen rather as men of action than as poets. But then in New York we do not dwell in a flower garden; we are not filled with a love of horses, dogs, and blossoms; and we do not all speak unconsciously a literary language.

My friend was very eager that I should let him "hear from" me upon my return to the States, and he particularly desired a postcard picturing a skyscraper. So he gave me his address, which was:

"W. C. Buckingham, P. C. B. Deyersan, Chelsea Police Station, King's Road, Chelsea, S.W."



In acknowledgment of my postcard I received a letter, which I think should not remain in the obscurity of my coat pocket. I wish to submit it to public attention as a model of all that a letter from a good friend should be, and so seldom is! There is an engaging modesty in so large a man's referring to himself continually with a little letter "i." My correspondent tells me of himself, he gives me intimate news of the place of my recent sojourn, he touches with taste and feeling upon the great subject of our time, he conveys to me patently sincere sentiments of his good will, and he leaves me with much appreciation of his excellent nature and honest heart. Occasional personal peculiarities in his style, deviations in unessential things from the common form, give a close personal touch to his message. This is my friend's letter:



## Page 82

“DEAR FRIEND—

“It is with Great pleasure for to answer your post Card that i received this morning i was very pleased to receive it and to know that you are still in the land of the Living i have often thought about you and as i had not seen you i thought you had Gone home i have shown the Card to Jenkins and the tall one and also a nother Policeman you know and they all wish me to Remember them Verry kindly to you they was surprised to think you had taken the trouble to write to me they said he is a Good old sort not forgetting the little drops we had at the six bells and Kings Head.

“P. H. What do you think of this terrable war it is shocking i have just Got the news that a cousin of mine is wounded and he is at Clacton on sea he is a Sergt in the 1th Coldstreams Gds got a wife and 4 Children i have been on the sick list this Last 17 days suffering from Runitism but i am better London is very quiet Especially at Night the Pubs Close at 11 m. and half the Lights in the streets are out surch Lights flashing all round 2 on hyde Park Corner 2 Lambert Bridge 2 War office dear Friend i hope i shall have the Pleasure to receive a Letter from you before long Now i think that this is all i have to say at present so will close with my best respects to you your

“Sincere friend

“WILLIAM CHARLES BUCKINGTON.”

The letter which later I sent him was returned to me by the Post Office. And that is all that I know of my friend, man of ardent nature and gentle feeling, lover of flowers, London policeman, gone, perhaps, to the wars. Cheyne Walk would not be Cheyne Walk again to me without him.

## XVI

### HELP WANTED—MALE, FEMALE

The people who (because they think they don't need to) do not read the “Help Wanted” “ads” in the newspapers really ought to do this, anyway for a week or so in every year. They are the people, above all others, that would be most benefited by this department of journalism.

Now, there is nobody who more than myself objects in his spirit to the very common practice of this one's saying to that one that he, or she, “ought to” do this or that thing. Nobody knows all the circumstances in which another is placed. Some people insist upon saying “under the circumstances.” But that is wrong. One is surrounded by circumstances; one is not under them, as though they were an umbrella. Nobody ought to say “under the circumstances.” However, this is merely by the by.

It's a queer thing, though, that Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who certainly writes some of the best English going, says that "under the" and so forth is all right. Certainly it is not. But, as I said before, this is not a point about which we are talking.



## Page 83

One ought to read want “ads” for many reasons. For instance, you can thus become completely mixed up as to whether or not you are still young. “Young man wanted,” you will read, “about sixteen years of age, in an office.” Goodness gracious! It does seem that this is an age of young, very young, men. What chance does one of your years have now? On the other hand, you read: “Wanted, young man, about thirty-five.” So! Well, this is an age, too (you reflect) in which people remain young. There are no old folks any more; they are out of fashion. Witness, “Boy wanted, strong, about eighteen.”

They (want “ads”) ought, particularly, to be read at times when you have a very good job. It is then especially that the reading of them is best for you. They do (or they ought to) soften your arrogance.

If—like Mr. Rockefeller, jr.—I were a teacher of a Sunday school class (which, as Mr. Dooley used to say, I am not). I would say: “The best religious teaching is to be found in the help-wanted advertisements in the newspapers. We will take up this morning these columns in this morning’s papers.”

As a matter of fact, if you are out of a job I should strongly advise against your reading advertisements for help wanted. In the first place, nobody ever got a job through one of these advertisements. I know this, as the phrase is, of my own knowledge. Then, the influence of suggestion is very powerful in these announcements. If you are without a position, it is depressingly plain to you that you are totally unqualified to obtain one again, of any account. If you have a berth paying a living wage, you perceive that some mysterious good fortune attends you, and you are made humble by fear for yourself, and compassionate towards others. For who are you, in heaven’s name, and what the devil do you know, that you should make a living in this world! In this world where there is wanted: “Highly educated man, having extensive business and social connection. Must be fluent correspondent in Arabic, Japanese, and Swedish, and an expert accountant. Knowledge of Russian and the broadsword essential. Acquaintance with the subject of mining engineering expected. Experience in the diplomatic service desired. Gentleman of impressive presence required. Highest credentials demanded. Salary, to begin, seven dollars.” Knowledge, undoubtedly, is power!

Still, one seeking a position through want “ads” need not altogether despair. A little further down these very catholic columns you will find that: “Any person of ordinary intelligence, common-school education not necessary, can make \$1000 a week writing for newspapers, by our system, taught by mail. Only ten minutes a day before going to bed required to learn.”

One thing stands out above all others in advertisements for help wanted. This is the land of hustle. Tinker, tailor, candlestick-maker; lawyer, merchant, priest; if you are not a “live-wire” you are not “help wanted”—“Cook wanted. On dairy farm, twelve miles from town. White, industrious. Must be a live-wire! One that can get results. No stick-in-the-muds need apply!”



## Page 84

Uplifters and governments do not deal a more telling blow at the demon rum than do want “ads.” There is no longer any job for the drinker. “Bartender wanted. In a very low place. Must be strict teetotaler!” The student of the help-wanted columns will come to regard it as a very great mystery who floats all our “public-houses.”

Persons whose outlook on life is restricted to the dull round of one occupation and to one class of society will find a decidedly broadening influence in the perusal of help-wanted “ads,” a liberal and a humane education in the subject of the variety and picaresque quality of humanity’s manifold activities. And such persons will be made aware of their dark ignorance of many matters. What, for instance (they will say) is a “bushelman”? A great many bushelmen are continually “wanted.” It might be well to be one so much in constant demand as a bushelman. Has this welcome character something to do with the delectable grocery trade? No, my dears (for though I never saw a bushelman, I’d rather see than be one), he engages in the tailoring business, in the sweatshop way (as well as I can make out).

There are people wanted in help-wanted “ads” (but not in real life) to do nothing but travel in pleasant and historic places as companions to wealthy, “refined” persons in delicate health. There are people wanted (in want “ads”) to share attractive homes in fashionable country places whose duties will be to smoke excellent cigars and take naps in the afternoon.

And there are as romantic things to be found among help-wanted “ads” as there are in the most romantic romances. Now, lest it may be thought that some of the help-wanted “ads” which I have written right out of my head to illustrate the type of each are somewhat fanciful, I will copy out of yesterday’s paper an advertisement which “Robinson Crusoe” hasn’t anything on, to put it thusly. Here you are.

“WANTED—A man (or woman) to live alone on an island, eight miles from shore; food, shelter, clothing furnished; no work, no compensation. Summer time, Box G, 532 Times, Downtown.”

I knew a man once who got several replies to advertisements for help wanted. He bought ten New York papers one Sunday and a dollar’s worth of two cent stamps. At ten o’clock in the evening he went out and stuffed the ballot-box, I mean the letter box. He said in his own handwriting that he was an excellent man to be manager of “the upper floors of an apartment house”; that he was uncommonly experienced in the moving-picture business and knew “the screen” from A to izzard; that he had edited trade journals from the time he could talk; that he had an admirable figure for a clothing model; that he was very successful in interviewing bankers and brokers; that he was fond of children; that he would like to add a side line of metal polisher to his list; and that he certainly knew more about Bolivera than anybody else in the world, and would be prepared to head an expedition there by half-past two the following day.

## Page 85

That man already had a job that he had got from a want “ad.” He had been “copying letters” at home, “light, genteel work for one of artistic tastes.” But he found that one could not make any money out of it. Because, after one had bought the “outfit” necessary one discovered that it was humanly impossible to copy the bloomin’ letters in the somewhat eccentric fashion required.

He got several replies, as I said, to his replies to want “ads,” this man. One was a postcard which read: “Call to-morrow morning about work, Room 954, Horseshoe Building, X. Y. Z. Co.” Considering himself a gentleman, and being touchy about such things, he was annoyed at this manner of addressing him on a postcard. However he went to the Horseshoe Building. Room 954 had a great many names on the door, names there stated to be those of “attorneys,” “syndicates,” and “corporations, limited.” Among these names was that of the X. Y. Z. Co. Within, one side of Room 954 was partitioned off into many little alcoves. An antique, though youthfully dressed, typist, by the railing near the door, showed our friend to the X. Y. Z. Co., who was seated at a bleak-looking desk in one of the little alcoves. The alcove contained, besides the “Co.” (a little whiskered man, wearing his hat and overcoat) and the desk, an empty waste basket, and one unoccupied chair.

It was a “demonstrator” that was wanted, on a commission basis, for a fluid to cleanse silver. This alcove, it developed, was merely one of many thousand branch offices of the “Co.” scattered across the country. The “Co’s.” “factory,” he said, was over in New Jersey, a very large affair.

Mr. Bivens, that is the name of the gentleman of whom I have just been speaking, was invited, too, this time in a letter politely beginning “My Dear Sir,” to call at the offices of a moving-picture “corporation.” Asking to see “M. T. Cummings,” who had signed the letter, he was presented to an efficient-looking person, evidently an elderly, retired show-girl, who directly proved him wofully deficient in knowledge of “the screen.”

His next experience was with a portly, prosperous-looking gentleman who had elaborate offices in a very swell skyscraper. This man wrote an excellent business-like letter; he unfolded to H. T. (I always affectionately call Bivens “H. T.”) admiration-compelling plans for large business enterprises, which included a project of taking five hundred American business men on a trip through Europe after the war at a cost to each one of only four dollars and a half, the balance of the expenses of each to be paid for in local business co-operation.

Bivens was taken right into this energetic and enterprising man’s confidence. He did considerable outside work for his employer for ten days. On the eleventh day, reporting at the office, he found the promoter’s secretary and office boy awaiting him, in company with his office furniture, outside the locked door.

## Page 86

Bivens next answered an advertisement for a strike-breaker to light street lamps, and for a person to distribute handbills at a pay of seventy-five cents a day. But his luck had changed; he never got another reply to any answer to a help-wanted “ad.”

He thinks this is strange, because he believes (and I know this is true) that he writes a letter which would instantly mark him as a man of high merit among the multitude.

But I once knew a man who put a help-wanted “ad” in the paper. He ran a hotel, and he advertised for a clerk. I was stopping at his place at the time, I and my three brothers. And the five of us, Mr. Snuvel (the hotel man), I, and my three brothers, used to bring up from the village every night for a week (the place was in the country) the mail, which consisted of replies to this help-wanted advertisement. We used large sacks for this purpose.

## XVI

### HUMAN MUNICIPAL DOCUMENTS

A literary adventurer not long since found himself, by one of the exigencies incident to his precarious career, turning over in the process of cataloguing a kind of literature in which up to that time he had been very little read, a public collection of published municipal documents. This gentleman had had a notion for a good many years that municipal documents were entirely for very serious people engaged in some useful undertakings. He had never conceived of them as works of humour and objects of art. But his disinclination to this department of pure literature was dissolved, as most prejudices may be, by acquaintance with the subject.

Municipal documents are human documents. They are the autobiographies of communities. The personalities of Topeka, Kansas, of Limoges, France, and of Heidelberg, Germany, rise before the impressionable student of municipal documents like the figures of personal autobiography, like Benvenuto Cellini, Marie Bashkirtsev, Benjamin Franklin, Miss Mary Maclane, Mr. George Moore.

A very touching quality in municipal documents is their naivete—that unavoidable and unconscious self-revelation which is much of the great charm and value of all autobiographies. By the way, do statisticians really understand municipal documents, or do they think them valuable simply because they are full of statements of fact?

Our literary gentleman, at all events, found his task very engaging, though as a cataloguer he was much perplexed by the extraordinary informality, in one respect, of formal public papers, a curious provinciality, as he could but take it to be, of municipalities. A very common neglect, he found, in such publications is to make any mention anywhere of the relation to geography of the community chronicling its history.

## Page 87

He would read, for instance, that the pamphlet in his hand was the “Auditor’s Report of Receipts and Expenditures for the Financial Year Ending February 10, 1875, for the Town of Andover.” Where, he asked, with absolute certainty, was the town of Andover here referred to? He examined the printer’s imprint, which was explicit—personally: “Printed by Warren F. Draper, 1875.” There was something very friendly about this. Printers of public documents seem to be an amiable, neighbourly lot: “Printed at the Enterprise Office,” one mentions casually in a large, warm-hearted fashion. Another imprint reads, “Auburn, Printed by Charles Ferris, *Daily Advertiser* Office, 1848,” Mr. Ferris, in his lifetime, was evidently a very pleasant man, but a little careless of what to him, no doubt, were inessential details. He was thoughtless of the dark ignorance in places remote from Auburn of the *Daily Advertiser*. Another prominent Auburnian of the same craft, one W. S. Morse, it may be learned from some of the products of his press, flourished in 1886. But, the puzzled cataloguer inquires, was Mr. Morse successor to Mr. Ferris, or was he official printer to the Government of Auburn, Maine, far from the scene of Mr. Ferris’s public services, possibly in Auburn, New York? To these picayune points the breezy gentlemen make no reference.

The worker with public documents turns from the title pages to search the documents themselves. Are these the “Proceedings of the Board of Chosen Freeholders” of the City of Albany, Missouri, or of Albany, New Hampshire? (A cataloguer has a faint impression that there is an Albany, too, somewhere in the State of New York.) Is this a “Copy of Warrant for Annual Town Meeting” of Lancaster, Massachusetts, or New Hampshire, or Pennsylvania? Impossible, he thinks, that there should be no internal evidence.

He reads on and on. He notes the intimate nature of an Article 19: “To see if the town will accept a gift from Hannah E. Bigelow, with conditions.” He peruses “Selectman’s Accounts” of expenditures, how there was “Paid on account of Grammar School” such or such an amount; he learns the cost of “Hay Scales,” the expenses of “Fire Dep’t, Cemetery, Street Lamps.” He peers behind the official scenes at Decoration Day: monies paid out of the public treasury for “Brass Band, Address (\$20.00), flowers, flags, tuning piano.” He goes over appropriations for “Repairs at Almshouse.” He sits with the “Trustees of Memorial Hall,” and informs himself concerning conditions at the “Lunatic Hospital.” He follows with feeling municipal accessions, “purchase of a Road-scraper, which we find a very useful machine, and probably money judiciously expended.” But more and more amazed at the circumstance as he continues he is left totally in the dark as to where he is all the while.



## Page 88

Sometimes the mention, made necessary in connection with plans for some public improvement, of a well-known river, say, revealed the town's location. Occasionally the comparative antiquity of the civilisation supplied inspiration for a good guess as to its situation—that it was the town of that name in New England rather than the one in Oklahoma. Multiplied clues of identity, again, built up a case: "Official Ballot" (ran the title) "for Precinct W. Attleborough, Tuesday. Nov. 3, 1896." The name "Wm. M. Olin" was given as that of the "Secretary of the Commonwealth." Of the first page that was all. In heaven's name! exclaimed the cataloguer, what commonwealth? A study of the list of candidates on this ballot, giving their places of residence, however, fortified one's natural supposition—"of Worcester, of Lynn, of Haverhill, of Amherst, of Pittsfield" (ah!), "of Boston." It is a reasonable surmise that this Ballot pertains to the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

It is not here stated that the name of its native State is never discovered in the whole of any American municipal document. Often, in some indirect allusion, somewhere in the text it may be found. Frequently, too, it is true, the State seal is printed upon the title page or cover of the volume. And in instances the name of the State stands out clearly enough upon the page of title. But in case after case, in the occupation giving rise to this paper, the only expedient was recourse to a file of city directories, collating names of streets in these with those mentioned in the documents.

Another curious idiosyncrasy of one branch of public document—which informs the labour of cataloguing them with something of the alluring fascination of putting together jig-saw picture puzzles ("spoke," in the words of Artemas Ward, "sarcastic") is the extraordinary variety of names that can be found by municipalities to entitle the Mayor's annual eloquence. This versatile character may deliver himself of an Annual Address, Message, Communication, Statement, or of "Remarks."

A cataloguer was surprised to discover, in "An Act to Incorporate and Vest Certain Powers in the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the village of Brooklyn, in the County of Kings," the prophetic enlightenment of the Inhabitants of that village in the year 1816. The voice of Andrew Carnegie, Colonel Roosevelt, and Prof. Brander Matthews speaks in the following passage: "That the section of the town of Brooklyn, commonly known as 'The Fire District,' and contained within the following bounds, viz.: Beginning at the public landing south of Pierpont's distillery, formerly the property of Philip Livingston, deceased, on the East River, thence running along the public road leading from said landing to its intersection with Redhook lane, thence along Redhook lane to where it intersects Jamaica turnpike road, thence a North East course to the head of the Wallabaght mill-pond, thence thro the centre of said mill pond to the East river, and thence down the East river to the place of beginning, shall continue to be known and distinguished by the Name of the Village of Brooklyn." "Thro" certainly is phonetic spelling.

## Page 89

It was the sterling character of these villagers that then laid the foundation for the better half of a mighty city to come. The “act” concludes: “And then and there proceed to elect Five discreet freeholders, resident within said village, to be trustees thereof.” So witness is borne to this vernacular quality of discretion in the twilight of Brooklyn history.

The aesthetic consideration of municipal documents has not received much attention. The format of a municipal document, however, is in itself a delightful essay in unconscious self-characterisation. Those of the United States express a plain democratic people. They have, in fact, all the commonness of the job printer. “Printed at the *Journal Office*,” is, indeed, their physical character.

The municipal documents of Great Britain are usually bound, in good English book-cloth, that peculiar fabric to which the connoisseur of books is so sensitive, and which, for some inexplicable reason, it is, apparently, impossible to manufacture in this country; or in neat boards, with cloth backs. Or if in paper it is of an interesting colour and texture. A noble heraldic device, the coat of arms of the city or borough, is stamped in gold above, or below, the title. This is repeated upon the title-page, the typography of which is not without distinction. The paper has more refinement than that used in such American publications. The effect, in fine, is of something aristocratic. The “Mayoral Minutes” of Kensington is rather a handsome quarto volume.

An added touch of distinction is given these British volumes by the presentation card, tipped in after the front cover. A really exquisite little thing is this one: it bears, placed with great nicety, its coat of arms above, delicately reduced in size; across the middle, in beautiful sensitive type, it reads: “With the City Accountant’s Compliments”; in the lower left corner, in two lines, “Guildhall, Gloucester.”

The municipal documents of Germany are very German. *Verwaltungsbericht* is one of those extraordinary words which are so long that when you look at one end of the word you cannot see the other end. These volumes sometimes might possibly be mistaken, by a foreigner, for “gift books.” Often they are bound, in pronounced German taste, in several strong colours in a striking combination. Buttressing the decorative German letters, on cover and title page, appears some one of various conventionalisations of the German eagle, made very black, and wearing a crown and carrying a sceptre. In “*Verwaltungsbericht des Magistrats der Koniglichen Haupt- und Residenzstadt Hanover, 1906-7*,” the frontispiece, the armorial bearings, “*Wappen der Koniglichen*” and so forth is a powerfully coloured lithograph, a very ornate affair, of lions (of egg-yolk yellow), armour, and leaves and castles. These German publications are filled with excellent photographs of public places and buildings, and extensive unfolding coloured maps



## Page 90

and diagrams. A gentleman with a taste for art viewed with much admiration a handsome plate of “des Dresdener Wassenwerks.” They contain, too, these volumes, multitudes of pictures of distinguished citizens, often photogravures from official paintings; these gentlemen sometimes appear decorated with massive orders, or again decorated simply with very German expressions of countenance. The “Chronik der Haupt- und Reisdenzstadt Stuttgart, 1902,” somewhat suggests bound volumes of “Jugend,” with its heavy pen and ink head and tail pieces, of women marketing, of a bride and groom kneeling at the altar, and one, an excellent little drawing of a horse mounting with a heavily laden wagon a rise of ground, the driver beside him, and a street lamp behind protruding from below (remember this is a municipal document).

A quaint little duodecimo is the “Jaarboockie voor de Stad Delft,” with little headpieces pictorially representing the seasons and a curiously wood-cut astrologer introducing “den Almanak.” A rather square-toed kind of a little volume, neatly bound in grey boards, and very nicely printed, having altogether an effect of housewifely cleanliness, is the “Verslag van den Toestand der Gemeente Haarlem over het jaar 1894. Door Burgemeester en Wethouders Uitgebracht aan den Gemeenteraad; imprint Gedrukt bij Gebr Nobels, te Haarlem.”

The language of Great Britain’s municipal documents is lofty: “The Royal Burrough of Kensington, Minute of His Worship the Mayor (Sir H. Seymour King, K.C.I.E., M.P.) for the year ending November, 1901.” (Here is imprinted the design of a quartered shield containing a crown, a Papal hat, and two crosses, and, beneath, the motto: “Quid Nobis Ardui.”) “Printed” (continues the reading) “by order of the Council, 30th, October, 1901. Jas. Truscott and Son, Printer, Suffolk Lane, E.C.” And in the following there is something of the rumble of the history of England:

“Addresses Presented from the Court of Common Council to the King. On his Majesty’s Accession to the Throne, And on various other Occasions, and his Answers, Resolutions of the Court, Granting the Freedom of the City to several Noble Personages; with their Answers, Instructions at different Times to the Representatives of the City in Parliament. Petitions to Parliament for different Purposes, Resolutions of the Court, On the Memorial of the Livery, to request the Lord Mayor to call a Common Hall; For returning Thanks to Lord Chatham, And his Answer; For erecting a Statue in Guildhall, to William Beckford, Esq.; late Lord Mayor, Agreed to between the 23d October, 1760, and the 13th. October, 1770 Printed by Henry Fenwick, Printer to the Honorable City of London.”

Henry Fenwick, Esq., takes himself with dignity.

But to turn from the pomp of state, to peep for a moment at the intimate life of the people of England a couple of centuries ago, few things could be better than “The

Constable's Accounts of the Manor of Manchester," from which a few items of "Disbursements" are cited;



# Page 91

- “Pd. Expences apprehending two Felons.... -1-
- “Pd. Expences maintaining them two Nights  
in the Dungeon ..... -2-
- “To Ann Duncan very ill to take her over into  
Ireland ..... -4-
- “To Straw for the Dungeon ..... -4-
- “To Belman sundry public Cries ..... -76
- “To three pair of Stockings and dying for the  
Beedle ..... -9-
- “To Wine drinking Royal healths the Prince’s  
birthday at his full age ..... 3/16/6
- “To a distressed Sailor to Leverpoole ... -1-
- “Pd. Boonfire on King’s Coronation Day .. -66
- “Gave Nancy Mackeen a Stroller ..... -/6
- “Pd. *Musicians at rejoicing for good news  
from Germany, and on birth of the Prince  
of Wales* ..... 27/-
- “Pd. for a Cat with nine Tails ..... -3-
- “To a lame Stranger ..... -1-
- “Pd. lighting Lamps last Dark ..... -26
- “Several Fortune Tellers Indicted, etc... -12-
- “Pd. Lawyer Nagave advising Roger Blomely’s  
Case bringing Actions agt. the Constable  
for putting him in the Dungeon for being  
drunk on Sunday in time of divine  
Service ..... ///-”

It is interesting to note in this connection that on August 16, 1762, was “Pd.” one “Barnard Shaw maintenance of Rioters and Evidence, 1-11-6.”

A circumstance of considerable human interest, too, and one possibly little known, is the great aversion to the sight of bears held by the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight, at least in the year 1891. A copy of the “Bye-Laws” of the “Administrative County of the Isle of Wight,” issued that year, contains, following articles relating to “Regulating the Sale of Coal” and “Spitting,” this:

“As to Bears.

“1. No bear shall be taken along or allowed to be upon any highway, unless such bear shall be securely confined in a vehicle closed so as to completely hide such bear from view.

“2. Any person who shall offend against this Bye-law shall be liable to a fine not exceeding in any case five pounds.”



“Atti del Municipale! Atti del Consiglio Comunale di Siena. Bollettino Degli atti Pubblicati Dalla Giunta Municipale di Roma.” It is fitting that quartos of such titles as these, containing addresses beginning Signori Consiglieri and Onorevoli Signori, should look something like Italian opera, and be bound in vellum, title and date stamped in gold on bright red and purple labels, with sides of mottled purple boards, and imprints such as “Bologna. Regia Tipografia Fratelli Merlani,” and of typography the best. And on genuine paper, far from the woodpulp of American municipal graft contracts.



## Page 92

Once, indeed, municipal documents were august pages. Some of the early Italian and German are on paper that will last as long as the law. And in these times the title pages of municipal documents were Piranesiesque: massive architectural scroll work framing stone tablets, hung with garlands of fruit and grain, and decorated with carved lions, human heads, and histrionic masks. And initial letters throughout to correspond.

Now who but France would bind her municipal documents in heavily tooled, full levant morocco, with grained silk inside covers?

### XVIII

#### AS TO PEOPLE

It is a very pleasant thing to go about in the world and see all the people.

Among the finest people in the world to talk with are scrubwomen. Bartenders, particularly those in very low places, are not without considerable merit in this respect. Policemen and trolley-car conductors have great social value. Rustic ferry-men are very attractive intellectually. But for a feast of reason and a flow of soul I know of no society at all comparable to that of scrubwomen.

It is possible that you do not cultivate scrubwomen. That is your misfortune. Let me tell you about my scrubwoman. I know only this one, I regret to say, but she, I take it, is representative.

Her name—ah, what does it matter, her name? The thing beyond price is her mind. There is stored, in opulence, all the ready-made language, the tag-ends of expression, coined by modern man. But she does not use this rich dross as others do. She touches nothing that she does not adorn. She turns the familiar into the unexpected, which is precisely what great writers do. To employ her own expression, she's "a hot sketch, all right."

She did not like the former occupant of my office. No; she told me that she "could not bear a hair of his head." It seems that some altercation occurred between them. And whatever it was she had to say, she declares that she "told it to him in black and white." This gentleman, it seems, was "the very Old Boy." Though my scrubwoman admits that she herself is "a sarcastic piece of goods." By way of emphasis she invariably adds to her assertions, "Believe *me!*"

Her son—she has a son—has much trouble with his feet. His mother says that if he has gone to one "shoeopodist" he has gone to a dozen. My scrubwoman tells me that she is "the only fair one" of her family. Her people, it appears, "are all olive." My scrubwoman is a widow. She has told me a number of times of the last days of her husband. It is a touching story. She realised that the end was near, and humoured him

in his idea of returning before it was too late to “the old country.” One day when he had asked her again if she had got the tickets, and then turned his face to the wall to cough, she said to herself, “*Good-night—shirt.*”



## Page 93

But most of the discourse of my scrubwoman is cheerful. She is a valiant figure, a brave being very fond of the society of her friends (of whom I hold myself to be one), who works late at night, and talks continually. I know that if you would contrive to find favour with your scrubwoman you would often be like that person told of by mine who “laughed until she thought his heart would break.”

The most brotherly car-conductors, naturally, are those with not over much business, those on lines in remote places. I remember the loss I suffered not long ago on a suburban car, which results, I am sorry to say, in your loss also.

The bell signalling to stop rang, and a vivaciously got-up woman with an extremely broad-at-the-base, pear-shaped torso, arose and got herself carefully off the car. The conductor went forward to assist her. When he returned aft he came inside the car and sat on the last seat with two of us who were his passengers. The restlessness was in him which betrays that a man will presently unbosom himself of something. This finally culminated in his remarking, as if simply for something to say to be friendly, “You noticed that lady that just got off back there? Well,” he continued, leaning forward, having received a look intended to be not discouraging, “that’s the mother of Cora Splitts, the little actress;—that lady’s the mother of Cora Splitts, the little actress.”

“Is that so!” exclaimed one who was his passenger, not wishing to deny him the pleasure he expected of having excited astonishment. A car conductor leads a hard life, poor fellow, and one should not begrudge him a little pleasure like that.

The conductor twisted away his face for an instant while he spat tobacco-juice. Thus cleared for action, he returned to the subject of his thoughts. “That’s the mother of Cora Splitts,” he repeated again. “She’s at White Plains tonight, Cora is. Cora and me,” he said, as one that says, “ah, me, what a world it is!”—“Cora and me was chums once. Yes, sir; we was chums and went to school together.” Some valuable reminiscences of the distinguished woman, dating back to days before the world dreamed of what she would become, by one who played with her as a child, doubtless would have been told, but the conductor was interrupted; a great many people got off, some others got on the car just then, and he went forward to collect fares from these, and the thread was broken.

At my journey’s end, I recollect, I went into a public-house. There was a person there whose presence made a deep impression upon my memory. A fine stocky lad, with a great square jaw, heavy beery jowls, and a blue-black, bearded chin; in a blue striped collar. He put both hands firmly on the bar-rail at a good distance apart; straightened his arms taut and his body at right angles with them, so that he resembled a huge carpenter’s square; then curled his back finely in, and said, with a significant



## Page 94

look at the man behind the bar, "Gimme one o' them shells." A thin glass of beer was set before him; he relaxed, straightened up, and drank off its contents. Then, apparently, feeling that he was observed, he looked very unconcernedly all about the room and appeared to be bored. He then examined very attentively a picture on the wall, and his neck seemed to be temporarily stiff. I can see him now, I am happy to say, as plain as print.

One's mind is, indeed, a grand photograph album. How precious to one it will be when one is old and may sit all day in a house by the sea and, so to say, turn the leaves. That is why one should be going about all the while in one's vigour with an alert and an open mind.

Wives are picturesque characters, too. I mind me of my friend Billy Henderson's new wife. Billy Henderson's wife looks like a balloon. She's so fat that she has busted down the arches of her feet. In order to "fight flesh" she walks a great deal. She walks a mile every day, and then takes a car back home. Her father comes over from Philadelphia once every week to see her, because she is so homesick. For months after she was married she just cried all the time, she was so homesick. She never goes to the movies. The movies make her cry. One time she saw at the movies a hospital scene. It horrified her for days. A friend of hers is about to be married. But she has told her friend that she cannot go to the wedding. Weddings always make her cry so. She just can't read the war news; it is too terrible; it affects her so that she can't sleep a bit. She hasn't read any of it at all, and, she says, she has no idea who is winning the war. She takes some kind of capsules to reduce flesh, which cost six dollars for fifty. She has taken twenty-five. The extension of the draft age being spoken of, she said to Billy:

"Dearie, I'll put you under the bed where they won't get you." She doesn't want to vote, and she can't understand why any one should want to go to poles and vote and all that kind of thing.

Billy Henderson's wife is handsome; she is rich; she is an excellent cook; she loves Billy Henderson.

## XIX

### HUMOURS OF THE BOOK SHOP

The panorama before his view is the human mind. He panders to its divers follies, consults its varied wisdom. He stands umbrellaless in the rain of all its idiosyncrasies. Why has he not lifted up his voice? He, the book clerk, that lives among countless volumes of confessions! Whose daily task is to wrestle hour by hour with a living



Comedie Humaine! Has the constant spectacle of so many books been astringent in its effect upon any latent creative impulse? Or has he been dumb in the colloquial sense, forsooth; a figure like Mr. Whistler's guard in the British Museum? Sundry "lettered booksellers" of England have, indeed, given us some reminiscences of bookselling and its humours. But they were the old boys. They belonged to an old order and reflected another day. "As physicians are called 'The Faculty' and counsellors-at-law 'The Profession,'" writes Boswell, "the booksellers of London are called 'The Trade.'" Let us look into this Trade as it is to-day, we said. So for a space we played we were a book clerk.

## Page 95

There are two, decidedly contradictory, popular conceptions of the man whose business it is to sell books. One is the sentimental notion of an old gentleman in a “stovepipe hat,” a dreamer and an idealist, who keeps a second-hand stall. The most delightful pictures of him are in the pages of Anatole France. He is a man of much erudition. And books are his wife and family, food and drink. Then there is the other idea. “Why is it,” we report the remark of an important looking gentleman in a high hat, “that clerks in book stores never know anything about books?” (or anything else, was perhaps not far from his thought.) This gentleman, it was readily perceived, had an idea that he had said something rather good. But it was not new. This conception of the book clerk is one of the world’s seven jokes—brother to that of the mother-in-law. The book clerk of this view is a familiar figure in the pages of humour, like the talkative barber or the comic Irishman of the vaudeville stage—a stock character. His illiteracy is classic; his ignorant sayings irresistible. He was sired by Charles Keene and damned by Punch. Phil May was his godfather; and every industrious humourist employs him periodically. These two ideas of the book business are perhaps reconciled by the popularly cherished sentiment that book sellers are not what they were. Newspapers from time to time print feature articles about the days “When Book Sellers Knew Books.” If you ask a salesman in a modern book shop if he has “Praed,” you of course expect him to reply, “I have, sir (or madam), but it doesn’t seem to do any good.”

Well, at the Zoo there is humour from the inside looking out, as well as from the outside looking in. The book clerk is in the position to remark certain human phenomena patent to him beyond the view of any other, most curious, perhaps, among them a pleasant hypocrisy. “Oh!” purls a sweet lady, pausing to glance for the space of a second at her surroundings, “I think books are just fine!” “I love to be in a book store,” rattles a vivacious young woman. “Books have the greatest fascination for me,” says another. A young lady waiting for friends looks out of the front door the entire time. Her friends express regret at having kept her waiting. “Oh!” she exclaims, “I have been so happy here”—glancing quickly around at the books—“I should just like to be left here a couple of years.” There is a respectful pause by all for an instant, each bringing into her face an expression of adoration for the dear things of the mind. Then, chatting gaily, the party hastens away. We turn to hear, “Oh, wouldn’t you love to live in a book shop!”

What is it that all men say in a book shop? The great say it, even, and the far from great. Each in his turn looks solemnly at his companion or at the salesman and says: “Of the making of books there is no end.” Then each in his turn lights into a smile. He has said something pretty good.

## Page 96

“There are persons esteemed on their reputation,” says the “Imitation of Christ,” “who by showing themselves destroy the opinion one had of them.” Though one might think it would be the other way, it is difficult, indeed, to sell a book to a friend of the author. “Oh, I know the man who wrote that,” is the reply. “I wouldn’t read a book of his.” You see, a great writer must be dead. A common error of book buyers is to confuse the words edition and copy. “Let me have a clean edition of this,” is frequently asked. Once a lady asked for something “bound in gingham.” No one, it is our belief, ever sold a light book to a Japanese. They are the book clerk’s dread. Terribly intelligent, somewhat unintelligible in their handling of our language, they always want something exceedingly difficult to find, something usually on military or political science, harbour construction or the most recondite form of philosophy.

Then there are the remarkable people who “keep up” with the flood of fiction; who say, “Oh, I’ve read that,” in a tone which implies that they are not so far behind as that! “Have you no new novels?” they inquire. Novels get “old,” one might suppose, like eggs, in a couple of days. The quest of these seekers of books suggests the story of the lady at a public library who, upon being told that seven new novels had come in that morning, said, “Give me, please, the one that came in last.” There are, too, those singular folks who appear regularly every year just before Christmas, buy a great quantity of books for presents, and disappear again until the next year just before the holiday season. What, we have wondered, do they do about books the rest of the time? Ministers are always very trying characters to book clerks. “Beware of the gallery,” says a fellow serf to us, “there’s a minister browsing around up there.” The official servants of the Lord fall, in the book clerk’s mind, into that class technically described by him as “stickers.” All gentlemen wearing high hats also belong to this classification. Deaf customers are embarrassing, for the reason that one always addresses one’s next customer as though he were deaf, too. Foreigners are invariably very polite to clerks. They bow when they enter and take off their hats upon leaving. Very respectful people. “There,” said a fellow thrall, “come two old women in at the door. Now, if I were my ancestor, I’d dance around that table with a stone club and brain them.” As it is, they ask, “Have you Hopkinson Smith’s ‘Gondola Days’?” He says, “I think so.” A lady, very rich and important looking, wants a book “without an unpleasant ending.” “I wonder how this is” (looking at the last page). “No” (closing the book with a thump), “that won’t do.” A gentleman orders two sets of the Prayer Book and Hymnal, to be marked upon the cover with his name, the words Grace Church and his pew number. He informs us that every year while he is away in the summer his set of these books is stolen.



## Page 97

'Tis a merry life, the book clerk's, and a hard one. Customers: Two youngish women. "Can you wait on us?" They want to get something, do not know just what, for a present. "Oh, no!" they say, "we don't want anything like so big a set as that. Something nicely bound." A copy of "Cranford" is near by. "Oh, when I read it I didn't think it much good." "Poetry?" "No, I don't think she is much interested in poetry." "Do you suppose an art book?"-----"No, she is not interested in art." "Memoirs, then?" "No, she would not care for that." "Why, I had no idea," said one somewhat reprovingly to us, "that it would be as hard as this."

A calling which requires the practitioner to turn easily from the recondite gentleman inquiring the author of "Religious Teachers of Ancient Greece" to consideration of the problem (no less recondite) of a lady anxious to find something to entertain a child of five and a half inculcates some degree of mental agility. "I want," said the very fashionable lady, "to get a book for an old man—a" (with some petulance) "very stupid old man." "I want," from a serious old lady, "to get a book for a young man studying for the ministry." "I want," exclaimed a very smart apparition, "a dashing book for a man!" "What is the best book on Russia?" "Do you know, now, if this is a good story?—there are so many poor books nowadays." Says a large, uncommonly black lady, "I want 'Spears of Wheat, No. 3.'" (Discovered to be a prayer book.) "I want the latest book, please, on how to bring up a baby." "I'd like to see what you have on 'physical research.'" "Can you recommend a book for a young man with softening of the brain? Poor fellow, he's in Bloomingdale." "Is there any discount to Christian workers?" "Do you know," a demure person, an awful blank look coming over her face, "what I want has gone quite out of my head." There is an appealing look for help. "Something American," in a patrician voice, "for the ladies to read going over on the boat. This is American, now, is it? New York society? Ah, very good! Have you anything about the Rocky Mountains, or that sort of thing?"

Now we see coming the man who has been directed in a letter from his wife to get a certain book, about which he knows nothing, and the title of which he can not decipher. Here is a person asking for "comfort books" for the sick. Here is Mrs. So-and-So, who tells us her husband is very ill, unconscious; she has to sit up by him all night, and must have something "very amusing" to divert her mind. Here is the angry man to whom by mistake was sent a book inscribed "to my good wife and true." Heaven help the poor book clerk when the same good wife and true comes in with her present of a naughty book with humorous remarks written in it!

Now, how do you like the job?

## XX

### THE DECEASED



## Page 98

I think it was William Hazlitt's brother who remarked that "no young man thinks he will ever die." Whoever it was he was a mysterious person who lives for us now in that one enduring observation. That is his "literary remains," his "complete works." And many a man has written a good deal more and said a good deal less than that concerning that "animal, man" (in Swift's phrase), who, as Sir Thomas Browne observes, "begins to die when he begins to live."

No young man, I should say, reads obituary notices. They are hardly "live news" to him. Most of us, I fancy, regard these "items" more or less as "dead matter" which papers for some reason or other are obliged to carry. But old people, I have noticed, those whose days are numbered, whose autumnal friends are fast falling, as if leaf by leaf from the creaking tree, those regularly turn to the obituary column, which, doubtless, is filled with what are "personals" for them.

And yet, if all but knew it, there is not in the press any reading so improving as the "obits" (to use the newspaper term), none of so softening and refining a nature, none so calculated to inspire one with the Christian feelings of pity and charity, with the sentiment of malice toward none, to bring anon a smile of tender regard for one's fellow mortals, to teach that man is an admirable creature, full of courage and faith withal, constantly striving for the light, interesting beyond measure, that his destiny is divinely inscrutable, that dust unto dust all men are brothers, and that he, man, is (in the words of "Urn Burial") "a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the tomb." I doubt very much indeed whether any one could read obituaries every day for a year and remain a bad man or woman.

In many respects, the best obituaries are to be found in country papers. There, in country papers, none ever dies. It may be because, as it is said, the country is nearer to God than the town. But so it is that there, in country papers, in the fulness of time, or by the fell clutch of chance, one "enters into his final rest," or "passes from his earth life," or one "on Wed. last peacefully accepted the summons to Eternity," or "on Thurs." (it may be) "passed to his eternal reward." "Died" is indeed a hard word. It has never found admittance to hearts that love and esteem. Whitman (was it not?) when he heard that Carlyle was dead went out in the night and looked up at the stars and said that he did not believe it. Even so, are not all who take their passing "highly esteemed" in country papers? In small places, doubtless, death wears for the community a more tragic mein than in cities, where it is more frequent and where we knew not him that lies on his bier next door but one away. In the country places this man who is now no longer upright and quick was a neighbour to all. And the provincial writer of obituaries follows a high authority, another rustic poet, deathless and known throughout the world, who sang of his Hoosier friend "he is not dead but just away."



## Page 99

When one enters upon his last role in this world, which all fill in their turn, he becomes in rural journals that personage known throughout the countryside as "the deceased." It might be argued that, alas! the only thing you can do with one deceased is to bury him. It might be held that you cannot educate him. That he, the deceased, cannot enter upon the first steps of his career as a bookkeeper. That he cannot marry the daughter of the Governor of the State. That whatever happened to him, whatever he accomplished, enjoyed, endured, in his pilgrimage through this world he experienced before he became, as it is said, deceased. That, in short, he is now dead. And that it should be said of him, as we say in the Metropolitan press, as a young man Mr. Doe did this and later that. But in places simpler, and so more eloquent, than the Metropolis the final fact of one's existence colours all the former things of his career. In country obituaries all that has been done was done by the deceased. In this association of ideas between the prime and the close of life is to be felt a sentiment which knits together each scene. This Mr. Some One did not merely apprentice himself to a printer at fourteen (as city papers say it) and marry at twenty-one. But he that is now deceased was once full of hope and strength (at fourteen), and in the brave days of twenty-one did he, that is now struck down, plight his troth. So, doubtless, runs the thought in that intimate phrase so dear to country papers, "the deceased."

And there are no funerals in the country. That is a word, funeral, of too forbidding, ominous, a sound to be under the broad and open sky. There where the neighbours gather, all those who knew and loved the departed from a boy, the "last sad rites are read," and the "mortuary services are performed." Then from the fruitful valley where he dwelt after his fathers, and their fathers, he mounts again the old red hill, bird enchanted.

He is not buried, though he rests in the warm clasp of the caressing earth. Buried has an inhuman sound, as though a man were a bone. The deceased is always "interred," or he may be "laid to rest," or his "interment takes place."

Now, it is in these biographical annals of small places that one finds the justest estimates of life. There folks are valued for what they are as well as for what they do. Inner worth is held in regard equally with the flash and glitter of what the great world calls success. I was reading just the other day of a late gentleman, "aged 61," whose principal concern appeared to be devotion to his family. His filial feeling was indeed remarkable. It was told that "after the death of his parents, three years ago, he had resided with his sister." After his attachment to his own people, his chief interest, apparently, was in the things of the mind, in literature. He had "never engaged in business," it was said, but he "was a great



## Page 100

reader," he could "talk intelligently on many topics which interested him," and in the circles which he frequented he was admired, that is it was thought that he was "quite a bright man." Who would not feel in this sympathetic record of his goodly span something of the charm of the modest nature of this man? Again, there was the recent intelligence concerning William Jackson, "a coloured gentleman employed as a deck hand on a pleasure craft in this harbour," who "met his demise" in an untimely manner. Clothes do not make the man, nor doth occupation decree the bearing. This is a great and fundamental truth very clearly grasped by the country obituary, and much obscured elsewhere.

On the other hand, positively nowhere else does the heart to dare and the power to do find such generous recognition as in the obituaries of country papers. The "prominence" of blacksmiths, general store keepers, undertakers, notaries public, and other townspeople bright in local fame has been made a jest by urban persons of a humorous inclination, who take scorn of merit because it is not vast merit. Pleasing to contemplate in contrast to this waspish spirit is the noble nature of the country obituary, inspiration to humanism. Here was a man, to the seeing eye, of sterling stamp: "He attended public grammar school where he profited by his opportunities in obtaining as good an education as possible, *etc.*" Later in life, he became "well and favourably known for his conservative and sane business methods," and was esteemed by his associates, it is said, "fraternally and otherwise." He was "mourned," by those who "survived" him, as people are not mourned in cities, that is, frankly, in a manner undisguised. Country obituaries are not afraid to be themselves. In this is their appeal to the human heart.

They are the same in spirit, identical in turn of phrase, from Maine to California, from the Gulf to the Upper Provinces. That is one of the remarkable things about them. You might expect to come across, here or there, a writer of country paper obituaries out of step, as it were, with his fellow mates, so to put it, one raising his voice in a slightly off, or different key, a trace, in short, of the hand of some student of the modes of thought of the world beyond his bosky dell or rolling plain. But it is not so in any paper truly of the countryside. And, perhaps, that is well.

A type of obituary which very likely is read rather generally in cities is that of slow growth and released from the newspaper-office "morgue" as occasion calls. One such timely and capable biographical account is waiting for each of us that is a Vice-President, King, lord of great dominions, high commander of armed forces, intellectual immortal of any kind, recognised superman in this or that. Big Chief anywhere, or beloved popular idol, nicely proportioned according to our space value. Of course, if we are a very great Mogul indeed we get a display head on the first



## Page 101

page upon the dramatic occasion of our exit. But, generally speaking, this type of matter would run somewhere between the seventh and the thirteenth or fifteenth page, according to the number of pages of the issue of the paper coinciding with the date of the ending of our day's work. There, if we are pretty important, we should lead the column, and take a two-line head, with a pendant "comb." This, altogether, would announce to the passing eye that we went out (as the poet, Edwin Arlington Robinson, puts it) in such or such a year of our age, that pneumonia, or what not, "took" us, that we were a member of one of the city's oldest families, that a family breach was healed at the death of our sister, or the general points of whatever it is that makes us interesting to the paper's circulation. We are likely to have a date line and a brief despatch from Rome, or Savannah, or wherever we happen to be when we shuffle off, stating that we have done so. This to be followed by a "shirt-tail dash." Then begins a beautifully dispassionate and highly dignified recital of the salient facts connected with our career, which may run to a couple of sticks, or, even, did our activities command it, turn the column.

Or, suppose for the sake of our discussion that your achievements have not been quite of the first rank. You get a one-line head, a sub-head, and a couple of paragraphs. Somebody has exclaimed concerning how much life it takes to make a little art. Just so. How much life it takes to make a very little obituary in the great city! Early and late, day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out, in the sun's hot eye of summer, through the winter's blizzard, year after year for thirty-six years you have been a busy practising physician. You have lived in the thick of births and life and death for thousands of hours. What you know, and have lived and have seen would fill rows of volumes. You are a distinguished member of many learned societies, widely known as an educator. You are good for about a hundred and fifty words.

Perhaps not. Perhaps you were a person of rather minor importance. You are, that is, you were, we will say, an astronomer, or you were a mineralogist, or a former Alderman, or something like that. So you call for a paragraph, with a head. Your virtues (and your vices) have been many. You were three times married. As Mr. Bennett says of another of like momentous history, the love of life was in you, three times you rose triumphant over death. Goodness! what a novel you would make. You call for a paragraph, with a head. All your clubs are given.

## Page 102

You are doing pretty well. Many of us, just somebodies but nobodies in especial particular, do not have a separate head at all but go in a group into the feature "Obituary Notes." Our names are set in "caps," and we have a brisk paragraph apiece, admirable pieces of composition, pellucid, compact, nervous. Our stories are contained in these dry-point-like portraits stript of all that was occasional, accidental, ephemeral, leaving alone the essential facts, such as, for instance, that we were, say, a civil engineer. I think it would be well for each of us occasionally to visualise his obituary "note." This should have the effect of clarifying our outlook. Amid the welter of existence what is it that we are above all to do? To thine own self be true. You are a husband, a father, and a civil engineer. That is all that matters in the end.

But after all, all obituaries in a great city are for the elect. The great majority of us have none at all, in print. What we were is, indeed, graven on the hearts that knew us, and told in the places where we have been. But in the written word we go into the feature headed "Died," a department similar in design to that on the literary page headed "Books Received." We are arranged alphabetically according to the first letter of our surnames. We are set in small type with lines following the name line indented. It is difficult for me to tell with certainty from the printed page but I think we are set without leads. Here again, frequently, the reader comes upon the breath of affection, the hand of some one near to the one that is gone: "Beloved husband of -----." And he is touched by the realisation that even in the rushing city, somewhere unseen amid the hard glitter and the gay scene, to-day warm hearts are torn, and that simple grief throbs in and makes perennially poignant a bromidian phrase.

As this column lengthens the paragraphs shorten, until is reached what seems to me the most moving obituary of all, that most eloquent of the destiny of men. "ROE. ----- Richard. 1272 West 96th St., Dec. 30, aged 54." It is like to the most moving line, perhaps, in modern literature. For nowhere else, I think, is there one of such simplicity and grandeur as this from "The Old Wives' Tale": "He had once been young, and he had grown old, and was now dead."

## XXI

### A TOWN CONSTITUTIONAL

There is certainly no more grotesque fallacy than that humorously bigoted notion so generally entertained, particularly by our friends of other nations (at any rate, before the war), that the only thing in the world for which we as a people care is success as measured by money. A walk about any day will give this ridiculous idea a black eye. Any one with ears to his head will perceive that we scorn things which are to be had for money. Money! What is that? Phew! Everybody has it. It



## Page 103

is mine, it is yours, it is nothing—trash. Any one with a brain-pan under his hat will recognise inside of half an hour that we are anything but a nation of shopkeepers spiritually. It is as plain as a pike-staff that we are a nation of perfectly rabid idealists. It is sounded on every side that the things which we most fervently prize, inordinately covet, envy possession of, and hold most proudly, are precisely those things which the wealth of the Indies would not procure. To wit:

Jimmy was a waiter, humble, but celebrated—as a waiter—among a circle. An admirer of Jimmy's, a journalist continually on the lookout for copy, wrote him up for the paper at space rates. Thence till the day Broadway suffered his loss by untimely death did Jimmy fold and unfold his worn clipping to exhibit with a full heart this tribute to him which was of a kind (as he never failed to say) which "money could not buy." It is reported upon reasonably reliable authority that Jimmy's last words, in a faint whisper, were: "Money could not have bought-----" And then he went on his way.

So it was, too, with a tobacconist whom I knew—who had an article framed which referred to his shop. "In such a paper, too!" he exclaimed a hundred times a day, "money could not have bought it."

Your aunt has a lot of old spavined furniture which would bring about tu'pence at public sale. Some of it was your great-aunt's. All of it has been in the family from time immemorial; and its peculiar and considerable value, your aunt and her neighbours are agreed, resides in the esoteric fact that it is the kind of thing which "money couldn't buy."

Health is a great blessing, and, we are repeatedly told, we should prize it beyond measure,—as it is a thing that money will not buy.

His money, it is commonly said of a rich man in bereavement, will not bring his son back to life. The impotency of money in the life of the spirit is notorious among us. Of a deceased miser we declare with satisfaction: "Well, he can't take his money with him." And money—the righteous well know—will get none into heaven.

What is the moving theme that holds the multitude at the movie theatre bound in a spell? What is it that answers deep unto deep between the literature vended at drug stores and the people?—Concern for money overthrown by idealism! The triumph of ethereal love over the base temptation of lucre! Is it not so: the rich wooer in the top hat and the elegant Easter-parade coat is turned away, and the poor lover with his flannel shirt open at the collar and a dinner-pail hung upon his arm is chosen for bluebird happiness—and the heart of the maligned masses is satisfied.

Money (the conviction has passed into an industrious bromideum) will not buy happiness.

I knew a man who had a wife; and he was told by sage counsellors that if he would treat her right she would give him “what money could not buy.”



## Page 104

But what need is there to multiply examples? Take a turn around the block and return with the wisdom that money can not buy. Come; get your stick and let us go.

A beneficent Providence, sir, has caused it to be that the finest shows in this world are free of all men. Nature charges no admission fee. The dawn and the evening are gratis. In the matter of art, the performances of the little men of the passing hour are to be seen in Bond Street, on the Avenue, and at the academies and societies, for a price; but those treasure houses of the enduring masterpieces, the great museums of the world, demand naught from him that hath nothing. A collector of customs sitteth at the golden door of the movies; but the far more delightful and far more human shows shown in the show windows are quite free for all to see. And to those blessed ones whose eyes have not lost their innocence and whose hearts remain sweet and simple the costly spectacles of the world are but tawdry vanity as compared with the feasts of entertainment enacted daily in show windows.

One of the very best theatres in this country for entertainments of this nature is lower Sixth Avenue, though the Bowery is not to be overlooked, and the passionate lover of pleasure should not neglect any business thoroughfare which presents a particularly shabby appearance. The actors and actresses in these fascinating histrionic presentations are not called comedians and tragedians, comediennes and tragediennes—but “demonstrators.” The effect of their performances thus is twofold: they gratify the spectator’s sense of the humorous or the curious, and they demonstrate to his intelligence the value of something with whose merits possibly he is not acquainted.

There are not many things in life, I think, which you find pleasanter than this: You are slightly obstructed in your perambulations on a fine afternoon by a small knot of loiterers pausing before a shop window in which an active young man of admirably mobile countenance is holding forth in dumb show. Your progress is slackened as you edge about the throng with the intention of proceeding on your way. As it were, you poise on the wing. Then, like a warming liquor stealing through the veins, the awakening of your interest in the artful antics of this young man makes fainter and fainter your will to proceed on your course, until it dies softly away. What is this ridiculous thing he is doing? By its magnetism it has, at any rate, become for you the supreme interest, for the moment, of the universe.

With a horrible grimace the young man yanks fiercely at his cravat. It does not budge, or at least only very slightly. With still further display of energetic effort, accompanied by a ferocious expression of pained and enraged exasperation, he yanks again. No, the cravat is stuck fast behind within the collar. With a gesture of hopeless despair and a face of pitiful woe the young man abandons his struggle with the ordinary kind of cravat which loops around the neck, and which, foolishly enough, is so universally worn. You see, so his eloquent flinging out of the hands saith, it is of no use. He shakes his fist. Then, registering the extremity of disgust, he rips the loathesome, cravat-clogged collar from his neck and flings it from him.



## Page 105

What will he do now? is the thought that holds his audience bound in a spell. Ah! His face breaks into light. He snatches up his collar and industriously adjusts it without a cravat. He picks up a small object which he holds aloft between thumb and forefinger, turning it this way and that. It is the ready-made bow of a bow tie, the bow and nothing more. Yes, there are patent prongs to it, which he deftly slips beneath the wings of his collar. So! No trouble whatever. Instantaneous. A smile of luxurious blandness spreads over the face of the young man. Thus he stands for a moment. Then stoops and places in a corner of the window a large card inscribed "Ten Cents." With a pleasing sense of curiosity satisfied, the current of your own life as distinct from show-window shows flows back again into your consciousness. You turn, and the great movement of the city takes you, although some souls of spacious leisure and of apparently insatiable curiosity linger on to drink in the happiness of witnessing a repetition of the fascinating exhibition.

Of such shows is the freedom of the kingdom of heaven. There is the other young man in a show window a bit further on who all day long gashes blocks of wood with a magic razor, only to sharpen it to greater keenness, so that before you he continually cuts with it the finest hairs. There is the young woman garbed as a nurse who treats the corns on a gigantic plaster foot. In show windows cooks are cooking appetising dishes; damsels are combing magnificent, patent-medicine grown tresses; and in show windows are spectacles of infinite variety and without number. All for the delight without cost of a penny of those whose hearts are as a little child. There is the trim maid who folds and unfolds a Davenport couch. I had a friend one time of a roving disposition (alas! he is now in jail) who once got the amazingly enviable job of doing nothing but smoke an endless succession of cigars in a show window.

Brother (as Lavengro used to say), there is nothing high about the cost of pleasure. But hold! would you, without a thought, pass by here? Though this, yon show, is without its rapt throng to do it reverence, it is, to an ardent mind, the most enticing, and the most instructive, of all the classic exhibitions to be seen from the pavement, the one fullest of all of (in the words of one Quinney) "meat and gravy." Always tarry, fellow man, before the cheap photographer's.

Any one who has ever been enough interested in human matters to examine the sidewalk exhibitions of the cheap photographer does not need to be told that the fine old star character there, a character somewhat analogous in popular appeal and his permanency as an institution to the heavy villain of melodrama, a character old as the hills, yet fresh as the morning, is the naked baby. Nobody ever saw a cheap photographer's display without its naked baby. Just why he should be naked is not clear. However, there is undoubtedly



## Page 106

inherent in the mind of the race this instinct,—that you should begin your photographic life naked. Perhaps this is in response to a sentiment for symbol: naked came ye into the world. Perhaps it is because your face at the time of your initial photograph is as yet so uncarved by time that it is deemed more interesting to display the whole of you, clothed, as it were, in innocence. The art of painting, of course, from the earliest rendering of the Child of the Virgin down to Mary Cassatt, has been fond of portraying infants nude,—the photographer may be said only to continue a very old tradition. But painting has always observed the baby with ceremonious respect; painting stripped him to admire him and softly caress him. The broad humanity of the cheap photographer “jokes” him, as you may say.

The most popular way of presenting the baby at the cheap photographer’s,—seated, standing, on his back, or on his belly; stark naked, or (as sometimes he is found) girded about the loins, or (as, again, he is seen) less naked and wearing an abbreviated shirt, and in various other stages of habilimentation,—is on a whitish hairy rug. No background but the hairy rug. It is background (very largely), one suspects, that gives one the sense of a baby’s value. The idea occurs to a thoughtful observer of his photograph that it is to a considerable degree from background, surrounding atmosphere, local colour, that the baby derives personal identity. Twenty cabinet-sized naked babies, each on a hairy rug:—one conceives how an unscrupulous photographer (as may very likely commonly be the case) might save money on negatives, after he had a stock of a little variety, by snapping babies with an unloaded camera and printing from old plates, without anybody’s being the wiser. (Here, indeed, would be a utilitarian motive behind the baby’s being naked of articles of identification.) It is, alas! undermining to the pride of race to reflect that that photograph of one’s cousin’s fine new baby Edward, which reminded every one so much of the infant’s mother, may not impossibly have been the original likeness of some baby now long extinct.

History, so called, deals exclusively with persons of distinction; fiction, though more catholic, sees man in a glamour, with the various prejudices this way and that of a mortal eye. The development of the discovery announced by Daguerre in 1839, and first applied to portraits by one Draper,—this is the great historian. The photograph business, sir, alone sees life steadily and sees it whole. Photography is the supreme sociologist, master psychologist. In the sidewalk display of the cheap photographer is the poor, naked, human story,—poignantly touching, chastening of pride, opening the heart of the responsive beholder to deeper knowledge of the inherent kinship of all humankind.

How does the consummate realism of the cheap photographer show its babies of yester-year, clothed now in the raiment of mature years and simple honours?



## Page 107

That appealing spectacle, the girl who has performed somewhere in curiously home-made-looking "tights," and, laughing roguishly at the camera, been photographed afterward (from this sight what rouse would not turn away his sinful eyes in shame and pity?). The highly satisfied young man in the very rented-appearing evening clothes (photographed, it is apparent, in the day time). The blank-looking person who for some cryptic reason is enamoured of the studious, literary pose, and appears, in effect like a frontispiece portrait, glancing up from a writing table (an obviously artificial cigar between the fingers of one hand, apparently made of carbon, and, presumably, the property of the photographer). The aspiring amateur boxer, in position, with his sparring trunks on and an American flag around his waist (or sometimes, in default of trunks, he is seen in his nether undergarment). The jolly girl in boy's clothes (who has not seen her?). The little child in costume performing a cute dance. The coloured beau, a heavy swell, in spats and a van Bibber overcoat. The gay banqueters of the So-and-So Association, around their festive board (one man, devilish fellow! holding aloft a beer bottle). The young girl in confirmation attire, standing awkwardly by a table (her slip of a mind, as she stands there, very probably less upon her God than upon her common, foolish dress). The team of amateur comedians (sad spectacle!). The bride and groom (perennial as the naked baby) standing, curiously enough, upon our old friend, the hairy rug. The family group (all the figures of which have a curious wax-work effect, reminiscent of the late Eden Musee). The policeman, in uniform (sitting in a chair of cathedral architecture). The fireman (a hero, perhaps,—though no man is a hero, merely amazingly human, to the cheap photographer's camera). The youthful swains posed beside that indestructible stage property of the popular photographer, the artificial tree stump. The immortal woman vain of that part of her which Mr. Mantalini referred to as "outline," and careful to keep her near arm from obstructing the spectator's view (sometimes she is clothed; sometimes simply wound in a sheet; sometimes, in either case, she is like the Dowager whose outline Mr. Mantalini described as "dem'd"). All these—and many others—are the traditions of the cheap photography.

Nobody, apparently, is so unattractive, nobody so poor, nobody wears such queer clothes, nobody is so old, or faded, or fat, or "skinny," or short, or tall, or black, or bow-legged, or so anything at all, that he or she won't pose for a photograph. So that it may reasonably be said, that to have lost the instinct to have one's "picture taken" is to have lost the love of life. Nobody, no doubt, but is interesting to somebody. And, as Stevenson has said, can any one be regarded as useless so long as he has a friend?

And when—brother—at length, one has withdrawn forevermore from the tawdry stage of the cheap photographer's, a last view is taken of one, as it were, in the grave. Side by side at the cheap photographer's with the naked baby and with the bride and groom—is the "floral emblem."



# Page 108

## XXII

### READING AFTER THIRTY

Somewhere in the mass of that splendid, highly personal journalism of his, William Hazlitt declares that he was never able to read a book through after thirty. That penetrating man, Samuel Butler, reflecting in his "Note-Books" on "What Audience to Write For," says: "People between the ages of twenty and thirty read a good deal, after thirty their reading drops off and by forty is confined to each person's special subject, newspapers and magazines." Thirty again, you see.

We all have friends who have been omniverous readers, persons who, to our admiration and despair, seem to have read everything in "literature." It may have struck us, however, as a curious thing that, except possibly in rare instances, such persons appear not to read much now, beyond newspapers and magazines. The upshot of what they are able to say, when you ask them why this is true, is that one simply reaches a time of life when one "quits reading," as one ceases to dance, or cools in interest toward the latest fashions in overcoats.

But, undoubtedly there are persons who continue to read, apparently with unabated industry and zest, no matter how old they may become. Dr. Johnson, of course, was a constant reader all his life, and would cheerfully read anything whether it was readable or not. Though did not he somewhere confess to himself that he did not read things through? Mr. Huneker, who is well on the richer side of thirty, would seem to read everything printed about five minutes after it has left the press, and before anybody else has had a chance to see it. There are so many capital letters on the pages of his own books that it makes one dizzy to look at them. Whether or not he reads through all the books he mentions is of course (as he is a reviewer) a question. And, then, both Mr. Huneker and the Doctor belong to the trade, so to say. Another startlingly prodigious reader is Theodore Roosevelt, hilariously past thirty, and not exclusively identified with literary "shop." He is continually discovering and vigorously recommending new poets and short-story writers whom professional critics have not yet had time to get around to. It does not appear that a fundamental or organic change in the composition of the human brain which inhibits reading occurs more or less suddenly at thirty.

Why then do so many reading animals cease at about that time to read? Butler does not say. Arnold Bennett (was it not?) has asked what's the use of his reading more, he knows enough. Hazlitt, in his own case, surmised that the keener interest of writing rather asphyxiated the impulse to read. And, doubtless, that generally is about the size of it. As in the cure of the drink habit, a new and more intense interest will drive out the old. The reader, of course, is a spectator, not an active participant in the world's doings.



## Page 109

After thirty, desirable citizens of ordinary energy have little opportunity for the role of noncombatant, and the taste of action and of success, like the taste of war, makes them impatient with quieter things. Failures read more than successful men. Bachelors no doubt read much more than husbands. And fathers seldom are great readers. This last fact may explain the observation that even college professors do not read fanatically. When they are “off” awhile they “play with” their children (children are great enemies everywhere to reading), who are much more real to them than study.

In one of his later books George Moore chronicles his resolve to cultivate the habit of reading, to learn to read again. And he sucks much naive pleasure from the contemplation of this prospective enterprise; but he finds it very difficult to persevere in it, and drifts away instead into reveries of what he has read. There is a thought here, however, to be hearkened to: the idea of learning to read again.

What is it that happens to one in consequence of his ceasing to read? He suffers a hardening of the intellectual arteries. There are quaint old codgers one knows here and there who declare that in fiction there has “been nothing since Dickens.” They are delightful, of course; but one would rather see than be one. We all know many persons whose intellectual clock stopped some time ago, and there are people whose minds apparently froze at about the time when they should have begun to ripen, and which are like blocks of ice with a fish (or a volume of Huxley) inside. Nothing now can get in.

At those times of earnest introspection, when one would “swear off” this or that, would reduce one’s smoking, would adopt the principle of “do it now,” and so on—at those times an excellent New Year’s resolution, or birthday resolution, or first day of the month resolution, would be to re-learn to read, to keep, as Dr. Johnson said of his friendships, one’s reading continually “in good repair.”

## EPILOGUE

### ON WEARING A HAT

There is a good deal to be said about wearing a hat. And yet this humorous custom, this rich topic, of wearing a hat has been sadly neglected, as far as I can make out, by scholars, scientists, poets, composers, and other “smart” people.

Man has been variously defined, as the religious animal, and so on; but also, to the best of my knowledge and belief, he is the only animal that wears a hat. He has become so accustomed to the habit of wearing his hat that he does not feel that he is himself out of doors without it. Mr. Howells (I think it was) has told us in one of his novels of a young man who had determined upon suicide. With this intent he made a mad dash for the

sea. But on his way there a sudden gust of wind blew off his hat; instinctively he turned to recover it, and this action broke the current of his ideas. With his hat he recovered



## Page 110

his reason, and went home as alive as usual. His hat has come to mean for man much more than a protection for his head. It is for him a symbol of his manhood. You cannot more greatly insult a man than by knocking off his hat. As a sign of his reverence, his esteem, his respect, a man bares his head. Though, indeed, the contentious Mr. Chesterton somewhere argues that there is no more reason for a man's removing his hat in the presence of ladies than for his taking off his coat and waistcoat.

In the more complex social organisms of Europe the custom of lifting the hat to other men whom one thus acknowledges as superiors is much more prevalent than in our democratic country. Though in America we remove our hats in elevators upon the entrance of ladies, a practice which is not followed in England. It was Mrs. Nickleby who indicated the extreme politeness of the noble gentlemen who showed her to her carriage by the celebrated remark that they took their hats "completely off." We express great joy by casting our hats into the air. If I wish to show my contempt for you I will wear my hat in your house; if I wish you to clear out of my house I say: "Here's your hat"; if I am moved to admiration for you I say: "I take off my hat to you." I greatly enjoy seeing you run after your hat in the street, because you are thereby made excessively ridiculous. The comic Irishman of the vaudeville stage makes his character unmistakable to all by carrying his clay pipe in his hat band. The English painter, Thomas Gainsborough, gave his name to a hat. The seasoned newspaper man displays his cynical nature and complete disillusionment by wearing his hat at his desk. A hat worn tilted well back on the head indicates an open nature and a hail-fellow-well-met disposition; while a hat decidedly tilted over one eye is the sign of a hard character, and one not to be trifled with. In the literature of alcoholism it is written that a common hallucination of the inebriate is that a voice cries after him: "Where did you get that white hat?" Upon assuming office the cardinal is said to "take the hat." When a man is conspicuously active in American political life "his hat is in the ring." Whistler topped off his press-agent eccentricity with a funny hat. The most idiosyncratic hat at present in America is that which decorates the peak of Mr. Bliss Carman. The hat-stands in our swagger hotels make a great deal of money; I know a gentleman who affirmed that a hat which had originally cost him three dollars had cost him eighteen dollars to be got back from hat-checking stands. Cheap people evade the hat-boy.



## Page 111

When the present enthusiast for the splendid subject of hats was a small boy it was the ambition of every small boy of his acquaintance to be regarded as of sufficient age to possess what we termed a "dice hat," what is commonly called a "derby," what in England they call a "darby," what Dickens aptly referred to as a "pot-hat," what, in one highly diverting form, is sometimes referred to on the other side as a "billycock." That singular structure for the human head, the derby hat, one time well-nigh universally worn, has now gone somewhat out of fashion and been superseded by the soft hat of smart design, though there are indications, I fear, that the derby is coming in again. When we were young the soft hat was most commonly worn by veterans of the Civil War, in a pattern called a "slouch hat" or "Grand Army hat." Though, indeed, such romantic beings as cowboys in popular ten cent literature and the late Buffalo Bill wore sombreros, and the picturesque Mexican a high peaked affair.

Our grandfathers wore "stove-pipe hats"; and the hats of politicians were one time frequently called "plug hats." This male head-dress even more extraordinary than the derby, books of etiquette sometimes say you should not call a "silk hat" but a "high hat." In London but a few years ago no man ever went into the City with other than a top-hat, or "topper" as they say there. It is said that the going out of general favour of the silk hat has been occasioned in a considerable degree by the popularity of raincoats in preference to umbrellas. If you observe any great crowd in England to-day you will find in it few hats of any kind; it is in the main a sea of caps. The American "dude" and the anti-bellum British "knot" always wore silk hats. Gentlemen at the British race courses and fine old clubmen of Pall Mall affect a white or grey top hat, of the sort which was so becoming an ornament to the late King Edward. The opera hat is said to have startled many persons who had not seen it before. Intoxicated gentlemen in funny pictures have always smashed their silk hats. Some men have worn a silk hat only on the occasion of their marriage. High hats are worn by small boys in England. The most useful occupation to-day is that which involves the wearing of a "tin hat."

The day in the autumn fixed by popular mandate when the straw hat is to be discarded for the season is hilariously celebrated in Wall Street by the destruction by the affronted populace of the straw hats of those who have had the temerity or the thoughtlessness to wear them. Coloured men in livery stables, however, sometimes wear straw hats the year round. To the habit generally of wearing a hat baldness is attributed by some. And the luxuriant hair of Indians and of the cave-man is pointed to as illustrating the beneficent result of not wearing a hat. And now and then somebody turns up with the idea in his head that he doesn't need a hat on it. There is a white garbed gentleman of Grecian mould who parades Broadway every day without a hat.



## Page 112

It is indisputable that the hats women wear to-day are more beautiful than they have been for generations, perhaps centuries. Yet this fact has met with little expression of appreciation. This present excellence is because women's hats now are the product of intellectual design. In the '80's the idea was entertained that decoration of a woman's hat was increased by attaching to it something in the way of beads or feathers wherever there was a space free. A fashionable woman's hat to-day may be as simple and, in its way, as effective as art as a Whistler symphony; a single splotch of colour, it may be, acting as a foil against a rich mass. Or the hat is a replica, as it were, of the celebrated design of a period in history. But the erudite subject of women's hats should not be touched upon without a salute to that racy model which crowns the far-famed 'Arriet, whose Bank-holiday attire was so delightedly caressed by the pencil of the late Phil May. None could forget his tenderly human drawing of the lady with the bedraggled feather over one eye who has just been ejected by the bar-man, and who turns to him to say: "Well, the next time I goes into a public house, I goes where I'm *respected!*"

A hat is distinguished from a cap or bonnet by the possession of a brim. The modern hat can be traced back to the *petasus* worn by the ancient Romans when on a journey; and hats were also thus used by the earlier Greeks. Not until after the Norman conquest did the use of hats begin in England. A "hatte of biever" was worn by one of the "nobels of the lande, mett at Clarendom" about the middle of the 12th century; and Froissart describes hats that were worn at Edward's court in 1340, when the Garter order was instituted. The use of the scarlet hat which distinguishes cardinals was sanctioned in the 13th century by Pope Innocent IV. The merchant in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* had

"On his head a Flaundrish bever hat";

and from this period onwards frequent mention is made of "felt hattes," "beever hattes," and other like names. Throughout mediaeval times the wearing of a hat was regarded as a mark of rank and distinction. During the reign of Elizabeth the caprices of fashion in hats were many and various.

The Puritans affected a steeple crown and broad brimmed hat, while the Cavaliers adopted a lower crown and a broader brim ornamented with feathers. In the time of Charles II. still greater breadth of brim and a profusion of feathers were fashionable features of hats, and the gradual expansion of brim led to the device of looping or tying up that portion. Hence arose various fashionable "cocks" in hats; and ultimately, by the looping up equally of three sides of the low-crowned hat, the cocked hat which prevailed throughout the 18th century was elaborated. The Quaker hat, plain, low in crown, and broad in brim, originated with the sect in the middle of the 17th century. The silk hat is

## Page 113

an article of recent introduction. Though it was known in Florence about a century ago, its manufacture was not introduced into France till about 1825, and its development has taken place entirely since that period. In all kinds of hat-making the French excel; in the United Kingdom the felt hat trade is principally centred in the neighbourhood of Manchester; and in the United States the States of New York and New Jersey enjoy the greater part of the industry.

So much for hats.