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Swaine, London.

THE BOOKMAN OF THE MEMOIRS.

THE MEMOIRS
OF A BOOKMAN
BY JAMES MILNE

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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Dedication; To Amy and Trixie, Gratefully.

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I. OLD AND NEW VICTORIANS

How, by the fortunate Providence of things, three generations of great writers united, in the eighteen-nineties, to influence, instruct and delight the new democracy of English readers created by popular education.

THE Old Guard of the Victorian writers still illuminated the London literary world at the beginning of the eighteen-nineties. You met people who had known "George Eliot," Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Thomas Carlyle. Bulwer Lytton and Charles Reade were near enough to be memories and Charles Kingsley and Wilkie Collins were more than that.

Alfred Tennyson was still lyrical, though Robert Browning had ended his song, and John Ruskin had not lost his prophetic mind, Herbert Spencer and Russel Wallace, Thomas Henry Huxley and John Tyndall were a left wing of philosophy and science, and they recalled Charles Darwin, whose "Origin of Species" had changed the whole mental and spiritual outlook of mankind.

OLD AND NEW VICTORIANS

The younger men of the Old Victorian Guard were in the fullness of their flight and influence. Thomas Hardy was established in Wessex as a novelist who made it a world of human nature. George Meredith wrote at Box Hill in Surrey and discoursed there, in braided language, to his friends. John Morley, journalist and man of letters, was adorning statesmanship with his pen, and still hoping to write a book on the rise of Garibaldi's Italy, though he never did it.

Algernon Charles Swinburne, "red" poet in his youth, was resting his caravan and communing with his friend, Theodore Watts-Dunton, at The Pines, Putney Hill. May be they discussed the novels of Mrs. Humphry Ward and "Lucas Malet," Charles Kingsley's daughter. Hall Caine they knew, if only for his early acquaintance with Gabriel Rossetti, and, following an authentic English legal precedent, they may have asked each other, "And who is Marie Corelli?"

The last of the Victorians, those who were also to be Edwardians and Georgians, were arriving to take up the literary burden, welcomed by genial Walter Besant, another Anthony Trollope, with differences. Mr. Bernard Shaw, red-haired and Irish, was sniping Fleet Street and the conventions from his first London lair in Soho. Mr. Rudyard

Kipling, camped in Villiers Street, between Charing Cross and the Adelphi, was the bearer of new tidings from India.

Sir James Barrie had come south from Scotland, bringing with him " Thrums," his own Kirriemuir, and its " kail-yard," of " Auld Licht Idylls." Mr. H. G. Wells was exploring the heavens in " time machines" and mapping out a new earth. Mr. John Galsworthy had begun to weave the picture of a passing English generation, solid yet dramatic, into " The Forsyte Saga." Mr. Arnold Bennett, of the Five Towns by nature as well as birth, was nevertheless setting out to be a citizen of the world and loving the adventure.

These were only the stars and the comets of a literary time which shone with many constellations. It was a time when English springs of authorship, the old and the new, were, in their very fullness, overflowing into each other. It was the waters-meet of three generations ; that which had achieved, that which was achieving, and that which had begun to achieve. Serenity—what had been done ; ripeness—what was being done ; eagerness—what would be done. The harvest, the sowing, the burgeoning ; it was Mother Nature's immemorial way in all things, but here a colourful, arresting, Victorian pageant.

OLD AND NEW VICTORIANS

What luck, then, for a Scotsman, young, simple, unspoilt, to come straight into such a London traffic of the " wise and the bold/* Perhaps a little terrifying if that thought had presented itself, but how many of us have ever been " silent upon a peak in Darien " ? It is better that we should just go on with the day's work, its changing, moving human elements and their intrigue for us. So the long-ago memory which really returns is what the poet of the " Shropshire Lad " wrote on coming face to face, in a London museum, with a Greek statue :

" *Well met" I thought the look would say ;*
" *We both were fashioned far away ;*
We neither knew when we were young,
These Londoners we live among."

But youth fits itself in, even when the concern is books, high cards and counters in the game of life, for that, surely, is how they should be regarded. Perhaps in the early eighteen-nineties there was not enough of this living regard for them, because English readers were still, in effect, the " educated classes." Scotland had long had popular as well as university education, but the Board Schools of England were only now teaching the English

masses into the companionship of books. That, also, was an event and portent of the later Victorian age, and indeed it was to be the great harvester of its rich and varied literary crop.

It all seems just natural and orderly as one looks back ; the alignment of rich resources in English authorship, with the coming of the multitude curious for knowledge, demanding to be mentally fed. Fortunate, was it not, that the supply should so fully honour the demand as to make their union a marriage of ever-increasing happiness and well-being. We speak of the Republic of Letters, meaning that those labouring in it are equals, though their gifts to it may not be. Equally we may speak of the Commonwealth of Reading, because in its many mansions there lodges a great democracy.

Of the reaction between the man of letters and the man in the street, we shall, no doubt, have frequent glimpses and gleams as we go on with what becomes a personal story of adventures and encounters in the London world of writers and readers.

II. ECHOES OF THE GRAND MANNER

Picturesque figures of a picturesque time ; Gladstone and his postcards and pamphlets, Tennyson reciting his own poetry, and Sir Lewis Morris composing the " Epic of Hades " amid the gloom of the old London Underground.

TENNYSON'S funeral in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, was my baptism to the human drama of authors, great and small, for I was there. It was a mere shadow of a link with a glittering Victorian; " A great creature, like an incarnate truth," said Henry Irving of his presence and personality. But it was an advance on just reading him, a contact of mental and spiritual awakening, like the eighteen-nineties themselves.

Literary London was then a very good place to be in, even if you were only on the edge of it, and it is a pleasant and varied picture to look back upon. It had picturesqueness and colour, both in the way it comported itself and in the way it worked, and it was gracious and kindly to the individual who

came into association with it, especially if he walked simply.

The grand manner, for which Tennyson stood, still made itself felt, like Gladstone's writings on Bishop Butler and his translations of Horace. Both veterans were splendid figures to the eye ; one felling a last tree in Hawarden Park, or, spectacled and studious, in his Temple of Peace ; the other, in Surrey or at the Isle of Wight, bearded, cloaked, his furrowed face crowned by a big soft hat, his air everything that a singer of English and England's Poet Laureate should be.

They made one or two pleasure voyages together as the guests of that genial Scotsman, old Sir Donald Currie, and snatches of their sea communings would get into the papers. Not more quickly, though, than any postcard Gladstone happened to write about a new book, for herein was popular recommendation. Authors rather pelted him with their writings, and being good-natured, and perhaps flattered as a literary taster, he replied with a postcard. Nay, the Gladstone postcard, on other subjects besides books, and always in the Grand Old Man's handwriting, became a sign and a tradition.

It gave a book a vogue which sometimes, perhaps, was not strictly merited, but it helped the

prosperity of other writings that have shown some enduring quality. " John Inglesant," " David Grieve " and Marie Bashkirtseff's memories, most crashingly frank in the eighteen-nineties, are remembered instances of Gladstone's influence in the passing show of English literature. People were more concerned then about their souls than about their bodies, and that was a sympathetic text for Gladstone, though there is the story of him saying at some difficult hour in politics, " I wonder if the S.P.C.K. has a copy left of ' How To Be A Christian ' ? "

He was our last great pamphleteer, for that weapon of public opinion was swallowed up by a popular press which has done the job better. His broadsides on the Vatican Decrees, for one thing, or the Bulgarian Atrocities for another, were before my interest. But I happen to have a copy of what, I fancy, was the final pamphlet the " Grand Old Man " wrote and launched, through John Murray, in 1897, " The Eastern Crisis," a letter to the Duke of Westminster, K.G.

Abdul Hamid, the blood-red Sultan of Turkey, " damned " by Sir William Watson, and ultimately deposed by the New Turks, was the villain of this pamphlet, the suffering Cretans were its chief heroes, and the then Concert of Europe was its

background. The pamphlet emerged from Gladstone's closing years of life with the characteristic and pathetic personal word, " My ambition is for rest and rest alone."

It would be more valuable in a " collecting " sense to have original editions of any of Tennyson's poems, even if they are supposed not to be much read to-day, anyhow by younger folk, who would courageously " date " genius, or the Sermon on the Mount. Of Sir Lewis Morris's " Epic of Hades," once so familiar and widely read, they have probably never heard, and I mention it, after Tennyson, for a particular reason.

More than once I came into contact with Sir Lewis, whom I recollect, grey-haired, thin-bearded, Celtic-faced, clear-eyed, frock-coated, black-tied and solemn, until he got talking, and then he lighted up, certainly if his own " Epic " happened to be the topic. He left me with the impression that perhaps he had hoped to succeed Tennyson in the Laureateship, and even that he had got the idea of an understanding in the matter. May be he thought his services as a Liberal candidate strengthened his poetic claim on Gladstone, Anyhow, he was disappointed when the G.O.M. left the singership vacant, to be filled later by Alfred Austin, on the nomination of Lord Salisbury.

The writing of Morris's "Epic of Hades," while he travelled on the ancient fire-and-brimstone London Underground, is a quaint incident in the story of the Victorian poets, and it so happens that he gave me a record in his own hand of the business.

"Whatever happens in the future," he prefaced it by saying, "I am glad that it has been my good fortune to write a poem which I honestly regret is not better. At least I have enjoyed the keen delight of having been wholly possessed for a long time by a beautiful subject," Victorian that, perhaps, in what it says and what it implies, but rather nice, dear reality poets of our less cloaked and sworded Georgian day.

"Much of the poem," Sir Lewis Morris went on, and his exact words are the importance, "was written amid the not inappropriate sounds and gloom of the Metropolitan Railway, very much about the time when, in similar surroundings, the beautiful 'Earthly Paradise' was born. I recall, with distinct pleasure, the cheap note-book and the pencil, writing at express speed, as the lines rushed out headlong, and the nods and winks of the young city clerks who thought their fellow-traveller crazy, while spiritually he was living in the sunshine of the Hellenic skies, though fathoms deep in the grime and smoke of our dear London."

HOW THEY TOOK THEMSELVES

Authentic and authoritative that footnote to English literary history, however you regard Sir Lewis Morris's "Epic of Hades" and himself as a poet. Some of the young men of his own time, he said, were rather down on it, "the would-be classical people, you know, who are brought up in an office," One for his critics !

But it had made its way with the people, and for the rest, "It is, indeed, a great privilege, be your rank high or be it low, to have had a part in the long procession of the English poets, the ever-lengthening pageant of the blest." Surely those Old Victorians, whether they piped in verse or blew a trumpet, knew how to take themselves, and that enables us, as one remembers a well-branched tree, to picture them easily and intimately.

Particularly Tennyson, of whom Sir Lewis Morris, never to be confused with his more original namesake William, the Socialist poet and "master printer," told me much out of years of friendship with the Victorian Poet Laureate. Assuredly he was both a great poet and a popular poet, a not too frequent combination in the history of literature. He was also a great man in a personal sense and nobody could meet him, even for a short hour, without feeling that.

Sir Lewis was introduced to Tennyson by the



Barraud, London,

THE PICTURESQUE TENNYSON.

Pictorially the fame of Tennyson is largely, associated with this portrait, which is reproduced by the courtesy of his publishers, the Macmillans.

having people to lunch or to dine, he would often invite Sir Lewis Morris to be his guest.

Particularly Sir Lewis remembered going, one Good Friday, to see him, and Tennyson's first remark was, "What are you doing to-night?" "Nothing in particular," was the answer. "Well," he went on, "I'm asked to George Lewes's to read something of my own there." Perhaps "Harold," thought Sir Lewis Morris, because it was a favourite with Tennyson himself. "Have you any literary antipathies?" the Laureate inquired, and was answered, "None at all, and moreover I have never seen either George Eliot or George Lewes." "Then let us go together," and they went and found a room full of young men, all eager to hear Tennyson read from his own writings.

Mrs. George Lewes, for so, said Sir Lewis Morris, "George Eliot" was always called, was in the room, which had a table, set with candles and a glass of water, where Tennyson could read. When he got up to do so everyone shouted "Maud," "Maud," knowing it also to be a favourite with him, and he looked pleased. Whether he read from "Maud," from "Harold," or from both poems, Sir Lewis could not recall but he "reconstructed" the scene very clearly for me.

Tennyson, picturesque, rugged and striking ; a

company of expectant faces, and then the booming note of his voice and a characteristic almost peculiar delivery. He read as he talked, naturally, forthrightly, and this had led an American to say that his manner alone would make him a success across the Atlantic, if he would only go there and read from his works. There was, indeed, a story, that he was offered £20,000 if he would go to America and merely shake hands with people, but he was only amused, for he hated the "garish day."

It did not, of course, beat so strongly on Sir Lewis Morris, but he also often had the Victorian flattery of being asked to read his verse to a socially met company. There was an amusing tale of him doing this at a country house, and of one dear lady asking another, when he stopped, "Do you take in the heels of socks in the same way as the heels of stockings?" No doubt the reading had been from the "Epic of Hades," but it was hardly possible to ask Sir Lewis.

Of Aldworth, the Tennyson home in Surrey, he had a delightful memory, and he said the Laureate's life there had a fit suggestion of baronial halls. Picturing him, in the surroundings of the country, as like a Lincolnshire farmer, he asked himself, where did he get the exquisite classical things which are his poetry? "Ulysses," for

example, or " Tithonus," which so perfectly represent the Greek spirit, pure and simple. And it was the " Tithonus," when it appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, that first suggested to Sir Lewis Morris the idea of the " Epic of Hades/'

Once Dr. Jowett of Balliol was a fellow-guest at Aldworth, and he left a glowing account of Tennyson's talk that evening. Sir Lewis cited the incident as an example of the different impressions a conversation may have on the minds of different people. He, himself, felt that Tennyson did not talk as well as usual, and indeed the talk was mostly about dogs ; just the bluff Lincolnshire farmer interested in the rural affairs of early surroundings, a mental " return of the native,"

It was as one himself indifferent to society, that Tennyson said of Robert Browning, " He will die in evening dress," or words to that effect. He meant, of course, that Browning was very fond of " going out," but even so Sir Lewis Morris did not meet him much. There was, however, a Browning experience which had come his way in the Rev. H. R. Haweis's hospitable and literary Victorian house at Chelsea ; quite a salon in its day, and sometimes, perhaps, something of a " zoo " for its variety and contrast in " lions."

Browning had spoken into one of " those clever

instruments that repeat your words for the benefit of posterity," Sir Lewis Morris's description. The company were to hear his voice from the shades, and presently the instrument began to talk. While they listened, quiet as mice, there was a halt in the flow of words and then a kind of aside, "It is a very strange thing that I cannot remember my own lines/" Browning, when talking into that early gramophone, had had a lapse of memory, and it was odd to hear his interjected excuses, from the unknown Beyond, at a moment of strained and reverent solemnity. .

Other Victorians of the grand circle, of whom Sir Lewis Morris had something to tell me, were Thackeray and Dickens. He often sat next to Thackeray at the Reform Club where the novelist had his own circle of friends. He was not a talker at all and thus did not become the outstanding centre of a lunch party or a dinner party. Thackeray was, in fact, such a poor talker that when the Free Library movement began in Manchester and he went north to support it, he broke down while making a speech.

Dickens was also at Manchester, in the interest of the same good cause, and his readiness and felicity of speech were in striking contrast to Thackeray's halting way. Fluent and eloquent

were Sir Lewis Morris's words about Dickens as a speaker, and he ranked him by himself. Nobody among his contemporaries resembled him at all in style, except, perhaps, George Augustus Sala, who had the same Londoner's raciness of diction.

Wholly different but most engaging was James Russell Lowell, so eminent in American letters, and so liked as American Minister in London. It was good, quoth Sir Lewis Morris, to correspond with Longfellow and Wendell Holmes and other famous writers of America. But it was high luck to know Russell Lowell, with his poetic spirit, his original sense of humour, his austere but flowing eloquence, and his fine presence, that of a great American and a great American gentleman.

None of us could doubt this and later know John Hay, Bayard or Choate, and hear them speak of Russell Lowell. They put him highest among the men of letters or eloquence who have represented the American Republic to the mother country of Britain. Most likely, it was of him that some happy-tongued Englishman coined the traditional phrase, " America's public orator to England."

III. " BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH ! "

Some contacts, through Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff and Sir George Grey, with voices that live on the microphone of time; Charles Dickens, Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold, the Brownings, the Carlyles and Charles Darwin.

THE average Englishman, if there is such a person, has a peculiar dread of people and things literary, as part of his reserve. He thinks them intellectual, so not easily understood, high-brow, so, perhaps, beyond him, and this makes him distant, if not, sometimes, suspicious.

He sees the man of letters receding into the sky as a mountain does, seemingly without the touch of humanity which really makes us all kin ; at the most an Elijah going up in a cloud. Especially he cannot conceive him a man of affairs, skilled in business, accomplished in statesmanship, although, he admits, there may be exceptions, John Lubbock, afterwards Baron Avebury, or John Viscount Morley, for example.

The affliction, if it be that, is not one from which my own countrymen, the Scots, suffer, at least to the same degree, perhaps because they have enough other defects and, in frank moments, are humorously conscious of them. Books have always been systematic and intimate in Scottish family life and national life. They have been part of the tradition of free education and of the other tradition of "liberty, equality and fraternity." Thus they are handled and read as transcripts and mirrors of human nature, long ago or now.

A forgathering with Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, the diarist and politician, revealed to me, at first-hand, how personal and engaging the great Victorians could be. He had a house on Chelsea Embankment, a straggling beard which had become thin and grey, like his head of hair, and an expression of gravity. But there was a smile in the eye, even if the face had the deep furrows of age, and pawkiness and whimsicality whispered in the voice, with its unlost Scottish roll of the "r" and its quick jerk from high to low. He had filled an inquiring and logical mind with knowledge gathered from many quarters and this lightly braided his conversation.

Grant Duff's "Elgin Speeches," as they came to be called, brought fame to a corner of Scotland

"BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH !"

which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has likewise put on the map with his Lossiemouth. Also he had consistently published his regularly kept journals, a modern and modest follower of John Evelyn, he would say, not of the impish and scandal-mongering Pepys ; and he had known nearly everybody worth knowing among the Victorians.

Charles Dickens ? Not an attractive man to the casual eye but, when you became friendly with him, delightfully attractive. " George Eliot ? " A woman of extraordinary mental gifts, but not a good talker, being stiff and self-centred or self-conscious, and certainly not a " good-looker/" Was it Grant Duff or someone else who told me a story of " George Eliot " and Herbert Spencer ; that, walking with her one day on the terrace of Somerset House, he felt he might have proposed to her if, " having a face like a horse's head," she had not been so ugly ?

A gallant synthetic philosopher ! For, however true the story may be, its uncouthness is in harmony with Spencer's habit, when a conversation ceased to interest him, of plugging his ears with two balls of cotton that he kept for the purpose. This odd way of the great man was certified, I seem to remember, in a little book done about him by a pair of elderly sisters with whom, for some years,

he shared a home in St. John's Wood. He took the house and furnished part of it for himself while they furnished the rest and managed affairs. Their innocent, quaint revealings much amused the Victorians who knew Spencer's pontifical characteristics, his deep voice, his slow, heavy figure, his grey face, with the long upper-lip, his mutton-chop whiskers, his massive, bald, dome-like skull, and, one quite human detail, his bulging shirt front.

It was, the elderly sisters told the Victorians, a habit of Spencer's to be always feeling his pulse, testing his state of health. If the pulse was normal, all right ; if it was a trifle out of its regular beat he would at once return home, say from a drive. He had his bed made in a particular way, with a pleat down the middle of the blankets, so as to get added comfort, and if he took a long railway journey it was in a hammock.

This sounds odd, but he simply reserved a compartment for himself, and had a hammock slung from side to side of it. Experience, he said, had taught him that, so travelling, he avoided any evil consequences from the jolting and jarring of the train. Once he took with him, on a journey, the manuscript of a new work, and he made an amazing arrangement to ensure its safety.

He tied a thick piece of string round his waist and

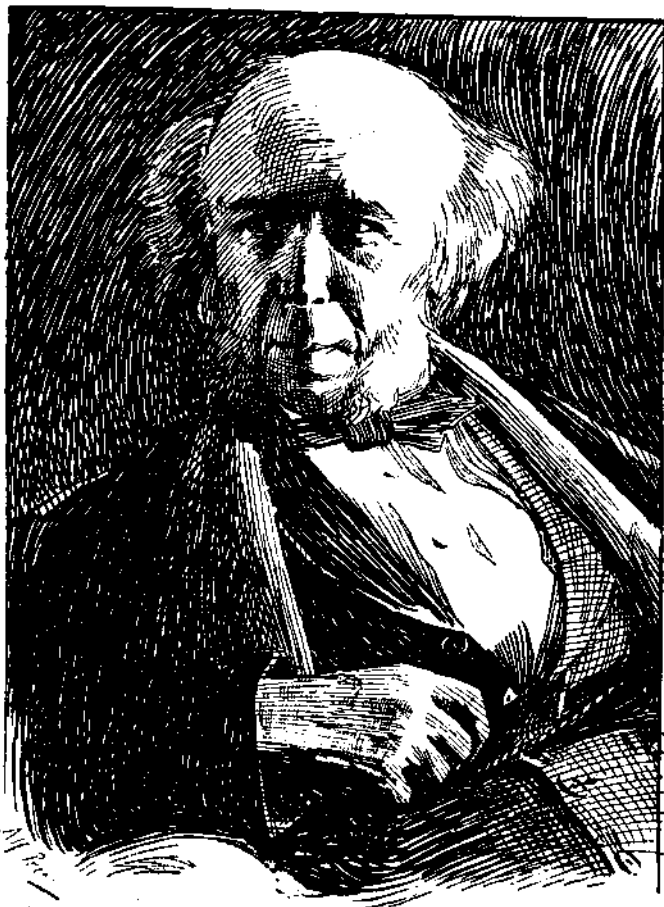
"BEING DEAD YET SPEAK.ETH I"

the ends of it issued like a tail from beneath the back of his severely black frock-coat. To this tail he tied the MS., made up into a brown-paper parcel, which he then held in his hand. It was all comically like the White Knight of "Alice in Wonderland."

Spencer took a minute interest in the publication of his books and there, as in all the acts of life, was gravity itself, though he played billiards ; hence a story so familiarly Victorian that to a Georgian day it may be fresh. He was staying at Brighton, where, at one time or another, so many English writers, thinkers, statesmen and royalties, have rested their caravans. He would drop into a certain billiard-room for a game, perhaps with the marker, perhaps with somebody else.

Some somebody else beat him so soundly that he exclaimed, " Young man, a certain proficiency in billiards is good and creditable, but your accomplishment is so great that it suggests a mis-spent life." Possibly Spencer was a bad loser in unimportant things, for that has been a human weakness in the immortals, and he counted on being among these.

Grant Duff, I judged, was not very fond of him, but he spoke warmly of another Victorian, also with a long, sombre face, Matthew Arnold. Egotist-



News Chronicle.

HERBERT SPENCER, THE PHILOSOPHER.

A drawing of him when he was seventy-eight, made for the "Daily Chronicle" from a favourite photograph in his own Autobiography.

ical ? Possibly, but in him egotism was a charm ; really only a nice vanity lit by a quiet sense of humour. Why, he could often be seen laughing to himself and what better test of geniality and good humour could there be ? Moreover, Grant Duff held Matthew Arnold a greater poet in thought and intimate influence than either Tennyson or Browning.

He would not have the latter described as merely " charming," the word constantly used about him by scribbling Victorian hostesses who thought of the guest only. Certainly Browning had charm, but he was much more than charming ; a full, virile fellow with the air and appearance of a merchant rather than of a poet. It was a token of this that he had carried off as his wife, Elizabeth Barrett, from the imprisoning atmosphere of her father in Wimpole Street. That was an act worthy of a Young Lochinvar, especially as the lady had been so invalidish, and it made two people ideally happy for the rest of their lives.

How interested Grant Duff would have been to see the recent play around the " Barretts of Wimpole Street," because he was a man of feeling as well as of letters and affairs. For me his vignette of Robert Browning was filled out by Felix Moscheles, the artist, on whom, at South Kensington, the poet

would often look in with the remark, " Now here I am to enjoy myself," for he liked the atmosphere of London studios.

Always, remarked Moscheles, he was an inspiring presence and then he was so lovable, so simple and true, so without any dry, chilly ceremonious elements. Once, at the end of a sitting which he had been watching, and which had been tiring for the model, he gave her half a crown. This she had made into a brooch, afterwards very proudly worn, and in a wider sense it commemorated Browning's great heart.

" I tried last night," Moscheles would say to him, " to read a poem of yours, but I couldn't understand it and I'm so sorry." " Oh, try again," Browning would laugh, "just try again and it'll be all right."

But perhaps it was not always all right, else why should the Victorians have needed a Browning Society for his study and clarification? It took its way and went its way, as that other fraternity " The Souls " did in a later Victorian day. No longer are poets thus honoured, for it was an honour to the poet, if only, perhaps, a darkening of counsel among the Browningites themselves.

It was, Felix Moscheles assured me, one thing to read a difficult Browning poem and quite another

thing to hear him read it himself. What had seemed subtle and shadowy beyond the reader's mind, became clear to the listener in the lamp of Browning's utterance.

"Andrea del Sarto," so hard to follow, at first anyhow, was sun-clear when he read it to his friends, even if the clouds afterwards returned. One would, Moscheles put it, have thought he was telling a story, not reading a poem, so perfectly natural was his method. But then Browning was musical ; he would sit down and play a little at a friendly piano and his enjoyment of good music was very keen.

Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle, make pictures of married love which, each in its own fashion, have become personal chapters of English literature. This Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff was quick to appreciate, all the more that Carlyle House is only a stone's throw from his own old home on Chelsea Embankment.

He had often visited the Carlyles there, and he never saw anything which led him to think they were unhappy with each other. They were, in his expression, "a most interesting couple," regarded domestically, and Carlyle was one of the truly big figures of his time. That estimate by Grant Duff

implied him greater as a temporary influence than as a permanent influence, and subsequent years have, possibly, confirmed the estimate.

Was Thomas Carlyle an ugly man ? Grant Duff thought he was, adding that, at least, most people would have said so. But, to myself also, Sir George Grey, the famous pro-consul, who knew him well, qualified and expanded this judgment. He was tickled with the idea that Thomas would have cared a groat what anybody thought of his books. For the rest there could be no question of mere ugliness or beauty, because, as a personality, he towered among other men, like a mountain among hills.

His favourite hero Cromwell, regarding him in demeanour, head and face, would have exclaimed, " A man after my heart/" So ; and Sir George Grey told me one story where Thomas Carlyle's appearance made the text, and another with a sweet light on him and Jane Welsh or Carlyle, his wife. You see that is the traditional Scottish address to a married woman, an ancient recognition of her maiden personality beside that of her husband, and her equality with him, in the activities of life and the records of death.

The author of " Sartor " had a horse, or hired one as an antidote to his chronic indigestion, and

he rode it almost every day. He was not, however, tailored for riding as Sir Walter Gilbey, the censor of Rotten Row to-day, would have approved. Thomas sported a long, weird-looking overcoat, ancient and neutral in colour, which almost covered his legs ; but there is a familiar picture of him so caparisoned.

A frequent route with him was northward from Chelsea towards Maida Vale, and thither bound he encountered some boys who " gayed " the quaint figure. He reproved them, gently and not too gravely, because he may have had the instinct for youth, though he had no children of his own, a greater disaster even for Jane.

Next day he rode the same way and there were the boys again more curious this time and more aggressive, for, not content with " gaying " him, they threw stones at him. He was not hit, except in his heart, which he poured out sorely to Sir George Grey, saying here was an incident which showed the state of English young folk, for want of the greater educational chances which he so strenuously advocated. You see him, as he said that, sitting at the right side of his Chelsea fireplace, with his pro-consul friend at the left side, and both talking at large, though, as a loquacious Scot, Carlyle probably outspoke an Englishman who

"BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH !"

had far family links with the gracious and tragic Lady Jane Grey.

The other Carlyle story, imparted to me by Sir George after he returned to London from his long absence in Greater Britain, is in a different key. If you have visited the Sage of Chelsea's former London home, now a memorial to him, you will recollect the study, high up, where he worked. He sought, not with complete success, as he often lamented, to make it proof against the outside roar of London, because, with him, as I found it with John Morley, literary work meant solitude.

Sir George Grey happened to call and Jane Welsh was wishful to be hospitable, yet was loath to disturb her husband writing in the sanctuary. So she took the visitor softly upstairs, and opened the door of the room an inch or two to permit a "keek" inside. Wife and visitor looked for a moment, and then she noiselessly shut the door again and they turned downstairs. "Aye," whispered she, "that's Tammas Carlyle, whom all the world's talking about, and he's my man !"

Fine, and finely tender ! Particularly the sure, possessive triumph in the Scottish wife's "my man." The incident seemed to Sir George Grey to appraise the Carlyle controversy very well, and indeed he was most clear that it was largely a piece

of fireworks. No doubt the warmth of fire, as there should be in married life, but quiet and unapparent ; then, posthumously, this blown into sky-rockets.

Thomas Carlyle ? Difficult, because mentally rough-hewn, and very temperamental. Jane Welsh Carlyle ? Difficult, because likewise endowed with a brilliant mind, on which a woman's nature was superimposed, and also very temperamental. But through all and everything there dwelt the abundant and beautiful love and devotion of two choice souls.

The row over James Anthony Froude's biography of Carlyle was so fresh in the eighteen-nineties that people still took sides about it at dinner tables. " Revelations," real or so called, were not as common then as they are now, when nothing is left to the imagination that will print. Froude himself stood aloof, leading a quiet life, down by the Devon sea, just as Darwin, in his Kent home, had shelter from the wind of the world's turmoil over evolution. " The very idea of our being descended from monkeys—what blasphemy ! " But Huxley was alive at Eastbourne, if retired among his roses, to say this was not the gospel of his friend Charles Darwin,

Of Darwin, personally, Sir George Grey had

memories with an explanation of the indifferent health from which he sometimes suffered. The historic *Beagle* took him on his voyage of inquiry into Mother Nature's secrets, at a date when water for drinking and food for eating were carried in a primitive way. Think of the state of water stored in a cask, after weeks of tropical weather, and of the condition of the food supply in a little wooden ship on which the sun blazed day after day. The consequence for Darwin was a stomach trouble, taking, Sir George said, a form of nausea, which afterwards returned at intervals with acute discomfort and disabling results.

Grey could speak authoritatively of this, because he himself, the knightly Walter Raleigh of the Victorian age, voyaged to West Australia in the *Beagle* after Darwin had finished with it. His trouble was one of wonder that the master of evolution should have been able to see it through, as he did, against such a physical handicap ; a hero of science, indeed. For he was the prophet and artificer of it all, if Russel Wallace was the co-discoverer, and Huxley the Hotspur of the battle.

IV. TABLETS OF OTHER YEARS

A backward peep into the national significance of Samuel Smiles on " Self Help "; also railway book-stalls and the mid-Victorians, " Yellow Back " stories, the paternal Mudie, and the three-volume novel.

SOMETIMES a man who is not himself memorable, stands for a phase of action, character, or thought peculiar to his time. He has struck a note common to his contemporaries and, silent themselves, they have endorsed it and passed it on.

Samuel Smiles, the author of " Self Help," does not lie in Westminster Abbey, but his book was a Victorian classic on how a life should be ordered. As a very old man, he gave a copy of it to myself, a very young man, with his autograph written beneath a small photograph of himself, which he stuck on to the title-page.

That I remember with odd clearness, though it happened long years ago, because it was so like putting a stamp on an account and then receipting it. A youthful impression, whereas it was merely

a double honour offered by Smiles, whose kindly nature had a proper vanity touching the success of his Victorian books.

He told me about " Self Help," that he took the manuscript to old Mr. Routledge, the publisher, with whom he was acquainted, and left it for him to read. This was at the time of the Crimean War, and his decision was that nobody would read books then. Smiles carried home the MS., put it away and more or less forgot about it until he wrote his life of George Stephenson, the engineer. Its success caused him to rout " Self Help " out again, saying, " I'll go over this and see if it won't make a book after all." He revised it, making a good deal of alteration, and showed it to John Murray III, who launched it into great prosperity.

" Samuel Smiles—who's 'e ? " quoth a most modern person who was asked if he had read " Self Help." Other persons as modern and as indifferently sure about everything, will say the same, and there is no case for a definite Smiles eulogy, though his friend David Livingstone was " A fine fellow, a very fine fellow ; and he always had the most interesting stories of his work in Africa." But the genial, winning, modest, knowledgeable Samuel Smiles remains, if only in his history of the John Murrays.

Once he thought of writing a life of Gladstone's

SMILES OF "SELF HELP"

father, John Gladstone, merchant and man of affairs, and proposed as much to John Murray III. " Oh," said he, " I knew Sir John Gladstone very well, and he was quite a notable man in many ways. But, upon my word, I don't think anybody would be interested in a biography of him." Therefore that idea was "turned down," as young London publishers might say, but Samuel Smiles had his victories.

Not the least of these was his accurate reflection, in a literary way, of a characteristic of mid-Victorian industrialism ; its hard-faced individualism, its concern with iron rather than with blood. His gospel was self-improvement and ambition, the slogan of a much-blazoned Victorian " Popular Educator," " The boy, what will he become." He put his gospel genially and sincerely, and he illustrated it with many life-stories of the humbly born risen to greatness.

Perhaps it was a natural gospel for a steel age, though in itself unnatural, but looking backward " Get on," with the implied " Or get out ! " seems selfish, unimaginative and starkly unemotional. We think, anyhow, that since then we have broadened both in our humanities and in our reading, and into that forward stream came railway bookstalls and circulating libraries, even before English School Boards and education for the masses.

Steam power was a revolution carried by the railways, and the bookstall is an unexplored glade in that pregnant valley. "Smith's Bookstalls" were the determining signboards to it, and an early London acquaintanceship fell to me with "Old William Faux," as we called him, who for many years was librarian to the great house. He was a treasury of book knowledge in its human aspect, backed by immediate references, as when he cited to me a pioneer taster of the English bookstall.

This was one Dr. Samuel Phillips, for Faux knew his identity though he wrote anonymously; who canvassed the mid-Victorian bookstalls to learn what was being read, our present curiosity as to that past. Out from some dusty but not forgotten recess came a dog-eared volume, imprinted by John Murray in 1852, having the title "Literature of the Rail," and selected from papers which Phillips had contributed to *The Times* newspaper. Bookstalls had, until then, been an unorganized, haphazard business, so, looking around London, Phillips found on them mostly "unmitigated rubbish." At Euston, however, where Smith's people were installed, he "caught the school-master by the button" and sought information.

"We asked for something highly coloured," William Faux read out Dr. Phillips, for my benefit.

" The bookseller politely presented us with Kugler's ' Handbook of Painting.' We shook our heads and demanded a volume more immediately concerned with life and the world. We were offered ' Kosmos.' Something less universal, said we, befits the London traveller. We were answered by Prescott's ' Mexico,' ' Modern Travel' and ' Murray's Handbook of France.' We could not get rubbish whatever price we might offer to pay for it,"

" You'll soon be in the *Gazette*" Dr. Phillips said, commiseratingly, to the Euston railway bookseller, adding, " You never sell these things ?" " Constantly ; we can sell nothing else," was the answer. " What ; have you nothing for the million ? " " Certainly ; here is * Logic for the Million,' price six shillings, will you buy it ? " " Thank you, but surely books of a more chatty character——? " " Chatty, oh yes ! Coleridge's ' Table Talk ' is a standard dish here and never wants purchasers,"

Perhaps Dr. Phillips wrote with a turn of exaggeration, but he was recording the arrival of a new order of bookstalls. " We'll raise it, we'll raise it," meaning their tone, said Mr. W. H. Smith, who became the well-known Victorian statesman, and by " Toby M.P. " was nicknamed " Old Morality," really a fine tribute to his character

and integrity. He said this to a young man, when he sniffed at a bookstall appointment, in contrast with one in a bookshop, " And I'm not at all sure," he added of the new literary mart, " that it may not be made as respectable as Paternoster Row." There was a temporary cloud, however, as Dr. Phillips noted, for, " Ladies—we beg their pardon for revealing the singular fact—are not great purchasers of good books at the stationer's. If they do by chance purchase a really serious book, it is invariably a religious one."

That is a human and spiritual note on the English woman of the eighteen-fifties, when there also began the famous " yellow backs," which only went out with Queen Victoria's reign. They were cheap reprints, mostly of stories, with covers of a yellowish tone pasted on to the boards. Hence the name " yellow backs," a decorative get-up heralding the varied and gorgeous "jackets" in which new novels and other books are nowadays published.

Andrew Chatto, one of the last merchants of the " yellow back," spoke about it to me with something like affection. It had served his house well for Wilkie Collins's " thriller " " The Moonstone," a fine example of the school, and for a string of other stories. But the " yellow back " had to be

good stuff, otherwise it could not hold the course, and, in this "tasting," Chatto's natural instinct helped his sound judgment as an "old-fashioned publisher." Always gracious, he gave me faded copies of some of his old triumphs, and I could imagine him, a decade earlier, being host to one of his most famous authors, Robert Louis Stevenson.

He had the good luck to acquire, directly, or from another publisher, the copyright of one or two of Stevenson's books of essays. The same fortune stood by him with Thomas Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree" and a Hall Caine story, but as he said, "So many of the manuscripts we have bought outright have been failures."

Before departing for the South Seas, Stevenson was a friendly caller at the then Chatto place of business in Piccadilly where "Old Hytch," another lovable figure of the London book world, was the man of letters. He had lots of memories of "R.L.S.," especially his easy, genial manner, his eager, fresh talk, and his picturesque appearance, but he never would write them down and that was a loss to the personality of English literature.

Hytch was also a general depository of knowledge about writers and readers back across the Victorian years, and he knew the paper-covered "sixpenny" in all its glory. Probably it, like the "yellow

TABLETS OF OTHER YEARS

back " owed its existence, certainly much of its vogue, to the rise of the railway bookstall. It thus had its place in a variously awakening time and exercised its own influence in the spread of reading. The circulating library was another vital influence, which Charles Edward Mudie fathered, as, with his bookish instinct, he was the first to publish Russell Lowell on our side of the Atlantic.

" So," said Thomas Carlyle to him, when they met at one of my Lady Ashburnham's receptions, " you are the man who undertakes to supply the world with books, to divide the sheep from the goats, a very serious thing, eh ? "

No doubt it was, put baldly like that, but this was not Mudie's idea when he began near Carlyle's own Cheyne Walk, in Chelsea. His father had a newspaper shop there and the son, wishing possibly to go one better, had his own dreams. Why should the best books not be read by everybody who could read, as well as by the select and elect of the nation ? Also how to make that possible ?

This was before the year 1844, for Mudie's dreams had become facts then at Southampton Row in Bloomsbury, where he had small premises. He prospered so well that by the eighteen-sixties he moved into the house so long associated with his name in New Oxford Street, near the British

VICTORIAS AT MUDIE'S

Museum. The veteran was still alive and pretty active when I first visited Mudie's Library, with its spacious hall knit with Ionic columns, where so many famous Victorians had walked.

Here was a mid-Victorian literary salon, to which grand ladies came for their reading and to show each other their latest crinolined gowns and poke bonnets. What a contrast to such circulating libraries, "moribund reservoirs of dry and old-fashioned novels," as there had been before, for Mudie struck out on a spacious and high-grade scale.

Nothing could be more reminiscent of Victorian society than the picture of it drawing up in carriages—victorias, phaetons, or dog-carts—at Mudie's door, sweeping in upon the counters and shelves and emerging again, followed by flunkeys carrying loads of the newest books. Majestic "three-volumers," stately biographies and perhaps a few "yellow backs" to nestle with them in the arms of yellow-plush liveries. It was almost as much an afternoon duty as a drive in Rotten Row and often, perhaps, the one was a part of the other ; for, as has been said, "Women—well, you know what women are !"

One wonders if any of the fashionable ladies and "blue stockings" of those years were ever taken over his "catacombs" by Mudie. Deep and dark,

TABLETS OF OTHER YEARS

below New Oxford Street, they were as a "stricken field" mutely proclaiming the contribution his library, and others like it, have made to English reading down the generations.

Cellars over which the traffic of London rumbled dully, and they stored countless books that had gone out of action. You felt as if you were dipping into the Catacombs of Rome, where the early Christian martyrs sleep in shelves above each other. It was a literary world of spirit and body that belonged to the past, yet a sleeping rather than a dead world.

What an endless stream of books had flown through this underground store-house, coming, resting a while, going out again, perhaps to be sold in a second-hand way, or made into "pulp" for new paper. Novels, very largely novels, always everybody's reading ; and the "three-decker" had been a great institution, with long, prosperous service to its credit, and still, seemingly, in the early nineties, as solid as Nelson's Column. Then it "crashed," another high-light in our story of the influences which moulded the present Georgian literary realm.

A quite oddish thing was the English three-volume novel, for the circulating library really created it, and when it had exhausted its purpose, destroyed



Chancellor, Dublin.

QUEEN VICTORIA, SOVEREIGN AND WOMAN.

A portrait of the Queen, taken at Osborne in 1899, which well reflects both her own personality and her qualities of Sovereignty.

it in 1894. The "three-decker," as Rudyard Kipling sang it, was thought to be the "only certain passage" to the Islands of the Blest. It was supposed to give young writers a chance of making a name, because, at half a guinea a volume, a publisher could risk a small edition and get home without any loss.

That, no doubt, was an artificial premium on literary work, but the architecture of the three-volumer itself was artificial. It was only suited to a small reading public, and when readers grew many, and "three-volumers" more, to satisfy them, the whole edifice crumbled away. Whereas in a limited, aristocratic and bourgeois market it had thriven, a rising democratic tide of readers, with "booms" and "best sellers," carried its doom. It meant the buying of thousands of three-volume novels which had only a short run, and then were made waste by the appearance of cheap single-volume editions.

You have, sometimes anyhow, to speak of literature in terms of money, and its hard logic was the guillotine of the English three-volume novel, though, in itself, it had become effete as an instrument of authorship. There had been a particular run of late Victorian "best sellers" like "The Green Carnation" and "The Yellow Aster" all

TABLETS OF OTHER YEARS

of them now pretty well forgotten. Mudie's, Smith's and the rest of the circulating libraries, uprose and pronounced sentence of death in a "scrap of paper" which may be called historic.

It was all a great rumpus, and in particular there were tears and wailings for the honest men and worthy women who had made a profession of the "three-decker." Not heaven-sent geniuses, but folk of some talent who built passable tales meant to while away leisurely Victorian hours. Now they would be unemployed, because they were not for the more up-to-date subjects and crisper style of the six-shilling novel, ushered into being out of the storm.

Perhaps the long spinsterish reign of the English "three-volumer" had something to do with the insurgent fiction which followed its disappearance. Writing and reading must not be "too good for human nature's daily food," and convention and conservatism, swathed in immaculate morality and silvery wedding bells, would naturally result in a swing to the left. That bred the "problem novel" of sex, the "hill-top novel" of woman's freedom, and generally the fuller text of human life as novel writers paint it to-day, without the need of any labels.

V. "THE MOVING FINGER WRITES "

Of Queen Victoria as a reader of the romance of a pro-consul and what might have been the reality^ of Gladstone's ten per cent discount on second-hand bookbooks, and of a thrifty Tennyson.

IT can hardly be said that Queen Victoria was an immediate, personal influence on English authorship during her reign, for she was not a woman of literary tastes. Her sound mind, kept shining by feminine instinct, and ripened into wisdom by experience of affairs, turned on character, not on phraseology.

Her own writing reflected this in the clearness and strength with which it expressed her ideas, her desires, or it might be her commands. But of any natural grace of style, as a pledge of the artistic and poetic temperament, it had none at all and, perhaps, that was well in a Sovereign.

Otherwise the Queen might have been lost in the merely gifted lady, and the Victorian age, even in letters, would have been less than historians already rank it. For it cannot be doubted that by her

"THE MOVING FINGER WRITES"

domestic example as maid and wife, mother and widow, and by the public conduct of her reign, she greatly shaped the ideas and events which are the material of books.

Court and society, religion and science, art and industry, as they moved and had their being in her era, necessarily made the imprint of its literature. Strengths and limitations ; the discovery of new forces in nature ; by contrast, the sterile Victorian family novel ; but all a stout, ordered creation, waiting, when the time came, to flow beneficently as the River Nile does in flood.

Perhaps Queen Victoria, like humbler folk, did most of her reading in the earlier years of life ; before burdens claimed every moment of it. Certainly seclusion and a quiet book were sought by her and her " Letters " hold such references ; for instance to " Jane Eyre " as " very peculiar in parts but so powerfully and admirably written ; such a fine tone in it ; such a fine religious feeling. . . ." Casual criticism that, expressed in quite ordinary language, but the verdict of a mind with insight and grip.

Her favourite statesman's " Endymion " naturally interested her, though she may never have known that its vogue was a little disappointing at the time, while to-day it might be included among

the elder Disraeli's "Curiosities of Literature."* Tennyson's poetry was always understood to be both liked and read by the Queen, and later, though it is another story, Marie Corelli's novels were supposed to be among her pages in waiting.

Possibly, because Marie Corelli at least had ideas and a mission, was a preacher and insistent on getting her doctrines accepted ; just the kind of writer whom Queen Victoria might regard for her combativeness, though she could also tell a capital story and did so in her very first one, "A Romance of Two Worlds." She lived up to this title when, at her greatest in popularity, she decreed that her novels should not be sent to the reviewers, holding that they were not fair to her. Nothing terrible happened, and everybody behaved decorously and courteously, even under provocation, for those were the ethics of the decorative time in which Victorian and Edwardian patterns mingled.

My own best gleams of the Victorian spirit, for which the Queen stood personally, because it took shape around her, as well as sovereignly, were got from Sir George Grey. He might have been a great writer, even a great poet, if Providence, for that was how he saw things, had not made him a pro-consul. He had the glow of imagination and the sense of romance, and his simple

“ THE MOVING FINGER WRITES ”

English was so easy as to seem a gift, not an acquirement.

What would one not have given to listen to a long talk he and Robert Louis Stevenson once had on a ship in Sydney Harbour. He drew a vivid picture of that meeting for me, and as a token of it gave me a copy of the famous Father Damien pamphlet presented to him at the time by " R.L.S." Alas ! that treasure, with corrections in blue pencil by the author, took wings, but another relic of Sir George Grey, his pioneer book on the mythology of the Maoris, is as well preserved as when he wrote his name in it.

He was the greatest Victorian I have known intimately, and one of the greatest Victorians, with a place as surely reserved for him in history as James Anthony Froude reserved it in his " Oceana." They spent a while together on Grey's island of Kawau, off the New Zealand coast, and their communion was Victorian ideas and ideals at their best.

He recalled that happy event to me more than once, and another eminent Victorian with whom he had to do, in a similar personal way, was Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards the third Marquis of Salisbury. Young Lord Robert, tall and bent of shoulder, like his grandsons who now carry on the

Cecil duty of public service, was then making a tour of the world for his health. He encountered Sir George, who at once recognized his intellectual parts, and liked his modesty, and gave him freely of his own knowledge and experience.

Such friendships were habitual among the notable Victorians, and they imparted inspiration and richness to the mentality of the age, not least in its scientific projections and literary achievements. Thus Sir George Grey was friendly with men as differently gifted as Sir John Herschel, the astronomer, and Charles Babbage, the inventor of a counting machine rather laughed at by his contemporaries, but prophetic of instruments in common use to-day. A "great mind," said Sir George of Babbage, and of Herschel that he went out to Cape Colony to fix the southern stars ; and of both he had amusing stories.

It has been a rebel characteristic of many famous men that they have not bothered about the appearance of their clothes, wearing a worn coat or baggy trousers, and Herschel was an instance. He had been buying things for dinner and was carrying them home in paper parcels, to the suspicion of an observant London policeman who thought him a tramp. This suspicion seemed certainty when Herschel doubled his pace as if he had seen the

"THE MOVING FINGER WRITES"

policeman, who now shouted, " Stop thief ! " The unlucky astronomer was hauled to the nearest police-station, protesting he was Sir John Herschel, which made his captors say, " Oh, that's it—eh ? " Only when he sent for friends to identify him was he released, with apologies, which did not, however, help him to explain his lateness to his waiting dinner guests.

Babbage, living in a London street about Portman Square, was invaded by a German band, to which he had several times given money, with the request, " Now, go away ! " He tired of this musical blackmail and when the Germans persisted in playing, he went down into the street, seeking a policeman. A crowd gathered quickly, as it always does in London, and it took the part of the band against excited, bare-headed and meanly dressed Babbage. He was jeered at and threatened, but he held on to his doorstep until a policeman came and drove the Germans off for good.

What a library we should have in books that might have been written but have never been written ; a companion library to the worthy books that have been written and have missed recognition, If King Edward VII who, for half a century, was behind all closed doors, had left us his memories ? But the books of the kings cannot be written by

the kings, because they go too deep and are too intimate. If Florence Nightingale had cared to tell her life story ? If Henry Labouchere and his friend Sir George Lewis, the first baronet and well-known London solicitor, had wished to be reminiscent in frank, cold print ?

Diverting thoughts ! But, indeed, how vastly an inner record of events in the private lives of people of history, or in its confidence, would enlighten that history. Probably Sir George Grey, who even at more than eighty had a fresh, speculative mind, spoke of this to me out of his own experience, without referring directly to that experience. At all events the idea of getting straight down to the personal seeds of public events is intriguing though, of course, it is mostly impossible.

You never could trace history generally to the private influences interwoven with it, but many of us have, perhaps, in our traffic with celebrities, been let behind the veil. My most striking gleam had to do with Sir George Grey's career and how, privately, it was shorn of what might have been a crowning public chapter. The story is new in the telling, and the moral of it is my own, based on knowledge of him, but the human facts were known to his intimates, and they can now harm nobody.

"THE MOVING FINGER WRITES"

He and his wife had been separated for more than forty years before they died, and when they were brought together in the gathering twilight it was too late. Well I remember the little London dinner which was meant to mark their return to each other, but only revealed them as become hopeless strangers. They had been too long apart, they had become too fixed in their ways, and they were too aged to again develop sympathies.

Actually they differed about a bottle of champagne which he ordered in honour of the reunion ; a gracious thought on his part, but, as she thought, a foolish extravagance. So Lady Grey went into the country and there died, and Sir George died in London, and was, thanks to a Fleet Street plea for the Tightness of the tribute, buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Most personal all this, but it is the necessary key to a hitherto untold footnote of South African history. Sir George Grey was Governor of the Cape where, for one thing, he had diverted a British army, China bound, to the succour of India, menaced by the Mutiny. A strong pro-consul, eager in high affairs for the well-being of mankind, and that may be one explanation why he and his wife, a bright, vivacious, pretty woman in her youth, did not get on well. It was, possibly, just a case of a

woman seeking the natural joy of life, and a man gravely above that; but when a gallant naval officer, flirtatious and attractive, came between them, there came also separation and scandal.

Sir George Grey's abiding and constructive dream was the federation of all the countries which make the British Commonwealth, with the United States as an outside partner. " Oh yes," Mr. John Burns once said to me, " Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain took and exploited his original ideas. Not, however, on the democratic, brotherly lines with which he preached and warmed them." Wherever he was, in the service of England, he sought to implement his gospel, and conditions in South Africa were favourable.

The primitive Transvaal Republic, still in the throes of birth, was in difficulties, even according to the stolid notions of Paul Kruger, The Orange Free State was friendly to the British comradeship, and welcomed counsel from Grey as from a wise father. He sounded both republics about a South African federation under aegis of the Union Jack and the response was so cordial that he only wanted authority from home to go on. He counted on Queen Victoria's influence to help the plan through, and there the difference between himself and his wife ruined everything. The Queen was displeased

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and cold, her Ministers, who then rather regarded colonies as "millstones" around the neck of the mother country, were indifferent, and the great chance passed.

Please suppose that this dream, with the business end well in hand, had come true. Gold had not been discovered in the Transvaal, nor diamonds at Kimberley. South Africa was a pastoral land, with the simple life and relationships which belong to such a community. By the time gold was discovered and exploited on the Rand, it would have been federated and so sheathed against the malediction, "Money is the root of all evil." Consequently there would have been no South African War, because, however you regard that tragedy, the greed and need of gold were its begetters.

A dreamer of dreams, visions and realities? Something of both, perhaps, because truth can be imaginative, spirituality in action, as well as hard, inanimate fact. Victorianism accepted this in its guidance of things, as in the poetry of Tennyson, with its lyric note and its search into the future "far as human eye can see," or in the apostleship of Gladstone, at one moment championing the freedom of the little peoples, as Byron did that of Greece, at another time the thrifty Chancellor of the British Exchequer.

Back in the eighteen-nineties we heard something of Tennyson as reader and bookman, as well as poet, and Gladstone conformed to an observation which fell from his contemporary, Lord Salisbury. "We all," it was, "have our particular gin shop and Mr. Gladstone's is a second-hand bookshop."

Not one bookshop only but several, and when he did not call to see if there was anything he liked he would order from catalogues, always stipulating that he should have a ten per cent discount for cash. This little peculiarity, which he justified on the ground that he was a large buyer, was well understood among his bookseller friends, and they cheerfully accepted it as sound and reputable business. It meant not merely the distinction of the Grand Old Man's custom, but his marked catalogues and his postcards had an autographic value.

He was particularly friendly with that admirable London bookseller and bookman, James Westell, who saw him, *off* and on, for nearly half a century. Telling me of this relationship, Mr. Westell said, "He would call at my shop and look over likely volumes, or he would ask me to visit him, or again he would buy by marked catalogue."

Occasionally, perhaps, Mr. Westell would be late in getting to Downing Street, where the

appointment would be at ten o'clock in the morning. He would say, " Late as usual ; will you excuse me, Mr. Gladstone ? " " Oh, Mr. Westell," he would answer good-naturedly, " you have so much to do," Always Gladstone was kind, the nicest customer a proud bookseller could possibly have.

For long he used postcards to order books, but as he grew old and found writing a labour, he merely marked a catalogue and returned it to the second-hand bookseller in a halfpenny wrapper. If he only ticked the titles he wanted, the halfpenny postage was enough, but the situation changed when he wrote on the catalogue, " Please send me those marked, subject to ten per cent discount," or " Send me, subject to the usual discount."

A very brave bookseller, who had to pay a two-penny surcharge on such a catalogue, put it in the Grand Old Man's account. He paid up but made a sarcastic reference to the red-tapeism of the G.P.O., and over that the bookseller had his own chuckle. Because Gladstone was then in power, and his Postmaster-General was a statesman to whom he had just given Cabinet rank.

Other book collectors, knowing about Gladstone's ten per cent also tried to get it from London second-hand booksellers, and I remember hearing of a parson who was specially insistent. " If," he



Courtesy of W. Hell Jones.

A CARE-FREE GLADSTONE.

An unpublished photograph of the Grand Old Man at Hawarden, in what his family called a "Bank Holiday mood."

wrote, " the G.O.M. gets this discount, why shouldn't I ? Besides, I have the claim that I am a clergyman and he is not." This appeal did not succeed and it is understandable that the mighty Gladstone could command practical courtesy which others, less eminent, could not.

He and Tennyson must, at their meetings, have talked a lot about books but possibly they did not confide their own bookish ways to each other. It is literary history that the poet was paid very handsomely for some of his verse when it appeared in magazines, and in book form it had, of course, an enormous sale. His genius invited this, but people of the London book world who had contacts with him assured me that he was, though the exquisite singer, also a good business man, and, in fact, a little given to the tight grip. At least there were legends to that effect and here are two of them that I came across.

One was that he ordered a valuable volume from a second-hand bookseller, kept it for six months, and when the account was sent to him, returned it ; the other that, desiring a work from a certain London library, and not being a subscriber, he borrowed it on the ticket of a friend, who, at the end of a year, had to pay its value to the library. No doubt Tennyson had forgotten all about this volume, but,

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in a less economical age, we can perceive how careful the greatest Victorian poet and the greatest Victorian statesman could be in the beloved affair of books.

Thrift is a garment of simplicity, and it might be good if we could even return to the very simple humour of a story which Dr. Stoughton, the well-known Nonconformist, had from the still better-known Nonconformist, Dr. Guthrie, and passed on to me. Guthrie was dining at Queen Victoria's table when someone made the tremendous announcement, "*The Times* has been sold ! " " Really ? " echoed the company. " Who has bought it, and how much has been paid for it ? " " Sold for threepence," quoth the unsophisticated humorist, amid much unsophisticated laughter.

It could not have been that story which provoked Queen Victoria's classical deliverance of displeasure, " Sir, we are not amused." But possibly it illustrates how much a royal dinner table is like any other dinner table, a place of small talk and small flights of wit and fancy, whispered nothings, rather than Norman blood.

VI. A QUICKENING TIME

It tells of John Bright's " Angel of Death " speech, of Mark Twain, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Goldwin Smith; of a new clue to Ruskins tragic marriage, of Rossettis buried poems, and of " Old Fitz"

No doubt slag-heaps of literature gathered in the eighteen-nineties, as they have always gathered, but those of that time might be specially worth an explorer's attention. It was a time of quickening disputation in which youth had its share, exhorted by middle age, and inspired by the elderly, still about, or not long departed.

We may patronize the past or laugh at it, but the wise thing is to do neither and let it speak for itself. Charles Reade, as a novelist with a purpose, had not been shelved in the nineties, and why should he ever be, with " The Cloister and The Hearth," and " Hard Cash " to his credit ? His slogan, that justice is the daughter of publicity, inherited from Dickens, had passed on to Tolstoy and Zola, and is not yet, let us hope, dead in novel writing, though it sleepeth.

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" Ouida " had an echo of it and didn't Sir William Harcourt insist that she was the best of women novelists, to the distress of the Jane Austen disciples, whom Rudyard Kipling has shortened into " Jane-ites." Anthony Trollope could be remembered correcting his proofs at the Saracen's Head in Chelmsford, and for his practice of the saying that a bit of shoemaker's wax, sticking an author to his chair, is a fine stimulus to output. Lewis Carroll and Dodgson the Oxford Don were still twins who caused incredulity because they were so unlike, but Anstey's " Vice Versa " was reading for fine laughter.

You would not, in the nineties, have heard a writer say, as one of our later scribes has said, " Although I now make a good many thousands per annum, I am not a professional novelist, nor a long-haired literary cove." The pursuit of letters was too serious, too proud a business for that, even on the traditional quota of a little oatmeal. Think of the gravity with which Martin Tupper's " Proverbial Philosophy " was studied or, better perhaps, of the warm English salute waved across the Atlantic to Emerson, to Hawthorne, to Whitman, or to Bret Harte, who, for a while, rested his Argonaut life with us.

The world of the London literary nineties was

JOHN BRIGHT'S EMOTION

a rich inheritance, as well as an original creation, dramatic, too, for the trial of Oscar Wilde, and other more pleasant events. Gilbert's "Bab Ballads" were a poetic string in the long symphony of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and up at Regent's Park, beside the Zoo, George R. Sims wrote his Bohemian story of his own time in rhyme, in play, and in his Sunday "Mustard and Cress." Authorship, to be sure, and everywhere, but as life, red blood, and not merely pens, paper and ink, for they alone cannot provide such anecdotage as one lighted upon, say, about that "people's tribune," John Bright, a master of simple, Biblical English.

His description of a Quaker funeral, in one of his House of Commons speeches, has become a classic for its tender pathos. A friend of his, who heard it, gave me what he believed to be the inner key to its extraordinary feeling. One of Bright's own sons had died not long before, and he had lain awake all night thinking of the funeral, picturing it, a Quaker's funeral in church-clamped England! When he spoke in the House of Commons, his bereaved heart was in his words, and the Commons were touched to tears.

This confidence, being imparted to Mark Twain on one of his visits to London, broke his flow of conversation for a moment, not an easy thing; but

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he, also, was a man of feeling and, about the time, he was sorrowing for loved ones. His outer cheerfulness, however, was grand and he told me a delightful story of an English Victorian author in America. He thought it was Charles Kingsley, and that he was being shown over Boston by Mark Twain himself.

Passing something or somebody, Kingsley made an observation which his " guide, philosopher and friend " did not catch. What was it ? he asked courteously. " Oh, Greek," was Kingsley's reply. " I don't know Greek, never could get a word of it into my head," quoth Mark Twain, if he actually took part in the story, as well as told it. " Ah," chortled Kingsley, " that's not the end at which we impart it ! "

Every writer has his aura, as we may call it, meaning the atmosphere in which he naturally dwells, as contrasted with his attitude among strangers, and to the outside world. When Mark Twain made a joke or told a story, it was with an air of restful gravity which added to the effect. He might have been delivering a sermon, except that there was a note in his quiet, slow voice which told you to look out, because there was something coming and you might miss it.

On the other hand, Oliver Wendell Holmes

spoke merrily, with a twinkle in his eye, while saying a grave thing. This appeared when, having audience of him in the eighteen-nineties, at charming Beverley Farms, on the Massachusetts coast, he told me how he wrote his "Autocrat" and other works. He had no vanity, but finding somebody genuinely interested, became himself interesting, as may happen with persons less gifted and charming than he was.

"That pen," he said, taking up a goose-quill from his desk, "is the workmanship of One higher than we and is the best of all pens. I use it except when I have to revise a manuscript, and then I have this sort of pen," showing me a finely pointed gold nib.

Possibly the small, human characteristics of men of letters would be a helpful guide to the understanding of them and their writings. That thought suggests a stray, long kept, page of paper in the handwriting of Sir Hall Caine. It begins :

"Goldwin Smith—his personality too well known in England to need describing ; the exact counterpart of the Oxford portrait ; lives at the Grange, Toronto, a comfortable old brick house in a large plot of ground ; of course lives in the atmosphere of books."

Back in the eighteen-nineties when we were all

young and eager, Hall Caine took a vigorous part, following the example of Walter Besant in getting Anglo-American copyright made straight and honourable. He had been in America chiefly for that reason and on his return by R.M.S. *Teutonic*[^] as the crested sheet of letter paper tells, he gave me some notes on his American and Canadian impressions. Now Goldwin Smith was a notable Victorian who had left England and settled in Canada, but his name continued to bloom in English intellectual and literary circles. He had cut his swathe in the mother land, and it was well to hear about him on first-hand information like Hall Caine's.

"Has a club there," reads his report of Goldwin Smith at Toronto, "which meets fortnightly called 'The Round Table.' About a dozen men interested in intellectual things meet round a great round table and talk. Goldwin an excellent talker, quiet, with a sly sort of humour, tells stories with relish ; shot fires when he pulls the trigger. Grave face lights up into perfect sunshine, as always with grave faces that smile rarely. Great fund of stories of the men of the departed and departing generations in England."

That portrait of Goldwin Smith is worth having because his absence from England made us less intimate with him and less well informed about him

than with other outstanding Victorians. " Is very much beloved in Toronto," Hall Caine concluded in his flowing script, " for his qualities as a man, though his political views, so far as they concern Canada, obtain no sympathy. Leaves on you a curious sense as of a star out of its orbit." May be that was true, for it was Goldwin Smith's fate to be unsatisfied with the mentality of old England and no determining influence in that of young Canada.

While he passed on to a quiet end, his friend, John Ruskin, a definitely greater Victorian, was in the dim postscript to his fruitful authorship and apostleship, for he was the prophet as well as the thinker and the writer. George Allen, whom he had made his publisher, had come up from Orpington in Kent and been established in London for some years when I met him. He was a genial spirit and it was always a delight to see and talk with him. He seemed, somehow, to embody the very soul of Ruskin's teaching ; the simple man who lived with high thoughts in a beautiful atmosphere. He was, like a true Ruskinian, extremely fond of Nature, and he had a loving understanding of her manifold ways.

" Your thankful and sorrowful friend, master no more," was how Ruskin, in a beautiful letter, described his relationship with George Allen. He

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often spoke about Ruskin, his writings, and the intimate, personal friendship which united them apart from the business of publishing. Particularly I recall what he said to me about the master's marriage and divorce, because of its new inner light.

Ruskin did not defend the action in the Scottish Courts, but let his wife have her way and subsequently marry Sir John Millais, the artist. He did a well-known portrait of his friend standing beside the Tummel, or another equally sparkling northern stream, and when I see it, I think of the romance and tragedy of which Effie Gray was the heroine. But, as I gathered from George Allen, what acutely hurt Ruskin was the shadow cast upon his manhood by the Scots legal word which annulled the marriage. The word "impotency" is unbeautiful in itself and ill in marriage, but, knowing all that, and its import, Ruskin was proud and chivalrous and silent.

How proud, chivalrous and silent, appears when I add George Allen's explanation of the tangle as he had it by mouth or by inference from Ruskin himself. It was that his wife dreaded the danger of having children, that he accepted this situation, and that the legal cause for a break in the marriage arose in that way. Afterwards, of course, she had a large family to John Millais and their home in

South Kensington remains a beautiful relic of their long happiness together.

Never had a great man a more loyal, more qualified biographer than John Ruskin found in Sir E. T. Cook, journalist, man of letters and politician. He spent years of labour on the definitive "Ruskin," and further time on the authoritative biography. After a heavy Ruskin day at his home in Bloomsbury, he would come into Fleet Street in the evening and write there until midnight or longer. "E.T.," as we called him, was not expansive, did not wear his heart on his sleeve, was shyly cold, like his friend Asquith who made him a knight, but when you got to know him well he was charming.

His conversation was measured in tone and language, and so clear that you could almost see him think. There was a gleam, compounded of knowledge, penetration and gentle satire, in his eyes, which, at times, softened to sadness. His wife's death struck him hard and the rising vicissitudes of Fleet Street surged roughly about him, though he never grumbled with fate. He merely said, one night, "When I leave a paper, or it leaves me, I don't look at it any more. It is better so ; it softens the break, as time does a personal sorrow, and much sooner."

A Fleet Street fame may pass, though there is no

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reason why, if worthily won, it should, but Sir Edward Cook's service to John Ruskin and so to the Victorian age and to English literature, will not die. It may not be so picturesque a story as that about the burning, by John Stuart Mill's maid, of the manuscript of the first volume of Carlyle's "French Revolution," which he had been lent to read. Nor is it so appealing to the popular mind as the well-founded tale that Blackmore's "Lorna Doone" might have failed if, appearing about the time of the marriage of Queen Victoria's daughter, Princess Louise, to the Marquis of Lome, it had not become tangled up with that real romance. But a devotion of life, labour and scholarship, fit for record beside John Morley's sacrifice of three years of his career to the "Gladstone," is a thing for canonization as well as for resurrection.

Some points of a particular talk I had with "E.T." about Ruskin remain as clearly in mind as he put them there. What was the secret of the mass of work he got through? Orderliness, method, what? Method, certainly, but the real secret was early rising. Ruskin was in advance of the Act which gave us Summer Time, for he was up with the sun, winter or summer, and working while he was able to work.

Maybe his wonderful style was the gift of the

morning, for hadn't it been supposed that the right word just flowed from his pen ? " One of the little misunderstandings which have grown up," quoth " E.T." with a smile. " His mastery of style included the old, old story of toil, taking pains. He revised and revised, and revised yet again. Many parts of his * Modern Painters' he went over four or five times, never content until he arrived at the desired end." It had, " E.T." added, interested him as Ruskin's editor, to see how often the happy shot came only with the last shot.

All the time he was perfecting his style by reading as well as writing, and that led to the question, " Would you say, as has been said, that it was the Bible which most inspired Ruskin's literary manner? "

The Bible, Plato and Dante, " E.T." answered, were his three constant books of study. He made it a daily exercise to examine closely a certain amount of the Bible and to translate a certain amount of Plato. His Biblical references were innumerable and extraordinarily accurate, though he never used a concordance, but relied on a fine memory.

To-day John Ruskin is not even run after by " collectors," English or American, though the story of his marriage is as moving, in another vein, as Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poetic grief for his wife, Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall. Of him as poet, artist, man of

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natural romance, and picturesque figure, I heard from Hall Caine who had lionized him as well as known him. It was, however, Mr, Thomas J. Wise, the keenest, most discerning English collector of our time, who told me the authentic, unadorned history of Rossetti's poetry, dramatically buried with his wife, and afterwards recovered from her grave.

He was in the habit of copying all the verse he wrote into a book for her, the original slips being destroyed or thrown away. When she died, tragically, leaving him shocked and hysterical, he declared, " Nobody shall see my poetry." Only scraps of it had been printed, and very few of these, so the manuscript volume which Rossetti laid on the breast of his dead wife as she lay in her coffin, was really his creative work until then. He folded her hands over it, saw the lid of the coffin screwed down, and body and verse were buried in Highgate Cemetery, where they lay for some years.

Algernon Swinburne, William Morris, and other friends of Rossetti began to win fame by their poetry and he said to himself, " Why should I not publish mine ? " It was determined to open the coffin and recover the MSS. and, sanction from the Home Secretary of the day having been obtained, this was done. William Rossetti, Dante Gabriel's brother, and Theodore Watts, afterwards Theodore Watts-

Dunton, were, Mr. Wise thought, the only people at the grave besides the Home Office officials.

The precious volume was found to be much decayed, but it was disinfected, cleaned with the utmost care, and a transcript of the contents made. A poem on "Wellington's Funeral" was the only complete piece of manuscript preservable, and Mr. Wise got it from William Rossetti, who also possessed a few other fragments of this strange book of the quick and the dead.

No volume of English writing could hold a more vivid drama of love and poetry, just as Edward Fitzgerald's translation, in its first printing, of Omar Khayyam, is a romance in bibliography. Perhaps its vicissitudes, bottom deep when they landed it in Quaritch's "penny box," have helped many to an acquaintance both with Omar and with "Old Fitz," whom some of us often salute in that charmed circle, the Omar Khayyam Club. There, of course, the famous "Rubaiyat" is as holy writ with, no doubt, different interpretations and various commentators, but down in Suffolk, "Fitz" is, in memory, just himself, the countryman, the rough-hewn figure who lived above a shop overlooking the market square of Woodbridge and is buried in the churchyard of Boulge not far away.

Omarians, and Geraldines, we went to Suffolk

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honouring an anniversary of FitzGerald's death, and we found his old room not greatly changed. From his windows he had a kindly view of the stout, sombre church of Woodbridge and, away to the left, a blue glimpse of the salt-water estuary which he loved so well. Outside, fixed in the wall, there is a small stone slab with the initials " E.F." and the years of his occupancy. Within remain the air of Victorian comfort and the atmosphere of quiet colours which sheltered him awake or asleep.

If you are too late to see, in the flesh, a man you would have liked to see, then visit him dead, because he is not gone. Edward FitzGerald still walks in Woodbridge, when he is not out in his boat with his salt-water cronie, " Posh." Didn't he write, " I am happiest going in my little boat round the coast to Aldboro', with some bottled porter and some bread and cheese, and some good, rough soul who works the boat and chews tobacco in peace."

That was " Posh," otherwise Joseph Fletcher, a fellow of the big Saxon type with a nose in which Roman and Greek met, simple of soul, just of thought, tender of nature and rather given, at times, to lashings of beer. You can, with your eye and your mind's eye, grasp what fine times " Old Fitz " and he had on the Deben, " by Ramshot Church, by Bawdsey Cliffs," where " its friendly waters glide " ;

“ TO DINE AND SLEEP ”

" *Till safe behind the foam-drenched bar
They mingle with the tide.*"

It was another Omar pilgrim who lilted those lines to us about Edward FitzGerald at Woodbridge. He had the great Tennyson there, sleeping him and his son Hallam in the Bull, still hospitable, because it could give them more comfort than the house, Little Grange, whence he had moved. One mentions it, for clearly Tennyson had the name in thought when he wrote :

" *Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange
Whence once I tarried for a while^
Glance at the wheeling orb of change
And greet it with a kindly smile*"

" It talks to me," said " Fitz," of the Suffolk sea, tan, and grey and blue, as we followed it to the skyline, and it talked to us of him. " She go like a wiolin," an Aldboro' sailor praised his boat, either *The Scandal* which he thus named because he thought it stood for a large local product, or the *Meum and Tuum*, which he so christened because he meant " Posh " to be part owner of it. He liked the comparison to the " wiolin " as a pretty conceit and something Suffolkish, but when you get to Boulge,

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a mile or two away from the sea, you read on his gravestone the solemn words, "It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves."

Over his head, as if springing from it, nods a rose-bush which links FitzGerald, the English master, with Omar Khayyam, the Persian master. The seeds out of which it has grown were gathered from the roses on Omar's grave at Nashapur, and brought home by William Simpson, the war artist. Now it is a robust bush, with many branches and a shower of roses every summer to mark "where some buried Caesar bled." So altogether "Old Fitz" is well in possession of the green, delectable corner of English soil and sea which Woodbridge and Boulge designate, and we leave him, "glad thereof."

VII. OLD TRAVELLERS WHO RETURN

Among them Samuel Butler at Clifford's Inn Professor Huxley at Eastbourne and Cardinal Manning in London ; with anecdotes of Queen Victoria and King Edward and a " close-up " of Gerald Massey, the Chartistpoet.

URyoung people say that the Victorians took themselves too seriously, meaning that they overrated themselves and their work. It is also charged that this attitude tended to make them sombre and smileless in their personal and social life.

No picture of that sort was left on the mind of anybody who encountered notable Victorians in the eighteen-nineties and later, for they did not all die with Queen Victoria. They were serious because they held their interests sincerely, at a time of high thinking and simple living. But they did not go about with glum faces or unjoyous voices, as if life were an endless funeral, clothed in crepe. How could they, wearing gallant moustaches and rakish beards ?

On the contrary they were eager and zealous to

lift and lighten, both in a mental sense and in a physical sense. They had ideas and if they preferred to plant and tend and reap them, is not that better than casting them to the sporting chance? Each generation may be supposed to find the best way in which to express itself and its work.

Perhaps the Victorians were more reticent about themselves than we, the Georgians, are about ourselves, or was this merely an idea conveyed by their manner of talk and, say, of telling a story. One of an English judge whose years take him back to the Victorians, but who is still active, illustrates this greater subtlety of touch, and so I quote it from my own memory of being told it by a witness.

My lord was trying a criminal case, and a young barrister who appeared for the prisoner was droning on in his defence. Prosecuting counsel passed him a scribbled note saying, "The old duffer is with you, but if you bore him much longer, your man will get penal servitude."

Quick of eye, his lordship noticed the circulation of the slip of paper, and asked, "Anything to do with the case?" "No, my lord, purely personal" was the simultaneous, self-conscious response of both counsel, "No harm in my seeing it," the judge pursued, and it was collected by the clerk of court and handed up to him.

SAMUEL BUTLER AT SIGHT

He looked at it once, twice, thrice, and then, quietly turning to the defending counsel said, " You have read this?" "Yes, my lord." "Well," passing it back with elaborate courtesy, " I think, if I were you, I'd read it again 1 "

Samuel Butler lived for a while in that ancient legal precinct of London, Clifford's Inn, where, only the other week, I sought again the door which he once opened to my knock. He was then slowly coming into the long-delayed fame which we now associate with his books, and I had called to ask him something about them. He was hearty enough in a rather gruff voice, but he gave me the impression that his authorship was a very minor affair with him and not the business of anyone else.

We know, however, that he kept his diaries and records religiously, not, perhaps, contemplating publication for them, and not accepting oblivion. " I am editing my remains," he would say demurely to his friend Richard Garnett. " I wish to leave everything in order for my executors," and his other friend and biographer, Festing Jones, found it so. Thus he may have foreseen his fame, in the faith :

*" Be the day weary, or be the day long,
At last it ringeth to evensong"*

This "first of the moderns," as someone has called Butler, looked more like a farmer than a writer. He was rather stocky of figure, and he had become bent, and weathered of face. His bushy, threatening, yet benignant eyebrows thatched soft, thoughtful eyes, which lit a fine head. As, after our talk, he sallied forth into Fetter Lane, by the little iron gate which remains as he knew it, he had a full air of originality and distinction.

Its spirit is reflected in Mr. Bernard Shaw's tribute that, "When I produce plays in which Butler's free and future-piercing suggestions have an obvious share, I meet with nothing but vague cacklings about Ibsen and Nietzsche." Also in Samuel's own remark, "You will not forget the pretty roundness of my literary career"; "Erewhon," which came to him and had to be written, and "Erewhon Revisited," a first and a last philosophy about "The Way of All Flesh." "Letters," he said, "are like wine; if they are sound they ripen with keeping"; and that, perhaps, is the just word on Samuel Butler and his writings.

He exposed humbug and derided hypocrisy, and thus helped the world along, like William Morris, another forthright fellow clearly remembered. He, likewise, was a Victorian apostle, easy to rouse if there was a wrong, beautifully amiable and generous-

hearted to his friends. Even the scientific and realistic Professor Huxley, for all his devotion to the cool logic of science, was, on a certain quite provocative occasion, as genial and kindly as anyone could wish.

Asked by an editor's young ambassador to speak or write on some subject at the time being hotly debated, he said with courteous decision, "Thank you ; no." When, most daring, that young ambassador called a second time, an hour later, with the same intent and purpose, Huxley was nailing up the roses on the front wall of his house at Eastbourne. He was not less pleasant, not less adamant, and a subsequent formal offer from the editor himself of fifty pounds for a short article, was "declined with thanks." Our big men are less coy to-day about "rushing into print," but then the forum of controversy has become the people.

It was an era when style in writing counted greatly, and Huxley, like Cardinal Newman, was a master to be admired and studied, though, perhaps, the "sedulous ape" business never did anybody much good. Not even Stevenson, who embalmed the phrase, for he was born with natural gifts above it, and it has done him direct harm with the young evaluers of posterity, though not, of course, permanently.

OLD TRAVELLERS WHO RETURN

Those of us who did not read Huxley for his science, could well read him for his English, as passages might be recalled to attest. Shall we take just one which comes easily into the conversation of memory ?

" That man, I think, has a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of ; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order, ready, like a steam-engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind ; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations ; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience ; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself."

This might well be painted on the walls of our schools as an eirenicon for youth, which seeks education, and age, which seeks to impart it.

DIDN'T READ THE PAPERS

Huxley wrote with the clarity of his mind and the force of his character, and Walter Pater was a Victorian stylist of a more precious order. Students of his day were counselled to read him for his mere language, and sometimes they found him rather lost on the heights, there recalling that famous Victorian collective wraith "The Souls," of whom his friend, Arthur Balfour, was a shining if inconstant light.

The oddity of an incident which links the names of the two men, has kept it from being forgotten by one person to whom it was told, and it will be new to other people. Some days after Pater's death a letter addressed to him arrived at his publisher's office, and the writer turned out to be Arthur Balfour. It was returned to him, a mute confirmation of the saying, attributed to himself in a moment of "soulfulness," that he never read the papers, or, at least, did not read them attentively.

Sir Charles Russell, who became Lord Russell of Killowen, did some newspaper work when he was young at the Bar, and that, Sir George Osborne Morgan, the Welsh politician, told me, added to the relish with which he would relate two stories. Sir George thought they had come within Russell's own experience as a public speaker, but somehow they struck me as less individual, and having a more familiar ring than that.

Anyhow one was the conversion of " Drink deep or touch not the Pierian spring " into " Drink deep or touch not the aperient spring." The other was the appearance of the line, " Like a pale martyr in a sheet of fire," as " Like a pale martyr with his shirt on fire." They both meet what, after all, is the test of a successful story, chestnut or original, a laugh as between teller and listener.

Cardinal Manning, even in his oldest years, was always in touch with the papers and the outside world and only a few days before his death, as a far effort of memory recalls, he asked for news of King George's elder brother, the Duke of Clarence, also dying. " A little better," he was told, though it was merely a flicker in an illness dark from the first, and he answered " Thank God." He had a notable regard for the royal family, and sat with King Edward, then Prince of Wales, on a commission of inquiry into the housing of the poor.

Manning is a personage and personality on which Mr. Lytton Strachey dowered his art and craft as a modern stylist in " Eminent Victorians." Would the portrait and the judgment have been different had he met him ? It would not, possibly, have been done with so much easy certitude of the folds which were in Manning's character.

Suppose, like a late Victorian who had such a

meeting, he had called at Archbishop's House on a Saturday and been told quite sincerely, " I am very busy but I would like you to come again." " When ? " " Well, to-morrow is Sunday ; do you go to church ? " " Sometimes ; and sometimes to Brompton Oratory to hear the music." " Good ; then come to me early and you'll be able to go to the Oratory afterwards."

He had been accused of " Socialistic leanings," and certainly he helped the " human lift " which the London Dock Strike began and which characterized the eighteen-nineties. Not by his writings, perhaps, though he is in the bibliography of the Victorian age, but by the influence of his ascetic character and his position in the Roman Church. Here was a grave eminence who could unbend, as Gladstone did, after his last Midlothian campaign, for being saluted by a stranger he answered, " I'm very well indeed." It was a mere passing word, but it was accompanied by a Gladstonian smile and bow, the one gracious the other graceful, which are remembered as youthful trophies of a newspaper life.

Queen Victoria herself, the gravest of the grave when high affairs were concerned, could handle a personal situation with lightness, as her letters and memoirs abundantly show. It so happened that a little instance of this fell into my own ears from an Australian statesman knighted by her. This was

OLD TRAVELLERS WHO RETURN

Sir George Gibbs who, in his own island-continent, had been half-credited with a "cut the painter" republican policy. He repudiated the idea to us all when he visited London, but perhaps it was in a corner of the Queen's absorbent and retentive memory, as he knelt before her at Windsor to be made a knight of St. Michael and St. George, an order which she particularly linked with Greater Britain.

"You know," he told me afterwards as we drove round London in a hansom, he paying farewell calls, "the Queen usually confers knighthood with a Court sword. While I waited on my knee she was offered one but she refused it with the request, * No ; give me a real military sword/ " She got it and used it, and it was a very "parfait knight" who left her presence, as he afterwards showed in Australia.

The tact of King Edward, in the great position of Prince of Wales, was also ever-helpful in keeping Victorian society from the doldrums. Of this, too, Sir George Gibbs had an experience which he related to me with a nice, human satisfaction and a characteristic gusto at being in such good company.

He was a member of a country house party at which the Prince was the chief guest, and "At dinner I was placed beside a very handsome, very bright woman. After dinner the Prince quizzed me slyly, saying, * Well, were you not happy ? I wanted

you put there,' and he poked me in the ribs. He offered me a cigar from his case and when I said I should keep it as a memento, he answered, ' Tut, tut ; smoke it now and have another/ and I obeyed."

We need to know the atmospheric trifles of a period, as well as the big references, if we are to command it rightly, Gerald Massey, the poet of the far Chartist days, was still alive, in the first decade of the twentieth century, though he had long buried himself in Egyptology. Of him, in his small house on the southern heights of London, I saw a good deal, and his favourite pen, stout and stained, and still armed with a big gold nib, is a reminder of that.

The last poem he wrote is also before me, and through it runs an echo of his own career, as you can gather if you will read it in an intimate and friendly spirit :

*" He set his battle in array, and thought
To carry all before him, since he fought
For Truth, whose likeness was to him revealed;
Whose claim he blazoned on his battle-shield;
But found in front, impassably opposed,
The World against him, with its ranks all closed:
He fought, he fell, he failed to win the day
But led to Victory another way.*

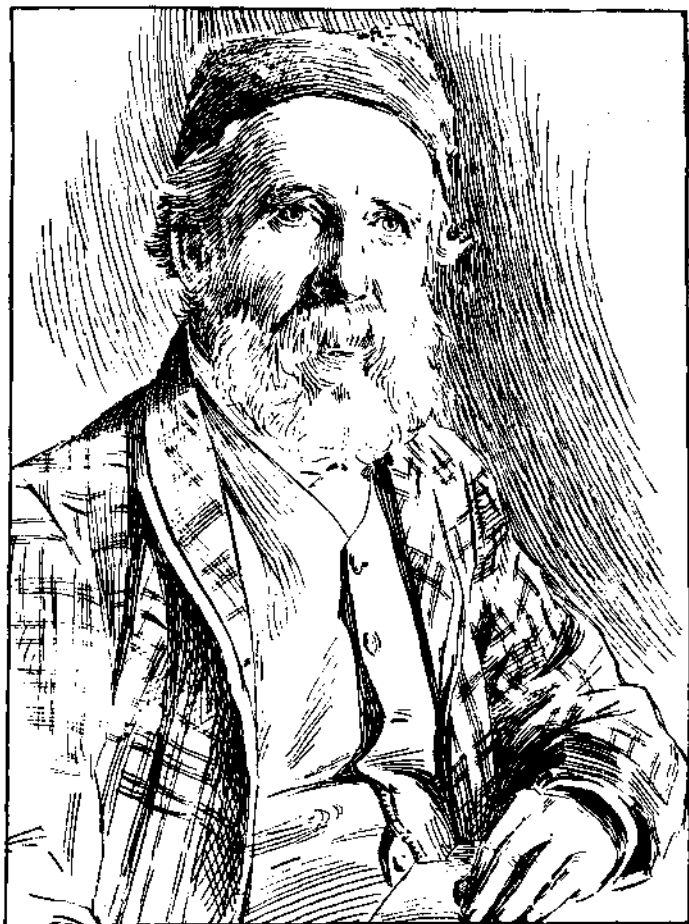
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OLD TRAVELLERS WHO RETURN

*" For Truth) it seemed, in very person came
And took his hand) and they two in one flame
Of dawn, divinely through the darkness -passed;
Her breath far mightier than the battle-blast.
And here or there men caught a glimpse of grace,
A moment's flash of her immortal face,
And turned to follow, till the battle-ground
Transformed with foemen slowly facing round
To fight for Truth) so lately held accursed,
As if they had been Her champions from the first.
Only a change offront, and he who had led
Was left behind with Her forgotten dead"*

That is not sung by the Chartist poet of the day when the railings were pulled down in Hyde Park and the great Duke of Wellington's windows were broken by the hungry populace. Gerald Massey had turned from lyrics, though never from liberty, to Egypt as the cradle and home of the world. Within her dead womb, as he thought, lay the secret of all things, life, death, eternity, and his hours, when I knew him, were spent searching the hieroglyphics and the zodiacs for it.

He had not forgotten himself as the English poet whom Walter Savage Landor saluted as a new Keats, whom John Ruskin proclaimed, and whom Mazzini, Garibaldi or Rossetti, George Eliot, Alfred Tennyson



News Chronicle.

GERALD MASSEY, THE CHARTIST POET.

A sketch of him, done for the "Daily Chronicle," in his old age, when he had long stopped writing verse and become the zealous Egyptologist.

or Robert Browning delighted to honour. But when he would go back on his old poetic self it was just to say, " I think the poems real, as far as they go, only their range is very limited." As you waited, expecting him, perhaps, to enlarge on a text so personal, even if, to him, remote, he would add, " Simply I ceased to write verse because I had a greater task."

Not a word of regret that the clear lyre of melody had been sacrificed for the dark torch of the Egyptologist. Aged, he worked on, tired but tireless, in his velvet skull-cap coming down almost to his gentle, bespectacled eyes. They were as lamps in a face that all his learned and elusive Egyptology had not changed from its stamp of rural England. " I had no childhood," he told me of his hard, early days, and at the end he lived on a meagre Civil List Pension granted him as the poet of

*" If when the world was in its golden
Prime, and God was Lord below"*

Simplicity, endurance, faith had dwelt with him in everything, for he had that soul of the earth and the heavens which illumines a man in whatever his tasks may be. Sacrifice on the early achieved slopes of Parnassus, if you like, and martyrdom before the Egyptian gods ; but it was all begotten of courage

and sincerity. Massey would even have said of himself what, in a strain of returned poetry, he sang to me of a London " Tommy " shot down at the battle of Spion Kop in the South African War :

*" If3 bloomin-well good enough, isn't it, mate,
To die for the Old Land so ? "*

He was, in youth, a " spirit that can stand alone," and in age he kept working and waited " till the rest come round." A far cry, surely, between the slogan of Chartism and the dead tombs of Egypt, but the two Gerald Masseys were one in their search for the light.

It was the former whom George Eliot softly portrayed in " Felix Holt," and the latter is somewhere in the tomes of Egyptology that he laboriously wrote and, out of his slender means, printed. That gospel I could only dimly follow, even when he explained it in his rolling, slow-spoken words, but his verse was bugle-clear. Say, " We have fed the sea with English souls," or " Our rivers carry heroic dust," in his song about our " Sea Kings."

Gerald Massey was Berkshire, his native county, when you got down to the natural man, because the primitiveness which we all inherit lasted with him. He could still, in fancy, see the green fields and hear

A LYRE OF COMPASSION

the lark, about which he talked to a grandchild, telling her of the cruel old custom of blinding birds so they might sing the more in their cages. Next he wrote a poem, " The Lark in London," whose sad tune you will hear in the opening and closing lines now copied from his manuscript :

*" Listen, my little one, it is the lark.
Captured and blinded\ singing in the dark"*

.

' As if with floods of music he would drown
The dire, discordant roar of London Town."*

Another small relic of Massey suggests his memory, lingering on to the end, of the Victorian progressives with whom his lot was cast around the " Hungry Forties," There was George Jacob Holyoake, a father of the English Co-operative movement, and a mention of him brought forth this verse :

*" ' / blend the Holly with the oak !"
⁹Twas thus the voice of Nature spoke,
And, in fulfilment of her plan
She gave us Holyoake, the man."*

A few days before his death Gerald Massey sent a message that he would like to see me. He was very

OLD TRAVELLERS WHO RETURN

weak in body but the native vitality of his mind had not yet been sapped. A worn, rugged figure, night-capped, his grey dressing-gown gathered about his shoulders ; a little bed in the plain room where he had toiled for years on that last big book ; an autumn London sun gleaming across the windows, dancing in at them with the fresh air which the veteran loved. It was a scene to linger in the heart and, said Massey, looking out at the sunshine, " It would be a pity if I didn't pop off when all is so beautiful."

The " Babe Christabel " of his poem was the attendant angel of his aged years, and never was daughter more devoted to father. She would have myself speak a word beside his coffin, before it was laid in the earth at Old Southgate in Hertfordshire, looking down on London. It was a request hard to carry out, still harder to refuse, but it was an adventure of the soul in company with a fine old English gentleman.

VIII. THE MILLS OF GOD

How they worked in the surgent nineties^ now mis-called " Naughty " because the " Tellow Book " flavoured them ; and snatches of their bright activities in contrast to an odd Spencerian epistle on keeping well.

WE hear people speak of the " naughty nineties " with a laugh as if they were loose and profligate, in contrast to other years of our own time. Surely that is mistaking the origin of the phrase, which had to do with a trend in letters and its presentation in art, not with the social world. Moreover, to say that the last ten years of the Victorian age were specially philandering, would be to colour them with a gaiety which our " bright young people " refuse to admit ; so the contradiction is evident.

Nobody in the nineties thought of them or spoke of them as " naughty," and it is even doubtful if the expression had come into use with the nineteen-hundreds. Anyhow, it had its source in the break-away of writing from its straight-jacket of sniffy Victorian propriety, and in the Grecian bend of

Aubrey Beardsley and his school of the famous *Tellow Book* and its companions and rivals.

Many good folk denounced the milestone magazine as a sort of "yellow peril" and refused to look at it, unless, perhaps, just a peep when they met it, open at the latest Beardsley drawing, in a bookseller's window. Others, the younger set, the artistic set, the literary set, perhaps the traditional "Marlborough House set," found its atmosphere catholic, piquant and in an expressive word of the day, "spicy."

What had become a revolt in letters and art, also became a vogue of *Jin de siecle* English society, and eventually some scribe, looking backward, invented the "naughty nineties." Why not? Nobody has been harmed. But they were really earnest and serious, filled with ideals and Utopias, surgent with new ideas, and eloquent and vigorous in pleading them.

This was the atmosphere into which I walked one afternoon at the Bodley Head, John Lane's publishing house in Vigo Street, the home of the *Tellow Book* as well as of the fabled "choir of singing birds." Several figures were bent over a table, studying a sketch, which one of them was explaining in quick, eager sentences, with darts of long, tapering fingers, now at one part of the picture, now at another.

Aubrey Beardsley's fingers, and he himself ; tallish,

A "YELLOW BOOK"* TRIO

thin as a rash, black-haired, pale of face, with bright eyes, wherein, as in his stoop of shoulders, there seemed a danger signal of delicate health. His companions were Henry Harland, the novelist, as fragile to the eye as his writings were fragrant to the mind, and John Lane, fair, florid, with, in his hair and face, the greyness and roundness of middle age, and an easy Devonshire frankness which framed lots of subtlety.

Here were the three chief musketeers of the *Tellow Book* gravely engrossed in planning a new number, eager to make it a feast of quality. They sought that from the springs of modernity in letters and art which had begun to flow, if you like as a protest against cast-iron Victorian "correctness." It could cover many things, and perhaps this was why Cecil Rhodes invented the term "correctitude" as suggesting a touch of hypocrisy.

It was all just a time of stir and bond-breaking, not of flouting the real eternities, which are always secure. But, obviously, when new ships launch themselves on old tides there must be froth as well as cargo, and the eventual sorting of them from each other is not easy*

Strenuous the nineties and the nineteen-hundreds certainly were and there is testimony to this in the then charge of literary "log-rolling," just as we hear

it to-day. It was natural, in a renaissance of poetry and prose, that its forward spirits should know each other. The young literary bloods had their way to find, and as part of the pilgrimage they read manuscripts for publishers and wrote reviews for the papers. Possibly, on occasion, they even reviewed books which they had recommended for publication, and their defence was, " Well, the stuff is good, we believe in it, and therefore why not help it along."

Not quite deliberate log-rolling, you see, but rather a friendly campaign of mutual help. Who is to settle the ethics of a literary question which is as old as criticism and as new as the latest deliverance by a living author-reviewer ? Hardly the man of letters who has the good fortune to be " in the swim," nor the other man of letters who is allowed to cry in the wilderness because he is " not one of us." Both may have their own thoughts but, likewise, they have their own interests, and this was about how the argument worked out when Richard Le Gallienne, Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson and other Bodley Headers ran a kind of Book Society of their own.

They and their school were, at least, pioneers, for they helped to make new books part of the news of the day. Earlier, reviews were thought to appeal only to the select few and were confined chiefly to weekly periodicals, with the *Athenaeum* and the *Academy*', now

long dead and gone, as the critical " high-brow " organs. Literature and its affairs hardly came into the daily record of the nation's life as reflected by the newspapers. Reviews were an occasional, not a systematic feature, and their chief use in the sub-editorial mind of Fleet Street was as " fill-ups." " Keep," they were marked, in the black, deadly letters familiar to every journalist, and often they perished unborn.

All that was changed when Alfred Fletcher, an editor with human insight and journalistic foresight, started the famous Literary Page of the old *Daily Chronicle*. Its mission was clear and specific from the beginning ; to set out usefully and therefore systematically the activities of the whole English book world. The grave and the gay of literature were shown side by side, information and recreation, or the two combined ; and with reviews there went news and gossip about forthcoming books, also special interviews. The column of " Writers and Readers," which it fell to my fortune to write from first to last, became a real channel of communication between publishers, booksellers, book-buyers and readers, almost an intelligence department.

May be you know that London Scottish bookman, Mr. John G. Wilson, to whom we owe the literary shows at the Old Marylebone Court House, off Oxford

Street. He will tell you that when he was a young bookseller in Glasgow he used to meet the London express on Wednesday and Friday afternoons, in order to get the latest book news from the *Daily Chronicle* and order accordingly and quickly for likely customers. There is a "book sense/* just as there is a "news sense/¹ and here it was, very alert in Glasgow.

No wonder that, when you now call on its possessor, you may meet, on the stairs, or in the lift, eminent book-fellows like Sir James Barrie, or Mr. Bernard Shaw, or Colonel Lawrence, all dropping in to pass the inky time of day. But the reason for personally citing a bookman who will not like it, is his testimony to the bright lexicon of literary criticism and news in the eighteen-nineties and the nineteen-hundreds. Then, as now, it was a gladness to drift into Hatchard's, in Piccadilly, and hear the hum of it all, and, on one occasion, to carry away, as a capital "news story," an interview telling the history of the famous London bookshop.

Old custom and tradition are hard to break down, because we cling to them unconsciously, and they would not be if they had not once stood for something good. Many people, high- and low-brow, at first looked upon the *Chronicle* "Page 3"—it was always that—with doubt and suspicion. It won its way, however, slowly perhaps, but definitely into the

esteem of all who valued books and appreciated their influence on human life and labour.

The reviews were written with knowledge and yet in a popular style, and this owed much to the inspiration and counsel of Henry Massingham, while he was literary editor. They could be read with interest by the learned and at the same time could be "understood of the people." They aimed at interpreting a book, showing how it bore upon thought and action, and so how it might help the reader as a citizen and as a man.

Many a grand adventure had I under the folds of this flag in my almost boyishly venturing days in London Town. One occurs to me, because it illustrates the reticent conservatism which then governed publishing, and because it was the beginning of a valued friendship. Some book had just been published by John Murray and a copy of it had not come to the *Chronicle*, still only an invader of the literary field, not yet a conqueror. Therefore I was dispatched to Albemarle Street with the message that we would like to review the book and could we have it?

Behind the counter stood a tall gentleman, bearded and grave, and a little timorously I explained my errand to him. He was grandly courteous, but it was unheard of that any paper to which a review book had not gone in ordinary course, should ask for one and

think to get it. Aye, though this was unspoken, and from the house of John Murray, and the paper a Radical sheet like the *Chronicle*.

There was a footfall behind me and a strong, kindly voice said, " Is there anything I can do for you ? " The late Sir John Murray had been passing from his business house through to his home, the famous No. 50, next door, for it was lunch time. " Of course/¹ he declared, " you shall have the book, and if you ever want to know how well or how ill we are serving literature here, come and see me." Only his death ended this engagement and he left an open door, for Albemarle Street has been hospitable ever since Walter Scott and Byron dined and drank port there in good fellowship.

On that text, the ancient and royal one of meat and drink, I have a quaint and curious letter, given me by Edward Clodd which Herbert Spencer addressed to Grant Allen, and, so far as I know, it has n[^]t been published. The philosopher wrote from Brighton, where he was staying, after his friend had paid it a visit for health, in the June of 1899.

" My dear Allen," it opens, " I am glad to think your wife thinks that you profited by your stay here. I hope that the corner-stone may be by and by completely turned. That it may be turned completely, it is clear that you must improve your mastication."

With this salutation. Dr. Spencer and " Dr. Brighton'⁰ speaking together, as it were, the epistle becomes so intimate and personal, so pontifically large and discursively small, that the only thing is to give its full language, so :

" Quite spontaneously Miss Key remarked, since you left, how very rapidly you ate—more rapidly, she said, than Miss Shickle—and, as I know Miss Shickle eats in a helter-skelter manner, as she does everything else, I can understand that your mastication must be extremely inefficient, and that your wife's complaint, in fact, is not strong enough.

" If I had to teach children, I should give them, among other things, a lesson on the importance of mastication and should illustrate it by taking a small iron nail and weighing against it some pinches of iron filings till the two balanced, then, putting them into two glasses, pouring into each a quantity of dilute sulphuric acid, leaving them to stir the two from time to time and showing them, that whereas the iron filings quickly dissolve, the dissolving of the nail would be a business of something like a week. This would impress on them the importance of reducing food to small fragments. That you, a scientific man, should not recognize this, is to me astonishing.

" The fact is, however, I presume, that you are

doubtless, on all occasions, either talking about something, or thinking about something, and ignoring altogether attention to your food, to which attention should be mainly devoted, the result being that you bolt mouthful after mouthful, almost unawares. Miss Shickle has been a martyr to indigestion all her life and my friend Potter was much in the same way. Excuse me for saying that if you do not masticate, you do not deserve to be well. Truly Yours, Herbert Spencer."

Poor Grant Allen, poor Miss Shickle, poor friend Potter ! Moreover, the arraignment went on, unlike the case of Mr. Gladstone who said everyone should bite so many times, and left the advice at that. Spencer, after the manner of the fussy old lady whom we seem here to see him, must have a PS, and a spinsterishly long one.

" You are," he insisted to Grant Allen, " very fond of biscuits—passionately fond—I believe. Now biscuits require a very great amount of mastication, since, in the absence of it, there is not the due mixture of ptyalin in the saliva, which is needful for changing the starch into sugar. The result is that your habit of biscuit-taking, unless you masticate so as to reduce the biscuit to pulp, is an extremely injurious one. Mr. Troughton, remembering that you used to be a

great tea-drinker, suggests that I should add that tea checks the secretion of ptyalin and that physiologists, therefore, recommend that the consumption of starchy food, such as biscuits, should always precede tea-drinking."

Sermons in letters were still a Victorian habit, as well as sermons spoken in the pulpit and then printed and sold broadcast, especially those of Charles Spurgeon which went on, appearing regularly, for years after his death. We have, in the contrast between his plain and grim theology and the doctrines of Herbert Spencer and Grant Allen, another of those chasms which made the mental Victorian age, towards its close, like an earthquake country. Old and new struggled in it, moving and heaving mentally, as volcanic forces have moulded the physical face of the earth, and yet it was all so orderly an evolution, that only with study and attention could it be realized by a contemporary and then he had to have imagination.

Suppose, what can be clearly recalled, a visit to Westminster Abbey, when Dean Farrar, his ultimate dignity, was a canon of it and a preacher there. His "Life of Christ" with its broad views, its florid style, and its individual flavour, had made him famous. There he was, pale and long of face, gentle yet penetrative of eye, arresting in every word, though not eloquent, prelatic in his gown, but a sympathetic

figure. As he leant over the pulpit, you heard a blend of the old theology and the new, not controversy but exposition ; and Charles Darwin also was listening to it, for he is in Westminster Abbey.

What picture could be more suggestive and illuminating of the Victorian march into the future which is our to-day ; and it was the same swing in Grub Street. No longer is that name in common use, because its inference of literary penury and hardship, which will always go with writing, hardly applies to modern conditions.

A book world that was once amateurish and casual has become highly organized and professional, a machine on a business-run basis ; so all men and women in it, writers or critics, publishers or book-sellers, at least, know pretty well where they are. Possibly the " time machine," as we have it in every sphere of life, makes for efficiency in the mass, but it also makes against personality. No gain in human effort is achieved without some loss, and in the realm of books, as in the realm of politics, the individual giant recedes before the challenge of greater general efficiency, a drab word.

The axe of history has a deadly edge for trees which, in their day, stood up as tall ships in the sea of letters. There was the stir made by the author of " John Inglesant," a book name better known than its writer,

but hardly mentioned now except among students of the Oxford Movement. Robert Buchanan gave vigour and bravery, also psychology and atmosphere, to the "fleshly school" of fiction, as it was called, years before the "problem novel" came along.

George MacDonald wrote Scottish novels with temperament and poetry in them, and Leslie Stephen, John Addington Symonds and Theodore Watts-Dunton, were great critics. Blackmore thought his "Springhaven" a better story than his "Lorna Doone" but was happiest market-gardening at Twickenham, where uninvited pilgrims sometimes went bothering him about the Doones.

George Augustus Sala had a marine residence at Brighton and a flat in Victoria Street, the first real home, by the way, of the London flat. He came up every morning by pullman, to write his article for the *Daily Telegraph*, and went back to the seaside in the evening. He took up and down with him a blink of the eye which was almost a squint and which gave an onlooking piquancy to his tip-tilted nose. Sala was a vivid fellow, picturesque to look at, being dark of skin as with the warmth of southern blood, and sight of him, still more talk with him, meant you were in contact with a Bohemian literary England which went out with Queen Victoria.

If one dwells on Sala it is because a meeting with

him suggests the Fleet Street curiosity, how many of the young men who climb the stairs of the Press Club stop, on the first landing, to look at his portrait ? He was as big a newspaper noise as Henry Labouchere or Edmund Yates or John Corlett of the *Pink ' Un*, and they were all chiefs of the late Victorian writing gang. Likewise George du Maurier, of whose drawings for " Trilby " I have the luck to possess some proofs, given me, I fancy, by the Harper Brothers of America and our Albemarle Street, who published it,

Is it remembered that when the story was appearing serially in *Harper's Magazine*, James McNeill Whistler resented a passage in it as being an attack on himself? Warlike, as always, he went out for the blood of author and publishers, and they had the story purged of its offending Whistlerism when it became a book.

Echoes of the yesterday of yester-year ? But suggestive of what that yesterday was like, with the sound fiction of Walter Besant marching sedately beside early " shockers " such as " Called Back " and " The Mystery of a Hansom Cab." It was a surprise for the expiring country gentlemen when Besant was made a knight, because he was early among the modernly titled pens. But Sir Walter, or Walter, he remained the simple, unpretentious, good-

natured man who never thought his day complete if he had not done something to rescue the profession of letters from its old Grub Street inheritance ; and indeed he was the father of the Authors' Society.

Would Stevenson have become a " Sir " if he had not gone to the South Seas, and had lived until literary knighthoods were in flower, thanks, perhaps, to the initiative of the Premier Lord Rosebery ? He and Walter Besant were good friends, their mutual interest in historic and municipal London being one point of contact, though otherwise they had characteristics in common. A week-end invitation to Mentmore was an incident of the friendship, and the gesture pleased the novelist. But, as he told me, " I asked to be excused because I would be out of my natural world," and Lord Rosebery understood.

He would not have had less regard for " R.L.S.," a brother Scot of Sir Walter Scott's " mine own romantic town " of Edinburgh. Almost certainly he had talks about him with Charles Baxter, Writer to the Signet, who was, of course, Stevenson's intimate friend from youth onward. If so he would have heard what I heard from the same source, that " I came across Louis on one occasion, in our Edinburgh days, sitting on the steps of the Register House, just under the Calton Hill, reading a book and smoking a clay pipe."

THE MILLS OF GOD

It was the young " R.L.S.," who later, long-haired and jacketed in velveteen, would loosely saunter into the Savile Club in London. On other members, as I came to be told, he quite naturally made the impression that here, at least, was one Victorian writer who would live for his picturesque personality, as well as for his beautiful literary style.

IX. THE MELODY OF FAME

Reverence and Pilgrimage as Victorian and Edwardian virtues, taking us to Swinburne at Putney and Meredith at Box Hill; with -passages on the Berserker Henley, -pawky Robertson Nicoll, and Mark Twain's mystery memoirs.

AN observation of singular beauty fell to me from the Earl Grey who, years ago, was Governor-General of Canada, as we looked down on the St. Lawrence River from The Citadel of Quebec. It was that the shy, retired, convent-educated girl of French-Canada, would surely give reverence and a soul to the womanhood of all the North American Continent.

However that may be, the decline and fall of reverence is one of the things to be noted in these turgid days. One uses the word reverence as describing a general attitude to life and not in the religious sense only, though there, also, it probably holds. Not everywhere is the spirit that "brings back the Patriarch, Who in Chaldean wastes found God through reverence."

The nineties and nineteen-hundreds had revering disciples who saluted the living great, as well as the great dead. They did them honour in the street and made pilgrimages to them at their homes. If that meant hero-worship, it was still reverence, but nowadays only cinema stars are acclaimed. By the mob, it is true, yet that is an incense which chokes the better way.

Everybody did not agree with W. T. Stead, but he had many pilgrims, and his roughish figure and bearded, arresting face, would be noticed in the street. Not so the quieter, more retiring Frederick Greenwood, a gentleman who wrote for gentlemen, and perhaps, on this account, was rather neglected in his later years, when sincere recognition is sweetest. The influential brothers of the *Spectator*, Richard Holt Hutton and Meredith Townsend, kept to their unpretentious office beside Waterloo Bridge, but distinguished foreigners visiting England sought them there, as President Wilson, years later, travelled north from London to see Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*.

Sir Henry Lucy had his lunch parties at Ashley Gardens, and on the table-cloths entertained and entertaining notables wrote their names, which Lady Lucy embroidered. Also T. P. O'Connor was the dashing, debonair Irishman of that London's

literary and journalistic life, all so colourful and so kindly :

*" Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave . . . "*

W. E. Henley could say that in tender mood, but when the lion roared in him, " I was a king in Babylon and you were a Christian slave." His young men were faithful to him in either mood, even when, a drastic editor, he would pound their manuscripts to his style and thinking. His Berserker flare-up towards his old friend Stevenson had been a bolt from the blue, and perhaps it tried his friends a little, if only because they never quite understood the reason for it. Jealousy of a starrier career, some said, but Henley was not small like that, any more than he was small in physique, though crippled.

There was not much in common between Henley, who had only been in Scotland, and Sir William Robertson Nicoll, who came from there, except that each had his clear camp in the writing world. From his, on the heights of Hampstead, Nicoll always descended one mid-week day to see his *British Weekly* to press and afterwards to dine, pretty certainly, at the Devonshire Club. He was a genial centre of a circle, also full of knowledge and " canny " talk but,

being a simple person in comportment, though many-folded in mind, he was, perhaps, best in his home study. His searching gaze for new writers and new books went out from that Hampstead eyrie, in which his fragile body moved as actively as his thoughts.

A multitude of books was his company, and he could track down a wanted one with amazing certainty of its corner, and of the place in it, probably marked by a dog-ear, which he desired to consult. He liked visitors, however, when he liked them, and the mere pilgrim was not turned away. He went out socially now and then when the atmosphere was intellectual and sympathetic, but he was a literary and domestic man, and with him the two were one.

" W.R.N." had no recreations, not even that of walking, for if he had a little journey he drove, and indeed he took the air that way. Someone called this an extravagance, to which he answered, " On the contrary it is an economy ; it saves my strength and working time," and he was always working. He learned that from his father, a Scottish Free Church minister who, with a slender stipend and " review copies," created a library almost as spacious as that of the son, though, naturally, more severely theological.

Other men of letters and journalists of our time

may have lit the eternal skies more than Robertson Nicoll did, but not many have wielded so much immediate influence. He was editor, author, critic and he had the double gift which makes a real publisher, literary judgment and business judgment. That, in a high sense, is not a frequent combination, and possibly the root of it in Nicoll was his mixture of the Highland and Lowland Scot.

John Morley and George Meredith were eminent instances of "publisher's readers" who belonged to the old school of "This is a fine work and you should accept it," or "I find little serious endeavour to recommend in this manuscript." Their search was for good literature and it began and ended there, but the new school of "publisher's reader" has also a very keen eye for the book that will sell, whether it be for posterity or not.

Nicoll had the knowledge of one school and the flair of the others, and was thus, indeed, a pioneer. He could "pick a winner," as well as discern the scaffolding which heralds a classic. More, he saw future books, in casual manuscripts by unknown writers, which came under his eye, and he got them done, published and made widely known, for he could carry a book through if he believed in its appeal.

"Well, they seem to come off," said a living

author who is both good-natured and discerning, when charged with the frequent good works by other writers that he "discovers." Nicoll could have said this with extreme justice, as when he declared of Watts-Dunton's novel of poetic realism, "Aylwin," "It must succeed." It did, tremendously, though a re-reading of it to-day hardly explains why, apart from "W.R.N.," "Claudius Clear," and "A Man of Kent," all guns of the same heather-on-fire literary battery.

Most of us paid pilgrimage to The Pines, a solid, square-faced house which you may still mark at Putney Hill, and we certainly saw Watts-Dunton who gave us strong tea and much monologuish talk. But Swinburne was harder to see, except by old friends like Thomas Hardy to whom he once spoke with amusement of a paragraph he had come on in a Scottish paper.

"Swinburne planteth, Hardy watereth and Satan giveth the increase," ran this paragraph. "We laughed and condoled with each other," Hardy recalled, "on having been the most abused of living writers, he for' Poems and Ballads,¹ I for *Jude the Obscure V

Algernon, as his house-mate spoke of him, was supposed to be coming downstairs every time I had tea with Theodore at The Pines, but somehow he

never came. He was occupied, or he simply did not want to be bothered, as why should he, for even a famous poet has a right to choose his own company, though he may not always succeed.

Easily, comfortably, Watts-Dunton chatted on, expounding "Aylwin," eloquent on his favourite text, the "renaissance of wonder" as he called it, or throwing in a word about some great Victorian. It was admirable faring but it left out the elusive Swinburne, of whom, therefore, my nearest glimpse was a snapshot in a book James Douglas wrote, showing him looking down from a window at The Pines.

Characteristic that picture of his dimness for the outside world, and of his guardianship under the affectionate eye of Watts-Dunton, who had gathered him in when he much needed it. But his daily walk with a jerky, lifting gait across Putney Heath, should be in our national gallery of pictures, for he was supposed to call at a "pub" on the other side and drink a glass of beer. Tennyson and Edward FitzGerald, honest lovers of honest ale, would have liked him for this, but it may have merely been a story tacked on to his once red hair, his once insurgent muse, and his always romantic air.

Nobody in the nineties thought of being at Box Hill, in Surrey, without taking refreshment at the

hostelry where Nelson and his Emma stayed their last night together on his way to Trafalgar, and where Keats lodged, and then going to see George Meredith's Flint Cottage. The Nelson Room and the Keats Room at the inn meant personal touches in general history, but Meredith, on the pleasant heights, a mile away, was reality as well as personality.

You should have been there, as I happened to be on his eightieth birthday, when Edward Clodd, Clement Shorter and other ambassadors of the writing brotherhood, waited on him with an address of congratulation, signed by almost every English author of note then living. It was, perhaps, the final occasion on which he was fully in the nation's eye before his death, which filled the papers so that even the big public understood a great spirit had ascended from Box Hill.

"When a great man dies," finely said his friend Sir James Barrie, "and this was one of the greatest save Shakespeare, the immortals await him at the top." We awaited the still sprightly if aged Meredith outside his home, because he had been for his forenoon airing on Box Hill. Presently he came, sitting low in a long bath-chair, drawn by "Picnic," a donkey of uncertain age and eternal loyalty, beside which walked Cole, the novelist's handy-man and



GEORGE MEREDITH AT HOME.

News Chronicle.

A life-like picture of the famous Victorian author taken at Box Hill on his eightieth birthday and first published in the "Daily Chronicle."

gardener. Also there was Sandy, Meredith's Scots terrier, a wise-looking, friendly little fellow, with a bit of red ribbon stuck on his collar. " Ah," said one of us, seeing it, "' G.M/ is eighty to-day, but he is still a red-hot Radical."

Meredith much disliked being photographed, hence, for one reason, perhaps, though he may have had the other of personal approval, the long reign of Hollier's portrait of him in his prime, an almost Greek head in beauty. But a newspaper " snapshotter " who had joined our little party quietly took a picture of the bath-chair and its occupant without his knowing it. That picture must have a unique interest, as the last likeness, and a fine one, of an enduring Victorian, and therefore its taking, almost over my own shoulder, was a happy chance of a memorable day.

It always brings back to my sight the old lion, struck by the infirmities of the body and the weight of years, but mentally as resonant as youth. He waved us a greeting with his stick and then gave a hail of *'how-do-you-do ?" especially to * Sir Reynard," his playful nickname for Edward Clodd, whose gentle nature held his real regard, often, as the Meredithian way was, expressed quizzically. They were both quizzed for being " pontifically rationalistic," in the lines by someone with wit :

THE MELODY OF FAME

" *Said Meredith to Clodd,*
* *There isnt any God'*
Said Clodd to Meredith,
⁴ *Tm certain he's a myth.'*
So God, with great good humour,
Proclaimed himself a rumour."

Meredith would, in his private letters to Clodd, chaff him about " the far twinkle of your tail," speak of " Sir Reynard's roguish pranks," or ask " Why are churches empty ? Because there is no Sir Reynard in the pulpit." It was this easy, jolly note also for his eightieth birthday, and it took in Clement Shorter and Dora Sigerson, his wife, the Irish poetess. So all was simple and informal and the geniality and glow of Meredith continued from his bath-chair to within his cottage, where the album of congratulations was left with him.

" Many of your fellow-countrymen," the address said, " will join in felicitating you upon the health and happiness that are yours upon this, your eightieth birthday. We desire, on our own behalf, to thank you for the splendid work in prose and poetry that we owe to your pen, to say how we rejoice in the growing recognition of this work, and to thank you for the example you have set to the world, of lofty ideals embodied not only in books but in life."

My memory vignette of George Meredith is that of a figure which had been lithe and elegant ; a face, white-bearded and lined with thought and questioning ; deep and deep-seeing eyes, hazel or grey as they gleamed or glinted ; a distinctive and distinguished white-haired head, though only crowned by a soft cap, for outdoor wear and, with the whole, an air of solitude, like a castle on heights beyond the range of the populace.

Deafness had grown on Meredith, which meant effort on both sides of a talk, and the result that it rather drifted into a quip and crankish monologue on his part, now on one subject, now on another. Discourse and metaphor streamed from his still vibrant voice, as if they were native to him, which indeed was true, and he could be gallant and gay, mocking or mordant, as when, to cite an instance, he sometimes described Matthew Arnold as " a dandy Isaiah/¹

He himself may never have been a dandy but we know that he had a sense of colour and the picturesque in clothes, ties certainly, though, even in youth, it never ran to Stevenson's. They forgathered, of course, and they would have had a quick affinity, if only in the ancient hostelry of which Meredith, amid his quiet eightieth birthday celebration, said in so many words to the visiting friends, " You will find

luncheon prepared for you at the Burford Inn, and are begged to take seat there, as at my table." Of it, as you may remember, Stevenson writes in his "Memories and Portraits," linking it with the old Hawes Inn at Queensferry as spots which "abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable. . . ."

He adds, of the Burford Inn, that "with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river" . . . it "still seems to await the coming of the appropriate legend. Within those ivied walls, behind those old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. . . . Some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford."

A later postscript by Stevenson to this was, "I have tried to launch the boat with my own hands in 'Kidnapped.' Some day I may try a rattle at the shutters." But he never did, and perhaps it was hardly in the line of Meredith, and anyhow he would have made it a different tale.

The Omar Khayyam Club once gathered within range of his home at Box Hill, so that he might be met, and it was a high occasion in that august society's history. Meredith had enough of the accredited Omarian spirit to forgive his beguiling into good

company, but by nature, perhaps, he best liked that individually and as the host. Charming and teasing, he wrote to "my Dear Clodd," on a St. Valentine's Day, saying, "On Saturday come in time to dine and I will be your Valentine, O chairman of Omar Khayyams, for whom the praises down the damns."

This had not been always Meredith's own experience, but he had gone on writing in his garden chalet at Flint Cottage, provisioned as for a siege, in order that he might not be disturbed. "Andrew Lang gives me criticism and that I take in good part," he told a friend in the nineties, adding, "And if I do not please him I miss a mark,"

What a critic of rich phrases he would have been himself, say his deliverance to Clodd about Edward FitzGerald: "Fitz is good Suffolk soil, the most pleasing of Fogies. His literary taste in the Classics is quite sound, and infantile out of them." Meredith's ironic humour, keen and swift as the wind on Box Hill, was also, everybody who knew him well told me, a constant sauce to his conversation. No wonder that he was sought, courted and honoured at his little home among the Surrey pines and heather, and that, when he died, a great character as well as a great writer was inscribed on our roll of fame.

We had his name continued in English literature by his son Mr. Will Meredith, as partner in a London

publishing house, and this suggests how very personal the book world was in the nineties and even the nineteen-hundreds. You may still find where the Bentleys published their good harvest of literature. Not however their Red Room, of which there is mention in many chronicles, and in which Victorian authors loved to take tea and talk the afternoon sun down. It would have been known to Charles Dickens or Wilkie Collins and, since she was a woman and no doubt fond of tea before it had altogether "come in," to Mrs. Henry Wood, whose "East Lynne" remains almost a "best seller." What a lot of money it must have made.

Quite a galaxy of giant publishers pop up when we wander in the faded, ghost-like but still speaking bookland which was a near memory in the nineties. Westward, like the Bentleys, John Murray III had reigned in Albemarle Street and consolidated the empire of his father, Byron's "Glorious John," George Henry Bohn started his famous library beside Covent Garden, in the house where De Quincey wrote his "Opium Eater." The Rivingtons, who numbered Buckle, John Stuart Mill, and James Anthony Froude in their list, hung out the sign of the Bible and Crown at Waterloo Place.

There, from the Cornhill that named the magazine still happily with us, came George Smith, with his

house of Smith, Elder, which counted a Bronte, a Thackeray and a Browning among its authors. David and Alexander Macmillan from the Highlands of Scotland had planted their flag in the mid-London which defines itself beside the Strand. William Tinsley, who, at the author's expense, launched Thomas Hardy's first story, "Desperate Remedies," was also in that region.

The knowledgeable and venturing Sampson Low, who kept "Lorna Doone" from failing, was somewhat eastward. Still more easterly was the house of Cassell which has long been associated with La Belle Sauvage Yard, where the ancient London coaches made a home. Up Ludgate Hill, leftward to Paternoster Row, you had the Longmans, oldest of our existing houses, with the Scottish Blackwoods next door.

Now those pillars of the Victorian book market, with others as notable and illustrative, all had their own particular authors, men and women identified with their literary outlook. This gave them character and tone and the individual writer had himself enlarged and emphasized by the mirror which reflected him. It was an almost feudal machine this of publisher and author, as much gentlemen's understanding as business arrangement, but it worked to the glory of Victorian letters. Grub Street, sometimes, no doubt !

Yes, but at other times fame for genius and riches for talent ; and always it was not just haggling in the market-place, whoever won or lost.

Personal friendliness was also a link with the American world of letters which still looked to that of England as the grown-up brother. Sir Walter Besant, I remember, came back from the United States full of admiration for its writers and readers, and sure of the immense part they would play in the whole realm of literature. George W. Cable, whose Creole stories of New Orleans had preceded him, visited London, stayed with Sir James Barrie, and had much social attention.

William Dean Howells, scholarly and sensitive, was also a visitor and he did not forget that an Edinburgh publisher first made his delicate work popular in Britain. A younger American writer, Jack London, dipped across the Atlantic for a little while and was especially interested in the East End life of the capital whose name had fallen to him. He was amused at the coincidence of bringing its own name to London and remarked, " I wonder what the old town thinks ? "

George Haven Putnam was always passing to and fro, though that did not lead anybody to make the joke which somebody made about another great Atlantic traveller, Charles Frohman, that he was a

to-and-fro-man ! More vivid was George Harvey, an American publisher and editor, before he became President Wilson's henchman and, later, American Ambassador in London. Mostly there was someone literary at the embassy itself, though it could not always be a Bancroft, a Russell Lowell or a John Hay.

Perhaps Mark Twain's personality and talk most naturally expressed and signified the bond of a common language and a common literature, as between old England and new America. He had a curious old-worldism in his nature as well as the fresh, alert, untrammelled mentality of the boundless country whose child he was to the end. You will find old-worldliness, a new-worldliness and other-worldliness in what he told me about a book that he had, at the time, lying in manuscript awaiting an unknown future.

" You see," he said, walking about the room and smoking a cigar which hadn't lit well, " I have been writing for many years ; writing to publish. Now there are things a man wants to write to please himself, things he feels he ought to say. This is such a book and I had it by me when trouble overtook the New York publishing house with which I was associated. I think I know my public and I fancy if I had brought the manuscript out of my desk and

printed it then, it would have done well ; so well, possibly, that I should not have had to lecture and write other books in order to clear *off* the liabilities of that firm."

He stopped, as one does when one comes to another road, whether of the feet or the mind, and he lifted a silk hat from a side table and looked into it as if his next thought might be there. It was his own hat, for he had been to some London party and was dressed in a morning coat and light trousers. The double-breasted frock-coat liked by King Edward, was still in vogue but Mark did not go that far in his tribute to English "correctness." Naturally, for his usual get-up was a lounge suit and a soft hat, or, in summer, a straw hat.

"No," he went on, "there could be no question of taking out the manuscript and publishing it. I said to myself, * This is my book, my own book, and it shall remain mine, just mine/ My wife agreed with me and the work remains in manuscript and may never be published at all"

He had begun by joking about stories that had got into the papers as to the existence of a mythical work by him. Then he grew serious, even earnest, and I felt that he was telling me a little bit of intimate autobiography. His moral was the sacredness of literature, the grandeur of writing, apart from its practice

as a livelihood, and the right of an author to his own soul.

About the time of this English visit by Mark Twain an experiment had been made in London with seven-day papers. It had failed, for one reason because it was purely competitive, for another because public opinion was not sympathetic but said, "A plague on both your houses." Mark, who had been a journalist himself, rejoiced that London had refused to follow America with seven-day papers, adding, "It is a fine example of sound public opinion."

By contrast, he was enthusiastic about Anglo-American copyright, then a comparatively fresh achievement in its fullness, as merely right to the individual author and as a real literary bridge between the two English-speaking peoples. It was lamentable the old state of "piracy," when a Dickens had no actual rights in America, or an Emerson any in England. True, high-minded publishers on both sides of the Atlantic were often voluntarily just, even handsome in their generosity, but the situation had been absurd and moreover an irritant in the general relationship between the two countries.

Mark Twain gave me an amusing account of his own efforts in the cause of Anglo-American copyright when it hung on the decision of Congress at Washington. "Why," he said with a laugh, "I actually

went on to the floor of the Senate or the House of Representatives, perhaps it was both, and canvassed the legislators. This was done in quiet little talks, now with one opponent of the measure, now with another, and done as well as I could do it."

He was truly pleased that he had helped in a literary reform which has borne enormous fruit, not only for the common inheritors of Chaucer and Shakespeare, but for the world at large because it set other nations moving. It was, however, the pleasure of a most modest man, because the Samuel L. Clemens, behind the Mark Twain, was the good citizen, the affectionate husband and father, and the very perfect gentleman.

X. HARDY BY THE SUFFOLK SEA

A leisurely and colourful " conversation piece " with Thomas Hardy as the natural, simple, russet-aired countryman of Wessex, in contradistinction to the great English author, who is also in these " Nodes Ambrosian<e"

APPROACH a mountain range and you have difficulty in making out which are really the highest peaks, but look back on it and they are manifest. This parable may be found in the moderate heights of the Scottish Grampians, in the great European heights of the Alps, or in the giant peaks of the Indian Himalayas. At least that is the experience of one who, being Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian, has a long retrospect, and a lively interest in the prospect.

Surely Thomas Hardy is the English author whose writings, in their spirit and style, have bridged and linked those three reigns, anyhow in his novels. He lit bonfires on the skyline of the past and the present, warnings that the old dam of the Victorians was bursting through. But in its tumult it was bearing new soil for the near Edwardians, and the farther

Georgians, and their whole duty was to be up and sowing.

We all have our favourite authors, chosen in youth generally when the sympathies are quick and warm, intuitive rather than critical. Stevenson was a first hero of mine, for his "Treasure Island" and the writing of it in a little house, which I have seen a hundred times, at Castletown of Braemar in the Aberdeenshire Highlands.

He was there one autumn with his American wife, to whom he was to owe so much care and inspiration, and her two children, afterwards familiar in his life as Mrs. Strong and Mr. Lloyd Osbourne. An eventual meeting with Mr. Osbourne gave the assurance that he must have been a delightful boy, but the Braemar weather was imprisoning and "R.L.S." had to carry on his literary work. So, if the small folk would be very good, he would write a fine yarn, and read it to them in the lamp-light of the evening ; and that was the origin of "Treasure Island,"

After Stevenson, Thomas Hardy, more deeply romantic because more gauntly realistic, and thus acquaintance with him, when it came in the goodness of London life, was a personal page completing many read pages. One particular meeting with somebody is often the richest impression of that person, and

indeed, thus struck, you may have made a record of it at the time.

This takes me to a week-end, when the twentieth century was young, at Edward Clodd's Suffolk home, Strafford House, in Aldeburgh town. It might be said that he had a salon there, for his stream of guests included many eminent writers and thinkers, always sure of a mutual "feast of reason and a flow of soul." As one of them, Thomas Hardy would come up to London and travel down to East Anglia, though he did not readily leave his home at Dorchester.

No railway station in London gives you a more gloomy send-off to the country than Liverpool Street, moated in the grey border-line of the City and the East End. On the other hand, its foggy, smoky atmosphere is a stimulus to one's relish of a clearer sky and a purer air in the awaiting Essex and Suffolk,

No doubt here was the two-fold feeling of a little party that, on an afternoon in late October, found its way to the Aldeburgh-bound train which Edward Clodd had named, and in which, always sweetly thoughtful, he had already found seats. We travelled third, of course, and therefore had the full fun of a railway journey, including the tight squeeze in an overcrowded compartment.

This in no way disturbed Thomas Hardy, who sat in a corner seat, quiet as usual, even detached, except

for the formalities of meeting, until we were free of London. By then we got talking and now he would join in, and again he would cast his countryman's swift eye out on the countryside as it swam by. It is a sign in which you can recognize the man nurtured on and amid wide spaces and the townsman who lives close to things.

Hardy, I find the aid to memory telling me, looked older than when I had last seen him, and in the kindly Scottish phrase he was getting " little bookit " ; that is, smaller in physique. He was balder for one thing, almost completely bald, and he happened to say that once he had a great crop of hair. He thought that perhaps the wearing of a tall hat, as the fashion was when he was a young architect in London, had been the first cause of its loss.

Now he wore a soft felt hat which had once been green, but had, thanks to sun, shower, and honest service, become a medley of colours. His clothes were a heavy top-coat, of a black and white check and a tweed suit of no particular shade, though it was russet, and also of no particular cut. He had never been " a dressy man " ; everything nondescript and modest, even to his Gladstone bag of brown leather, grown darkish and tagged " Hardy, Passenger." A detail that, but eloquent of the novelist's simple ways and shrinkage from the eye of the world. Not for

him the label which would invite the remark, " Why, that's Thomas Hardy, the great author."

At some station in our journey through East Anglia, a servant girl, good-looking and plump, jumped in among us, first asking, " Is this first-class."

⁴⁴ No," she was assured, probably by Hardy himself, he being next the door ; " it's third."

Sure she was in the right place, and shyly recovering from her fluster, she sat down in the seat we made for her by a little extra squeezing. Presently, as if she felt she must explain herself, she said she could not read, that she was going to such and such a station, and would the train stop there.

Hardy was instantly concerned with the circumstance that she could not read and asked her, sympathetically, almost earnestly, " Why is that ? " She shook her head, saying she did not know ; just she had not learned and she was eighteen years old. She could, however, say the letters of the alphabet backwards ; say them better thus than forward ; and didn't this, her voice seemed to suggest, make up a little for her unableness to read ? Here, I remember thinking, was another possible Tess or Sue, a rustic heroine, ready-made for a Wessex novel, but by then Hardy had stopped writing fiction.

Why ? Perhaps there was a side-light for us on that in a casual remark he made about his " Jude the

Obscure." " I have," he said, " seen acquaintances turn away when I met them. You get accustomed even to that, but it is not pleasant." If he had gone on writing other novels would they have been " Jude " ; " Jude's " more so, or less so ?

Hardy did not say, but he did inferentially speak of the progress which English fiction, in its examination of human life, had made in the years following " Jude " and " Tess." Possibly he was thinking of them as blazers of the trail which led to the emancipation of the English novel from its long Victorian shackles. His inexpressiveness about himself did not let this appear, but one learned to attach as much to his silences as to his words. Even his measured way of talking had its different significances when you got to understand them.

" Jude," I had been told, was a book on which Hardy set personal store, though, when it appeared, it had not nearly the popular success of " Tess " and still more criticism from the Victorian paladins of literary virtue. Remembering this, I asked him if he had a particular favourite among his novels.

He answered generally, by analogy, as he often did, that at one time an author might like one of his own books best, and at another time another of those books, a matter of mood. I suggested that perhaps a writer was apt to lay most value on the book which had cost him most mental labour, wrongly, because the

perfect thing is often born, not made. He agreed, and doing so left me with the feeling that he favoured "Jude," among his stories.

How, I inquired in the course of this all-round and roundabout conversation, had the reviewing of his books affected him as a writer? Encouraged him, helped him? Or discouraged him, kept him back on his very individual Wessex road?

"Well," he said, "for long any praise I got was given grudgingly, and even when it became the habit to praise what I wrote, it was still grudgingly done. About *Tess,' as you know, I was abused by some papers in unmeasured terms, as if I had done something dreadful. It was, as you also know, still worse with 'Jude' and the criticism of my verse has sometimes been carping, because on small points, a word or such-like." He did not complain, or blame, and indeed was grateful for much and to many, but he just made this note on his passage through the sea of criticism and renown.

Somebody, Hardy casually told us, had wanted to summarize several of his novels for a serial work and he had not countenanced the idea. He enlarged on that refusal by saying it was an impossible idea and asking, "What sort of thing would be the result?" He illustrated his attitude in the remark that the introduction to Scott's "Kenilworth"—how the traveller

came to his inn—set the whole tune of the story. " One of the best pieces of writing Scott ever did," added Hardy, " but if there were to be a condensed edition of * Kenilworth,' I suppose it would instantly be left out."

Thus and thus we made the journey to Aldeburgh and, arriving there, either took the general bus to Edward Clodd's Strafford House, or walked there with him. He liked the walk between the station and his home and as his quick, square figure, begotten of stout seafaring stock, moved along, he would talk of Aldeburgh, its health qualities and its associations.

He knew the town as intimately as Thomas Hardy knew Wessex ; its people and their ways, their soft Suffolk drawl, the picturesque, stimulating landscape behind it and the changing seascape in front of it. His heart had a warm corner for George Crabbe's old church on the heights above the town, because, though he was a Rationalist of the Victorian school of Darwin and Huxley, Herbert Spencer and John Morley, he had an innate reverence towards everything noble and of good report.

Edward Clodd's hospitality was as simple as it was perfect, for while he thought of his guests all the time he let them be at home in their own fashion. Outside, on the October occasion which I have been recalling, the wind was lashing coldly in from the



THOMAS HARDY AND EDWARD CLODD.

A photograph "snapped" on the sea-shore at Alderburgh, where the Wessex Novelist, who is on the right, often visited the banker-author at his hospitable home in the ancient East-Anglian town.

North Sea and the night was deepening into darkness. The waves broke on the shingle with the heavy beat which comes from deep water, because Aldeburgh has real salt-tanged ocean, just as it keeps its ancient, long-shore atmosphere of rope and tar.

Here was a community which for centuries has gone down to the sea in ships and boats, and that imprint, Ai at Lloyd's, was on Edward Clodd. Nay, it was the basis of his long-prized work as the secretary of a great London bank, and of his undoubted high service to English thought in letters and science.

Within, his Strafford House was all physical warmth and mental light, and surely a guest can seek and get no better hospitality. There was a fire in the old-fashioned hall and it burned so brightly that you could read the famous names inscribed on a table there which had been presented to Clodd on a birthday. Your room, whichever it might be, took you up an easy, winding stair, and it offered the welcome of quietude and a bouquet of bedside books. Down again, by and by, to a kindly dining-room, a kindly dinner, a bottle of red wine, which the host himself had put in the fireplace to warm, and, above all, much serious and careless chat.

An incident of the dinner would be the appearance of a stone jar in which a New Englander, grateful for hospitality by Edward Clodd, had sent him,

from Boston, a liqueur called " Elder Didson." The contrast between its robust flavour and its Puritanic name, always brought a sparkle into Clodd's eye, and jocularly into his comments, as he poured it out. The New England pilgrims ? Grim fellows of a grim religion ! Yes, but here was Elder Didson, not only the inventor of a comforting spirit but, since his name christened it, the voucher for it to others.

Grave and gay, and gay and grave, and each mood so natural that they made a memorable blend of " Noctes Ambrosianae," for Christopher North and his cronies would not have been better than Strafford House at its best. This was over a cup of coffee and afterwards, in the bow-windowed room, on the first floor, which was Edward Clodd's parlour, study, and familiar haunt. It was the centre of the life of Strafford House and was peopled with photographs, manuscripts, rare and valued books, and it lay on to the Bay of Aldeburgh. There, quiet as a mill pool, leaping into small white crests, or grumbling in anger, was ancient Mother Sea, and Clodd loved her company.

Hardy was too much the country-man to be the sea-man, but I recollect thinking that the drub of the tide below Clodd's window might well have suggested the eerie touch in his " Dead Man's Bay " of " The Dynasts." But, of course, he got it from his

own Wessex coast, beside Weymouth, which the King George of the period was in the habit of visiting. Anyhow, that point of history did not arise in the rest of the week-end communings, though these were many and various. Never, in the case of Hardy, intimate, because he had none of the amiable vanity which opens that door in human nature, or he self-consciously suppressed it.

The names of Robert Louis Stevenson and Anthony Trollope cropped up, in what conjunction I don't remember, for the two personalities are not easy to join. Hardy spoke of Stevenson having written some piece of work thirteen times and commented, " I sometimes wish he had not written things so often." Of Trollope I told him what I had seen in a new " George Eliot " letter, the man and novelist described as the " insusceptible Trollope." He laughed and said the phrase was exactly right, because Trollope, in conversation, just went on, indifferent to attention and to other people.

Amid the going round of jokes and light but never colourless chat, Hardy told us a Dorset story of an old man who was dying. His daughter came from far to see him, arrived tired and anxious, and when the doctor led her to his bedside she fainted. The doctor caught her as she was falling, and from the bed a sepulchral voice cried faintly, " Cut her stays."

Hardy, about then, was revising his " Dynasts " and he had brought a set of the proofs with him to Aldeburgh. He was very careful and precise with his markings on those proofs, and if they still exist no doubt Mr. Gabriel Wells, the American collector, would be glad to hear of them. Perhaps it was in this relation that the question came up of Meredith giving his gardener man Cole some of his manuscripts, and of these being sold later to the Pierpont Morgan who gathered so many literary and art treasures from England and the Old World generally.

Was it these manuscripts, asked Hardy, which Meredith alluded to in his will when he said he had provided for Cole ? " No," answered Edward Clodd, and as a banker friend he knew ; " Meredith had, in his lifetime put some stock into his servant's name." He had attached no value to the manuscripts but in friendly fashion had given them to Cole, who only regarded them as a personal token from his master. It was afterwards, and from others, that he learned of their practical value, for manuscripts were not in his line of knowledge.

Hereupon Hardy mentioned that he himself had been approached, by a literary agent, with the request, would he sell some of his MSS. ? No name of the person behind the inquiry was given him, but it was probably the same active Pierpont Morgan. The

inquirer got no sort of response, as Hardy let us understand without saying so, because that might have seemed self-importance.

" But what/* he asked, " is a man to do with his MSS. ? It would look like vanity and assurance to offer them to the British Museum." " Not a bit," quoth Edward Clodd, "and certainly the manuscripts of the author of the Wessex Novels and * The Dynasts' should be preserved there." This tribute of an old friend silenced Hardy for a moment with, perhaps, a pleasant confusion, but he listened to another suggestion which one of us made.

There were certain institutions which, by statute, had each to get a free copy of every book published in this country ; the British Museum, Oxford University, Cambridge University, the Advocates' Library of Edinburgh and Trinity College, Dublin. Why should an eminent English writer, wishful to do the right thing in the right way, not distribute his manuscripts over those national institutions ?

" Still better than the British Museum idea," remarked Edward Clodd, while Hardy sat and thought the matter over. He may seriously have done that then, for later he did gift his chief manuscripts to national seats of learning and letters, beginning, I think, with Aberdeen University. His first honorary degree came from that ancient and scholarly

seat, and it gave him a lively satisfaction and heralded other honours which he took quietly.

Churches and church music ! They drew a word from Hardy on the Sunday at Aldeburgh when, walking for the air and exercise, we found ourselves beside the parish church. It means a postscript to a Hardy incident which has not been unrecorded, but the detail and directness from him make new light.

" We heard the echoes of the music within," I find in a note-book, " and he listened, saying softly he had always been fond of church music. It had been familiar to him in his youth and his affection for it remained. He did not go to church when he was at home as that might be misunderstood ; but elsewhere he often did so. This, not alone because of his pleasure in the music, but because churches had an architectural interest for him."

Some of us put that into the literary contacts of George Crabbe's former church, when we rumbled past it for the station, on our way to London after a fine week-end. It was only, however, typical of Edward Clodd's parties and of the atmosphere which his own beautiful nature gave them. He had, as a host, not only humour and good humour, but the happy word and the pat story drawn from a wealth of memories and experiences. Take one of an American widow, who so often told her neighbour at

dinner of her widowhood that, his patience and his susceptibility exhausted, he snorted, " Grass or sod, madame ? "

On some occasion he was talking of Bates the " Naturalist on The La Plata," who, in tribute to their friendship, named him his trustee. A chief legacy to the family was a wonderful collection of beetles which Bates had spent his life in making. It was so unique that the problem was what to do with it, how to obtain for it anything like its value.

Clodd's efforts in this way made a lively narration by him, and somehow the beetles were resolved into a substantial sum of money—I fancy he said three thousand pounds. A moment's silence followed the narrative, and then a most dear lady of the company, wishful to be sympathetic and seem attentive, quietly asked, " But on what did you feed the beetles ? " Laughter and applause !

This delicious interlude led Clodd to tell the lady, a favourite of his as the wife of a sincere man friend, of a not unsimilar incident which had also happened at his Aldeburgh dinner table. Races and their characteristics were being discussed, humanly rather than learnedly, and somebody remarked on the swarthy Spanish types to be met in our very English Cornwall. " Yes," cooed that learned woman, Miss

Jane Harrison, who was of the party, " the sailors of the Spanish Armada got ashore there ! "

The salt was fathom deep in Edward Clodd's blood and he was never happier than when he was afloat in his little yacht the *Lotus* on the tidal Aide, with a few chosen companions. He was then the " little admiral " indeed, my own fond name for him, and he and his man made a ship-shape crew. There was a *Lotus I* and there was a *Lotus II* and both were intimate in Clodd's summer life, until the ageing eighties hove in sight with him.

Not easy to navigate was the Suffolk Aide with its twisting shoals and its mudbanks, where wild birds swarmed and cried. It was staked to help yachtsmen tack safely on the tide and Clodd, at the helm himself, would post us to watch the stakes in case, in uncertain light, we missed one and found ourselves aground. Once I did miss one, with the foreseen consequence, and a wait for more water, but the " little admiral " cheered my remorse with the remark, " Never mind ; Thomas Hardy was before you in the same unseaman-like negligence."

The smile in his soft, grey-blue eyes as he spoke lingers with me, like the morning light on his Aideburgh Bay, where his noble soul found nurture, and his ashes dwell with the living tides.

XL A PAGE OF PEOPLE

Books and their exposition and criticism as a regular part of London's news of the day; a bold and original experiment^ and its achievement of an awakening spirit whose fruits are still active.

A HUMAN life is greatly coloured by the window from which it looks out on the world and through which the world comes in. We all have windows in our lives but some are only the rise and fall of a blind, while others abide with us. The voice of a flying day goes over the hills ; the other, of the years, becomes ourselves.

No window could be more enriching, in mind and heart, than one looking on the English bookland, with its daily activities and its treasury of the ages. Especially if it happens to be in the office of a great London newspaper, for then it mingles the actual with the contemplative.

Moreover atmosphere was not the only inheritance in being literary editor of the old *Daily Chronicle*^ for that place had been held by three notable men, all, oddly enough, Henrys ; Henry W. Massingham,

Henry Norman and H. W. Nevinson. They had made traditions, and it was fortunate in one's youth to have seen them in the making, because that was not only to know the land but later to continue its exploration.

There has always to be a machine if a thing is to work, and a subconsciousness of that may explain why children love mechanical toys. They want to see the wheels go round and even a literary page has its wheels, as well as its personnel. At least ours had, and a simple, direct method, well understood, from the inside by reviewers, and from the outside by authors and publishers, was a key element of the whole achievement.

So much book criticism and book news every day ! That was the bed-rock of operations and readers who cared for it knew it would be there absolutely, whatever might be the " pressure on space," as Fleet Street laconically puts it.

Every night there is the silent drama of the " lay-out " for to-morrow's paper ; how shall its columns be apportioned among the news, the editorial, the special articles, the sport and so on ? It is an unwon, unlost, eternal battle, with the editor-in-chief as the final umpire and autocrat.

Naturally " literature " is in a delicate position, being something that, again in Fleet Street parlance, can be

A NIGHTLY TUG-OF-WAR

" held over." Therefore the officer in that particular pill-box constantly gets " sniped " and has to be alert, resourceful and tactful if he is to keep his flag flying.

One remembers many a battle around that flag, a sort of tug-of-war which possibly warmed an atmosphere but never spoiled its good nature. Nobody was expected to come to any harm and indeed, out of an encounter, it was sometimes possible to annex a piece of territory for next day's paper. That, of course, was done in a high cause, like most annexations in the history of the world, and certainly we believed in ours. You would, if you had walked into the literary editor's room about four o'clock of an afternoon and found it star-scattered with the new books of the hour.

A journalist loves the smell of an early copy of his paper, with his article, bright and good, in it, and an author loves the newly-born copies of his book. But you get a literary garden in full bloom when you look upon a mass of just printed books, coloured by their ⁴⁴jackets " like a rainbow. The inky way has come home and it has come bringing the fruits and the fallacies, the hopes and the fears of many minds and some hearts. Into both the dark and the light go all of us, when we are confronted with such a daily harvest of the pen, but the literary editor, poor man, has his immediate job.

It begins when, as a personal book-lover, he casts an eye over the waiting throng, opening a page here, reading a sentence there, happening on names known and unknown. It is like looking out on a sunny morning and sensing it curiously and gratefully, as if it were all yours, as indeed it is. Of this personal dip through a batch of new books, a literary editor, however sophisticated, never grows tired, or if he does he had better take a holiday. Meanwhile his concrete job awaits, but often there will firstly be a dozen letters to answer.

" Why the———don't you get in one of my reviews ; haven't had anything in for days, and I'm waiting for the cashier " ..." I thought that rather a scrubby little review of my new novel. I'm sure if you had written it yourself it would have been much more satisfactory to you and to me. ..."

" I'm just down from Oxford and I want to follow a literary life. I understand that I must start at the foot and I am offering my services to you as a reviewer. What about the Poet Laureate's new volume or Winston Churchill's latest ? " . . . " I have asked my publisher to send you a personal copy of my new story which is just about to appear, and I think you will agree that it is quite the best thing I have done."

Thus and thus, with others of other sorts, run the epistles and, being answered, a paper-weight is

clamped on them while the reviews for the morrow are chosen, sub-edited, which may mean little or much, and sent to that essential gentleman the printer, who is upstairs or downstairs, according to the architecture of the office. Anyhow, he has his "chapel" somewhere, that being the name, with compositors, of the small standing committee, as it may be called, which manages the corporate affairs of the men. Why "chapel" one wonders, because there is nothing religious about it, and indeed the lowest member of the hierarchy it represents, the boy who does all things, is named the "printer's devil."

Now for the literary editor comes leisure to carefully examine the new books, those clearly worthy of review being ranged in one packet, those which may be worthy in another, and those obviously not worthy in a third, curtly known as the "throw-aways." Such is our trilogy of order and fate and by the time it is worked through and set moving, Mr. Printer has sent down his proofs of the reviews being published to-morrow and these have to be looked over.

Allow a break for dinner, the writing or dictating of letters, and the seeing of callers and the night will have come when, the Scriptures hath it, no man can work. But the journalist had not been invented in

Scriptural times, much less the literary editor, who, however, is fortunate enough to finish his day's task earlier than most of his colleagues.

His personal contacts with reviewers, publishers and authors, give him a savour which remains various and diverting in the memory, as some instances and portraits will suggest. Say Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham's almost unreadable handwriting, about which a deputation from the "compositors' chapel" appeared one evening, courteous but resolute. It returned a manuscript by him to the literary editor with the information that compositors really could not be expected to spend their hours in the vain effort to read and set it up.

This indictment was not easy to meet and afterwards, I think, Mr. Cunninghame Graham's MSS. went through a sequence of decipherers before it was tried on the printer. Odd that the modern Mac-Quixote of Scotland should make his beautiful English so hard in manuscript, while, when it gets into plain print, it is sun-clear. Anyhow, in two senses, he illustrates the truism which easy-going young authors of to-day might well remember, that difficult writing makes the best reading.

A naval book, or one on some great English sailor, had come in on our literary editor, and lay about for a day or two because the usual reviewer of such

volumes was not available. A stranger sent in a notice of the book, handling it with evident knowledge, even authority, and a pleasant style of writing. Nothing could be better, so that article by " E. Hallam Moorhouse " was duly printed and others on sea subjects were entrusted to the same pen.

One afternoon an office boy came upstairs with the information that a visitor would like to see the literary editor, and the name written on a slip of paper, " E. Hallam Moorhouse." " Oh, send him up," was the instruction, because it was always good to make the acquaintance of a new contributor. Presently there appeared a nice girl, with smiling eyes and flaxen hair, who explained that she was the " Hallam Moorhouse " who had been addressed, through the post office as " Esquire." Under her maiden name of Esther Hallam Moorhouse, and her married name of Mrs. Gerard Meynell, she has since those years done much admirable writing, but she has never perhaps made so surprising and pleasant a stir as she made in Fleet Street that afternoon.

There was a standing rule, rarely broken and only for a special reason, that a book must not be reviewed by a friend of the writer of it. Now J. E. Patterson, who had been a sailor and had written some sound and ship-shape sea novels, had a new one coming out. He reviewed for the paper, but, stretching a point,

the literary editor confided his book to a mutual friend, thinking the best that could be said of it would thus be said, and Patterson needed encouragement.

Alas ! the article did not satisfy him, and he was doubly angry when, somehow, he learned who had written it. Not that he had any feeling against this brother reviewer, but that he thought he was not understanding and appreciative enough, as we all, perhaps, are apt to think about our friends. Besides, the review which comes out of the unknown blue is always most intriguing to an author. He wants to be judged on his merits, being, naturally, quite sure of them, and so praise from a stranger is doubly sweet.

Rarely is there a writer who does not feel that his immediate book has brought out something fresh in his talent, and that is the right instinct. It took much soothing and coaxing before we again heard the natural heartiness of Patterson's "Hullo," when he blew in, bag in hand, from rural Essex, in which he dwelt and which he loved with his battling, kindly heart of oak.

He had sparkle and vitality but he was not always happy, though he could be. He loved humour but he often found tragedy when another man would have laughed. He had his audience in his day, and if he is not remembered like Joseph Conrad, he

nevertheless served before the mast, revered the sea, and was a novelist and a poet of parts.

Edward Thomas, who is remembered, was becoming the essayist and the poet, while he made his living as a critic. Possibly some of his best work was his criticism, but he was never the man to advertise anything he did and, test of that, he hardly cared whether a review by him appeared with his name or without it. His personality, as he would look in, every now and then, lingers with me as that of a most likeable man and gentleman, both sensitive and modest.

He was tall, supple as well as robust, the very figure you would look for on an open road, swinging a walking-stick instead of leaning upon one. It was not unusual for him to leave London in the evening and walk all the miles home to Petersfield, in Hampshire. You could not fancy him a town dweller because then he would have been imprisoned mentally and physically.

He carried the atmosphere of the country with him and its freshness and richness and poetry were in his eyes and his face. He spoke slowly, with a Welsh softness, now gravely, now smilingly, it depended on the mood, but always arrestingly. His fair hair might have covered the head of a young Norseman, and there was an artist's disorder of refinement in it when he took *off* his soft felt hat, and stood with it in

his hand, a familiar attitude. He was not easy to know, shrinking from all contact that was not sincere, but he was worth knowing, and then delightful.

Thomas added high industry to high talent, and where the two mate as a touch of genius, let the all-wise tell us. But the writing road had not been easy for him and popular recognition tarried. It was only, indeed, when his life closed in the war, that he came into his name as a writer with the spirit of a George Borrow or a Richard Jefferies, and the soul of a poet, and into his readers.

Outwardly he bore the delay serenely, though he may have felt it deeply, because he had recesses of power which had not been fully called forth. They were lost, like so much other literary metal of the English pasture, with the "flowers of the forest" which Armageddon "wed away." Most specially does memory associate "E.T." with trees and fields and flowers, and for him there was freshness every morning in the old lines :

*" One is nearer God's Heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth"*

Another fine fellow who lived in the country but never became a countryman, was Tighe Hopkins, author and reviewer, and accomplished as both. He

would come to London once in a long while from his corner of the Kent coast and drop in with the warm greeting of the genuine Irishman he was.

He had a constant laugh in his eye, an unfailing curl in his moustache, increasing furrows on his broad brow, and still a lilt of the brogue in his singularly beautiful voice. His air and his clothes had grace and he was amazingly particular about his ties, liking them rather dandy, which led us to tie them into a joke with his Christian name. Never was the writing gift more evident in tapering hands than in his, and as his dear little wife would say, he could not, for the life of him, make up a parcel.

Tighe's richly stored mind was picturesque without being actually poetic, and romantic without being merely sentimental. This perhaps accounted for his love of French literature and his at-homeness with it. He wrote some admirable books on French celebrities and events, and their clarity of style recommended them across the English Channel. His sympathetic nature and his hatred of everything cruel made him a student of prison life and his writings on it were an actual influence in its modern amelioration.

What a conversationalist he was of a Sunday afternoon in his Kent garden, with his wife pouring out the tea and his daughter handing round the home-made cakes. He talked slowly, easily, honouring

what he had to say by the way he said it, humour in his eyes, a cigarette eternally in his lips or his hand, or half-made, for he was old-fashioned in that he rolled his own.

His chivalry to women was only equalled by his kindness to men, for to both he was the perfect esquire. He had known most of the ups and downs of a literary life and they can sour the best of natures. His remained sweet and simple and when he died he left us all the poorer by just as much as his life had made our lives the richer.

Tighe Hopkins and Louis F. Austin, old friends, had in common those characteristics which are expressed in natural elegance of mind and body and in care for clothes and how they are put on. Often "L.F." walked down to Fleet Street from his rooms in Jermyn Street, or from his successive clubs, the Devonshire and the Reform, where he did much of his writing, to the holy horror, I fancy, of ancient and crusted members, with Victorian ideas about what a member might and might not do.

"No writing here," beyond private letters ; "dam it, sir, it isn't done." This would not have upset one line of Austin's spidery, difficult writing, nor his gay philosophy, which sometimes had a whiff of the cynical, though it could never have left a real wound.

"L.F." was as fine an after-dinner speaker as we

SIR HENRY IRVING

have ever had, spontaneous and witty, and in all moods eloquent. He was for years private secretary to Sir Henry Irving and that great actor's speeches were sometimes thought to have his touch. Perhaps he "devilled" for him, but a letter from Irving in Austin's handwriting, which I once got, had changes by "the chief" that showed his own presence and finish.

It had to do with the interesting suggestion and possibility whether Sir Henry would some day write his reminiscences. He carefully inserted the qualification, "might perhaps," into the promise, "shape themselves when my professional work becomes less exacting/* Irving's death while he was still in the throes of the stage, robbed us of a book that he may often have talked over with a literary artist as accomplished as L. F. Austin.

He was a born essayist and the pity was that he never wrote the books which all his friends knew he could have written. Journalism was his living and his tyrant, and I think the only volume he did was one with a selection of "At Random" causeries which he contributed to a weekly London paper. He was essentially the Londonian in his interests, and his favourite walk of a morning was up Regent Street and down Bond Street, varied by taking them the other way about. He was the life and soul of a

social party of intellectual friends and there was something fitting in his death, suddenly, at Brighton, in evening dress.

Our "star" reviewer of novels was Hubert Bland and nobody has ever made reading about them more fresh and useful than he did. It is a tiring literary furrow to plough for a long time, because it has many arid patches. But Hubert Bland, like Mr. Gerald Gould to-day, made it an affair not merely of enlightenment on this story or that, but of personality, and so of diversion, coloured with human insight and knowledge ; the ultimate angle from which all writing has to be assessed. Why address the moon ?

A monocle, which he knew how to wear, and a red tie which perpetuated him as an original Fabian, were not only parcel but part of Hubert Bland. His white hair, his noticeably black moustache and his dressiness were more of him, and his short-sightedness brought him close when he spoke, thus adding nearness to geniality. He had a high-pitched voice and a real pleasure in helping other people, especially young writers. But his greatest possession was his wife, Edith Nisbet, whom all the world knew, and should go on knowing, for her lovely children's stories.

The Bland home was at Well Hall, an old country house not out of touch with London Town, and a



DRAMATIC HENRY IRVING.

The famous actor at the stage door of the Lyceum Theatre, which he also made famous; from an artistic snapshot owned by his friend, Sir Arthur Pinero.

A GRAND CIRCLE

visit to them there was an adventure. It was liked by such celebrities as Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. H. G. Wells, the Sidney Webbs and many lesser known and unknown people. Well Hall was Hospitality Hall, Bohemian Hall, and anything else that it could be in a useful way. Hubert's elegant air and his wife's fairy goodness went grandly together, and if the household ran in a casual fashion, that was just Well Hall. Always it had a magic carpet, such as " E. Nisbet " wove in her stories, and there it typified the whole family of *Daily Chronicle* reviewers.

The inner circle of them included William Archer, a genuine critic and scholar of the drama and of letters ; A. B. Walkley, with a similar knowledge, which he expressed as a Frenchman might ; Lewis Hind, who made art understandable to the inartistic ; E. T. Cook, who could put finality and a literary touch into a mere leader note ; Martin Hume, an authority on everything Spanish ; Marriott Watson, who wrote good long novels and some perfect short stories ; Clarence Rook, whose " Hooligan Nights " were an example of what he gave to Fleet Street, and Charles Lowe, who had been *The Times* correspondent at Berlin in the great days of Bismarck.

Other brethren who were of the inner circle are Mr. Arthur Waugh, a man of letters in all the phrase means ; Mr. C. E. Lawrence, who mixed criticism as

bright and good as his own books, with his own good nature ; Mr. W. H. Chesson, whose notice of any book had a second-sight fairy touch ; Mr. George Sampson, an authority on education and literature ; Mr. Keighley Snowden, prose-poet of the Yorkshire wolds ; Sir Philip Gibbs, when he was not away somewhere as " special correspondent " ; and Mr. D. S. Meldrum, in whom Fleet Street captured and held a fine Scottish novelist.

Before them, Richard Le Gallienne, John Davidson, Lionel Johnson, Francis Thompson and other vital sparks had called at grimy Whitefriars Street for " review books," and beyond its immediacy lay an outer circle of notables who were occasional reviewers. It was a small " Who's Who," as you will gather in the further mention of names like those of Bernard Shaw, Augustine Birrell, Frederic Harrison, Austin Dobson, Edmund Gosse, Justin MacCarthy, Israel Zangwill, Canon Barnett, Egerton Castle, the novelist, Isabella Bishop, the traveller, and, of course, amiable Edward Clodd.

Every name that comes to the tongue recalls a memory or a story ; William Archer's anxiety that the paragraphs in his articles should be left just as he arranged them ; Le Gallienne's Byronic face and hair and his melodious voice ; Walkley's detached politeness as he turned over a batch of books, looking

for one he cared to write about ; Martin Hume's tales of what the Spanish Ambassadors said about Queen Elizabeth in their confidential dispatches to Madrid ; Lewis Hind's advocacy of Christian Science, a faith which had helped himself in illness, or Clarence Rook's knickerbocker suit and his quiet courage when he could no longer come in it to Whitefriars Street. Then Mr. William Bailey Kempling, scholar, journalist, and dear fellow, kept the literary department trimmed and oiled for us all, and Sir Robert Donald was stimulating in his onlook.

As an editor his call was essentially for affairs and men, but he had the Scotsman's natural and national regard for books. Also observation and discrimination among them, and his tireless spirit would, as it were, alight and rest a little in their quiet, communicative presence. He was " R.D." to us all, particularly at such a moment, for he was from the Grampians, where the splendour of nature inbreeds the feeling and thinking which make for literature.

The whole personality of Robert Donald was of the order that comes from the Highland Line across Scotland, a mixture of the Celt and the Saxon, or, as John Morley said about Gladstone, a Highlander in the custody of a Lowlander. He had the dark eyes, the dark hair and the inviting air of the one, and the tall, arresting, capable presence of the other,

altogether a "man o' pairts" as the comprehensive Scots phrase has it.

Wherever he was he would make a difference, and he was constantly among the "great and the bold," liking that and, on occasion, chatting about it, amused and amusing. His inquiring smile, in which there could be a tear, was a light both among friends and strangers, and his voice, with its musical Scottish roll of the "r," let out the true kindliness of his nature.

His pleasure, when he could serve anybody, was instant and whole-hearted, but he had an uncanny Highland insight, which guided him surely through the precincts of human nature. This instinct, comrade to a steady Lowland common sense, was reflected in his relations with his colleagues, for he let them do their jobs with freedom, encouraging in all things, jealous in none. It was the same large character which won him abiding friendships among the public men of all parties, and thus enabled him to pass the best inner opinion into the stream of national thought.

Something like that, looking back over the years, is how I see "R.D.," the worker, and he worked ardently, but it is only a portrait in faint lines. Of him, in the traffic of friendship, a little thing will best illumine, as stars do.

We happened to meet, a day or two before his sudden death, and one passage of conversation was on the preciousness of a serene, beautiful home in a strenuous life. " Ah," said " R.D.," " that means peace ; peace to think and work, because happiness." His friends knew what this constant presence and inspiration had meant in his striking career.

It could not have closed more fitly than among the blanket of morning papers with which, from the era of the old *Daily Chronicle* and its literary page, he had always opened a new day.

XII. "THE INKY WAY"

Its lure and challenge to a -personal adventure, namely the founding and editing of a Book Monthly\ with many side adventures^ especially the true tale of Stevenson s " To-ho-ho " pirate song.

WE are all, in our mortal lives, entitled to two real flings, one sentimental, the other practical, and if a holiday, so big and long that it becomes an adventure, is added, then we have lived, however else the Gods may treat us.

Every person will see that trinity according to his, or her, own lights and experiences, but in mine the founding of a literary magazine, and the editing of it for seventeen years, take a clear place. If it was the pursuit of literature on a little oatmeal, according to the tenet of the Edinburgh Reviewers, it was also vastly diverting in its contacts, and reassuring for its constant discovery of the milk of human kindness in inkpots distinguished and undistinguished.

One thing struck me, youthful and eager, as being absent from the London book world of the late

“ M'SIEUR MONTHLY ! ”

eighteen-nineties and early nineteen-hundreds. This was a monthly which should mirror that world to the public on the personal notes of gossip, news, interviews and signed articles, with an accompanying gallery of portraits and pictures.

Something popular, but always literary, because lightness of touch, as the young English generation better realize, is the friend, not the enemy of artistry. Something serious and informing, though as un-high-brow as the *Athenaeum* and other Victorian literary organs had been high-brow, because their line was pure criticism. Something for the good reader, author, publisher, bookseller, " man in the street " or woman in the drawing-room, who liked personality as a key to literature, as it is to life.

Somebody later sent to *The Book Monthly*, for so the baby was christened, a poem which happily expressed its spirit and its way, as these were conceived and as they worked out. Sang this bard of warm greeting and genial understanding :

" *Eonjour ! M'sieur Monthly !*

Ton put us au fait

In mannerly style, with

Book-things of the day—

*With things we have wanted to know—and did not
And things we are glad to be told—quite a lot!*

“THE INKY WAY”

" *Ton are not too uppish
Brave Venturer young !
Ton wag but a friendly', and
Literary tongue !
Tour flair is delightful; your ' high-brow ' is not !
For which we are thankful, indeed quite a lot.*

" *An hour of enchantment,
A wander-away
By delicate paths from
The highway's dull grey . . .
Aroma d the atmosphere ; couleur de rose,
With bird-call of Poesi, harp-wind of Prose.*

" *We bow, M'sieur Monthly ;
Vous etes id—pray stay ;
Certainement you deal well
With needs of To-day
Bon voyage. Young Venturer ! bien, we acclaim you ;
Prestige grace your brow, as Bon Ami we name
your*

But the voyage had still to begin, because, as in Longfellow's poem, you first must have the " Building of the Ship," its equipment and the charting of the sea to be sailed in. Dreams and dramas have to be anchored to ways and means, if they are to come

true, though, perhaps, our fondest dreams and dramas are those which have only been imagined.

Most journals, great and small, have had a personal root, that being the touchstone which interests, attracts and holds. But even a modest one needs sinews of war, provision for a period of struggle, and if it can be housed with repute and substance already existing, so much the better.

After friendly soundings the original idea of *The Book Monthly* was submitted to Mr, Frank Lloyd, the chief proprietor of the *Daily Chronicle*^ a man in whom graciousness and integrity, coupled with foresight and insight, made as fine a character as Fleet Street has known for many a year. He listened to the outline and thought, and he asked for details and time to consider them. Then he spoke and, as usual, his verdict was as clear as it was kindly.

Here was an idea, a plan, good in itself, and pretty certainly there was a vacant place in London literary journalism for it. But it was not big enough to fit into the organization of a daily paper. Necessarily the appeal of a bookish magazine, however crisply done, was to a select audience, and the possible profits were small, as let the possible losses also be ; a hundred pounds or two hundred, either way, in a year, as far as might be estimated, a singularly shrewd forecast, as it proved.

“ THE INKY WAY ”

No, it was not an affair for Mr. Frank Lloyd, with all his sympathy, but said he, " I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll give you, for a year, a substantial advertisement of the literary page of the *Daily Chronicle* and, may be, keep on with it." A generous thought on his part, and a grand thought for me, because, as was intended, it suggested a definite plan of campaign.

Why not go to the leading publishers, mostly by this time good personal friends of mine, and say, " Do you think well enough of this venture to reserve ahead space in it for advertising your new books ? You will, of course, only do this if you feel it is going to be an influence in a general literary way, as well as directly useful in spreading your particular light. Otherwise the man with the plan and willingness to work on it, had better give up the notion."

There was a precedent here in the tradition of the *Athenaeum* that publishers must reserve dates if they were, for certain, to get into it with their announcements. It was the " dream and the business," based on character and quality, for the old Victorians knew how to create and hold what they had created.

Would the example hold in a very modest way in the new day of King Edward, for new and different it was by contrast with the long reign which had gone before. Already I had consulted Sir Charles Dilke and he had thought well of a literary monthly on

modern lines but went no farther. Indeed when I saw him at his house in Sloane Street, tall, handsome, bearded, he struck me as the essence of deliberation and caution, much in contrast to the scandal with which he was identified. He was a fine fencer, and his mentality of cold, rapid decision, expressed in cool, slow words, may have been influenced by that accomplishment.

Anyhow his *Athenum* showed what a new venture, given half as much goodwill, might do, and so the outcome proved. It soon got promises enough of publishers' lists to guarantee existence for the year it needed in which to prove itself. This it was fortunate to do from the beginning, much helped by a kindly send-off which John Murray IV gave it at an opportune literary dinner, and so, year and year, it went on, mostly, it is true, a labour of love, but always a loving labour.

"Why," friends would say, as the years grew and only brought a modest fame, not fortune, "do all this work for little or nothing, except, of course, the glory of it?" Here came the smile that friends give us, but so far as a little self-analysis could tell it was not an affair of glory. Surely the stimulus lay in the pleasure of creating something new and fresh from month to month.

No feeling is more exquisite, more satisfying, than

“THE INKY WAY”

the creative one, perfectly expressed in human life itself, otherwise it would not go on in letters, in music, in art, however heavy the discouragements and obstacles. Perhaps it ministers to vanity, but if the purpose is high it can only be a pretty vanity, such as the Scottish character, particularly, manifests in unknown people and in Prime Ministers. If Mr. Ramsay MacDonald were, calling on his literary side, to define it, he might say, " Well, if a man gives his best to a task, recognition of this helps it, and gratifies him."

Certainly there is a great joy, as well as hard labour, unrewarded materially, in editing a magazine which is yours and yours only. Its pages take your confidence in good and bad hours, and such a giving out of self gradually spreads beyond the printed page. You hear from people, meet them, make new friendships, and existence, mentally and spiritually, becomes larger and richer. What you give out, much or little, comes back an hundred-fold and always there is the stir of adventure, as of some surprise waiting round the corner to be discovered.

It is an adventure making for understanding and tolerance and thus for an unconscious but clear uplift in an editor himself. All the more is that so if, early and late, he has to wite much of his publication, besides twelve times in the twelve months find



Russell, London.

KING EDWARD AND His GRANDCHILDREN.

The Royal Architect of the Edwardian Age, with the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Tork, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Princess Royal.

“ SWEET SEVENTEEN ! ”

the main ideas for it. Wearing and wearying ?
Necessarily, but there is always the knightly ballad
of the Scottish Border :

“ ‘ bight on, my men] Sir Andrew says,
 ⁴ A little I'm hurt but yet not slain,
 ril but lie down and bleed a while
 And then I'll rise and fight again' ”

Simplicity must be the slogan, and this helped things when, in the tumultuous time after the Great War, *The Book Monthly* must give up the ghost. All through Armageddon it sallied out at intervals and then it found a harbour which promised to give it both security and a larger life. However, this was not to be, in the post-war flux of things, and though nobody and nothing should die at seventeen, the pilgrimage had been a goodly one, its friendships and meetings had been many, and its harvest had often had sheaves of real value.

If a future " Solomon Eagle," instead of heaving a contemporary brick at *The Book Monthly*, were to erect one to its memory, he could say that it garnered fresh material from the English literary world, made it available in general, and thus assisted knowledge and enlightenment. He would find many instances of such exploration and ingathering, some small but

“ THE INKY WAY ”

vital, others poetic and colourful, like the real facts attaching to the famous quatrain in Stevenson's " Treasure Island " :

⁴⁴ *Fifteen men on the dead mans chest—
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
Drink and the Devil had done for the rest,
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum ! "*

Did " R.L.S." find the chant of Billy Bones in some legend of Captain Morgan and the other gentlemen of the " Jolly Roger " ? Did it, as somebody once suggested, spring from the wreck of an English buccaneer on a cay in the Caribbean Sea called " The Dead Man's Chest," because of its fancied resemblance to the old sea-chest which held a sailor's scanty belongings ? Had the grim words ever been actually on the lips of deep-sea sailors, and if so how did " R.L.S." encounter them ? Alternatively and ultimately, did he just invent the quatrain for the service and need of his Treasure Islanders ?

Writing to Henley, when he was beginning the story at Braemar, he mentioned that it had a sea song with a chorus, " Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum," " At the third ' ho ' you heave at the capstan bar," and altogether here was " a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the

HISTORY OF THE MYSTERY

late Captain Flint, who died of rum at Key West, much regretted."

That was a clue for us, and another may be found in a letter Stevenson wrote to Sidney Colvin saying, "' Treasure Island ' came out of Kingsley's ' At Last,' where I got ' The Dead Man's Chest.' " But still the situation was unclear, as perhaps a piratical tale in verse should be, and some of us, given to Stevenson-worship and keen about a literary mystery, wanted light, more light.

Straightway, in response, came a charming letter and a revealing volume, privately printed and bound in red, all the way from Kentucky, capital of the " blue grass state " of the American Republic. The sender was the author of the book, Mr. Champion Ingraham Hitchcock, and it and his letter were proof that his friend and associate, Mr. Young Ewing Allison, also of Kentucky's capital town, was the writer of the full poem, " The Dead Man's Song,"¹ as it exists to-day.

Taking the quatrain in " Treasure Island " he first wrote " A Piratical Ballad " of three verses around it, and this was set to music by Mr. Henry Walker, the adopted son of Mrs. Scott Siddons, and sung in America. That was at the beginning of the eighteen-nineties, and only the foundation of the full poem, with its grisly tang and its eerie dirge, as

“ THE INKY WAY ”

Allison, after loving labour and artistry, completed it in the year 1897.

What we have, then, are two separate things, the quatrain which was, no doubt, Stevenson's own work, and the later poem, ballad or chanty as you prefer to call it, by his American disciple. Confusion vanishes in the light of their several authorships, and the next important thing is the text of Allison's poem, because it got bowdlerized, bastardized and spoilt. Here, with authority on the heels of commentary, is the authentic version, which let all bookmen perpend :

*" Fifteen men on the dead mans chest—
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
The mate was fixed by the bosons pike
The bos*n brained with a marlinspike
And Cookeys throat was marked belike
It had been gripped
Byfingersten;
And there they lay
All good) dead men.
Like break-o"-day in a boozing ken
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !*

"SUNSET" AND "SUNRISE"

" *Fifteen men of a whole ship's list—
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
Dead and bedamned, and the rest gone whist!
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
The skipper lay with his nob in gore
Where the scullion s axe his cheek had shore—
And the scullion he was stabbed times four
And there they lay.
And the soggy skies
Dripped all day long
On up-staring eyes—
At murk sunset and at foul sunrise—
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !*

" *Fifteen men of 'em stiff and stark—
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
Ten of the crew had the murder mark—
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
*Twas a cutlass swipe, or an ounce of lead,
Or a yawing hole in a battered head—
And the scuppers glut with a rotting red
And there they lay—
Aye, damn my eyes !—
All look outs clapped
On Paradise—
All souls bound just contrarie wise—
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !*

“ THE INKY WAY ”

" Fifteen men of 'em good and true—

To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !

Each manjack could ha'sailed with Old Pew—

To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !

There was a chest for chestfullof Spanishg, o l d ,
~~With a ton of plate in the middle hold,~~

And the cabins riot of stuff untold.

And they lay there

That had took the plum

With sightless glare

And their lips struck dumb.

While we shares all by the rule of thumb—

To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !

" More was seen through the sternlight screen—

To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !

Chartings no doubt where a woman had been—

To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !

A flimsy shift on a bunker cot,

With a thin dirk slot through the bosom spot

And the lace stiff-dry in a purplish blot.

Or was she wench . . .

Or some shuddering maid . . . ?

That dared the knife

And that took the blade !

By Gad ! she wa: stufffor a plucky jade—

To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !

“ A MAINS’ L TIGHT ”

" Fifteen men on the dead mans chest—
To-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum !

~~We wrapped 'em in a sheet and bled 'em white,~~ h t , W
~~We heaved 'em overboard and out of sight—~~
With a Yo-heave-ho !
And a fare-you-well!
And a sullent-plunge
In the sullen swell
Ten fathoms deep on the road to hell—
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum ! "

Actually there has never been any claimant, except Young Ewing Allison, for this " Dead Man's Song " founded on the Stevenson quatrain but, Mr. Hitchcock pointed out to me, it has been ascribed to sailor men " as a sort of folk-chanty." This, he added, was absurd, having regard to the use in it of particular words and its modern niceties of phrase and rhyme. So it could not have come from the Spanish Main, nor was it a mere chanty, like :

⁴⁴ *Blow a man down is a blow me down tricky*
Blow—Blow—Blow—a man down ! "

“THE INKY WAY”

"A masterly and exquisite ballad of delicious horribleness," was James Whitcombe Riley's praise of the poem, and Allison said himself, "I feel stronger in my piracy than in my seamanship." One reason for that was his youthful fondness for dime-novel sea yarns and, he confessed, "I have also often visited the tomb of that fine patriot-pirate and ex-Alderman, Dominique You, in the old French cemetery at New Orleans. As chief gunner for Jean Lafitte, he was some pirate; as chief artillery man for Gen. Andrew Jackson at the battle of New Orleans, he was some patriot,"

Evidently Allison was a spirit to whom Stevenson would have taken and whose poem he would have rejoiced to inspire. It had been closely developed in the Stevensonian note, until the verse which suggests the trace of a woman on the derelict ship. There was no woman on Treasure Island, but Allison felt he would be doing no violence to Stevenson because Billy Bones's song is a reminiscence of his own past and not of "Treasure Island,"

We get another glimpse of Allison's delicate artistry in his remark, "A very lovely little girl who was visiting my wife, helped me to decide whether I should write—'a flimsy shift' or 'a filmy shift,' or other versions, and her opinion on 'flimsy' decided me." She was, he added, the only person

who had to do with the poem, "as far as I know. What hypnotic influences were at work, or what astral minds may have intervened, I know not. But I have always thought I did it all."

Now that is a plain tale, and perhaps it has been worth the telling, alike for itself, and because it was one of the literary feathers in the cap of *The Book Monthly*, whose parent still laments it, as a mother laments a child of her mind, her heart and her soul.

XIII. WHISPERS OF A THRONE

Celebrities as far apart in time as Charles Dickens and Rudyard Kipling; knit by other notables such as Thomas Carlyle, Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace, Lord Avebury, Lord Bryce and the Premier Lord Rosebery.

AN editorship, small or great, becomes a confessional of life as it flows by, for men and women find comfort in disrobing their minds and souls. It is also a depository of things heard in conversation, gathered in correspondence, or captured in reading. Thus it has two flowing tides from which to draw memories, and, searched back upon, these may have a harmony of diversion in their very disorder.

Anecdote and incident are certainly good candles with which to travel the literary world, because they mean the human and the personal. Say to yourself the names of Mr. Kipling, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Wells, Mr. Chesterton, and a few others, and out of a pigeon-hole in the mind leaps the thought and reflection, unconsciously docketed there :

THE DICKENSIAN NOTE

" Ah, yes, they re-struck, in their several ways, the direct human note of Dickens. Doing this, they revived his own popularity as author and, more than that, created the model on which English writing now runs."

Not disciples of the great Victorian master in style, but like him, understandable, feelable. Humour and pathos were great Dickens weapons, though they are supposed to have become old-fashioned to-day, which has other appeals not always so clear.

His son, the late Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, summed up for me the real Dickensian spirit as " His strong human sympathy, and his power of showing how, deep in the hearts of men, there exists a feeling of charity and brotherhood." Similarly Mr. Jeffery Farnol, who has himself something of the Dickens touch, attributed the abiding and powerful vogue of the master to his kindly humanity and his unfailing belief in the goodness of his fellowmen.

" Because he is sane, pure and wholesome," was Marie Corelli's answer to " Why is Dickens popular ?" " Because," she also said, with a characteristic Corellian challenge, " he never soiled his pen with degrading sex problems and because, with him, as with Shakespeare, evil appeared as evil and good as good."

Style, says Buffon, is the man, but behind it lies

character, and of Dickens in that respect his friend Percy Fitzgerald, an almost last survivor of his personal and literary circle, gave me some guiding lights. They also had literary philosophy, as became a man who could say, " I wonder if there is anyone else left who has dined in the company of Thomas Carlyle and smoked a pipe with him ? "

" The contrast," said this other " Fitz," " between the state of writing in the mid-nineteenth century, and what it has become, is so extraordinary as to be almost incredible. Authorship was not developed at all then ; novel-writing was periodical writing ; the whole thing was really in the hands of Dickens and Thackeray, and I cannot give you a sufficient idea of how they stood out. They were the pillars of the English literary world, and what they wrote was hurried to the public in monthly parts, which kept up the excitement."

" Generally," Fitzgerald recalled in his quiet, easy voice, " English social ethics were such that if you were known to write it was thought not correct, almost discreditable, something no gentleman should do." He mentioned an anecdote of one lady saying to another, " I'm so glad Mrs. So-and-So has got over that terrible disgrace." " And I'm very glad also," said the other ; " just think of her son becoming a writer."

No social terrors hold back pens to-day, but an element which Percy Fitzgerald perceived behind Dickens's was that he had territorial views, like Walter Scott. They were both anxious to own property which should be associated with their names, Abbotsford and Gad's Hill, and to found families. Both were killed by their efforts to do so, Scott through the toil of his writings, Dickens through the strain of his readings.

There we strike another link between Dickens and the common strata of mankind, for he liked natural fellows about him. With a laugh Fitzgerald instanced himself, an Irishman, and then there was that clever Scotsman, Andrew Halliday. Likewise George Augustus Sala, whom Dickens sent to write up Moscow and St. Petersburg, only to get him so in love with the Nevski Prospekt that he went on doing articles about it and had to be called home.

Was Thomas Carlyle an influence on Charles Dickens and his works? According to Fitzgerald, the novelist worshipped, almost venerated the Scottish sage, who, in turn, paid tribute to him as "the good, the high-souled . . . every inch of him an honest man."

Both were sociable, but in different ways, Dickens being a ready mixer, while the thing with Carlyle was

" To send out for a long churchwarden pipe and a screw of tobacco, which put him in great good humour," He " talked to his plate," and if anybody said anything with which he did not agree he would murmur " Oh ! the puir auld fool ; a regular, puir old fool ! "

The lesson which Fitzgerald had about Dickens, in particular, and about Carlyle and other literary " mid-Vics," is expressed in a passage by Beaconsfield's father, Isaac D'Israeli. " Those authors," he wrote, " who appear sometimes to forget they are writers and remember they are men, will be our favourites. He who writes from the heart will write to the heart."

Beside that, as a basis of assessment, one puts a remark George Meredith made to Edward Clodd about Robert Louis Stevenson's writings. " Good as they are," he said, " the struggle for life which goes on among books, as among men, will bar their chance of any permanent place, except the unfinished
⁴ WeirofHermiston.' "

He would hardly have said that to the fine and fond Scotswoman, who was Stevenson's mother, as he was her son. It is an Edinburgh memory of one's own hearing, that when he began to grow famous she collected newspaper chronicles of his writings and himself into a scrap-book, with the motto :

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

" *Speak well o my love*
Speak ill o' my love
But be aye speaking ! "

About the time " Weir of Hermiston " appeared, the Kipling-Shaw-Wells-Chesterton school of humanities was in prospect and the " man from India " had paid his first call at the old house in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, where the Macmillans published for so long. Their *Macmillans Magazine* has departed

from us, like Longman V. Murray's *Gentleman's*, *Bentleys* and other ~~*Bentley's* and others that served English letters well~~ and faithfully.

Out of the blue of India there had appeared in it, " The Man Who Was," " The Courting of Dinah Shadd," " The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney," " Without Benefit of Clergy," and more short stories, now classical studies of Anglo-Indian life. A less discerning welcome, with keen after regrets, had been given elsewhere in London to the literary evidence of young Rudyard Kipling in far-away India. But that, as he would say, is another story, and it did not cloud his presentation of himself at Bedford Street, as a veteran who was there once described to me.

He looked quite young, though somehow the grave air which is present in most of his photographs, must have accompanied him from the cradle. He was

bashful, as he remains bashful and retiring, but there was a glow of the eye, a light of the face, an alertness of the short, compact figure which might well have foretold name and fame. This was the outward Kipling, in whom, probably, he himself was not greatly interested, because he just had his message, garnered in India, and he had to deliver it.

Knowing his Bible, as all great writers must, he would, no doubt, be familiar with i Corinthians xiv. 9, a passage of perfect advice to authors and speakers, young or old. " So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken ? for ye shall speak unto the air." Not long ago this passage was suggested to Sir John Reith, as a motto for the studios of the B.B.C., and it appealed to his Scotsman's sense and sense of humour.

Mr. Kipling contrived to be understood in his own original way, and, while he wrote in the shadow of Charing Cross Station, he made a small circle of bookish friends. They smoked his tobacco, drank his beer and whisky, for tradition says he nobly ran to both and talked the while. Most intimate with him, probably, was that admirable fellow and clever writer Robert Barr, who then, like his brother, James Barr, had to do with the London edition of the humorous American *Detroit Free Press*.



Associated Press.

MR. RUDYARD KIPLING ON HOLIDAY.

Mr. Kipling has always been shy of the camera, hence the interest of this picture of him and Mrs. Kipling on the Riviera.

"BADAUA" SHOWS THE WAY

It was in its long-forgotten pages that the story of "Badalia Herodsfoot" first appeared ; a story which made full manifest of Mr. Kipling's genius, even when he was on ground far less familiar than his Indian plains and hills. The problem novel ? Well, "Badalia" showed how it could be done ; the quickening and quickness that genius could give it. But what has always to be said of the new model in English authorship is what, in so many words, Mr. Kipling says himself :

*" Ah I what avails the classic bent
And what the cultured word.
Against the undoctored incident
That actually occurred ?*

¹¹ *And what is Art> whereto we press,
Through paint) and prose and rhyme—
IVhen Nature in her nakedness
Defeats us every time ? "*

Faith, Hope and Charity ! It was a saying that they were represented in the gospels of Mr. Kipling, Mr. Wells and Mr. Chesterton, while Mr. Bernard Shaw had a bit of all three entangled in himself. Does he suffer from corns ? it was early asked about him, and that was supposed to explain his fondness

for treading on other people's. It was a good time for new language and fresh ideas, because youth waited to receive and cultivate them, and because eminent Victorians remained to encourage by example and kindly sympathy. Certainly these were characteristic of Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer with Darwin of the theory of evolution.

Benignant, broad-browed, white-haired and white-bearded ! That was Alfred Russel Wallace, in his eighty-second year, as I saw him at his home down in Dorset, where the pine trees and the heather are neighbours to the sea. Notwithstanding his age he looked hale and well in his velveteen jacket, a Victorian comfort and smartness for men of the pen, which will probably come again. He took *off* his spectacles to look forth with me from his study window on the Purbeck Hills in the distance, and the gleam of salt water further away.

More than one great man has been called a " dreamer of dreams " and it is, perhaps, an essence of greatness that he should be. Dream and achievement were both to be read in the blue eyes of Russel Wallace, who, three quarters of a century ago now, was dragging Mother Nature's secrets from her on the banks of the mighty Amazon and in the islands of Malaya.

A ship carrying many of his specimens home from

DISCOVERING EVOLUTION

South America was burned, which would have been a disaster to anyone else. He came to feel that it was actually good fortune, because, otherwise, he would have gone back to the Amazon, where Bates had been working for years. As it was, he went to the Malay Archipelago, a nearly virgin country for a naturalist.

A blithe, radiant philosophy, and it gave beauty to Russel Wallace's story, fully told to me, of the drama between him and Darwin concerning the theory of Natural Selection. Darwin's intention had been to set the thing out thoroughly in a large work which would have taken years to write and which, in conception, might be compared to Herbert Spencer's system of synthetic philosophy. "What must have been his surprise," said Russel Wallace, "when he got my paper on Natural Selection." Sir Charles Lyell's comment to Darwin had been, "Well, I warned you that somebody would get hold of the idea and bring it out and now here is Wallace working on the same lines as yourself."

Knowing that Darwin was much further ahead than himself with the problem, Russel Wallace generously let him have right of way, and the outcome was the epoch-making "Origin of Species." Shortly stated, that was what happened, but there was a really larger answer to the question many people asked Russel Wallace, "Were you not disappointed that

Darwin anticipated you, as he had his material gathered and ready ? "

" For that very reason," was Russel Wallace's assurance to them and to me, " I was not disappointed. I felt that while I could only have written a slight volume, he was able to launch the discovery, backed not alone by a mass of carefully winnowed evidence, but by his already high reputation as a naturalist. Everything was for the best, in the larger and therefore the important sense, as perhaps it usually *is*."

All this only brought Darwin and Russel Wallace closer together as friends, and in their respective work they criticized each other faithfully, as good friends should. There were points in regard to Natural Selection on which they did not agree and upon which each stubbornly held his own views. This thought pained Darwin, and in some of his letters he dwelt on it with a melancholy which was really amusing, because so unnecessary.

Even so, Russel Wallace added, Darwin had a vast deal of humour, which brimmed over both in his writings and his conversations, making him a delightful man. He and Herbert Spencer were the two greatest men he had known, and a rather tragic fact which linked them was their semi-invalidism. Darwin saw few people, because conversation, at all events when it became a debate, was apt to bring on

his stomach trouble, while Spencer was a martyr to insomnia. It may have been to assuage it that the philosopher learned the flute, for Russel Wallace said he sometimes played it and indeed had musical tastes.

" Enoch Arden," it will be remembered, has a description of the paradise of the Tropics, which Tennyson had never visited. He asked Russel Wallace if the local colour was correct and got the assurance that it was, quite remarkably so. This was incidental to a talk they had at Tennyson's Surrey home about Spiritualism, in which they were both interested.

" He was practically a Spiritualist," remarked Russel Wallace, citing his writings as evidence of this, " and he wished to hear of my personal experiences. He spoke of trying to see something for himself, and certainly he had the seeing eye, the vision into the beyond. ' In Memoriam ' is a marvellous poem for its beauty of feeling and the scientific anticipations which it voices,"

Not always do men who have dwelt in the Tropics live to praise and thank them, but I found Russel Wallace the exception. He was extremely delicate as a child and, indeed, his life was despaired of on several occasions during his early youth. For twelve years he lived in the best of the tropical climate, with the sun and the sky, the wind and Nature always

about him. It was then, he did not doubt, that he laid up the store of health which had lasted him so well and so long.

One gesture of my meeting with Wallace lingers particularly, because of its generosity towards another naturalist, who at the time had not come into his kingdom. He took a volume from a shelf, and pointing to the title, "A Naturalist in La Plata," he said, "A finer work than Darwin's 'Voyage of the *Beagle*' or my own 'Malay Archipelago.'" How that tribute would have pleased W. H. Hudson, another writer who was battling up with his message in the irrigating years which united the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

New thoughts were being applied not only to natural history, to science, and to literature, but to the living of daily life. Here enlightened and kindly Lord Avebury had the fortune to be a prophet and a reformer meriting gratitude. He was a leader in the fights for the Bank Holiday and for Sunday Closing, and I had talk with him on their human significance, on his famous list of the "hundred best books," and on how he became an author, among other books, of "Lubbock on Ants" as it is still called, and "The Pleasures of Life."

⁴⁴ My father," he told me, "was a mathematician and he would have liked me to follow in his footsteps.

But he believed that all departments of science and research were useful and as I always had a bent for natural history, he let me have my way. We lived near Charles Darwin in the pleasant county of Kent, and he was a great stimulus to me. He encouraged me to study natural history, and what an inspiration he was, only those could know who knew him ; so gifted, so winning, so simple in everything. Lyell and Murchison and other leaders of thought were also friends of my father and thus I was, from the first, in an atmosphere of healthy stimulus."

Sir John Lubbock, like his scholarly contemporaries, laid stress on the reading of good books as an element in the rise of the common people to better conditions of life. This was behind his advocacy of the Bank Holiday and Sunday Closing, because they meant rest and leisure and so gathered energy to read. For the jaded mind, if it turned to books at all, could not digest them, and therefore benefit from them. He even felt that an association might be traced between the over-tired worker and the prevalence of trashy literature. Anyhow he could not expect his list of the " hundred best books " to be every man's reading, but it did represent an ideal.

" Clearly," he said, " a book is an affair of personal taste, and people must choose for themselves. Myself, I find it best not to read the same book too

long at one time, not longer, perhaps, than an hour, as the mind blunts. But what is the reading of a hundred books to man's average length of life ? How much time would they actually occupy in it ? A simple calculation would show the smallness of the task."

" Lubbock on books ! " Of course his chosen hundred, which were debated up and down the country, included the Bible, nay, was led by it. Had I asked him why, he would probably, apart from its sacredness as the bed-rock of the Christian religion, have agreed with his friend Huxley's tribute :

" A book that has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history, that is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of literary form."

" You know his ways and what he needs, pretty well by this time," Jane Welsh Carlyle wrote to her old servant maid about Thomas, on some occasion she was away from him. " Trouble him with as few questions as possible."

Wisdom that, as to all men and things, but without the stream of curiosity natural to a healthy mentality the river of knowledge would dry up. Consequently human beings keep asking, and when book-loving is concerned the answering is sure. Now think of an opinion by the Premier Lord Rosebery on Napoleon

Bonaparte's favourite books, his "hundred best books."

A French bookman had spoken of an edition of these which Napoleon, at one time, thought of having printed for himself. He even appears to have drawn up the list, but finally to have abandoned the idea on the score of expense, as even emperors can be mean when books are concerned. It probably included the Bible, the Koran, curiously enough, Ossian's poems, Corneille's tragedies, Shakespeare, something of Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau and the "Arabian Nights."⁷ At all events he had been accustomed, during his campaigns, to take this reading with him in a pair of mahogany boxes of which we have the precise measurement, two feet five inches long, eighteen inches wide, and seven inches high.

"Of course," wrote Lord Rosebery to me from Dalmeny House, which looks on the Forth where that river occurs both in the writings of Scott and Stevenson, "the fact of Napoleon having selected a library, which he had meant to have specially printed, is well known and that will be a sufficient guidance to what he considered the best books. The library at Elba," he added with the decision of a graduated Napoleonic scholar, "is quite worthless as any indication of Napoleon's tastes."

Most probably this literary question, like others,

was discussed by Lord Rosebery and Lord Bryce, two congenial spirits in bookmanship. Also the latter may have told the former how he came to write his history of "The American Commonwealth."

It was tempting, certainly, to get that story because every book, like every child, has a history of the cradle and moreover Lord Bryce crowned his life by becoming British Ambassador to the American Commonwealth. His wiry figure, with the scholar's stoop, became as familiar in Washington as it was honoured there. Following his English custom he took long walks and, as an eminent American once said to me, "That's the only thing we don't understand about him ; why shouldn't he ride ?"

"I was," James Bryce answered an inquiry by myself, based on some personal acquaintance, "led to write my book on the U.S.A. by finding that English friends, and especially Mr. Gladstone, used to ask me after my second visit to America, in 1881, what books they ought to read to describe the actual condition of the country. Mr. G., in particular, often said that he felt immensely curious regarding it, but did not know where to go to satisfy his curiosity. This set me to write, and the book grew to a much greater size than I intended, because one explanation required another."

There is a story worth telling, that Bryce, on a

railway journey in America, had a conversation with a young American about the institutions of the country. " Oh," quoth the American, when different views arose between them on some point, " I can assure you I am right, for Bryce says so." One can imagine the self-conscious smile that came over the kindly, bearded face of the Englishman, who, silent for a moment, had to confess, " Well, you see I am Bryce,"

America was something of a spiritual home to him, or, may be, it could be put that he helped it to find its spiritual self as well as its historical self. He won and held fame in this link, unlike another fine mind, Lord Haldane, whose reference to a " spiritual home " was misconstrued amid the Great War and used to damn him.

What he had actually said was that the influence on him of a noble man, a German professor, long dead, had been such as to be, in itself, almost a spiritual home. It was a purely personal tribute and statement, afterwards foully twisted to suggest sufferance with pre-war Germany, but that cloud on Haldane's fair fame has long lifted.

XIV. TRAFFICS AND SURPRISES

Peers in contrast, the Bible as "best seller" some Bernard Quaritch memoirs, a John Murray literary butler; and talks about themselves with Justin McCarthy, "Tom" Bun, Dr. John Clifford and Mr. John Burns.

SIMPLICITY and humanity are two precious things which unite bookmen and they open big doors and little doors of acquaintance and friendship. Both imply sincerity and sympathy which, again, are the common touches that make us all kin and the world a good place.

"Knowing I lov'd my books he furnish'd me " with memories " I prize above my dukedom." That is a brave and free adaptation from "The Tempest," justified only because it tells why there is an unusual freemasonry of letters, and how it may bring a single individual a range of notable contacts. He need not fail in their conduct if he remembers that while outwardly mankind manifests itself in very different ways, inwardly there may be an easy bridge between these ways.

Take a story which I heard of Lord Roberts and Lord Curzon of Kedleston, calling on successive mornings at a London publishing house and what each said to the office boy. "If you please, sir, your name," quoth he. "Say Roberts!" "Please, sir?" "Oh, then, say Lord Roberts." "If you please, your name, sir?" "Say Lord Curzon of Kedleston is here." And yet my Lord Curzon cancelled a book by himself when it was about to appear, because it might be wrongly read into circumstances of office and responsibility which had meanwhile come to him.

This was almost a Biblical sense of honour, which suggests the constant influence our greatest English book has upon writing and reading as well as upon spiritual life. The soul, the message, and the literary qualities of the Bible are the possessions of all men. Of the body of the Bible, as it goes marching on, nobody could have a more intimate acquaintance than the late Mr. Henry Frowde, for long the publisher to the University of Oxford.

Its London warehouse, now in Warwick Square, was, in his day, at Amen Corner, with an outlook on one side to Stationers' Hall, and a view from the other side into Paternoster Row. There, in an atmosphere almost dimly religious, for it was a foggy London day, and with the Oxford Bible for text, he

margins, or are of the impracticable sort, but every one is read with interest.

It is a natural passage from the Bible to the " first bookseller in Europe," as Bernard Quaritch I was called in his lifetime. Of him his son Bernard Quaritch II told me some things which were worth knowing. It was true that when he informed the famous Bohn he was leaving his service, the latter said, " Leave the first bookseller in England ?" " Ah," was the answer of the then young man, " but I'm going to be the first bookseller in Europe."

He made the promise good and himself the friend of many notable men, with Gladstone at their head, for he was a frequent visitor at the old Quaritch shop in Piccadilly. The association must have begun in the Grand Old Man's Tory days because, pointing to a bus which was passing along Piccadilly, he once said to Quaritch, " I'd as soon give the horses in that bus a vote, as lower the franchise." It was to him, however, as a Liberal that the shaping of the modern franchise fell.

What struck the great bookseller about the great statesman were his composure and geniality, whatever the political atmosphere outside might be. It seemed as if he left all his political cares and worries on the doorstep, or still farther away, and that the only thing in which he had the slightest interest, for the time

being, was literature. His talk and bearing were simple, easy, and even deferring, tokens, surely, of all true lovers of books.

Bookselling, an historic English calling, lies invitingly across the paths of young men and women seeking a worthy life to-day, and Mr. Quaritch II gave me a prescription which might help them. What is the secret of being a good bookseller, especially a second-hand bookseller ? A memory which stores away knowledge about books ; experience, which means going through the mill ; and an intelligence department with details of everything you want to know, however unexpected it may be.

Thinking of this career for a young gentleman from Eton or Oxford, or a more likely seminary, I asked Mr. Quaritch II, " What is the most valuable literary treasure that could now turn up ? " " Oh," he said with a laugh, " the manuscript of Shakespeare's ' Hamlet ' would be worth something. We can hardly, I suppose, hope to find that of the Pentateuch."

" Can we," I pursued, " have any real hope of ever coming upon a manuscript by Shakespeare—anything in his hand ? " " Well," he replied, " one can never tell what time may bring to light in old manuscripts and rare editions. I'm afraid there is nothing to suggest the possibility of a Shakespeare

MS. but still, hope springs eternal in the literary breast."

This was also the spirit of a conversation which I recall for its unusualness, with another servant of letters who for nigh forty years was in the household of John Murray III, the grandfather of the present Sir John Murray. Literary butlers are rare but James Mills was one, not only one by association but by discriminating taste, certainly in authors. At Albemarle Street he attended the coming and going of a long procession of celebrities and there is a well-founded tradition which guarantees him his niche in bookland. A Murray dinner party was discussing the place of some passage in Walter Scott and could not be sure of it, but Mills was, and named book and page and brought them in proof.

His memory, when he was seventy, remained as clear about the men who were accustomed to dine with John Murray III, hours earlier than the custom is to-day. Grote, the historian, whose gentle manner and fashion of dress suggested a Georgian picture ; Dean Milman with his fine head of hair, almost white, and such bushy eyebrows ; or Dean Stanley, a lesser figure in stature but not less charming. Also Monckton Milnes, who was in fame as a poet, Sir Charles Eastlake and his wife, Sir Roderick Murchison, the geologist, Sir Henry Layard, the explorer of the

ruins of Nineveh, and Sir Henry Rawlinson, the modest, famous traveller.

Sir Richard Owen's long, gaunt face, beaming with smiles, was a picture in the firelight at Albemarle Street ; George Sorrow's fine original character and marked sensitiveness, made another ; and Paul Du Chaillu's bright animation was a third. Somehow Mills got the impression that there was a disappointment in Borrow's life and he thought Du Chaillu's work—he discovered the gorilla—should have been more fully recognized by his contemporaries. Robert Browning, was a " regular " at Albemarle Street, and Thackeray had called but had not—the perfect butler's memory—dined there.

Often James Mills was exhorted by the late Sir John Murray and his brother, Mr. Hallam Murray, to set down his recollections, but he never got further than three or four sheets, which had lingered with him from the eighteen-eighties. They enabled him to say that he first saw Charles Dickens in 1857 when he came to dinner at Albemarle Street. He was of medium build, neither tall nor short, nothing either way to notice.

" But I was, perhaps, a little disappointed with the rather theatrical air he seemed to have. Gradually, in company, he became easier in manner, and indeed

anything else was, most likely, just the expression of his instinct for the dramatic."

There was a simple warmth in Mills's references to David Livingstone, home from Africa, and quite the "lion" of London though he did not like it. "If I remember rightly he was wrecked, or had some experience which left him with a reefer jacket sporting brass buttons. Usually he was wearing it and a sea captain's cap with gold lace, when he looked in at Albemarle Street. He had a certain appearance of being an officer ashore, and thus he makes a picturesque figure, as well as a staunch, dependable one."

Darwin and Gladstone were Murray men and, more than once, Mills went to Hawarden with his master, a welcome guest there, like later Murrays. It was homely and kindly, and Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone might have been newly married people, so tenderly attentive were they to each other. "Mr. Gladstone's home life," Mills had the sentence in one of his sheets of paper, "was a truly charming sight to see; and if one may judge another, I should say he was in every way a good man and a thorough Christian gentleman,"

A humble forecast that of the late Marquis of Salisbury's eulogy of Gladstone as a "great Christian," and this brings in another figure remembered at Albemarle Street. As Lord Robert Cecil he

was a contributor to the *Quarterly Review*, from which indeed, after his death, a series of his essays was recovered. He was not then the direct heir to the peerage and was writing, a talent which goes on with the Cecils, like their definite family physique.

" Sometimes," Mills said to me, " I thought his wife must be of great assistance to him in his literary work, for she looked so capable and talked so cleverly. And how winning she was with her flaxen curls—you see ladies wore their hair in ringlets then ! Everybody had heard the romance of their marriage and delighted in it and them " ; a fine old English butler's blessing on a Victorian idyll of married love.

No Victorian could better be cited for that age than Mr. Justin MacCarthy, who though an Irishman, had all its best characteristics, as indeed you may read in his " History of Our Own Times." Often I met him, for he was the politician, the journalist, and the historian, and in everything the much-liked man.

His nature is inscribed on one of his books received " With the kind regards of Justin MacCarthy," who had then, after sunshine and storm, come to anchor in peace at Westgate-on-Sea. A road there, for which he had no name until he gave it one, wound from his garden and disappeared round a corner of the Kentish coast. It might go anywhere, or nowhere,

to London, or merely fall into the sea, and so to himself he called it " Imagination Road."

That pictures genial, kindly Justin MacCarthy, and he told me, modestly, how he came to write his history and of its success, and more freely of the great Victorians he had known. Thackeray was big physically and mentally, for he stood six feet four, and was crowned by an abundant head of hair which eventually turned strangely white, so adding to the effect of his presence.

" You would never forget him if you had once seen him," said Justin MacCarthy, " and if he had lived longer it might have been my fortune to see a good deal of him. I had written something he liked, and through a mutual friend he invited me to a little literary dinner, as he called it. When I stepped ashore from a Thames steamer, at Blackfriars Pier, on the morning of that very day, newspaper boys were showing their bills with the announcement, ¹ Sudden death of Mr. Thackeray/ Thus his death was almost a personal shock to me, and to London at large it was a most sorrowful event."

According to the rules of elocution, Thackeray was not a good speaker, but he was most impressive, and Justin MacCarthy could almost recall the end of his lecture on George III. He described the old king wandering about his palace, in sentences of such

pathos and power that they seemed to come from the innermost soul.

Dickens was a different sort of speaker, a fellow of infinite feeling, of grand humour and charm of manner, and a born actor. He had not Thackeray's presence, being much shorter, but he had a handsome face, and eyes that blazed and flamed.

Thomas Carlyle rather frightened our gentle Irishman, at all events until he met him several times, because he was dogmatic, loud of talk and overbearing, though that may merely have been a temperamental manner, needing to explode. William Allingham, the poet, was a great admirer of Carlyle and a constant visitor at Cheyne Walk, and about that here is a story in which the almighty sage let out at his friend.

"One day," remarked Justin MacCarthy, "some people were dining with the Carlyles, Allingham, from whom I had the tale, being among them. The host fell to denouncing Gladstone in unmeasured terms, and it struck Allingham that this might offend some of the company. "Don't you think, Mr. Carlyle," he ventured, "that something might be said for Mr. Gladstone?" "Aye, William Allingham," was the retort, "ye're just the most contradictory man I ever met. Man, you would contradict anybody about anything," which silenced the poet.

Tennyson had come within Justin MacCarthy's purview, and his stature, his wavy hair, and his dress all framed in the familiar cloak, made him a picturesque figure when he walked in St. James's Park, as he often did on visits to London. "George Eliot" he was fortunate enough to see amid her own circle, for her habit was to receive her friends on Sundays. Of Robert Browning he could say that he knew him really well, and that he was a fine fellow in the best sense of the word.

¹¹ I can also," added Mr. MacCarthy, "declare from my heart that he was one of the most engaging men I ever met, so full of humour and what is best in human nature, and with never a suggestion of the professional poet about him. It was a delight to listen to his talk, and he was an excellent listener, like Gladstone. The best talkers, I have noticed, are generally good listeners ; they may control the conversation, or rather they inspire it, but they never monopolize it."

The last person to monopolize anything was Mr. Thomas Burt who left a beloved memory as a leader of the Northumberland miners, and a high repute as one of the early Labour M.P.s. It was at the Reform Club, which he visited most days, that he gossiped with me about the part books had played in his life. His Northumberland "burr" lent indi-

viduality to his talk, which, like his speeches, had a natural simplicity that engaged both one's mind and one's ear.

Quick to feel this, his old friend, John Morley, once said to him, " But where did you get your style ? " " He did not," Burt commented, with a twinkle in his eye, " say whether it was a good or a bad style." He added, seriously, that he never knew he had a style—a literary style—a big word that !—until other people told him ; among them the well-known Newcastle editor, Mr. James Annand, who surprised him with the remark, " You can put things when you like—you have been greatly influenced by Ruskin," which was true.

" I had no schooling in any real sense," Mr. Burt said, " and indeed in my boyhood, that was little possible for the children of colliery workers in the north of England. But, happily for me, my father was a reader and my mother an eloquent reader aloud. Thus I was brought into touch with books and I have often wondered whether it may not have been in my mother's beautiful reading aloud that I first found the music of words—style ? "

A new answer that to an ancient literary question and it made Stevenson as well as Ruskin a favourite with " Tom " Burt. " I have," he emphasized, " a strong notion that an author can hardly win a place

on the heights unless he has an artistic style, as well as a message." There were exceptions, Scott, notably, but the manner in which a thing was said was only less important than the thing itself.

Sir William Harcourt, the "Historicus" of a famous series of letters to *The Times*, was a fine reader and a sincere book-lover. Mr. Burt remembered telling him that the first great book he read, and what a dawning it meant, was Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." "My dear man," Harcourt exclaimed, "you read Gibbon when you were a pit boy." "Read him and enjoyed him"; and Sir William's friendly wonder grew, for he had a large heart in his large body.

Gibbon was, what Ruskin became definitely, balm in Gilead, sweetness and light, to the hard contact which young Burt had with life. By and by he read Carlyle, of whom he shrewdly observed, "At the outset he wrote great English, later great Carlylese," This recalled an incident which affected Carlyle and John Tyndall, the Victorian scientist, with whom Mr. Burt once sat on a commission.

In the waits of the work they would talk about literature, and the strife had begun about James Anthony Froude's life of Carlyle. Tyndall was excited, almost angry at the way James Anthony Froude, a liked friend of his own, had written the



Hook Monthly.

JOHN VISCOUNT MORLEY, O.M.

Perhaps the last photograph of the author-statesman and it takes us to the modest study in his old home on Wimbledon Common, London.

biography. " He is," he declared, " too much of a dramatist ; David Masson should have written the ' Carlyle.' " If he had done so, one chapter of English literature would certainly have read differently.

To Thomas Burt the boy, the reading of the Bible was a family task, but it probably stirred his love of poetry, which had always been great. " What religion I have," he said quietly, " I owe to the poets " ; Shakespeare, the super-poet ; Milton, the creator of sublime passages ; the human and lyrical Wordsworth ; Byron, Shelley, Keats, Matthew Arnold, and in a measure, Swinburne. Tennyson he had loved to pore over and his grand and touching " In Memoriam " had been a comfort to him in times of trouble.

Nobody who knew and liked Dr. John Clifford) the Nonconformist leader, could doubt that emotion, which, surely, is poetry in action, was a notable element in his personality and career. " They may," he said to me with a laugh, " take anything they like except my books," the allusion there being to his conflicts, as a Passive Resister, with the officers of the law. They were free to the other goods and chattels in his modest London home at Westbourne Grove, but his books were his sacred possessions.

When did he begin his friendship with them ?

That took him back to his mother's little library at their home in Beeston, down in the Midlands. " I see a Bible in it, a Bible with the Apocrypha ; I can remember looking at the pictures in that Bible and I can remember—how things come back—reading about the Maccabees. Also I can see Bunyan's ' Pilgrim's Progress ' in my mother's library, and I became well acquainted with it, and I can see ' Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs,' which took a strong hold on me." He wondered why, hardly knew why, but afterwards the graves of the good and the great had a fascination for him.

That was the beginning of Dr. Clifford's book road and later milestones on it were Pike's " Early Piety," D'Aubigne's " History of the Reformation," Knight's " Family History of England," and Cassell's " Popular Education " in penny numbers. His early mental activities were stirred by the throb, near and far, of the Chartist Movement, and the democratic verse of Gerald Massey and Ernest Jones. A first taste of books in any collective sense was when he was allowed to look over those in the only shop at Beeston that sold publications. He was then working in a Nottingham lace factory, a fact which certifies how delicious this experience must have been to an eager-minded lad.

It was Emerson and his " Twelve Essays " that

brought **Dr.** Clifford what he termed his great awakening, and indeed it changed his outlook and future. He got stimulating energy from the book, phosphorous for the brain and iron for the soul, and Emerson became a hero with him.

His available books grew with his studies, but very gradually, for he was not able to buy many volumes. Generally he had been a large reader of biography, and, after the Bible, Boswell's "Johnson" was perhaps his best liked volume, though he never wearied of reading about that "blood and iron" Puritan, Oliver Cromwell. Browning was his favourite English poet and George Eliot his favourite English novelist, with Meredith, Scott, Dickens and Thackeray as rivals.

One point which Dr. Clifford raised will appeal to elderly people for, said he, "I find myself specially interested in any work touching upon the period of my own life. The reason, I suppose, is that, unconsciously, one applies a personal test to such recent history." Otherwise put, this reading has a direct interest, because we weave our own lives into its happenings, become part of it, though only flecks on the stream.

Past and present ! From men who have been, to Mr. John Burns who remains a man of to-day, when we still await his autobiography. Nor can he offer

so full an excuse for not writing it as he once jokingly made to me, " Well, the call has been to make books rather than to write them ! " Another remark was, " My books are part of myself and without them, I should not be," so the story of John Burns, bookman, is vastly good.

Our confab was in his old home at Battersea and in his little library and workshop with its books to right of him, to left of him, everywhere, all in orderly array. It was fine to notice his command of them and his bookman's gentle handling of them; that caressing touch which lingers on a faded page or a beautiful binding. Say a copy of " The Answer " of Charles I to Parliament, urging why he should not be beheaded, unique because, as an inscription shows, it belonged to John Bradshaw, the president of the tribunal that condemned the king. Or a complete set of Robert Owen's *New Moral World*, a curious periodical of 1835, bought in the New Cut for three pennies.

Shakespeare, Milton, Robert Burns ; all the great fellows of poetry and some others, dog-eared with reading, annotated with criticism and reflections. Somebody has proved in the most detailed fashion that John Burns, born in London of Scottish parents, is descended from the same strain as the Scottish national hero.

" Well, well," he smiled, " I certainly know his

poetry, and that is enough. How rich it is in its pictures of the workers, in its human sympathy and in its vision of the time when men, the world over, ' Shall brithers be an' a' that/ Perhaps my favourite lines of poetry are four which Robert Burns wrote and which, I think, come near the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount." To my nod of understanding he quickly quoted :

*" To make a happy fireside clime
For weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life"*

" How different," John Burns went on, " is Shakespeare's attitude to the working classes, from that of the Scottish poet. I remember a long interesting talk I had with Henry Irving on Shakespeare and the common people, the 'rude mechanicals.' We do not find in him any adequate picture, any true reflection of the workers. Almost invariably he introduces a plain, russet-clad man only to scoff at him, to ridicule him, by contrast with folk in a higher station. It was in them Shakespeare delighted, in the atmosphere of courts, for one reason, possibly, because of the colourful setting which this gave him. Now Milton was different," and quickly Mr. Burns

found the passage beginning, " If every just man that now pines with want, . . "

Take a walk along Charing Cross Road, in search of likely second-hand books, and you may come upon John Burns at the same adventure. His library, which he has gathered where he could, and as he could afford, has naturally formed around the subjects which belong to his public work, everything that has to do with the well-being of the people.

It has been his tools, his equipment, and possibly nobody has such a full set of material dealing with the life and labour of London. Original, solid, invaluable, is his reference library within a library, and the ever-young soul of John Burns gives it the light of poetry. Hear him declaim a whole sermon on the text for the simple life :

" // is the off-spring of the modest years "

Hear him speak Ebenezer Elliot's tribute to William Cobbett, ending :

*" beneath this sod
Bill Cobbett lies—a man by God ! "*

" A man by God ! " A real epitaph, that !

XV. NEW AND OLD GRUB STREET

What every publisher of books should know about his ancient and gentle but difficult art and craft; and confabs with a trio of recent masters, Sir Algernon Methuen, John Lane and William Heinemann.

THERE are certain people whom the traditional, honest Englishman does not quite understand, and so he has his doubts about them, especially actors and actresses, authors and journalists.

He sees them as men and women removed from himself and his world, and dwelling in some misty land where anything may be going on. His conventions of moral worth are material, the horny hand and the sweating brow, successful trade and commerce, wealth and rank ; and as good sense in the conduct of life is just what can be understood and no more, he is hardly to be blamed.

Of others our Englishman is hazy, without doubting or suspecting them, and perhaps publishers are to be ranked in this class, the enigmatics, shall we call it ? The general attitude is simply that a

publisher is a man who publishes books, and what more is there to be said ?

He is the fellow between the writer and the book-seller, the honest broker whose calling is fortunate, because easy. Does the average reader ever know who publishes a particular book ? Hardly ever ; and that is his acquaintance with Mr. Publisher, who, in reality, is altogether different.

Perhaps I have known more publishers of my time, as well as more authors, than anybody else has done, not merely casually but intimately. They are very like other people, human, homely, simple, ambitious, domestic, less domestic, clever, less clever, amusing and dull. The perfect publisher, if ever there was one, is made out of experience, but he is also born because he needs to be equal to encountering two worlds.

He walks with one foot in the green field of literature, and the other in the stiff soil of commerce. He must be bookish enough to have some real idea what he publishes and commercial enough to understand his market. " Damned literary successes " are all right now and then, if only as advertisement, but they don't keep the home fires burning.

One might almost make an analogy between publishing and the turf because there is a gamble in a book as well as in a horse. " I say,^M said Arnold Bennett, in a pontifical moment, " it is a solemn thing

to discover any authentic novelist/' That puts the publisher's gamble on a high plane, but indeed he who prints and issues a noble book is surely entitled to the credit of it, after the author'

Often books have benefited by suggestions from the publisher, though there are also instances, when such have been hinted, of writers saying, " No, sir, it's my manuscript ; I'll take it elsewhere," and elsewhere it has sometimes " boomed," faults and all. Publishing is a ticklish affair, and perhaps a useful aid in it is the quality of natural diplomacy, meaning shrewd good nature, sincere and humoursome, backed by the asset of character rather than the shining and changing light of personality.

A lie, if it be plausible and sounding, may have a long life, and we still hear the one about Byron making a famous Bible line into " And Barabbas was a publisher." It would have been tampering with sacred writ, and perhaps Byron had enough of the Gordon Scot in him to boggle at that, though another Scotsman and another poet, Campbell, may have risked it. Besides it would have been unoriginal, compared to the splendour of Oscar Wilde's retort, when he was asked to change some piece of his own writing : " Who am I that I should interfere with a work of genius ? "

No doubt this shot was directed at a publisher, and another of the brethren must have been in Whistler's

mind when he said, in a double-barrelled volley, such as he favoured, " By gad, sir, such a fool as that is wasted as a publisher. He ought to have been an art critic."

Poor Mr. Publisher ! You perhaps persuade him, in his kindness, to take up a poor book which does not sell, or a book too good to sell much, and then you bully him for having failed you in your mission, forgetful that it is a partnership of distress.

When he does " back a winner " he will, almost certainly, have his author thinking, or saying out aloud, " Oh, he's making too much out of it, for what he's done."

Human nature being imperfect in adversity and envious in success, is like that, but nowadays the incidence of profit as between writer and publisher has been arranged almost to a standard rate, like the fees of accountants and solicitors. This means evenner going, the difference, again to cite the turf, between a race on the flat and one over hurdles, but it takes away from the personal element which is so important in every part of the book market.

" I respect Miller," said Samuel Johnson, although he had grumped and quarrelled with him ; " he has raised the price of literature," There is no nobler passage in John Morley's " Recollections " than his appreciation of his old friends, Daniel and Alexander Macmillan as high-minded and great-minded pub-

lishers, both of them from Scotland, which has richly served the calling,

Its own full service is reflected, with a mixture of reverence and amusement in a story told about Augustine Birrell, who died a father as well as an ornament of English literature. "I have," he related it, "been petrified with horror to find myself pilloried ... as a man capable of sneering at the Clarendon Press. I would as soon think of poking fun at the Parthenon/" Half his charm was the way in which he could poke fun, but there was always a thought behind it, not merely a laugh.

No publisher of recent years had a clearer philosophy of his craft than Sir Algernon Methuen, the founder of the house of that name, who had been a schoolmaster. Many boys had reason to be grateful for the text-books in Latin and Greek and French, of Algernon Methuen Marshall Stedman. When he "commenced publisher," an early book being Kipling's "Barrack Room Ballads," he used the Methuen, and eventually made it his surname instead of Stedman. Here was a romance of personality, but the most notable characteristic of Sir Algernon Methuen was his keen mixture of literary judgment and business grasp.

Thus he might almost have been speaking of himself when he declared to me that publishing needed

certain clear qualities. A man must know something about books and have a certain love of them. He must have the ability to produce a book well, and be able to buy, sell and organize. A modern publisher could not depend wholly on his advisers, and indeed the successful publisher of the future would be creative. He would originate the idea, find the subject and commission the writer, qualifications which the old publishers did not need because they were few and authors came to them suppliantly.

"I don't suppose," said Sir Algernon Methuen, whose conversation was that of the quiet logician, "many people understand how very difficult publishing is, and how few are the actual prizes. I think it would be fairly correct to say that out of every five books published, only two pay. This, if you like, is a form of gambling, very skilful gambling, because it is a system, not mechanical. Audacity and caution are the supremely necessary combination in the publisher who is going to succeed. It is not often found in the same person, any more than the business faculty and the literary faculty, which are usually regarded as at daggers drawn."

Sir Algernon was a realist in that he saw things by the steady light of a cool, cultured and yet practical mind. Books, unlike sugar and nails and other commodities in which fortunes are made, change

THAT GENERAL READER?

from year to year, the fashions in them and their authorship, for writers rise and fall, come and go. Also books are getting to be like magazines, of which the number issued last is extinct on the thirty-first of the month. Sounded a little dreary but compensations appeared in the human interest, and the literary interest and the agreeable contacts they brought. Some experiences in life were beyond money and beyond price, and the publisher had his and esteemed them the more amid trial and tribulation.

The English book world turns mostly on two institutions, the general reader, who is a mysterious, collective being, and the novel which represents more reading than all other books put together. A smile came over Sir Algernon Methuen's thin, serious face when I asked him if he had ever fathomed the bonds between the two, as knowledge helpful to the publisher man, so often faint but always pursuing.

He confessed that he often wondered who the general reader is, where and what in actuality he or she is, and how many of him and her there are. Perhaps there was a vast number of people whom we never see, never hear of, yet who read books, a fair proportion of which are bought, not merely borrowed. It could hardly be supposed that books were bought for the mere sake of buying, and it

might be calculated that at least three-quarters of the buyers bought in order to read.

What did the general reader desire in his books ? That was part of his mystery, but two things for certain, pretty good stuff, served up in an attractive form. Unknown he might be, the unknown soldier of the marching regiments of English readers, but he did let that be known.

This brought us to the growl, so frequent and loud, that excessive fiction reading has led to the deterioration of literary taste. It is a standing challenge in the book world, like the challenge to the film in the dramatic world, and the two may even be allies in sin, though, as with the strong-minded lady who revoked at bridge, they have their reasons.

"What," quoth Sir Algernon Methuen, "is fiction and what did Homer write, and Dante and Shakespeare ? Fiction in its higher and lower forms has always been the most popular literature, naturally so. People want relief from care, to be transported into other lives, or to see their own lives painted by a master. They want human passions, good or bad, and they find they can get them better from the story than from any other sort of writing. If that be the chief reason why English people read fiction so much compared with other books, then I think it an entirely creditable reason."

Sir Algernon Methuen, I remember, made an acute deliverance on the new writer, who, like the poor and now the rich-poor, are always with us. His own experience, for he was quite frank, was that three out of four first novels fall flat. A writer's second story may share the same fate, but if he has the root of the matter in him he will arrive with his third. If not, then publishers should become shy of him, for though however clever and gifted otherwise, he will be lacking the absolutely necessary thing. And it ? I asked Sir Algernon.

" He has not the touch, the flair. There is no personal rapport; he lacks sympathy, the subtle something which always attracts in men and books. Oh, yes, books have manners and charm and personality, just as men and women have these gifts, or are without them. Naturally and necessarily, because they come out of the minds and hearts of men and women."

We could all mention individual cases in proof of this, but the thing was perfectly expressed in a remark to Mr. W. J. Locke of lovable memory, " There is always somebody to love in your books." Surely, because he wrote with a fine heart as well as a fine head, and yet he did novel after novel, all good, before he " let himself go " in that mood, wrote " The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne," and won name and fame.

A friend, as he told me, had whipped him up to the

point by saying, " You have a natural sense of humour. Your conversation shows you a keen observer of men and things. Why not write your stories like that, from within, outwardly." An agreeable consequence was that John Lane, on coming to the Bodley Head one morning, found Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman writing his name into a dozen volumes which lay around him. They were " The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne," and, quoth " C.B.," " It's the best novel by an Englishman that I've read for twenty years."

But Mr. Publisher has to go after Mr. (or Mrs. or Miss) General Reader whenever he wants a high success. It is the same as getting the indifferent voter into the booths at a General Election, because, he counts for all the difference. Perhaps, there is no better, more guiding response from the mass of readers who form the general reader than this lively dirge by American Miss Caroline Wells :

*" The books we think we ought to read are poky, dull
and dry;
The books that we would like to read, we are
ashamed to buy;
The books that people talk about we never can recall;
And the books that people give us—oh, they're the
wont of all"*

We find, however, when we look back on ourselves as young general readers that, somehow, certain books are so well remembered as to mark red-letter days. One of us thinks very specially of a copy-book sort of edition, rather tattered and torn but readable, of Lady Brassey's " Voyage of the *Sunbeam*" Here were broad, flat, fat pages, full of strange things and strange places, and in school hours it could, an adventure in itself, be piratically read inside the covers of a regulation Victorian copy-book.

That old-fashioned spacious sixpenny brought to a village of the Aberdeenshire Highlands the music of warm winds, the wash of far oceans and the colour of many lands. Not, perhaps, a volume of which Charles Lamb would have declared, " There is more reason for saying grace before a good book than before a good dinner." But it was a revelation to a young mind wondering, and a pensive wonder, in folk of all ages, is a real link between books and readers.

Neither authors nor publishers can ever know the estimable deeds a new book may achieve on its pilgrimage, be that long or short, because only casual echoes of it come back from the unknown sea of readers. There was a story of Israel Zangwill, the novelist, being told by a lady, " Oh, I so admire your ' Children of the Ghetto ' that I have read it six times,"

and of his answering, " Madame, I would rather you had bought six copies." It was a fair retort to one of those fussy women who seize on social opportunities to salute distinguished writers, though Zangwill, being kindly and human himself, could take or give sincere praise.

It helps anybody and everybody along the literary way, but what are the ultimate stimulus and support which enable men of genius to struggle against poverty, ill-health or other sacrifice while delivering their message to the world ? Is it the hope, unconscious or conscious, but never spoken, of everlasting life through their creative work ? Eliminate that hope and darkness falls, for there is no true writer who would not say, " I'd rather have one sentence live than be a millionaire."

Assuredly John Lane, who launched so many young writers from the Bodley Head, would have agreed with this, anyhow in regard to poets and poetry. We had talks about them at times when English poetry was in bloom and in fashion, and at other times when it was only a grey shadow on the grass of Parnassus.

He was almost publisher-in-ordinary to the rising poets of the eighteen-nineties and melody streamed from the Bodley Head. But ten years later, in the nineteen-hundreds, new verse had become a drug

PAYING FOR POETRY

in the market, very much as it is to-day, and John Lane was the undoubted consulting specialist on the problem.

When he began business he said to himself, " No publisher will issue poetry by an unknown or little known writer, however good it may be, unless the expense in so doing is guaranteed. Well, I will publish poetry and I'll always pay for it." On those lines he went to work and he found that poetry could be made to pay, in the uplift of the nineties.

England had then three great, acknowledged living poets, Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning and Algernon Swinburne. When they died there was a natural curiosity among lovers of verse as to who would succeed them. " Oh, we have no poets left," was the remark most heard, to which, when a well-known lady said it to him, John Lane replied, " But I can name a dozen real poets," and he did.

William Watson had written his " Wordsworth's Grave," and he definitely climbed the Victorian heights with his " Lachrimae Musarum." The magic mantle had also fallen on Rudyard Kipling, John Davidson, Richard Le Gallienne, Stephen Phillips, Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson, Laurence Binyon, Francis Thompson, A. E. Housman, Alfred Noyes, Arthur Symonds, " A.E." and W. B. Yeats. Still other men poets there were and among singing

women, Mrs. Alice Meynell, Mrs. Margaret L. Woods, Mrs. Katharine Tynan, Mrs. Hubert Bland, Dora Sigerson Shorter, Nora Hopper, Olive Custace or Mrs. Ernest Radford, the wife of a poet.

Here was a choir of the nineties and John Lane supposed that contemporary thought and feeling were attuned to verse, or, it might be, tuned up to it. Some of the poets were writing reviews, and thus were helping to make good verse known and understood of the people. No volume of true poetry would have escaped the vigilance of poet-critics such as Mr. Le Gallienne or Lionel Johnson, and guidance and encouragement came likewise from men as diverse as William Archer, William Sharp, Henry Nevinston, Andrew Lang, Austin Dobson and Edmund Gosse.

John Lane spoke of another real influence and stimulus, the Rhymers' Club, which, in the nineties, met at the ancient Cheshire Cheese, *off* Fleet Street, for the furtherance of poetry and friendliness. Original poems were read and discussed at the meetings and this activity helped to correct the static situation which happens in poetry when a few singers only are recognized, the magnifying of them to such a degree that other genuine voices are neglected.

"The man in the street," John Lane enlarged his

HAIL TO THE HEIGHTS !

text, " who, mind you, is not above or below being interested in poetry, is likely to honour only the exalted singers. If we take Tennyson we can see how this supremacy and popularity meant want of recognition for Clough or Matthew Arnold. Moreover, with them I should link William Morris, George Meredith, W. S. Gilbert, Theodore Watts-Dunton, Lord De Tabley, Robert Louis Stevenson and Austin Dobson, as poets who did not get their full deserts."

He also hoped that Robert Bridges and John Masefield would be properly recognized as poets and indeed their successive Laureateships have confirmed that hope. " Never," said John Lane, in his smooth but emphatic way, " has a genuine poet sung and not come into his crown some day. But for him it may be too late, and what I advocate as most wholesome is the praise of quality in poetry, not of the one-man poet." There would always, of course, be the hero-poet but let not his comrade singers be neglected, for as time went on, more and more good poetry was being written.

⁴⁴ Why," exclaimed John Lane, " every week there comes before me, in manuscript at the Bodley Head, verse which, if it had been written in the early part of the nineteenth century, would have won high and lasting renown for its authors,"

We had talked of the " up " of verse in the nineties and the " down " of it in the nineteen-hundreds, and I asked " Why such a change and contrast ? " He thought for a little, as we do when we are going to say something unexpected, and then he said with the deliberation of conviction, " I believe the ' slump,' the fall of interest in new English poetry, can almost be fined down to the date of Oscar Wilde's arrest. The Bodley Head, until then, had made a commercial success of every book of verse it published. Onward from then, it could do no more than get its money back, unless the verse was by quite eminent writers.

" I was in America when Oscar Wilde was arrested," John Lane went on, " and I well remember the cabled report that he had a copy of the *Yellow Book* under his arm. What he was actually carrying was a ' yellow back ^f novel, not the famous Bodley Head quarterly, to which he never contributed a line. People chattered, ' Oscar Wilde ? Oh, he's a poet.' And because of him they took a prejudice against poetry. It was all very absurd and unreasonable, yet I'm persuaded that was the beginning of the revulsion. Yes, Oscar Wilde, the vaunted apostle of the beautiful, dealt a death-blow to much that is beautiful in literature."

Nothing moves quicker than a reaction, because

it is a retreat from glory, and besides his footnote to English poetry, John Lane mentioned other circumstances which tended, as he thought, to assist the reaction. "John Davidson and Stephen Phillips left poetry, in large measure, to write for the stage which is the natural enemy of modern poetry, whatever it may have been in the past. Poetry for the study and verse for the stage are entirely different things, as different as the art of the miniature painter and that of the scene-painter." So the Kipling-Henley-Newbolt school of verse, the poetry of action, soon gathered all the popularity unto itself. Poetry pure and simple was thrown into its lap and there it was confirmed by a series of wars between America and Spain, England and the Boers, and Russia and Japan.

If John Lane had been discussing the Great War he would have found that it threw up much poetry reading and much poetry. It brought, in fact, its own renaissance of verse but he would probably have repeated what he said to me of other conditions. War, with the unrest attending it, was the deadly foe of poetry, unless it be action verse, for when a nation has horrors in its papers every morning how could it think of the things which mean the highest poetry ?

What of the English poets who wrote and surely

were read, during the long Napoleonic Wars ? John Lane pondered. Scott was read, so was Byron, so was Tom Moore, but although Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats were writing, were they read ?

No ! It was either poetry of action or second-class verse that prospered and the two great sources and inspirations of pure poetry were Peace and Ideals. Give us, declared John Lane, quoting William Watson, instead of " Motion and fire, swift means to radiant ends," what Wordsworth bequeathed to his generation and ours, " for weary feet, the gift of rest."

It is a pity that a vital, subtle, sensitive man like John Lane who expressed the eager literary spirit of the eighteen-nineties, should not have left a journal. He worked mostly by contacts and the spoken word, not being a writer himself, but he was extraordinarily acquisitive, responsive, and reflective when he cared. No doubt he left correspondence and fragments of records, as well as the many pictures which he joyfully collected and which used to make the Bodley Head look like a casually arranged art gallery. But, apparently, there was nothing substantial enough or connected enough to guarantee a biography, for there has been none, and now, in the lines of one of his old Bodley Headers, William Sharp, who was also " Fiona Macleod " :

A LONDONER'S DIARY

" *O what are the bugles of Dreamland calling.
There-, where the dews of the gloaming are falling ?* "

The bugles recall another publisher with singular natural equipments for the work, William Heinemann, whose imprint also marches along on books. He did keep a journal, not very regularly perhaps, but fruitfully, and when he died he left it to his friend and partner, that good fellow Sidney Pawling, who cricketed with Sir James Barrie and other literary batsmen, bowlers, fielders, umpires or genial organizers of matches. " I have looked at it and looked at it," said Pawling to me, in his genial, gracious, wondering way, and I don't know what to do with it."

Apparently it contained things that could not be printed, as all diaries should if they are truthful and human. It also contained memories and stories of characters and celebrities that Heinemann knew, in particular of Whistler whom he knew intimately. Certainly it had to be edited, but Sidney Pawling did nothing with it and when he, in turn, died it passed into other hands and was destroyed like Byron's historic memoirs, and also, it was said, in the same way, by being burned.

Here would have been a personal and publishing document of real interest, for William Heinemann

both lived and achieved, being a man of individuality and success. He was short, until middle age, slim, and his mind and body were in constant activity, or, as one might say, in a chronic hurry. He was dark and rather sallow, like the Jewish race, but in moments of particular eagerness a flush came into his face, and his bright eyes winked and leapt.

There was an attractive little stutter in his words as he nervously poured them out, and almost a foreign touch in his accent, as of a man accustomed to other languages as well as English. No London publisher before or since Heinemann, has had an equally sure literary foot in our island and on the Continent, and this was reflected in the books he got and issued. He was master of both the art and the commerce of publishing for he knew a promising manuscript by instinct, and could calculate and effect its market with the public.

It was a picture in personality, repeated from time to time, to see Hall Caine and Heinemann talking on the pavement of Bedford Street, Covent Garden, from which the triumphant Manxman's stories were published, A new one would be coming out, and he had come along to see if all was right for its voyage, and the pow-wow had continued out of doors. There was Hall Caine, picturesque and impressive, and Heinemann, natty and definitive, a vivid combine,

However different in its likes, dislikes and outlook
i the world.

Dramatic settings do sometimes occur in the land
' publishing, but I can on the best authority, his
vn, lay to rest the old story that Henry Irving might
ive become a publisher. True, in his youth, he
as employed as a clerk in the London house of
hacker which did publish, among other activities,
pecially with India. But, wrote he, "I cannot
call any special handling of books.

" The firm," Sir Henry continued in his letter to
e, " exported all kinds of wares and I sat on a
ool and wrote invoices. It would be pleasant and
unantic to say that in this occupation I caught a
>ark from Shakespeare but stern veracity bids me
rbear."

It is as hard to imagine Henry Irving on a high
ool in the City of London, as to think of Theodore
oosevelt as a " silent partner " in a New York
iblishing house. But this, George Haven Putnam
Id me with a merry laugh, was how he once became
sociated with the firm. " Could a personality so
gorous ever be silent about anything ? He showed
e, from day to day, of course in a most friendly
birit, just how to run a publishing business."
isatiable but not omnivorous, was Putnam's
ascription of Roosevelt as a reader and, with

Gladstone, he always had a book at hand for the odd moments.

The publisher who rightly honours his job courts a manuscript in the same way, or if he be quite modern and perhaps more merchant than bookman, he keeps steadily in touch with authors. Personal contact is far less than it was before the rise of the literary agent and different, but it counts, as it must in everything human, and publishing is certainly that.

"Lanoe Falconer," who wrote a "best seller" called "Mademoiselle Ixe," had a humanly amusing story about Kegan Paul, a publisher whose success the 'prentice of to-day might well envy. "He begins," it ran, "with the moral that one should never leave one's publisher, and ends with an adjuration to go to him if I do."

Be a gentleman, but be enterprising ! It is no bad motto, and it is a most proper morality beside another story, never likely to be given away in detail in any volume of memoirs, of a famous Victorian lady who, going to see a not less famous Victorian editor, was asked, on her return, what he was like, and answered, "Well, he's the sort of man who would put his arm round your waist and beg you to be faithful to your husband."

XVI. PILGRIMS OF THE PEN

Peeps at them journeying in hope and travail, a vision of Celtic Lloyd George as a writer, the Williamsons and the motor novel) mysterious " Fiona Macleod " explained; and Crockett of the Scots " Kail-yarders"

THE joy and pain of creative writing, which is the birth of ideas in becoming words, has been expressed in many ways but never, perhaps, better than in Heine's, " Out of my sorrows I have made my little songs," Behind that heart-beat lies the whole road of authorship, won or only sought, and a long, near, onlooker asks himself " What about it all ? "

" With a good pen," said Clemenceau, " good ink, and good paper, with which to set down fine and inspiring ideas of justice and truth, a man in a democracy such as ours, can be king of the world." " Be sure to trust yourself," John Morley counselled Margot Asquith when she was writing her autobiography, " and do not worry about the critics."

Clemenceau lived up to his faith, and Morley's advice was wise, like his face, particularly in later

years when it came to resemble that of Goethe, not in expression and lines, but strikingly in general contour. Anybody who writes, wondering while doing so how someone else would do it, is pretty sure of failure.

Even a plain British soldier in the Great War guarded against that in his letters home to his wife, by calling in the help of Shakespeare. He regularly borrowed a copy of "Macbeth" from the camp library and being asked why, replied, "Well, I write reg'lar to the Missus and dunno what to say, so I just send her a bit of Shakespeare."

Genius is rare, talent frequent, and mere cleverness abundant, and the road of authorship has uses for them all, but foremostly for character and industry. "Genius," said George Meredith to that most original agent of letters, American Samuel McClure, "is an extraordinary activity of mind in which all conscious and subconscious masses itself around any effort of the will and becomes effective. It manifests itself in three ways ; in producing, in organizing and in rapidity of thought." Whichever form it takes it will always look after itself, except in a worldly sense, so leaving talent and cleverness their own opportunities.

Possibly the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, a reader of poetry and a sound judge of it, was thinking of

them, rather than of born genius, when he made an observation to which other men of his day and to-day would, like the speaker after Edmund Burke, say ditto. "To an old-fashioned ear," was the Asquithian confession, "there seems to be a fine and often an almost arrogant disorder in the outpourings of the contemporary Muse." If it be a criticism, it has such a sonorous murmur that it might also be a compliment and blessing.

Poetry is a call, sure to need sacrifice, while the novel is every man's possibility, alike as to writing and prosperity, and therefore the main street of authorship, if not its Appian Way. When millions of readers cry, poor resolve has he or she who would not endeavour to feed them with thrills or threnodies, narrow squeaks in adventure, ever nearer escapes in virtue, or even old-fashioned wedding bells, for you never know when they may become a new fashion.

While he was in London, Richard Le Gallienne sang one school of fiction in :

*" Give us the book that flowers and flames
With love and youth and noble tears"*

Also he sang the other school, only gathering vogue in the last decade of Queen Victoria, when he pleaded :

*" Oh, take away those books that tell
The hideous so-called truth of things,
Those little documents of Hell! "*

It all sounds far and faint, but it still has guidance for the young writer seeking to find himself, and with that done, a public.

Shall a pen-name be used ? It often was when the writing of novels was thought to be unrespectable, but it is less often used now when so much written is really unrespectable, at least according to Victorian standards. Mrs. Pearl Craigie, who flung witty prose at those conventions, wrote as " John Oliver Hobbes " and won not less witty praise from an American Ambassador, the silver-tongued Choate. " I myself," he declared, " am under great obligations to Mrs. Craigie, for it was from her play ' The Ambassadors ' that I acquired most of my knowledge of the duties of that office."

One does not know why, but nearly every woman is glad to be told that she writes like a man. When women have taken the plunge of using a man's Christian name they have rather favoured " George," as " Georges Sand," " George Eliot," and, more recently, " George Egerton " and " George Paston."

Not less important is the choice of the name of novel heroes and heroines, the essential thing being

WHAT'S IN A NAME

that they should suggest the characters for which they are the sign and perhaps a general sense of romance and sex. A year or two ago Antony was the fashion and Marjorie had a turn, and even gave a title to a novel. "And you know my name's Marjorie," quoth a coquettish lady, not in her first youth, when she asked for that story at a London circulating library.

Wendy, of Sir James Barriers heroines, is a name which he owed to the little daughter of his friend Henley. She could not pronounce "Barrie" with the insistent Scotch double "r" in it, but once she heard her father address him as "friend." She gathered that into her infant mind and it came out as "Wendy," the nearest pronunciation she could manage.

A memory will unconsciously suggest a phrase which has the qualities of a good title, like "Our backs to the wall" of Earl Haig's historic war dispatch from France. Being a Scotsman and a Borderer bred on the soil of ballads, he may, behind his mind, have been thinking of the one which runs :

*" O send Lewis Gordon hame
And the lad 1 maune name.
Though his back be at the wa'
Here's to him that's far awa'."*

A parable is a prose ballad, with a difference, and Mr. Lloyd George's instinct for it might have made him a very individual writer and professional author, had he not gone into the whirlpool of politics. Every country boy should know his beautiful application of a youthful experience of his own, to a pre-war political storm.

It was, he said, like the winds howling at night among the Welsh woods, making much conflict with their trunks and branches, but in the morning there would be an abundance of fallen wood to gather for humble home fires. This was his way of saying that modern legislation for the well-being of the people, such as old-age pensions, would reward the rough turmoils of birth.

Mr. Lloyd George had an equally fine parable on the war in a London speech he made at the Queen's Hall, in the agonizing year nineteen-hundred-and-fourteen. "I know," he said, "a valley in the north of Wales between the mountains and the sea; a beautiful valley, snug, comfortable, sheltered by the mountains from all the bitter blast. It was very enervating and I remember how the boys were in the habit of climbing the hill above the village, to have a glimpse of the great mountains in the distance and to be stimulated and refreshed by the breezes which came from the hill-tops and by the spectacle of

that valley," And then came " L.G.'s" moral, " We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations."

We had been too comfortable, too indulgent, many perhaps too selfish, and the stern hand of fate had scourged us to an elevation where we could see the everlasting things that matter for a nation ; the high peaks of honour we had forgotten, Duty, Patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the pinnacle of sacrifice pointing, a rugged finger, to Heaven. We should descend into the valleys again but as long as the men and women of this generation lasted, they would carry in their hearts the image of those great mountain peaks, whose foundations were not shaken, though Europe rocked and swayed in the convulsions of war.

Mr. Lloyd George was not destined to be a John Bunyan and write another allegory like " The Pilgrim's Progress " but chance, as is constantly apparent to an onlooker, has its part in the making of an author. The American Admiral Mahan's famous and determining book on sea power, is an instance citable from his own telling when he came to London for a dinner at which all the eminences of England were his honoured hosts.

His warship was lying at Callao, the dull seaport town of Lima, and he and his brother officers

frequently went for a day to the capital, an hour's journey away. There they had the hospitality of the English Club, and in its library Mahan found Mommensen's "History of Rome" which he read systematically, especially the Hannibal episode.

It struck him how differently things might have gone if Hannibal could have invaded Italy by sea, as the Romans had invaded Africa, instead of by the long land route ; or if, after reaching Italy, he had been in sea communication with Carthage. This clue led subsequently to his study of the influence of sea power upon history, with results which changed thought and policy in regard to both,

No brighter spirit ever came from America to join our writers than Alice Muriel Livingstone, whose marriage made her Mrs. C. N. Williamson and a British subject. It is a tradition that she was the prettiest, wittiest girl who ever invaded Fleet Street, where she met her husband, then the editor of a now forgotten illustrated weekly, *Black and White*.

As ^{<1} C. N. and A. M. Williamson "they invented the motor novel, and just how they did it I learned from Mrs. Williamson, because, like so much else on the rocky road to authorship, it was a chance out of a mischance. She told the story with the bloom and vivacity characteristic of herself and her talk, to

which a lingering accent, native to the banks of the American Hudson River, gave a farther singing charm.

When motor-cars were young and frisky animals of uncertain habits, the Williamsons, then themselves "young marrieds," ventured to buy one. It was small and in shape resembled a sitz-bath or an open Gladstone bag. To them, however, it looked about as large as a Roman chariot and as high as a German throne. It had a bright bonnet and silver-coated things inside, rather like crystallized fruit, but it was diabolical in its ways.

The Williamsons lived on a farm in Surrey where their most intimate friends were biscuit-coloured Jersey cows with purple tongues. These cows kept their distance after the arrival of the new beast, having an instinctive sense of "safety first." However, the car was mastered well enough to be taken abroad and in it the owners bumped and lolloped and side-slipped and skidded over large and lovely areas of France and at last bumbled heavily into Italy.

At Taormina, in Sicily, there came a bolt from the cobalt blue, not this time from the car. It was a letter saying a travel paper for which the C. N. Williamson was doing articles and taking snapshots, was about to give up the ghost. Alack and alas !

No money in hand, or not much ! A very fine situation ! But quoth the A. M. Williamson, who being a woman, thought it her mission to console, " Anyhow, it's a real adventure. Let's take the best rooms with a bath ; let's order a gorgeous dinner and the most expensive champagne. Then let's stroll by moonlight in the pergola and think out a story to write about our trip, instead of your articles."

" Done," said " C.N.," so they took rooms suited to royalty, bathed away the dust of their desolation, put on their gladdest rags, ate Sicilian goat, which called itself " milk-fed lamb," drank health to themselves, no doubt in Asti Spumanti, and made for their pergola. After it, it meant flowers, or the thought of flowers, and they have always been comforters of the heart, if sometimes disturbers of the hearth.

Perhaps it was the thrill of the moonlight, or it may have been the spirit of the ancient car seeking to atone for many things ; at all events an idea jumped into the Williamson heads. An hour later one of them, seated on an unsympathetic iron balcony chair, with her feet on another iron chair still harder, began the first letter of " The Lightning Conductor." On and on the letters went, till long after the gleaming pearl that was Mount Etna, had dissolved in the purple-wine of a moon-deserted night.

AND IT STOOD STILL!

A reaction of feeling set in about the car, love instead of hate, for it had shown " A.M." and " CN." the beauty of many landscapes, as well as done its best to break their hearts and their bones. They almost went to its Taormina garage to pat it good night and may be in some mysterious fashion this emotion of late gratitude affected it, for it never, of its own volition, moved again.

It was tugged by a horse to Catania, it returned to England by ship, and in Surrey it was sinfully sold to a tradesman. What happened to it later the Williamsons did not know, and did not ask, but it had given them a " best seller " which enabled them to buy a beauteous car for their new career as " motor novelists." It was a career almost like a romance with, far ahead, the long illness which took " C.N." and the going-to-sleep which closed the life of "A.M."

She was the story dreamer and the writer and no vital woman ever had a more beautiful nature. The successive Williamson homes in the French Riviera were centres of hospitality and joy and whether she was in London or New York, " A.M." was sure to be helping some under-dog of authorship, art, music or the stage. Her gaiety of spirit was only equalled by her high gravity of character, but indeed she was a lovable personality for a dozen reasons and beloved

by a legion of friends, among whom it was a real pride to be well counted.

When the Williamsons wrote their stories they might have had in their minds a text by an American poetess they knew. Miss Emily Dickinson :

*" There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any couriers like a page
Of prancing poetry."*

But that just happened to be their line of vision, as William de Morgan found his with very detailed, very personal novels done in his old age and, most fitly, in Chelsea where, one loves to fancy, there still lingers an atmosphere of the brocade and frills of other days. He wrote with the elaboration of a sampler and the smooth insequentness of conversation in a Victorian drawing-room, and possibly the natural memories, in the same strain, of a dying generation had something to do with the De Morgan vogue.

Meet him at his Chelsea home, or see him in the rakish King's Road, and you instantly said to yourself, " But here is ancient romance returned." Somebody even got its rosiness into a jingle around his stories :

" ' Joseph Vance ' kissed ' Alice For Short'
 As the two in the library stood_y
 ' // Never Can Happen AgainJ she said_y
 He said it was ' Somehow Good.' "

We see how personal the success of a writer may be from the very beginning, whether he deals in sentiment, realism, or a mixture of the two, which is the melange of life. John Murray IV remembered his father's " trade dinners " at the famous Albion in Aldersgate Street, when orders would be taken for twenty thousand copies of Smith's " Principia Latina." Here was faith, another necessary element in the pilgrim author and Mrs. Humphry Ward had it when she launched " Robert Elsmere."

Her uncle, Matthew Arnold, recognized the merits of the book, but was opposed to its main idea that a priest who doubts must depart. A point like that would not be taken so solemnly to-day, but possibly the good advice of a friendly memorandum which John Murray IV once addressed to his authors holds as fast as ever, an exception, such as the case of " Robert Elsmere," proving it.

" Don't," he said, " place too much confidence in the *obiter dicta* of friends who have no stake in your books." Similarly, he added, it was a mistake to suppose that good reviews alone would sell a book.

Most reviews were favourable in some degree, but the success of a work depended a great deal on its being talked about in society and elsewhere. Nobody could say how this might come about in any given case ; and so we get back to the ever-present question of luck as well as merit.

Persistence at least gives successive opportunities and for that reason there should have been prosperous authorship in an American newspaper-man of whom, and our Mr. Winston Churchill, I have an anecdote in memory. It relates to Mr. Churchill's earlier years of political office when he was President of the Board of Trade. Came the journalist with an introduction which could not very well be ignored, because it was from Mr. Lloyd George.

" Do you know," said Winston, according to the story, " that I have refused to see forty-seven of your compatriots ? " " I ought to know," was the laconic answer, " for I am the whole forty-seven."

It was a little joke with Sir Rider Haggard that his enormously popular " King Solomon's Mines " ruined his career at the Bar, because no man who wrote a " best seller " could hope to succeed in the arid realm of law. But for it he might have become a judge of the High Court, and oh ! to think that it was written out of a bet with his brother. The bet was made casually, to prove it possible for someone,

not at all known in authorship, to do a "thriller" as successful as "Treasure Island."

Even in a "thriller," certainly as good ones as Stevenson and Haggard wrote, there is probably something of a prescription set down by John Ruskin. "Make yourselves," he says, "nests of pleasant thoughts. None of us yet know, for none of us have been taught in early youth, what fairy palaces we may build of beautiful thoughts, proof against all adversity : bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings, treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy, nor poverty take away from us ; houses built without hands, for our souls to live in." Amen ! say we all.

It has long been definitely known that William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod," two notable Victorian names, stood for the same person. The secret was, however, strenuously kept, and it is an instance of how a little mystery can do no harm to fame.

Before me there lies a letter, dated September 14th, 1904, but still fresh and clear, especially the signature "Fiona Macleod." Its purpose was to allay the curiosity which insisted on mixing William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod," and it suggested some reasons that had, perhaps, led to this. The former is spoken of as "my kinsman," who "at one time

acted for me," and with whom there were " kindred sympathies and interests " and a " known intimacy and relationship. Many people, too, because my name is somewhat unusual, though of course not unique, thought it must be a pseudonym,"

An odd relic of the years, and of no importance now, yet it played its part in a drama which was once quick and controversial. It was one Scotsman's way of authorship, possibly because he wanted different expressions for the two-fold writer in him, the thinker and the poet. Another Scotsman, Samuel Rutherford Crockett, leapt at writing as with a bound, relishing it whole-heartedly, taking it in his stride and wearing out his talent for the tenderness of ^{<£} " The Stickit Minister " and the colour of " The Raiders."

Crockett brought to London readers the clank of the Solway moss troopers and the cry of the whaup in the lonely places of Galloway. The first time I saw him was on the narrow Paternoster Square stair which led to his publisher, Mr. Fisher Unwin, and the next time on a wider stair in a Fleet Street newspaper office. He was bearded, though young, squarely set, with a round drop of the shoulders, genial of face, bashful of eye and reddish and touselish of hair. A certain air of romance combined in him with the outer Free Kirk minister, and made him seem quite the man to go with for a story.



MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD AND SIR JAMES BARRIE.

*An "Auld Liiht Idyll" of the two eminent S,«/w// foigartered
on holiday in Angus, the county of Kirriemuu, uthr.u," 7/:tutns."*

He came as the second pillar of the Scots "kail-yard" school of the eighteen-nineties, Sir James Barrie having been the first, and genial "Ian Maclaren," also, of course, a parson, the third. Crockett's road to authorship was guided by still another parson, the Rev. W. H. Wylie to whom, as an editor of a religious weekly, he had sent some sketches of the "kail-yard" sort. When the editor-parson died he left counsel to his son that the promising writer at Penicuik Manse was to be encouraged and helped. An eventual result of this duty was the appearance of "The Stickit Minister" dedicated to Robert Louis Stevenson, and with a grateful tribute to the Wylies.

An individual case of the road of ink is a thread in its whole contour, and, being "discovered," Crockett threw his whole self into his pen. He gave up his career as a Scottish minister, saying when he preached his valedictory sermon, that he had received a call from the *Lord* to literature. He was then only thirty-five and he obeyed the call until he died at Avignon in his fifty-fourth year. He had the other association with France that a French lecturer on Scottish letters spoke of "The Stickit Minister" as "Le Ministre Assassine," while it merely means a man who has failed in his theological studies and so has not reached ordination.

Within the country of "The Raiders," the book

PILGRIMS OF THE PEN

by which Crockett is most likely to live, there is now a memorial to him. " Samuel Rutherford Crockett," said Sir Herbert Maxwell at its unveiling, " was what we Scots euphemistically term a love-bairn.^{J>} It is a tender word, always tenderly spoken by Scottish folk, within whose roll of fame and genius it stands for a brilliant company, strangely enough, naturally enough, perhaps, according to the laws of human creation.

XVII. CONFIDENCES AND CONFESSIONS

The grand literary game of the " Symposium" whose spirit is happily illustrated in anecdotes about the Prince of Wales ; and a variety of colloquies with a host of eminent and popular English writers.

A PERSON well accredited in the London book world is not only in the way of meeting its people but is sure to hear from them. This leads to pleasant little discoveries of opinion, outlook and peculiarity, with the charm of intimacy, and at the same time a public side. You get things that are meant for yourself and other things which are to be passed to a larger audience as, possibly, a⁴⁴ symposium."

It means the collection of views on some topic, by men and women having authority about it, a darkening of diverting counsel. We all like to be well regarded and this human vanity-box bears the inscription, though everybody may not see it, or be able to read it, " Ask and ye shall receive ; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Not always, perhaps, but mostly, and so the organization of a literary

symposium can be an adventure as well as a venture.

Many of them have come into my own traffic with the English bookland and always they have yielded good-nature, delectation and knowledge, expected or unexpected. Nowadays the " symposium " is rather out of fashion, perhaps because it got worn, perhaps because a younger generation has not time merely to think, perhaps because it does not care to pool ideas for the common good. Therefore one values all the more memories of enterprises launched on such slogans as " How I write my books," " How we collaborate in our novels,"⁴⁴ " What character would I most like to have created in all literature ? " or even " What Publishers Read."

It is a literary game of both chance and variety, very like the individual " symposiums " we all unconsciously conduct when something occurs to us and we ask about it of whoever happens to be near. A London bookseller friend, who has come into touch with the Prince of Wales as a reader, tells me an anecdote of him which illustrates the symposium spirit at its best, because on its closest note.

H.R.H. had made a speech at a large London meeting held in support of the call " Forward Young England." He was so impressed by another speech

from a working man that afterwards he shyly asked, " Did you prepare it yourself? " " Yes, sir," was the answer. " Wrote it all ? " " Of course." The Prince saw he was in contact with a well-educated, self-educated man, and he felt he might have unintentionally hurt his feelings. " Well," he said with his understanding smile, " I can only say that lots of people help me with my speeches."

Not in recent days, one gathers, because the Prince's personality braids all his speeches, and he has become a ready speaker as well as a good speaker. No doubt a golden key to his success is the quality of sympathy which is in an anecdote, also new to record, of his visit to South Africa where the English and Dutch races made a complete union in their regard for him.

The Prince was in some veldt village or township, and the crush around him was so great that he said, " I suppose everybody is here." " All except one poor fellow," he was informed, " who is a cripple, spends all the time on his back, and can't be moved." ^{%i} Then I'll go and see him," quoth the Prince and he did, and spent half an hour beside his bed, talking and joking with a very proud invalid.

Shall we, metaphorically of course, hold the hands of a few of our best known active or recent authors and note the personal lights they have, one time or

another, thrown across my road of quest ? Not in a heavy fashion, though solidly, but in the catch-as-catch-can of an old music-hall ditty when it was applied to the anonymous authorship of the lively and amusing " Young Visitors " :

*" Daisy, Daisy, give us your answer do ;
We re halfcrazy\ wondering who are you"*

Confidences about the creation of their own books have hardly come from Mr. Rudyard Kipling, or Sir James Barrie, for one is as determinedly silent as the other. It is just as natural, on the other hand, for Mr. Bernard Shaw to yield up his thoughts, whether they be about himself or other people. He is essentially simple in his attitude and outlook, like most really complex characters, so his method of authorship is simple.

When he has anything to say that seems worth saying, he takes a pen or typewriter and puts it down and that is all. Ideas come and mostly have to be rejected, for to him good writing represents only about two per cent of them. A great deal of his later work has been done in shorthand during his train journeys between London and his little country house in Herts. His secretary transcribes his shorthand on the typewriter, and when he has been over the

script at least twice, and sometimes much oftener, it goes to the printer.

With the famous Shavian we bracket Mr. H. G. Wells as a prophet and teacher of the twentieth century but he, also, is old-fashioned in that he writes everything. Generally he writes on large sheets of paper like the manuscripts of the Victorians, among whom Mr. Wells was born. He weaves his farther and final thoughts into his big sheets as almost artistic interlineations and with a lift in the penmanship, a sort of ballooning touch, such as is found in the mentality of his novels.

To Mr. Hugh Walpole the real purpose of a novel seems the creation of a human being and therefore, when he sets out to write, it is a human being he sees first. Other characters gather round him, or her, some phase of life envelops them, a background evolves, and the moral comes from the clash of several of these human beings against each other.

Thus shape Mr. Walpole's stories and they are all connected together in his mind, making, for him, a world of their own. This explains why his characters move from one book to another, a most inartistic proceeding, he has been told. " But," he observed,⁴⁴ life seems to me more important than art, though art is a heaven-sent and glorious luxury."

Sometimes it is a character that begins a book with

Mr. A. E. W. Mason, sometimes a combination of people in a particular relationship, sometimes an idea, not yet personified, which he happens on. Or, it may be some story which has been told to him, but usually he starts with certain people and certain facts associated with them, and these simmer in his head long before he does anything with them. His "Four Feathers," which some of us read with a thrill not yet forgotten, sprang from the idea which is the kernel of the story ; the fear of fear carried to the point of disgrace, with the subsequent realization that the highly-strung one, put to it, will go farther than the rest.

Bright and grave, like herself, was Miss Rebecca West when she said, " I don't know how I write my books, except that I write them on six different writing pads," She meant that with the sixth pad, if the going is good, she reaches a fair copy of whatever she has in hand, so we see how hard-working natural brilliance can be. It is indeed proof of the thoroughness of ratiocination, as a learned person would put it, that though Miss West carefully plans her stories before she begins them, at the end they are quite different. Simply the characters take the tale in hand, but" How one gets them," she declared, " I don't know—they come out of anywhere."

Arnold Bennett mentioned to me an incident,

bearing on his method of authorship, which happened during the war when he was helping in Whitehall. "What beautiful shorthand you write," said another secretary to his secretary. "Oh," was the reply, "that is Mr. Bennett's shorthand," and truly one had only to see it and his ordinary writing, to realize him as an artist of the pen in two senses.

Bennett wrote for years according to regular hours, but later did not do so, though always most of his work was done in the morning. Oftenest he got his ideas while walking about the streets of London, of which he was so fond. He did not sit down to write until he knew fairly exactly what he was going to say and he scarcely ever made an alteration, mind and hand being in full union.

John Galsworthy, most courteous and friendly of correspondents, could in a few words suggest much detail, his genius for atmosphere even when it was himself. The main drifts of character and plot came to him spasmodically, at odd moments in the silent watches. Detail washed up from, he supposed, the subconscious into the conscious mind of one sitting solitary and diligent in a chair. He never made scenarios, he did not write with a stylo, he did not dictate, and "The Forsyte Saga" is his.

Joseph Conrad had also to hold a pen if he was to express himself in his art and his art in himself, but

gout intervened. It affected his writing hand and this caused him to try dictation and he would speak a part, as it were, have it typed, re-speak it, and so on until he got where he wanted.

He would attack a big novel, such as one on the Napoleonic time which he left unfinished, both by pen and voice, and his manuscript, however it eventually arrived, was scored with up-strokes and down-strokes and flourishes. These were tokens of the zeal with which he sought a harbour of perfect expression, perhaps his most remarkable characteristic as a writer in English, originally a foreign language to him, a Pole by birth.

Another fine spirit now lost to us, William J. Locke, was definite about the making of his stories. "The only real way in which a man can write a real novel," he said, "is to put personality into it. A novel should be a created thing, with life in it, like a baby." His novels were happy, but not too happy, meaning that they reflected life as he saw it through his temperament which was ever hopeful. His mind ranged the darker human problems, but his heart's instinct was to present them framed in sunshine, and that faith remained with him at Cannes even when illness struck him.

"Yes," he once remarked to me, with a laugh in the gentle eyes that lit his furrowed face, "let us try to

pick happiness from life where it is so delicate, so elusive, a butterfly playing in the sun." He asked, "Was it not Anatole France who said 'Sorrow—that is easy to write about, but comedy—that is a serious business?' Happy endings a novelist should not always seek—there's 'Romeo and Juliet'—but may one not aim to reflect the seriousness of life within the mask of comedy?"

It is an education towards that to meet and hear from writers, and certainly it leads to pretty questions of all sorts. Take the situation of two people, particularly a man and a woman, who write books together, because it involves both human and literary problems. They must be sympathetic and understanding if they are to get on, and they must have minds which fit into each other, if they are to bring forth as readable novels as, back in other but remembered years, Walter Besant and James Rice wrote here and Erckmann and Chatrian wrote in France.

"We must hear, or think we hear one voice," said Besant about the working method of his partner and himself. It has always been understood that Rice was the chief architect of their novels while Besant was the chief writer. The Erckmann-Chatrian combine was on different lines, for each author wrote what he liked and afterwards struck out of the whole what he did not like. By this process of creative-criticism

they achieved their novels and, like Besant and Rice, disproved the literary wisecrack, " Collaboration never was a success except when it was not collaboration."

We have a sound challenge to this deliverance in the history, as I heard it directly, of two cases of present-day collaboration. Moreover, the first is, itself, in the wisecrack garden, for it has to do with " Wisdom While You Wait," by Mr. E. V. Lucas, and Mr. C. L. Graves, which, in the Merry England of before the Great War, began a very bright series of skits on men and things.

" It was usually," Mr. Lucas told me, " my collaborator who held the pen, while I paced the room. Everything we wrote separately was revised by the other. Some of the best ideas came when we were walking out of doors, but the best of all never reached print."

It is often so, and, further, as Mr. Lucas commented, " It is sad to think that those days are over. Not that there is less now to satirize and guy, but it is a young man's game." Well, there is surely a young Georgian with enough humour to take up that challenge.

A fruitful joint authorship has been that between Miss E. CE. Somerville and her cousin " Martin Ross," who was actually Miss Violet Martin and is

now dead. It produced not only the human and lovable " Irish R.M." but other writings as original, and in a letter to me Miss Somerville spoke in gratitude for a merciful privilege ; that is her literary colleagueship with " Martin Ross." " She has gone but our collaboration has not ended," I was assured, for in " whatever, during these later years, I have written, I have known her help and I have thankfully received her inspiration."

One or other of the gifted Irish ladies would state a proposition and it would be argued, modified or approved. Then it would be written down by whoever had pen in hand, scratched out and scribbled in once more, until it found itself as decorous MS. Altogether it would suffer many things, but it would, anyhow, have the advantage of being well aired.

Once Miss Martin, speaking of the ease with which she and her friend worked, put negatively an essential element of true literary collaboration. Few people succeeded in it because they had separate minds on most subjects and fought their own hands all the time. Thus it was not instructive, understanding co-operation, but a struggle, unconsciously veiled, for certain results.

A happy marriage should be an assurance against this because it implies the inner comradeship, and certainly no recent collaboration has yielded more

popular novels than that of the Williamsons. They were "ye twain" in life and pen all the time, but, on the other hand, writers have often joined forces for a single book, as Mr. Rudyard Kipling and his brother-in-law, Wolcott Balestier, did in "The Naulaka," and Andrew Lang and Mr. A. E. W. Mason in "Parson Kelly,"

Most institutions, literary or otherwise, are evolutions, trees throwing out new branches, and this bears on the whole art and craft of collaboration. Go back and you find that Pope had junior partners for his ¹¹Odyssey," and Addison and Steele the help of others with "Sir Roger de Coverley," not perhaps to its benefit. The two Dumas, being "mass producers," like our Edgar Wallace, turned to a kind of staff for the mechanical parts of their authorship, much as Rubens let pupils do the groundwork of some of his paintings.

However D'Artagnan, of the Dumas factory, came to literary life, Mr. De Vere Stacpoole holds him the most vivid character in romantic fiction. He said so during my gleanings as to what character in literature notable current writers would most have desired to create. "Homer's Achilles," said Mr. John Masefield, "because he seems to be most alive." "Falstaff," Mr. H. G. Wells named, without comment, and Mr. John Buchan ranked him and Cleopatra as

CHARACTERS IN FICTION

the two most astounding characters in literature. " But," quoth the Scottish novelist, perhaps with a fond look north, " I would rather, in the ordinary business of creation, create Sir Walter's Jeanie Deans than anybody else."

Don Quixote was favoured by Mr. Hugh Walpole and Mr. Compton Mackenzie, and Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell plumped for Robinson Crusoe. " At the moment," said Mr. E. F. Benson feelingly, " I should like best to have created the character I am trying to create, but if that doesn't count, I would choose Gus in " Ravenshoe." How many readers of to-day know Henry Kingsley's fine romance ?

Again, how many people, on the instant, would place Arnold Bennett's " Very well, Aloysha," in the pages of Dostoieffsky's " Brothers Karamazoff"? We have the rightly English postscript to that in Mr. W. B. Maxwell's vote for John Inglesant, as " so fine, so perfect a gentleman," and in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's election of Colonel Newcome as the " ideal English gentleman."

We are on a parallel road with the inquiry, " If you could meet characters of literature in the person, who would you ask for first and next—and next ?" " I think," said that scholarly man of letters, the late Mr. W. L. Courtney, " I should best of all like to meet Falstaff, to ask him whether he ever forgave

Henry V." Mr. E' V. Lucas was also for meeting Falstaff, and Arnold Bennett added Conrad's Lord Jim to his Aloysha, though " I shall possess myself in patience if neither of them turns up."

" My strongest unsatisfied craving," Mr. Stephen McKenna declared, " is for an introduction to Mrs. 'Arris." W. J. Locke wanted to shake Mr. Pickwick by the hand, have half an hour' with Falstaff, and listen for a while to Don Quixote. Walter Scott's Diana Vernon was asked for by Mr. W. B. Maxwell, and Mr. Hugh Walpole was for Scott first, if Lockhart's biography makes him a character in literature.

" Job, if he would honestly answer all my questions," quoth Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell, " Le Cousin Pons, if he would reveal what he paid for his best bits, and tell me what will catch the fancy, in furniture, of the rising generation, and Lucrezia Borgia, if she would tell me about all the crimes she committed which were not found out," Always individual, Dr. Arthur Lynch desired to meet the Angel Raphael of Milton's " Paradise Lost," having noted the interest he displayed in Adam and Eve ; also Ulysses, a thinker who could discourse in terms of life itself, likewise Aladdin, Sancho Panza, and Byron's Don Juan.

It is a noble army that marches past and its march conducts us to one other investigation, " Which are

the twelve greatest novels in all literature ? " A difficult, an impossible question, or as Mr. H. G. Wells said, " It is like asking which is the greater work of Nature, the shrew-mouse or the elephant, the cedar tree or the violet.¹

" An unmanageable question," agreed Mr. Bernard Shaw, because nobody has read all literature and nobody has read all the novels. One could only give a list, and off-hand he named " Don Quixote," " Robinson Crusoe," " Tom Jones," " The Vicar of Wakefield," " Manon Lescaut," " Ivanhoe," " Rob Roy," " Little Dorrit," " Candide," " Gulliver's Travels," " The Pilgrim's Progress," " Les Misérables," and " The Arabian Nights."

It is, anyhow, a good baker's dozen, but as Mr. Shaw commented, winding up the subject, " You can easily get another dozen just as eligible," and then Shavianly, " Come off it, my dear sir, come off it ! "

XVIII. THE GREAT WAR TIME

Its quick and far-flung reactions on English writers and readers as silhouetted against the three waves of Regulars, Territorials and Citizens ; likewise a little pilgrimage in the Paris bookland of Armageddon.

PEOPLE who lived and wrote as they could, through the Great War, have a tale to tell which perhaps throws light on the dark gulf supposed to divide what went before and what has come after. They were on the thundering bridge that linked the two epochs, for surely the Pre-war and the Post-war are not to be regarded as strangers but as comrades carrying forward common burdens, eventually to be harmonized.

When the younger Pitt folded up the map of Europe he thought the " crack of doom " had come, but Waterloo was still to be won by Wellington. Gradually the life of the world strode over the whole Napoleonic shake-up, though, in a smaller world, its comparative shock was probably greater than ours. Cataclysms of many kinds, but always continuity,

“FOR COMRADESHIP”

because there is no death in human evolution and progress.

The Sermon on the Mount was preached twenty centuries ago and its message has never been more needfully guiding to mankind than it is to-day. It was doubly sacred amid the martyrdom of the Armageddon we know, for in its smoke of guns, and fog of murder gas, the still small voice which is within us all could croon :

⁴⁴ / saw an altar ,white against a sapphire sky.
Lit by 'very lonely stars.

*Because the stars were 'very far and
I brought a little flaming lamp and laid it on the t
step
For comradeship."*

It was necessary to light the writing man and the London literary world along when the sword fell, rattling and crashing on the pen, its ancient rival for power. Except that it must be destructive, the crash was all wonderment, for while there had been many writings prophetic of modern warfare, we had still to discover it as waged on a colossal scale. Memories went back to Stephen Crane's "Red Badge of Courage," and to a modest volume, "The Epistles of Atkins," which told of the South African War

as the soldier man found it, but they were small catechisms.

It might almost be said that, in their surprise and amazement, English readers dropped the books they had in their hands. This feeling lasted for a week or so, and then folk recovered their natural selves, but they did not at once proceed to read books. They ordered many newspapers, all of them smaller in size, and they read and read and read the scant war dispatches. Finally, when they saw that it was to be a long business, they fell back again on books.

That, at all events, meant quietness and shelter from the loosened blasts of strife, and after still another while, the book world moved once more as a machine. At the ebb of summer in August "Fourteen" it was a skeleton, which might have been buried, without the discovery that there was life in it. "But," said its writers, publishers and booksellers, "there's work to do and we'll get down to it." It was true helpfulness to ultimate war triumph, for books as diversion, comfort or encouragement were as another Allied army in the field.

Active poets and poetry played an especial part in this spiritual quickening for high tasks. They had for long been addressing their manuscripts to wives and sweethearts, and getting them, if they could, into

A "TIPPERARY" PARODY

print in the springtime, when a young man's fancy turns to verse as well as to love. Now they wrote rapid little patriotic odes or made anthologies of the great English singers, particularly Wordsworth. By and by verse, red and vigorous, began to come from the men who were fighting in France, and home poets answered back in grateful and admiring vein.

It was not always easy to do, for think of the parody of "Tipperary," by a Scottish soldier from a trench in Picardy :

*" If3 a lang way tae Auchtermuchty,
If s a lang way tae Perth,
If's a lang way to anywhere,
Frae anywhere else on airth,
Guid-bye tae Ballachulish
Farewell but an' ben
It's a lang, lang way tae Auchtermuchty
But ive'll gang back again"*

Here, outwardly anyhow, for no man knows the soul of another, was Wordsworth's " happy warrior," he " whom every man in arms should wish to be." Thomas Atkins of so many virtues and so few graces, ever had the old folks at home in his heart, and in his vision some dear woman crooning to herself :

THE GREAT WAR TIME

*" So I knit this long, grey thing,
Which some fearless lad will fling
Round him in the icy blast,
With the shrapnel whistling fast :
Comforter it may be then.
Like a mother's touch again,
And at last, not grey but red
Be a pillow for the dead"*

Many, many a brave fellow had fallen before the second war-year, which brought another crisis in the English book world. When Europe swam in the Napoleonic storm England made her own paper, mostly from good English rags. Thus Byron and Wordsworth and Scott were never faced with the caution from their publishers, " We can't publish your new work because there's no paper on which to print it."

There would, in 1915 and onward, have been a real paper famine instead of a limited controlled supply, if our admirals had not been looking after the freedom of English literature, as well as they looked after other things. Actually whole editions of some books, being transported by sea, were sunk by German submarines but that did not matter in the general carrying-on so truly and deftly reflected in " Mr. Britling Sees it Through."

HOW CAME ARMAGEDDON?

Nobody was more keenly interpretative of the war than Mr. Wells whose later book, " The Outline of History," it suggested. Out of what, remote as well as near, had this Armageddon come ? What threads of human history had piled it up and then let it loose ? So people asked themselves and each other, and only a wilderness of books, impossible of exploration, gave any answer to them. Being up against a tremendous note of interrogation, they needed a current rendering of the world's account. It must be ancient and modern, the one examined by the newest knowledge of the other and the two balanced, for not otherwise could we understand our inheritance.

Perhaps we have there a summary of much of the thinking which filled war books of the civil order, and of the thought permeating a mass of post-war literature. But when I asked Mr. Wells, during its height, what effect it was likely to exercise on the future of English literature, he could only say, " I can imagine a hundred things, most of them contradictory outgrowths of the others."⁰

Mr. W. J. Locke, though less of a prophet generally, fancied the main effect would be to deprecate the morbid psychology of the " scalene triangle," as he called it. " If," he added, " the triangle does come in, it will be an honest, right-angled one," Such a tempest of elementals, he felt, should cleanse

the sex problem from all "the accretions of decadent sophistry," and establish a primitive standard of values. He was something of a true prophet, there, and most prophecies made in the Great War time went wrong.

New ideas, a new range of vision, fresh spiritual and intellectual light, sometimes expressed in verse, sometimes in prose. Would the waves of emotion caused by the ordeal of the war mean a permanent increase of poetic feeling among the people? Would realism or romanticism, always in conflict in letters as in life, prevail in the mending years of peace.

Those were literary issues for the future, and John Galsworthy's verdict to me upon them was a broad one, in two counts. The war was too big, too dreadful and too machine-made for epic treatment, and it could not for long be seen in a true historical perspective. Everything was "greatly dark," but aged Thomas Hardy, so often mistaken for a pessimist instead of a grave seer, was hopeful. He thought the war would ultimately affect English literature for good by removing from it—and, patriarchally, he quoted Hebrews xii. 27 : "Those things that are shaken, as things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain,"

A conversation I had with "Ralph Connor," the

Scottish-Canadian novelist, was dramatic in that it took place in London one morning when he was straight from his chaplaincy with the Dominion forces in France. He is the Rev. Dr. Charles Gordon of Winnipeg, and noticeable in him were the long-leggedness, the tall spareness and the swing, suggesting grace and endurance, which characterize the " Cocks o' the north." His iron-grey hair fell on a full, wrinkled forehead, and a pawky humour, which means understanding, subtlety, and a hundred other things, danced in tender eyes, tear-trying by what he had seen with the Canadians.

He felt the war to be so vast that it would fill and colour all literature for generations, but time was needed to winnow the mental and moral grain from the chaff. To him the supreme revelation of it all had been the majesty of the plain, common man, even when overwhelmed with danger, often with foulness, sometimes with stupidity. Down in his spiritual depths rested a flaming soul, making him, in the words of Robert Burns, the ^{4t} noblest work of God."

For himself " Ralph Connor " got from the war the religious and social creed that man is indeed the most wonderful creation of God and should be treated, as one treats God, with reverence. He also spoke with feeling of the circumstance that the two families

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of the English-speaking people would write, in the same English language, of the high affair in which they had been partners. This was one of the thoughts that offered consolation for the tribulation to which mankind had been subject, because it meant comradeship with the pen as well as with the sword.

The clang of battle, clear and loud in Paris, made its book world almost a desert, compared to ours in London. Several war visits by myself to the French capital were lightened by the friendship of Henry Davray, a very real ambassador of letters between England and France, whose kindly commendation opened many Paris doors, but its ancient, prosperous bookland was nearly silent.

Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, who must read because reading was part of their nature, were turning to the old masters for the peace that dwelt in them, or because living authors were embattled and there were few new books. They were reading Moliere, Sainte-Beauve, Victor Hugo, and the other ornaments of their literature, including the very modern Anatole France. Even in war-time the French were essentially a literary people, full of the charm we associate with the page of a good book, scholarly in their knowledge, clarified and logical in their style of writing and their manner of reading.

One wandered on the Grand Boulevard and asked the women at the newspaper kiosks what wares were selling at all. They answered in the soft, serious tone which was the tone of all Paris in black, that they had only a market for things about the war. Alas ! the business of warfare was not in things of the intellect but in things of the physique.

It was the same when I walked through Old Paris and its narrow, picturesque streets and came to the bookstalls on the banks of the Seine. " Hardly anything doing," said Monsieur the second-hand bookseller, and if Monsieur TAnglais would only buy a few volumes, why, he could have them ever so cheaply. They were not valuable, but he was persuasive and charming and Monsieur TAnglais took the books, if only as a token of the splendours France would add to her literature when the red ink of war had ceased to run.

Meanwhile the strains of " Tipperary " came down the quiet air of Paris from some English band, and wayfarers half stopped to listen. A French man of letters who happened to be among them had a friendly " Bonjour" and the remark " Stirring, but what has become of that old English favourite, ' The Girl I Left Behind Me ?' As good a tune, far finer words " ; and we mutually recalled the verse :

THE GREAT WAR TIME

" The dames of France are fond and free ^

And Flemish lips are w i l l i n g , A n d soft
~~And soft the maid of Italy,~~

And Spanish lips are thrilling;

Still though I bask beneath their smile ^

Their charms fail to bind me

And my heart falls back to Erin's Isle—

To the girl I left behind me"

So to lunch with another French writer, the Abbe Dimnet at the College Stanislas, where ever so many distinguished Frenchmen have been educated. Half the French war aces were Stanislas boys, and possibly they began to study the heavens from its beautiful grounds.

The Abbe was full of good talk, which included praise of Sir Richard Wallace, the founder of the London Wallace Museum for what, living in Paris, he had done for it. Did he not, as one thing, buy, and so probably keep from destruction, the lovely Chateau Bagatelle which was built in a month for that spoilt darling, Marie Antoinette ?

English, spoken or written, is as easy to the Abbe Dimnet as his native language, and a book he wrote on how to think made him a " best seller," especially to America. This was after the war, which threw up its own books destined to have a vogue, like " The



Book Monthly.

CAPTAIN BAIRNSFATHER AND "OLD BILL."

No personality of the Great War helped us with it more than Bruce Bairnsfather's laughing philosopher, "Old Bill" here blessing him.

Silences of Colonel Bramble," by Andre Maurois. We know him to-day for many writings, but that was his beginning and it came out of the circumstances of war.

Monsieur Maurois was attached to a British Division and he lived intimately with our soldiers, taking his meals among them, hearing their stories, listening to their "grouses." What a gorgeous English word ! The whole English stomach is in it. He had only, he said afterwards, to put down on paper what went on around him, but of course it needed an exquisite talent to portray that reticent, explosive, kindly gentlemanly Briton in uniform, Colonel Bramble, who made readers smile, just as Mr. Bruce Bairnsfather's "Old Bill" made them laugh.

One can only hope, recalling the ups and downs of the book world during the Great War, to rescue a lamp of thought here and a light of example there. England went into it in three clear waves, the Regulars, the Territorials and the Citizens, and the reaction to books was in accordance with this. The "Old Contemptibles" wanted reading of the humorous, sensational "bluggy" sort, the Territorials the better stuff to which civil life had accustomed them, the massed everyman, a mixture of the good, often the very good, and the merely distracting.

It was a whole river of reading which flowed over

shallows and deeps, making wonderful discoveries in its passage. The natural result was that book-reading grew into the lives of a host of men who otherwise might have missed it. This meant a definite quickening of the national mind and it was reflected in the remarkable demand for books of easy price, whether gay or grave in contents, when our armies at long last came home from France.

The consolations and pleasures of reading had been acquired in a hard school, but they begat a strong desire for knowledge of the past and the present. Epictetus, perhaps, for the Stoics were needful in "No man's land"? A picture still lingers with me of Sir George Grey, in the evening of his life, studying and finding in the ancient philosopher beauty of thought and the credentials of a later Christianity.

Wells had to be read, for certain, by the returned warrior, because he is to-day, with its dreams and its fears, a legacy of the tortured years of Armageddon. "Wells of knowledge"! The small joke would have pleased "H.G." who can also give pleasure, as a letter, in his hand, turns itself out of a bundle to remind me.

It was addressed by him to an unknown reviewer, care of a Church paper, of all papers, and it said, "Thank you very much for the honour you have done me in reading me carefully and thoroughly.

THANK YOU, MR. WELLS

Quite the best piece of criticism that has been done about me ... sympathetic and understanding, and as finished and exhaustive within the scope of what it sets out to do, as a good piece of scientific research." Handsome that and made more handsome by the addition, " I very rarely write to anyone in this way, but I do hope you will forgive my expressing my high appreciation of what you have done."

Even the poor reviewer comes into his own now and then, but he had no easy time with the tumult of authorship which followed the tumult of war. Perhaps a period of "jazz " was inevitable in English literature, after four years of strung and unstrung nerves, but, fortunately, " In to-day already walks to-morrow."

XIX. CANDLES OF MEMORY

People who are different and things that are in a manner, because of their intimate human touch, cast in humour or pathos, tenderness or beauty; all making a gallery of time and occasion, which T'vette Guilbert completes.

OUR memories are dreams turned backward and set against the westering sun which shines for us all, whether we like it or not.

Most memories are of fact, what one did or said, what somebody else did or said, or about events in which we have shared. But others, far fewer in number, are of feeling, associated with the heart and the soul, as when one says of a friend, "Oh, but you are different,"

Something human not encountered before, as soft graciousness or, on the direct contrary, hard scintillation, may also have a part in marking out these particular remembrances. It is not necessary to analyse them, because that would spoil their response when you open the corner of memory in which they repose. They concern many things, but our story calls only on those that have a bookish contact with life.

Humanness is the essential thing, as in an anecdote of a popular English woman novelist who had a week-end house party and, when it was over, sank into an easy chair, saying " Thank God, they are all gone and I can look my age again." Or a tale brought from Italy about D'Annunzio dropping his handkerchief, of a young lady picking it up for him, of him saying, " But Mademoiselle you may keep it," and of her carrying it gingerly to the charcoal embers and throwing it on them. Again, who would not have a warm spot for the American reviewer, though he may have been merely lazy, whose whole article on a certain English book, apart from a record of its title, its author, its publisher and its price, was the word " Shake 1 "

Absurdness and whimsicality have a way of being intimate, even when they are general, recurrent after one's first laugh over them, though of no importance whatever. There was a story of Grant Allen saying, " Browning is splendid for the nerves," no doubt a shot at the poet's obscurity, and of having from an old lady the inquiry, " Will you give me the address where to obtain it, because I suffer from my nerves ? "

It was another dear lady who, hearing that an English man of title had written a book on " Pascal," asked him what that was,

" Oh, a person ! "

¹¹ Alive ?"

" No, a Frenchman who has been dead for two and a half centuries."

" Then how on earth did you come to hear of him ? "

A tenderness lingers, especially if it be shared with a poet and Eugene Field's " Little Boy Blue " and " Wynken, Blynken and Nod " have fixed his name in the hearts of English mothers and fathers, as well as in the hearts of American fathers and mothers. At a Chicago dinner party, where several writing visitors from London were present, he was asked to recite one of his poems.

He stood up, as I can see him at this moment, tall, thin, dark-haired and grave, except for his dancing eyes, and we wondered what he would recite. It was a poem, not then published and perhaps never published, telling that Little Blue Boy " peed the bed," and of his childish confusion and shame about it, all so delicate and lovely that actually we were silent unto tears. One of the first tragedies of childhood, you see, exquisitely told.

The domestic touch of life was also, though differently, in a conversation I had with Neil Munro, Scottish novelist and journalist, not very long before he died. He had come to some leisure from news-

paper work, and I said would he not use it to give us another novel in the fine tradition he had created. He answered that he had thoughts in that direction, and speaking of the range of Scottish character for a writer, he mentioned, as typical, a maid who had for long years been in his own household, the friend and the servant, a helping and a governing spirit.

Here to his hand was a universal and beloved Scottish "character," a heroine awaiting only his sympathetic and understanding pen. He would see what he could do, but now a Scotsman of a younger generation will have to write that novel, if one arises able to do it as well as Neil Munro would have done it.

A square of white silk, and on it one's name in black ink, esquired too, though that looks particularly wrong beside the spread of Japanese characters which follows. It came, a flambeau of the Orient, to say thanks for a kindly word in print about a Japanese gentleman's poem on Walter Scott and Kenilworth Castle. An ode addressed to the king could not be more beautifully presented, and my silken message of goodwill remains, whatever happens to royal verse when it bursts into flower at times like a coronation or the death of a Sovereign.

But what touched me was the poet's statement that

he had sent the praise of his verse " To my old mother in Japan, who is staying near to my father's graveyard' My doctor brother can read for her your English lines and I can easily imagine how happy and joyous she will be." Proud mother, proud son, a grand echo of a mere kind word ; and there are other experiences to the same effect.

An English lady who had herself been a Diana after big game in Africa, was asked to review a book written by a really " mighty hunter," widely known by name. She had never met him, but she liked the natural colour and natural modesty of his narrative, and signified the same in the usual manner of reviewers. Within a few days she received, with his compliments, a bracelet made from the tail hairs of an elephant and mounted in gold. Nice, was it not ? But they never went shooting together in Africa, or anywhere else, and romantic minds will even have to accept it that they have not yet met.

Writing people do not, perhaps, meet as much as other classes, because their job, unless it be journalism, necessarily keeps them solitary. When they do meet it is often to find sadness or suffering, poverty or positive want, where it had not been expected, thanks to a gay face or an iron silence shown to the outside. Calamity often assails the bravest and the best for no more scrutable reason than the puckish one that they

are the bravest and the best and thus, may be, can most endure.

Some years ago, on a beautiful Sunday, I happened, with friends, to be sitting in Hyde Park looking at the swing and vanity of " Church Parade." A man in young middle age and worn clothes, looked over, rose from his chair hesitatingly, and then walked away with a nod which recalled our acquaintanceship in New Grub Street where his talent had seemed to assure him a high place.

Next morning I had a letter from him, suggested by our sight of each other, in which he said the irony behind it was almost hysterical. He had got so down and out, thanks to bad health and ill luck with his books, that he had for weeks been sleeping in Hyde Park, having nowhere else to go, and this was how he came to be at " Church Parade." It was a weird contrast ; and might make a fine short story, but he had not spring enough of mind or heart left to attempt the writing.

Another man, younger and at the beginning hopeful, sought counsel from the north of England as to what he should do, because he was compelled, in the daytime, to the meanest of manual labour, and in the night wrote prose and poetry. Both had original strength and promise of more, and indeed local papers had printed them. What of trying London ?

Kindly dissuasion did not prevent that, for a month or two later there came a cry of distress from him in the depths of our great city. "I want," he wrote desperately, "to go home again, but I haven't a penny, having now spent my little all," Such venturesome courage cheers ; such agony to a soul in search of itself, hurts like a dozen daggers.

The loneliness of a literary mind in drab, mean streets was flashed on me like a star by Thomas Holmes, the well-remembered police court missionary who worked humanly for divine ends. "Do you realize," he said, "that there are thousands and thousands of people in submerged London who don't know there was a Shakespeare, a Scott or a Dickens ? They have never even heard of Sherlock Holmes, for his fame as a solver of crime has not gone down to the regions where they labour and exist." It was a dark case of minds which just accept things without asking why and are themselves almost a blank, apart from the daily round of poorer London.

Here Thomas Holmes pointed out, with his blend of vision and actuality, was a real national loss of potential intellect. How great a loss, he could well appreciate, for often he had come on naturally keen minds which, not being tilled at all, were a wilderness. Moreover, as new soil, when it was first cultivated,

showed unusual vigour, so a like freshness might be expected from the intaking of knowledge and reading by the mentally submerged tenth of London Town.

It was one of the hopes of another friend of mine, Richard Kearton, the delightful writer on Nature, that his books might bring some of the sunshine and interest of the country to people dwelling darkly in our massed centres. He was brought up on the Yorkshire moors and Nature and her wonders were his constant companions in youth, and a later desk, in a London publishing house, did not keep him from them. The happiness he thus found illuminated his talk, particularly when he came back from real discoveries about the wild birds of the Outer Hebrides, whose beetling cliffs he climbed, though a lame man, with his brother Mr. Cherry Kearton.

There was the photographing of the very scarce red-necked phalarope, which has the peculiarity, in contrast to Nature's rule, that the female is more gorgeous than the male. It had been thought hopeless to get a "snap" of the black-throated diver because of its inability to walk at all on the ground and hence its constancy in the sea. However, he found a Hebridean isle where one was nesting and he set himself to construct a little hut of rough stones from which he might watch the bird.

One morning, when she had left the nest, he concealed himself in this hut and awaited her return. When she did return she swam and swam and peered and peered for hours, full of suspicion and fear that a stranger was near. Ultimately, feeling safe, she crawled out of the water and pushed herself along the ground to her nest, and Kearton got a photograph which demonstrated this to be her only walk.

He told me that what struck him most, after the beauty and mystery of wild life, was the constant presence in it of the instinct of self-preservation. He instanced a family of sea-gulls learning to fly under the guardianship of their mother, which gently pushed any of them over into the bay below, if they went beyond a certain point of the cliff. Curious, he sought a wider view and it revealed that the mother was keeping her children to a smooth, sheltered corner of the sea and not letting them get where it was rough, lest they should drown.

Discipline, said Richard Kearton, was the first law in the bird and animal worlds, to the end that danger might be avoided, and it began miraculously early. "Why," he exclaimed, "if you pick up the just-hatched egg of an oyster-catcher and hold it to your ear, you will hear the wee chick inside chirping and knocking on the walls of its prison-house. But directly that chick hears the alarm-note of its

mother, it becomes silent, as if it were not within the shell."

Human nature is still more interesting than animal nature, as appears in stories related to me by an old West End librarian, genial Thomas Verrinder. They take us back to London Society in the eighteen-nineties or there about, when naughty novels were still taboo, though not unknown, and Zola's " *La Terre* " was in its first English translation,

A pair of beautiful young girls, for there were lots of them then, asked to have it, and hearing this the fatherly librarian stepped up, saying he was sure there must be some mistake and might he recommend another novel to them. Being persuasive, he had his way, and they departed, not, however, very well pleased, as was evident when, next day, their mother, a woman of title, walked in, all feathered and stern.

Who had dared to order her daughters as to what they should read ! What presumption ! And she grabbed " *La Terre*," and went off with it for herself, or them, or both.

Poor Victorian librarian ! He himself honoured Zola as a master writer, sincere to a fault, and he said so to an elderly English divine, the author of various works on religion, who was denouncing the Frenchman out and out " Wouldn't read a line by him,"

he declared, and he walked away, vastly scandalized, but that afternoon he slipped back to exchange a book, and when the old librarian asked what he had taken, the answer was " Nana."

Zola came to be warmly regarded in London, when he was here, and Madame Yvette Guilbert has been genuinely liked since she first came among us. She has been something of a novelist and autobiographer, as well as an inimitable artist, and it was on this road I met her and her husband, Dr. Schiller, and became aware of her as a rare personality, somebody quite different from the anybodies. You felt it as she talked in English with her soft French accent, hesitating now and then for a word and perhaps only saying it with her eloquent hands or her deep, thoughtful eyes.

We spoke of whether it did not feel grand to be famous. Yes ; but not like that. You have struggled up from the depths, keeping your eye faithfully on the heights all the time. You have been anxious to do something for art's sake which would make others happier, if merely for a time, and perhaps also better. You go on like that, not thinking much about it and some day you arrive, you have succeeded. But to be famous ? It was enough to be reminded of that once a year,

Yvette Gwilbert's friends often say of her that if

she had lived early enough in the world's history she would have been a saint. She will tell you simply and definitely, for she has always been a mystic, how God and her faith helped her through struggle to victory. An artist without religion ? She could not fancy that. It was to be without inspiration, without consolation, to live a life from which the higher things were absent.

She confessed that she cries when she sees a Communion, especially young people in the purity of white, at their first Communion. She says to herself, " There is the beginning of a life, of many lives—what will follow ? " But does not all religion appeal to the imagination, open the heart ? Not mere forms, dogmas, words but faith in the large, spacious sense.

" How can I," she said slowly, almost solemnly, " resist the manifestations of a Divine Being which have been given to me, yes to me, on the many times I have been at death's door ? There is a physical moment which seems the end, but God helps you, God saves you, giving you still another chance to achieve. For what makes life great, worthy, sweet, are faith, love, charity and work in a noble spirit."

Madame Guilbert has a singular power of drawing an inner picture of human life as it really is, not as it

may look from the outside. You find yourself saying about this or that remark by her, " Yes, it's just so, though it has never occurred to me." For instance, that she likes the sorrow next to the joy of life, that there is a magnificent stimulus in suffering, that a grave illness has its comforts, even its beauties for the fit soul.

Also an illness gives a pause for thought, for contemplation, a spiritual breathing space in which you can quietly cast up your account. You are able to estimate how you stand with this world and perhaps with the next—how it has been with you ; to say, if you can say it, " Well, I should do again what I have done," Therefore illness, in the ultimate sense, is to be regarded as so much of one's development, certainly of one's spiritual development, and has not somebody said that suffering is an aid to humbleness?

Hope is also a chief article in Yvette Guilbert's catechism ; increasing hope, or you will fall by the way and fail. Never despair, but go forward. Do what you think right, obey your heart's dictate, take the risks, and be assured that there lies the only true victory.

Youth, too, she knows in her woman's philosophy, to be important and the world grows younger as it grows older. Balzac gave us the romance of the

YOUNGER TO-DAY

woman of thirty. Since his time every woman has gained ten years in youth and beauty.

Good ; there is the more time to do the things we want to do, and there is a personal echo to that in the invitation, " When you come to Paris, don't forget you have a very faithful friend in Yvette Guilbert."

XX. SALT AND SINCERITY

What a life in literary London has been like in a personal and particular way, with some notes and

comments which are suggested by the known and some which are only for the unknown to-morrow.

●
W I have now, travelling steadily in hope, if not always in achievement, explored many highways and by-ways of the English book world and so of our contemporary life. It remains to think over the actual, personal pilgrimage among them, in the sense, always present at the end of a story, "Has it been worth while?"

Surely, both in work and in happiness, but then he is the really fortunate man who finds the one in the other. That is the great thing which rewards the journalistic and literary calling, given an inborn taste for it and an unfailing zest in it. You live it as well as by it, and you need little more if you are simple in your wants, except affection and friendship.

The lives of most people are a conflict between

earning a living and trying, with doubtful success, to live as something more important, if vaguely realized. Often the better a living they make the less they know how to gather about them the things that do count. All these are in the world of letters, which is thus a true land of promise to the right soul, but it is a poor country, and if many are called few are chosen. Ever it demands of its people, in Thomas Hardy's " Song of the Soldiers "—

*" What of the faith and fire within us.
Men who march away.¹*

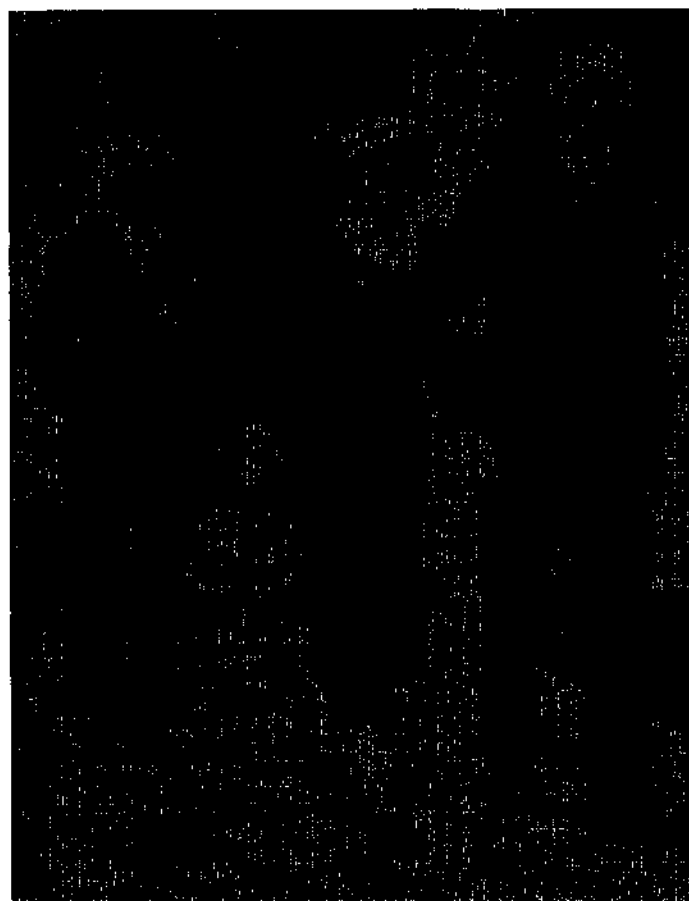
You must take risks if you are to win in any occupation, certainly if you are to be something more than a mere human cabbage. There are plenty of hazards in the land of books and they are, at least, inviting to a heart venturesome enough, or stout enough for the gamble. The case of the writer is typical of it all, because he is the creator of the raw material on which it subsists, flourishingly or not so flourishingly, for it has its ups and downs, like other spheres of human activity.

He may write a classic or a " best seller," but the odds are heavily against either, yet he goes on cheerfully, because in a congenial and inspiring atmosphere. " The conversation of authors," says

William Hazlitt somewhere, "is not so good as might be imagined ; but such as it is, and with rare exceptions, it is better than any other." So to be act and part in it, is a privilege which atones for disappointments, even hardships, and anyhow, the grand prize may be hiding round the corner.

We are never frightened at sunset in the book world, except when it is our own sun that is concerned. Even then, though the airs of the concert may grow less lively, they will be more harmonious, the age of turbulence and heart-burnings being over. Stoical, perhaps, but unselfish rather than indifferent, because the spirit of writing and reading, like true religion, is encashed within.

George Moore was the philosopher when, having done his work, he sat down in Ebury Street, London, S.W., to build himself into a possibly enduring frame' He received visitors, was saluted by them, and went on revising and refining his books, thus hewing himself into a personality which should keep them company. He managed, with that invaluable asset to anybody cast for authorship, a private competence, to span its whole arc, for he shocked the Victorians with his "best seller,"⁴⁴ *Esther Waters*," and he ended believing that things he wrote might live. Who knows, but certainly one remembers the good-night of a near-



MR. BERNARD SHAW, PROPHET OF TO-DAY.

While on tour round the world he called at Hollywood and was there with two of its "stars," "Charlie" Chaplin and Mary

by neighbour in Ebury Street to some parting guests, " Walk gently ; the master sleeps 1 "

Every author is his own author, and what will be with him will be, which is to say that he takes his chances of the going, good or bad, dependent ultimately on himself alone. Noticeably, however, the outwardly successful career is often the well-architected career, for in all life the careerist exists and thrives, liking the mission, as fairly he may because he knows his wares are scarcely invoiced for eternity. " I don't touch the great public," said George Gissing, a Victorian novelist who was ahead of his time, because before the day of modern realism in English fiction. For all his shy manner and his stammer, Arnold Bennett had ambition, which carried him to the great public, and Hall Caine was the full-graced author who lived his art and part, as dramatically as his friend Beerbohm Tree lived the art and part of the theatre.

Back in those years, authors who thought it not wrong to help their books along, after having written them, were called " boomsters." To-day they would be embraced by their publishers and envied by their rivals, for, undoubtedly, the element of pushfulness, which can be not only practical but commercial, is more alive, more active, a more definite force in the realm of books than used to be

the case. Here it is only following a tendency evident in everything, but may be the old way was more lovable and assuredly more personal, as two examples which come to my mind will illustrate.

Good Sir Walter Besant published with Andrew ChattOj and once a year the manuscript of a new novel would be tenderly carried down by him from the heights of Hampstead, where he lived. Frogmal End was then almost a remote region, linked up with central London for the ordinary person by the "Favourite," horse-drawn buses. Besant was a patron, inside in winter, outside in summer, and he would be deposited with his newest story at the nearest point to Chatto's office. Duly it was made into a "three-volumer," and with the first copy under his arm this old-style publisher would walk to Mudie's and "subscribe" it, by this personal attention honouring his author-friend, the library, himself and the cause of English literature.

When Sir Charles Dilke owned the *Athenaeum* it was a very prosperous little paper, as well as a big organ of influence in the literary world. One morning, oh, so long ago, I was sitting in the then Albemarle Street office of Harper Brothers talking about something with the head of that house. The door opened quietly and a grey head popped in and said to my companion, "Now don't forget that

you must book up at once if you want advertising space this year. Don't blame me if you are crowded out, because I have told you." It was a courteous gentleman from the *Athenæum*, with a reminder of its grand manner towards the publishers, that they must arrange for their announcements in time if they were to be sure of getting them in. What a paradise that must suggest to the advertising souls who to-day wait on the London publishers ; and, possibly, the contrast has its literary moral.

Another change is the large disappearance of literary gossip telling the news of coming books and their writers with a definite personal touch, like good literary talk. The book paragraphist should be the short-story artist of journalism, for his job needs some of the qualities which make the short story itself, as against the fragmentary tale which is a mere chip of a long novel. Poor fellow ! He is rather out of fashion nowadays when literature is advertised in shouting double columns and shrieking black capitals ; but he will come back, because naked facts, like the human body, are more intriguing when artistically clothed.

Within a vignette the literary paragraphist must announce the book, for the first time if possible, since that is news. He must describe its nature, suggest its atmosphere, and hint to readers what

imports it has for them. Finally the place the book is meant to fill has to be indicated, and the whole style of communication must be easy and conversational. Artistry, in its way, and that may be one explanation of its comparative absence except as mere, direct announcement in this new age when there is almost nothing really new.

Beforetime the writer of literary gossip went on high lines and sometimes, possibly, he became high-brow, which was no part of the art. His clear mission was to spread good literary tidings so that they might readily reach people interested in them, and by a personal and artistic touch intrigue others not specially interested. He gathered his information in walks round Paternoster Row and the other London streets where publishers dwell, though they no longer hang out signs as they did long ago, except in the reversion by John Murray, and possibly a few others, to the quaint old fashion. They counted a nimble paragraph of almost as much value as a review, especially when it was read by their friends the booksellers, and indeed, the prospectus of a venture may have as much to do with its success as the after deliverances on it.

Once reviewers were a race by themselves, men and women who made it almost a profession,

though, of course, they might also write books. Present literary criticism necessarily has a larger, more popular sweep, because it is for a much bigger public and because there are so many more books. A notable wing of it is the plan, followed by most daily papers, of giving at once material of a news value which may be in biographies and autobiographies or other volumes. Untold stories and fresh facts about famous people and historical events, can make almost as good "copy" in Fleet Street as the most immediate happening. This kind of article has, too, the educative value that, as news, it surprises the non-bookman into, perhaps, a first love of reading and knowledge of literature.

Nobody can really say that literary criticism is worse done or better done at one period than at some other period, for the simple reason that it changes in response to conditions. The true test of it must be its usefulness and its influence in spreading the light and comfort of books among human beings. Outsiders, with names made in other kinds of writing, have, on this stream, come in as reviewers, but obviously a man may be a good novelist or a good essayist and not at all a good critic. The creative gift and the critical gift are quite different qualities, though, again, a fortunately endowed person may have both. But everywhere

signed reviews are dominant, and there is everything to be said for them, except when they leave you with the puzzling inquiry, " What's in a name ? "

An odd thing is that while personality is getting an ever greater chance in criticism, the establishment of a reputation in authorship itself becomes more difficult. Not so long ago a novelist had only to write one strikingly successful story and he was a made man or woman. This ladder of fame has become a step at a time in the dark, instead of a leap into the light, for while a first success remains vital it does not mean that a second novel is taken for granted, or even a third.

Most likely such an attitude of caution on the part of readers, who are the ultimate king-makers, has to do with the prevalent habit of discovering works of genius every other day. The rather amateur critic possibly thinks it clever, good literary journalism, but it does not mean much, as an effort, six months later, to recollect the " finds " will prove, and it worries the life of those good fellows, the booksellers.

Members of the old bookselling school, who would as readily talk about a volume as sell it, are getting scarce, but the sound traditions of a glorious English trade still have their hold. They keep the younger men from becoming mere salesmen in a

mass-moving age, and the same fine roll of tradition helps to maintain individuality, and so distinctiveness and distinction, in the senior book-market of publishing.

New wine in old bottles ! Well, the association is possible, and both the wine and the bottles may benefit, the former by an inshoot of freshly grafted grapes and the latter by a good rub-up. Vintage and non-vintage ought, between them, to produce both the flavour of ripeness and the sparkle of youth.

But always the cardinal question remains, what does the modern English reader want ? He has to be considered and reconsidered and his intelligence and intuition must never be underestimated. He wants real life stories, biography, autobiography and travel, and he hunts around to satisfy his other mental or recreational needs, which are expressed finally in the novel. He observes that reminiscences, however youngish, pour out, but he may not notice that anonymity in authorship tends to disappear. The current young Pepys is willing to guarantee, with his signature, personal revelations which would have made our fathers and mothers blush, in memory, perhaps, as well as indignation.

Generally it is an epoch of naked frankness and slap-dash writing, and of the "debunking" of things that once were as pillars of life, without any

promise of others being created in their place. It all raises hard questions, difficult questions, which only time will answer as to where we are going. Our comfort is that the inherent sun of English authorship has still, no doubt, light and warmth for the future, if only, as in Oliver Goldsmith's elegy to a lady:

*" The king himself has followed her,
When she has walked before"*

It is a sin and a sign of the literary times that you must not quote a line or two of verse, even when they happily convey what you want to say. The younger generation which reads eagerly, curiously, critically, and so is on the look out for new books, shows little sentiment and, as a consequence, may end in the pit of sentimentality. Not that it ignores or derides poetry as poetry, but that it is harder and brighter and more brittle than we were before, and therefore not susceptible to the same appeal.

It is a generation that shines and shimmers, like new silver coins streaming from a mint, and with the same even, unmelodious rattle, though the metal is there all right, particularly in the young women. It does not put on Sunday clothes of reverence, as

we did, but motors the roads and tramps the golf-links in plus-fours and soft collars, and tweed skirts and heavy shoes. Better in a human sense, and none the worse in a religious sense, but different, and there is the key, perhaps, to reading and readers to-day.

Behind there is still the old guard, thinned regiments of Victorians, Edwardians and early Georgians, because the King's reign is now long, only a publisher finds it hard to reach them with writings having their appeal. It is the young, alert public which is watching advertisements, noting reviews and talking about books, in itself a great help to selling them, that he has first to consider. This bookish divide is striking and as there is no corresponding rift in public and social affairs, it may be psychological, new elements in the British character.

One has, in the general world of progress, to wait long and then only see small results from constant, hopeful work. By contrast, results are much quicker in local government, as an eminent journalist, retired from Fleet Street and farming in Warwickshire, has found there. Possibly this, again, may mean that human nature in town, seemingly hard and unemotional, still has links with quiet, useful progress in the country, and the

salutation to Mary Webb and writers like her, is a token of it in letters.

Somebody once said that Anthony Trollope could write standing on his head, only was the effort worth the likely outcome ? He was, of course, a post office official, with much travelling to do, and he learned to write in trains and hotels, or wherever he happened to be. Much of the present writing suggests disorder, not always sweet, but it is often redeemed by its intensive human note and its challenging sincerity.

" I think," said Stanley Weyman, who gave the historical story a brief revival, " the scope of a novel is properly limited to providing sound, wholesome amusement." There was a cloud of Victorian and Edwardian writers for lovers of the heart-throb on lines that never soared above the common understanding. " Best sellers " have often come along on that scented wind, because it is an instinct of human nature to seek for its own image in a story, as well as in a glass. Women are like that, and when some genius gets them rightly into the detective story it will be an even greater money-maker than it is.

" A ' blood ' for me," we sang in other years, and sensation and mystery remain only less vital for popular fiction than what is called " love interest."

It goes as strongly as ever it did, whatever the events on which it is hung and how could it be otherwise, men and women being what they are. Nay, it has increased as its telling has deepened from heart-throbs to the surgeoning of the whole human and divine being, body and soul.

What has become rare is passion in writing, as may be observed anywhere, between a novel of the purplest dye and a work of religion. Young authors argue, describe, analyse, but they do not enthuse, holding, conventionally, that it must not be done, for they are already forging their own fetters. They are for "plain Jane and no nonsense," with the consequence that nobody discovers a new land of Ruritania as Anthony Hope did, or, it seems, anything else worth discovering.

Perhaps an invitation back to charm, illumined by soul and mind, gleamed in "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" but an art so elusive cannot be captured and made into a school. So the spiritual detective story still waits, and is there not a clear invitation to try it in that strange case of a Hungarian girl whose conduct was exemplary when she passed as a boy, yet who fell to manifold shady ways when her sex was discovered and she had to put on skirts?

What a theme for the modern realist who seeks to dig deep, and what a consoling thought for us,

his readers, because, to succeed, he will have to use the spade of imagination, which, for want of use, has been losing its fine edge. With it goes humour, and in the storm and strife of being, at any cost, realistic, it also has become as if it did not exist. Nonsense ; because, in defiance of rouge, lip-stick and powder, the modern English woman can still smile naturally and—as naturally—be the mother of great English humorists,

The various and sensitive ways of the book world, as it moves and moves on, are a drama which really televisions the greater drama of human life with an uncanny subtlety and detail. It is, therefore, a kingdom in which it has been wholly good to dwell for a ripe and colourful span of time. Its tide of adventure has meant battles lost, as well as won, but always there has been a tide, and that is a life lived.

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