

the name of the publisher and paper I represented, and said:

"I have been directed to get from you the very best account of this boat that I can get."

"Good!" said Yarrow.

He led the way forward and down a dirty stairway into the fo'c'sle, and there he dictated right off the reel one of the most beautiful bits of popular mechanics that was ever put down on paper. He even anticipated the maneuvers that we were going to make off the Sands, so that I might send the report back to London by the first boat. There wasn't an essential detail that was left untouched. He was full of it. It was his darling baby. He waxed eloquent, dramatic, and I got it all down, a column and a half. He had dictated so carefully that my notes were in good shape to send off without recopying, and at the expense of two guineas I got them back to London within six hours from the time I'd left the city.

The big London papers do not publish a Sunday edition: not through any piety on the part of the proprietors, but because people won't advertise on that day. So a number of the big ones printed the Yarrow stuff that I had got, giving full credit to the New York newspaper whose correspondent had employed me.

Mr. Yarrow told me not to quote him, so I didn't, and a number of the London papers commented upon the rare technical skill of the reporter, and his great insight, while the New York office complimented its London correspondent for his work. As a matter of fact, I had no technical skill, no insight: nothing but commonsense. I simply turned to advantage the very great ability of Mr. Yarrow. Probably there was not a reporter on that craft that didn't know infinitely more about naval matters than I did. That's the curious part of it.

HAVING gained confidence from the Yarrow incident and some slight insight into English human nature, I never hesitated to hold up anybody, no matter who or where he was, once I recognized him, and plump questions at him—and I found that the English gentleman had no more reserve in such matters than anybody else.

One day I accosted the Marquis of Queensbury on the Strand. It was midwinter, and the Marquis, in his great astrakhan coat and close-cropped, curly—and I suspect somewhat dyed—sideboards, was a dead ringer of an impresario. It was the day of the Corbett-Mitchell fight in Jacksonville.

I confess that the interview developed some surprises. "What do you think of the prize fight?" said I.

"I loathe prize fights!" said he.

I was somewhat shocked, but proceeded, "Then how did you come to frame up the famous Marquis of Queensbury rules?"

Here I accidentally unearthed the case of a man who is credited with honor he neither earned nor sought, a case of the real inventor remaining obscure, while another gets the glory. The Marquis paused abruptly.

"I'm glad you asked that question; for I always wanted to set the world right on the true authorship of those rules. They were drawn up by John Chambers, a classmate of mine at Cambridge, and subsequently the editor of *Land and Water*. He brought them to me to revise. I made two or three alterations in them, and they were adopted, and curiously enough they bore, and still bear, my name. I had always been an enthusiastic sparrer. For two years I held the second middleweight championship, and for two years the lightweight championship, of England."

And now came another surprise.

"Which was the greatest fight you ever witnessed?" "The only one I ever attended, the one between Smith and Kilrain," replied the man who was generally supposed to know more about prize fighting than any other man in the world.

Another surprise as he went on.

"I consider glove fighting more severe than fighting with bare knuckles. The combatants receive more punishment, and it is more wearing."

BUT the most conspicuous case in which I used my American directness—and a little ingenuity thrown in—to good advantage was when I was asked by my correspondent friend to get interviews on the proposition that the United States government should issue at the postoffices of the country an interest-bearing twenty-dollar bond, which was only another kind of postoffice savings bank. The proprietor of the newspaper wanted talks with Lord Rothschild, the manager of the Coutts Bank, the British Postmaster General, and others. The correspondent, who was an Englishman and wedded to English methods, called me in for consultation. Through So-and-So we were to get a letter of introduction to So-and-So, M. P., who would in turn introduce us to Lord Rothschild, the Coutts people, and the Postmaster General.

"How long will it take to do all this?" said I.

"Perhaps a week."

"But the boss wants an answer right away. He wired—he didn't write you. Doesn't that mean hurry up?"

"There you go again!" said the correspondent, patting me affectionately on the shoulder. "You Americans think you can rush things over here; but you can't do it."

"We don't want to rush things," said I. "We simply want to save time. This roundabout way you have of going from Jim to John with letters of introduction is all bosh. I can beat it to a standstill, even here in London."

"Go ahead," said he.

It was then two o'clock. I took a cab to Capel Court, then entered the greatest private banking institution in the world, and was very civilly greeted by the brilliantly liveried porter. I had figured out just how to handle this gentleman, and I said, "Mr.—has sent me with a message to Lord Rothschild."

Mind you, I didn't say I was from the newspaper. I made the thing personal.

"I'll take in your card, Sir," said the gentleman with the fat calves. In a few moments he returned.

"His Lordship will see you," he said, and presently ushered me into a vast room, in the middle of which was a very businesslike mahogany desk. Baron Nathan Rothschild was seated there. He was a handsome man, with a pointed beard, cut rather on the French order, iron-gray hair, and handsome eyes. He greeted me cordially, shaking hands.

In half a dozen words I told him what my newspaper proprietor had sent me to him for. When he realized that I was a reporter he laughed heartily.

"That's one on me," he said. He then closed his eyes, stroked his beard with his hand, and dictated about a column of as good stuff on finance as anyone would care to read. He particularly went into a comparison of the French and American characters, claiming that, while the Americans were greater money earners than the French, they were nowhere near so thrifty, and that he thought that the habit of saving would have to be taught them as it had the British.

I used the same tactics to get a talk with the manager of Coutts' Bank, and with Mr. Burns of J. P. Morgan & Co. The Postmaster General immediately saw me and gave me a very interesting talk on the subject, telling me particularly what the postal savings institutions had done for England.

That evening about seven o'clock I drove back to the office with a sheaf of interviews, and the correspondent could scarcely believe that they were genuine. But he sent them along, and they made a distinct hit. So much for directness.

In the Postmaster General's statement I took the liberty of inserting the sentence, "The government of the United States should be made the custodian of the savings of the masses," and this sentence or its variant ran in italics at the foot of every editorial for some months, generally giving the Postmaster General credit for it—I'm afraid somewhat to that gentleman's embarrassment.

"Hang it!" he said to me one day when I met him on the Strand. "I'm a quiet man and nothing but a public servant, and you've gone and made a great orator of me."

BUT there was one case where my much vaunted directness failed me in England, and curiously it was in the case of an American whom I was sent to interview. But I think my failure was due more to the fact that my physical courage fell down at the last minute rather than that my method was wrong.

A story got afloat in London about a curious man named Bayard Brown, an American, who lived on his yacht at Brightlingsea, at the mouth of the Colne. It was said that he had lain there for five or six years; in fact, that his yacht had been in the harbor down on the coast of Essex for so long that her bottom was covered with barnacles and sea grass. He floated the American flag in the harbor so long that the British government made him take it down; for by international law no foreigner can float his flag in your harbor more than so long. He used to pull up anchor about once every six months, run out to sea just beyond the marine league limit, then come back, drop anchor, and raise the flag again. He had an idea that if he got outside of British jurisdiction some American ship would seize him and run him off to America, where he'd be put in an asylum and his property taken away from him.

He was reputed to be very rich. Brown came from somewhere in Maryland. He was the object of constant solicitude on the part of his female relatives. One day he received a cable that a maiden aunt was on her way to England to visit him. He met her at the train, Brightlingsea was at the end of the road,—handed her a ticket, and reminded her that she was just in time to catch the return train for London, which she did. Brown had learned to hate all things American; nor did he love the English. He was one of those curious expatriates that seem to be blessed with no pride of nationality.

Everybody in the little seaport was afraid of Brown. They told all kinds of stories about him. Once when out shooting he broke a shotgun over a stupid attendant's back, injuring him severely, and then turned

round and gave him enough money to set up in business. There was probably method in this kind of madness.

Another story was about his first secretary, who was an American. That gentleman fell asleep one evening after dinner, and awoke to find his master carefully cutting off his mustache,—a luxuriant affair which he'd been years in raising and of which he was inordinately proud. A dreadful row followed, revolvers were drawn, and shots fired.

Brown adopted a kind of water punishment for his men. He used to take a great window cleansing syringe that held about a gallon of water, creep up to his men when they were asleep, and suddenly deluge them.

The London correspondent of a New York paper sent me down to investigate these stories.

MY first business when I got to Brightlingsea was to confirm them first hand. Then I made up my mind to pay a visit to Brown on his yacht. I heard that he was cordial at times, and so the fact that he was alone on the vessel did not deter me. I engaged a fisherman with his dory to take me to the yacht, which lay about half a mile out in the harbor.

We pulled round to the leeward side of the vessel, and were about to land at the stairs when I looked up and saw glowering down at me from the railing near the foremast shrouds a huge face, with brown eyes that seemed to be set in a mask of curly black whiskers. The shoulders and chest of the man were about the size of a chiffonnier, and his arms, which rested on the railing, resembled great cables. His hands were enormous, and covered with black hair. Altogether I had never seen so fearful a looking creature in the guise of a man before. I don't think I was ever so startled in my life. I thought of the secretary and the water cure, and instantly changed my mind about going aboard, and gave orders to the boatman to pull back to shore as quickly as he could.

I made tracks for the first train for London. Imagine how shocked I was when, ensconced in the corner of a second-class compartment, I saw the towering figure of Brown pass down the platform. I drew close into my corner, fearful that he would discover me; for I was seized with a sudden conviction that he thought I was a spy from his American family, and that he was going to do me up.

No sooner had he passed my compartment than, much relieved, I looked out, and to my dismay and terror saw him inspecting each compartment, beginning at the car next the engine and making his way down toward the rear of the train. I pulled my hat over my eyes and pretended to be asleep. Suddenly the light was shut out from the window, and I felt that Brown was scrutinizing me. I peeked out from under the brim of my hat. Sure enough, there he was, his great bulk filling the window, his savage eyes staring in.

Evidently he was satisfied that I was the man he was after; for without a word he entered the compartment, took a seat next to the door, and proceeded to glower at me. Unfortunately the train was an express through to London, and I couldn't escape. I cannot describe the terror that I felt during the whole ride, sometimes going at the rate of a mile a minute, with that awful creature sitting there glowering at me. I was unarmed and, although an athletic fellow, no match for this semi-maniac. However, when we pulled into London, Brown left the car without so much as a look at me, and disappeared into the crowd.

I am sure now that he never intended to do me bodily harm, but only to scare me.

BUT there was one case where I failed to get an interview when neither directness nor conservatism would have saved the day. When Oliver Wendell Holmes died I was sent out to get from the most prominent literary men of London expressions of sentiment in regard to the art and personality of that amiable man. Among others whom I was to see was Justin McCarthy, the historian, statesman, and old particular friend of the author of the "Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table"; so I expected something peculiarly intimate and interesting from him. Furthermore, Mr. McCarthy had always been on terms of the greatest friendship with my newspaper, and had never refused to see any of its representatives.

Imagine my surprise then, on reaching his house and sending in my card, to be told by the butler that Mr. McCarthy would not see me.

"But why?" I remonstrated. "Go back and tell him what paper I represent."

The butler did so, and presently returned with the same message, "Mr. McCarthy cannot see you. I do not know why, Sir, but he begs to be excused."

I was wounded and mystified at being turned down in this way until I chanced by a newsstand and saw the glaring headlines of an extra, "Justin Huntly McCarthy, the historian's son, marries Cissie Loftus."

Then I understood why Mr. McCarthy refused to see me. I also excused the abruptness of his message. He evidently thought I wanted to interview him on that topic.

Part II will appear in an early issue