LATE NEWS FROM THE WRITING AND PUBLISHING WORLD

THE STORY OF A PLUCKY WOMAN'S BRAVE STRUGGLE

Mrs. Tompkins Pictures a Young Girl in a Stifling Philanthropic Atmosphere—Lincoln the Lawyer. German History—The Administration of President Hayes—Virginia During the Revolution. An Official Memorial to the Memory of Horace Greeley—French and English Text Books.

A WOMAN'S BRAVE FIGHT.

The struggles of a plucky young girl against the stifling philanthropic atmosphere in which she has been brought up are described with some humor and more pathos in Juliet Wilbor Tompkins's *The Seed of the Righteous* (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis). She is the youngest child of a celebrated philanthropist in honor of whom a statue has been erected somewhere in New York city. His family makes it a point of honor to live up to his reputation. His widow, who shared in his work, is engaged in all kinds of benevolent and uplifting undertakings which call for her constant attendance at meetings of women. She is full of the Early Christian communistic spirit, and as she is ready to give anything she has to any worthy cause, so she thinks it natural to call on her friends and acquaintances for any service or assistance she needs for herself or for the objects she is interested in. She is sincere, and as unconscious of criticism as she is blind to the inconvenience she causes.

She quarters her son, a literary weakling of over delicate susceptibilities, on a rich widow. He disdains to work for his own support, is dabbling weakly at tasks that are too much for him, thinks only of his own comfort, and after inducing the widow to sink a lot of money in producing an impossible play he has written kindly allows her to marry him and support him as he deserves. Her elder daughter also has a mission that raises her above remunerative work; she has entered whole heartedly into the woman movement and is ardent in support of eugenics; she runs a society for the spread of the idea and is sent about the country to preach its gospel.

As the younger daughter, to her regret, has not developed an aptitude for any special kind of uplift work the burden of this shiftless if high-minded family falls on her. She is always there to do the work which the others drop whenever they are called upon to help humanity along. The care of her brother's motherless boy also falls on her as he wears on his father's nerves and interferes with his intellectual strivings. The child with his love for animals and his talks with his grandfather's statue is delightful. The girl too loves her father's memory and draws comfort from her imaginary discussions with the statue. She loves her mother too, and cannot bear criticism of her ways, but her eyes are naturally more open to the flaws in her sister and brother.

While she is looking about for the philanthropic specialty in which she shall engage her uncle offers her a salaried position in his real estate office; she spurns the offer as an indignity to her family. In spite of her loyalty, however, she chafes at comments on the family ways, at wearing clothes that are bestowed on her, at unpaid bills and other unpleasant matters. She thinks the matter over, takes the place and enjoys the work and the feeling of independence. She is in love with her cousin, who is a practical and level headed youth, though not overburdened with politeness when expressing his contempt for her family. This leads to dissension between the two at a critical moment, when the mother dies heroically and the girl, left alone, broods over her lover's harsh judgment. The child has been taken away when his father marries again. Her father's statue has been removed because it offends the æsthetic taste of a Board of Aldermen which wishes to widen the street. The girl is desolate, but fortunately her lover is able to make up for everything, even to erecting a more suitable monument for her father and mother.

The portraits of the several persons who have allowed the burden of a great name and the methods of philanthropic work to affect their lives are so vivid that readers in many communities will be tempted to attribute real names to them. The story, however, is of the awakening and development of a very lovable girl, so childlike in her innocence that we resent the cruelty of the blows she receives in learning the ways of independence.

HISTORY.

Lincoln the Lawyer.

Strangely enough no one among the multitude who have examined one phase or another of Abraham Lincoln's life, not even his faithful biographers, has thought of investigating his doings in the profession that occupied him till he attained the Presidency as John T. Richards has done in *Abraham Lincoln, the Lawyer-Statesman* (Houghton Mifflin Company). The author has taken the pains to rummage through the Illinois court records in search of all the cases in which Lincoln was engaged, a search bound to be incomplete because all the original records for the Southern district of the State were destroyed in the Chicago fire. He shows conclusively that with all the disadvantages of his education Lincoln was as fully a master of law as he was of pure English. He examines in detail the noted case in which a professed eyewitness's story was thrown out by Lincoln's introducing the evidence of the almanac to prove that there was no moonlight and himself proves through the "Old Farmer's Almanack" that it was honest evidence and not sharp practice. Mr. Hill also discusses Lincoln's attitude toward the Dred Scott decision, the legal side of his actions as President and his views on reconstruction. He appends the list of cases in which Lincoln was counsel on one side or the other. The book is a notable addition to the Lincoln literature.

German History.

Two more volumes of the excellent *History of the German People* in twelve volumes, edited by Edward S. Ellis and Augustus R. Keller, are ready (The International Historical Society, New York). Volume III., "Political Development of the Renaissance," deals with the period of confusion between the extinction of the Hohenstaufen and the establishment of the Hapsburg dynasties, with an account of the changes in constitution and conditions, a period which there is a temptation to hasten over. Volume IV., "The Renaissance and Humanism in Germany," is a compact description of social and intellectual development, bringing the history down to Luther and the Reformation. The small, handy volumes make this history extremely convenient for the general reader.

A Eulogy of Mr. Hayes.

Delivered at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, of which Mr. Hayes was the most distinguished alumnus, and in the presence of the surviving members of his family, it was inevitable that the lectures of Prof. John W. Burgess on *The Administration of President Hayes* (Charles Scribner's Sons) should be wholly eulogistic. He began with a review of the deplorable condition of political life prior to his election, described the electoral contest with full approval of the commission's decision, praised the conduct of the Administration and the moral reforms instituted by Mrs. Hayes and wound up with the phrase "the finest examples of genuine American manhood and womanhood who ever occupied the White House of the nation were Rutherford Birchard and Lucy Webb Hayes."

Virginia in the Revolution.

The picturesque and exciting incidents that led immediately to the Revolution and have made their way into general history happened all in New England and the North. The doings in the Southern colonies and in Virginia, the greatest of them all, have attracted much less attention. It was fully time that a careful study of what happened in the Old Dominion in those early days were made and that task Dr. H. J. Eckenrode has performed in *The Revolution in Virginia* (Houghton Mifflin Company). His selection of material from the sources leaves nothing to be desired and his book will be drawn upon by other historians. It is somewhat unfortunate that he adopts the judicial and somewhat cynical tone fostered by modern history professors and does not allow himself to express admiration. The result is that honored figures in our history are made to appear as little more than scheming political workers, more stress being put on methods employed than on the patriotic result sought for. Of Patrick Henry the author seems to have a pretty poor opinion and of Thomas Jefferson none too high an estimate. If allowance be made for this reluctance to accept traditional estimates the facts collected by the author will be found valuable, instructive and interesting.

Horace Greeley.

An official memorial to the memory of Horace Greeley is published under the title *Proceedings at the Unveiling of a Memorial to Horace Greeley at Chappaqua, N. Y.*, by the University of the State of New York (Albany). The greater part of the volume is taken up with the speeches delivered at the various centenary meetings in 1911, at Chappaqua, in the New York City Hall, at Amherst, N. H., in Colorado and by Typographical Union No. 6. To these are added the account of the proceedings and speeches on the completion of the monument, February 3, 1914, and other tributes to Greeley's memory. The volume is fully illustrated.

Marie Cher AUTHOR OF "THE IMMORTAL GYMNASTS" (DORAN)

Marie Cher was born in New York city. Her new novel, "The Immortal Gymnasts," is a peaceful tale of London life. From the time she was a young girl Miss Cher has paid frequent visits to London, and has there a wide circle of friends. For the past five or six years she has lived in Paris, but at present, owing to the war, she is staying in New York.

Mrs. Grace Sartwell Mason AUTHOR OF "THE GOLDEN HOPE" (APPLETON)

Mrs. Mason is an Eastern woman by birth who has had unusual experiences while observing conditions in the West. How she gained her knowledge, embodied in her new novel of Western life, "The Golden Hope," she tells in the interview appearing in another column of this section.

Nathan Kussy AUTHOR OF "THE ABYSS" (MACMILLAN)

Mr. Kussy is the author of a book acclaimed as an unusual first novel. The story of his discouragements and eventual recognition is told elsewhere on this page.

TEXT BOOKS.

French ceased to be an easy course in American colleges when Chardenal's "Advanced French Course" was discovered; that ingenious conglomeration of idiomatic phrases, all fairly used in the language and not merely devised for the student's torture. That led to the examination of the author's elementary courses, which were also found to be useful, with alterations and improvements, and the books have held their own for over a generation. A tested improvement, in which the requirements of schools and colleges have been met successfully, C. A. Chardenal's *A Complete French Course*, edited by Maro S. Brooks, appears in a new revised edition (Allyn and Bacon, Boston).

A teacher's own system devised so as to supply the pupil as soon as possible with the practical vocabulary needed for getting about in Paris, *The Ideal System for Acquiring a Practical Knowledge of French*, by Mlle. V. D. Gaudel (The author, New York), appears in a sixth edition. On the basis of the French used in travelling, with tradesmen and so on, supplemented by grammatical exercises, the pupil is made ready for the French of literature.

So long as the colleges subject the masterpieces of English literature to the ordeal of being regarded by youth as subjects for classroom exercises, it is just as well that the editors of the text should use discretion and sense in their recommendations. This is shown preeminently by William D. Lewis in his edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (Allyn and Bacon); his recommendations on the use of the book should be studied carefully by college examiners.

The little volumes of a new edition of the separate plays of Shakespeare *The Globe Theatre Shakespeare*, edited by Daniel Homer Rich (Harpers), are very attractive. To each is prefixed a brief biography, an account of the Elizabethan theatre, and one of the play in question, while comments on the peculiarities of the verse and of Shakespeare's vocabulary and grammar appear in the appendix. The plays at hand, both in the list of college requirements, are *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar*. The explanatory notes are at the bottom of the page.

A CANADIAN HUMORIST ON AMERICAN HUMOR

A YEAR and a half ago, when Stephen Leacock, the Canadian humorist, was in New York, he was interviewed for THE SUN and brought to task about some of his statements in a current magazine article on American humorists. Mr. Leacock admitted at that time that he had never read any of the works of O. Henry. He promised to go home and read O. Henry.

He kept his promise, and one of the best essays in his new book (serious), "Essays and Literary Studies" (Lane), is entitled "The Amazing Genius of O. Henry." "The time is coming, let us hope," he says, "when the whole English speaking world will recognize in O. Henry one of the great masters of modern literature."

But Mr. Leacock has many a kind word to say for American humor. In his book he includes that essay which kicked up that rumpus a year and a half ago. He makes us, however, quite proud of our humorous literary history. He says:

"Wonderful as our civilization is on its material and practical side it falls short as yet in regard to literature and general culture of the standard of the great nations of Europe. Yet in this relative literary sterility there has been one salient exception, and this exception has been found in the province of humorous writing. Here at any rate American history and American life have continuously reflected themselves in a not unworthy literary product.

"The humorist has followed and depicted the progress of our Western civilization at every step. Benjamin Franklin has shown us the humor of Yankee commercialism and Pennsylvania piety—the odd resultant of the juxtaposition of saintliness and common sense. Irving has developed the humor of early Dutch settlement—the mynheers of the Hudson Valley, with their long pipes and leisurely routine; Hawthorne presents the mingled humor and pathos of Puritanism; Hans Breitmann sings the ballad of the later Teuton; Lowell the Mexican war and the slavery contest; Oliver Wendell Holmes the softer side of the rigid culture of Boston; Mark Twain and Bret Harte bring with them the new vigor of the West, and at the close of the tale the sagacious Mr. Dooley appears as the essayist of the Irish immigrant, and a brilliant group of 'up to date' writers—the Ades, the Adamses and the Irwins of our contemporary journalism—boldly challenge comparison with their predecessors. No very lofty literature is this perhaps, yet faithful and real of its kind, more truly and distinctively American than anything else produced upon the continent. * * *

"Let me turn to the more immediate consideration of American humor as such and inquire what special sources of contrast and incongruity, what particular modes of thought and expression might well be engendered in American life and reflected in American writing. Perhaps the most evident and the most far reaching factor in the question is the circumstance that we Americans are a new people, divorced from the traditions, good and bad, of European life and are able thereby to take a highly objective view of European ideas and institutions. Our freedom from the hereditary and conventional view has enabled our writers to take an 'outside' view of things and to discover many contrasts and incongruities hidden from the European eye. We have been able to view the older civilization from a distance and to judge it on its merits. The objective view—the deliberate insistence in judging things as they are and not as hallowed tradition interprets them—forms the essential 'idea' of much of what is considered typically Yankee humor.

"It is one of the leading qualities in the humor of Franklin's Poor Richard, of Major Downing, of Sam Slick and of Hosea Biglow. It is connected essentially with the development of Yankee character and of the Yankee view of the outside world. 'A strange hybrid indeed,' said an English writer half a century ago, 'did circumstances beget in the new world upon the old Puritan stock, and the earth never before saw such mystic practicalism, such niggard geniality, such calculating fanaticism, such cast iron enthusiasm, such sour faced humor, such close fisted generosity.'

"This peculiar vein of Yankee character has nowhere been better exploited for purposes of humor than in James Russell Lowell's 'Biglow Papers.' Here we have New England wisdom detached from the conventional view of things.

"A great deal of Mark Twain's humor rests upon a similar basis. The humorous contract is found by turning the 'artistic innocence' of the western eye to bear upon the civilization of the old world. The result is amply seen in those two most amusing of American books, 'The Innocents Abroad' and the 'New Pilgrim's Progress.'

"Let us pass on to consider another broad division of American humor, the humor of exaggeration. It is not to be supposed that we Americans hold any monopoly of this mode of merriment. It is at least as old as Herodotus, whose efforts deserve all the credit attached to a praiseworthy beginning. Nay, even before Herodotus we find the humor of monstrous exaggeration fully exploited in the primitive literature of Norway. "The great giant of the Eddas," says one of the Sagas, "sits at the end of the world in Eagle's shape, and when he flaps his wings all the winds come that blow upon man." The suggested parallel to the American eagle is too obvious, and I pass it by. It is at least supposable that this element of exaggeration entered largely into all primitive folk song; it is likely that many passages in Homer and the Ancients, which to the scholars of to-day are mere misstatements of ignorance, were greeted in their time by the loud guffaws of barbarian listeners.

"But though there is no monopoly of exaggeration in America the circumstances of our country and its growth tend to foster it as a national characteristic. The amazing rapidity of American progress and the very bigness of our continent has bred in us a corresponding bigness of speech; the fresh air of the western country and the joy of living in the open has inspired us with a sheer exuberant love of lying that has set its mark upon our literature.

"It is notorious that this form of American fun has always proved somewhat difficult of comprehension to our British cousins. 'I was prepared,' said Artemus Ward in speaking of one of his English audiences, 'for a good deal of gloom, but I did not expect to find them so completely depressed.' It is interesting to note that the Right Hon. John Bright, one of the auditors of the lecture, said next morning: 'The information is meagre and is presented in a desultory manner; indeed I cannot help questioning some of the statements.'

"This divergence of national taste is really fundamental in British and American art and literature, and it forms the line of division between the British and American conception of a joke. The Englishman loves what is literal. His conception of a 'funny picture' is the drawing of a trivial accident in a hunting field, depicting exactly everything as it happened, with the discomfited horseman dripping with water from having fallen into a stream; or covered with mud by being thrown into a bog.

"The American funny picture tries to convey the same ideas by exaggeration. It gives us negroes with boots that are two feet long, collars six inches high and diamonds that shoot streaks of light across the paper. The English cartoonist makes a literal drawing. He may draw Mr. Winston Churchill as a chimney sweep or a nurse girl or as a bull terrier, but the face is always the face of Mr. Winston Churchill. The American cartoonist on the contrary reduces Mr. Roosevelt to a set of teeth with spectacles; Sir Wilfrid Laurier to a lock of hair, and the German Kaiser to a pair of mustaches. In either case the object sought may be attained or missed.

"British literalism in comic art or literature easily fades into insipid dulness; pointless stories of 'awfully amusing things,' told just as they happened, make one long for the sound of a literary lie. American exaggeration in comic art runs to seed in the wooden symbolism that depicts a skating accident by a series of concentric circles. American exaggeration in literature passes the bounds of common sense, and becomes mere meaningless criminality.

"It has been impossible in this short compass to say much of the part of American literature which moves upon the highest plane of humor, in which the mere incongruous 'funniness' of the ludicrous is replaced by the larger view of life. In plain truth not much of what is called American humor is of this class.

Stephen Leacock.

The writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the works of Mark Twain (not as cited in single passages or jokes, but considered in their broad aspect and in their view of life) and perhaps more than all the work of O. Henry, whose name will stand in restrospect among the greatest, present the universal element. But a large part of American humor lacks profundity and wants that stimulating aid of the art of expression which can be found only among a literary people. The Americans produce humorous writing because of their intensely humorous perception of things, and in despite of the fact that they are not a literary people. The British people, essentially a people of exceptions, produce a high form of humorous literature because of their literary spirit, and in spite of the fact that their general standard of humorous perception is lower. In the one case humor forces literature. In the other literature forces humor."

A WESTERN WRITER OF MANY INTERESTS

Mrs. Grace Sartwell Mason cheerfully came down from Mary Austin's studio, up aloft at the National Arts Club in Gramercy Park, to submit to an interview on her books and herself. Appleton's are just bringing out her latest novel, "The Golden Hope," written in collaboration with John S. Hilliard. It is a story with Western settings—settlers in the Sierra foothills, land thieves, water rights and desert reclamation, the lust for gold and other events and emotions that make up the exciting history of early Californian days.

"I am not a Westerner by birth," Mrs. Mason explained. "I was born in Pennsylvania and went West because I had always thought I should be able to do my work much better in the open, and in California it is possible to write outdoors most of the year. Of course the material for 'The Golden Hope' was gathered after I went West. It is essentially two true stories put together. Some of the characters are taken from life directly; some are composites made from real people. For example, Jackling, the land grabber, is actually an old fellow who lived near Monterey and stole the soul of his neighbors by despicable but extremely amusing trickeries. Once this man—the real fellow—wished to cheat the countryside in acquiring some land that was to be sold at auction. He had the clock set ahead. At the announced hour the land was sold to him at his own figure. When other intending buyers arrived at the correct time the sale was all over.

"Mr. Hilliard has collaborated with me before, and I recall that our first joint work, a story called 'The Bear's Claws,' was due to a casual remark I made regarding my perplexity as to the setting for part of the novel. I told him that I had the idea for a story, but was held back by the fact that part of it must be laid in a country with which I was unfamiliar. He had a special knowledge of Persia, which proved to be just the thing needed. So we set to work, and the faithfulness of coloring in the Persian scenes of that novel, dealing with conflicting English and Russian interests, is due to his share of our joint labors.

"But my first impulse to write came in Paris. I had gone there with my husband, who as a musical critic wished to attend the opera in the French capital and study abroad. We were living in the Latin Quarter, and the amazing spectacle of that life about me and the extraordinary persons we were among made me wish to put the people and incidents on paper. I got so that on our return home at night I would sit down and write everything out.

"I had not intended to be a writer at all. I am, or was, a violinist. Some ten years of hard work had gone into the study of that instrument. But I decided that I should never be a first class violinist and I had long felt the need of a fuller expression than music could give me. So those little sketches, jotted down loosely at night in Paris, were the turning point at that period of my life. Yet I cannot recall having used the things I wrote down then in more than one or two short stories.

"Just at present I am intensely interested in the subtle but indubitable change that has come over women everywhere—in city and country village alike—in their attitude toward life. I don't want to say that I am interested in feminism; that limits the field too greatly. But this changed attitude of woman toward the world about her is the central fact on which I hope to build my next novel. The thing has not progressed any further yet. While I am doing various short stories I shall try to develop this idea, an incubation that may take six months.

"The central idea comes first with me in the construction of a story. After that the characters. They must be completely seen and understood. The setting follows. It cannot be selected, at any rate, before I have the principal characters fully in mind. To choose a setting and then envisage the characters seems to me a mistake, for the people are too likely to be puppets in certain selected surroundings. The idea of taking people and putting them through a series of experiences, the whole threaded together and called a novel, is the thing I dislike most. I want my people to have a share in their own destinies. I want them to act on their own environments, to flower forth, and not to be the passive victims of outer circumstances. A fine example of what I mean by the characters of a story budding out and by their own action exhibiting themselves as flesh and blood creatures is found in May Sinclair's story 'The Combined Maze.' That book seems to me a splendid piece of work."

Mrs. Mason said that she expects to stay about a year in New York, which will be her longest sojourn in this city.

"I find New York delightful," she smiled, "because of the liveliness of it and the varied manifestations of life on every hand. Here it is possible to get ideas in abundance. And I also find the atmosphere exhilarating enough to enable me to work well. Perhaps the pressure is a little too great at times. You know publishers have a way of saying to you when, in a state of exhaustion, you hand them the manuscript of your completed novel: 'Well, come in next Monday and we'll talk over your next book.' And you cannot make them understand that that book is months away, or that possibly the fatigues of the last volume have not magically vanished with the last leaf of manuscript."

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A "DICKENS OF NEW YORK" AND HIS TWENTY YEARS WAIT

Nathan Kussy, whose first novel, "The Abyss," is receiving comparison with the work of Dickens and Dumas, has had from high school days one dominating idea—to succeed as a writer. His disappointments and setbacks would have discouraged one less determined.

He was born in Newark in 1872, and when he was twelve years old decided he would become a writer. Mr. Kussy still lives in Newark and at his home there he told of his experience.

"I have always been very fond of books," he said, "and read a great deal as a child. Naturally, reading and thinking over what I read created the desire to write myself, and so I was only fifteen when I wrote my first book. It was a story for boys, with the title 'The Blind Hero,' and was in twenty-nine chapters."

That book still rests in a drawer of the author's bookcase.

"I wrote many short stories in the next few years," he went on, "but none of them was accepted. Dickens influenced me more than any other writer. I always felt intensely for the submerged, while crime and criminals also appealed strongly to me."

He kept a journal from his childhood days, and an entry in 1889 (when the boy was only seventeen years old) is significant:

"It is a strange fact that the rejection of one of my MSS. does not in the least discourage me. I am as hopeful of ultimate success as ever."

A year after this, when he was eighteen, a sketch was accepted by the New York *World*. He received a check for $4.87. The young author was so thrilled at this testimony of recognition that he at once began work upon a novel called "Toughey, the Song of the Streets." The scenes were the same as the scenes of "The Abyss"; the hero lived in Mulberry street, and much of the action took place along the Bowery.

But he was now facing the problem of earning his living, and vainly tried to get work on a New York newspaper. He decided to study law, was graduated from the New York Law School and admitted to the bar in 1895, when he was 23 years old. Since then he has practised law in Newark but has never let go of his ideal.

"About the time of my admission to the bar," he said, "I began to write plays. 'The Fool's Love,' my first play, was followed by 'The Rat of Hunger,' the scenes of which were laid in the slums. But the fate of these was the same."

In 1900 illness kept him at home several months, and he used the time to write plays, many in blank verse. But all appeals to managers were unsuccessful; it was said that costume plays, the scenes of which were laid in past centuries, would not "catch on." Once Mr. Kussy felt he was near acceptance. Robert Mantell told him he would produce "The Mad Jester" if his manager would let him shelve Shakespeare; but nothing came of it.

In 1906 came the inevitable physical reaction against days of law work and evenings of literary work. He had an attack of congestion of the brain, and since then has divided his day hours between law and literature.

"I have been working on 'The Abyss' more than five years," said Mr. Kussy. "The novel, as you know, tells the story of a little Jewish orphan in the underworld and his struggle to rise out of the muck. I have always been interested in criminals, an interest fostered by my profession of the law. It is out of all this experience that 'The Abyss' has been composed—helped by this volume here."

Mr. Kussy indicated a bulky scrap book. He opened it, displaying newspaper periods covering twenty-five years.

"It is my practice," he explained, "when I'm about to describe a scene, to read all I can get hold of that relates to it. So I've kept scrap books in which I've mounted newspaper articles, or unusual clippings that appealed to me. I've indexed these books so that by consulting my cards I can at once refer to any passage on a given subject."

The scrap books show articles dated back in the '80s. There are descriptions of the New York slums, of prison life, reports of criminal trials, articles dealing with the life of the city's poor. In "The Abyss" there is an incident of a child who was disguised and forced to go about the streets performing tricks for pennies. This incident is based upon an actual occurrence, described in a clipping from the New York *World* of December 27, 1896.

But many of the characters of "The Abyss" are real people.

"The little woman Becky," said Mr. Kussy, "is taken from life, sketched with absolute fidelity to the original. The story of the prisoner clubbed to death by his guards is based upon a case brought to my attention in the course of my practice; and the actual occurrence differs from my incident in that it was so much more cruel and shocking that I didn't dare picture it as it really occurred lest I be charged with gross exaggeration.

"My prison scenes are written with the help of a friend who spent a year in a reformatory. He entrusted to me a diary which he had kept during his confinement.

"I experienced great difficulty in familiarizing myself with the life, habits and argot of tramps. But I was fortunate in learning that a man I knew had been a tramp in his youth, and from him I gained information which was of great value to me.

"From a pawnbroker I acquired a knowledge of various matters which were of service to me in describing the pawnshop of Mr. Samuels. Wherever it was possible for me to obtain through investigation personal knowledge of facts, scenes and incidents which I purposed to describe I have done so, in the hope of being enabled to depict vividly the experiences of my hero and to catch the spirit of a great throbbing, restless city, full of the comedy and tragedy of existence."

THINK OF NAPOLEON IN A SUBMARINE!

Very few people are aware that the submarine was invented in a practicable form during the Napoleonic regime in Europe. The original British inventor, J. Day, was drowned in Plymouth Sound in his own boat in 1774. The Bushnell submarine followed, the work of an American inventor, and came near being used during the Revolutionary war to blow up a British warship. The attempts proved, however, abortive, because the explosives used were not of sufficient power.

Frederick A. Talbot telling about this in his "Submarines: Their Mechanism and Operation," recently published by the Lippincotts, tells of the next submarine exploit—no less than a daring plan to rescue Napoleon from St. Helena, where he was held a prisoner by the English. Capt. Johnson built the submarine for the deed; the boat was to be carried on shipboard to a point near the island. "Here the submarine was to be lowered overboard and therein Capt. Johnson was to proceed under water to the island to a lonely part of the shore where a landing could be effected. A huge sum of money was promised if the attempt should prove successful, while $200,000 was to be paid over on the day the boat was completed. But on the day when work on the outer shell of copper was to be started the desperate enterprise was rendered unnecessary owing to the death of the august prisoner."

Think of Napoleon in a submarine. It is a curious idea, isn't it?

NEW MAGAZINE DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO VERSE

That poetry is taking on a new and more vigorous life in America seems evidenced by the appearance of a new magazine devoted entirely to verse. It is called *Contemporary Verse* and is published at 203 Chestnut avenue, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia.

Its first number came out in January. Some of those represented are Hermann Hagedorn, author of "Troop of the Guard and Other Poems"; Louis Untermeyer, author of "First Love"; Don Marquis, who has just published a new book of verse, "Dreams and Dust"; Robert Haven Schauffler, author of "Scum of the Earth and Other Poems." Others who will contribute are Joyce Kilmer, T. A. Daly, Leonard Bacon, William Rose Benet, James E. Richardson, Alice Wilson, Jean Brooke Burt, Max Eastman.

VICTOR BRIDGES ADMITS HE WAS A BAD ACTOR

Victor Bridges, the author of "A Rogue by Compulsion," which has just appeared under the Putnam imprint, relates an amusing story in connection with his early experiences as an actor. He had been on the stage for several years managing "by some delightful miracle" to make enough to live on when he was engaged to play the part of the *Tortturer* in a version of "Notre Dame" produced by Charles Cartwright. He was made to look as unpleasant as possible, and among other duties he had to rack the heroine. After the operation had been performed and she was lying a crumpled, mangled heap on the floor he had to advance, and pretending to stick her, observe brutally, "Stand, heretic."

At the first matinee at Islington when he brought out this rather callous command a dear old lady with violet bonnet strings, who was sitting in the front row of the stalls, leaped to her feet, darted up to the footlights, brandishing an umbrella, and yelled furiously, "Give her a chair, you nasty little beast!"

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