THE JOURNAL

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A Detective Story.

Guy Boothby has written a short detective story under the title of "Cavesson and the Centipede," the first chapter of which will appear in The Journal next Saturday along with the concluding chapter of General Charles King's "Norman Holt." General King's story, we are sure, has been one of absorbing interest to the newspaper story readers of The Journal's constituency, dealing as it did with so many important characters and incidents of the war. They will find this new story of adventure by Boothby as entertaining and clever in its description of the resources and ingenuity of the famous bandit of Queensland in escaping the law, as any of Dr. Doyle's stories of Sherlock Holmes' skill in apprehending criminals. Boothby's story will appear in three parts.

STRINGING WIRES

The more publicity is given to the proposition to give the telephone and telegraph companies the right to "string wires" along all public highways, the worse does the proposition appear. It is said that Senator Thompson, who is advocating the bill in the senate, is very much discomposed because his pet measure has been sharply criticised. If this be true, it would indicate that there was indeed a woodchuck in the scheme.

The fact is that this proposed law is utterly indefensible. If adopted, it would reverse the established policy of the state, and grant away, to moneyed corporations, rights which it has always been the policy of the legislature to secure to the people. At present, the privilege to "string wires" can be secured only by first getting license from the local authorities. The people of each locality, through their representatives, are first to be consulted. Why should the legislature grant to any person or corporation the power to occupy the streets of a city in defiance of the local wishes and policy on the subject?

The cities have found the excessive stringing of wires a nuisance, and are trying to abate it. It is the policy of Minneapolis to have all telephone wires put under ground. This policy will be useless, and pursuit of it will be unavailing, if the bill in question should become a law. One recognized necessity of the age is to allow to cities a larger measure of home rule. It would be strange if the legislature of Minnesota should commence the new century by blocking home rule.

It is said that Senator Thompson's object is to favor the erection of local telephone lines by individuals, in the rural districts. Then why does he not introduce a bill to accomplish that purpose? Let it be clearly understood, that those who desire the passage of this measure in its present form, are those who can derive some benefit from it, namely, the telephone companies. Let it be further understood that no step should be taken by the legislature to enlarge the powers of these companies, while the question as to the extent of their present privileges is pending in the courts for determination. The haste with which it has been attempted to railroad this wire-stringing bill through, and the bitter feeling of its advocates when their scheme is discovered, are suspicious. Whatever grant of this kind is made, should be upon the condition that license from the local authorities must be secured before any highway is occupied. But this condition would embarrass the present scheme.

LAW AND JOINT-SMASHING

From Indiana it is reported that some of the joint-smashing women have adopted the rather mild accompaniment of spanking their husbands with clapboards when these unfortunate men were found in saloons. This is a variation of the amusement of destroying the furniture as well as the firewater in the saloons. It is not everybody, however, who can indulge in this diversion. There are but few women who can lay their husbands across their knees and give them a good spanking. If the operations of the women crusaders were confined to such punitive form they would find the business too tame, doubtless. Mrs. Nation, for instance, would never be satisfied with it.

With reference to the joint-smashing method of Mrs. Nation, which is now imitated in several states, it is widely held that the Nation theory, that there are no property rights in saloon goods and furniture which any citizen is bound to respect, is correct, and that anybody who opposes the great athlete is a friend of the liquor dealer. There is, however, some reason to dissent from this view. The supreme court of Kansas has dissented in a case of joint-smashing back in 1889, in which the defendant, upon being assailed on his own premises by a female hatchet brigade, defended himself with a shotgun and was arrested, tried and convicted on the ground that he had used more force than was necessary to defend himself and his property. The state claimed that the women had the right forcibly to destroy the man's property and that he had no right to prevent or defend it. The lower court held that it made no difference if the defendant was a joint-keeper and his habitation a joint and his property liquor and fixtures. "The mere fact that some are engaged in unlawful business does not give others any lawful right to destroy the property or injure the person of those so engaged, without intervention of law." The supreme court affirmed this decision.

The remedy for the Kansas trouble appears to lie in the repeal of the prohibition law and the substitution of high license and local option. These would, no doubt, prove of some real value to the cause of temperance. In Iowa they have adopted the plan of no saloons except where public sentiment demands them, and it works well. Under the Nation system, if it were sustained by the courts, the raiders would have to be protected by the courts, even if they applied the torch to all buildings owned or rented for saloons. Carrienationism, carried to its logical terminal, would fill the country with temperance firebugs. There should be reason in all things.

THE CANAL TREATY

The fifty-sixth congress expires on March 4, and, on that date, will expire the pending negotiations touching the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. It is rumored that the British government has cabled Lord Pauncefote full instructions to concede the principal amendments and arrange the settlement of the other details. This, however, is something of a gratuitous assumption, although possible. It is more likely that the treaty will be allowed to fail. The Nicaragua and Costa Rican concessions will also terminate on next Monday and it is probable that the whole business will have to be gone over again owing to the delays through the contumacious disposition of the senate, which has not only delayed the work on the ship canal a year or more, but has deliberately declined to ratify a number of reciprocity treaties, negotiated by the regularly appointed commissioner, Mr. Kasson, at the instance of the president, who earnestly recommended the effectuation of the reciprocity clause of the present tariff law. The republican party has indorsed the policy and the president, in his messages, has urged the ratification of the treaties which have been negotiated with several Spanish-American countries, with the British and Danish West Indies and with France.

In addition to the senate's singular repudiation of a distinct party policy of reciprocity its course with regard to the canal treaty has been remarkable. It was several times gravitating toward Senator Morgan's dishonorable proposition to act upon the canal bill without waiting for the action of the British government upon the amended treaty. It has been restrained only by the fact that it has still a segment of its conscience left which led it to consent to leave Morgan's bill untouched until the British cabinet acted upon the treaty. Senator Morgan and those who back him, care not a continental for national honor. They pretend to justify their course by alleging that Great Britain has violated some of the provisions of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and has so voided it, but when called upon for specifications they cannot give them. This nation will not repudiate its share in the making of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, which is a solemn obligation of our government from which release can only legitimately come through the regular processes. It is very desirable to get rid of this old treaty, which contains no provision for its own abrogation and the consent of both parties to its abrogation is therefore necessary. Whatever may be our ability to take the matter in our own hands, it is necessary for our honor to show a decent respect for the sanctity of treaties.

The delay in the matter of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty is unfortunate, but the difficulty will finally be overcome and in the proper way. As soon as there is a full realization of the necessity for the canal from a strictly business standpoint and as an essential business enterprise, no power or influence on earth can prevent its construction.

Protection for Man.

There is a story going the rounds of the eastern press that, following the introduction in the Minnesota legislature of the measure prohibiting the marriage of women past the age of 45, a Widows' Protective League has been formed. Nonsense! There are no widows over 45, and if there were, they would not need protection from so gallant a body of men as the present Minnesota legislature. Of course, the silly measure will not be made into law. And if it were, it would be promptly killed by the courts. There is no disposition on the part of the public to prevent the widow, or any other lady, from seeking her natural prey at any season of the year in this state.

The only possible modification that would have a chance of passage would be a bill making "a closed season" on man, i. e., that it would not be lawful for ladies over 45 to hunt for their natural prey from October to May. This would give man a fair chance and would not be considered tyrannous or unreasonable by any fair-minded person.

The Wheeling, W. Va., News is trying hard to give the news, but Wheeling is pretty far out of the world. The News says:

Minneapolis has a great mayor. His name is Ames, and he has recently gained much fame. The other day the governor of Wisconsin interfered to prevent a fistic carnival at Minneapolis, whereupon his honor, in a huff, issued a proclamation prohibiting athletic sports of all kinds within the city limits. Prize fighting, bicycling and baseball are put on the same level by the brilliant Ames, and we imagine Minneapolis will have a dull summer.

Besides locating Minneapolis in Wisconsin, the News seems to be slightly "off" in other respects. Bicycling will certainly be allowed, though there are some varieties of it that do not deserve the official clemency.

Ex-Secretary Evarts, who died yesterday, was the author of some of the longest sentences in the language, but no one ever denied that there was meat in them. It is the person who talks and says nothing at whom we are all sore.

Wind cave, near the South Dakota Hot Springs, has been secured by the government, which is evidently after a corner on wind. They are even talking extra session.

Admiral Sampson says he did not give to the press the Gunner Morgan letter. It is safe to bet your life on that. It is the kind of thing that will not bear publicity.

The Yankee railway manipulators are trying to get hold of the English systems and bring them up to date. At present you cahn't even get your luggage checked.

A remedy has been found in France for the foot and mouth disease. Is this too late for the present session of the legislature?

Dr. Wheeler, professor of history at Yale, sees this country rushing on to its ruin. There, there, doctor, the election is over.

Mrs. Nation's polite name for cigarettes is "hell sticks." There is much in what she says. They smell like it.

There is a man in the New York legislature known as Warwhoop Lynn. We all know his tribe.

There is a divorce suit on in Cleveland because hubby would not eat the pie. The brute!

AMUSEMENTS

Foyer Chat.

The announcement of a magnificent revival of the greatest of Bartley Campbell's plays, "Siberia," will doubtless have the effect of crowding the Bijou theater to the doors all next week. This drama has been almost continuously presented for a score of years and has always been received with the greatest enthusiasm. "Siberia" affords an almost unlimited field for scenic embellishment, reaching as it does, from the gayety of the governor general's palace to the snow clad prison mines of Siberia.

Only three more opportunities are left local theater-goers to enjoy the many funny incidents and situations in Hoyt's "A Brass Monkey," as presented by Mazie Trumbull, James K. Wesley and their splendid supporting company at the Bijou. To-morrow at 2:30 the only remaining matinee of the engagement will be given.

Next season James A. Herne, whose "Hearts of Oak" company is playing at the Metropolitan, will revive "Drifting Apart," one of his early successes, and will engage a special company to present it in addition to the ones now playing in "Shore Acres" and "Hearts of Oak."

"The Christian" will be seen at the Metropolitan for four nights and matinee, commencing Sunday. The dramatization of this story was not entrusted to a playwright, who might have tampered with its theme for dramatic effect, but the entire work as seen upon the stage was evolved by the eminent novelist himself, and the result is unusual perfection.

Thomas Q. Seabrooke, whose art as a creator of hilarity has kept him at the very top of comic opera stars since he leaped to enormous distinction years ago in "The Isle of Champagne," is booked for appearance at the Metropolitan for three nights and Saturday matinee beginning Thursday, March 7, in "The Rounders."

GOVERNING A BIG CITY

Bird S. Coler, the well-known controller of New York city, contributes a paper to Everybody's Magazine on "The Government of a Great City"—a subject with which he has no little practical acquaintance as a municipal reformer. Mr. Coler properly describes the crippling curse of American city government as "political meddling and state interference." Vicious and unnecessary legislation produces half the bad city government in this country. The remedy is home rule, good citizenship, public spirit, honest local government. The government need not necessarily be non-partizan; but the politics should be improved in standard to the highest point. There should be two elective officers—the mayor and chief financial officer—and the mayor should have unlimited power in executive matters and unrestricted power of appointment and removal, while the chief financial officer ought to have final veto power over all expenditures and complete responsibility for the financial affairs of the city, including the assessment of property and the collection of taxes. Simplicity should be the rule in the conduct of public business. All tendency to extravagance should be checked and pay should be regulated on the extent and responsibility of the work done. The rules of employment, pay and promotion which obtain in the service of every great corporation should be adopted in the government of cities. City charters and constitutional restrictions ought to provide different conditions for different classes of debt. Every franchise and special privilege granted to individuals and private corporations should be made to yield a revenue based upon its actual earning value. Intelligence, honesty and simplicity are always essential to good city government. The public business of a city, Mr. Coler properly says, is the affair of its citizens, and secrecy and circumlocution are not to be tolerated.

When citizens realize that fact, there is no doubt that the days of Croker bosses will be ended. When citizens do realize the true meaning of public business, there will be no further difficulty about effectuating municipal reform.

A BOOK OF 1553

A few days since the Democrat was permitted to examine a rare old book of Theological thesis on the Bible, by Johann von Ect, D. D., printed in 1553 in German text, by permission of the emperor and all rights reserved for six years. The book is owned by James Erblang and is on exhibition in the window of the Payant Furniture and Music company. It is of principal value to scholars and has been examined with much interest, not only because of its literary merit, but its great age.

This Man Wants to Know.

To the Editor of The Journal:

It would be interesting to know the ground for the sage conclusion reached by the health commissioners of St. Paul and Minneapolis at their late momentous conference upon "the smallpox situation." It is said that "both agreed that a general vaccination of the people of the twin cities is essential." The first thought suggested is that these worthy gentlemen are finding life less strenuous than their eager and impetuous natures demand. Or, mayhap, they are urged to take a step repugnant to their quiet tastes by an overflowing love for their kind and a desire to manifest their regard in some memorable way.

These are only guesses, the former hazarded upon a glance ahead at the possibilities in store for them in the event of their putting their plan in operation; in such case the excitement of wolf hunting in Northeast Minneapolis, or even the chase of the festive mountain lion in the Rockies would become in comparison as insipid and tame as a pink tea. My second guess is based upon my knowledge of their undoubted knowledge of the lasting effects of a vaccination epidemic which leaves in its wake sickness, many deaths and, worse yet, occasional cases of lifelong disfigurement.

It is a perennial wonder that smallpox should be the disease singled out for so much attention from the medical men when there are dozens of diseases more prevalent and fatal. Many such have had provided for them, by medical science, serum cures and other specifics just as effectual as Jenner's discovery for preventing smallpox.

Not to weary with enumerating I will only mention the disease known as old age. In spite of the heroic efforts of doctors to prevent deaths from this cause, there is a constantly increasing number of persons whose acquaintance with doctors is strictly social and never, or rarely, professional, and this class with great regularity die from old age. Within my recollection there have been discovered two certain cures for this disease; one almost as disgusting as the putrid vaccination cure, was discovered by one Dr. Brown-Sequard, and the other but lately exploited with the retiring modesty that characterizes a portion of "the profession." The latter is rather clean and comparatively harmless, one would judge, nevertheless the aged are not clamoring to be pickled in brine, so why not corral them and at the cost (to the doctors) of a few cents per hundred head, distend their shrunken veins with salt water and give them a new lease of life? This will give variety to medical compulsion which is usually practiced on little children, and as the aged are also weak and defenseless the stalwart kick that the present vaccination scheme is going to provoke will be avoided, a reasonable revenue will accrue and medical science will score another triumph. This suggestion is in the interests of peace.

—L. C. L.

New York Daily Letter.

BUREAU OF THE JOURNAL, No. 21 Park Row.

Work of the Illustrator.

March 1.—Present-day writers owe a large debt to their illustrators, for it is, indeed, the "picture magazines" and the "picture books" that attain the large circulations. Those that deal with literature alone have to be content with a comparatively small sale. In spite of pictures, however, there is no reason to depreciate the literary quality of our leading illustrated periodicals. Their general average is pretty high. No one will deny the very great attractive power of illustrations, and now, with every mechanical facility for reproduction, the public is getting the work of many able artists. Pictures were before writing, and it was by the addition of the illuminations and wood cuts to the early printed books that they were made to appeal to a wider audience. The history of illustration has yet to be written, but one may easily trace its influence here in America within recent years by reference to the growth of our periodicals. Beginning with Harper's Magazine, in 1850, there has been a steady progress in illustrative art. In 1870 Scribner's Monthly followed, and it has continued to carry on the best traditions, as has also the Century. The new Scribner's Magazine began in 1887, just about the time that the half-tone and the line-plate were asserting their full value and the wood engraver beginning his swan song. There is a most interesting field of study in the pages of these and other magazines.

"Abraham Lincoln—His Book."

One of the most unique and interesting offerings that has ever come to the book world has just made its appearance under the title of "Abraham Lincoln—His Book." This is a replica of a small scrapbook which was the property of Abraham Lincoln, and which gives his views in regard to "negro equality" and slavery prior to his election to the presidency of the United States. The book, according to the explanatory note furnished by J. McCar Davis, "owes its existence to the political campaign of 1858, when the opposing candidates for the United States senate from Illinois were Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. The issue was slavery; whether, as Mr. Lincoln contended, it should be restricted to the states in which it already existed, or, as Judge Douglas advocated, it should be permitted to invade the new territories if agreeable to the people thereof." At the same time there was much discussion as to Lincoln's position, and he, therefore, made a scrapbook containing what he had said on the subject for J. N. Brown. The latter used it with telling effect in the campaign and carefully preserved it. On his death, in 1868, it passed to his sons, William and Benjamin W. Brown, by whom it is still owned. From it, by photographic processes, Messrs. McClure, Phillips & Co. have made a facsimile reproduction, showing the pasted newspaper clippings together with the notes and remarks in Lincoln's own handwriting.

Net Prices for Books.

At last the Publishers' Association has adopted the plan suggested by its committee some months ago for a reform of the evils of price-cutting in the retail trade. The plan is an agreement on the part of the members, including all the leading houses in the business, that after May 1 all copyright books, with certain exceptions, shall be published at net prices. It is recommended that these prices shall be reduced from the prices at which similar books have been heretofore issued, and that net copyright books shall be sold only to such retail dealers as will agree to maintain the retail price. The books excepted from the operation of the agreement are works of fiction not juveniles, school books, new editions and subscription books. Libraries may be given a discount of 10 per cent. The exception of fiction seems a pretty large one, for it is, of course, on the popular novels that the prices have been worst cut. It is optional, however, with each publisher to include fiction among his net books if he so desires.

How to Be It.

A useful guide for persons desirous of following the conventionalities of social intercourse is Emily Holt's new book, "An Encyclopedia of Etiquette," just published by McClure, Phillips & Co. The man or woman who wishes to do at all times and under all conditions the exactly proper thing in the most approved manner would do well to read this volume. The proper forms of invitation for the various kinds of social entertainments, such as dinners, receptions and dances, are carefully described and illustrated; and detailed instruction is given as to when, how and to whom to issue them. The approved duties of host and hostess, and of guests, whether men or women, are all carefully set forth as fixed by the best and most reasonable practice; and there is explicit instruction regarding the proper dress for both men and women for all of the various social occasions. —N. N. A.

The St. Louis Fair and Sunday Closing.

To the Editor of The Journal:

The telegraphic news of a few days ago made the announcement that the United States government had appropriated $5,000,000 to the exposition to be held at St. Louis, provided the exposition was not opened on Sunday. The dispatches did not state why this proviso was attached to the appropriation, but it is to be presumed that it was done to prevent the people from committing the great and unpardonable crime of enjoying themselves on Sunday; of looking at beautiful pictures; of admiring the handiwork of the artisans of various countries; of examining the practical inventions of the master minds in the material and real line of progress. For all the dreamings and discussions of every metaphysician that the world produced, did not do as much to abate war as the steam engine did in ten years. It would seem that after 2,000 years of attempting to make people good by legislation, lawmakers would profit by the experience of the past. Governments do not make people good, but people can make good governments; and four-fifths, yes, nine-tenths of all the salutary legislation that has been enacted has not consisted in the making of new laws, but the repealing of old ones. Witness, the corn laws and protective system of England and slavery in our own country. If it is a sin to do certain things on Sunday that during the other days of the week are perfectly harmless (in other words, if one space of time is better than another), the masses will never be kept from doing these various things by passing laws saying "Thou shalt not!" Such laws only add to the original crime another one, that of breaking the law. Every law against usury has miscarried and made the burden of those intended to be benefited heavier. Kansas for the past fifteen years has been attempting to keep men from drinking whisky by passing a law. The result is well known. It has produced liars, hypocrites, sneaks and lawbreakers, without decreasing the amount of whisky consumed or the number of crimes committed. In order to keep men from besotting themselves with whisky they need not a change of "heart" but a change of intellect, and this laws cannot give them.

There is another side to the question. If every seat in every church in St. Louis was occupied on Sunday during the exposition, not one-tenth of the people would be taken care of. It is not to be supposed that the others will stay in their hotels and boarding-houses, read the prayer book and sing hymns. People attend such places as the exposition referred to to be amused, to get away from the cares of their daily life. If the exposition is not open to them on Sunday, they will be driven to attend places whose moral effect will certainly be more questionable than that of the exposition. Why not permit them to spend their Sundays as every other day should be spent—doing as much good and as little harm as possible? —H. R. L.

Hicks Still Lives.

To the Editor of The Journal:

I am called on to settle a bet as to whether Irl Hicks, the weather prophet, is alive or died some months ago. I don't remember seeing anything about his death, but want to be sure. Can you tell me? —E. J. B.

In reply to an inquiry addressed to the Word and Works Publishing company, Mr. Hicks, the editor, writes: You can say to your correspondent, who desires to know whether Rev. I. B. Hicks is still living, that if the court has any knowledge of itself we are. "It is I who speak unto you." If I am not alive I am certainly enjoying a most realistic vision. In further testimony of which I hereunto affix my autograph, from which you will see that no other living man could write it, and if a dead man undertook it he would have a serious job.

The sheriff of Morton conuty has demonstrated the fact that a North Dakota sheriff can catch something. He has the smallpox.

The Great Opera-House Hold-Up

BY J. P. COUGHLAN.

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The Oaktree opera-house was unusually crowded. The people of Oaktree are a drama loving community, and the Watson-Duval Double Star Combination was giving "Hamlet." The manager estimated that there was at least $500 in the house, his prosaic way of summing up the value of his audience from the box office point of view. There was a good deal more than $500 in the house, from the practical financial view of Gentleman George, known in the adjacent mountains, where he made his headquarters, as the leader of the redcaps. Gentleman George had a reputation that branched out into several of the adjoining states. His methods of brigandage were more novel than the unoriginality of his sobriquet would lead you to believe, but then he was not responsible for the adjective.

Gentleman George visited Oaktree occasionally, but a discreet population refused to recognize him, and the authorities were conveniently unaware of his identity. Hence it was quite in order, as with other personages, that he should attend the performances at the opera-house incog.

The curtain had fallen on the second act, and the audience was for settling itself back into its eats when a tall, bearded, distinguished looking gentleman in evening dress appeared before the curtain and made a sign to the audience, begging their attention. The audience craned forward its their seats.

The man raised an impressive hand and began:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I trust that I shall have your undivided attention. We are about this evening to vary the program slightly, and shall, with your kind indulgence, offer a little comedy, part of whose action will take place in the body of the house. I think it well to warn you beforehand that it would be best for you to keep your seats. If you obey this injunction you will be in no danger whatever, but should you become restive serious accidents may happen.

"Now let me add that it will be impossible for a single person to leave the theater until the finish of the little comedy. If—don't rise from your seats, please—you will look towards the exits you will see that they are very carefully guarded."

Eyes were instantly turned to the doors. At each door on the two tiers that included floor and balcony of the little theater stood a resolute looking man holding a brace of revolvers and wearing a red cap. A tendency to scream on the part of the women was repressed by the impressive hand of the man on the stage, who had by this time also donned a red cap.

"No danger, friends," he called out in an amiable voice. "Allow me to introduce myself: I am Gentleman George, and you know my reputation. If you are reasonable you will not be touched; that is to say, you will only be touched mildly, for what valuables you may happen to have upon you. The good people behind the scenes are safe in the hands of my comrades. All comunication with the outside world is cut off. Every door is guarded. There is not a head in this house that is not covered by a red-cap gun. As long as you sit still you are in no danger, but the moment you try to get gay or stow away any of your goods or put us to any trouble you will hear—"

The ominous elipsis at the end of the last sentence had all its intended effect.

"Now that we understand each other," continued the speaker, "our collector will pass amongst you, and I trust you will remember that their time is valuable and cannot be wasted on disputes. In the meantime there is no reason why the music should not continue. If you please, Mr. Professor, strike up."

To the somewhat tremulous music of the piano three men moved systematically through the lower floor of the theater, each one carrying, slung over his shoulder, a large leather bag, such as is carried by postmen, while three others, similarly equipped, went at the same time through the balcony.

"Ladies may keep their wedding rings," called out the chief robber, who shouted out from time to time orders to his men and to the audience from the stage.

"Please, sir," may I keep this? It was my mother's," said a young girl in a tremulous voice from the balcony as she held up a small brooch in her hand for Gentleman George to see.

"Certainly, my child. Jim, see that the young lady keeps her brooch."

Presently requests of various kinds began to come from all parts of the house. In some cases the requests were granted immediately, others as curtly refused, and still others compromised. Some citizens were allowed to keep trinkets they valued by giving an "I. O. U." for their value. This unexpected turn to the proceedings gave the affair a flavor of the auction room, and in the excitement, coupled with the peeps into the heart secrets of others, the women forgot in a great measure their fright. This result was greatly contributed to by the good-natured way in which the thieves did their robbing.

"Now, my friends," said Gentleman George, after a pause, "everything seems to be moving serenely, and while the rest of the collection is being made, with your kind permission I will endeavor to entertain you with a little song. Can you accompany me in 'The Suwanee River,' professor?"

"Certainly, sir."

"If you please, then."

In a sweet, rich tenor voice the brigand began the old song. The audience listened in amazement, and as he finished the first verse, filled the house with genuine applause.

By the time the song was finished the collectors had completed their work, and only the guards on the doors remained. The leader again raised his hand for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said. "I thank you for your kind attention. Our little comedy has passed off successfully, and now, before we wind up, let me give you a few final instructions. Our guards are still outside the various doors and shall remain there until we have had a good start. That will be, let us say, fifteen minutes. Any one who attempts to leave before that time will be shot dead at the door—and you know I have a habit of keeping my word. To simplify matters I intend to place this alarm clock"—here he held up an alarm clock, which was handed to him from the wings, to the view of the audience—"here on this table. It is set to go off at 11 o'clock. Don't leave your seats until you hear it. If you do—"

Before the sentence was finished Gentleman George had vanished.

The people in the house looked at one another wonderingly. No one dared to be the first to tempt fate by getting up and leaving the theater. Yet each man there believed that the threat was a "bluff," intended to give the robbers a chance to get safely away. They were disinclined, however, to put their belief to the test, and no one stirred. While matters were still in this indeterminate state a piercing cry of "Fire" rang out throughout the house, and was immediately taken up on several sides.

The managers of the theater at this outcry rushed on the stage and shouted words meant to be calming to the audience. They succeeded in a measure in allaying the panic which was beginning to get under way, but many people overwrought by the evening's happenings rushed from the theater out into the street. Then it was discovered conclusively that there was no fire, but that the scare raised by the cry had added to the start already gained by Gentleman George and his band.

By noon on the day following the sheriff was ready to start for the haunts of Gentleman George with a strong posse, when the mayor sent for him, and read this letter, found on his doorstep that morning:

Dear Mr. Mayor: A dastardly outrage has been perpetrated on my good name and incidentally on the people of your city by the ruffians who held up the opera-house last night. The person calling himself Gentleman George was only an impersonator. I believe I know the scoundrel, and by the time you receive this, myself and a few trusty comrades will be on his trail. The good citizens of Oaktree can not be more grieved than I am over the regrettable occurrence of last evening. To show you that I was not the man who held up the opera-house, I enclose you my latest photograph, made in San Francisco. You can depend upon it that the evil doers of last night will be brought to justice. Yours in good faith,

—Gentleman George.

The sheriff did not like the cool, impertinent tone of the letter, and thought that, owing to his long immunity, Gentleman George was inclined to jest with the township. The mayor thought differently. It was, he said, a very courteous note, and he could not see that it in any way reflected on the town. Sides were taken, and the next election was fought out largely on the question of the good faith or otherwise of Gentleman George. Though the election went in favor of the mayor and the upholders of Gentleman George, to this day it has not been determined whether or not it was that polished bandit who had held up the opera-house.

MINNEAPOLIS JOURNAL'S CURRENT TOPICS SERIES

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PAPERS BY EXPERTS AND SPECIALISTS OF NATIONAL REPUTATION.

AMERICAN LIFE A CENTURY AGO.

II.—WOMEN'S COSTUME.

(By Alice Morse Earl, author of "Costume in Colonial Times," "Home Life in Colonial Days," China Collecting in America," etc.)

A complete history of the costumes of the nineteenth century may be obtained not only from discarded and obsolete fashion plates of the day, which show us what tailors, mantua-makers and milliners wished men and women to wear, but from contemporary portraits which reveal to us what was actually worn.

AFTERNOON DRESS FOR FEBRUARY, 1801.

Fortunately the first half of the century was a day of portrait painting, hence we have preserved for us in color all the details of authentic costume which the portrait's dull successors—the daguerreotype, ambrotype and photograph—reveal only in outline in dull black and white.

The nineteenth century opened in France upon a time of confusion and revolution. In America the new order of things in the new republic was running smoothly, with no marked events of history save the death of Washington, which had temporarily dressed American women in mourning ribbons, lockets, gloves and even gowns, for as long a time as court mourning is worn in royal circles.

Ladies' Modes for 1801.

An attempt at revulsion of feeling against the costly stuffs and extravagance of the eighteenth century made simpler materials proper for wear even in full dress. Mantua-makers adhered also to simple lines, and less material was used in the manufacture of gowns. The skirt was short, reaching in meager, clinging folds only to the feet, with but slight flouncing at the lower edge. It was stretched as tightly as possible across the front of the figure, sometimes held across with whalebones placed horizontally. A short bodice had puffed sleeves of moderate size with detached long sleeves which could be worn if preferred or long mittens of nankeen or linen. Often a collar of embroidered net or a muslin tippet surrounded the neck. Through the absence of pressure on any part of the figure the dress was far more conducive to health in its shape than in its warmth or weight. The bonnets were varied in shape from a simple infant's cap to a huge, projecting "cabriolet."

The empire dress of January, 1801, was certainly graceful on a person of slender figure, having well-shaped arms, well-set head and good carriage. It was inexpressibly unbecoming to fat, thickset, clumsy-built women—but no more so, possibly, than other modes have been and ever will be to such unfortunates. Dame Fashion provides no shapes or styles for the "unco fat."

The best-known name in the history of fashion of this time is Mme. Recamier. An English lady describes the dress she wore in the Kensington gardens, London: "She appeared a l'antique, her muslin dress clinging to her form like the folds of drapery on a statue, her hair in a plait in the back and falling in small ringlets over her face and greasy with huile antique, a large veil thrown over her head." Seen through the haze of the century, the huile antique seems a little too classical and not over alluring.

DOLLY MADISON, ABOUT 1810.

Muslin and Dimity for January Wear.

I have just examined with much interest the winter numbers of La Belle Assemblee and the Lady's Magazine of the early years of the nineteenth century, and the chief emotion is that any of our grandmothers survived those years, so lightly were they dressed. In January, 1807, the walking dresses were of white jaconet muslin or cambric, with brown velvet or "orange blossom" shoes. The "chemise-shaped" gown was deemed the most elegant. The hat was of straw or tiger fur. Another favorite was a "Chinese robe" of India twill or French dimity trimmed with a border of tabour, with loose back or scalloped at the bottom. White kid and rose-colored silk low shoes were worn, with silver rosettes. Muffs of white down and variegated sarsnet silk "cottage cloaks" gave scant warmth. In the spring pink muslin mantles appeared and sarsnet tippets trimmed with Malines lace; lilac and pea green were fashionable colors. With ball gowns were worn white satin shoes spotted with gold and gloves trimmed with gold lace. Sleeves were trimmed with ribbons put on corkscrew fashion, "to give an air of genteel confinement." Necklaces and bracelets of white carnelian were very fashionable.

The neck and portions of the arms were often left bare, even for outdoor wear, hence a scarf or long shawl in winter became a grateful adjunct to the scanty toilet.

Freezing for Fashion's Sake.

One old lady tells me she often went to church in winter in a French cambric gown with a shawl but a yard square as the only outdoor covering. The wife of Governor Joseph Trumbull remembered riding from Middletown, Conn., to Berlin in an open sleigh one bitter winter's night in an organdy gown, low-necked and sleeveless, her only extra covering a cloth cape without lining. That fell curse of New England—consumption—was nourished and increased by this scanty dress. A rhyme of the day begins:

Plump and rosy was my face
And graceful was my form;
Till fashion deemed it a disgrace
To keep my body warm.

Very little underclothing was worn; no flannel save a rare flannel petticoat by older women. Girls would rather die than look stout. The scanty gowns were easily made. A good dressmaker could make three slips a day and the gowns were cheap. The wife of a commodore of the United States navy had a gown that cost $50 and a friend wrote that she could not see how Abby (Mrs. Commodore) could "justify such extravagance to her conscience." A wedding outfit could be bought for $1000, if it had no lace or shawls. The opening and vast prosperity of our East Indian trade had brought these shawls and scarfs to our market, as it had brought the beautiful muslins, calicoes, dimities and lawns which still show their place of birth in their names.

OLD PRINT FROM CHILD'S BOOK, 1820.

When Our Grandmothers Went Shopping.

From newspaper advertisements of that day we learn exactly what goods and stuffs were imported and sold. In the Columbian Centinel in February, 1801, we find frequent notice of the sales in Boston of muslins, muslinets, muslin garments of various colors; Jaconet, tamboured, open-worked, fancy and sprigged; cambrics, printed patches, China ribbons and tastes; platillas, ginghams, Madras longcloths, lappet muslins, gauzes, cypress—all these were thin stuffs and what would now be unseasonable goods for winter wear. There were sold in the offices of merchants and on the wharves hundreds of different East India stuffs. Nearly all trace of the signification of the names or of the quality of these stuffs is now lost with the death of the old India merchants who imported and sold them. We know that among white cottons were Tandisannas, Allebad Cossas, Tanda Manoodies, Gadjapoor Cossas, Chadpore Cossas, Baftas, Altonah Sannas, Boran Cossahs, Now Sannahs, Cudor Cossahs. Among colored stuffs, presumably of cotton, were Custers, Sooty Romalls, Blue Gillas, Blue Guinees. Other stuffs advertised in 1800 were Tanda Baftas, Jallapoor Sannas, Dungree Stripes, Jallapoor Mamoodies, Albad Baftas, Janna Cossahs, Omeitys, Tockoys, Gude Cossahs, Barboom Gurrahs, Muchan Gungees, Adhungee Sannas, Oudes, Chitabilly Baftas, Toolpore Cossas, Selinas, Janna Sulquachis, Kerboam Surrahs, Sistersoys, Tookettys, Gugernauts, Penasorys, Jugedahs, Carlapahatys, Seersuckers. The last named we still have—seersuckers—the others are lost in the dust of past decades. Other feminine fancies were muslin shawls tamboured and openworked; purple chintz and Rutland net gauze shawls, pagoda-top parasols and honeycomb fringes; elastic wire and horse hair glove ties. These glove ties or glove tightens were a device to hold the long gloves up at the elbows.

A pelisse was the warmest outer garment. If it were of dark cloth it was brightened with gold clasps and lace. Pelisses of scarlet, pink, flame-color and green were worn. When cloth was announced for gowns in 1828 a writer in the Lady's Magazine urges the readers never to wear them indoors, as they "were not a fireside costume."

Alice Morse Earle

Defective Page