THE WORLD OF BOOKS

BY HECTOR FULLER.

It has been a source of worry to the young author when he has gone into a bookseller's shop and found his latest novel, a "Woman Who Was," or "The Lash of the Goad," piled up in a neat pile and marked "$1.50," while hard by, on another table might be seen "The Three Musketeers," or "Ivanhoe," or "Vanity Fair," or "David Copperfield," in good cloth binding, a little less gaudy, perhaps, than the modern novel, but marked at 50 cents the volume. Theoretically, why should any one buy a modern meretricious novel when he can get a classic for less than half the price? This question has taken definite form in France, where they do much to conserve literature, but it has taken the peculiar form of a proposal to tax the classics and thereby reduce the competition between masters of a bygone age and the struggling young authors. By reflection the same question seems likely to come up in England.

There is little doubt but that such a measure would meet with the approval of the publishers of the books which they hope will qualify for the "six best sellers" class, and it might appeal with something of the same force to the struggling young author, but to the general public it will hardly seem so attractive. A French author of some prominence voices what will probably be the general opinion on the subject when he says:

"The proposal to tax the classics for competing with living writers is rankly illogical, and means the turning of literature into a sort of charitable institution. Surely, literature exists to benefit the world; not to support authors. If we make the classics more expensive, and thereby reduce their circulation, it will be tantamount to admitting that the cause of literature and of public culture is less important than the providing of young authors with enlarged incomes. There is no doubt that the wide circulation of the classics helps literature in no small degree. Now, I ask you, of what account are a few starving young writers, as compared with the welfare of literature?"

This, of course, is the cold-blooded, but common sense way of looking at the subject. In this country we have long recognized the value of the classics, and in no country in the world are they made more accessible to the general public. In a revised and condensed form they are used largely and intelligently in our public schools, and through the enterprise of some of our leading publishers complete editions of the classics are published at a price that puts them within the reach of many a young man who could not afford the modern novel, which, by the way, he is usually much better without.

The record for book popularity at the Public Library during the week just ended shows that in nonfiction the call was for Thorpe's "Industrial Chemistry" and Hall's "Three Acres and Liberty." In fiction Elizabeth Miller's "Saul of Tarsus" and Thurston's "The Mystics" had the call, while among the children the demand was for Lang's "Orange and Blue Fairy Books." This record, however, gives but a small idea of the usefulness of the Public Library to the general public. During the week there was a great demand in the reading room for books on European travel. Most of the applicants came to the library with two questions: How to prepare for a trip to Europe? and what to see in Europe? To these inquirers were given Grant Allen's "European Tour" and Moore's "A Year in Europe," while of those who wanted to know what to see in Europe Cook's "Old Touraine" and "Stoddard's Lectures" answered most of the needs. Electricity was a subject also on which many readers wanted information, and to these visitors Franklin's "Electrical Engineering" and Edgecombe's "Electrical Engineer's Pocket Book" were recommended. On the subject of wireless telegraphy Kenelley's and Mazzoto's books were sought for.

At the recent national festival at Upsala, Sweden, in memory of Linnaeus, the author of Selma Lagerlof, was crowned with a laurel wreath at the cathedral, in recognition of her being chosen as the nation's favorite author. Miss Lagerlof's next book will be published by Messrs. Doubleday, Page & Co.

The Macmillan Company published on June 19 "The Flower of Old Japan," a new volume of poetry by Alfred Noyes; "Temptation," a novel by Richard Bagot; "Socialism Before the French Revolution," by Dr. William B. Guthrie, and an extensively revised edition of Prof. John R. Common's "Proportionate Representation." Macmillan has also just published "Sidon: A Study in Oriental History," by Frederick Carl Eiselen; "Clinical Psychiatry: A Textbook for Students and Teachers," by A. Ross Diefendorf, of Yale University; "The Growth of Christianity," by Percy Gardiner, and "The Story of Oxford," by Cecil Headlam.

Having disposed of the "nature writers," Messrs. Long, Roberts, London, et al., President Roosevelt now advises the reading of certain books of pure fiction that have, as he expresses it, "the prime quality of being interesting." In his speech at the semi-centennial of the Michigan Agricultural School, at Lansing, Mich., President Roosevelt said:

"You will learn the root principles of self-help and helpfulness toward others from 'Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch' just as much as from any formal treaties on charity; you will learn as much sound social and industrial doctrine from Octave Thanet's stories of farmers and wage-workers as from avowed sociological and economic studies; and I cordially recommend the first chapter of 'Aunt Jane of Kentucky' for use as a tract in all families where the men folks tend to selfish or thoughtless or overbearing disregard of the rights of their womenkind."

If Mr. Howells' judgment is to be trusted, he has discovered the great American novelist, setting forth the reasons for his belief in the current issue of the North American Review. He asserts that the stories of Leonard Merrick are mainly "of obscure talent struggling to the light in those very uncertain avenues to distinction and prosperity"—literature and the stage. To quote a part of Mr. Howell's appreciation: "Of the two arch enemies of love, prosperity and adversity, he makes an oftener study of adversity. There is a great deal of grim adversity in his books, which sometimes remains adversity to the end, but also sometimes puts off its frown. It is the more depressing when it becomes or remains the atmosphere of ambition which seeks fruition in the successes of the theater. If we are to believe him, and somehow Mr. Merrick mostly makes you believe him, the poor creatures, usually poor pretty creatures, who are trying to get upon the stage, are almost without number, and certainly outnumber the struggling journalists and authors a hundred to one.

The spectacles of their humility and humiliation, of their meek endeavors and cruel defeats, are of such frequent recurrence in his novels and tales that, after a little knowledge of them, one approaches the scene with an expectation of heartache through which nothing short of the mastery dealing with them would support the reader. In the monotony of the event it is most remarkable how he distinguishes and characterizes the different children of adversity, especially the daughters. They are commonly alike in their adversity, but they are individual in their way of experiencing it. In fact, in an age of intensely feminized fiction, he is one of the first of those who know how to catch the likenesses, to the last fleeting expression, of women; and especially of the women of the theater. Probably these are not essentially different from other women, but they have an evolution through their environment which no one else seems to have studied so surpassingly well."

A curious incident in book selling is announced by the Oxford University Press, which says there has just been sold the final copy of a book published by them in 1716 at 12 shillings and six pence, and continuously on sale at this price ever since. The volume, which has enjoyed 191 years of uninterrupted, if somewhat slow, circulation, and has never undergone the indignity of being "remaindered," is Wilkin's "New Testament in Coptic." Probably it has made a record of literary long life.

The "Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne," which she herself had intended to call "Stories of an Aunt," have been edited from the original manuscript by M. Charles Nicoullaud, and published by Scribners. From the mass of anecdotal matter and recollections of celebrated personages may be taken the story of an incident at the French court:

I will now return to 1814. Sir Charles Stewart, the brother of Lord Castlereagh, and English commissioner to the Army of the Allies, gave a magnificent ball. The sovereigns were present, and the Emperor and the King of Prussia danced several polonaises, if the polonaise can be called a dance.

The man takes a lady by the hand, and walks a few seconds along with her to a measured step. There is then a change of partners, and it is usually, I believe, the women who leave the men; but here the princes took the initiative, in order to be polite to every one. During this promenade they talked all the time to their partners. As the Emperor Alexander was very tall and very deaf, when his partner was short he had to bend down to her, an attitude more obliging than graceful.

It was in the midst of this ball that the Duke of Wellington appeared for the first time in Paris. I can see him now entering the room with his two nieces, Lady Burgers and Miss Pole, hanging on his arm. There were no eyes for any one else, and at this ball, where grandeur abounded, everything gave way to military glory. That of the Duke of Wellington was brilliant and unalloyed, and a luster was added to it by the interest that had long been felt in the cause of the Spanish nation.

It was at this same ball that the Grand Duke Constantin, after the departure of the Emperor Alexander, asked for a waltz. He was just beginning to dance it when Sir Charles Stewart stopped the orchestra and asked for a quadrille, which Lady Burgers wanted. He was devoted to her.

The conductor hesitated, looked at the grand duke, and continued the waltz.

"Who has dared to insist on having this waltz played?" asked Sir Charles.

"I," answered the grand duke.

"I alone give orders in my house, Monseigneur," said Sir Charles. "Play the quadrille," he continued, turning to the conductor.

The grand duke went away very angry, and was accompanied by all the Russians.

This made a great stir, and the powers that be were compelled to interfere in order to arrange matters. That, I fancy, was the first impertinences which Sir Charles scattered throughout a progress which he began as Lord Stewart, and continued as the Marquis of Londonderry.

It is not generally known that there exists the unpublished manuscript of a story written by Charlotte Bronte. It was written when she was in her teens, and although a youthful production it is not without interest. Mrs. Gaskell alludes to it in her life of Charlotte Bronte, and quotes a passage from the introduction, but the story itself has never been published. The manuscript is now owned by a genetleman in New York City, who may be induced to publish it at some future day. This same gentleman is the owner of the manuscript of an unpublished love poem written by Tennyson to his wife.

The Outing Publishing Company announces six forthcoming books. "The Shame of the Colleges," a humorous expose of leading schools; "The Sporting Primer," a burlesque of different branches of sport, by Norman H. Crowell, and "Bait Angling for Common Fishes," by Louis Ahead, will be published immediately. "Bar 20," a Western story, by Clarence E. Mulford, and "John Kendry's Idea," a story of California life, by Chester Bailey Fernald, will be published July 1. "Big Game at Sea," a story of adventures with monsters of the deep, will appear in September.

Dr. Horace Howard Furness, the eminent Shakespearean scholar, is hard at work seeing through the press the fifteenth volume of his monumental new variorum edition of the works of William Shakespeare. The play treated in the volume will be "Antony and Cleopatra," upon which he has devoted his entire time since the publication of his edition of "Love's Labor Lost" more than two years ago.

"About this time, as the old almanacs might announce, expect disturbances of the English language," says a writer on "Schoolboy English" in the Outlook. Three instructors in English at Harvard have prepared a classified list of the linguistic disorders that manifest themselves during this period, he informs us. Among the amusing examples may be quoted the following bit of grotesque English, which only a subfreshman could turn out 'Antonio is direct, a little harsh, and yet his friendship for Bassanio and Bassanio's love for him are characters that no one who has read the play cannot help from recommending it with the highest praise."

The literary agents have proved their usefulness to the author, and sometimes to the publisher, says the Lounger in Putnam's. There are occasions when they seem to be squeezing the last drop of blood—or should I say ounce of gold—from the publisher, but there are other occasions when they are perfectly reasonable. I suppose that they argue that a publisher is not obliged to buy a manuscript unless he wants it, and that he will not pay more than it is worth to him. This is not altogether true. A publisher does sometimes pay more for a manuscript than he will ever make out of it, being influenced by various reasons. There is no doubt that literature has been commercialized within the past decade, and that the author, like every one else in this extravagant age, is hustling for gold.

Curious indeed seem the freaks of fame when we consider that on one of the earliest and slightest of his novels, "Daisy Miller," does Mr. James' reputation in America largely hang. It is, however, in the character of a novelist that he has most frequently appeared, says H. G. Dwight in July Putnam's. Some twenty-five, or nearly half, of his books have been novels—a number which would be considered a very fair output for a man who had done nothing else. And whatever may have been brought against him, no one has ever accused Mr. James of being slipshod in his work. Yet he has made his mark in no less definite a manner as a writer of short stories. If it appear to the lay mind that a man who can produce so many novels merely requires a little patience to sit down and produce twenty volumes of short stories, the instructed are only too sadly aware that not every talent can pursue those two arts with equal success. But it is not alone to the fictive branches of literature that Mr. James belongs. His work as a critic, in fact—although the later results of it have yet to be put into attainable form—has won recognition from many who are unable to read his fiction. If the life of Hawthorne, in the English Men of Letters series, should be included among his half dozen books of this class, that of the sculptor story occupies a place by itself in American biography. And then we have said nothing of the early descriptive essays—that go on the same shelf with Hawthorne's "Our Old Home" and Howells' "Venetian Life" and "London Films"—of the ten or more volumes translated or edited, and of the many stories and essays which have never been collected between separate covers. The fecundity of mind and constancy of purpose capable of producing so much work of so high an artistic level, with so little encouragement, would argue in itself a personality not without interest—were that the point at issue. So various is the expression of this personality, so novel in manner and matter, and so widely related to things beyond our Anglo-Saxon ken, that our ability, after forty years, either to accept or to reject it is perhaps not to be wondered at.

Lincoln Steffens, who has been spending the past year in San Francisco, will write the first of a series of articles on conditions in that city, beginning with the August number of the American Magazine. Mr. Steffens' first article will be on Francis J. Heney, whom he describes as "the bravest man I ever saw, morally as well as physically."

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews is one of those authors who vigorously object to publicity and has never had her photograph published or authorized paragraphs concerning her personal or even her literary affairs. She prefers to be known to the public entirely through her books, and certainly with the success of her most recent book, "The Good Samaritan," she is rapidly becoming one of the best-known and best-considered of the newer women writers of our day.

E. F. Benson, although still under forty years of age, has twenty novels to his credit, starting with "Dodo," published nearly fifteen years ago. He is a son of the late Edward White Benson, archbishop of Canterbury, and a brother of A. C. Benson, the author.

Witter Bynner's poem "An Antique Elegy" in the American Magazine, is fit in its delicate melancholy to be a complement to some of the verses by "A Shropshire Lad:"

O Mother, guard my little maid
Whom now I trust to you,
Comfort her if she seem afraid
Of arms and faces new!

A single year on yesterday
Had ended since she came,
Yet listen to the baby way
She knows me by my name!

Teach her to pity!—to divine
Dimly among the shades,
How here on earth not one is mine
Of all the little maids!

O Earth, with flowers on her eyes,
Be thou as sweet as she!
Be thou as light where now she lies,
As she was light on thee!

AN OPTICAL ILLUSION.

Interesting Experiment with an Incandescent Light.

From the Baltimore Sun.

An interesting optical experiment may be made with the ordinary incandescent light. Gaze steadily at the light for a few seconds, then suddenly extinguish it. The experiment is best performed in a very dark room. In about half a minute you will see the perfect image of the light, with the fine strands of wire plainly visible. It will be red at first. In a few minutes it will turn purple and then a bright blue. Later it will apparently move to the right. As you turn your gaze it will continue moving to the right. If you keep your gaze fixed it will come back. It is surprising how long the illusion will last. It will be seen for fully five minutes, perhaps longer, and if you turn on the light and look away from it you will see the old image for several minutes though more faintly than in the darkness.

HIS FORTE NOT POETRY.

After the irony of the "Letters from a Chinese Official" and the eloquence of "The Greek View of Life," we may read, says the Boston Transcript, in "From King to King" the mingled prose and verse out of which Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson has made a tragedy of the Puritan Revolution. It is, we believe, now published for the first time in this country by McClure, Phillips & Co., but its first English edition dates back in 1901. In its successive scenes, Mr. Dickinson endeavors "to delineate vividly the characters of leading actors in the struggle, their ideals, and the distortion of these as reflected in the current of events," the dramatic form being deliberately chosen "because that of an essay appeared insufficient." As a specimen of Mr. Dickinson's blank verse, this speech of Cromwell will suffice:

You talk of thrones—who wants to set them up?
Who calls me king? Who proffered me the title,
And who refused it? E'en if not refused,
Where were the treachery, the mean ambition?
Man, man, do you think to rule a state like this
By geometric axioms good forever?
Liberty's still your cry! What liberty,
Were I removed? The scaffold and the block
Under a second Charles! You talk of factions.
Oh, well you may! But on this heaved abysm
Of chaos self-tormented, who imposed
The law that, e'en from braying discord, strikes
The heaven's high court appealing harmonies?

From this it is evident that Mr. Dickinson's forte lies more in the writing of essays than in the composition of dramatic poetry.

Ironmasters of Alabama.

Under the title, "The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama," there will shortly be published in Birmingham a history of the ironmasters of that State. The author of this work, Miss Ethel Armes, formerly of Washington, has received every encouragement in collecting her material, and has conscientiously covered the subject in a way that will last, it is said. In addition to a number of sketches of these men who are indelibly linked with Alabama's iron and coal industries that have already appeared in magazines, there will be used a wealth and variety of hitherto unpublished incidents, so inclusive, when taken together, as to constitute a most valuable reference work. Completed, "The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama" will be a series of biographies of near a hundred of those toilers in the ground who, as Miss Armes says, "have been far too busy making iron to stop for the making of books about it." With the biographical element there will be mingled in this chronicle romantic episodes, stirring scenes, humble struggles, and triumphs achieved, all graphically and truthfully portrayed by Miss Armes.

Largest Morning Circulation.

All advertising contracts made by The Washington Herald are based upon its sworn circulation—a circulation in Washington larger by thousands than was ever before attained by any morning newspaper at the Capital. Its books are open.

NOYES ON ROOSEVELT

Correspondent Barry Writes of Editor's Speech.

ADDRESS IS COMPLIMENTED

Nothing Better than Veteran Journalist's Summing Up of President's Character Has Been Done by Any of Executive's Biographers—Some Sidelights on Local Conditions.

Wide publicity, says David S. Barry, in a Washington dispatch to the Providence Journal, has been given to the address on "Journalism Since Jamestown," delivered by Crosby S. Noyes, the venerable editor of the Washington Evening Star, before the National Editorial Association at the Tercentennial Exposition, June 13, in which there was a quaint comparison of the relations of the public press to Capt. John Smith in 1607 and to President Theodore Roosevelt, 300 years later.

Many publicists and writers have essayed to give a word picture of Roosevelt and his ways, but none has succeeded better than this modest working editor and part proprietor of the Star. The Star is widely quoted, as other newspapers at the National Capital are, and has thereby an influence outside of its legitimate local sphere.

It was an idea that would have done credit to the presumably more nimble wit of a much younger writer, for Mr. Noyes to draw a comparison between the work that Capt. John Smith did with no newspaper press to back him up and the achievements of Theodore Roosevelt, the success of whose career can readily be traced to that often acknowledged but always patent influence popularly known as "the power of the press." Nothing better has been said by any biographer of Roosevelt, eulogist, or critic, than the summing up of Mr. Noyes: "After all, Theodore Roosevelt is a good deal of a boy yet, as well as a most masterful President."

Neither Friendly Nor the Reverse.

That remark was not intended, possibly, to be either friendly or the reverse; it was simply the expression of a self-evident fact. Editor Noyes might have said a more caustic thing if he had been willing to be less just; for it is known of all men that the Star is not and has not been at any time in his career, certainly not since he became President, an admirer of Theodore Roosevelt.

There is a popular impression that newspapers published at the National Capital always "stand in" with the administration, and this in a general way is true, being due possibly to the fact that the bulk of the newspaper readers here are officeholders and the bulk of the advertisers and other patrons dependent for a living upon those who draw their sustenance from Uncle Sam. However this may be, the Washington newspapers are, as a rule, friendly, or at least not unfriendly, to the party in power.

Roosevelt's "Fussy" Attempt.

The Star might be classed as complacent, for although it does not like President Roosevelt, it does not as a matter of editorial policy attack him. Mr. Noyes explains the cause of his dissatisfaction fairly well when he touches upon the President's "lack of appreciation of the encouragement and support given to him by the press; of his impatience of newspaper criticism which he professes to welcome and enjoy; of his undignified and unseemly strenuosity; of his fussy and petty attempt to prevent his Cabinet officers and other supporters and visitors to the White House from talking to the newspapers," and of that kind of impulsiveness, to use no harsher word, that led to his "hasty approval of the brutal deeds of his subordinates at the White House when the 'knockdown and drag-out outrage' was committed upon Mrs. Minor Morris, a refined, cultured, respectable Christian woman," which in the opinion of Mr. Noyes was "an act of cruel, heartless injustice."

This Mrs. Minor Morris incident served as the spark that set the long smouldering opposition of the Star to President Roosevelt into flame. The intensity of the fire seems to increase in spite of the warning conveyed in the fact that the persistency now displayed by Mrs. Morris in seeking frequent interviews with the Star's staff equals that which caused her ejection from the White House. If continued it may make it necessary for the newspaper to seek the aid of the local police in protecting it from the attentions of the unwelcome visitor.

Noyes' Career Remarkable.

More than sixty years ago, Crosby S. Noyes, who had left a little country town in Maine, came to Washington, tramping all the way from Baltimore, having no means to pay for transportation farther. He slept the first night in a market house, after having gone into debt for his supper, lodging, and breakfast. He was then a boy in his teens. To-day, at eighty, he owns one-third of a valuable newspaper, and is one of the foremost citizens of the city, where the name of Noyes stands for all that is honest and upright. He is the head of a family, the sons of which, working together in harness with the sons of the late Samuel H. Kauffmann, Mr. Noyes' life-long friend and business associate, a man of character and attainments closely akin to his own, are maintaining the prestige and adding to the material prosperity of the newspaper that enjoys a relation to the people of the District of Columbia similar to that existing between the Journal and the people of Rhode Island. As the Journal is "The Rhode Island Bible," the Star is the paper that 'No one in the District goes to bed without reading."

Mr. Noyes began his newspaper career at the Capital as a carrier of the Baltimore Sun, which in those days monopolized the local newspaper field. He and Mr. Kauffmann and the lat George W. Adams purchased the Star for $100,000, giving their notes in payment. Not one share of the stock has since gone outside of the three families, and the chances are, in view of the increasing numbers of young Noyeses, Kauffmanns, and Howards (grandsons of George W. Adams), not one ever will.

Stinging Criticism.

Even those who have best known Mr. Noyes hardly realized that he possessed in his mental make-up such felicity of expression, power of description, good-natured satire, and chuckling humor, to say nothing of caustic criticism, as he has displayed in his inimitable comparative character sketch of Capt. John Smith and Theodore Roosevelt. "Smith was badly crippled," Mr. Noyes blithely says, "by failing to have an energetic, independent press to back him up in his great work, and his great deeds have, therefore, gone 'unhonored and unsung.' The newspapers, on the other hand, have given Mr. Roosevelt that vigorous support in his reform policies, have exploited all his sayings and doings through twenty-four hours of the day, glorified the man and his work, and made his name a household word in every home in the land; he has been slow in acknowledging his indebtedness to the press, but perhaps he will think of it some day when he is not too busy."

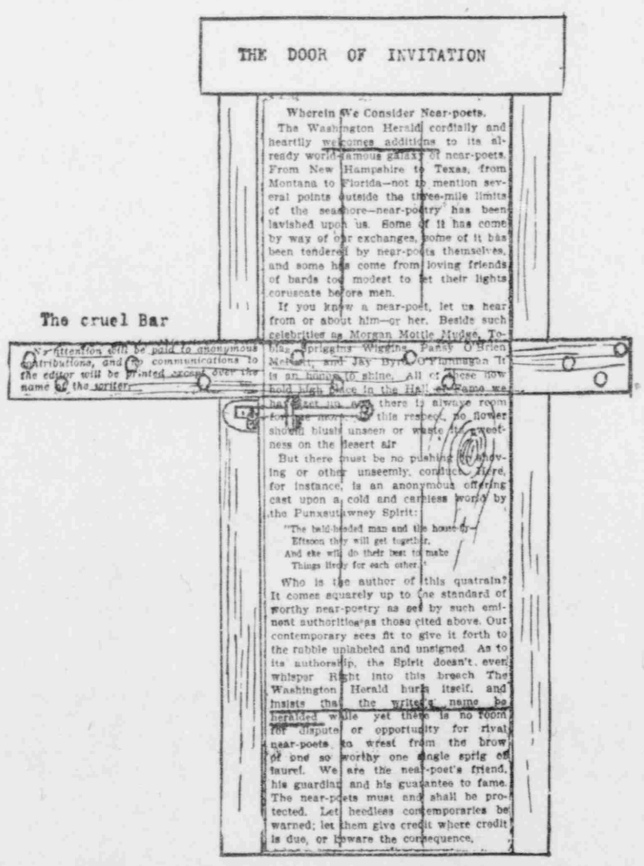
However strongly the public may be inclined to agree with Mr. Noyes in his graphic delineation of the President's character, and, in view of his estimate of him as a President, his kindly, if stinging, criticism, they will be apt to disagree with the charge that he has failed fittingly to acknowledge his indebtedness to the newspaper press.

Many Newspaper Men in Office.

Mr. Roosevelt has far surpassed any of his predecessors in conferring compliments and favors upon newspaper workers. They are found holding honorable, responsible, and lucrative places in every branch of the public service. Here in Washington two of the three District Commissioners, the men who virtually act as mayor, board of aldermen, and common council in one, were taken from the ranks of active newspaper men, and the list of those who have Federal commissions elsewhere is as long, possibly, as the pay roll of Mr. Noyes' generous and efficient editorial and reportorial staff. President Roosevelt, indeed, has been very good to the newspaper men. He has appeared to take delight in singling them out for preferment as no other President ever did. He has even been criticised for his evident partiality for them, and has never yet, not publicly at least, denied the soft impeachment. If all public men and all private citizens in Washington were as friendly to the press collectively and individually as are President Roosevelt and Crosby S. Noyes, not one of them would have cause for complaint.

WHEREIN ONE NEAR-POET DECLINES.

While the following verses, with the appended "Door of Invitation" and its "cruel bar," came to The Washington Herald anonymously, it has been decided that, for once, the exigencies of the occasion being both great and unusual, the rule shall be suspended and the near-poet responsible permitted to see his work in print.



THE REASON FOR THE DECLINATION.

I.
Would you ask a violet,
Ere its fragrance you inhale,
Questions of its pedigree?
Why refuse a triolet,
Fragrant, fainting creature, pale
As a violet can be,

II.
Just because the author shy
In his virgin innocence,
Seeks to keep his name concealed?
Tender flowers in sunshine die;
Tender thoughts have no defense
To the world's crass scorn revealed.

III.
Poets are a timid folk;
Every fool can point his jest,
Not forgetting, in the bunch,
"Near-editors" among the rest.

IV.
Wiggins, Spriggins, McNutt, Mudge,
All have felt the bitter gibe;
Why give street and number, then,
To the carping critic tribe?

V.
Must the flower "V. Blanda" sign
Ere you hold it to your nose?
Vainly ask of genus, tribe,
Ere you pluck the blushing rose?

VI.
No! And nit! A thousand times
Better the song die unrevealed
Than witless near-wits crucify
Upon the thorns their fancies yield!

AS TO WHITE LIES

BY EX-ATTACHE

Dean Hadley in his baccalaureate sermon at Yale University on last Sunday discoursed with much eloquence on the subject of truth, which was, indeed, the main theme of his address, but declined to discuss what he described as "the unselfish considerations which may in extreme cases justify a man in departing from verbal truthfulness." Now, it is precisely on that particular point that the young men starting out into the world on the completion of their studies require the guidance of a mentor enjoying such world-wide experience and so much universal respect as the eminent president of Old Eli. The importance of this subject is very great, and on more than one occasion led Henry Labouchere, when in the House of Commons, to ask that a royal commission should be appointed by the Crown to consider the question of official white lies in Parliament.

He was quite serious in this. In England, as in all the constitutional countries of Europe, where the cabinet officers occupy seats in Parliament, the legislators enjoy the right of interrogating the government with regard to its policy and its administration of the affairs of the nation. Frequently these inquiries are of an extremely indiscreet and awkward character, and if addressed by the opposition are usually intended either to embarrass the ministers or to entangle them into making statements of a compromising and boomerang nature. The result is that those representatives of the government who constitute its mouthpieces in Parliament devote a considerable amount of labor, as well as ingenuity, to answering these questions in such a manner as to mislead those by whom they are made and to misrepresent what is the truth. Indeed, the promotion of parliamentary under secretaries, junior lords of one or another of the great departments of state, and of other budding statesmen, depends in a great measure upon the cleverness which they display in "answering questions" in the house, and thus an official premium is practically set by the highest authorities in the land upon equivocation and a distortion of the truth.

It cannot be denied that this is inevitably contributing to the decline of that lofty regard for veracity which in ancient times constituted one of the most renowned qualities of the English-speaking races. True, their frankness was often formed a source of strength, and although foreigners might sneer at our boorishness, they respected our candor. Like the Chinese, we were reputed disagreeable, what the French so picturesquely describe as "mauvais coucheurs" (Anglice—unpleasant bed-fellows), but, as in the case of the Chinese, our word was accepted as being as good as our bond, and the distinction between American diplomats, such as Benjamin Franklin, and English statesmen, such as Pitt, on the one hand, and those of foreign countries on the other, was that it was possible to credit implicitly the assurances of the former, while in the case of the latter it was generally advisable to believe just the contrary of what they asserted. No one realized this to a greater extent, nor took advantage thereof in a more amusing manner, than the great Prince Bismarck. Unlike Machiavelli of old, he made a point of invariably blurting out the truth, even when he might have remained silent, thereby successfully misleading diplomats reputed the shrewdest of their day. For they could not realize that he really meant what he said, and persisted in acting on the mistaken theory that, like themselves, he used the gift of speech merely to conceal his thoughts and plans, and usually placed an interpretation upon his utterances directly opposed to their meaning.

It is not, however, so much the white lies of political and official life that constitute a problem to the young university graduate who is starting out to make his way in the world, as it is the distortions of truth that are absolutely indispensable to the welfare and continuance of our social system as to-day constituted. The difficulty is to define where the white lies end and the black lies begin, and it is this uncertainty as to the whereabouts of the exact border line which contributes in no small measure to deaden our qualms of conscience on the subject of strict veracity.

Society white lies are those which Dean Hadley describes as dictated by "unselfish considerations," and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred owe their existence to a desire to avoid giving pain. When a man has unwittingly said something about a third party that wounds his friend, the more amiable he is the more strenuously will he lie in order to wipe away the offense. There is the story of Constable, the artist, who had expressed his opinion that a certain landscape painter's pictures looked like putty. This criticism came to the latter's ears, and some time afterward on meeting Constable he said, "I am told you say my pictures are like putty." If the Royal Academician had adhered strictly to the truth he would have said "Yes; and I will explain to you exactly what I meant," and would have told him his objections to the paintings in question. But being a kind-hearted man and being unwilling to give unnecessary pain or offense, he exclaimed, "Well, what of that? I like putty." It is hardly necessary to point out that Constable did not and could not like putty in pictures, but his excuse soothed the feelings of his fellow-artist.

Gen. "Chinese" Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, was more strict in his regard for truth than Constable, and it was his scruples on this score that led the various governments which employed him to regard him as so utterly unpractical. He was more fitted for the ancient times of the Crusaders and Christian martyrdom than for the life of the present day, and he gave a curious illustration thereof on the occasion of his odd quarrel with the Marquis of Ripon, now lord of the privy seal. Lord Ripon, who is a most deeply religious man, of the highest honor and integrity, was in 1880 appointed governor general of India, and had induced Gordon to accompany him to the Orient as his private secretary. The private secretary of a viceroy of India is a far more important personage than his title would indicate. He is the alter ego of his chief, his principal lieutenant, and the power indeed behind the viceregal throne. As such he draws a very large pay and allowances.

On landing at Bombay to assume the reins of government, Lord Ripon received a voluminous pamphlet, written by some local magnate whom it was necessary to conciliate and to keep in a good humor. Lord Ripon turned it over to Gordon, with a request that he would write a reply to the man, stating that the viceroy was much indebted to him for the screed, which he had read with the greatest interest. Gordon pointed out to Lord Ripon that inasmuch as the pages of the pamphlet had not been cut, it was impossible to describe the pamphlet as having been read with great interest, and on the viceroy pointing out that it was a mere figure of speech, and that he had neither the time nor the inclination to read all the voluminous printed matter sent to him from various sources, Gordon declared that he could not reconcile his conscience to stating that the governor general had "read" a pamphlet and "enjoyed it" when it was untrue, and that sooner than be a party to such a deception, he would prefer to resign his appointment.

This he did, then and there, sailing for China by the very next steamer, and leaving Lord Ripon not only in a great quandary through the lack of an efficient private secretary, but likewise, under the public imputation of having quarreled with one of the most popular heroes in England by attempting to force him to write a lie. Had it not been for this dispute Gordon would probably have served out his term of office in India with Lord Ripon, and might never have been sent to Khartoum and to his death at the hands of the dervishes there. Sir Walter Scott entertained the same conscientious objections to lies, no matter how white they might be, but resorted to all sorts of verbal juggles to escape telling them. When, for instance, an ugly baby was brought to him, he knew full well that he was expected to admire it. Therefore in the kindness of his heart he invariably exclaimed, as though overwhelmed with a sudden blaze of infantile beauty, "Well, I am sure that is a baby," with a great emphasis on the "is." Constantly taxed with the authorship of the Waverley novels, he, while never denying outright, would generally reply, "I shall not own Waverley," with the emphasis on the "not," which might be taken whichever way the interlocutor pleased, but which was generally construed as a denial. It was only toward the close of his career that Sir Walter, who in all affairs of life was a model of chivalrous honor, consented to admit that he had written the popular series known as the Waverley novels, thereby divesting of much literary credit a number of unscrupulous people who had taken advantage of his reticence to encourage the authorship to be ascribed to themselves.

Such men as Sir Walter and Chinese Gordon are anomalies, and their intense conscientiousness, while admired in them as a virtue, would be regarded as simply intolerable in ordinary everyday citizens. How, for instance, could we put up with servants who declined to utter the time-honored formula of "Not at home" when we do not find it convenient to receive a visitor? And what a number of disagreeable invitations we should be forced to accept, did not we have at our beck and call the conventional white lie with regard to "a previous engagement." Balls would become a source of torture rather than pleasure to the fair sex were they obliged to dance with every awkward swain who considered it to be his duty to ask them. And how, when demanded by your host for your opinion with regard to his children, his wines, or his cigars, can you tell them the plain, unvarnished, and, in nine times out of ten, intensely disagreeable truth? In fact, the whole routine of society, as at present constituted, is nothing more nor less than one continual long drawn out white lie, which is quite as much of a bleached lie if it is implied as when uttered.

Good old Sir Walter Scott might just as well, as far as the question of strict truthfulness is concerned, have used words of admiration about the baby when presented to him, as to have contented himself with pretending an enthusiasm that he did not feel, and in the same way it is just as much of a kindly fib to squeeze the hand of a painter or of a singer, with a look of hypocritical rapture in the eye, as to tell him outright that his execrable daub is a dream of beauty, or that the song which you have just listened to with pain has transported you to the seventh heaven of delight. The only excuse that can be offered for all this deceit and mendacity is that its main object is to avoid giving pain, and that without it life, as constituted today, would be impossible. The result is that our success and popularity in society have ended by depending to a great extent upon the talent which we display in artistically and agreeably disfiguring the truth. We have not quite reached the stage where a man can boast of his successes as a liar, where he can taste the sweets of fame by touching one of his victims on the arm, and saying: "You think me an honest and respectable man. I am not. I am an accomplished liar. Gaze at me and admire." But we are getting there, and the English translation of the solemn words, "Requiescat in pace," which figure on nearly every tomb, will acquire a new significance, since a double meaning can be applied to the phrase, "Let lie undisturbed."

When I say that we are "getting there," I mean that we English-speaking people are not yet as gifted as other nations in the art of picturesque and artistic mendacity. Dean Hadley in his sermon on Sunday last wound up his address by declaring to the graduating class that "from your fathers and mothers you have inherited instincts of truthfulness." Scruples for truth may be said to be imbibed with the mother's milk among the English-speaking races, and the slightest scruple of truth is fatal to the perfect lie. While these scruples may disappear in the space of the next two or three generations, it will take considerably longer before we can ever hope to rival the Orientals in the art of lying. Asiatics, and, in fact, Africans as well, may be described as born liars, instead of being merely educated to untruth, as in our case. The Persians, for instance, lie, even when the truth would serve their purpose equally well. But they do it so glibly, so artistically, and so agreeably, that they actually command your admiration and esteem.

Oriental lying presents a striking analogy to Oriental embroidery. In each case the foundation is of the very flimsiest character, but so profuse is the application, and so intricate the design thereof, that one loses sight altogether of the unsubstantial character of the original fabric. Orientals exemplify above all others the very highest type of liar, and when they tell a fib they are prepared for all that its creation entails, namely, the necessity of being ready with two or three dozen more with which to prop it up, and for each of these subsidiary lies they may have to coin still others, a task which they never shirk, and through which they go with supreme grace and consummate skill. To accomplish this demands constructive talent of the highest order, and when this is absent, the strain upon the mind and the imagination is so great that the person is liable to break down and to make that false step which brings the whole edifice to the ground.

Possibly it is because there is a strongly developed touch of the Oriental in their composition that Russians enjoy the reputation of being the most accomplished and artistic liars of Europe. One of their most famous diplomats and statesmen, Gen. Count Ignatieff, now president of the powerful Pan-Slavist Society, actually earned for himself while Ambassador at Constantinople, among a population that presents the greatest aggregation of liars in the world, the nickname of "The Father of Lies." The late Czar, who was the most straightforward and truthful man of the entire Russian empire, on one occasion taxed the count with this, and asked how he had managed to acquire such an unenviable sobriquet. To this the general replied, with a low bow, "Au service de votre majeste."