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BY E. D. COWAN.

EVOLUTION OF EUGENE FIELD.

THE PEOPLE'S POET.

Joe Brown, a reporter on the Denver Tribune, when Eugene Field was associate editor, has exhumed from its files a volume of verse which should be commended to merciful consideration of the literary critic and reviewer. As a compilation it is a tribute to the commercial spirit of the times. A sentimental regard for Field's reputation would have dictated its suppression.

It is only fair to say that Field himself never would have sanctioned such a publication. Indeed, in his maturer years he often anticipated with dread akin to horror the future appearance in the book stalls, of his earlier column filling versifications. Of all the tentative jingles he wrote from the time he began newspaper work in St. Louis as a reporter under Stanley Huntley—the author of the "Spoopendyke Papers,"—until he took his own measurement on the Chicago News six years later, he deemed only five productions worthy of revision, and one of those was an erotic.

When Field started on his newspaper career, paragraphic levity was coming into vogue. The Murat Halsted sneer had many imitators. Lonergan's satirical skits, Huntley's and Budrette's humors, Bartlett's keen witticisms, were models for the leavening of the editorial page. Field was peculiarly qualified by temperament and experience for work in a lighter vein. He enjoyed life as a comedy. He had drifted through Columbia and Gallatin colleges on a single plank—Latin. Mathematics was cryptography to him. He had reveled in Roman rhetoric. Chaucer, Spencer and Anglo-Saxon folk lore. Everything sordid displeased him. He delighted in his own irresponsibility; gave full play to the instincts of the practical joker and was ashamed to disclose the fund of sentiment with which he was endowed. In a romp around Europe, Field had wasted to the last penny a moderate patrimony. Rescued by his uncle, he had returned to the sweetheart who afterwards became his wife, had taken offense at some trifling criticism she passed, and had presented to a girl acquaintance a diamond ring he bought at Paris for his betrothed and preserved from the Mont Piete while in dire distress. The day he was married he caused a tearful panic at the home of the bride by failing to put in an appearance at the appointed hour. On the way he had paused to decide a dispute between boys who were playing a game of marbles and unconscious of the figure he cut in his dress suit, joined them in the pastime.

The third day after Field began reporting he was advanced to the editorial page as a paragrapher. Then came an executive experience as city editor at St. Joe and as managing editor with Dr. Mumford on the Kansas City Times. Here Field first began to gain a reputation as a humorist and comic versifier. His personality had much to do with the spread of fame. He was a mimic of the highest order, a passable musician, a fine vocalist, and a capital story teller. Convivial to the last degree he was the most sought and the best known man around town, by that class of admirers, who, though sincere in their homage to talent, hurry it down hill at the fastest possible pace. Life was made to seem to him like a glass of champagne in which the effervescence never was to die. The most accomplished recognized in him the attributes of a great comedian, and vainly urged him to adopt the stage.

It was at this point in his career that Field met O. H. Rothacker, through the mutual acquaintance of Frank Mulvaney, the artist. Rothacker, then the editor-in-chief of the Denver Tribune, was by all odds the cleverest writer west of the Missouri. The two men were of an age, and of kindred sociability. They conceived a warm regard for each other at the outset, and Field accepted a two years' contract on the Tribune staff, as Rothacker's associate, with the executive functions of managing editor.

Instead of escaping the environment which repressed or misdirected his talents, Field now plunged deeper into it. Denver at that time was a western Bohemia. Leadville and the other mining camps of Colorado were pouring out millions of treasure, much of which found its way to the capital.

Personal habits or infirmities, outside the criminal court, were not considered a proper subject for serious criticism; political morality was on a vacation, and the arts of conviviality were practiced by everyone who desired influence or newspaper recognition. It was the reign of the good fellows, and an experience out of which Field coined such expressive words as "sozzle," and to the memory of which his "Cinkeytclink of the ice in the pitcher," many lines in his paraphrases of Horace, and other bibulous verse, abundantly testify.

Abstinence was not so much a struggle of the will power at times as it was a question of tactical escape. I recall, for example, the appearance one day by a special car, of two railroad magnates, one of whom has been prominent for years in the management of the Pullman system. Field and Rothacker, figuratively, took to the woods. Finding the editorial rooms vacated, the riotous railroad officials, inspired by a luxurious sense of humor, proceeded to demolish everything in sight. Not even the early copy on the hooks was spared. Later in the night when they could persuade no one to go townpainting with them, they tore a barrel to pieces in the street and bombarded the editorial windows with the staves.

All this was an expensive joke for the Pullman company. When the legislature subsequently convened, the Tribune demanded a reduction of the Pullman rates, and a drastic bill was introduced in the house by the chairman of the railroad committee, who was a party to the conspiracy. The worst of the two vandals was hurried to Denver with a grip full of annuals and boodle. In his "odd gossip," Field noted the arrival as follows:

Mr. ———— ———, of ——— is occupying a suite of rooms at the Windsor with his beautiful niece, Miss Maudie Vere de Vere."

A marked copy of the Tribune containing this paragraph was mailed to the gentleman's wife, and nearly led to an action in the divorce courts. The legislative visitor was pointed out editorially as a convict and everything mean under the sun. He begged piteously for quarter, took to buying champagne by the basket, suffered himself to be held up right and left; and when the bill was finally bottled in the railroad committee, as was its prearranged fate, he left for home a wreck.

The two years in Denver tried Field's capacity, endurance and character to the utmost. Poor Rothacker, brilliant, generous but erratic, never found the up-grade again, and glided swiftly down to an untimely death at Omaha, with the pictures of those he loved best turned to the wall while he expired. He was a literary encyclopedia, a novelist and a poet. He left verse worthy of place on a classic shelf, and wrote epigram with the felicity of Hugo. His reply to Ingersoll, in which he embalmed the great American agnostic as "a moment brawling at eternity," was a masterpiece of defense for Christianity. Ingersoll complimented him in an autograph letter, on its force and effect as an answer. This little work was No. 1 in the Tribune literary series, of which Field's primer was No. 2, and the last.

The cross road of Field's career came when he was stricken with nervous dyspepsia. He was acutely attacked, and for a period suffered the contemplative horrors of suicide and death. Drugs having failed to bring him relief, his latent will power asserted itself and he set aside all stimulants, together with tobacco and coffee. For a year he restricted himself to an invalid diet, working constantly the while. Often he would write his daily stint, his head crowned with ice wrapped in a towel. When his digestion was apparently restored he resumed the tobacco and coffee habits at Chicago though he never again touched alcoholic stimulants, save for a brief spell in London. While there for his health in 1899 his physician persuaded him to sip of Bordeaux at meals, but it was unpalatable and he soon abandoned it as a dietary aid.

The excessive use of tobacco and coffee, and an unconquerable appetite for mince pie and indigestibles, together with an aversion for physical exercise, shortened Field's life. Even in his sufferings he found inspiration for much humorous prose and verse, and some of his best work was done at London in 1899-90, while he was living on a hot milk and cracker diet cooked by himself three times a day.

When Field joined the Chicago News staff in 1883 he was broken in health, destitute and pursued by a horde of creditors. His family was large; his responsibilities would have taxed the stoutest heart. No visible worry affected him, however, until the friendship between himself and Rothacker was violently sundered. While Field was attached to the Denver Tribune, General Hamill, at that time rated as a mining millionaire, and one of the Republican leaders of Colorado, owned a large interest in the property. He was an exceedingly liberal man, and, for any one he esteemed, always held an open purse. Rothacker, among the newspaper fraternity, was especially his protege. Field having got into a stew of trouble over a $650 furniture debt telegraphed General Hamill in the mountains, asking him for an immediate loan of that amount. He was requested to visit the general at Georgetown, when he would be accommodated. Field took the earliest train, but upon meeting General Hamill was informed that it was impossible to let him have the money. Field's disappointment was great; his disgust greater. General Hamill's change of front could be explained only by the assumption that somebody to whose advice he would listen, had warned him by wire against trusting Field.

Not many months later the Tribune passed into the junk room of American journalism; Rothacker was editing "Opinion," a weekly literary and political publicantion for which General Hamill supplied the capital and Field was writing the "Sharps and Flats" nonpareil column of the Chicago News.

Those of Field's panegyrists who have tried to clothe his character with the attributes of Babyland and Angeldom, do him a maudlin injustice. He was intensely human, with virile passions; an almost theatric contempt for conventionality, and a strong appetite for revenge, where he thought he had been deceived or injured.

So, when the Colorado senatorial campaign came under discussion and General Hamill was mentioned as a candindate, Field made a scurrilous attack on him, pointing him out as illiterate, boorish and unscrupulous. The abuse contained not a word of truth, was wholly devoid of the humorous or satrical, and fairly oozed malice. Field had been guilty of similar departures from the path of journalistic rectitude, without having suffered a check. This time he was administered one severely, by the last person from whom he should have expected it.

Rothacker, in despite of their intimacy and the fellowship in which they had lived and worked, landed on Field ferociously, in "Opinion." He denounced Field as a dishonest ingrate, and poured upon him a volume of mucky invective that is not worth while picking over here. As Field never neglected an opportunity to goad or satirize a contemporary, the Chicago press retaliated by reproducing Rothacker's defense of General Hamill, Field was pilloried as a journalistic ghoul.

The blow was a severe one, and would have jarred many a man off the track. Field felt it keenly and brooded over it. In his moods of resentment his savage design would manifest itself in the awful threat, "I will live to write Rothacker's obituary." The two men never spoke to each other again. Field's premonition that he would outlive Rothacker was satisfied, but the poet and satirist, broadened and softened by that time, forgave in silence.

Field's physical breakdown, and simultaneous transfer to the Chicago field of journalism, was the combination of causes that made for his betterment. Naturally industrious, once he emerged from the environment that must have soon warped and sapped him, motive and method came into his life. He found himself admired and sustained by brainy and well trained coworkers, who took themselves and their duties seriously, and who discovered their keenest enjoyments in intellectual pursuits. His managing editor, John Ballantyne, afterwards his brother-in-law, gave him the blue pencil in allopathic doses, though kindly. The treatment was new, and proved curative, Ballantyne could not tolerate the trick doggerel and vulgar verse surprises that Field used to frame with such facility. Still, a more potent influence in Field's growth was Slason Thompson, the chief editorial writer of the News, now editor-in-chief of the Chicago Record-Herald. Thompson had fine literary taste and discernment. His reputation was established as a critic. As a playwright he had produced in collaboration, "Sharps and Flats," for Robson & Crane; "M'liss,' and "Chispa," also a twelve part comedy for the veteran John Howson. He had given to the literary world that entertaining compilation, "The Humbler Poets." He was an honest, frank companion; an athelete with a surplus of the vitality and health which Field envied. He was the opposite of Field in the sanity of his habits and the propriety of his manners, and therefore attracted him. In a brief time Thompson became the mentor of the twain. He is now writing for Scribners a life of Field that will be the first fair estimate of the genius and character of the poet, the humorist and the man.

Field's style of composition on the News quickly improved. A deeper sincerity began to pervade his pathos; his sentiments were encouraged into more enterprising play, and his prose, humor and versatile verse developed technical accomplishments acquired by unceasing study. His father had bequeathed him a library of 5,000 volumes, never explored until now. He became a daily visitor at the Jansen & McClurg publishing house, and established there the famous "Saints and Sinners Corner," among the $50,000 worth of rare editions presided over by Geo. Millard. An unorganized literary society grew out of this invention and for its midnight delectation once Field wrote and read his "Dibdin's Ghost." To this mystic corner he led many a victim and initiated him into the mysteries of Bibliomania, only to make satirical copy of him later. He found food for fun in everyone's fads, even his own. Unable to save money, owing to his incurable thriftlessness, he took to laying up valuable books, grotesque toys, freak canes and rare autographs. These in time constituted the treasures of his home and the bulk of the small inheritance he left his children.

Sham and sordidness were the two things Field detested most in man, and never cultivated in himself. His infirmity, in the matter of dissipating money, was so pronounced and incurable that his salary, save a few dollars for tobacco and coffee and the inevitable mince pie or cheese cake, was reserved weekly for his family. Even his bit of pocket money he would often waste on salary day on a dinner with a friend or two, and during the remaining six days of the week finesse his way. Nothing afforded him more genuine pleasure than a comrade who was easy to "work," as he expressed it. Some of the best humorous verse he has written, though unpublished, were his spontaneous literary redemptions of these little debts. Something of the velvetty cunning of the child revealed itself in Field when he indulged such moods. An iceberg would melt and turn warm for him. His improvidence was equally boyish. I recall, as an illustration, a dinner at Kingleys to which he had invited Slason Thompson, Dr. Frank Riley, then an editorial writer on the News, and myself. He started the ball with cream of terrapin soup, which, having been put away, he discovered was valued on the carte du jou at $4.00. "Well," he exclaimed with a grimace, "All I've got is $5.00. You boys will have to run the rest of this dinner yourselves."

A better illustraton still of this not unlovable trait, was an incident that occurred in Denver, when he was in debt to the Tribune, the butcher, the baker, and no telling who else. Meat and other edibles were needed at home, and on such occasions Fred Skiff, the amiable manager of the Tribune, was never appealed to in vain, no matter how desperate looking the red figures in the ledger. With a grateful "thank you," Field hustled out of the office with a crisp ten dollar bill, only to bump against a stranded reporter who had worked under him at St. Joe. In a few moments he returned to Skiff with the story of his ill luck. He had surrendered the tenner. Skiff emited a few burning words and gave him another. Field was admissible, without challenge, to the jolly brotherhood of such as Burns, Goldsmith, heedless Dick Steele, and their ilk. His biographers up to date, have missed the perspective of those amiable weaknesses which present genius in strongest relief.

In his introduction to the Tribune collection of verse Mr. Brown says: "It is the purpose of this volume to present to the admirers of Eugene field a collection of poems from a store wherein many of his richest gems of wit, humor and pathos have been buried for twenty years forgotten, save by those who were his intimate associates during his career in Denver."

When Thompson urged him to begin the compilation of his verse in enduring form, Field sifted his Denver productions and took up for revision out of the mass, only four. One of these he practically re-wrote, and two more he subsequently condemned as unworthy. The rest of his Denver verses he consigned to oblivion, with the fervid hope that no one would resurrect them. He had mastered the mechanics of poetry, learned to measure literary values, and realized that his Denver metrical work was experimental, largely shallow, and immature. A single comparison will disclose the healthy improvement in sentiment and the development of method. In the "Hushaby songs" of the Tribune collection he shocks one with this bit of cynicism, neither humorous, witty nor pathetic.

"He sleeps, my darling baby boy,
My life, my hope, my sweetest joy!
How like a bubbling, blushing rose
His tiny mouth, now in repose!
How white his chubby, dimpled fists,
How plump and creased his baby wrists!
His little neck, how soft and sleek,
His chubby legs, how childish weak!
How sweet to gaze on baby's face
And dream of future manhood days.

"Who knows but in the time to be
His form shall grace the gallows tree?
Then shall his eyes so pure and bright
Be veiled by cap as black as night,
Then shall his tiny hands, alack,
Be strapped behind his sturdy back!
Then shall his chubby legs be bound
With cruel hempen cords around
Then shall his neck so white and fair,
By brutal hands be laid all bare,
A ruthless noose adjusted here
Below his tiny, shell-like ear!

"How sweet to gaze on baby's face
And dream of future manhood days."

This is worse than pathos. Years after he wrote in "The Dead Babe," the artistic antithesis:

"Last night, as my dear babe lay, dead
Before mine eyes the vision spread
Of things that might have been;
Licentious riot, cruel strife,
Forgotten prayers, a wasted life,
Dark red with sin.
Then with sweet music in the air,
I saw another vision there;
A shepherd in whose keep
A little lamb—my little child!
Of worldly wisdom undefiled
Lay fast asleep!'

To readers of Field the following excerpts of early imperfection and an exaggerated or dyspeptic sense of humor, though shocking to the critic, should prove interesting as a demonstration of what study and hard work may accomplish:

"See my baby brother
"Sitting in mamma's lap;
"He's just getting ready
"To take a little nap."

"Two little cub bears
"In a child's breast
"Called bear and forbear
"They bring us rest."

"Baby and I, in the weary night
"Are taking a walk for his delight,
"I drowsily stumble o'er stool and chair,
"For he's got the colic
"And paregoric
"Don't seem to ease my squalling heir."

"Baby and I with the morning grey
"Are griping and squalling and walking away,
"The fire's gone out and I nearly freeze,
"There's a smell of peppermint on the breeze;
"Then mamma wakes
"And baby takes
"And says, 'Now cook the breakfast please.'"

"If I could sing as the angels sing
"In heaven above,
"I would raise my voice to a heavenly thing,
"And that is love.
"But my voice is harsh and my petted sense
"Is of humble stripe,
"And oh! it's a lowly theme I choose,
"The which is tripe."

"Only a woman's hair
"Binding the now to the past,
"Only a single thread
"Too frail to last;
"Only a woman's hair
"Threading a tear and a sigh,
"Only a woman's hair
"Found today in the pie."

"I am a mountain lion free
"And I roam the mountain side
"I grit my teeth in savage glee
"And my chops with gore are dyed.
"I live on little babies fat
"Which from their homes I steal
"I love to crunch each toothsome brat
"And hear his dying squeal."

"Some folks believes in angels
"A prowling around on earth;
"Experience teaches me better
"You may take it for what it's worth."

The following is the feeble Denver germ of all the beautiful lullabies written by Field:

"Go, little darling, go,
"Nid nodding to Bye-low,
"The snow white sheep
'Are fast asleep
"In such a pretty row,
"All in the sweet Bye-low
"Then go, my darling go."

Compare the foregoing with "The Rock-a-by Baby from Hushaby Land," "Wynken, Blynken and Nod," "So, So, Rock-a-by So! Off to the Gardens Where Dreamikins Grow," "Here by the Sea a Mother Croons," "Sleep Little Pigeon," and the many other finished lullabies of his later years. What wonder that he should shrink with dread from the spectre of the future book-making body snatcher.

In the Denver collection are a few suggestions, such as "Clover Top and Thistle Down," "Last Year's Doll" and "The Wren's Nest."—of the fanciful spirit of Dickens which in after years found ample play in "The Gingham Dog and the Calico Cat,' and many other verses devoted to the jocular illumination of the ancient Campanella school of metaphysics—the belief of the existence of soul in bird and beast ,and in inanimate and voiceless objects. Here is one of the Denver samples:

Two pieces of ice in the ice house lay
Waiting the dawn of another day,
And as they lingered there side by side,
"Oh, tell me brother, since we must die,
What fate would you choose for the by and by?"
The giddiest piece of the couple cried,

"Oh, I am fondly and gently bred,"
The other ice cake sighing said,
"And I would melt in a glass of tea
With a maiden stirring me to and fro
And mixing me up with sugar I trow,
Such, I pray, may my ending be."

The other cake for a moment smiled,
"I always have been a wayward child
And it strikes me now I would like to float
In a brandy punch or a whisky sour,
Beguiling some wretched mortal hour,
And cooling some thirsty mortal's throat."

The hours passed on and the days went by
Till finally came their time to die,
And the gentle piece of ice expired
In a bowl of tea, while the other piece,
In rare libation found surcease,
Each one perished as each desired.

What of the maiden who quaffed the tea?
They planted her under a willow tree,
And the mourners come and the mourners go,
Ice cold tea was the dreadful cause,
Nature avenged her outraged laws,
Neuralgia wielded the deadly blow.

And the man—oh, the man of the whisky sour,
He's living and prosperous this very hour,
And he struck it rich in a Gunnison mine.
It's always the same with ice and men,
It's nice to be giddy now and then;
Take you death in tea, and your life in wine.

"Apple Blossoms" is the predecessor of "The Little Peach." In the case of "Our Little Tom:"

"The days passed on and the weeks passed on,
"And the blossom into an apple grew,
"When along came Tom and gobbled it down,
"Skin, stem and core and the green seeds too.

"Our little Tommy has angel wings
"And he flops around in the golden sky;;
"It's to be presumed he sweetly sings
"Of apple blossoms in the By and By."

In the later tragedy:

"Under the turf where the daisies grew
They planted John and his sister Sue
"And their little souls to the Angels flew—
"Boo hoo!"

The esthetic feelings of the eastern critic revolted against this gruesome levity, and they castigated Field quakerishly for having preserved "The Little Peach," in his "Little Book of Western Verse." They simply failed to grasp the motive. Field wrote these trifling anti-climaxes for the wit of children more than for the delectation of maturity. Most of them were tried first on the imagination of his own children. The night he heard Marie Jansen sing "A Little Peach," with the interpolated negro refrain "Listen to My Tale of Woe," I chanced to have been with him. He hurried from the theater after the first verse had been rendered, and upon reaching the sidewalk breathed an expletive that is regarded as classic nowhere outside of Rabelias, and the field of Waterloo. Gradually he refined his method of appeal to the sense of the grotesque in childhood, as witness the shudderful climax of the great inanimate duel:

"But the truth about the cat and pup
"Is this: They ate each other up!
"Now what do you think of that?"

During the Anglo-Egyptian trouble Field recorded "The Fate of Tomato Kahn," as follows:

Old Ragbag Bey, a venerable man,
Arose one morning and to his servant said,
"Send hither, slave, my son, Tomato Kahn,
If, by the Prophet's beard, he's out of bed."
Tomato Kahn responded in all haste,
And, kneeling on the earth before his sire,
Kissed thrice his feet, and clinging to his waist,
"Why hast thou called?" respectful did inquire.

"Mush Allah!" cried the old man in a breath,
"Our country is in dire complaint, I see,
On every hand is desolation, death,
And she demands a sacrifice of me.
From Am el Telba unto Goghar's wall
From Batra's palms to Ondig's sandy plain,
I hear the roll of drum, the trumpet's call,
The clash of arms and war's intense refrain.

Bind on this scimiter, my son, and go
This day to Goghar on thy fiery, dauntness steed,
Join thou the army of the Faithful, show
Thy zest for Allah in thy country's hour of need!"
Tomato Kahn bound on old Ragbag's sword,
His love, the fair Amirie, begged him stay,
In vain the maiden wept, in vain implored,
Tomato Kahn strode on his vengeful way.

He did not die, as Ragbag hoped he might,
Nor as Amirie thought a warrior should,
He did not perish on the field of fight,
No Christian hands are reeking with his blood.
Kicked by a mule, he fell at Sneeze-el-Snuff,
A cheap, Arabian mule, a vulgar beast,
He faintly murmured, "Allah! this is rough!"
And then the throbbings of his sick heart ceased.

So, for his country died Tomato Kahn,
A youth equipped for great, chivalric scenes,
Dead by a mule, a martyred, glorious man,
At patriot since the end doth glorify the means.
A mausoleum hath old Ragbag built,
As tribute to Tomato Kahn's brave deeds,
At morn, at night his bitter tears are spilt,
The fair Amirie wears a widows weeds.

Nothing that Field wrote in Denver provoked more laughter than his "In re Spring," ascribed to Judge G. G. Symes, a pompous deep-voiced lawyer who subsequently was elected to Congress:

Whereas, on sundry boughs and sprays,
Now divers birds are heard to sing,
And sundry flowers their heads uprise,
Hail to the coming on of Spring!

The songs of the said birds arouse
The memory of our youthful hours,
As young and green as those said boughs,
As fresh and fair as those said flowers.

The birds aforesaid, happy pairs,
Love 'midst the aforesaid boughs enshrine,
In household nests, themselves, their heirs,
Administrators and assigns.

O, busiest term of Cupid's Court!
When tender plaintiffs actions bring;
Season of frolic and of sport,
Hail! as aforesaid, coming spring.

Fields ability as a punster and trick versifier, indulged without restraint at Denver, repressed at Chicago, and afterward delicately revived in the paraphrases of Horace, is fairly illustrated in the following:

"Suppose," he said, in accent soft,
"A fellow just like me
Should axle little girl to wed,
What would the answer be?"

The maiden drops her liquid eyes,
Her smiles with blushes mingle,
"Why seek the bridle halter when
You may love on sur, cingle?"

And then he spoke, "Oh, be my bride,
I ask you once again;
You are the empress of my heart,
And there shall ever rein!

"I'll never tire of kindly deeds
To win your gentle heart,
And saddle be the shaft that rends
Our happy lies apart."

Upon her cheek the maiden felt
The mantling blushes glow,
She took him for her faithful hub,
To share his wheel or whoa!

Although the Denver volume discloses the crudeness and flippancy of much of Field's earlier versification, it will serve to prove the expansion of his talent under severe study and with happy environment. At first loose and vulgar in composition, heedless of literary grace or elegance, he became in time a stickler for all the verbal niceties of expression, delved to the depths of philological technique, and eventually prided himself on his acquired knowledge of the shade meaning of words. His Yvetot, a fanciful Saxon legend, the rounding out of which occupied his spare moments for a year, he prized as his greatest literary achievement. Capacity for work he regarded as his only genius. He flattered himself, justly, that he could imitate or paraphrase all the poets. His mastery of the style of Horace, Heine, Beranger, Villon, Hugo, Dr. Watt, Chaucer Spencer, Butler and English folk lore, was complete. The Horace of himself and his brother Roswell, now the editor of "Youth's Companion," is considered the best in English. Once he composed a number of hymns, after Watt; had them published in the New York Sun as the posthumous discovery of the London Standard, and the literary sharpers of Chicago, in a series of interviews in the News, agreed that they must be genuine. Their chagrin may be imagined when the joke was exposed.

Although versification was easy to Field, story writing and dramatic composition tortured him. He wrote two acts of a comic opera, "The Begum," and then destroyed the manuscript. All of his allegorical tales were rewritten many times and then rarely satisfied him. The Wer-Wolf, for which Edward Bok paid $500 after Field's death, he rewrote eight times, and then cast aside as unfit for publication. I have the fourth manuscript and it is a mass of erasures and interlineations.

Field's fertility as a maker of copy was phenomenal, and renders the humor, polish and excellence of so much that he wrote, the more marvelous. Slason Thompson, who explored the "Sharps and Flats" columns of the News' files for Scribners, informs me that by actual measurement—and this does not include the stories and magazine works—Field wrote in eleven years 6,000,000 words. As near as can be estimated, he produced, in all classes of work during eighteen years, more than 10,000,000 words, or 144 volumes, of 350 pages of bourgeois each.

HOW MEN ARE MADE SOLDIERS

Some of the Requirements Needed in Good Fighters—The Ability to Use a Rifle Well of First Importance.

What is a soldier? The question is habitually answered in a dozen different ways. If we are to judge by the plans they advocate, the ideals they set up and the attitude they adopt toward the army generally it is evident that a large body of Britons would reply by saying that in the first place a soldier is a man who is not less than five feet six inches in hight. Others appear to believe that a soldier is a man who measures so much round the chest or who weighs so many pounds avoirdupois. Others, again, evidently hold that a soldier is a person who wears a particular kind of dress in a particular way and who knows how to polish buttons and to lay on "blanco" with special smoothness and neatness—in fact, they think that a soldier is essentially a man in uniform. Yet others regard him as a man who at the sound of certain words performs certain muscular actions with precision, who assumes with correctness "the position of the soldier" as laid down in the drill book—"eyes looking to the front, chin slightly drawn in," etc.—and who keeps step and maintains his place in complicated evolutions with the skill of a ballet dancer. Another school holds a soldier to be a man who salutes with frequency and alertness, who observes an exact ritual in regard to his kit and accouterments and whose obedience to orders is so perfect as to be automatic and mechanical rather than the product of individual thought and volition.

But though all these views are held (we will not say expressed in words, for though men hold them and act upon them, they do not, of course, put them forth in plain terms), we venture to assert that they none of them afford the true answer. They none of them, that is, express the essential quality of the soldier, the sine qua non, the quality without which the soldier is not a soldier.

The only answer to the question, "What is a soldier?" which gives the essential, the sine qua non quality is the answer, "A man who can kill other men with rifle fire." A soldier is a rifleman. A man may be able to kill other men with rifle fire and not be a perfect or a reasonably efficient, or even a useful soldier, but unless he can kill with the rifle he is not a soldier at all. A man may be a splendid marcher, he may be trained to take cover with extraordinary skill, he may be an expert at digging trenches, his drill may be perfect, his power of turning himself out smart and clean, and with all his belongings in the most perfect order may be miraculous, and yet if he cannot shoot with a rifle he is no soldier. Imagine an army composed of men possessing all the qualities we have enumerated except the power of shooting, and then imagine another composed of men who would kill with a rifle, but had only that gift. Both would be very bad armies, no doubt, but who would hesitate to declare that the riflemen were the soldier and the other army, though composed of very accomplished men, were without the thing which is essential to soldiers?

Needless to say, we do not insist that the true answer to the question, "What is a soldier?" is, "A man who can kill with the rifle," merely as a piece of dialectical analysis. We insist on the fact because unless and until people not merely admit the fact with their lips, but realize it, we shall never get a true reform of the army. Rifle shooting must be the foundation stone on which the army rests. On that foundation must be built up a superstructure which seems and in a sense is as important as the foundation, but we must always remember that though there can be no superstructure without a foundation there can be a foundation without a superstructure.

Having laid the foundation, of rifle shooting and answered the question "What is a soldier?" with the reply "A rifleman," let us next ask and try to answer the question, "What is a fully qualified soldiers?" So many things are necessary to make, we will not say the perfect soldier, but the soldier who shall be able to render his ability to use the rifle fully effective, that it is difficult to know which to name first. In our opinion the most important quality that can be laid on the foundation of rifle shooting is that of discipline—using the word in its widest sense. The rifleman must be not only willing, but able, to give an instant and, what is more, an intelligent obedience to the orders of those above him. He must obey and he must also, if possible, seize the object of the order and obey not like a machine but like a thinking man. He must, that is, not be hypnotized by formal drill into a mechanical obedience, but must give an obedience which is co-operative and not merely passive.

Next to the moral essential we should put for the modern soldier the hunter and scout qualities—the ability to take cover, to watch the enemy and his movements, to see without being seen, and to take intelligent advantage of all means of protection from an enemy's fire while at the same time pressing his own advance. Next, the soldier should be able to use the spade and be capable of rapidly constructing protective work, which, though effective shall be almost invisible to the enemy. These are qualities for use in the fighting line. To get him into the fighting line the soldier must as far as possible be endowed with the gift of mobility. He must be good at marching, but he must also be able to make use of other forms of transport if and when they become available.

A soldier must be able to ride a horse should it be possible to provide him with that means of getting over the ground, and, further, he must be able to look after his horse if he gets one. Again, he should be able to ride and mend a bicycle if fortune should enable his colonel to "commandeer" 1,000 bicycles and so turn a three days' march into a day's march. But though this disciplined rifleman who can stalk, scout and dig and also ride either horse or bicycle if required will already be of great use in war, he can no doubt be improved by the addition of certain other things—accomplishments rather than essentials, but none the less of importance. If he is given a physical training which makes his frame and his muscles like those of an athlete, he will no doubt endure longer and shoot more steadily than if he has had no physical drill.

Furthermore, if he is something of a gymnast, he will, if he is making rapid advance on foot, be able to surmount obstacles with much greater ease. It will, clearly, for example, be good for him to be a swimmer. Again, if he has learned the handling of a bayonet, his enemy will fear the chance that he may get too close quarters more than if the same enemy knows that he has no skill with the bayonet. Lastly, if the soldier happens to be an expert at drill in close formation, he and 10,000 men like him may be able to get through the narrow streets of a great city more quickly and with far less confusion if he has no practice in moving in close order.

It comes, then, to this. A soldier, whether he belongs to the horse or the foot, is first and foremost a rifleman. Including and in addition to that the prme qualities of the soldier may be roughly enumerated as follows. He must be:

1. A rifleman.
2. A disciplined man.
3. A man capable of stalking, scouting and taking advantage of cover.
4. A man who can use the spade and pick-ax.
5. A man who can ride and look after either a horse or a bicycle.
6. A man who possesses some gymnastic training.
7. A man who has the power of moving rapidly and without unnecessary friction in close order.

Strange as it may seem to some persons, the way in which the soldier is dressed, the manner in which he cuts away his hand when he salutes, the exact occasions when he salutes, the angle at which his heels meet when he assumes "the position of the soldier," and so forth, do not really go to the building up of a soldier. He may be able to do none of these things and yet be a very capable soldier.

All we want to insist on at the present moment is the necessity for keeping in mind really important things that go to make up a soldier, and chief among these—rifle shooting. Unless and until we secure men who can shoot to kill with the rifle, and not merely let off their guns, we have not really got an army of soldiers, but only of neatly dressed theatrical supers. We might have in training a large number of smart young men with splendid ideals as to personal cleanliness, with perfect habits of neatness and order, and with a most engaging way of saluting their superior officers, but for all that they would not be soldiers unless they could also shot.—London Spectator.

BOONE'S ROCK AT RICHMOND, KY.

A Stone With a History.

In the courthouse yard of Richmond, the county seat of Madison county, Kentucky, stands a rude stone memorial of a period remoter, as judged by its tangible remains, than is the age of the patriarchs and the pyramids. It is an irregular natural obelisk of limestone, some seven feet in height and bearing upon its face the date "1770" and the name of "Squire Boone"—known to students of pioneer history as the younger brother of the famous Daniel, as the builder of the first cabin erected in Kentucky and the solemnizer of the first marriage performed within the boundaries of Kentucky.

According to the generally accepted account, the following is the story of the stone and its meager inscription:

On May 1, 1769, with three companions, Daniel Boone had, for the second time, penetrated the Kentucky wilderness, and early in the January following had been joined by his brother Squire and another frontiersman. Three of the six were killed by Indians and one was lost, leaving the Boone brothers alone and so poorly equipped with supplies that they decided Squire Boone should return to the Yadkin settlements "for a new recruit of horses and ammunition." He set out May 1, 1770, and during the three months of his absence Daniel remained "by himself, without bread, salt or sugar, without company of his fellow creatures or even a horse or dog.

The inscription, rudely scratched upon this chosen stone, was doubtless intended to apprise him of his brother's safe return and possibly also of the caching of supplies near by.

"Boone's Rock," as it is commonly called, stood originally in the "Horse Cove" about one and one-half miles from the Little Blue Lick. Its removal some years ago to its present location served both to bring it to the notice of many who had never before known of its existence and to protect it from the chippings of the omnipresent relic hunter.