

ROBERT BONNER.

HOW HE MADE MONEY.

A CHAT WITH THE FORMER EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK LEDGER.

He Tells How He Worked for \$25 a Year and How He Made His First \$100 as a Writer—His First Savings and How They Increased Until He Was Depositing in the Savings Bank \$1,000 a Week—How the Ledger Was Founded—Fanny Fern and Her \$100 a Column Story—How Henry Ward Beecher Received \$30,000 for a Novel—Reminiscences of Edward Everett—Robert Bonner on Advertising in the Newspapers and the Secrets of Successful Advertising.

Copyrighted 1897 by Frank G. Carpenter. NEW YORK, July 24.—I write this letter to young men. It is intended for young business men who want to succeed. It is intended for boys who desire to get rich, and, in short, for any one who cares to study others in the hope that he may thereby gain suggestions which may help himself. It is the story of a poor Irish boy who landed in New York with five dollars in his pocket, and who ten years ago retired

as a printer I must learn all about printing," Mr. Bonner continued. "Now the daily paper away back in the forties was different from what it is now. The most of the type for the Courier was set by spacing the day, a quarter of a column of space being left for the latest news. This was set up early in the morning just before the paper went to press. I wanted to learn all about press work, so I got up at 4 o'clock every morning and watched the printers run off the paper. I was anxious to help but for some time they did not ask for my services. At last I was told to get some water. I replied that I would do so if they would teach me to look up the form. The next day something else was wanted, and I made them teach me how to feed the press before I would do it. So I went on from day to day always learning something new until I had mastered the science of press work. I was at this time only twelve years old, and it seems to me now that it took some nerve for a boy of that age to get up before daylight those old winter mornings just for the sake of learning.

"I was soon rewarded for my work, however," continued Mr. Bonner. "One day one of the printers who put the paper to press announced his intention of leaving. He was told by the proprietor that he could not so until some one else could be taught to do his work. 'Why don't you take Robert,' said the printer. 'He understands how to manage a press as well as I do.' So they gave me the job, and I was paid 25 cents an hour for my early morning work and I got therefrom about \$3 a week."

Only Time Mr. Bonner Ever Worried.

It was later on in our conversation that Mr. Bonner again referred to this period

of his life. I had asked him how he had managed to keep so young and whether he had any secrets to worry him. He replied: "I never worry about business matters as a rule. I do what is before me and let it go. There are only two days of my life which I can remember as having been full of worry about business matters, and those were when I was a boy doing that extra work on the Hartford Courant. One night the proprietor told me that he thought some of the other apprentices ought to have a chance to make some extra money, and that I must let one of them try the press work. The result was that I lost my job and my money for two days. I can remember now how black life seemed to me then. The boy who took my place, however, was careless and I soon got back again. The boy during his second day's work in setting up an article written by the editor made an item of \$1,000.00 read \$100.00, leaving out the two ciphers. This disgusted the editor and I was reinstated. One trouble with the boy who took my place, was that his father owned three or four houses in the town worth a few thousand dollars apiece. The boy thought his father was rich and there was no necessity of his being careful, as the day would come when he would not have to work."

The First Savings of a Millionaire.
"When did you begin to save money, Mr. Bonner?"
"Just as soon as I could," was the reply. "You see I got very little at the start. It took all I made to pay my expenses, and I was almost of age before I began depositing in the savings bank. My first deposit was here in New York. I had come to New York, you know, to practice my trade as a printer. Well, about fifty-two years ago I found that I had a little money, and with that I opened a deposit in the Chambers Street Savings Bank. When I took the money to the bank there was one bad bill in it which I had never seen before. I can remember tonight how badly I felt when that dollar came back, and how I concluded it was soon save another to put in its place. I did save it, and saved more right along. I kept my deposits in the bank until they amounted to a thousand dollars a week. One day I noted that the cashier had put in red ink an item of three dollars and some cents below my last deposit. This was my first interest. 'Why,' said I, 'I did not have to work for that, and I then realized that money would make money. It seemed wonderful to me.'"

The New York Ledger and Fanny Fern.
"How did you come to found the Ledger, Mr. Bonner?"
"The New York Ledger," said Mr. Bonner, "was in 1850 a little financial concern known as the Merchants' Ledger. At this time I was working in the printing office. I had an advertising solicitor, who liked the way in which I displayed his advertisements. He left the paper a little later on and became connected with the Merchants' Ledger. He told his proprietor that he could get a great many more advertisements if I were to set them up, and it was in this way that I got an offer of a better salary from the Merchants' Ledger. I took it. It was a small sheet, devoted to mercantile affairs, and it had less than 2,000 circulation. Soon after I became employed upon it the proprietor wanted to sell, and I bought him out. I ran the paper for a short time as a mercantile paper and gradually turned it into a family one. One day I decided that if I had the best selling matter a paper of that class could have it would get a very large circulation, and I concluded to get it. I began at once to get the best contributors, and among them secured Miss Fanny Fern. Miss Fanny Fern was the most popular woman writer of that time, but she had never written for the newspapers. A book of hers had had a circulation of something like 1,000 copies, and I think she rather looked down on newspaper work. I first offered her \$25 a column for a story. She replied that she could get a great deal more for \$50 a column. This she also declined, when the return mail brought an-

other offer from me of \$75 a column. Upon this she said to a friend, 'I like the spirit of that man Bonner, and I wish you would go down and see him.' Her friend called on her and told her the story. 'I then proposed to give her \$100 a column, but said I did not want the story to run over ten columns. She replied that she would write the story for \$100, provided I would take it whether it ran nine columns or eleven columns, as she could not tell just how much it would run out. I agreed to this, and the story was published. The circumstances of the engagement were told, and nearly every newspaper in the country published my extravaganza in paying \$100 a column for a story 1,000 words worth of advertising. The editor of the arrangement, and the people began to ask for the Ledger. Before this I had had trouble in getting the news started to take the Ledger. After this they were glad to get it."

"Did Fanny Fern write more for you after that?" I asked.
"Yes, she wrote for me more or less up to the time of her death, both she and her husband, James Parton. Fanny Fern was a genius. She had ability somewhat like that of Henry Ward Beecher. Her work was always interesting and valuable."

Stories of Henry Ward Beecher.

"Speaking of Beecher, Mr. Bonner, he also wrote for the Ledger, did he not?"
"Yes," replied the veteran editor. "He wrote a great deal for me, and among other things his novel 'Norwood,' for which I paid him \$30,000."
"How did you become acquainted with Mr. Beecher?" I asked.
"It was through a poem of one of his lady friends. He sent me the manuscript, stating that if I used it a check would be very acceptable to the lady. I wrote back at once that I had plenty of poetry, but that I would give him a half to three-quarters of a column a week I would pay him \$1,000. There are only two days of my life which I can remember as having been full of worry about business matters, and those were when I was a boy doing that extra work on the Hartford Courant. One night the proprietor told me that he thought some of the other apprentices ought to have a chance to make some extra money, and that I must let one of them try the press work. The result was that I lost my job and my money for two days. I can remember now how black life seemed to me then. The boy who took my place, however, was careless and I soon got back again. The boy during his second day's work in setting up an article written by the editor made an item of \$1,000.00 read \$100.00, leaving out the two ciphers. This disgusted the editor and I was reinstated. One trouble with the boy who took my place, was that his father owned three or four houses in the town worth a few thousand dollars apiece. The boy thought his father was rich and there was no necessity of his being careful, as the day would come when he would not have to work."

"What was the nature of his writings?"
"They were to a large extent editorials," replied Mr. Beecher. "Many of them were published under the name of 'Keep Your Eyes Open.' The first article, I remember, was entitled 'A Cannon Ball in a Hat.' It gave the experiences of a man who attended a political meeting and a cannon ball in his hat. It described how the cannon ball grew heavier and heavier, and how the fear of detection ate into the soul of the thief. A moral was drawn, and brought out from this which struck home to every reader. A great deal of the matter written by Mr. Beecher was not published under his own signature, and this was also the case with Henry Ward Beecher. It was during the years just preceding the war. We had then a large circulation in the south, and the name of Mr. Beecher was a great asset. Contributors would have lost thousands of subscribers."

Beecher's \$30,000 Novel.

"Was not \$30,000 a great deal to pay for a novel?"
"Yes," replied Mr. Bonner. "It was. But I think the venture was a good business investment. The way I came to pay just this amount was rather curious. I had made an arrangement with Edward Everett to write a series of articles for the Ledger. Mr. Everett was at that time the leading statesman of the country along certain lines. He was anxious that Mount Vernon should be bought and preserved, and he was giving lectures over the country for the purpose of raising money for what he called the 'Mount Vernon fund.' I promised to him that I would give \$10,000 to the fund if he would write a series of articles for the Ledger. He accepted it. His articles were widely read and the Ledger agreed to pay him \$10,000 for the story, or as much as I had paid Mr. Everett for his writings. Later on I increased the amount to \$30,000."

"Here is what he answered in reply to my first proposition:
"Dear Mr. Bonner:
"I am almost dumb after reading your proposition and must clear my head before I say a word."
"Signed HENRY WARD BEECHER."

"When he wrote the story there was a decided sensation in literary and religious circles. Some preachers, and especially a Rev. Dr. Seeley, noticed Mr. Beecher's actions in making money in that way. I wrote an editorial on the subject, which was rather facetious, and sent the proof of it to Mr. Beecher, suggesting that if he thought well of it that he might give me a recommendation whereby I could get a place on the London Punch. Within an hour or two my boy had left the office he came back with the following note:
"My Dear Bonner:
"You see you like to gobble up a minister or two every year to digest just as hens swallow gravel stones. You have swallowed me in one way and Mr. Seeley in another. Like my way best."
"Signed HENRY WARD BEECHER."

"Then on the other side of the sheet he had written this recommendation:
"To the London Punch:
"Robert Bonner desires an engagement on your paper. It gives me pleasure."

"I am almost dumb after reading your proposition and must clear my head before I say a word."

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A GREAT TELESCOPE.

NEW ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY OF PENNSYLVANIA'S UNIVERSITY. Just What Can Be Accomplished Described Herewith for This Paper by Prof. Henry B. Evans, of the University—A Telescope With an Eighteen-Inch Lens—By Its Assistance It is Expected New Wonders of the Heavens Will Be Revealed.

PHILADELPHIA, July 19.—There has just been opened for active use a group of buildings intended for astronomical use, which are likely to become famous in the near future. They are the observatory buildings of the University of Pennsylvania, and in one of them is the new Flower telescope, by means of which astronomers hope to read secrets of the stars never yet revealed.

The lens of the Flower telescope is a marvel. It has no superior, if an equal, and the method of its manufacture is as peculiar as the qualities which it is believed to possess. The observatory stands on the crest of a range of hills in Delaware county, two miles from this city. It has a revolving steel dome eighteen feet in diameter. The tube of the telescope is twenty-eight feet long, and it is moved about by means of clock-work.

Persons who have read of recent astronomical feats may remember that it was the lens of this telescope which was used by Prof. Percival Lowell, the famous astronomer at Flagstaff, Arizona, when he made his marvelous observations of the canals of Mars. A comprehensive statement of the facts regarding the observatory buildings and the telescope is given in this paper by Prof. Henry B. Evans, instructor in astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania.

The University of Pennsylvania has dedicated to the cause of science its new astronomical observatory. The latter is very suitably located on the summit of one of the hills, and is entirely west of the city limits of Philadelphia, beyond the influence of the smoke and soot of the factories and the vibrations of the steam and electric railroads.

The ground on which it stands was presented to the university some years ago for the purpose for which it is now used by the late Reese Wall Flower, in whom the observatory derives its name. The original intentions of the donor were not carried out, however, until two years ago, when the present director, Prof. Charles S. Doolittle, then professor of mathematics and astronomy at Lehigh university, was called to the similar chair at Philadelphia. Under his direction has been added to the possession of the University of Pennsylvania, one of the finest and best equipped institutions for astronomical research in existence.

First and foremost in this equipment is the big equatorial telescope with its 18-inch lens, mounted in a separate dome-capped building of its own. All of the instruments are from the makers of the big Lick and Yerkes telescopes, and in this, their latest production, they have introduced every convenience which mechanical ingenuity could devise for the assistance and comfort of the observer. The lens, which is the largest one in this country east of Washington, was made by Brashear in Allegheny, and formed part of his exhibit at the World's fair in 1883.

Mr. Brashear is the only man in the world who has developed the art of grinding glass to such a perfection that he can produce an absolutely flat surface. He can grind glass correctly to any given outline within one-millionth of an inch. It would be natural to suppose a lens of his make would be of a high standard of excellence. The one he has made for the University of Pennsylvania has been pronounced by experts to have no superior. The telescope is provided with the ordinary eye-pieces, a screw micrometer for close measurements, a spectroscope with prisms, gratings, photographic attachments, etc. It stands on a pier of solid masonry, sixteen feet in height, seven feet of which is underground; the whole rests on a solid bed of rotten stone, and is totally unconnected with the building which surrounds or shelters it.

Near the base of the equatorial is the transit building, containing the mathematical instruments. In one end of this is a four-inch zenith telescope of superior design, which the director uses in carrying on his observations for the determination of the variation of the position of the north pole. The latter does not remain fixed at one definite spot on the surface of the earth, but moves slowly, according to a somewhat complicated law. Its whole range of motion, however, can be included within a circle of sixty feet in radius, and therefore, to determine its path accurately, a long series of most accurate observations, extended over a long period of time, is necessary. Such a series has been carried on by Prof. Doolittle with

any one. He was a high-minded, conscientious, patriotic Christian gentleman."

Big Money for Advertisements.
The conversation here drifted to advertising matters, and I asked Mr. Bonner to tell me the secret of his success in advertising. He replied:

"I can hardly remember when I was not studying the advantages of different advertising features. When I was a boy the New York Herald was very much criticized by the other newspapers of the country. I saw that the more the Herald advertised, the more the other people bought it, and when I took the Ledger I saw that I must get the paper talked about. I must not only have a good paper, but the people must know it. I could not borrow but I spent all my surplus in advertising. One time I spent \$2,000 for a single advertisement in the New York Herald; at another time I offered the Tribune \$3,000 for one insertion in the daily, weekly and tri-weekly. I paid during one week \$27,000 for advertising, and in one year \$100,000. These sums in those days were as big as ten times the same amounts now, and many of my friends thought I was going crazy. At one time I paid \$5,000 to the papers for publishing an installment of a certain story which ended with the words, 'continued next week in the New York Ledger.' I did this once in the Herald, publishing two installments, so that the readers thought they were going to get the whole story in the Herald, and then at the close of the second installment stated that they must look for its continuation in the Ledger. All this increased my circulation."

The Secret of Good Advertising.
"One of the secrets of good advertising is to have your advertisements unlike those of any other man. If all advertisements in a paper are disposed, this is equal to no display. My advertisements were always original, they attracted attention and the publishers of the papers that were so advertised, were attracted to them. One of the older Bennett sent me word that I must use less capitals. I answered that I would not use any, and repeated sentence announcing a new story over and over again to the extent of several columns without a break. The letters were continued out to the edge of the column line, without regard to the finishing of the words, and the next day I had several columns of solid type in the Herald. The advertisement was about the most striking the Herald had ever had, and after that Mr. Bennett told me I could do as I pleased. At one time the Tribune refused to give me a page in the Weekly. Mr. Bennett heard of this and sent word that the Herald would display a gift me all the space I wanted. I read that I would take the whole paper on the next Saturday. Mr. Bennett said all right and published an additional sheet, giving me a page opposite each page of reading matter. I could give you fifty other instances of advertisements which attracted attention, but this is enough. One of the great secrets of success, I believe, is to first have a good thing, then to advertise it so that the people cannot help knowing that you have it."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

most accurate results at his former observatory at Lehigh university, and such a series he is now carrying on with the beautiful new instruments of his present charge.

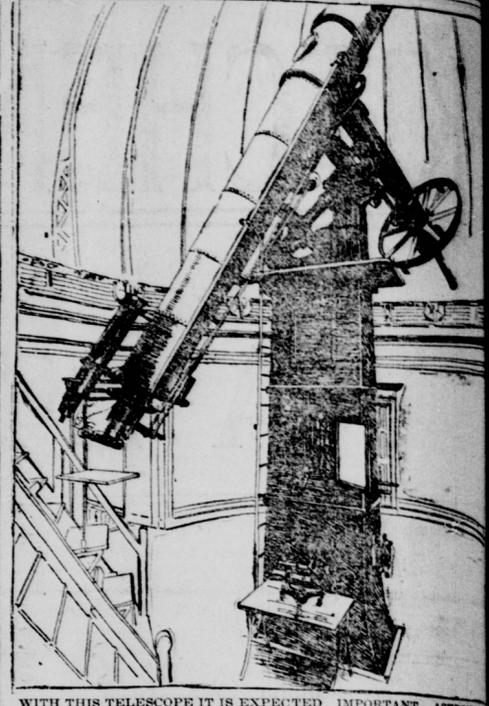
In the same building are also a 4-inch meridian circle and a 3-inch universal transit, both mounted so that their telescopes swing in a north and south vertical plane. For use in observations made with these latter there is a sidereal clock and a chronograph. The clock was on exhibition at the World's fair. One of its most distinguishing features is that by means of a little electric motor, operated by a battery of six Gordon cells, it winds itself once every hour, and hence is independent of the forgetfulness of man, requiring no attention but that necessary to keep the battery in running order. The principal requirement placed on a clock for astronomical purposes is that it shall keep accurate time under all conditions of temperature and weather. At present this clock is running at a uniform gain of less than one-tenth of a second per day.

To start in a fitting manner the institution thus equipped on the career of scientific usefulness, the officers and friends of the university gathered on the observatory grounds a few days ago. The provost of the university, C. C. Harrison, introduced the orator for the occasion, Prof. Simon Newcomb, late superintendent of the Nautical Almanac office in Washington, and the leading mathematical astronomer of this country. Dr. Newcomb spoke very appropriately on the "Problem of Astronomy," many of which will be investigated by the institution for which the address was delivered.

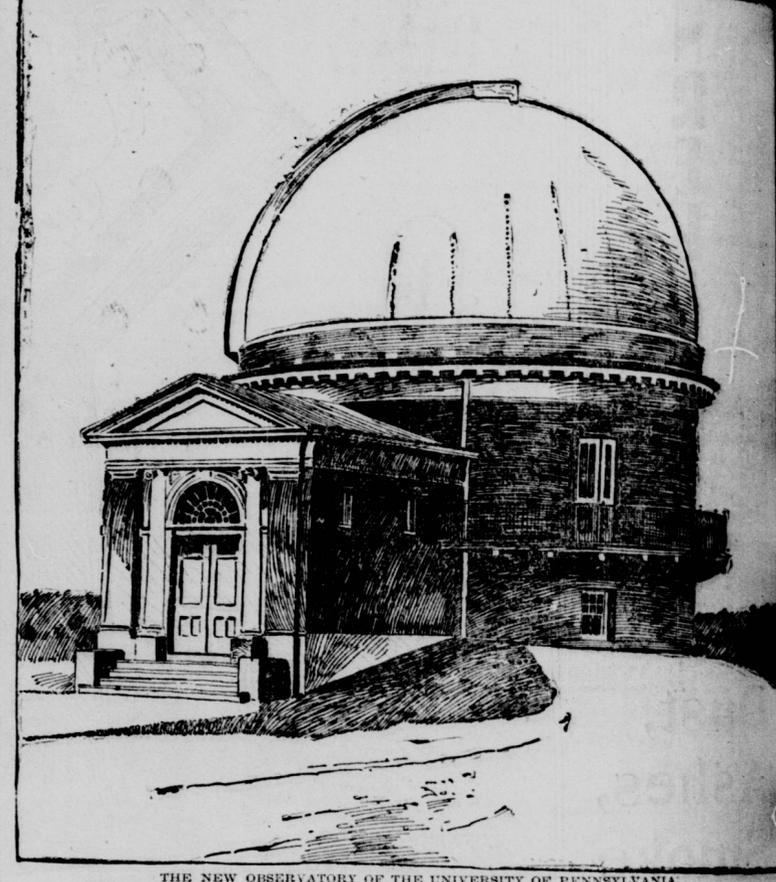
Following Dr. Newcomb, short speeches were made by the director, Prof. Doolittle; Dr. Warner, of the firm of Warner & Swasey, the makers of the instrumental part; Mr. Brashear, the maker of the optical parts, who gave a very graphic description of the making of a great lens, and the difficulties attending the process; Miss Mary Proctor, daughter of the late English astronomer, who upheld woman's place in astronomy; and Dr. Barker, head of the department of physics of the university, who spoke of the relation between physics and astronomy.

The observatory so equipped and directed, and started so well, cannot fail in its great purpose of increasing the useful knowledge of mankind.

HENRY B. EVANS,
Instructor in astronomy, U. of P.



WITH THIS TELESCOPE IT IS EXPECTED IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES WILL BE MADE. (From a Photograph.)



THE NEW OBSERVATORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA. (From a Photograph.)

Maiden, Wife and Mother

To the Maiden Crossing the threshold of womanhood, whose life has been darkened by the results of ignorance of the laws of nature; who needs the sympathy and advice of a physician, but who hesitates to expose her sufferings to her family doctor because of the embarrassment it would cause.

To the Wife Beginning to feel her inaptitude for the position she is called upon by nature to fill, feeling the encroachments of disease upon her delicate constitution and knowing not how to regain her wasted health.

To the Mother—God bless her—who has exhausted the best of her life in the care and nourishment of her children, and who well knows the impotency of drugs for her many complaints. To those who feel the loss of nervous strength, whose vitality is wasted in the cares and worries of life and who have weak, trembling sensations, pains in the back, nervous headache, bearing-down pains and a thousand other signs of exhausted vitality.

A Book for You A book is offered free of cost which will point out the plain truths regarding your condition, its cause, and will tell you how to cure it. This book is the result of Dr. A. T. Sanden's thirty years' experience as a physician. It is full of valuable information and tells how you may regain health, strength and perfect womanhood through the use of Dr. Sanden's Electric Belt, made specially for women. Send for this book today, by mail. It is closely sealed, without marks, free. Address **SANDEN ELECTRIC CO.,** Corner of Third and Washington Streets, Portland, Oregon.



ROBERT BONNER.

from business worth his millions. It is the story of a young man who started an enterprise out of his savings, and by his brains and industry increased his capital a thousandfold. It is the story of a business man who spent more than a million dollars in newspaper advertising and who, when the world laughed and wondered at his extravagance, went on to spend more. It is the story of a man who never owed a dollar, who never asked credit, but who throughout his life has benefited thousands and given away tens of thousands. It is in short the story of Robert Bonner, the millionaire founder of the New York Ledger. I give it to you as nearly as I can remember, in the words in which, in response to my questions, he told it to me.

Robert Bonner at Seventy-Three.

But first let me tell you how Mr. Bonner looked the other night as we chatted together on Fifty-Eighth street, New York. He has a face and form much like that of ex-President Hayes, but he seems to be ten years younger. The fact is that he is ten years older than Mr. Harrison. Mr. Bonner's complexion is ruddy, his hair is done and dandy, his hair and beard has but few gray strands, while those of the ex-president are as white as snow. Still Mr. Bonner is now 73. He does not appear to be 60, and he moves about with the energy of a man in his prime. He had spent the whole day at his farm at Tarrytown, inspecting the training of some of the fastest trotting horses of the world, but he did not seem to be tired. During our chat he went several times to rooms in the upper part of his house to verify matters which he referred to. As I was about to leave I asked for his photograph. He went up again to get it, and when I offered him my pencil to write his name upon it, he said that he preferred to use a pen, and that he would run upstairs to write it. I found Mr. Bonner's soul as young as his body. He is in sympathy with young men who wish to succeed, and when I asked him as to his life and those elements in it which had contributed to his success, he answered freely.

Discontent as an Element of Success.

"I have had one principle in my life," said Mr. Bonner, "which I think has largely contributed to my success. I don't know how I got the idea, but it was well expressed in a quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson, which reads: 'O discontented man! Whatever you want, pay the price and take it.' I saw those words when I was a boy, and they took fast hold of my mind. I early learned that whatever I got had to be paid for either in work or money, and I have been willing to pay the price."

"That you are naturally energetic, Mr. Bonner?"

"No, I am not," was the reply. "When I was a little boy I was the laziest mortal about the house. I hated to move, though naturally I was not deficient. I remember one story they tell about me. My family were Scotch Irish Presbyterians, and I was brought up upon the Bible and Shorter Catechism. I had to learn most of the Bible and was rather apt at quoting from it. One day when I was about eleven years of age they told me I was lying in front of the fire enveloping my father when my father asked me to give him some wood. I arose slowly and scratched myself and looking at the fire, exclaimed:

"Job, 23d, seventh: Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards."

Working for \$25 a Year.
"This business of mine continued until I came to this country about a year later and until I went into a printing office at Hartford, Conn. Then I shook it off. I saw that if I wanted to succeed I had to work and I did work. My hours were from 8 in the morning until 8 at night, and my wages were for the first year \$25, for the second year \$30, for the third, \$40, of course I got my board and clothes in addition. The paper on which I was employed was the Hartford Courant, the paper which Gen. Hawley now owns. It then had a circulation of 300 copies. I know, for I had to wet down the paper every morning.

"I soon saw that if I wanted to succeed



HENRY WARD BEECHER WHEN BONNER FIRST MET HIM.

"What kind of a man was Edward Everett?" I asked.
"He was a much misunderstood man," replied Mr. Bonner. "You remember that Wendell Phillips once said of him: 'It was when Mr. Everett was in the Senate that I met him. He was a man of great spirit, but that human gentleman, Charles Sumner, when Everett was our minister to England, Queen Victoria was said to have remarked that he was the only American gentleman she had ever met.' Mr. Everett was more than a polished icicle. He was not a mere intellectuality, but he was a man of great soul. His letters to me were full of feeling. He seldom sighed

and after that Mr. Bennett told me I could do as I pleased. At one time the Tribune refused to give me a page in the Weekly. Mr. Bennett heard of this and sent word that the Herald would display a gift me all the space I wanted. I read that I would take the whole paper on the next Saturday. Mr. Bennett said all right and published an additional sheet, giving me a page opposite each page of reading matter. I could give you fifty other instances of advertisements which attracted attention, but this is enough. One of the great secrets of success, I believe, is to first have a good thing, then to advertise it so that the people cannot help knowing that you have it."

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