

MAJOR POND, THE PRINCE OF LECTURE CICERONES

Beecher First on His Roll of Lions and Talmage Last—His Friendships With Men Whose Tours He Managed.

"I sit between wit and beauty," quoth a conceited Englishman, finding himself placed with Madame de Staël on one hand and a famous beauty on the other. "Yes," was the wit's tart rejoinder, "and possessing neither." Such, in a measure, was the fate of our genial old friend, Major Pond. Without title to fame, he sat always in the shadow of celebrity. Without distinguished gifts, he was constantly in the society of the gifted. Success for him lay in promoting the success of his betters, and his name will be written in a hundred biographies—of other men.

And yet it was a pleasant life out of which the major has lately slipped. Nature had made a nice adjustment of the man to his niche. Major Pond was big-souled enough to play second fiddle with enthusiasm. He was innocent of envy. His best genius was a genius for hero worship; he was great in capacity for admiration. He loved his lions and rejoiced generously in their triumphs. He basked in reflected glory as comfortably as though it were his own. He was the prince of "promoters."

It bespeaks a certain nobility in the major, much tact, much courage, much force, that his personally conducted lions loved him. For when a man is being rushed about the country as a "talking-piece of baggage," to be wound up every day at the same hour, it is something of an art to keep his affection. That the major's celebrities did love him is abundantly proved by his letter files. Writes Bill Nye: "It's funny that a little cuss like you should make such a cavity in New York when away from it." And each in his own peculiar way, Ian Maclaren, Conan Doyle, Hall Caine, Mark Twain and other lions, expresses the same emotion. Major Pond not only had business relations with practically all the distinguished folk of his day—he knew them intimately, dined with them, travelled in their private cars, saw them with the mask off, learned all their individual oddities.

Major Pond's acquaintance was as varied as it was wide. It included Josh Billings and Walt Whitman, Lyman Abbott and P. T. Barnum, Sir Henry Irving and Booker T. Washington. He sometimes travelled with them in wonderful combinations. Think, for instance, of a season spent with Mark Twain and George Cable! These "talking pieces of genius," as the major called them, beguiled the tedium of the road by "letting themselves out" in song and caper.

Another time it was Bill Nye and James Whitcomb Riley who united to cheer the manager's fun-loving soul. By way of advertisement of the combination Nye wrote Riley's "autobiography" and Riley wrote Nye's. A sample will show the unique style:

"Of the poet's present personality we need speak but briefly. His dress is at once elegant and paid for. It is even less picturesque than all-wool. Not liking hair particularly, he wears but little, and that of the mildest shade. He is a good talker—when spoken to—but a much better listener, and often longs to change places with his audience so that he also may retire."

The happy Major was present at many a notable meeting of literary folk from both sides of the sea. It was he who arranged that Edwin Arnold, whose first visit to this country was made expressly to see Walt Whitman, should surprise the aged poet in his home. Pond sat by while the two friends discussed their literary loves, each reciting freely from the other's poems. Again, the major made one at a little supper at which Joe Jefferson and Anthony Hope first met and talked till the small hours of the morning. It was he who introduced Henry Irving to his thereafter close friend, Henry Ward Beecher.

Among Major Pond's warm friends he reckoned Henry Ward Beecher first. During the eleven years of their acquaintance they travelled together some 200,000 miles, and, excepting Arizona and New Mexico, there was not a State or Territory in the Union which they did not visit. Being friends with Beecher during the black days of his trial and disgrace meant stirring experiences. Pond said:

"I was near him at the time of his greatest sorrow, when he was reviled and spat upon. I saw the majestic courage with which he passed through gaping crowds at railroad stations and at the entrances of hotels and public halls—a courage which I had not conceived mere humanity could possess."

The post of manager to Beecher was not without its actual physical peril. In Richmond, hostility ran so high that Beecher was urged not to risk attempting to speak. Even the police detailed to protect him sympathized with the mob. No doorkeeper could be got, so the major collected the dollars himself, risking the eggs. The Legislature had passed an informal vote to boycott the lecture, and then each member, secure in his knowledge that none of the others would be there, took the opportunity to hear Beecher. They met, and, in view of the joke on themselves, prepared for mischief. Mr. Beecher faced the jeering mob and opened with an audacious drive at the Legislature in special session assembled. He captured his crowd. The evening ended in cheers and demonstrations.

Again, when Beecher's private car was attacked by a mob, it was Major Pond who heated a poker in the car stove and "went for them." "I jabbed right into them," said he, "and they began to get out!" The major's devotion had its reward; he had the satisfaction of seeing the tide turn in Beecher's favor and hearing on both sides the continent and both sides the ocean demonstrations of love and con-

fidence from his church, his friends, his country.

A mightily different experience awaited the manager with a mightily different sort of clergyman—T. De Witt Talmage. English audiences at first went mad over "Talm-o-d-ge." The erratic clergyman was literally jerked from his berth by a welcoming crowd when the steamer landed; a vast throng surrounded the carriage which conveyed him to his first service, unhooked the horses, dragged the coach to the church door, lifted the divine bodily into the air, and having torn off his coatails as souvenirs, thrust him into the packed building. Even the manager was for some long seconds suspended over the heads of the enthusiastic crowd.

Everything looked like a phenomenally prosperous tour. The manager's mail arrived by the barrelful; everybody wanted a lecture at any price. Unfortunately for Major Pond, however, the clergyman declined to abide by his contract. He must be paid high for these astonishing ovations, or home he would go. The major had booked his first lectures too low; he was obliged to pay Talmage an exorbitant sum; the English crowds soon sickened of the lecturer's eccentricities when once they discovered the secular character of his addresses. The result was that the bargaining doctor got all the proceeds and his faithful manager had none.

Happier, both financially and socially, were his relations with that prince of explorers—Henry M. Stanley. Like many another man of action, Stanley was at his conversational best in tete-a-tete. Night after night in his private car the big-hearted adventurer poured out stirring tales of experience such as never reached the ears of his audiences, nor yet the eyes of his readers.

More than one successful lecture star has had to thank Major Pond for his start. He had a keen discrimination, and not infrequently sought out and dragged upon the lecture platform an obscure genius who never thought to see himself before the footlights. Such a genius was Bill Nye. When the major found him he was acting as postmaster and editing the Laramie Boomerang over a livery stable. ("Walk down the Alley, Twist the Gray Mule's Tail, Take the Elevator Immediately!") Pond persuaded him to try lecturing, and as there proved to be both money and useful publicity in it, Nye was grateful, and used for years to remember the major with characteristic notes, one of which had the following exhaustive signature:

"Yours with a heart full of gratitude and a system full of drugs, paints, oils, turpentine, glass, putty and every thing usually kept in a first-class drug store. BILL NYE. P. S.—Open all night."

Here and there exists a man who has withstood the major's blandishments and declined to be "platformed" under any circumstances. Such kept cannily out of reach of Pond's far-famed tongue persuasive. Three letters from Charles Spurgeon repulsed him with a crescendo of vehemence:

"Dear Mr. Pond: I am much obliged to you for your letter, but I can't say that I see my way to the entertainment you propose. There is such a thing as paying 125 cents for a dollar, and though I suppose there is money in the lecturing business, it seems to me that the bother, the fuss, the being at everybody's beck and call, the night journeys, and so on, make it very dear. I've seen a few men who've lived through the fight, but they did not look happy."

"I might do it as soon as I had two mortgages on my house, a lien on the horses and a bill of sale on the furniture, and writer's cramp in both hands; but at present I'm busy, and contented to go on with the regular writing business. You forget that I have already wandered over most of the States, and there isn't enough money in sight to hire me to face again some of the hotels and some of the railway systems I have met with America is a great country, but she is not made for lecturing in. With renewed thanks for your very kind letter, believe me, Yours sincerely, RUDYARD KIPLING."

Of all his hundred or so of proteges, there are but two or three who have called out the major's criticism. Talmage he thought a bit dishonorable, or at least, unbusinesslike. P. T. Barnum saw a chariot rider killed before his eyes, and rejoiced because a better performer was waiting for the place, and the manager put him down for heartless.—Boston Transcript.



Rear Admiral Harris, Paymaster General of the Navy, Formerly Stationed at Honolulu.



AT THE BOOK TABLE.

Mrs. Carter H. Harrison, wife of the mayor of Chicago, is writing another book of fairy tales, along the lines of her first book, "Prince Silver Wings."

Jacob A. Riis, who has been called by President Roosevelt "New York's most useful citizen," is getting together material for a book called "Theodore Roosevelt, the Citizen."

Hamblen Sears, author of "None but the Brave," has just finished a new novel with the scenes shifting from Cape Cod and Boston to New York City. It is entitled "Richard Daunt," and will be published in the fall.

Charles Marriott, the author of "The Column," has completed a new novel, "The House on the Sands," which will be published in the autumn. The scene is laid in Cornwall, and there is a political element in the plot.

Thomas Dixon, Jr.'s new novel will be called "The One Woman," and it will be issued August 1st. The theme is socialism, which is described as a deadly force, annihilating home life and weakening the structure of Anglo-Saxon manhood.

The author of the book of "Perverted Proverbs," who writes under the name of "Col. D. Streamer," is Captain Harry Graham, aide-camp to the governor-general of Canada. He is the author of "Ballads of the Boer War," and of several books of humorous verse, "The Baby's Baedeker," "Ruthless Rymes for Heartless Homes," etc.

The large volume on "The Island of Formosa," which the Macmillan Company are just publishing, was printed in Yokohama, and has a frontispiece in color by a Japanese artist and colored reproductions of Chinese posters, as well as numerous photographic illustrations. James Davidson, the author, has been for eight or nine years United States consul in Formosa.

Among the season's novels in course of dramatization are "Lees and Leaven," by Edward M. Townsend; "The Filigree Ball," by Anna Katherine Green; "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall," by Charles Major; "Hearts Courageous," by Hallie Erminie Rives; and "John Ermine of the Yellowstone," by Frederic Remington, which will be produced by James K. Hackett.

Hilaire Belloc, who began his literary career with a nonsense book for the nursery, who continued it with two remarkable studies of Danton and Robespierre, and who has also written, in lighter vein, a volume called "The Road to Rome," has now had published in England a satire on contemporary journalism and authorship, called "Caliban's Guide to Letters." An American edition will doubtless appear soon.

Charles Scribner's Sons will publish at once the pamphlet entitled "My Relations with Carlyle," that was written for private circulation by James Anthony Froude after he published his memorials of Carlyle. It is now republished by Froude's executors as a reply to Sir James Crichton-Browne's introduction to the "New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle." With Mr. Froude's own statement will be given a letter from the late Sir James Stephen, that was also printed for private circulation in 1886.

FLASHES FROM THE FOYER.

Charles Frohman has signed a contract with Francis Wilson binding him to appear under Frohman's management in the United States and England for three years from September, 1904. Wilson will continue to appear in "Erminie" under his present management during the coming season, after which he will abandon comic opera to appear in legitimate comedy.

After an arduous but highly profitable season, both artistically and financially, Richard Mansfield is resting in so far as his physical and mental energy will let him. Frequent cruises around Long Island Sound in his sailing yacht are his principal diversion. Mr. Mansfield's season will begin October 12th at the Lyric Theatre, New York. It is a new playhouse, which he will dedicate by presenting for the first time on any stage a version by Mme. de Meisner of Count Alexis Tolstoy's tragic theme, "Ivan the Terrible." Later in the New York engagement he will present "Old Heidelberg," a comedy of German student life, which has been very successful in Germany for the past three or four seasons, and in London last winter, when it was done by George Alexander.

Henry E. Dixey, the actor, is having lots of trouble. The Bingham agreed to bring him out of this fall in a Fitch play, "The Last of the Dandies," done in England by Beerholm Tree. But it seems it was not to be. Mr. Fitch couldn't deliver the play, Mr. Bingham couldn't deliver the part, and Dixey, therefore, couldn't star in it. Now Mr. Bingham is suing Mr. Fitch, alleging failure of agreement; Mr. Dixey is suing Mr. Bingham, alleging that he was long idle, and that his salary should be forthcoming, even though the play was not; and Mr. Fitch is suing Mr. Bingham for back royalties on his other plays in the Bingham repertoire, "The Climbers" and "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson," which Mr. Bingham is holding back to protect the fifteen hundred dollars he says he paid for the delivery of "The Last of the Dandies."

Lotta M. Crabtree, the former stage favorite and the donor of the fountain at the junction of Market and Geary Streets, has sold her realty in San Francisco. In 1869 Lotta's mother bought for her a piece of property on the south side of Turk Street, 87:6 east of Hyde. It is a lot 50x137:6, with an L 50x87:6, on which are four buildings, all the worse for their thirty-four years of wear. For this property Lotta paid \$12,000. She has now sold the property for \$50,000. The purchaser is Covington Pringle. Lotta and her mother came out to California about four weeks ago for the purpose of disposing of this property, as Miss Crabtree is desirous of consolidating her interests in the East. She has been very successful in her business investments, and is the possessor of \$1,000,000 of real estate in Boston. Her mother is eighty-five years of age, but is hale and hearty.

SOME GOOD STORIES OF THE TIMES WE LIVE IN

Near-Sighted But Great—A Case of Defective Hearing—Parable of the Innocent Pup. A Chairman's Predicament.

"President Roosevelt," said an old politician, "is unique in many ways. It was a favorite saying of James G. Blaine that no nearsighted man ever succeeded in politics. Yet here is Roosevelt—who must wear powerful glasses—President of the United States and in a fair way to succeed himself.

"Think back and see if you can recall any other nearsighted man who has been a leader. Blaine said there never was one, and I cannot recall one. Blaine's argument was that the nearsighted man became too narrow, from his very affliction, ever to be great. Still, the President evidently is the exception to the rule."

A CASE OF DEFECTIVE HEARING.

When Henry Norman, the English writer, who is now a Member of Parliament, came to this country several years ago, he made a trip to Washington and was entertained by the National Press Club.

Norman enjoyed himself hugely. He struck the newspaper men at the Capital as being a fine fellow, but they found he was a trifle slow in appreciating the jokes and stories that were told at their gatherings.

One night as he sat in the Press Club two or three correspondents decided to try him out. Karl Decker was chosen as the spokesman. Decker took a little bell from one of the tables and walked over to Norman.

"Mr. Norman," he said, "I have been delegated by my fellow club members to say to you that we have thoroughly enjoyed your visit. We consider you a fine type of the English newspaper man. Before you go, and as a testimonial of our friendship and esteem, we have decided to present you a slight remembrance, and on behalf of the club I am instructed to give you this ring."

As Decker said "ring" he tapped the bell smartly and placed it on the table. Norman was surprised. He hemmed and hawed a bit, but then pulled himself together and said: "Mr. Decker and the members of the National Press Club: I can hardly find words to thank you. I have enjoyed my visit here greatly. I shall always cherish pleasant memories of Washington. I am overwhelmed at this evidence of your comradeship."

Norman went on like that for five minutes. He made a very clever little speech. Then he said: "I am pleased to receive your gift, but, as is only natural, I suppose, Mr. Decker, in the embarrassment of the moment, for we newspaper men are notoriously poor speakers, has given me a bell instead of a ring."

WHAT THE WILD WAVES WERE SAYING.

Just before the Spanish-American war a number of Senators and Representatives went to Cuba to investigate conditions there and, particularly, to look into the reconcentrado camp horrors.

They were on a yacht and ran into terrible weather off Cape Hatteras. Everybody on board, except Amos Cummings, now dead, but then a Representative from New York, was seasick. One of the sickest was William Alden Smith, the Representative from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

After the weather had moderated, when they were off Jupiter Inlet, the party came together for dinner for the first time since they left the quiet waters of the Potomac. The cook had prepared a fine custard for dessert. Cummings didn't care for any dessert and went on deck to smoke his pipe. The pale, weak voyagers were partaking of the custard when William Alden Smith, thinking to add some gaiety to a melancholy function, piped weakly through a porthole to Cummings: "Amos, what are the wild waves saying?"

Cummings blew a whiff of smoke from his pipe, looked thoughtfully off to sea and then replied: "They are saying, 'A little more custard, please.'"

And that finished that dinner, then and there.

THE PARABLE OF THE INNOCENT PUP.

During the excitement in Congress after the Maine was blown up in Havana harbor Representative McCleary of Minnesota made an ill-advised speech. He said the sending of the Maine to Cuban waters at that time was practically an act of war and that some such catastrophe might have been expected.

The speech was not popular, naturally. McCleary was criticised everywhere. Speaker Reed, who was in the chair at the time the speech was made, spoke to Representative Tawney, also of Minnesota, about it next day.

"Jim," said Reed, "what's the matter with McCleary?"

"Nothing that I know of," replied Tawney.

"What's he talking this way for?"

"I don't know."

"Huh!" said Reed, "he reminds me

of the Kansas dog that tackled a cyclone. You see, a family from the East moved into Kansas along back a year or two ago, and they didn't know much about cyclones. They had a dog, a fresh, innocent pup, bred in the effete and windless East. One day a cyclone came along. The folks scooted for the cyclone cellar, but the dog, being an Eastern product, didn't understand. He hailed the advent of the cyclone with joyous barks and started off to tackle it.

"The result was, Jim, that when that cyclone did business with that dog, which charged down up it with open jaws, the dog was blown plump inside out. It was a dicensa of a predicament for the dog. After the cyclone passed along and the folks came out of the cellar they found the dog there, picturesque, but of no further value as a dog. The farmer surveyed the dog ruefully. He was a good dog and he hated to lose him. Then the foolishness of the dog struck him and he said, wrathfully: 'There, drat ye; that's what comes of keepin' yo'r mouth open in the face of a storm.'"

A LIGHTWEIGHT.

General Charles H. Grosvenor, the Republican war-horse of Ohio, was billed to speak in Pittsburg in the last campaign.

The meeting was a large one. When it was time to introduce the General the Chairman arose and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I need hardly say to you that we are particularly fortunate tonight in having with us one of the greatest Republicans of our sister State, Ohio. We are to have the pleasure of listening to a man whose name is a household word in Pittsburg, who has fought for us the battle of Protection, upon which so much of Pittsburg's material prosperity depends. You all know him. Everybody in Pittsburg respects and honors him. He is our friend. His name is on all our lips. Friends, I now have the pleasure of introducing to you that sterling patriot, that rock-ribbed Republican, that eminent statesman, General—General—"

The Chairman flushed, stammered, wiped his forehead nervously and then blurted, "General Gossamer, of Ohio."

ENGLISH AS SHE IS SPOKE.

There was strife and turmoil between rival factions in one of the cities in the far West visited by President Roosevelt on his recent trip.

The Mayor met the President at the station. He told his troubles. "Do you know, Mr. President," he said, "I haven't been able to get these people to corroborate."

At the dinner that night the Mayor sat next to the President. After the guests were seated there was a lull. The Mayor arose to the occasion. "Walters," he said in a voice that reached every part of the banquet hall—"waiters, bring on the feed!"

SENATOR BAILEY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

Senator Joseph W. Bailey, of Texas, was born in Crystal Springs, Copiah County, Mississippi.

"Joe was a great lad," said an old Mississippian a few days ago. "When he was seventeen years old he had four points of preeminent greatness over any other young fellow in Copiah County:

"He was the best-looking young man, he owned the biggest watch chain, he was the best pool-player, and there wasn't a man in the county who he couldn't argue down on any proposition whatsoever."

That was a good many years ago. Senator Bailey doesn't wear his great watch chain now and, so far as known he rarely plays pool, but he retains his good looks and, to say nothing of Copiah County, there are few men elsewhere whom he cannot argue down.

Miss Helen Gould was recently entertaining one of the girls' clubs, in which she is interested, at her home on the Hudson. After the girls had walked about the grounds and conservatories for a time, she invited them to wander over the house and see the pictures and objects of art. While they were thus engaged she overheard one of the girls remark, confidently, to a companion: "Say, Mamie, even heaven won't feaze Miss Gould after this place."

Got a life customer: "You haven't charged me nearly as much for half-soling these shoes as I expected." "No, ma'am. We charge according to the size of the shoe."—Chicago Tribune.

Reporter (in the Mastodonastoria): "Is it true, Mr. Goldwaller, that you have bought this hotel?" Innumerable:—"No, sir! It is not necessary; I can afford to be a guest."—Puck.

A little girl thus described a dachshund she had seen: "It was one of those funny ones—you know, the ones that are a dog and a half long and half a dog high. You must know the sort. It is a dog that only has four legs, but looks as if it ought to have six."

Wouldn't do: Photographer—"Beg pardon, sir, but can you look a little less stern and severe?" Sitter—"Never mind how stern I look. This photograph is for campaign use. I am a candidate for judge. Go ahead."—Chicago Tribune.

"Have you any request to make?" asked the sheriff of the erstwhile society man who was to be hanged on the morrow. "Yes, one," replied Hansome Harry; "let me tie the noose myself. I never yet wore a ready-made tie."—Ex.

Miss Nixdorf—"This is a pretty time of night for that Dasher girl to be playing the piano." Miss Also—"Oh, she's no respecter of time. You can tell that from the way she's playing."—Baltimore American.



Gen. John C. Bates, who is to succeed Gen. Davis in command of the troops in the Philippines.