

**BOOKS AND BOOK-MAKERS**

**EBEN HOLDEN**—Irving Bachelier Tells How He Wrote the Most Successful Book of the Century.

IRVING BACHELIER, whose book, "Eben Holden," has sold 250,000 copies and is now going off like hot cakes at the rate of about 9,000 a week, is an example of the newspaper man who makes a success in literature. But his success illustrates the point so often made—that the newspaper man cannot do literature and newspaper work at the same time, any more than a man can swim and walk simultaneously or stand on his head and on his feet at once.

Mr. Bachelier for fourteen years was broker in articles and stories for newspapers and periodicals. The Bachelier Syndicate was one of the many establishments that supplied newspapers with ready-made goods, but the man who wrote "Eben Holden" has not the huckster talent that alone would make such a trade profitable. Out of his syndicate Mr. Bachelier never grew rich. A few years ago John Brisben Walker, who runs the Cosmopolitan Magazine, bought the syndicate out and employed its founder to run it.

Mr. Bachelier spent three interesting months with Mr. Walker. At the end of that time he tendered his resignation. He had no definite idea of what he was going to do next. The only thing which he was absolutely sure was that he wanted to do something else somewhere else.

"I hadn't very much capital when I left Mr. Walker's employ," says Mr. Bachelier. "I had put a little money aside, and my wife and I decided that instead of looking for employment, it would not be a bad idea for me to see if I could produce something in a literary way."

"The extent of my worldly possessions you may judge by the fact that I thought \$15 a month was as much rent as I could afford while I engaged in literature. We lived at Irvington-on-Hudson. I was a literary man for just thirty days. In that time I produced 30,000 words. It was the first part of 'Eben Holden,' as it now stands. That is, 'Eben Holden' is the original story that I wrote then, with 60,000 more words tacked on to it."

"I sent my story, which I then called 'Uncle Eb,' to Harper's Round Table, the Youth's Companion and St. Nicholas. They rejected it with delightful unanimity."

"While my manuscript was start-

ing on its rounds I received an offer from the proprietor of a New York newspaper which I thought I could not afford to decline, and I didn't decline it. Then for a year or two I engaged in journalism. It was really the first time I had ever actually worked on the staff of a newspaper, although for fourteen years I had been in the newspaper business.

"In December a year ago a friend of mine who used to be on the staff of a Brooklyn paper, and who is now connected with my Boston publisher, wrote to me and told me that the firm was looking for a good novel. He thought I was the man to write it, for he had always believed that I had such talent concealed about me somewhere. In reply I said to him that I might prepare a book, but that I didn't feel very much like throwing up the work I was then doing and going into such a speculative venture. I suggested that if the firm would 'grub stake' me I might consider the suggestion.

"It so happened that business kept me travelling a good deal while I was doing this, and much of the story was written on telegraph blanks in Pullman cars, for the 'grub stake' that I got from the publisher was sufficient to enable me to travel in proper style. Since December one year ago I have written altogether 150,000 words. Now I have just finished my second story, and I'm going to take a rest of three months before I do anything else.

"The characters in 'Eben Holden' are not portraits, although I consider myself to a great extent more of a copyist than a novelist. 'Eben Holden' is a composite, with my father's old hired man as the basis, and some members of my own family blended into it. The scene of the story is laid at Pierpont, N. Y., my home. The people up there are real Americans. They have the quaint philosophy that can only be developed among folks who have time to think. In New York few of us ever have that."

"'Eben Holden' has been selling very well in England. It has gone well also in Melbourne, and a firm in Germany wants the rights of translation. I don't know how the quaint phraseology of Uncle Eb will sound in the Teuton tongue, but I suppose it's all right, or they wouldn't want it."

"I do not think that it is possible for a newspaper man to mix up literature and newspaper work. The latter takes out of you all you have."

When you are through with your day's work there is nothing left. I suppose a newspaper man could make himself do literary work during his vacations, if he ever got any.

"My advice to persons who wish to publish is to seek some new and pushing firm, as I did. Some of the old-fashioned establishments are not publishers at all; they are simply printers. They don't know anything about the art of disseminating and selling their produce, and if no one comes to their store for a book they don't sell it. I have had very many offers, of course, from publishers, but I intend to stick to the Boston firm that first brought me out. 'Eben Holden,' you may notice, is being widely advertised in street cars and newspapers. That is largely my idea of pushing a book."

"I do not think it is the title that sells a book, any more than the title of a newspaper. It is what one man says to another about it."

"I attribute much of my success to the help of my wife. She and I wrote 'Eben Holden' together—especially the love scenes. I would always read these to her and ask her opinion of them. Her opinion of them as they stood when I first turned them out was invariably very bad. She made me rewrite most of them. You know, perhaps, how mad it makes a man when one of his efforts which he thinks is rather good meets with adverse criticism. Well, when my wife told me what rubbish I had written, and how I had left out perhaps the most important point in some love scene, I would get pretty hot and insist that I was right, and that my work was fine. After a while, however, I would cool off and meekly do as she said, re-writing the scene and of course improving it."

"There is really no one whose criticism is so valuable as that of one's wife. There can be no question of her disinterestedness. A mere friend may feel timid about treading on your feelings. He may fear to offend you, and he often sacrifices frankness to friendship. The beauty of a wife is that she doesn't."

Mr. Bachelier then told something about the old "Lantherne Club," which he and a few writers established on the roof of a house then standing on the site where the Rhinelander Building now is, in William street. The shanty on the roof was occupied by an old Dutchman, who gladly gave up possession for the sum of \$50. Then the organizers, among whom was Stephen Crane, employed a cook and fitted up the shanty so that it looked like a ship's cabin. There, far above the madding crowd, the "Lanthernes" held high intellectual revels. A luncheon was served every day, and the members let their

hair grow long and their minds grow high. Every Saturday night they held a literary banquet. Each week some member of the club was assigned to write a story, and it was read at the dinner. Ecstasies and favorable criticism were prohibited. After the reading of the story the members jumped upon it as hard as they could, pointed out the flaws in it and panned it generally, if possible. The highest tribute that a story could receive was complete silence. That was the best and writer ever got.

"But such a coterie must always collapse," said Mr. Bachelier. "Why must it collapse? Oh, just bills and things. Rent comes due, and few cooks will go on cooking forever for nothing. That's who we collapsed. If the rent had been complimentary and the service of the steward gratuitous we might be running yet. Clubs of that kind ought never to be expected to pay anything to any one."

**TRICKS IN THE SILK TRADE.**

**How Shoppers Are Fooled—Tests Which Show the Pure Material.**

Pure silk, when it has been through all the processes necessary to bring out all its good qualities, is worth its weight in silver, said an expert the other day. Therefore the women who expect to buy pure silk at little more than the price of cotton must expect to be fooled; and there are lots of ways by which the manufacturer gets even with them.

They make stuff that is called silk, and pass it for it with credulous persons who don't know any better, out of nearly any old thing now. One favorite imitation silk is made of cellulose treated with chemicals. It isn't a good material to get on fire in. Then there are South Sea Island cottons and some mercerized cotton which, after treatment, look something like silk, though of course they wear very differently and their silken appearance soon vanishes.

But it is in adulterating goods which really have some silk in them that the greatest skill is exercised to deceive the buyer. To obtain the required rustle and body rough floss is often used for the wool of the material. This soon causes it to wear shiny.

Another trick is to increase the weight and apparent solidity of a flimsy silk material by using metallic salts in the dye vats. Pressing, with some kinds of silk, increases the weight also, but at the sacrifice of strength. Cheap, crackly, stiff silk which has heavy cords is good silk to avoid. It won't wear.

There are several tests which reveal readily the purity of a piece of silk. The microscope, of course, will show it at once, even to an unpracticed eye. Pure silk has the appear-

ance of fine smooth tubes. Another good test is by burning. Pure silk burns slowly, with a slight odor; cotton flares up quickly and would throw off a decidedly disagreeable smell.

Then the tongue will readily reveal the presence of metallic salts. There is no mistaking their taste. But all these may be disregarded, said the expert, when silk is offered for the price of cotton. You need not bother to test that stuff.

**EVER WATCHFUL UNCLE SAM.**

Consul Whom He Sent to the Philippines in 1901.

In the journal of the United States Senate for the years immediately following the organization of this government appear two entries which indicate that Uncle Sam had interests to be looked after in the East at a very early stage in our history.

The first entry reads: "According to the printed records of the United States Senate the first American consul appointed after the organization of the government under the constitution was Samuel Shaw, nominated by President Washington, February 9, 1790, to be consul at Canton, China."

The second is as follows: "On January 8, 1801, President Adams sent to the Senate a note stating, 'I nominate John Stuart Kerr, Esq., a native of Philadelphia, now resident in the Philippine Islands, to be consul of the United States for the city and island of Manila in the dominion of the King of Spain.'"

**Missouri Hen's Bad Spell.**

From the Louisville Courier-Journal. A Missouri hen has laid an egg on which was etched, "Prepar for the end is near." Evidently the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals should investigate that Missouri canard that the spelling reform resolution had been adopted by the National Educational Association.

**Beginning of the End.**

From the Philadelphia Times. They say the object in wanting those Danish West India islands is to look after the eastern end of the Nicaragua Canal. But in this thing it is not the end that is wanted, but a beginning.

**Playing 'Possum.**

From the Indianapolis News. Pacification of the Philippines seems to be extending, but we must not forget that it is a trait of the Tagalos to be good for a long time while they wait for an opportunity to get even.

**Turn the Switch.**

From the Baltimore American. It makes us shiver to think about what would happen if England and Russia should try to pass each other on that bit of railroad track. There would be a head-on collision for sure.

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