The Morning Call.

SAN FRANCISCO, SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 25, 1893.

JULES VERNE.

HOME LIFE OF THE GREAT NOVELIST.

PARIS, June 12.—"The great regret of my life is that I have never taken any place in French literature."

As the old man said this his head drooped and a ring of sadness sounded in the cheerful and hearty voice.

"Je ne compte pas dans la litterature Francaise," he repeated. Who was it who spoke thus, with drooping head and with a ring of sadness in his cheerful voice? Some writer of cheap but popular feuilletons for the half-penny press, some man of letters who has never made a scruple of stating that he looks upon his pen as a money-getting implement and who has always preferred to glory and honor a large account at the cash office of the Society of French Men of Letters? No; strange, monstrous as it will appear, it was none other than Jules Verne. Yes, Jules Verne, the Jules Verne, your Jules Verne and mine, who has delighted us all the world over for so many years, and who will delight the world for generations and generations to come.

It was in the cool withdrawing-room of the Societe Industrielle at Amiens that the master said these words, and I shall never forget the tone of sadness in which he said them. It was like the confession of a wasted life, the sigh of an old man over what can never be recalled. It was to me a poignant sorrow to hear him speak thus, and all that I could do was to say, with no unfeigned enthusiasm, what was to me and millions like me, a great master, the

Jules Verne.

subject of our unqualified admiration and respect, the novelist who delights many of us most of all the novelists that have ever taken pen in hand. But he only shook his gray head and said, "I do not count in French literature."

Sixty-six, and but for his limp, still hale and hearty, with much in his face that reminds one of Victor Hugo, like a fine old sea captain, ruddy of face and full of wife. One eyelid slightly droops, but the gaze is firm and clear, and from his whole person emanates an aroma of goodness and kindness of heart, which have ever been the characteristics of the man of whom Hector Marlot, writing many years ago, said, "He is the best of best fellows," of the man whom the frigid and reserved Alexandre Dumas loves like a brother, and who has not and never has had, in spite of his brilliant success, a single real enemy. His health troubles him, unfortunately. Of late his eyes have weakened, so that at times he is unable to guide his pen, and there are days when gastralgia martyrizes him. But he is as valiant as ever.

"I have written sixty-six volumes," he said, "and if God grants me life I shall finish eighty."

Jules Verne lives on the boulevard Longueville at Amiens, at the corner of the rue Charles Dubois, in a fine spacious house, which he rents. It is a house of three stories, with three rows of five windows on the boulevard Longueville and three windows at the corner and three more on the rue Charles Dubois, The carriage and other entrances are on this street. The windows on the boulevard Longueville command a magnificent view of the picturesque if misty town of Amiens, with its old cathedral and other medieval buildings. Right in front of the house, on the other side of the boulevard, is a railway cutting, which just opposite Verne's study window disappears into a pleasure ground, where there is a large music kiosk, in which during the fine weather the regimental band plays. This combination is to my thinking a very emblem of the work of the great writer, the rushing train, with all the roar and rattle of ultra-modernism and the romance of the music. And is it not by a combination of science and industrialism with all that is most romantic in life that Verne's novels possess an originality which can be found in the works of no other living writer, not even among those of the men who count most in French literature?

A high wall skirts the rue Charles Dubois and hides the courtyard and garden of Verne's house from the passer-by. When one has rung at the little side entrance and, in response to a great peal, the door has been opened, one finds himself in a paved courtyard. Opposite are the kitchen and offices, to the left may be seen a pleasant garden, well stocked with trees, and to the right is the house, to which a row of broad steps extending the whole length of the facade lead up. A conservatory filled with flowers and palms forms the entrance-room, and passing through this the visitor enters the drawing-room. This is a richly furnished room with marbles and bronzes, warm rich hangings and the most comfortable of easy-chairs, the room of a man of means and leisure, but without any characteristic feature about it. It looks like a room which is little used, and this is the fact. Both M. and Mme. Verne are very simple people, who care nothing for show and all for quiet and comfort.

The adjoining large dining-room is rarely used, except when dinner parties are given or a family fete is held, and the novelist and his wife take their simple meals in a little breakfast-room which adjoins the kitchen. From the courtyard the visitor notices in the far corner of the house a lofty tower. The winding staircase which leads to the upper stories is in this tower, and at the very top of the staircase is M. Verne's private domain. A passage carpeted with red stuff, like the staircase, leads past maps and charts to a little corner room, which is furnished with a plain camp bedstead. Against a bay-window stands a small table on which manuscript paper very neatly cut may be seen. On the mantelpiece of the tiny fireplace stand two statuettes, one of Moliere and the other of Shakespeare, and above them hangs a water-color painting representing a yacht steaming into the bay of Naples. It is in this room that Verne works. Adjoining it is a large room with well-filled bookcases reaching from ceiling to carpet.

Speaking about his methods of work Mr. Verne said: "I rise every morning before 5—a little later, perhaps, in the winter—and at 5 am at my desk, remaining at work till 11. I work very slowly and with the greatest care, writing and rewriting until each sentence takes the form that I desire. I have always at least ten novels in my head in advance, subjects and plots thought out, so that, you see, if I am spared, I shall have no difficulty in completing the eighty novels which I spoke of. But it is over my proofs that I spend most time. I am never satisfied with less than seven or eight proofs and correct and correct again, until it may be safely said the last proof bears hardly any traces of the original manuscript. This means a great sacrifice of pocket as well as of time, but I have always tried my best for form and style, though people have never done me justice in this respect."

We sat together in the room of the Societe Industrielle. On one side of Mr. Verne was a pile of proofs, "the sixth set," he said, and on the other a long manuscript, which I had looked at with interest, "but which," said the novelist with his genial smile, "is merely a report which I am addressing to the Municipal Council of Amiens, of which I am a member. I take great interest in the affairs of the town."

I had asked Mr. Verne to tell me of his life and work and he said that he would tell me of things that had never been told before. My first question was about his youth and home and this is what he said:

"I was born in Nantes on the 8th of February, 1828, so that I am to-day in my sixty-sixth year, and it should be rather on my impressions of old age than on my souvenirs of childhood that I should be asked to speak. We were a most happy family. Our father, who was an admirable man, was a Parisian by birth, or rather by education, for he was born in Brie, but was educated in Paris, where he passed his university career and took his degree as a barrister. My mother was a Bas-Bretonne from Morlaix, so that I am a mixture of Breton and Parisian blood."

These particulars are interesting from a psychological point of view and assist one to understand the character of Jules Verne, who unites with the gayety and savoir-vivre and joy of life of the boulevardier—Claretie wrote about him, "he is a boulevardier to the tips of his fingers"—the love of solitude, the religiousness and adoration of the sea of the Breton.

"I had a very happy youth. My father was a solicitor and barrister at Nantes and in a good position of fortune. He was a man of great culture, and of great literary taste. He wrote songs at a time when songs were still written in France, that is to say, between 1820 and 1840. But he was a man of no ambition, and though he might have distinguished himself in letters had he chosen to put himself forward he avoided all publicity. His songs were sung in the family; very few of them ever got into print. I may remark that none of us have ever been ambitious. We have tried to enjoy our lives and th do our work quietly. My father died in 1871, aged 73. You see he might have said 'I was 2 years old when this century was born.' in distinction from Victor Hugo's famous remark about the date of his birth.

"My mother died in 1885 leaving thirty-two grandchildren, and, if one counts the cousins and cousins-german, ninety-seven descendants. All the children lived—that is to say, death has not removed any one of the five children. There were two boys and three girls, and they are all alive to-day. Men and women are of solid build in Brittany. My brother Paul was and is my dearest friend. Yes, I may say that he is not only my brother, but my most intimate friend. And our friendship dates from the first day that I can remember. What excursions we used to take together in leaky boats on the Loire. At the age of 15 there was not a nook or corner on the Loire right down to the sea that we had not explored. What dreadful boats they were and what risks we no doubt ran. Sometimes I was captain, sometimes it was Paul. But Paul was the better of the two. You know that afterward he entered the navy, and might have become a very distinguished officer had he not been a Verne—that is to say, had he had any ambition.

"I began to write at the age of 12. It was all poetry then, and dreadful poetry too. Still I remember that an address which I composed for my father's birthday, what we call a 'compliment' in France, was thought very good and I was so complimented that I felt quite proud. I remember that even at that time I used to spend a long time over my writings, copying and correcting and never really satisfied with what I had done.

"I suppose that one may see in my love for adventure and the water what was to be the bent of my mind in later years. Certainly the method of work which I had then has clung to me all through my life. I don't think I have ever done a piece of slovenly work.

"No, I cannot say that I was particularly taken with science. Indeed I never have been; that is to say, I have never practically studied or experimented in science. But while I was quite a lad I used to adore watching machines at work. My father had a country house at Chantenay, at the mouth of the Loire, and near there is the Government machine factory of Indret. I never went to Chantenay without entering the factory and standing for hours together watching the machines at work. This taste has remained with me all my life, and to-day still I have as much pleasure in watching a steam-engine or a fine locomotive at work as I have in contemplating a picture by Raphael or Corregio. My interest in human industries has always been a marked trait of my character, as marked, indeed, as my taste for literature, of which I will speak anon, and my delight in the fine arts, which has taken me to every museum and picture gallery; yes, I may say every picture gallery of any importance in Europe. This Indret factory, our excursions on the Loire and my scribbling of verses were the three delights and occupations of my youth.

Jules Verne's Home.

"I was educated at the Lycee of Nantes, where I remained till I had finished my rhetoric classes, when I was sent to Paris to study law. My favorite study had always been geography, but at the time I went to Paris I was entirely taken up with literary projects. I was greatly under the influence of Victor Hugo, indeed very excited by reading and rereading of his work. At that time I could have recited by heart whole pages of "Notre Dame de Paris," but it was his dramatic work that most influenced me, and it was under this influence that at the age of 17 I wrote a number of tragedies and comedies, not to mention novels. Thus I wrote a five-act tragedy in verse, entitled 'Alexander VI,' which was the tragedy of the Borgia Pope. Another five-act tragedy in verse, written at that time, was 'The Gunpowder Plot,' with Guy Fawkes as hero. 'A Drama Under Louis XV' was another tragedy in verse, and for comedy there was one in five acts and verse called 'Les Heureux du Jour.' All this work was done with the greatest care and with the constant preoccupation after style before me. I have always sought after style, but people have never given me credit for this.

"I came to Paris as a student just about the time when the grisette and all that she meant was disappearing from the Latin quarter. I cannot say that I frequented many of my fellow-students' rooms, for we Bretons, you know, are a clannish people and nearly all my friends were schoolmates from Nantes, who had come up to the Paris University with me. My friends were nearly all musicians, and at that period of my life I was a musician myself. I understood harmony, and I think that I may say that, if I had taken to a musical career, I should have had less difficulty than many in succeeding. Victor Masse was a friend of mine as a student and so was Delibes, with whom I was very intimate. We used to say 'thou' to each other. These were friends I made in Paris. Among my Breton friends was Aristide Hignard, a musician, who, although he won a second Prix de Rome, never emerged from the crowd. We used to collaborate together. I wrote the words and he the music. We produced one or two operettes, which were played, and some songs.

"One of these songs, entitled 'Les Gabiers,' which used to be sung by the barytone, Charles Bataille, was very popular at the time. The chorus, I remember, was:

Alerte,
Alerte, enfants, alerte,
Le ciel est bleu, la mer est verte,
Alerte, alerte.

"Another friend whose acquaintance I made as a student, and who has remained my friend ever since, is Leroy, the present Deputy for Morbihan. But the friend to whom I owe the deepest debt of gratitude and affection is Alexandre Dumas, the younger, whom I met first at the age of 21. We became chums almost at once. He was the first to encourage me. I may say that he was my first protector. I never see him now, but as long as I live I shall never forget his kindness to me nor the debt that I owe him. He introduced me to his father, he worked with me in collaboration. We wrote together a play called 'Pailles Rompues,' which was performed at the Gymnase, and a comedy in three acts entitled 'Onze Jours de Siege,' which was performed at the Vaudeville Theater. I was living then on a small pension allowed me by my father, and had dreams of wealth which led me into one or two speculations at the bourse which did not realize my dreams, I may add. But I derived some benefit from my frequentation of the coulisses of the bourse, for it was there that I got to know the romance of commerce, the fever of business, which I have often described and used in my novels.

"While speculating at the bourse and collaborating with Hignard in operette and chanson, and with Alexandre Dumas in comedy, I contributed short stories to the magazines. My first work appeared in the 'Musee des Families,' where you can find a story of mine about a madman in a balloon, which is the first indication of the line of novel that I was destined to follow. I was then secretary to the Lyric Theater, and afterward secretary to Mr. Perrin. I adored the stage and all connected with it, and the work that I have enjoyed the most has been my writing for the stage.

"I was 25 when I wrote my first scientific novel. That was 'Five Weeks in a Balloon.' It was published by Hetzel in 1861, and was a great success at once."

I here interrupted Mr. Verne and said: "I want you to tell me how you wrote that novel and why, and what preparation you made for it. Had you any knowledge of ballooning, any experience?"

"None whatever," replied Mr. Verne. "I wrote 'Five Weeks in a Balloon,' not as a story about ballooning, but as story about Africa. I always was greatly interested in geography and travel, and I wanted to give a romantic description of Africa. Now, there was no means of taking my travelers through Africa otherwise than in a balloon, and that is why a balloon was introduced. At that time I had never made an ascent. Indeed, I have only once traveled in a balloon in my life. That was at Amiens, long after my novel was published. It was only 'Three-quarters of an Hour in a Balloon,' for we had a mishap in starting. Godard, the aeronaut, was kissing his little boy just as the balloon rose, and we had to take the lad with us, and the balloon was so weighted that it could not go far. We sailed as far as Longeau, the junction you passed on your way here. I may say that at the time I wrote that novel, as now, I had no faith in the possibility of ever steering balloons, except in absolute stagnant atmosphere, as in this room, for instance. How can a balloon be made to face currents running at six, seven or eight meters to the second? It is a mere dream, though I believe that if the question is ever to be solved it will be with a machine which will be heavier than the air, following the principle of the bird, which can fly, though it is heavier than the air which it displaces."

"Then you had no scientific studies to go upon?"

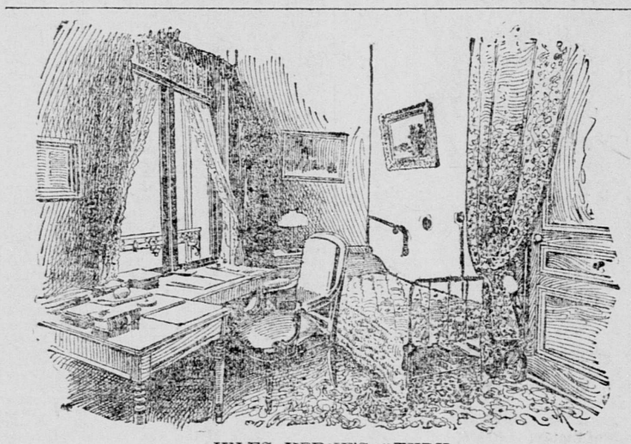
"None whatever. I may say that I have never studied science, though in the course of my reading I have picked up a great many odds and ends which have become useful. I may tell you that I am a great reader and that I always read with the pencil in the hand. I always carry a notebook about with me and immediately jot down, like that person in Dickens, anything that interests me or may appear to be of possible use in my books. To give you an idea of my reading, I come here every day after lunch and immediately set to work to read through fifteen different papers, always the same fifteen, and I can tell you that very little in any of them escapes my attention.

"When I see anything of interest down it goes. Then I read the reviews, such as the Revue Bleue, the Revue Rose, the Revue des Deux Mondes, Cosmos, Tissandier's La Nature, Flammarion's L'Astronomie. I also read through the bulletins of the scientific societies, and especially those of the Society of Geography, for mark, geography is my passion and my study. I have all Reclus' works—I have a great admiration for Elisee Reclus—and the whole of Arago. I also read and reread, for I am a most careful reader, the collection known as 'Le Tour de Monde,' which is a series of stories of travel. I have thus amassed many thousands of notes on all subjects and to-day at home have at least 20,000 notes which can be turned to advantage in my work as yet unused. Some of these notes were taken after conversations with people. I love to hear people talk, provided they talk on subjects with which they are acquainted."

"How could you do what you have done without scientific study of any kind?"

"I had the good fortune to enter the world at a time when there were dictionaries on every possible subject. I had just to turn up in my dictionary the subject I wanted information upon and there it was. Of course in my reading I picked up a quantity of information, and, as I said, I have a great number of scientific odds and ends in my head. It was thus that, when one day in a Paris cafe I read in the Siecle that a man could travel round the world in eighty days, it immediately struck me that I could profit by a difference of meridian and make my traveler gain or lose a day in his journey. There was my denouement ready found. The story was not written until long after. I carry ideas about in my head for years—ten or fifteen years sometimes—before giving them form.

"My object has been to depict the earth, and not the earth alone, but the universe, for I have sometimes taken my readers away from the earth, in the novel. And I have tried at the same time to realize a very high ideal of beauty of style. It is said that there can't be any style in a novel of adventure, but that isn't true; though I admit that it is very much more difficult to write such a novel in a good literary form than the studies of character, which are so in vogue to-day. And let me say"—here Jules Verne slightly raised his broad shoulders—"that I am no very great admirer of the psychological novel so-called, because I don't see what a novel has to do with psychology, and I can't say that I admire the so-called psychological novelists. I except, however, Daudet and De Maupassant. For De Maupassant I have the highest admiration. He is a man of genius who has received from heaven the gift of writing everything and who produces as naturally and easily as an apple-tree produces apples. My favorite author, however, is, and always has been, Dickens. I don't know more than a hundred words of English, and so have had to read him in translation. But I declare to you, sir"—Verne laid his hand upon the table with emphasis—"that I have read the whole of Dickens at least ten times over. I cannot say that I prefer him to Maupassant, because there is no comparison possible between the two. But I love him immensely and in my forthcoming novel, 'P'tit Bonhomme,' the proof of this is given and acknowledgment of my debt is made. I am also and have always been a great admirer of Cooper's novels. There are fifteen of these which I consider immortal."



JULES VERNE'S STUDY.

Then speaking as though musing aloud, Verne added: "Dumas used to say to me when I complained that my place in French literature was not recognized, 'You ought to have been an American or an English author. Then your books, translated into French, would have gained you enormous popularity in France, and you would have been considered by your country men as one of the greatest masters of fiction.' But, as it is, I am considered of no account in French literature. Fifteen years ago Dumas proposed my name for the academy, and as at that time I had several friends in the academy, Labiche Sandoz and others, there seemed a chance of my election and the formal recognition of my work. But it was never carried out, though, and to-day, when I get letters from America addressed to 'Mr. Jules Verne of the French Academy,' I have a little smile to myself. Since the day when my name was proposed no less than forty-two elections have occurred at the French Academy, which, so to speak, has entirely renovated itself since then. But I am passed over."

It was then that the master said these words, which, for the pregnancy of their import, I have placed at the head of this account.

Caricature of Jules Verne, by And. Gill.

To change the subject I asked the master to speak of his travels, and he said: "I have yachted for my pleasure, but always with an eye for getting information for my books. This has been my constant preoccupation and every one of my novels has benefitted by my voyages. Thus in 'Le Billet de Loterie' is to be found the narrative of personal experiences and observations in a tour in Scotland and to Iona and Staffa as also of a journey in Norway in 1862, where we traveled from Stockholm to Christiania by canal, mounting ninety-seven locks, an extraordinary voyage of three days and three nights in a steamer, and when we took carriage to that wildest part of Norway, the Tolemark, and visited the Gosta Fall, 900 feet high.

"In 'Les Indes Noires' is the relation of my tour in England and my visit to the Scotch lakes. 'Une Ville Flotante' came from my voyage to America in 1867, on the Great Eastern, when I sailed for New York, visited Albany and Niagara and had the great good fortune and joy to see Niagara icebound. It was on April 14 and there were torrents of water pouring into the open jaws of ice. 'Mathias Standorff' comes from a tour from Tangiers to Malta on my yacht the Saint Michel, called after my son Michel, who accompanied me, with his mother and my brother Paul on the voyage. In 1878 I had a very instructive and most pleasant yachting tour with Raoul Duval, Hetsel the younger and my brother in the Mediterranean.

"Traveling was the pleasure of my life, and it was with great regret that in 1886 I was forced to give it up in consequence of my accident. You know the sad story of how a nephew of mine, who adored me and of whom I was also very fond, came to see me at Amiens one day, and after muttering something wildly drew a revolver and fired at me, wounding me in the left leg and laming me for life. The wound has never closed and the bullet has never been removed. The poor lad was out of his mind, and said that he had done this in order to draw attention to my claims to a seat in the French Academy. He is now in an asylum, and I fear that he will never be cured. The great regret that this causes me is chiefly that I shall never be able to see America again. I should so have liked to have gone to Chicago this year, but in the state of my health and with this ever-open wound it is quite impossible. I do so love America and the Americans. As you are writing for America be sure to tell them that if they love me, as I know they do, for I receive thousands of letters every year from the States, that I return their affection with all my heart. Oh, if I could only go and see them all, it would be the great joy of my life!

"Though most of the geography in my novels is taken from personal examination I sometimes have had to rely on my reading for my descriptions. Thus, in the novel which I spoke about, 'P'tit Bonhomme,' which is coming out, I describe the adventure of a lad in Ireland. I take him from the age of 2 and give his life up to the age of 15, when he makes his fortune and that of all his friends, which is a novel denouement, is it not? He travels all around Ireland, and as I have never visited Ireland, my description of the scenery and localities have been taken from books.

"I have books ahead for years. The next novel, that is to say the one that will be published next year, is entitled 'Les Adventures Mirifiques de Maitre Antifer,' and is entirely terminated. It is a story of treasure seeking and finding, and the plot turns on a very curious geometrical problem. I am now yoked to the novel which will appear in 1895, but I can't say anything about it as it is not yet in any kind of shape. Between times I write short stories. Thus, in the next Christmas number of the Figaro there will be published a tale of mine entitled 'Monsieur Rediez et Mademoiselle Mibemol' (rediez and mibemol, as you know, are exactly the same notes on a piano). You see the drift? There my musical knowledge came in play. Nothing that one has learned is ever wasted.

"People often ask me, as you have done, why I reside in Amiens, I who am so thoroughly Parisian in my instincts. Well, because, as I have told you, I have Breton blood in me, and love calm and quiet, and could never be happier than in a cloister. A quiet life of study and work is my delight. I came to Amiens first in 1857, where I met the lady who is now my wife, and who at that time—her name was Mme. de Vianne—was a widow with two little daughters. Family ties and the quiet of the place have bound me to Amiens ever since. It is a good thing, for, as Hetzel said to me the other day, if I had lived in Paris I should have written at least ten novels less than I have done. I enjoy my life here very much. I have told you how I work in the morning and how I read in the afternoon. I take as much exercise as I can. That has been the secret of health and strength. And I continue very fond of the theater, and whenever there is a play at the little theater here you may be sure to find Mme. Jules Verne and her husband in their box. On those days we dine at the Hotel Continental, so as to have a little outing and to give our servants a rest. Our only child, Michel, lives in Paris, where he is married and has children. He writes ably on scientific subjects. I have only one pet; you have his portrait in the photograph of my house. It is Follett, my dear old dog."

I then asked Mr. Verne a question which, though indiscreet, seemed necessary. I had heard that the income received by him from his wonderful books has been less than that earned by an ordinary journalist. I had heard it stated on the very best authority that Jules Verne, taking an average, had never earned more than $5000 a year. M. Verne said: "I would rather say nothing about that. It is true that my first book, including my most successful ones, were sold for a tithe of their value, but after 1875, that is to say after 'Michael Strogoff,' my arrangements were altered and gave me a fair share of the profits of my novels. But I have no complaints to make.

"All the better if my publisher has made money too. Certainly I might regret that I didn't make better arrangements for my productions. Thus 'Le Tour du Monde' has in France alone produced 10,000,000 of francs and 'Michael Strogoff' 7,000,000, of which I have had very much less than my share. But I am not and never have been a money-getting man. I am a man of letters and an artist, living in the pursuit of the ideal, running wild over an idea, and glowing with enthusiasm over my work, and when my work is done, putting it aside and forgetting all about it so completely that I often sit down in my study and pick up a novel by Jules Verne and read it with enjoyment. A little more justice to me from my countrymen would have been prized by me one million times more than the thousands of dollars which my books should have given me more than they did give me each year. That is what I regret and always shall regret."

I glanced at the red rosette of officer of the Legion of Honor in the buttonhole of the master's easy blue jacket.

"Yes," he said, "that is some recognition." Then with a smile, "I was the last man decorated by the empire. Two hours after my decree was signed the empire ceased to be. My promotion to officer was signed in July of last year. But it is not decorations that I hanker after any more than gold. It is that people should see what I have done or tried to do, and should not overlook the artist in the taleteller. I am an artist," repeated Jules Verne, drawing himself up and setting his foot sturdily down on the carpet.

"I am an artist," said Jules Verne. America, as long as she reads, shall echo him.

ROBERT H. SHERARD.

HE WAS NEAR-SIGHTED.

But His Wife Could See Through Him at a Glance.

Boston Journal.

Augustus Squintman is a little bit near-sighted. This affliction does not trouble Augustus very much, however, as he is an admirer of feminine beauty, and each and every woman looks beautiful to him.

He was walking up Columbus avenue yesterday, as a Journal man was passing by the Companion building. Augustus glanced across the street. A lady was walking down the avenue, and she happened to look toward him and began waving her hand.

Augustus with great alacrity crossed over, not knowing who it was. His brain whirled with a sensation of mingled emotions. Had his handsome appearance attracted some fair creature's fancy?

He threw his head back and squared his narrow, consumptive shoulders, and then, raising his hat, made a Chesterfieldian bow, saying:

"At your service, madam; pray command me."

"Don't be a fool, Augustus, I only wanted to ask you for five dollars. I'm going shopping; you will find lunch all ready on the sideboard."

He passed over a five-dollar bill with great reluctance. The lady was his wife.

It Was a Statement of Fact.

New York Press.

"That's a bad cold you've got."

"Your reputation for veracity is not likely to be called in question as far as regards that stat-ment."

"I should say not."

"No, for apart from the fact that you are the twenty-seventh person who has told me this morning that this is a bad cold, I never knew any one to have a good cold."

INDIAN POTLATCH.

Natives Who Give Away Fortunes.

CUSTOM OF THE ABORIGINES.

Money Hoarded for Years Scattered in a Day—Inhumanity of Children to Parents.

Written for THE MORNING CALL.

One of the most peculiar customs of the Cape Flattery Indians is recognized in the "potlatch." This is an Indian word, and there is nothing in English which fits it. It is a custom which finds its source and mainspring in the desire for notoriety, which exists in greater or less development among all classes of people.

The oldest inhabitant or earliest pioneer in the extreme Northwest found the potlatch an established custom among the natives upon his arrival here, and it is still adhered to whenever fortune favors the Indian's efforts to hoard up money or property.

The Indians of the far Northwest are expert canoemen. Their frail boats, properly manned, are capable of weathering very severe storms and ride the waves or live among the breakers when Uncle Sam's life-saving crew and boats would be helpless sport of the sea or only resist its fury to be rolled in broken fragments on the rocky beach. It is in these canoes that the Indians of the Northwest formerly hunted the fur seals, whose migratory path to Alaskan breeding grounds lies anywhere from ten to sixty miles at sea along the coast. In their small canoes they brave the treacherous weather of March and early May in search of the seals and frequently in a season of two months could make from $500 to $1000. With skins readily selling at $10 to $15 each the lucky hunter in a short time would be able to acquire a considerable fortune.

Turned Out to Die.

The weapon most employed was the spear. The fur seal in its long journey frequently sleeps on the water, and it was the business of the Indian to noiselessly approach within striking distance, when the spearsman, standing erect in the bow of the boat, would fling his weapon with force and precision into the sleeping seal. The little creature would then be hauled alongside the canoe, knocked in the head, taken aboard, immediately skinned and the carcass cast back into the sea.

But to return to the potlatch. It consisted of a sort of Indian lovefeast, camp-meeting and barbecue combined, with the important addition that the giver's generosity, entirely voluntary, went beyond mere feasting and lavished all sorts of presents upon those who were called to his wigwam. The diligence exercised in giving away the fortune which perhaps he had been four or five years in hoarding up was only equaled by the miserly qualities and thieving proclivities (always abnormally developed) which he had employed in amassing his fortune.

I have seen an Indian sub-chief give away absolutely and forever, in a three days' potlatch, $6000 in coin or its equivalent. When the victim of this species of insanity has once determined to impoverish himself he sends out invitations to all his friends up and down the coast for thirty or forty miles advising them of his intention. The invitations are not elaborate, neither are they urgent. They don't have to be. The knowledge that a "potlatch" is to be given is quite sufficient. For it means to the invited participants a royal good time, an abundance to eat for a day at least, the probability of getting new blankets, dollars in silver and perhaps a good canoe, or fishing and hunting tackle.

The Indian who thus seeks the utmost depth of poverty from the height of opulence immediately becomes an object of the utmost importance, and the loving attention shown him I can only liken to the sympathetic regard heaped upon a young woman who is soon to be married by her immediate girl friends.

At the time I have alluded to an Indian, who rejoiced in the highly euphonious native name of Phui-pok-sok-sat, but who was for short called plain Captain John Smith by the whites, was known to have a large sum of money in American silver dollars—six thousand of them—and he announced that he would give every cent of it away. No meaner Indian ever lived in Western Washington, but he suddenly leaped into greater prominence among his fellow-citizens than a local political boss who has a half dozen offices to give out.

The day of the potlatch arrived. It took place at Cape Flattery lightnouse, on Tatoosh Island. On the evening previous the guests of Captain John began to arrive. They came in a fleet and in their big canoes capable of holding from fifteen to fifty Indians. As they came near the beach their paddles stopped and they sang in a sort of chant an Indian story, the women taking no part in the discourse. It was not unmusical, and, coming over the water in the falling shadows of the evening, mellowed by distance and mingling with the gentle swell which little more than rippled on the beach, was wild and mournful. This ceremonial over, they came ashore and mingled together about the camp.

On the following morning the feast began. Large quantities of brown sugar, kegs of syrup, hard tack and crackers were forthcoming and were carried out above high water on the beach. The syrup and sugar were poured into two canoes about fifteen feet in length, the boxes of hard bread were opened and the feast began. Dried halibut and other fish made up the menu, upon which the natives turned themselves loose with unlimited confidence and the utmost enthusiasm. Little and big, old and young, attacked the provender, and the noise and confusion of the feast could be heard even above the tumult, which is an inseparable adjunct to every Indian and Indian camp.

The feasting over, the more serious work of the potlatch began. Bolts of blankets, bolts of many-colored flannels, loads of calico prints, hundreds of flaming cotton-handkerchiefs were opened up, and brought before Captain John by his perspiring young bucks. Stripped to the waist, with a red blanket covering his lower limbs, Captain John stood forth, his face artistically painted in blue and red. In a loud and consequential voice he called the names of those for whom he had expended his coin, and as they came forward and received from his hands their presents the assembled multitude would shout out their approval of the giver's generosity and his prowess or "hyas tyhee," which being translated means a "big chief."

This distribution was varied, enlivened and diversified by more eating and the further giving of money. Captain John, pleased with the plaudits of his numerous friends, continued to impoverish himself, until every blanket, every scrap and piece of cloth and every dollar he had was gone. He then gave away his canoes—he had several—gave away all his seal-hunting outfit, cleaned out his stock of personal clothing, and finally removed the solitary blanket remaining, flung it to the crowd and stood before them naked. This last act was the signal for a singular chant by those present, who joined hands and, dancing, circled about Captain John.

When the syrup and sugar, the jerked halibut and the hardtack were all gone the Indians dispersed in all directions, leaving the rich Indian of yesterday without one solitary piece of property or thing of value to-day.

There appears no possible object for this strange custom beyond the temporary prominence which it affords. The Indians are notoriously covetous, grasping and selfish; yet they voluntarily give away thousands of dollars without the hope of return or reward.

It is a singular paradox in native character, and is not easy of solution. The Indians about Cape Flattery have another custom which excites strange speculation. They are devoted to their children. They will endure any hardship, any danger to care for them. This feeling of parental affection remains strong until the child becomes a man and has a family of his own. Then solicitude gives place to indifference and utter disregard, which, as time goes on, becomes absolutely barbaric. When the parents become old they are literally permitted to starve.

I have seen an aged Indian woman taken by her able-bodied son out of a warm corner in the hut, her blanket removed and she placed in an exposed position astride the house—left there to die of cold. In this particular case the woman was blind and deaf, and her hair was gray. She was thus turned out in a snowstorm almost naked for the express purpose of causing her immediate death. And this treatment is not objected to by the victim, who, with the stoic and stolid indifference of the Indian race, takes his fate as a matter of course, without complaint or resentment.

K. C. W.

THE ANSWER.

A rose in tatters on the garden path
Called out to God and murmured 'gainst his wrath,
Because a sudden wind in twilight's hush
Had snapped her stem alone of all the bush.
And God, who hears both sun-dried dust and sun,
Made answer softly to the luckless one:
"Master, in that thou sayest I did not well
What voices heard'st thou when thy petals fell?"
And the rose answered: "In my evil hour
A voice cried, 'Father, wherefore falls the flower?
For lo, the very gossamers are still!"
And a voice answered, 'Son, by Allah's will.'"

Then, softly as the rain mist on the sward,
Came to the rose the answer of the Lord:
"Sister, before I smote the dark in twain,
Or yet the stars saw one another plain,
Time, tide and space I bound unto the task
That thou shouldst fall and such an one should ask."

Whereat the withered flower, all content,
Died as they die whose days are innocent;
While he who questioned why the flower fell
Caught hold of God and saved his soul from hell.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

NATURE'S HANDIWORK.

A Wonderful House in an Arizona Canyon.

It is a grand house and to build one like it would cost millions of dollars, if it could be done at all. And yet the man who lived in it had hardly a dollar to his name. But then he didn't buy the house, because it was made by nature on the rocky walls of Sabina Canyon, in Arizona, thousands of years ago, and has been ready for an occupant ever since.

The man who lives in it is a prospector known as "Mike." What other name he has is not known, and besides it don't matter. He says he was going up the canyon one day a year or so ago when he first saw the place and thought it was a house built by man. When he saw his mistake he simply took possession. Mike's house is truly a most deceptive piece of nature's handiwork, and a very useful one. It is on the canyon walls, probably 100 feet above the bottom, and a flight of natural stone steps lead up to it.

It is hard to convince one's self that it is not the work of man until it is examined closely, when its enormous size alone would make a person know differently. It is only one story, but the outside wall is over a hundred feet high.

The door, which is in good proportion, is over twenty-five feet high, and the room on the inside reaches up and ends in a black vault that there is no telling how far away it is.

Built by Nature.

When Mike wants a fire he just makes it on the floor, and the smoke curls up to the top and disappears somewhere. This is somewhat strange, as no water ever comes into the place and the smoke cannot be seen coming out anywhere. But it very likely goes through some fissure into a cave beyond.

But Mike don't care where it goes. He is satisfied with the convenience, and thinks he is the best-fixed prospector in the mountains. This house of rock is most strongly suggestive of Egyptian architecture and also bears a great resemblance to some of the cave dwellings in the Salt River Valley. The thing is an interesting curiosity, and, although it is the house of a prospector now, there is a strong possibility that it may in the past have done duty as a home for some members of the lost races of this strange country.

Went After Dinner.

New York Weekly.

Patrick—I'ts poor advice ye've been givin' me. Didn't ye say th' best toime to ask a mon a favor was after dinner?

Bilkins—I certainly did.

"Well, Oi wint to ould Bluffers wid th' schmallest koind of a requist, and he refused. It was after dinner, too."

"Are you sure he had had his dinner?"

"Faith, it's little Oi know about ould Bluffer's ingoin's and outcomin's, but Oi'd had moine."