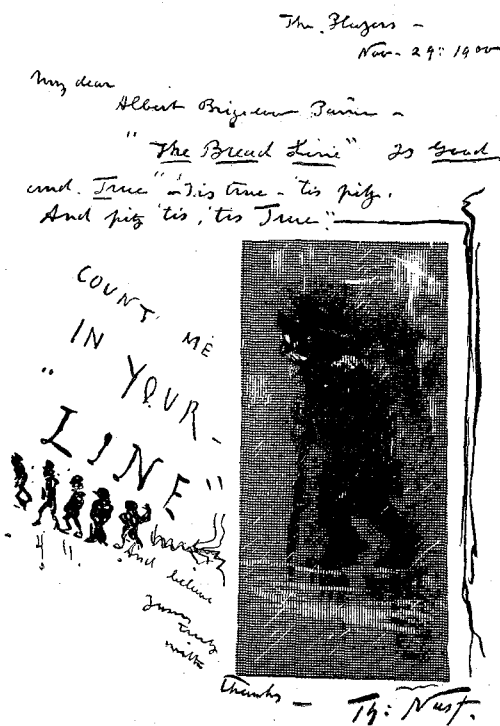


continuity which is symbolised by the retention of some of the ancient forms and usages. To a person who has any imagination and any sentiment this is a fine and fitting thing. Once upon a time we went to the commencement exercises of a college not very far from New York. These exercises were held in a hall over a large beer-garden. The President wore a suit of clothes that seemed to have been made to match a checkerboard, and of which the trousers bulged like the cheek of Tennyson's brawny spearman. The faculty sat around on cane chairs, and reminded us of a convention of amalgamated plumbers. We feel now that this affair would have been appropriately finished off had the President and plumbers bestowed an honorary degree upon Mr. George Cary Eggleston.

The accompanying designs attest Thomas Nast's appreciation of Albert Bigelow Paine's *The Bread Line*, about which we had considerable to say several months ago, and the recently published *Van Dwellers*.

The sketches have a double interest. They illustrate very felicitously the ideas of the books themselves, and they are typical of the quaint humour of an artist who has been one of the greatest forces in the political history of New York City. Many men took part in the fight against the Tweed régime, but none of them dealt it more crushing blows than Thomas Nast. Not only did his cartoons in *Harper's Weekly* contribute more to the overthrow of Tweed and his associates than any of the arguments which appeared in the public press, but to one of these cartoons was due the final capture of Tweed. Upon one occasion Mr. Nast found an analogy between Tweed's behaviour in the matter of some city franchise and a kidnapper stealing a child. A copy of *Harper's Weekly* containing this cartoon found its way to Spain and fell into the hands of a Spanish gendarme, who knew absolutely nothing of the conditions in New York politics. Soon after Tweed's arrival in Spain he was seen walking along the street by this gendarme, who recognised him from the cartoon and apprehended him on the charge of kidnapping.



A short paper entitled "Reminiscences of Wilkie Collins," by Olive Logan, was recently submitted to THE BOOKMAN, and with the writer's consent we are reprinting extracts from it here, because they seem to be especially adapted to this department of our magazine. Mrs. Logan met the novelist at a London luncheon party, and led him to talk of his impressions of the United States and his methods in the making of his books. The one disappointment he had in America was in the terrapin soup. For everything else, from Niagara to the canvas-back duck, he expressed an unbounded admiration. Then he talked of books and writers. "*Antonia* was the name of my first novel," he said, "and the elder Bentley paid me two hundred pounds for it—a large price, when you consider that I was then an unknown author, and the success of the romance had yet to be tested. Ah, the elder Bentley was a publisher of a rare species, now extinct. He himself read the novels which were submitted to him, and, being an excellent critic, he formed his own judgments. He had a delightful habit of giving dinners to authors, at which young scribes had the inexpressible pleasure of being brought in contact with the renowned lights. There are no such publishers nowadays; the elder Bentley knew every line of his authors' works, and no one was so enthusiastic about their writings as himself."

Wilkie Collins was induced to say something about his methods in the composing of fiction, *à propos* of an article by Bulwer-Lytton, in which, while admitting the greatness of Sir Walter Scott (who said that he never wrote a novel in his life about which he had a single fixed plan when he began), Bulwer, nevertheless, had no words too strong in which to condemn writers of fiction who plunge headlong into composition without first arranging the groundwork of the story to the minutest detail.

"I do not believe," said Wilkie Collins, "that Bulwer kept rigidly to this rule. Such may have been his theory—I doubt if it was his practice. It is well to have a *scenario* sketched out, but it is impossible for an author of any imagina-

tion to proceed far in the composition of a story without seeing various ways in which to turn the current. Naturally, he will choose the best."

"Have you any advice to give young authors who are aspiring to the honours of fiction?"

"Yes. I have several rules from which I never deviate myself, and deviation from which I consider very dangerous, even in the case of the most practised author. For instance, in writing a novel, you should always begin at the beginning."

"*Griffith Gaunt—The Princess of Thule—*"

"True; but to the extent of having a scene wrenched from the middle of the story, which must afterward be written up to at great length, both those novels are highly inartistic. A novel-reader is much like the spectator of a drama; his attention must be won by degrees, his interest gradually enlisted, until finally he becomes so absorbed in the story that he finds it difficult to lay the book down."

The novelist was asked if he approved of beginning a story with a sensation.

"Yes, if the sensation be a good one, and one which belongs naturally at the beginning of the story. Then, too, however uncertain an author may be concerning the exact conduct of the middle of the tale, he should always know how it is going to finish; and steadily working toward a prearranged termination, should always keep the action moving; that should never lag. Another thing: when you have interested your readers in one set of characters, it is most unwise to drop them and begin another chapter with 'We must now return to,' etc. The reader is disappointed at losing the people in whose fate he has become interested, and only by an effort takes up the thread of the new peoples' destinies, again to feel the same rebuff when he is forced to quit these new friends with 'We must now go back to,' etc. Another characteristic I deem essential to good novel writing is always to introduce a poetical side in the midst of every-day practicalities. It does not do to grovel in the dirt too much."

"Zola?"

"True; but the taste is ephemeral. Vic-