

This was the story that Parisian *flaneurs* told one another, darkly hinting that it was an actual fact. So far as we know, in France the tale never appeared in print. But an industrious American journalist, Mr Cleveland Moffett, being in Paris and hearing the yarn, straightway put it down upon paper. He called it "The Mysterious Card," sent it to a Boston publication that made a speciality of short stories and was at the time offering a prize of one thousand dollars, if we are not mistaken, for the best tale submitted before a certain date. "The Mysterious Card" won the prize, but with his success the troubles of the author began. From all over the country there came ridiculous requests for an explanation of the card. Of course the artistic strength of the tale lay in the fact that there was no explanation, just as Mr. Stockton's "The Lady or the Tiger" was good because the author did not know and did not say which way the choice would be. But people refused to recognise this, and Mr. Moffett was hounded until he consented to write the sequel entitled "The Mysterious Card Unveiled." Thereby he spoiled a very good story, but we are not going to abet his crime by a description of the obnoxious sequel. Apart from this *faux pas*, Mr. Moffett, whose *Careers of Danger and Daring* we were reading the other day, has done a great deal to entitle him to serious consideration in contemporary magazine work. He has made himself in a way a kind of glorified reporter, taking all sorts of uncomfortable risks in his relentless hunt for good "copy." He has been on the deck of turbine boats going at a speed of forty miles an hour; he has entered the cages of wild animals in the company of their trainers; he has sat at the throttles of fast-flying locomotives, and he has stood on narrow ledges at great heights, in order to taste the sensations of the men who build our suspension bridges and our skyscrapers. These are the experiences which would daunt most men, but Mr. Moffett has been repaid. He has got his "copy."

A caricaturist who is doing some exceptionally good work these days, espe-

cially at the expense of literary men, is Mr. George Brehm whose cartoons are published in the Indianapolis *Morning Star*. The sketches of Mr. George Barr McCutcheon which appeared in the November number of THE BOOKMAN and of Mr. James Whitcomb Riley, printed in the December issue, were originally drawn for the *Morning Star*.

According to Mr. Stewart Edward White, it was during his expedition last spring through the King's River Cañon for the purpose of gathering material for *The Mountain*, that he fell in with the hero of this anecdote. The hero in question was a gaunt and grizzled idler who for the last thirty years has been doing as little work as he possibly could and spending the greater part of his time on fishing excursions to the intense disgust of his friends and family. A few years ago he was notorious in his neighbourhood as the concocter of discreditable fish stories. At that time no exaggeration as to the size and weight of his catches could disturb him. He lied about his fish glibly and with relish. The day came, however, when the spirit of revival reached his town, and a sense of his own shamelessness and iniquity dawned upon the old man. He "got religion," and he got it hard. Solemnly he gathered his friends and relatives about him, confessed his shortcomings of the past, and announced forcibly that he never again would lie wantonly about the size of his fish, that he would purchase a pair of scales, and that in future every tale that he told would have upon it the cachet of absolute certainty and truth. By following this course he won a good name in the community and came to be regarded as a man of distinct and unusual probity. This reputation he might have continued to enjoy had not a new-born baby made its appearance in his household. There was the usual flutter of excitement in which some one suggested that the baby should be weighed. The only scales at hand were those which the old man had used to attest his fish yarns, and so they were brought down for the occasion. Ever since the fisherman has been regarded with the old-time scepticism, for

by his scales the baby was found to weigh forty-three pounds.



Those persons who are inclined to regard the following tale with any degree of scepticism we refer to Prof. Brander Matthews.

It is Professor Matthews who is telling it and who vouches for its truth. We, on our part, disclaim any responsibility. According to the tale, one evening a few weeks ago, Professor Matthews went to dine at a club of which he is a member. We shall not specify the club beyond saying that it was founded by the late Edwin Booth and faces Gramercy Park. After checking his coat and hat, Professor Matthews climbed the short flight of stairs leading to the hall and went through the compartment labelled "M" in the letter box to see if there was any mail for him. Among the letters he found one which when opened proved to be a rather peremptory request from a tailor for the settlement of a bill. This proved puzzling, because the name of the tailor was entirely unknown to him, and the dun was evidently a mistake. After studying it over for a minute, he looked again at the envelope and found that he had accidentally taken a letter intended for another member, so he put back the bill in the envelope and returned it to the compartment. As Professor Matthews turned to go into the reading room he noticed that the man to whom the letter had been sent was right at his heels. This man went through the "M" compartment, picked out the letter which Professor Matthews had returned, walked into the reading room where a number of clubmen were sitting about the open fire, read the letter through twice very carefully, discreetly tore it into little bits, and with a knowing wink and the smile of an invincible conqueror commented: "Poor silly little girl!"



The unexpected news of Mr. Seton Merriman's death at the early age of forty, was received with deep regret by a very wide circle of readers in this country. Mr. Seton Merriman, whose real name was Hugh Scott,

was one of the most unassuming and most retiring of men. He was very rarely seen in literary clubs and gatherings, and about two years ago he built for himself a beautiful house in Suffolk, not far from Ipswich. It was there he died, after having undergone two operations for appendicitis. Mr. Seton Merriman, as he would prefer to be called, disliked publicity to an excessive and almost morbid degree. Indeed, it is said that when he knew he was dying, he asked the watchers round his bed to supply no information about him to the newspapers. Though he was brought up in business, he had a link of connection with literature in the fact that the late Mr. W. L. Thomas, founder of the *Graphic*, was his uncle. His earliest productions first saw the light in the columns of the *Graphic*. When he began to write books he kept the secret even from his own family, though he could not hide his literary inclinations. From his youth he was delicate, suffering from a weak heart. His first book, which he suppressed, was the story of a gifted young man who never did what his friends expected from him, took no pleasure in his successes, and showed no eagerness to follow them up. It turned out when he died that he had known for some years that he could not live long, as he suffered from an obscure and deadly form of heart disease. This chilled his interest in life. In this book, Mr. Merriman was certainly autobiographical. It was his own experience.



At first he made but slow progress in the favour of the public, but by the time he died, he was one of the most popular of living novelists, and was gaining ground steadily. As a mere story teller he was surpassed by few living writers. Many objected to the abundance of his reflections, but to others they were at least provocative of thought, and especially pleasing was the uniformly high, gentle, and dignified tone of all his books. This reflected the character of the writer. In his rare appearances in the London clubs he was one of the most unassuming and friendly of men. Though avoiding literary circles, he made some close literary friendships, particularly with Mr.