

tween these three cases, so different one from the other and yet so absolutely alike? Were they the work of a madman? Were they the outcome of a devilish scheme, conceived with some hideous revenge for its object, and executed with ruthless daring? Nothing was discovered. But the terrifying thought of the fourth bit of red paper haunted every mind, upset the women and frightened the bravest of the men. Would there be a fourth victim?

Sixteen days elapsed. On the seventeenth—it was a Sunday—a priest, mounting the pul-



PRISCILLA CRAVEN (MRS. W. TEIGNMOUTH SHORE)

Mrs. Shore's latest novel, *The Pride of the Graftons*, was published in September. She uses the name of Priscilla Craven in order to avoid being confused with her husband, who is also a writer

pit, gave a cry and fell back headlong. He was dead. In his breviary was the fourth piece of red paper . . .

"And I assure you," M. Leblanc goes on to say, "that if I had invented eight scraps of red paper instead of four, and, consequently, described four more crimes to you, you would have followed me with just as much attention to the end of this most improbable story, of which you and I, alas! will never know the issue.

It was a good many years ago that J. M. Barrie observed that there were three writers in England

A. T. Quiller-Couch

using the curiously popular signature "Q." Of these the reputation of only one, Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch, has been in any degree enduring. As some English writer has remarked, Mr. Quiller-Couch has been the champion "Q" since 1890. There was a time when Mr. Barrie ventured the prophecy that Quiller-Couch would do for Cornwall what Thomas Hardy did for Dorset, although the methods of the two writers were as unlike as their counties. But, he added, that could only be done if in filling his notebook with his little Cornish comedies and tragedies Mr. Quiller-Couch was preparing for more sustained efforts.

Mr. Quiller-Couch's first book was *Dead Man's Rock*, a lurid tale of the Cornish coast, that bore a marked resemblance to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Since *Dead Man's Rock* he has changed out of all recognition. He is a realist in the sense of being a close observer of the human document. He has very decided views of fiction. "There is much *representation* of life," he once said, "and little *presentation*. All this involves an attitude of humility toward nature and the great facts of life. Take Hardy, for instance; see how true he is. In one of his books he tells us that he knows what kind of a tree it is that he is walking under at night, merely by the sound the wind makes, rustling through the leaves. There is an indication also of the humble study of nature. But still, while you must *represent*, you cannot get rid of *presentation*, as Mr. Howells urges must be done. A writer cannot get away from himself. I believe myself in no general statement. Each man brings forth his own work, and the critics must find this out."

Last month we quoted the opinions of Lord Northcliffe and the late Charles A.

Thackeray  
as an  
Editor

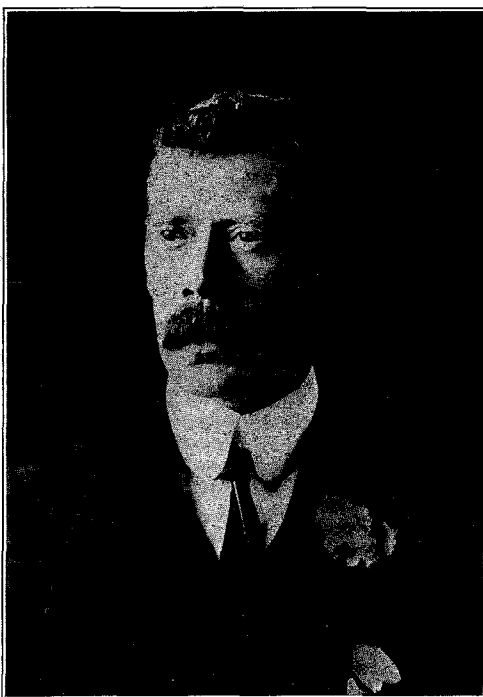
Dana on Charles Dickens as an editor. Inevitably and naturally the subject suggests a comparison, as it always does, of Dickens and his great

contemporary. Somehow the two seem to have met on almost all possible fields. Against Dickens's work as a reporter in the House of Commons there are Thackeray's experiences as Paris correspondent for the ill-starred *Constitution* and his days of hack work in Fleet Street. When Dickens was editing *Household Words*, Thackeray, with a great blare of trumpets, was assuming the direction of the *Cornhill Magazine*. In a word it was another case of Mr. Bacon and Mr. Bungay with a fine, full literary flavour. There is always the suspicion that Thackeray, in depicting the rival publishers of Paternoster Row, may have had just a thought of himself and of the author of *David Copperfield*.

Brief as was Thackeray's career as an editor—for his association with *The Snob* when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge is not to be taken seriously—it was marked by some of the liveliest and most interesting episodes of his life. At least three of his *Roundabout Papers*, "On Some Late Great Victories," "Thorns in the Cushion," and "On Screens in Dining Rooms" owe their inspiration directly to the experiences in the editorial chair. From the very moment of the establishment of the *Cornhill* until the day of his resignation he seems to have been in a constant state of irritability. It was a task for which he was by temperament utterly unfitted. He was never quite sure of his editorial judgment. He hated to say "no" to a would-be contributor. Above all, he who as a young man had poked such savage fun at Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton and the other men and women of the older school had become himself most sensitive to the slightest criticism, and most intolerant in his attitude toward the impertinences of youth.

When Sir George Murray Smith planned the *Cornhill* it was not his idea to have Thackeray as its editor. What he wanted for the magazine was a serial by Thackeray, and the proposition that he first made was that Thackeray should write either one or two novels of the ordinary size—one-twelfth portion of each novel to appear in each number of the magazine—in consideration of a pay-

ment of £350 each month. The terms seemed almost munificent to the novelist, who only a few years before had sold *Henry Esmond* outright for £1,000, and when he had finished reading the paper on which Smith had jotted down his proposal he said: "I am not going to put such a document as *this* into my waste-paper basket." George Smith's first choice as an editor for the *Cornhill* was Mr. Tom Hughes, but the latter felt that he was affiliated with another house and



ARTHUR T. QUILLER-COUCH

would not accept the place. Several other names came under consideration, but none seemed to be exactly suitable, and finally the publisher hit upon the idea of having Thackeray edit the magazine, Smith himself supplying the business qualifications. The proposal was made and accepted by Thackeray, who, in addition to the high rate of payment for his writings, was to receive £1,000 a year for his work as editor.

"It's to be called the *Small Beer Chronicle*," growled Wagg, "and little Popjoy is to be engaged for the infantine department."