

eminently shrewd, lynx-eyed editor discovered that two of her characters were stolen from a book which Edna had never seen; and another, equally ingenious and penetrating, found her entire plot in a work of which she had never heard; while a third, shocked at her pedantry, indignantly assured her readers that they had been imposed upon, that the learning was all "picked up from encyclopædias"; whereat the young author could not help laughing heartily, and wondered why, if her learning had been so easily gleaned, her irate and insulted critics did not follow her example.

In its mildest and most chastened form this was the author's opinion of her critics. Small wonder that they found huge amusement in hitting back, in taking quick advantage of the opening that was to be found on every page. And yet

now, after all the years, when the author is no more, we pause, perhaps just a little bit ashamed. For in *St. Elmo*, under all the pompous phraseology, there was a real story to be told, a story that, so far as rested in the ability of the writer, was well told, a story that has done something to brighten the lives of many tens of thousands of readers. Absurd as it too often is, there was not a line of it that was not inspired by a belief in lofty ideals and a passionate sincerity that checks the laughter on the lips. Four and forty years have passed since it first came to mystify and to impress, and yet to-day Augusta J. Evans's *St. Elmo* is not only not forgotten; it remains an early chapter in the code of life.

Arthur Bartlett Maurice.

THE BOOKMAN'S LETTER BOX

I

The year is still young and the holiday feeling lingers. Therefore, we venture to print a pleasant meed of praise for THE BOOKMAN, which comes to us from an admired reader in this city.

DEAR BOOKMAN: It is very truly the only magazine of its kind, and so very much the best of the many, especially in the independence and insight of its literary criticism and in the choice of its interesting illustrations that I read with some uneasiness that you plan to be even broader, better, and more interesting than ever before.

Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien sometimes, and your present standard in literature is so far above that of our other American magazines that I write this out of pure gratitude, not so much in the hope that you may go beyond the standard, but that you may keep it up.

We thank our correspondent, and shall endeavour to justify the good opinions and good wishes contained in her charming letter.

II

A Catholic clergyman writing us a pleasant note from Dubuque, Iowa, encloses a brief message to one of our readers who asked a question not long since. He says:

Tell "Curious" that we Catholics have always called our books of devotion "Prayer Books."

To us he says:

May your sway in the Letter Box be long!

Many cordial thanks.

III

The gentleman who signs himself "Criticaster" and who favours us with postcards from Indianapolis, has sent us the following:

Imagine my surprise, when reading *It is Never Too Late to Mend*, to find such gross lack of punctuation in the writing of so emi-

nent an authority and author as Charles Reade. How do you account for this:—or, as the astute Holmes would say, “What hypothesis covers the facts?” We know that a graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford, could not err through ignorance. Was he, then, careless, or did he consider punctuation immaterial to the interest and value of a story?

Now to lead up to another interesting point, let me ask—What further titles and ranks do you require at the hands of your admirers? Already you have attained to military distinction (nominally); but where are the trophies of your valour? Whose scalps dangle at your girdle (scalps of outraged authors not considered); in whose gore are your mighty hands stained red? Ecclesiastical honour befits you not, you who fume and boil in the sulphurous fumes of your Inferno! Nevertheless, BOOKMAN, let me confer still another *monica*. Knighthood has not yet been bestowed upon you. Kneel! I bring my ivory wand to bear upon your suppliant form. You are now Sir Bookman, Knight of the Bookshelf. By that title may your admirers know you.

CRITICASTER.

As to Charles Reade, this criticism applies to nearly all his books. The fault is to be ascribed partly to his proof-reader, but primarily to his own impetuous and peppery disposition. He wrote at a white heat, dashing off sentence after sentence, with scarcely any regard for matters of punctuation which, as “Criticaster” truly observes, are exceedingly important. It is likely that Reade’s proof-reader did not venture to alter the punctuation or lack of punctuation of this fiery genius, lest he should burst into the composing-room with a roar and a demand for blood. As a matter of fact, the public in general would be surprised to learn how great is the indebtedness which most authors owe to proof-readers and to compositors as well. We venture to say that not one manuscript in fifty leaves an author’s hands with a rational, consistent, and psychologically accurate punctuation. Much merriment is made at times over typographical errors; yet if the truth were known, the errors of a proof-reader are infinitesimally small when compared with those of an author. It is the author who struts about and gets all the credit, while the proof-reader is

too often compelled to bear a burden of blame which is not his or hers.

As to this matter of “titles and ranks,” we do not require any further ones; in fact, we never required any at all. The reason why we valued them was that they came so spontaneously and with such evident good feeling as to give them value. We are now General, Colonel, Captain, Admiral, Excellency, and Reverend, and we frankly assert that we deserve all these distinctions. If “Criticaster” has read the Letter Box from the outset, he will readily discover the trophies of our valour. It is precisely because we preside over the Inferno, sometimes pardoning and sometimes condemning, that we are entitled to ecclesiastical preferment. None the less, we are grateful on being dubbed a Knight Bachelor, and we rise from the accolade with a new sense of personal dignity. (By the way, don’t say “nominally” but “brevet.”)

IV

After much prodding, we have elicited another letter from Mr. Soap O’Loughlin. We must confess that it is an elusive, evasive, and unsatisfactory document. It reads as follows:

DEAR BOOKMAN: Isn’t it I that have been looking for a road map all this time and isn’t it I that haven’t found it? And isn’t it I that have just found the reason why? It’s because there are no roads! There is, of course, the railroad to Mennolith; but after that you must walk ’cross country straight up toward Mush-tong. You can’t miss Mushtong, for it’s right in the little valley between the mountains Wahassett and Moneemee, of the Maugtung Range. (Mushtong is really a corruption of Maugtung.) My house is just this side of Mushtong and is painted red. The first house you come to will be green and white, and is occupied by a fellow with red whiskers and a cranky wife. So don’t go in. Keep straight on to the red house. I warrant you will be treated like a real Connemara Cuckoo.

SOAP O’LOUGHLIN.

The reading of Mr. Soap’s directions gave us a bit of a headache; but we are able to append a little notice here to the

effect that the saponaceous incident is now closed.

V

Comes also a letter written by a gentleman in Swannanoa, North Carolina, in which he expresses his sympathy with our correspondent, the would-be author in El Paso. Incidentally he gives the name of a publication which is ostensibly conducted for the benefit of would-be authors. Our correspondent doubtless wrote his letter in good faith; but we are disinclined to advertise the periodical in question before knowing more about its general reputation.

VI

We don't precisely know whether the following letter, written upon particularly fine paper, is meant as a defence of Mr. Maurice Hewlett, or as an advertisement of pneumatic mattresses, or as a gibe at Dr. Cook. Possibly all three purposes were in the writer's mind. As the letter is very long, we should ordinarily refrain from printing it; but we have spent so much time in deciphering its most peculiar handwriting as to make us feel that it has acquired a certain additional value. So here it is.

MY DEAR MR. BOOKMAN: It is rather surprising to find your reviewer choosing as the most vulnerable part of Mr. Maurice Hewlett's newly donned realistic armour, the water-excursions that the quondam romanticist makes his hero and heroine take in turn upon a "portable bed," for, provided that the "portable bed" was a pneumatic mattress—and as the date of the story is so late as the year of grace 1894, there is no anachronism in assuming that it probably was—there is no physical reason why hero and heroine should not together have made extended journeys upon so safe and comfortable a craft. Your constant reader, the present writer, is the happy, though quite unromantic, possessor of an air mattress which on camping expeditions has entirely outdone the ordinary piece of Grand Rapids performing furniture, by serving as the couch of two ladies by night and as the boat of the aforesaid two ladies, two men, and a bulldog, by day.

"I do not believe Mr. Hewlett has ever seen the feat attempted, much less performed it himself." It is not probable, I freely admit, that Mr. Hewlett saw our particular party engaged in its aquatic sports, for so far as we were able to observe the banks they contained only an occasional rustic waiting, with rather more interest than commonly; for the stream to flow by, but shunning the dogmatic and confessedly sceptical spirit of your reviewer, I will not venture to say that Mr. Hewlett may not have been one of those rustic-seeming personages.

My line of reasoning is, however, this: If an air-mattress can serve as a craft for two men, two ladies, and a bulldog, to descend a swift stream, why should not a "portable bed" be comfortably paddled about in a pool by one man or one girl? If such voyages have been made in the prosaic unstoried regions of Central Ohio, why not, *a fortiori*, in the Open Country?

We were all aware that in our voyages upon the *Matratzen-Boot* we were employing a novel and perhaps unconventional means of locomotion, but not until we read the November BOOKMAN did we realise that we were resuming "romance in our realistic days!"

If your reviewer is still inevitably sceptical, I can assure him that the two men and the two ladies are all competent witnesses, being of the purest Caucasian race without admixture of Eskimo or negro blood, that with quite unusual foresight we brought our records home with us, and that we are prepared to submit to him—in confidence—authentic photographs of the two men, the two ladies, and the bulldog, gliding down the swift current of the Mohican upon a "portable bed."

C. T. P.

VII

From the far-off, misty island of Capri, where Tiberius Cæsar once did strange things, comes a picture post-card representing the Column of Phocas in the Roman Forum. We add it to our Gallery, with thanks. On the face of it is the following remark:

It seems to me as if I remember having read "Seafarers" in Kipling's book of poems called *The Seven Seas*.

Yours very truly,
M. M.

It seems to us as if "M. M." should have consulted *The Seven Seas*. That book does not contain the poem to which reference is made.

VIII

The following remarks are addressed to us, but they are evidently aimed straight at the author of the New Baedeker papers. We print them in full, so that in the classic phrase, he may get "all that is coming to him." It is written from Greenfield, Massachusetts, and is in Simple Spelling, which we have corrected.

The caustic sarcasm running through the article in the January BOOKMAN against Lake Pleasant, Mass., will make the good men and women who summer there smile! Oh! it is to laugh, to hear a prejudiced, ignorant man, like New Baedeker, abuse us, without stopping to investigate the subject of Spiritualism. It is rather late in the day to dismiss the subject with an over-night stop, the place evidently being too vile to hold his pure, undefiled, orthodox longer!

Let me assure you, Mr. Editor, the place is filled with sincere, intelligent men and women, who meet there each year, to discuss many subjects, occult and educational. It may have its objectionable people—what community has not? He must have been unfortunate enough to meet those I do not come in contact with.

The man writes himself a prejudiced bigot, who seems not to know what kindness or toleration mean. Does he write so unjustly and unfairly of other places as he does of Lake Pleasant, Mass.? Certainly he gives a detailed impression of a place visited by hundreds of people who receive benefit and comfort from the philosophy of Spiritualism. No right-minded person, whether they represent the colony at Lake Pleasant, Mass., or not, can let the abusive criticism pass without a protest.

The article is misleading, for evidently he made the visit years ago, while the pictures have been taken recently. New Baedeker had better come again and view the place through kindlier eyes—or, is he in that state of mind of the melancholy man, who, standing before a humourist, says defiantly—"Now make me laugh!"

I am proud to subscribe myself,

A LAKE PLEASANT COTTAGER.

IX

A question from Lebanon, Pennsylvania:

Will you kindly tell me in the Letter Box the words that should pass between parties introduced to each other? "Pleased to meet you" is in the "Inferno," where it certainly belongs, but what is the remedy?

A FRIEND AND A BOOKWORM.

"Pleased to meet you" is objectionable chiefly because it omits the personal pronoun, and conveys an impression of haste. Now ellipsis may be pardoned in a business correspondence, as where a person begins his letter: "Have received your favour of the nineteenth and would say in reply, etc., etc.;" though even in business we think the thing deplorable. In private life, however, where the amenities require a leisurely and quite unbusiness-like mode of speech, one should say, "It is a great pleasure to meet you," or "I am very happy to meet you," or "I am very glad to make your acquaintance," or anything else that doesn't savour of a social intercourse which suggests a quick-lunch counter.

X

The Gentleman from British Columbia has sent us a solution of the Mystery of the Silver Loving Cup. We regard it rather dubiously; but we publish it, since no one else has been courageous enough to make the attempt. Possibly the Junior Editor may call us "Zoilus," since we are classically inclined. If he does so, he does it in our absence. But we are quite sure that we never call him "Thesaurus," though we might well do so, since he is really a *thesaurus* filled with many rich nuggets regarding Dumas the Elder, Boxiana, and much other lore upon which we are continually drawing. Likewise, we confess that the work of the Gentleman from British Columbia over the Loving Cup is quite as good as that of the late Ignatius Donnelly over Shakespeare. Here is the alleged solution:

It is all very simple. The Loving Cup is from the Junior Editor, as can be proved by

the phrase on the cup: "Eidgenoschiches Schützenfest, 1904. St. Gallen," is merely anagrammatic—1904 being the key—and by rearrangement we get—

ZOILUS: CHANGE THESE
FLINGS. SHED SENSE, ETC. T.

From which I gather that the Junior Editor's pet name for the Senior Editor is "Zoilus." In the same way one may conclude that "T" stands for "Thesaurus"—an ironic appellation applied by the Senior to the Junior Editor.

G. FROM B. C.

P. S. There are people who, by some laborious occultation, can see a wonderful mysticism in such lines as "Tommy, mind your eye"!

XI

The legal gentleman in Provo, Utah (we mistakenly called the town "Probo") has sent us a very graceful little note, and likewise a poem which Miss Carolyn Wells will enjoy when the present number of *THE BOOKMAN* reaches her in Egypt, where she is now collecting nonsense verses among the hieroglyphs. He says:

Mr. L. Box.

DEAR SIR: I do not wish to start a controversy over the poetry of Carolyn Wells, because criticism of such verse must always reflect the critic's disposition or point of view at the time of writing; but I do want to say that I have taken a great deal of pleasure in her verse in the past, though she does not always maintain her average standard of excellence. The little ballade in your January issue pleased me very much. Permit me, in reply, to submit the enclosed "Appreciation."

Yours truly,

F. A. M.

P. S. Thanks for the mistake of calling this town Probo. It enabled Miss Wells to call me "Proboan"!

And here is the poem which is clever enough to make Miss Wells look to her own laurels with some anxiety.

A BALLADE OF APPRECIATION
BY THE PROBOAN

I have never longed for greatness,
Never sought for empty fame,
I have never wished my name
Sung by ev'ry blond-haired waitress.

I have never bored the famous
With my amateurish praise,
Nor indited to them lays
That might only serve to shame us.

Yet I've often thought my measure
Of contentment would be filled,
If for me some ink were spilled,
To my everlasting pleasure.

Now, behold! my dear desire
Has been fully gratified,
For of me a pen's been plied
With eudemonistic fire.

Once I dared a criticism
Of some stuff that one had writ.
Shades of wrath! I'd had a "fit"!
I had had a "cataclysm"!

I was called (weird thing!) "Proboan"!
Honest words "a heart-felt flier"!
Pen a trifle bit "austere"!
But, the madding fling, "Proboan"!

Sounds akin to protozoan,
Or a breakfast food just out.
But what's the odds? I'm writ about!
I'm a "Carolyn Wells Proboan"!

XII

The Letter Box is filled to overflowing with gibes, compliments, suggestions for the Inferno, and other things; but we must put them all aside this month in order to acknowledge with great satisfaction the generosity of our readers in sending us a great mass of picture post-cards intended to adorn the Letter Box Picture Gallery. Every one of them contains some cheerful message or merry quip which sounds the personal note in a most agreeable manner. As for the cards themselves they lie in a multi-coloured mass before us, delightful to the eye, and also gratifying, because they show that the Letter Box has friends in all quarters of the earth. The Gentleman from British Columbia has fairly outdone himself in sending us twelve very handsome cards, each of which displays one word, except that the tenth card has five words on it. Arranging the cards in

proper order, the inscriptions on them read as follows:

A very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from (happily a long distance).

G. B. C.

His cards were all posted at Wallace, Idaho, and they depict more mills, trains, concentrators, and mines than we ever saw before in our life. Visitors to our Gallery will think that we are engaged in engineering and have large interests in Western properties. However, we rather like the looks of Wallace, Idaho, and should be glad to bask upon one of its contiguous mountains and write poetry. We give these cards a first place in the second section of our catalogue. It will be remembered that the first section ended with picture number twelve. As we have a certain feeling about the number thirteen, we shall begin the second section with 12*a*, and then go on to fourteen.

THE LETTER-BOX PICTURE GALLERY. (SECOND SECTION OF CATALOGUE.)

12*a*. Standard and Mammoth Mines at Mace, Idaho.

14. Mullen, Idaho, Looking West.

15. Kellogg, Idaho.

16. Bunker Hill and Sullivan Mill. (Note the unconscious poetry.)

17. Wardner, Idaho.

18. Morning Mill (presumably Idaho).

19. Snowstorm Mill (presumably Idaho).

20. Hercules Mill and Tram (presumably Idaho).

21. Mammoth and Standard Concentrators Located at Wallace, Idaho. Daily Capacity 1000 Tons.

22. Burke, Idaho.

23. Bird's eye View of Wallace, Idaho.

[So far, the Gentleman from British Columbia. There follow two cards postmarked San Francisco and one without any postmark. They bring to us New Year greetings.]

24. Dutch Windmill, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.

25. Native Sons' Monument, San Francisco.

26. A White Cat Sitting in a Basket, and described on the obverse of the card as "The Cute Kittie."

27. The Column of Phocas in the Roman Forum. (See above.)

28. The Arch of Welcome in Denver, Colorado.

29. Pike's Peak from the Garden of the Gods.

30. Mount of the Holy Cross (somewhere in Colorado).

[The last three additions are sent to us from Denver by some one who signs himself "R. W." and he says that our idiosyncrasies "are enough to alienate any citizen who tries to think clearly and intelligently. But," he adds, "with thousands of others I read your monthly bushel with a sense of weakness and delight."]

31. The Obelisk, Central Park, New York. (From R. L. C.)

32. Entrance to Burial Hill, Plymouth, Mass. (From some one who lives in West Cedar Street, Boston.)

33. The Man With the Spade. (Anonymously presented "From a Sometime," whatever that may be—in Shreveport, Indiana.)

34. Just in from the Field: representing four small "coons" on a white farm-horse. (Also from Shreveport, Indiana.)

35. Salutations from Bluefields, Nicaragua. (Presented by E. M. B., presumably from Bluefields.)

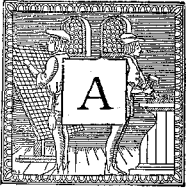
36. The Falls of Minnehaha. (From a lady who says that she made the acquaintance of Minnehaha when she was a very small girl in London, and never expected to see the Falls.)

We must here close the second section of our catalogue, owing to lack of further space this month. We still hold a large number of cards, some of which we do not mention now because the observations written on them require special comment. Meanwhile, we express our sincere gratitude to those who have made this collection entirely unique. We take immense pleasure in inspecting it at all hours of the day.

THE STORY OF ART IN AMERICA

BY ARTHUR HOEBER

PART II—THE MIDDLE PERIOD



RELATIVE of the wife of Benjamin West was Matthew Pratt, who became a member of West's household in London and afterward returned to Philadelphia a successful portrait painter. One of his paintings is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York. It represents the interior of West's studio in London, with the master giving a talk to four students. This artist Pratt is said to have been a remarkable sign painter, and the signs in those days were something more than mere lettering, for they included pictorial representations of one sort or another, and he was reputed to have been the best maker of signs in his day. Another pupil of West was William Dunlap, not much of a painter, but most interesting as the author of *The History of the Arts of Design in America*, from which volume we get pretty much all the information we have of the earlier men. In the rooms of the New York Historical Society there is a canvas by him, remarkably naïve and of no artistic value, but interesting historically, wherein he represents himself showing a picture to his parents. Although Dunlap was identified with the art life in New York and became one of the founders of the National Academy of Design, he was forced to work in other directions to gain a livelihood, even becoming a theatrical manager in his time.

The name of Robert Fulton, of course, immediately suggests the steamboat, but he, too, was a pupil of West in London and entered his studio about 1786. He went afterward to Paris, where he remained seven years, and although he spent the larger part of that time in experimenting with his submarine boats, nevertheless he managed to paint a great panorama, the first seen there, and there still remains the memory of it in the name of the *Passage des Panoramas*, where it was shown. But after all, even though he practised portrait painting for a brief while in Devonshire, when he

had gone abroad shortly after his twenty-first year and attracted the attention of the American president of the Royal Academy, it was there that he met the Duke of Bridgewater, and canal navigation gave him more concern than painting. Dunlap, the art historian, says he was guilty of painting poor portraits in Philadelphia, in 1782. He endeavoured to have his countrymen purchase such pictures by Benjamin West as were at the artist's disposal, and he wrote thus to the citizens of Philadelphia:

"I have now the pleasure to offer you a catalogue of the select works of Mr. West, and with it to present you the most extraordinary opportunity that was ever offered to the lovers of science. The catalogue referred to is a list of all Mr. West's productions, portraits excepted. No city ever had such a collection of admired works from the pencil of one man; and that man is your fellow-citizen. The price set on the collection is £15,000 sterling; a sum inconsiderable when compared with the objects in view, and the advantages to be derived from it." Fortunately, the citizens did not see it in the same light as did the great inventor, and the collection was broken up and widely dispersed.

One of the early men among the American painters was Joseph Wright, who was born in Bordentown, New Jersey, in 1756, the son of a woman named Patience Wright, who was a noted wax modeller in her time. She took the boy to London when he was sixteen, and his sister subsequently married the well-known English portrait painter, John Hoppner. Both he and Benjamin West were interested in young Joseph, who in his day painted the portrait of the then Prince of Wales, afterward George IV, but he was rather an idler than otherwise was Joseph, and he spent a good deal of his time loafing about the town. "Joe is idle and spends his money for pleasure," his mother wrote to her mother. Later this same Joe went to Paris, more or less under