

# McCLURE'S MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

AUGUST, 1893.

No. 3.

## REAL CONVERSATIONS.—II.

### A DIALOGUE BETWEEN EUGENE FIELD AND HAMLIN GARLAND.

RECORDED BY HAMLIN GARLAND.



ONE afternoon quite recently two men sat in an attic study in one of the most interesting homes in the city of Chicago. A home that was a museum of old books, rare books, Indian relics, dramatic souvenirs and bric-a-brac indescribable, but each piece with a history.

It was a beautiful June day, and the study window looked out upon a lawn of large trees where children were rioting. It was a part of Chicago which the traveler never sees, green and restful and dignified, the lake not far off.

The host was a tall, thin-haired man with a New England face of the Scotch type, rugged, smoothly shaven, and generally very solemn—suspiciously solemn in expression. His infrequent smile curled his wide, expressive mouth in fantastic grimaces which seemed not to affect the steady gravity of the blue-gray eyes. He was stripped to his shirt-sleeves and sat with feet on a small stand. He chewed reflectively upon a cigar during the opening of the talk. His voice was deep but rather dry in quality.

The other man was a rather heavily built man with brown hair and beard cut rather close. He listened, mainly, going off into gusts of laughter occasionally as the other man gave a quaint turn to some very frank phrase. The tall host was Eugene Field, the interviewer a Western writer by the name of Garland.

"Well now, brother Field," said Garland, interrupting his host as he was about to open another case of rare books. "You remember I'm to interview you to-day."

Field scowled savagely.

"O say, Garland, can't we put that thing off?"

"No. Must be did," replied his friend decisively. "Now there are two ways to do this thing. We can be as literary and as deliciously select in our dialogue as Mr. Howells and Professor Boyesen were, or we can be wild and woolly. How would it do to be as wild and woolly as those Eastern fellers expect us to be?"

"All right," said Field, taking his seat well upon the small of his back. "What does it all mean anyway? What you goin' to do?"

"I'm goin' to take notes while we talk, and I'm goin' to put this thing down pretty close to the fact, now, you

Copyright, 1893, by S. S. McCLURE, Limited. All rights reserved.

bet," said Garland, sharpening a pencil.

"Where you wan'to begin?"

"Oh, we'll have to begin with your ancestry, though it's a good deal like the introductory chapter to the old-fashioned novels. We'll start early, with your birth for instance."

"Well, I was born in St. Louis."

"Is that so?" the interviewer showed an unprofessional surprise. "Why, I thought you were born in Massachusetts?"

"No," said Field, reflectively. "No, I'm sorry of course, but I was born in St. Louis; but my parents were Vermont people." He mentioned this as an extenuating circumstance, evidently. "My father was a lawyer. He was a precocious boy,—graduated from Middlebury College when he was fifteen, and when he was nineteen was made States-Attorney by special act of the legislature; without that he would have had to wait till he was twenty-one. He married and came West, and I was born in 1850."

"So you're forty-three? Where does the New England life come in?"

"When I was seven years old my mother died, and father packed us boys right off to Massachusetts and put us under the care of a maiden cousin, a Miss French,—she was a fine woman too."

Garland looked up from his scratch-pad to ask, "This was at Amherst?"

"Yes. I stayed there until I was nineteen, and they were the sweetest and finest days of my life. I like old Amherst." He paused a moment, and his long face slowly lightened up. "By the way, here's something you'll like. When I was nine years old father sent us up to Fayetteville, Vermont, to the old homestead where my grandmother lived. We stayed there seven months," he said with a grim curl of his lips, "and the old lady got all the grandson she wanted. She didn't want the visit repeated."

He sat a moment in si-

lence, and his face softened and his eyes grew tender. "I tell you, Garland, a man's got to have a layer of country experience somewhere in him. My love for nature dates from that visit, because I had never lived in the country before. Sooner or later a man rots if he lives too far away from the grass and the trees."

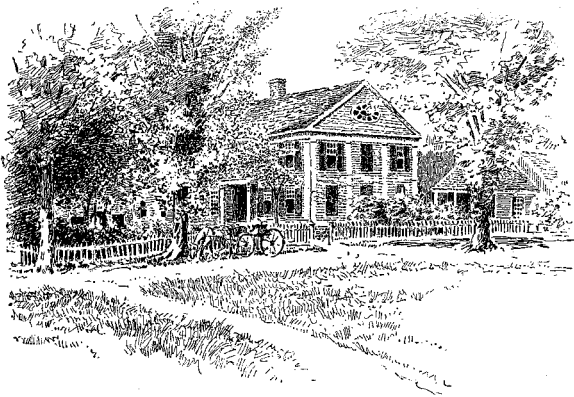
"You're right there, Field, only I didn't know you felt it so deeply. I supposed you hated farm life."

"I do, but farm life is not nature. I'd like to live in the country without the effects of work and dirt and flies."

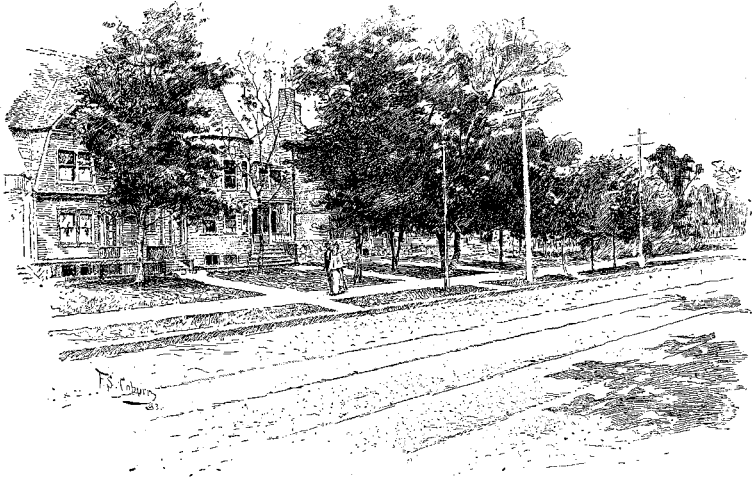
The word "flies" started him off on a side-track. "Say! You should see my boys. I go up to a farm near Fox Lake and stay a week every year, suffering all sorts of tortures, in order to give my boys a chance to see farm life. I sit there nights trying to read by a vile-smelling old kerosene lamp, the flies trooping in so that you can't keep the window down, you know, and those boys lying there all the time on a hot husk bed, faces spattered with mosquito bites and sweating like pigs—and happy as angels. The roar of the flies and mosquitoes is sweetest lullaby to a tired boy."

"Well, now, going back to that visit," said the interviewer with persistence to his plan.

"Oh, yes. Well, my grandmother was a regular old New England Congregationalist. Say, I've got a sermon I wrote when I was nine. The old lady used to give me ten cents for every sermon I'd write. Like to see it?"



THE OLD HOMESTEAD AT FAYETTEVILLE, VERMONT.



EUGENE FIELD'S HOME AT BUENA PARK, CHICAGO.

"Well, I should say. A sermon at nine years! Field, you started in well."

"Didn't I?" he replied, while getting the book. "And you bet it's a corker." He produced the volume, which was a small bundle of note-paper bound beautifully. It was written in a boy's formal hand. He sat down to read it :

"I would remark secondly that conscience makes the way of transgressors hard ; for every act of pleasure, every act of Guilt his conscience smites him. The last of his stay on earth will appear horrible to the beholder. Some times, however, he will be stayed in his guilt. A death in a family of some favorite object or be attacked by Some disease himself is brought to the portals of the grave. Then for a little time perhaps he is stayed in his wickedness, but before long he returns to his worldly lust. Oh, it is indeed bad for sinners to go down into perdition over all the obstacles which God has placed in his path. But many I am afraid do go down into perdition, for wide gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat."

He stopped occasionally to look at Garland gravely, as he read some particularly comical phrase : " ' I secondly remark '—ain't that great?—' that the wise man remembers even how near he is to the portals of death.' 'Portals of death' is good. 'One should strive to walk the narrow way and not the one which leads to perdition.' I was heavy on quotations, you notice."

"Is this the first and last of your

sermons?" queried Garland, with an amused smile.

"The first and last. Grandmother soon gave me up as bad material for a preacher. She paid me five dollars for learning the Ten Commandments. I used to be very slow at 'committing to memory.' I recall that while I was thus committing the book of Acts, my brother committed that book and the Gospel of Matthew, part of John, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and the Westminster Catechism. I would not now exchange for any amount of money the acquaintance with the Bible that was drummed into me when I was a boy. At learning 'pieces to speak' I was, however, unusually quick, and my favorites were : 'Marco Bozzaris,' 'Psalm of Life,' Drake's 'American Flag,' Longfellow's 'Launching of the Ship,' Webster's 'Action,' Shakspeare's 'Clarence's Dream' (Richard III.), and 'Wolsey to Cromwell,' 'Death of Virginia,' 'Horatius at the Bridge,' 'Hymn of the Moravian Nuns,' 'Absalom,' 'Lochiel's Warning,' 'Maclean's Revenge,' Bulwer's translation of Schiller's 'The Diver,' 'Landing of the Pilgrims,' Bryant's 'Melancholy Days,' 'Burial of Sir John Moore,' and 'Hohenlinden.'"

"I remember when I was thirteen, our cousin said she'd give us a Christmas tree. So we went down into Patrick's swamp—I suppose the names are all changed now—and dug up a little

pine tree, about as tall as we were, and planted it in a tub. On the night of Christmas Day, just when we were dancing around the tree, making merry and having a high-old-jinks of a time, the way children will, grandma came in and looked at us. 'Will this popery never cease?' was all she said, and out she flounced."

"Yes, that was the old Puritan idea of it. But did live——"

"Now hold on," he interrupted. "I want to finish. We planted that tree near the corner of Sunset Avenue and Amity Street, and it's there now, a magnificent tree. Sometime when I'm East I'm going to go up there with my brother and put a tablet on it—'Pause, busy traveller, and give a thought to the happy days of two Western boys who lived in old New England, and make resolve to render the boyhood near you happier and brighter,' or something like that."

"That's a pretty idea," Garland agreed. He felt something fine and tender in the man's voice which was generally hard and dry but wonderfully expressive.

"Now, this sermon I had bound just for the sake of old times. If I didn't have it right here, I wouldn't believe I ever wrote such stuff. I tell you, a boy's a queer combination," he ended, referring to the book again.

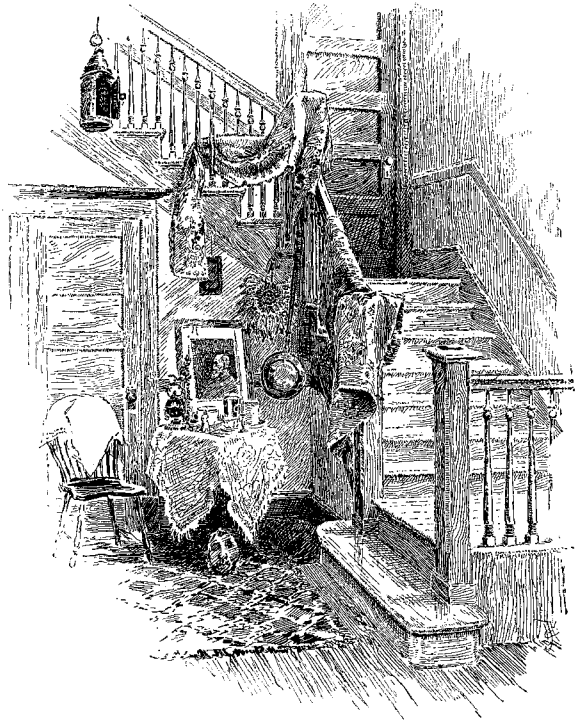
"You'll see that I signed my name, those days, 'E. P. Field.' The 'P.' stands for Phillips.

"As I grew old enough to realize it, I was much chagrined to find I had no middle name like the rest of the boys, so I took the name of Phillips. I was a great admirer of Wendell Phillips, am yet, though I'm not a reformer. You'll see here,"—he pointed at the top of the pages,—"I wrote the word 'sensual.' Evidently I was struck with the word, and was seeking a chance to ring it in somewhere, but failed." They

both laughed over the matter while Field put the book back.

"Are you a college man?" asked Garland. "I've noticed your deplorable tendency toward the classics."

"I fitted for college when I was sixteen. My health was bad, or I should have entered right off. I had pretty nearly everything that was going in the way of diseases," this was said with a comical twist voice, "so I didn't get to Williams till I was eighteen. My health improved right along, but I'm



THE HALL.

sorry to say that of the college did not." He smiled again, a smile that meant a very great deal.

"What happened then?"

"Well, my father died, and I returned West. I went to live with my guardian, Professor Burgess, of Knox College. This college is situated at Galesburg, Illinois. This is the college that has lately conferred A. M. upon me. The Professor's guardianship was merely nominal, however. I did about as I pleased.

"I next went to the State University



at Columbia, Missouri. It was an old slave-holding town, but I liked it. I've got a streak of Southern feeling in me." He said abruptly, "I'm an aristocrat. I'm looking for a Mæcenæ. I have mighty little in common with most of the wealthy, but I like the idea of wealth in the abstract." He failed to make the distinction quite clear, but he went on as if realizing that this might be a thin spot of ice.

"At twenty-one, I came into sixty thousand dollars, and I went to Europe, taking a friend, a young fellow of about my own age, with me. I had a lovely time!" he added, and again the smile conveyed vast meaning.

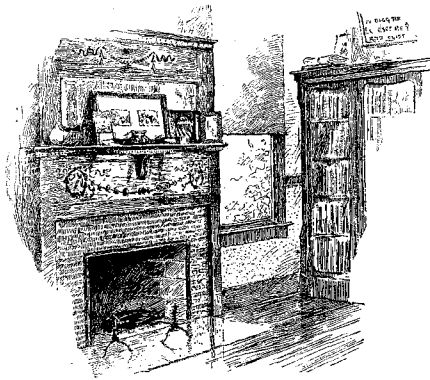
Garland looked up from his pad.

"You must have had. Did you 'blow in the whole business'?"

"Pretty near. I *swatted* the money around. Just think of it!" he exclaimed, warming with the recollection. "A boy of twenty-one, without father or mother, and sixty thousand dollars. Oh, it was a lovely combination! I saw more things and did more things than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio," he paraphrased, looking at his friend with a strange expression of amusement, and pleasure, and regret. "I had money. I paid it out for experience—it was plenty. Experience was laying around loose."

"Came home when the money gave out, I reckon?"

"Yes. Came back to St. Louis, and went to work on the 'Journal.' I had previously tried to 'enter journalism'



A BIT OF LIBRARY.

as I called it then. About the time I was twenty-one, I went to Stilson Hutchins, and told him who I was, and he said:

"All right. I'll give you a chance, but we don't pay much.' Of course, I told him pay didn't matter.

"Well!" he said, 'go down to the Olympia, and write up the play there to-night.' I went down, and I brought most of my critical acumen to bear upon an actor by the name of Charley Pope, who was playing Mercutio for Mrs. D. P. Bowers. His wig didn't fit, and all my best writing centred about that wig. I sent the critique in, blame fine as I thought, with illuminated initial letters, and all that. Oh, it was lovely! and the next morning I was deeply pained and disgusted to find it mutilated,—all that about the wig, the choicest part, was cut out. I thought I'd quit journalism forever. I don't suppose Hutchins connects Eugene Field with the — fool that wrote that critique. I don't myself," he added with a quick half-smile, lifting again the corner of his solemn mouth. It was like a ripple on a still pool.

"Well, when did you really get into the work?" his friend asked, for he seemed about to go off into another by-path.

"Oh, after I came back from Europe I was busted, and had to go to work. I met Stanley Waterloo about that time, and his talk induced me to go to work for the 'Journal' as a



THE DINING-ROOM.

reporter. I soon got to be city editor, but I didn't like it. I liked to have fun with people. I liked to have my fun as I went along. About this time I married the sister of the friend who went with me to Europe, and feeling my new responsibilities, I went up to St. Joseph as city editor." He mused for a moment in silence. "It was terrific hard work, but I wouldn't give a good deal for those two years."

"Have you ever drawn upon them for material?" asked Garland with a novelist's perception of their possibilities.

"No, but I may some time. Things have to get pretty misty before I can use 'em. I'm not like you fellows," he said, referring to the realists. "I got thirty dollars a week; wasn't that princely?"

"Nothing else, but you earned it, no doubt."

"Earned it? Why, Great Scott! I did the whole business except turning the handle of the press.

"Well, in 1877 I was called back to the 'Journal' in St. Louis, as editorial writer of paragraphs. That was the beginning of my own line of work."

"When did you do your first work in verse?" asked Garland.

The tall man brought his feet down to the floor with a bang and thrust his hand out toward his friend. "*There!* I'm glad you said *verse*. For heaven's sake don't ever say I call my stuff poetry. I never do. I don't pass judgment on it like that." After a little he resumed. "The first that I wrote was 'Christmas Treasures.' I wrote that one night to fill in a chink in the paper."

"Give me a touch of it?" asked his friend.

He chewed his cigar in the effort to remember. "I don't read it much. I put it with the collection for the sake of old times." He read a few lines of it, and read it extremely well, before returning to his history.

#### CHRISTMAS TREASURES.

I count my treasures o'er with care,—  
The little toy my darling knew,  
A little sock of faded hue,  
A little lock of golden hair.

Long years ago this holy time,  
My little ones—my all to me—  
Sat robed in white upon my knee,  
And heard the merry Christmas chime.

"Tell me, my little golden-head,  
If Santa Claus should come to-night,  
What shall he bring my baby bright,—  
What treasure for my boy?" I said.

Then he named this little toy,  
While in his round and mournful eyes  
There came a look of sweet surprise,  
That spake his quiet, trustful joy.

And as he lisped his evening prayer,  
He asked the boon with childish grace,  
Then, toddling to the chimney-place,  
He hung this little stocking there.

That night, while lengthening shadows crept,  
I saw the white-winged angels come  
With singing to our lowly home,  
And kiss my darling as he slept.

They must have heard his little prayer,  
For in the morn with rapturous face,  
He toddled to the chimney-place,  
And found this little treasure there.

They came again one Christmas-tide,—  
That angel host, so fair and white!  
And singing all that glorious night,  
They lured my darling from my side.

A little sock, a little toy,  
A little lock of golden hair,  
The Christmas music on the air,  
A watching for my baby boy!

But if again that angel train  
And golden head come back to me,  
To bear me to Eternity,  
My watching will not be in vain!

"I went next to the Kansas City  
'Times' as managing editor. I wrote  
there that 'Little Peach,' which still  
chases me round the country."

#### THE LITTLE PEACH.

A little peach in the orchard grew,  
A little peach of emerald hue;  
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew,  
It grew.

One day, passing that orchard through,  
That little peach dawned on the view  
Of Johnny Jones and his sister Sue,  
Them two.

Up at that peach a club they threw,  
Down from the stem on which it grew,  
Fell that peach of emerald hue.  
Mon Dieu!

John took a bite and Sue a chew,  
And then the trouble began to brew,  
Trouble the doctor couldn't subdue.  
Too true!

Under the turf where the daisies grew,  
They planted John and his sister Sue,  
And their little souls to the angels flew,  
Boo hoo!

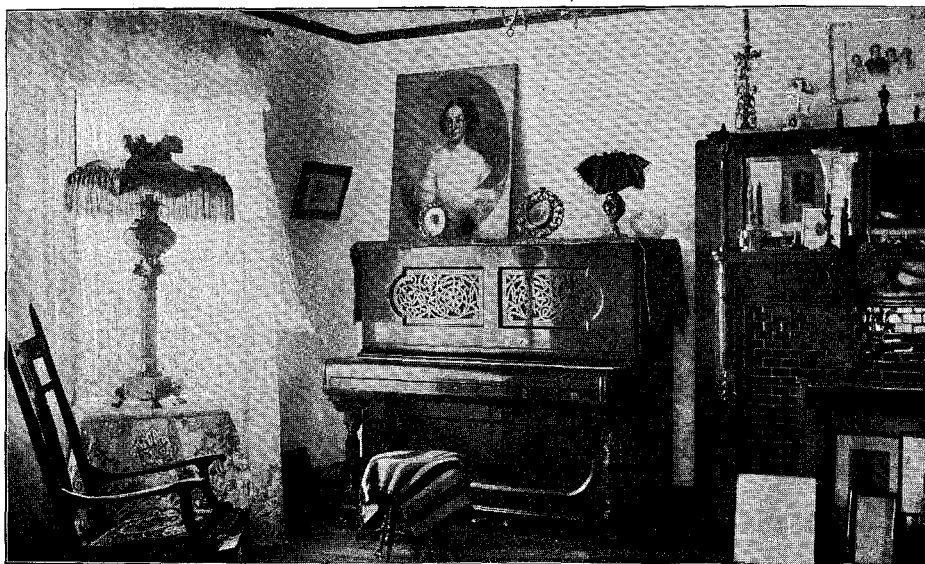
What of that peach of the emerald hue,  
Warmed by the sun, and wet by the dew?  
Ah, well, its mission on earth is through.  
Adieu!

"I went to the 'Denver Tribune' next, and stayed there till 1883. The most conspicuous thing I did there, was the burlesque primer series. 'See

How came the shell upon that mountain height?  
Ah, who can say  
Whether there dropped by some too careless hand,  
Or whether there cast when Ocean swept the Land,  
Ere the Eternal had ordained the day?

Strange, was it not? Far from its native deep,  
One song it sang,  
Sang of the awful mysteries of the tide,  
Sang of the misty sea, profound and wide,  
Ever with echoes of the ocean rang.

And as the shell upon the mountain height  
Sings of the sea,  
So do I ever, leagues and leagues away,  
So do I ever, wandering where I may,  
Sing, O my home! sing, O my home! of thee.



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

the po-lice-man. Has he a club? Yes he has a club,' etc. These were so widely copied and pirated that I put them into a little book which is very rare, thank heaven. I hope I have the only copy of it. The other thing which rose above the level of my ordinary work was a bit of verse, 'The Wanderer,' which I credited to Modjeska, and which has given her no little annoyance."

#### THE WANDERER.

Upon a mountain height, far from the sea,  
I found a shell,  
And to my listening ear the lonely thing  
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing,  
Ever a tale of ocean seemed to tell.

"That brings you up to Chicago, doesn't it?"

"In 1883 Melville Stone asked me to join him on the 'News,' and I did. Since then my life has been uneventful."

"I might not think so. Did you establish the column 'Sharps and Flats' at once?"

"Yes. I told Stone I'd write a good deal of musical matter, and the name seemed appropriate. We tried to change it several times, but no go."

"I first saw your work in the 'News.' I was attracted by your satirical studies of Chicago. I don't always like what you write, but I liked your war against sham."

Field became serious at once, and leaned towards the other man in an attitude of great earnestness. The deepest note in the man's voice came out. "I hate a sham or a fraud; not so much a fraud, for a fraud means brains very often, but a sham makes me mad clear through," he said savagely. His fighting quality came out in the thrust of the chin. Here was the man whom the frauds and shams fear.

"That is evident. But I don't think the people make the broadest application of your satires. They apply them to Chicago. There is quite a feeling. I suppose you know about this. They say you've hurt Chicago art."

"I hope I have, so far as the bogus art and imitation culture of my city is concerned. As a matter of fact the same kind of thing exists in Boston and New York, only they're used to it there. I've jumped on that crowd of faddists, I'll admit, as hard as I could, but I don't think anyone can say I've ever willingly done a real man or woman an injury. If I have, I've always tried to square the thing up." Here was the man's fairness, kindness of heart, coming to the surface in good simple way.

The other man was visibly impressed with his friend's earnestness, but he pursued his course. "You've had offers to go East, according to the papers."

"Yes, but I'm not going — why should I? I'm in my element here. They haven't any element there. They've got atmosphere there, and it's pretty thin sometimes, I call it." He uttered "atmosphere" with a drawling attenuated nasal to express his contempt. "I don't want literary atmosphere. I want to be in an *element* where I can tumble around and yell without falling in a fit for lack of breath."

The interviewer was scratching away like mad—this was his chance.

Field's mind took a sudden turn now, and he said emphatically: "Garland, I'm a newspaper man. I don't claim to be anything else. I've never written a thing for the magazines, and I never was asked to, till about four years ago.

I never have put a high estimate upon my verse. That it's popular is because my sympathies and the public's happen to run on parallel lines just now. That's all. Not much of it will live."

"I don't know about that, brother Field," said Garland, pausing to rest. "I think you underestimate some of that work. Your reminiscent boy-life poems and your songs of children are thoroughly American, and fine and tender. They'll take care of themselves."

"Yes, but my best work has been along lines of satire. I've consistently made war upon shams. I've stood always in my work for decency and manliness and honesty. I think that'll remain true, you'll find. I'm not much physically, but morally I'm not a coward."

"No, I don't think anybody will rise up to charge you with time-serving. By the way, what a rare chance you have in the attitude of the Chicago people toward the Spanish princess!"

The tall man straightened up. His whole nature roused at this point, and his face grew square. His Puritan grandfather looked from his indignant eyes and set jaw as he said:

"I don't know what's coming upon us."

"Aha!" Garland exulted, "even you are bitten with the same."

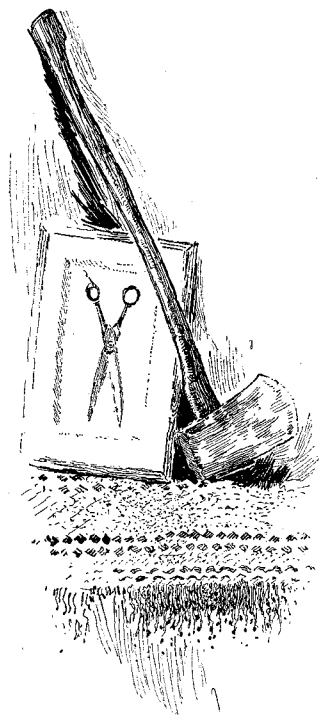
He flung his hand out in quick deprecation.

"Oh, I don't pretend to be a reformer. I leave that to others. I hate logarithms. I like speculative astronomy. I am naturally a lover of romance. My mind turns toward the far past or future. I like to illustrate the foolery of these society folks by stories which I invent. The present don't interest me—at least not taken as it is. Possibilities interest me."

"That's a good way to put it," said the other man. "It's a question of the impossible, the possible, and the probable. I like the probable. I like the near-at-hand. I feel the most vital interest in the average fact."

"I know you do, and I like it after you get through with it, but I don't care to deal with the raw material myself. I like the archaic."





past," Field admitted. Garland took the thought up.

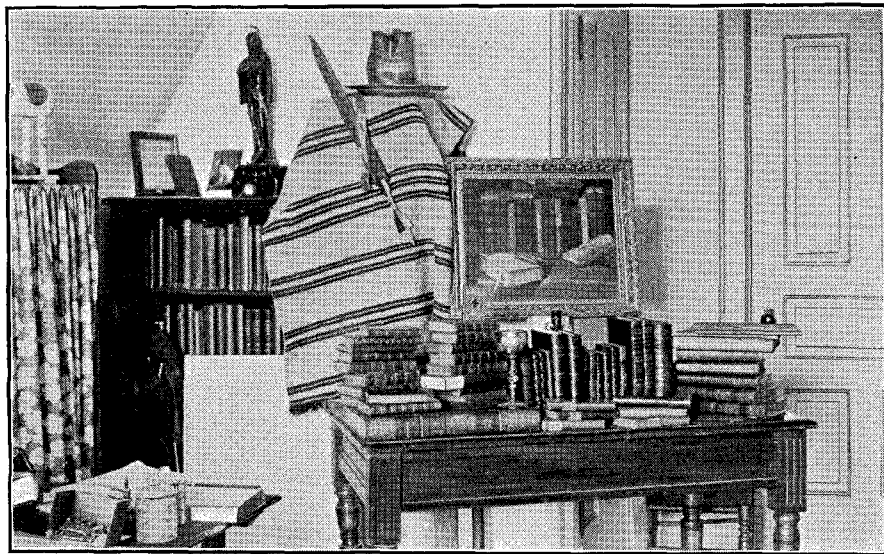
"Time helps you then. Time is a romancer. He halves the fact, but we veritists find the *present* fact haloed, with significance if not beauty."

Field dodged the point.

"Yes, I like to do those boy-life verses. I like to live over the joys and tragedies—because we had our tragedies."

"Didn't we! Weeding the onion-bed on circus day, for example."

"Yes, or gettin' a terrible strappin' for goin' swimming without permission. Oh, it all comes back to me, all sweet and fine somehow. I've forgotten all the unpleasant things. I remember only the best of it all. I like boy-life. I like children. I like young men. I like the buoyancy of youth and its freshness. It's a God's pity that every young child can't get a taste of country life at some time. It's a fund of inspiration to a man." Again the finer quality in the man came out in his face and voice.



FIELD'S "TREASURES": THE GLADSTONE AXE, C. A. DANA'S SHEARS, THE HORACES.

"Yet some of your finest things, I repeat, are your reminiscent verses of boy-life," pursued Garland, who called himself a veritist and enjoyed getting his friend as nearly on his ground as possible.

"Yes, that's so, but that's in the far

"Your life in New England and the South, and also in the West, has been of great help to you, I think."

"Yes, and a big disadvantage. When I go East, Stedman calls me a typical Westerner, and when I come West they call me a Yankee—so there I am!"

"There's no doubt of your being a Westerner."

"I hope not. I believe in the West. I tell you, brother Garland, the West is the coming country. We ought to have a big magazine to develop the West. It's absurd to suppose we're going on always being tributary to the East!"

Garland laid down his pad and lifted his big fist in the air like a maul. His enthusiasm rose like a flood.

"Now you touch a great theme. You're right, Field. The next ten years will see literary horizons change mightily. The West is dead sure to be in the game from this time on. A man can't be out here a week without feeling the thrill of latent powers. The West is coming to its manhood. The West is the place for enthusiasm. Her history is making."

Field took up the note. "I've got faith in it. I love New England for her heritage to you. I like her old stone walls and meadows, but when I get back West—well, I'm home, that's all. My love for the West has got blood in it."

Garland laughed in sudden perception of their earnestness. "We're both talking like a couple of boomers. It might be characteristic, however, to apply the methods of the boomers of town lots to the development of art and literature. What say?"

"It can be done. It will come in the course of events."

"In our enthusiasm we have skated away from the subject. You are forty-three, then—you realize there's a lot of work before you, I hope."

"Yes, yes, my serious work is just begun. I'm a man of slow development. I feel that. I know my faults and my weaknesses. I'm getting myself in hand. Now, Garland, I'm with you in your purposes, but I go a different way. You go into things direct. I'm naturally allusive. My work is almost always allusive, if you've noticed."

"Do you write rapidly?"

"I write my verse easily, but my prose I sweat over. Don't you?"

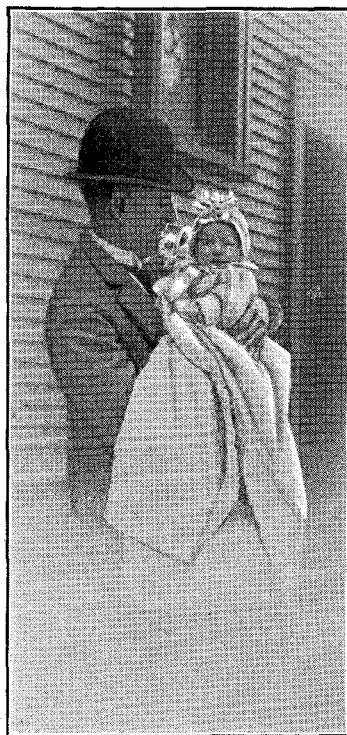
"I toil in revision even when I have

what the other fellows call an inspiration."

"I tell you, Garland, genius is not in it. It's work and patience, and staying with a thing. Inspiration is all right and pretty and a suggestion, but it's when a man gets a pen in his hand and sweats blood, that inspiration begins to enter in."

"Well, what are your plans for the future—your readers want to know that?"

His face glowed as he replied, "I'm going to write a sentimental life of Horace. We know mighty little of him,



but what I don't know I'll make up. I'll write such a life as he *must* have lived. The life we all live when boys."

The younger man put up his notes, and they walked down and out under the trees with the gibbous moon shining through the gently moving leaves. They passed a couple of young people walking slow—his voice a murmur, hers a whisper.

"There they go. Youth! Youth!" said Field.

NOTE.—A series of portraits of Mr. Field at different ages will be printed among the "Human Documents" in the September number.

## THE SHADOW BOATSWAIN.

By BLISS CARMAN.

DON'T you know the sailing orders?  
It is time to put to sea,  
And the stranger in the harbor  
Sends a boat ashore for me.

With the thunder of her canvas,  
Coming on the wind again,  
I can hear the Shadow Boatswain  
Piping to his shadow men.

Is it firelight or morning  
That red flicker on the floor?  
Your good-bye was braver, Sweetheart,  
When I sailed away before.

Think of this last lovely summer!  
Love, what ails the wind to-night?  
What's he saying in the chimney  
Turns your berry cheek so white?

What a morning! How the sunlight  
Sparkles on the outer bay,  
Where the brig lies waiting for me  
To trip anchor and away.

That's the Doomkeel. You may know  
her  
By her clean run aft; and, then,  
Don't you hear the Shadow Boatswain  
Piping to his shadow men?

Off the freshening sea to windward,  
Is it a white tern I hear  
Shrilling in the gusty weather  
Where the far sea-line is clear?

What a morning for departure!  
How your blue eyes melt and shine!  
Will you watch us from the head-  
land  
Till we sink below the line?

I can see the wind already  
Steer the scurf marks of the tide,  
As we slip the wake of being  
Down the sloping world, and wide.

I can feel the vasty mountains  
Heave and settle under me,  
And the Doomkeel veer and tremor,  
Crumbling on the hollow sea.

There's a call, as when a white gull  
Cries and beats across the blue;  
That must be the Shadow Boatswain  
Piping to his shadow crew.

There's a boding sound, like winter,  
When the pines begin to quail;  
That must be the gray wind moaning  
In the belly of the sail.

I can feel the icy fingers  
Creeping in upon my bones;  
There must be a berg to windward  
Somewhere in these border zones.

Stir the fire. . . . I love the sunlight,  
Always loved my shipmate sun.  
How the sunflowers beckon to me  
From the dooryard one by one!

How the royal lady-roses  
Strew this summer world of ours.  
There'll be none in Lonely Haven,  
It is too far north for flowers.

There, Sweetheart! And I must leave  
you.  
What should touch my wife with  
tears?  
There's no danger with the Master,  
He has sailed the sea for years.

With the sea-wolves on her quarter,  
And the white bones in her teeth,  
He will steer the shadow cruiser,  
Dark before and doom beneath,

Down the last expanse till morning  
Flares above the broken sea,  
And the midnight storm is over,  
And the isles are close alee.

So some twilight, when your roses  
Are all blown, and it is June,  
You will turn your blue eyes seaward,  
Through the white dusk of the moon.

Wondering, as that far sea-cry  
Comes upon the wind again,  
And you hear the Shadow Boatswain  
Piping to his shadow men.