

almost wholly to his own family and is naturally filled with such personal matters as they would be most concerned to know: his children, his pets, his health, his garden, the places he visited, the dinners he ate and the people in whose company he ate them.

The bulk of these letters were written to his mother, and news of his children naturally plays a large part in them. "They go everywhere with me that I will take them, and their talk is delightful. We passed a yard the other day where there were cows, and N. says, 'What a nice smell from those dear cows, Papa! Isn't it kind of the dear cows to give us smells?'" One can imagine with what pleasure the grandmother would read such instances of the little one's quickness and sympathy; one can imagine with what pleasure the father would write them. But alien eyes, bent possibly upon their own children and their own cows, may be pardoned for reading unmoved such essentially familiar and domestic records. There is a saying: "Never tell your troubles; you only take up the time of the man who is waiting to tell you his." In this hard and busy world the saying, perhaps, holds good of other things than troubles.

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AMONG the curiosities of literature, none, perhaps, is more interesting than the ægis of the author behind which he wages his war of words—the *nom de guerre*, with its caprices, its varieties, and, frequently, the reason for its choice. An author usually exercises himself as much to find a suitable name under which to write as a suitable title for that which he has written. In ten cases out of twelve a woman who is sending her thoughts, clothed in print, out among the public, prefers to do so under the guise of a masculine name. The reason is probably to be found in her praiseworthy desire to take herself seriously, to disclaim all privileges of sex, and so have her work judged with stern impartiality of the most masculine of critical canons.

It was as the work of George Sand, not of Mme. Dudevant, that the author of "Consuelo," "Mauprat" and "La

Mare au Diable," wished to have her bursts of descriptive eloquence and philosophy tested, and it was as the limning of George Eliot, not of Marian Evans, that the woman who gave us the portraits of Daniel Deronda, Silas Marner and Romola, wished the merits of the portraits to be judged. With both women the work done was as *virile* as the names assumed.

Algernon Charles Swinburne, the poet, probably the only man that ever did so, once reversed the ladies' plan of procedure, and wrote his erratic rhymes disguised in the petticoats and flounces of Mrs. Horace Manners. But then, Swinburne's signature, even when applied to such prosaic affairs as cheques on his bank, was, in his younger days, as erratic as his queer genius. Sometimes he would sign himself A. C. S., and again as A. S., an omission of a middle letter which, on one occasion, at least, led to the poet's discomfiture, for it inspired Thackeray, who saw the signature scrawled in an autograph album, to write underneath: "Only two-thirds of the truth." For Thackeray, it may be mentioned, had no love for the little, red-headed rhymester.

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FRENCH art and literature are replete with *noms de plume* both interesting and amusing. One of the wittiest examples is the "Cham" of the great caricaturist of Parisian life, whose real name was down in the *Almanak de Gotha* as the Vicomte de Noe. We are gravely told that Cham, or Shem, as the name appears in the English Bible, by his unfilial conduct toward his father Noah, obtained the unenviable distinction of being the first disinherited son on record. So when the old Vicomte de Noe, enraged that a white-handed aristocrat of France should stoop so low as to draw comic pictures for a living, disinherited his son, that talented and witty young gentleman took a truly Gaelic revenge by winning fame as a nineteenth century "Cham" disinherited by a nineteenth century Noe. All of which is very funny, indeed, as we all know that Ham was the disinherited son and that Shem was particularly commended of his father. Perhaps the brilliant French.