

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

SIR,—I read with much interest your ghost story that appeared in your number of the 24th October, and the more so as the *London Lancet* drew attention to the book from which you took it.

Of course, I take it for granted that you gave it as a kind of literary curiosity. It is very interesting, in a scientific point of view, to show how people are troubled with hallucinations, and the difficulty of convincing them that they are labouring under an hallucination. Medical men meet with many cases of the kind, and I assure you they are most difficult cases to treat; sometimes it is due to the state of the liver, whence a blue pill at night and a saline draught in the morning will get rid of the ghost. Other times it will be due to the stomach, when a good beef-steak, and a glass of good wine or porter, will make his ghostship disappear. But sometimes the hallucination takes such a hold of a man, that it is nearly impossible to get rid of it, for the nervous centre will not be sympathetically affected, but there will be some functional or organic affection, some physical derangement of the moral or intellectual organization, that it is sometimes very difficult to reach by medical treatment. Persons afflicted with those hallucinations are always of an insane neurosis; and you will find that it is quite a common thing that these ghosts appear to certain families. "I heard my father say that he once saw a ghost," is a very common expression. I have heard people in Ireland boast that, because "they were of an ancient family, the Banshee always appeared to some of the family when one of the members was about to die." As a general rule you will find those persons who see ghosts to be of a highly moral organization, and rather a low intellectual—people generally very religious, and not given much to reason. I had a case under my care ten years ago, a man who was pursued by a ghost everywhere he went, and his ghost would speak to him. He did all he could to get rid of it. At last he jumped into the St. Lawrence, off one of the wharves. One of the water-police saved him. The ghost disappeared, but for six months afterwards he would insist that it was an angel that took him by the hair of the head and lifted him out. In time he came to believe in the policeman. He has been well ever since. He is a good, honest, hard-working man, but certainly he is a man of weak intellectual faculties. The old saying, "A strong mind in a strong body," is true; but when we speak of a strong body, we must mean a strong mental organization. To go back to your ghost-seer, who saw the ghost on horseback. The hallucination and circumstances are easily explained. He was a clergyman, evidently a man of high moral feeling, proved by the fact that believing it his duty to continue his journey, he did so; though in great fear that he would be murdered. Then he says he was a weak man, evidently meaning by the expression, that he was physically weak, compared with the reaper, who was strong. No doubt his intellectual organs were weak also; he evidently was not one of your muscular Christians. He was on a lonely road when he met the reaper; he recognised him as one he had seen at a *tar-ern*, which roused his suspicions; then the man looked at his big silver watch in a peculiar way, and he had a sickle in straw. Evidently if the man wished to rob him, that was his time—no trouble in taking off the straw sheath. But the poor parson here becomes frightened, by his own account, out of his wits, the moment he heard a movement behind the ditch, even before he knew it was a man, and not an animal, that was running. Coming near the gate where the reaper with the sickle was, "he was in despair," and prayed, just worked himself up into a beautiful state to see a ghost. Of course, it was right to pray, but he should have done something more—he should have remembered the old adage, "The gods help those that help themselves;" or Cromwell's advice to his soldiers: "Put your trust in God, but keep your powder dry." However, he was not to blame, he acted according to his kind; he could not help it, he was a natural coward, and it was not his fault, it was his organization. At all events there was no occasion for a pugilistic performance, for, it appears, the poor reaper was as much frightened as himself, not at seeing two horsemen, but the fear that he would find him at some petty act of theft, perhaps cutting switches with his old sickle, to make baskets, or, more probably still, cutting a bundle of withes to make a bed for his wife and children, and knowing if he was caught in either act he would be sent to jail, the poor fellow ran away as soon as he saw his honour coming near the gate. Of course, as soon as the fear left the heart of the poor clergyman, and he turned to open the gate, the ghost on the white horse disappeared, just as all ghosts do. All any one has to do when he sees a ghost is to turn away his head for a moment, begin to read a book or a newspaper, and when he looks again the ghost will have vanished.

Your ghost story would have been better if we had the testimony of the reaper, that he also saw a ghost. As it is, it is quite evident the poor fellow was frightened at flesh and blood.

Yours,
MEDICO.

Three volumes likely to throw much light upon the political and social life of England during the reigns of George IV. and William IV. have just been issued by Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co. They form the journal of the late Charles C. F. Greville, Clerk of the Council to the two monarchs.

LITTLE LUCY.

Trample softly o'er the carpet,
For our little darling sleeps
Underneath the open casement,
Where the amber sunlight creeps;
Hidden in her downy covering,
Like a drift of snow she lies,
And her soul is sweetly cradled
In angelic fantasies.

See, she wakes! Her tiny fingers
Double in her tepid palm,
And she rubs her languid eyelids
Fastened still by slumber's balm;
Watch the dainty limbs outstretching,
Wide she opens her limpid eyes,
And she gazes round about her
With a gentle, glad surprise.

Bend before her, come and tease her,
Press your hand upon her lips,
How she winks and turns and quivers,
Sipping at her finger tips;
Tender her that mimic plaything,
Lo! she lays it on her bib,
Or with mighty stroke she bangs it
On the top-bars of her crib,
While she tosses hands and ankles,
Showing all the fleshly charms
Of her feet so fat and plump,
Of her rounded, rosy arms.

Now she's full of agitation,
Then awhile sedate and coy,
Half-words on her lips now bubble,
Then she utters screams of joy;
Raise from her little cradle,
Balance her aloft in air,
How she doubles up with laughter,
Or looks out with anxious stare,
On the arabesques of the ceiling,
Or the figures of the wall,
That are cold to her approaches,
And unmindful of her call.

Swing her right and left a little,
Throw her on the open bed,
Down she sinks into the pillow,
Till we scarcely see her head;
Her blue eyes are all a-twinkle,
Like the fluttering of a mote,
And a sweet, convulsive laughter
Gurgles in her little throat.

O thou chubby, ruddy angel!
Pastime of the hour of gloom,
To the weary man returning
Nightly to his cheerful home;
Naught like thee to whisper courage
In thy mother's faltering heart,
Ah! thou hast the giant's secret,
Feeble baby as thou art.

JNO. LESPERANCE.

VICTOR HUGO.

Lucy H. Hooper, writing in *Appleton's Journal* of an evening at the house of Victor Hugo, says:

A stir, a movement among the guests, and all rose to greet the host who had just entered. It was with inexpressible interest and emotion that I gazed upon the literary idol of so many years, and found the vague image so long enshrined in my imagination taking the shape and substance of reality. My first glance, however, dispelled all my fear of possible disappointment as to the personal appearance of the great poet. The fine venerable head, crowned with profuse masses of snow-white hair; the forehead massive and slightly projecting; the dark keen eyes full of fire and expression; the ample, snowy beard, and above all the kindly and benevolent expression of the whole countenance, combined to make up a picture that more than realized the enthusiasm-tinted image of my ideal. In one respect he hardly realized the portrait I had unconsciously sketched of him. I had in some way become possessed with the idea that he was, like Goethe, a very tall man—the mighty mind enshrined in a Titanic form—and he is, on the contrary, below middle size. But, though not tall, his powerful frame, broad shoulders, and massive chest be-speak a physical condition of unusual health and vigor. He scarcely looks his age, notwithstanding the snowy whiteness of his hair and beard. The years have touched "the old man eloquent" with a kindly hand, strewing, indeed, their snow upon his brow, but neither bowing the strong shoulders nor quenching the fires of his lustrous eyes, nor, as we all know, enfeebling the grasp of that right hand which has wielded the inspired pen of genius for so many years.

The conversation that ensued was extremely interesting, though rather too desultory to admit of a full record being made of it. Victor Hugo talks as he writes, with a certain calm fervor and eloquence that render his lightest words impressive. His voice, too, soft, deep, and full in tone, gives weight to his slightest utterances. Some mention being made of the Colonne Vendôme, he stigmatized those who had overthrown it as "a pack of fools. It is not yet decided," he said, "what statue shall be placed upon its summit. It ought to be a statue of La France." Then some one spoke of the siege, and I asked him about his little grand-daughter, the "Petite Jeanne" so beautifully apostrophized in "L'An-née Terrible."

"Poor little Jeanne," he said, "was then very sick, and, indeed, supposed to be dying; and it was for that reason that I preferred to illuminate her figure rather than that of her brother George's. You know," he continued, with that exquisite tenderness he has always shown towards the little children, shining in his smile, and softening the deep tones of his voice, "one always loves best the child that is ill. But she is strong and healthy now; it is my grandson who is the sufferer at present."

I told the poet that I had heard of the change of name of the Boulevard Haussmann to the Boulevard Victor Hugo, and my regret at the subsequent restoration of the old name.

"The Boulevard Victor Hugo," I said, "would have had an international interest. Few are the nations that have not possessed the works

of Victor Hugo, if only through the medium of translations; but very few, indeed, are they that know or care anything about Baron Haussmann."

"Yes," he replied, "I was surprised when I first entered Paris to see my name inscribed upon the walls. That was the work of my friends the Parisians, but the Versailles did not suffer it to remain long."

The conversation then turned upon that universal subject, the weather, and one of the gentlemen present asked the poet if he had not suffered much from the inclement climate of Guernsey during his residence there.

"Not at all," he answered; "on the contrary, the weather was uniformly mild and pleasant. My son, in his work on the island, has felicitously described it as a perpetual April, never too warm or too cold."

I asked him if he had seen there specimens of the "pieuvre" of the dimensions he had described in "The Toilers of the Sea."

"Oh, yes," he made answer. "My son was once, while bathing in the sea, pursued by one, and forced to take refuge in a cave; and I saw one killed which had attacked a boat, and which measured four feet and a half from one extremity of its outstretched arms to the other. People blamed me for exaggeration in my description of the creature, but in truth I told nothing about it that I did not know from personal observation to be a fact; and subsequent evidence has proved that I rather understated than exaggerated the truth respecting it."

I was happy to be able to impart some small particle of evidence respecting the vexed question, and I told him that an officer of the United States Navy had assured me that when he was stationed in Charlestown harbor he had known a cuttle-fish, or "pieuvre," seize upon the anchor of a small vessel, and carry it off down the bay. He seemed much interested in this piece of information, and asked me several questions respecting the locality, the probable dimensions of the anchor, and the possible size of the animal.

"There is a very fine one in the great aquarium at Brighton," remarked one of the gentlemen. "Monsieur, the 'pieuvre' owes you a debt of gratitude—you have made it fashionable (*vous l'avez mis à la mode*)."

After a little further time spent in conversation, we rose to take our leave, as it was growing late. I wish that, in this necessarily brief and imperfect record of our visit, I could have given some idea of the rare charm of the poet's manner; of the exceeding kindness and friendliness wherewith he greeted us; and of the perfect simplicity and lack of affectation which characterized his manner and his discourse. To use an expressive Italian verb, he did not in the least "peacock himself" upon his world-wide renown; nor did he seem to fancy, as Tennyson always does, that our wish to be presented to him was a positive insult to his dignity. On the contrary, he seemed gratified at being able to confer upon us the pleasure, which we ventured freely to express, at being thus admitted to pay our respects to him. As I left he raised my hand with graceful French gallantry to his lips.

"Permit me," I said, "in return, to kiss the hand that penned 'Les Misérables.'"

And I bent over the hand I held it with a feeling of reverential admiration that no mere prince or potentate could ever have aroused in my republican soul.

"Monsieur," I continued, "often as I have visited Europe, you are the first king—you, the only living sovereign of the three great realms of literature—to whom I have ever desired to be presented."

"Entendez-vous cela!" he cried, turning with a smile to Mme. Drouet—"the first king—merci bien, madame—merci!"

Kind and noble-hearted old man! With the world's homage at his feet, he would fain have persuaded me that my little outburst of admiring and enthusiastic reverence had made some impression on his mind. And then he bade us farewell with the same kindly warmth with which he had greeted us. So ended my interview with Victor Hugo—an interview which had de-throned my ideal picture of the great poet only to enshrine in its place a nobler and more lovable reality. Like the traveller who kneels in prayer before some wayside shrine, I had bent the knee before the image of a greater and more divinely inspired humanity than my own, and I went on my way strengthened and elevated by the remembrance.

GEORGE COLMAN'S PUNS.

George Colman was an admirable punster. Sheridan once said, when George made a successful hit, "I hate a pun; but Colman almost reconciles me to the infliction." He was once asked if he knew Theodore Hook? "Oh yes," was his reply, "Hook and I [eye] are old associates." George Colman the younger was an early associate of Theodore Hook. On the first evening they met they had been sitting some time, when Colman, fixing his eyes upon Hook, muttered, "Very odd, very strange indeed! wonderful precocity of genius! Astonishing diligence and assiduity! You must be a very extraordinary young man. Why, sir," he continued raising his voice, "you can hardly have reached your twenty-first birthday!" "I have just passed it," said the other, using the phrase of card-players, "*vingt-un*, overdrawn." "Ah, very good," replied Colman; "but pray, sir, tell me how the deuce-ace did you contrive to find time to write that terribly long 'Roman History?'" (Hook's.) A young person being hardly pressed to sing in com-

pany where George Colman formed one of the party, solemnly assured them that he could not sing; and at last said, rather hastily, that "they only wished to make a butt of him." "Oh, no," said Colman, "my good sir, we only want to get a stave out of you." One day, when Colman and his son were walking from Soho Square to the Haymarket, two wittlings, Miles Peter Andrews and William Augustus Miles, were coming the contrary way, on the opposite side of the street. They each sent a dramatic manuscript for the Summer Theatre, and being anxious to get the start of each other in the production of their several works, they both called out, "Remember, Colman, I am first oar." "Humph," muttered the manager, as they passed on, "they may talk about first oars, but they have not a scull between them." This reminds one of a witticism of Douglas Jerrold. Two conceited young authors were boasting that they rowed in the same boat with a celebrated wit of the day. "Aye," replied Jerrold, "but not with the same sculls." John Taylor sent to Colman a volume of his poems, which bore the motto—

"I left no calling for this idle trade;"

to which Colman added—

"For none were blind enough to ask thine aid."

Now, Taylor was an oculist, but having little or no practice, the satire was the more poignant. Taylor heard of this *jeu d'esprit*, and shortly after, being in company with Colman, the word *calling* was incidentally mentioned by the latter, when Taylor, with great quickness, interrupted him with, "Talking of *callings*, my dear boy, your father was a great dramatic 'English Merchant,' now your dealings are and always will be those of a small *Coal-man*." George the Fourth presented to Colman a commission of Lieutenant of the Yeomen of the Guard in 1820. On the first birthday that Colman attended officially in full costume, his Majesty seemed much pleased to see him, and observed, "Your uniform, George, is so well made that I don't see the hooks and eyes." On which Colman, unhooking his coat, said, "Here are my eyes, where are yours?" At the table of George IV., when Prince Regent, the Royal host said, "Why, Colman, you are older than I am!" "Oh, no, sir," replied Colman "I could not take the liberty of coming into the world before your Royal Highness." Turning to the Duke of Wellington, who was Gold Stick in Waiting, the King remarked, "George Colman, puts me in mind of Paris." "If that is the case," exclaimed Colman, the only difference between the Duke of Wellington and me is, that I am the hero of Loo—he of Waterloo!" Colman and Banister were dining one day with Lord Erskine, the ex-chancellor, who in the course of conversation on rural affairs, boasted that he kept on his pasture-land nearly a thousand sheep. "I perceive, then," said Colman, "your lordship has still an eye to the Wool-sack." Colman, himself no giant, delighted in quizzing persons of short stature. Liston and pretty little Mrs. Liston were dining with him, and towards evening, when preparing to leave their host, Liston said, "Come Mrs. L., let us be going." "Mrs. L. [El] indeed," exclaimed Colman, "Mrs. Inch, you mean." A Mr. Faulkener, from the provinces, had been engaged at the Haymarket. Colman was disappointed with his new actor, who had to deliver the following line, which he spoke in a nasal tone:—

"Ah! where is my honour now?"

Colman, who was behind the scenes, took a hasty pinch of snuff, and muttered, "I wish your honour was back at Newcastle again, with all my heart."—*Leisure Hour*.

MORE OF THE SHAH'S DIARY.

The *London Hornet* has the following: "The published portions of the Shah's diary of his visit to Europe having created so much interest, we are induced to give some further extracts. He seemed much impressed with everything he saw in London, especially the four-wheeled cabs, which showed, he said, the veneration entertained by us for anything of an ancient character. It was from the respect in which the drivers were held that they were allowed to make what charges they pleased. He found the English were great worshippers. They would worship anything. Even Lord Gladstone worshipped an idol known by the name of Homer, who was a wine merchant in London. The common people worshipped several idols, known as Bheer, Ruhm and Ghin, in whose honour thousands of magnificent temples were erected, all of which were brilliantly lighted at night for the convenience of worshippers during the ceremonies taking place therein. He was much impressed by the affectionate disposition exhibited by the married English. Among the noble and wise men it was the custom for the men to stop out late at places of intellectual study, called clubs, so that they might not interfere with the domestic avocations of their wives, who were generally employed in the kitchens, preparing the family meals, under the superintendence of police-constables, engaged expressly for the purpose, and who were regaled with cooked sheep's flesh and bheer. Among the poorer people it is the custom for the husband to display his affection by knocking his wife about in a playful manner. It is, however, a dangerous kind of amusement, and often attended with serious results. The dress of the people is something very curious. The women are fond of wearing large quantities of false hair, called 'chiknons,' on the top of which were placed little