

MSS. accepted, with promise of so much payment per printed page on application. The magazine duly appeared for a few months, but it was too evidently doomed, as the veriest tyro could see. The managing director died, and the magazine collapsed. No redress could be obtained; neither, though I wrote many letters, could I get my MSS.,—which, needless to relate, were never inserted, much less paid for—returned. The only thing to be done was to look as pleasant as possible under the circumstances, to say with Shakespeare, "Write me down an ass," and to abjure for the future all tempting baits of a like nature."

Doubtless many others have shared a similar fate. This, at least, is true, that nobody ever climbed the ladder of literature by means of Associations of this nature. Where it has been climbed, it has been done by means of genuine periodicals and magazines, and mostly by the aid of friends. The republic of letters, as it has been called, demands from nearly all aspirants as many introductions as a raw, country rustic requires before he can be admitted into aristocratic society. Instead of a cordial welcome, a young literary aspirant is generally refused admittance. But this should not discourage him. Were he to read the biographies of our greatest writers, he would find parallel cases. No editor would insert their articles; no publisher would publish their books; but they persevered until their object was achieved. To show what humble beginnings some of our great authors and journalists had, we will give a few illustrations.

Mr. George Augustus Sala's first contribution appeared in the *Family Herald*, and he says that he was so fresh and green that he actually did not know that he was entitled to be paid for it, and never asked for the money. Mr. T. Littleton Holt, who died recently at an advanced age, was the first to give Mr. Sala regular employment on the staff of *Chat* and to introduce him to gentlemen of the press. Mr. Sala writes: "I ultimately became editor of *Chat* myself, at the magnificent salary of £1 per week. Ah! those were my happy days." But elsewhere Mr. Sala is reported to have said that Charles Dickens was his master, and that but for his friendship and encouragement, he should never have been a journalist, or an author. Mr. Sala says, "The first five-pound note I ever earned from literature came from his kind hand. He urged me to enter the lists of journalism, and watched with interest my progress," and Forster says, in his "Life of Dickens:—"

"Of all the writers before unknown, and whom his journal helped to make familiar to the wide world of readers, he had the strongest personal interest in Mr. Sala, and placed at once in the highest rank his capabilities of help in such an enterprise."

Mr. Sala's paper appeared in September, 1851, and in the same month of the following year, Forster said that Dickens wrote in reference to another article:

"He was twenty guineas in advance, by-the-by, and I told Wills (Wills was sub-editor of *Household Words*) delicately to make him a present of it. I found him a very conscientious fellow. \* \* \* He looks sharply at the alterations in his articles, I observe; and takes the hint next time."

Dickens was certainly very kind to the contributors to his journals, and he introduced many to the world. He declared that he himself was indebted to no one for his introduction to literature, and denied that the contributions of popular writers alone were accepted by magazines. He said:

"I have heard a great deal about literary sets and clerks, and coteries and barriers; about keeping this man up and that man down; about sworn disciples and sworn unbelievers, and mutual admiration societies, and I know not what other dragons in the upward path. I began to tread it when I was very young, without influence, without money, without companion, introducer, or adviser, and I am bound to put in evidence that I never lighted on these dragons yet."

The fact of his not having met them may account for his denial of favoritism on the part of editors. But even he had a beginning. For twelve months he forwarded "Sketches by Boz" to the *Monthly Magazine*, which were accepted, but not paid for. Dickens did not, however, approve of working for nothing. He thought that if his sketches were worth inserting they were worth paying for, and therefore wrote to the editor that as he (Dickens) had hitherto given his contributions, he would be glad of any remuneration, and that otherwise he should be obliged to discontinue them, because he was going to be married, and would require more money. The magazine was then undergoing a change in the editorship, and Dickens' application was handed to the new editor, Mr. James Grant, who had expressed a wish to secure a continuation of "Sketches by Boz." An inquiry by the editor as to the terms on which Dickens would furnish him with similar sketches for an indefinite period, brought back an answer that he had just entered into an arrangement with Messrs Chapman & Hall to write a monthly serial, which would occupy much of his spare time from his duties as a reporter; he could not, therefore, undertake to furnish the proposed sketches for less than eight guineas per sheet of sixteen pages, which was at the rate of half-a-guinea per page. In little more than six months from that time his popularity was such, Mr. Grant said, that he could have had one hundred guineas per sheet from any of the leading periodicals of the day.

It is not often that editors treat beginners as Charles Dickens treated them; at any rate, few instances are recorded, and they are referred to as exceptional. Thackeray seems to have been a good natured editor, a quality which his biographer thinks one of the worst an editor could possess. He was very generous to Thomas Davidson, a Scotch poet and preacher of great promise, who died young. When a student of