

GENERAL READING.

JOHN BROWN.

THE STRONG MAN WHO WATCHES OVER HER MAJESTY.

The Paris correspondent of the New York World writing of Her Majesty's flying visit to Paris on her way to Italy, and of Her Majesty's departure from the gay capital, says:—

A moment more and out came a closed carriage, wherein, as it whisked by, one caught the faintest glimpse of a lady in mourning, bowing in acknowledgment of the salutations of the crowd. "There she is!" There she was. The carriage is out of sight in a moment; but it is to move in the same way through masses of the curious, with 300 policemen to keep them in order, all down the street and beyond to the Place du Havre, and beyond that again to the Faubourg, more densely crowded still. A burly, gray-haired man, in a Scotch cap, sat at the back of the carriage. It was the Queen's body-guard, John Brown.

"There he goes to take care of her," said mine host of the tavern. "Shouldn't like to be the man who tried to touch her when he was by. He's as big as a 'ouse and as strong as a lion. He looks after her, he does, and quite right of him too; he's paid to do it."

This was not bad as a rude definition of the position and duties of this favoured servant. Brown stands in and about the same relationship to his royal mistress as the lion to Una—he is to see that no harm befall. The extreme simplicity of the Queen's life has long made some domestic of the sort necessary. In the Highlands the Queen loves to roam about in perfect freedom from etiquette and ceremonial, and yet it would not do to have her roam quite alone. She is no longer young; there are dangers by flood and field in such a region; and besides there are more fools than Passaric in the world. Brown exactly supplies the want; he would lay down his life for her, not without requiring two or three in return, and, *en attendant*, he thinks nothing of carrying her in his arms, and perhaps a princess or two to follow her across a fordable stream. When she rides he takes his place at the head of the pony, and if the pony were too troublesome he probably would not make much difficulty about carrying him. Brown is not a lacquey—he wears no livery; on the other hand, he is not a gentleman by birth. He has a sort of undetermined office as Strong Man. He is death on all intruders on the Queen's privacy. Once when he met some reporters whom he suspected of dogging his footsteps for "copy," he ordered them off the public highway as though he held all the Highway in fee. It was grossly illegal, but they went. He has saved the Queen in a greater strait. When young mad O'Connor darted out on her from the shrubbery at Buckingham Palace, pistol in hand, he positively plucked the puny wretch up from the ground as if he had been an offending kitten, and held him out so, clawing the air with his paws, till the Queen had passed out of harm's way. He is a true clansman in the character of his service; he worships the Queen as devoutly, though not so demonstratively, as the "Dougal creature" worshipped Rob Rob. He thinks there never was such a Queen, and there never was such a woman in the wide world. The Queen treats him with the condescending confidence which often subsists between the very great and the very little in our older society. She knows there can be no mistake about their positions; it is those who are nearer to her who are kept the farthest off. He is "the old servant" who is also the old friend of the family. He has seen most of "the children" grow up. He probably knows a good deal more about family affairs than many a minister of state. To do him justice, he lets nothing out to his more distinguished colleagues of the Cabinet. A true Scotchman, he is as close as the grave. It is rather through the Queen's own frank avowals that we may judge of the extent of her confidences to him. There is nothing in the world to show, however, that these confidences ever pass the line of domestic life. Brown is no successor to Stockman, as some people who have the happy knack of fancying anything once fancied that he was. Brown's own solicitude for her welfare may have had something to do with this misconception. If he has the devotion of the Dougal creature, it is doubled with a little of the officiousness of Andrew Fairservice. He is for standing between the Queen and all possible intruders, and when he goes south he finds a greater complexity of self-imposed duty to which he is not always equal. The Highland shepherd dog loses something of his nice discrimination of character when he has to keep watch and ward at the door of a London palace. He once gave great offence to an artist summoned to paint a portrait of the Princess Louise, by cross-examining him as to his purpose, as if he had come to peddle the paints. This and the natural envy of "Jeames," with whom he never associates, and of both Jeames' and John's superiors in the hierarchy of court service, make him about the best-hated

man of the household. There is a sort of standing plot against him in the servants' hall, which has sometimes, spread from the subterranean of the palace to the subterranean of journalism and society, and things have been said which are only not criminal because they are so intensely foolish. The lower classes in England hate him with a will and on the most impartial grounds, without in the least knowing why. If there were a successful revolution in London his head would probably be the first luxury enjoyed by the mob.

BAD NOTES AND A LOW (E) FALL OF A GENUINE AND STERLING ORATOR.

From the London Correspondence of the Manchester Examiner.

The numbers and appearance of the House were not in any way remarkable. It was generally expected, though this did not turn out quite so, that the evening would in the main be devoted to speakers of the second order. So rapidly were the questions disposed of, that Mr. Hanbury rose to resume the adjourned Zulu debate at ten minutes before five o'clock. The House, which at that moment was a fair one, at once sustained serious depletion, and the process continued during his address. I cannot say that Mr. Hanbury altogether deserved the comparative indifference with which he was treated; for although his speech was not in any way a remarkable one, it was rather clever and spirited, and, at all events, evinced a creditable knowledge of the papers that have been presented on the subject. When he resumed his seat, Mr. Lowe got up, his rising being greeted with liberal cheers, and producing an almost immediate augmentation in the number of the members present. The right hon. gentleman began rather well, making two or three smart points, getting a cheer here and a laugh there, and altogether appearing to be in good vein. We thought that we were in for a brilliant and effective speech. No sooner, however, did the right hon. gentleman get through the light skirmishing of his exordium, which he rattled off, as the saying is, "out of his head," and applying himself to the substance of his speech, then two things almost immediately made themselves apparent—one, that he was depending to a great extent on notes; and the other, that he had got his notes into a mess, and was, either from nervousness or some other cause, only able to read with difficulty those on which he could lay his hands. He began to "boggle" frequently. Pause after pause of an embarrassing kind followed each other. The kindly cheers of the House encouraged the speaker in his struggle with his papers, and one difficulty after another was gone over. At last he came to one which proved fatal. He got as far as the middle of a sentence and then stuck fast. "The question," he said, "was—" and he got no further. He sorted and shuffled the papers in his hand, glanced hurriedly at one after another, could not find what he wanted—my impression is that in the state of nervous fret to which he had by this time worked himself up he could not read any paper, whether the right or wrong—and after a very painful minute or two, of which the House vainly endeavored to lighten the embarrassment by again cheering, the right hon. gentleman suddenly snatched his hat from the table and sat down with a gesture of bitter mortification, hastily drawing his hand across his eyes and dashing away something as he resumed his seat. The Marquis of Hartington, who sat next him, appeared to try to induce him to rise again and make another effort. The House lent its encouragement by renewed cheers. No one rose immediately. But it was of no use; Mr. Lowe shook his head. He had broken down, and could not struggle further against a fate the most singular in the world to befall a speaker of his acknowledged, well-practiced, and often-tested power. I imagine that there is no instance of a break down of a similar kind on the part of a man of anything like his unquestionable oratorical eminence. I need hardly repeat that the root of the mischief lay in the trouble into which he got with his papers, arising out of the difficulty which in consequence of his deficient eyesight, he always has in dealing with them. But I fancy he was in a nervous state when he rose. Mr. Hanbury had gone on much longer than had been anticipated. The House seemed to be dwindling away under his prolonged talk, and the delay on the one hand, and the disappearance of his audience on the other, would, one can easily conceive, have an irritating effect upon a gentleman whose temper is not the most placid in the world, and whose nerves are much too sensitive to anything which jars upon them. I ought to mention that almost as soon as Mr. Lowe sat down, Mr. Gladstone, who appeared in the House to night for the first time since his recent indisposition, hastily quitted his seat at the end of the front Opposition bench nearest the Speaker's chair, and, taking his place by Mr. Lowe's side, engaged earnestly and warmly with him in what was evident-

ly a kind and consolatory conversation. I fear that for the moment even his persuasive eloquence would hardly avail to soothe the grief, sharp if temporary, of so conspicuous a fiasco in the face of the House of Commons.

AGASSIZ'S EXPERIMENTS IN ENGLISH.

My first impression of the genius of Agassiz was gained when he was in the full vigor of his mental and physical powers. Some thirty five years ago, at a meeting of a literary and scientific club of which I happened to be a member, a discussion sprang up concerning Dr. Hitchcock's book on "bird tracks," and plates were exhibited representing his geological discoveries. After much time had been consumed in describing the bird tracks as isolated phenomena, and in lavishing compliments on Dr. Hitchcock, a man suddenly rose who, in five minutes, dominated the whole assembly. He was, he said, much interested in the specimens before them, and he would add that he thought highly of Dr. Hitchcock's book as far as it accurately described the curious and interesting facts he had unearthed; but, he added, the defect in Dr. Hitchcock's volume is this, that "it is dees-creep-teeve, and not com-par-a-teeve." It was evident throughout that the native language of the critic was French, and that he found some difficulty in forcing his thoughts into English words; but I never can forget the intense emphasis he put on the words "descriptive" and "comparative," and by this emphasis flashing into the minds of the whole company the difference between an enumeration of strange, unexplained facts and the same facts as interpreted and put into relation with other facts more generally known. The moment he contrasted "dees-creep-teeve" with "com-par-a-teeve" one felt the vast gulf that yawned between mere scientific observation and scientific intelligence, between eyesight and insight, between minds that doggedly perceive and describe and minds that instinctively compare and combine. The speaker vehemently expressed his astonishment that a scientist could observe such phenomena, yet feel no impulse to bring them into relation to other facts and laws scientifically established. The critic was, of course, Agassiz, then in the full possession of all his exceptional powers of body and mind. You could not look at him without feeling that you were in the presence of a magnificent specimen of physical, mental and moral manhood; that in him was realized Sainte-Beuve's ideal of a scientist—"the soul of a sage in the body of an athlete." At that time he was one of the comeliest of men. His full and ruddy face, glowing with health and animation, was crowned by a brow which seemed to be the fit home for such a comprehensive intelligence; and the slight difficulty he overcame in enunciating English words only lent to them increased significance. He gave the impression that every word he uttered embodied a fact or a principle. Afterwards he so adapted his organs of speech to the English language that he ended in speaking and writing it as though it were his mother-tongue. It was an exception to be made, it was in one of his favorite terms, "development." He never completely overcame his tendency to pronounce it devil-ope-ment.—E. P. WHITTLE, in Harper's Magazine for June.

FAMILY READING OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

BY MRS. HOWELL COBB.

Father, I kneel
Before thy throne this night, yet feel
Voiceless before me, while my heart
Aches with its grief, and tears start
To my sad eyes, upraised in vain
To see thee smile on me again.

Father, forgive!
Without thy love I cannot live.
I would be thine, all thine; yet sin
Creeping and loathsome, enters in;
Upon its work I dare not gaze,
But my weak heart to thee I raise.

Thou knowest all
And while upon thy name I call,
And listen for thine answering voice,
Ev'n in that knowledge I rejoice;
I would not hide me from thine eye,
Though prostrate 'neath its beams I lie.

Thou knowest me,
Oh let my soul but mirror thee!
Search thou its depths. Make pure, make strong,
To choose the right, abhor the wrong,
And while I tremblingly adore
Lord, draw me on to know thee more.

SHETLAND WOMEN.

Not far outside the town of Lerwick, on the Shetland Islands, there is a great, black, muddy tract of land called a peat-bog. All about is utter desolation. There are no huts even to be seen. The town is concealed by a rounded hill; and when, through some opening between the bare upheavals, one catches a sight of the North Sea, it too seems deserted by mankind. The peat, or mixture of roots and peculiar black soil, is dug here in large

quantities; and all about the place are great piles of it, dried and ready to be burned in the fire-places of the Lerwick people. Peat takes the place of wood; and in every poor man's hut in Shetland will be found burning brightly, and giving out a thin blue smoke.

To prepare peat for market, a great deal of labor is performed. First come the diggers—men, women and children. Entering upon the deep, miry bog, they cut the soil up into cakes about a foot long and a few inches thick; and then they place in high piles to dry. A few weeks they come again and carry the cured fuel away to the town.

It is while carrying these loads that the Shetlanders present a peculiar spectacle. The men are often very old, infirm and poorly clothed; and the women are dressed in short-skirted, home-spun gowns, below which may be seen very red and very broad feet. On their heads they usually have white caps, nicely ironed, with a fluted ruffle around the edge. Passing across the breast and over either shoulder are two strong straps, and these support an immense basket hanging against the back.

Thus equipped, the brave, stout women, their baskets piled with peat, tramp off to Lerwick, two miles away, to set their loads for a few pennies each. They make many trips a day, always smiling and chatting and apparently contented. Often a long line may be seen carefully stepping along over the rough roads, stopping now and then to rest.

The homes of these poor peat women are, many of them, simply hovels. When they wish to build a home, they go out into some fields, usually far away from other huts, and there they dig a trench about a square piece of ground. Upon this they build walls to a height of about eight feet, and fill the crevices with mud and bog. For a roof they gather refuse sea wood, and, with this for a support, lay on layer of straw, mud and stones.

But what homes they seem to us! There is no fire-place, only a hole in the ground, with a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape through! No windows, the door serving for both light and entrance! No beds, only heaps of straw! Sometimes in one small room, often the only one the house contains, will be seen man, wife, children, dog and hens, equal occupants, sharing the same rude comforts. Outside the house, if the owner be moderately well off, may be seen a herd of sheep or ponies, and a patch of garden surrounded by a wall.

But there is something a peat woman of Shetland is continually doing that we have not yet noticed. All have no doubt heard of Shetland hosiery; of the fine, warm shawls and hoods, and delicate veils that come from these far northern islands. Now, all the while the poor bare-legged woman is carrying her heavy burden of peat, her hands are never idle. She is knitting—knitting away as fast as her nimble fingers will allow. In her pocket is the ball of yarn, and as her needles fly back and forth, she weaves fabrics of such fineness that the Royal ladies of England wear them; and no traveller visits the island without loading his trunk with shawls, mittens, stockings and other feminine fancies.

Not to know how to knit in Shetland is like not knowing how to read at home. A little girl is taught the art before she can read; and, as a result, at every cottage will be found the spinning-wheel and the needles, while the feminine hands are never idle. It is one great means of support; and on Regent Street in London will be seen windows full of soft, white goods marked "Shetland Hosiery."

Who first instructed these far northern people in this delicate art is not surely known. On Fair Isle, one of the Shetland group, the art is first said to have been discovered, very many years ago. On that lonely isle even now, every woman, girl and child is while working at any of her various duties.

The yarn with which the Shetland goods are made is spun from the wool of the sheep we see roaming about the fields. In almost every cottage may be seen the veritable old-fashioned wheel; and the busy girl at the treadle sends the great wheel flying, and spins out the long skeines, which serve to make baby a pretty hood or grandma a warm shawl. *Edwards Roberts, in March Wide Awake.*

A CRYING EVIL.

Irreverence is a sin of our times. It is not difficult to account for it in the radical reaction, first from ritualistic forms, and then from puritanical stiffness. But it has gone far enough, too far. Honor of the hoary head, respect for parents, reverence for the sanctuary, a due regard for the ministers, the ordinances, the word, and the name of God, have been swept away. Ill-manners, the result, their enemies say, of republicanism, and of puritanism, characterize, in too great a degree, our people, old and young. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the house of God. Many a Sabbath-school is educating its pupils, we fear, to dishonor the sanctuary where they sit. Inattention to teachers, gazing and whispering during prayer, disrespect to the superintendent, are so common as to be hardly noticed. "My scholars always behave worse after a session of the Sabbath-schools," said an experienced Christian teacher of a day school to us. The want of discipline in many Sabbath-schools sends the pupils home

more unruly than when they left their parents to spend an hour in worshipful study of the word of God!

Sabbath-evening services are too often chosen by young people to carry on flirtations between the sexes: the week night prayer meeting is only saved from disturbance because it is a less popular resort for the frivolous and giddy. Many of these sinners against decent manners are younger members of the church, some of them recently received; others are children of Christian parents. The serious mistake of pastors, officers of churches and sabbath schools is that they tamely submit to the disgrace thus put upon them and the religion they profess. Sometimes this is owing to something worse than mere inadvertence. The ambition for large membership, the supreme desire to please, the fear of giving offense, and, in some cases, a want of proper self respect, render abortive individual efforts to pastors or single officers to assert the honor of God in his house and ordinances. There is a coaxing, beseeching style of treatment which inevitably increases the evil complained of. Better the tithing man with a creak in his shoes that sent a shudder through the heart of his evil doer. Better the distant, reserved, and even stern manner of the old divines. Better expulsions, or, if these excite no fear, other punishments that imply disgrace to the offender and unpopularity to the executor of justice, than the increasing flood-tide of irreverence which fears not God nor regards man.

A reverent spirit lies at the very root of Christianity. Indeed, no true religion can exist without it. Satan has often wisely chosen for his companions men like Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll, whose sneers insure a laugh at things sacred, solemn, and eternal. But shall the ministers and teachers of religion follow the same bad road? If our character and manners, as seen in our worship, possess no dignity, if familiarity has even in us bred contempt, who can blame those who hate Christianity and its God, for venting their spleen in ribald ridicule of belief and believers? We ought to turn to the lessons of holy fear that abound in the tabernacle and temple worship. We ought to take counsel of the reverent spirit with which all men approached the man Jesus Christ. We need to read again the unsparing denunciations of irreverent worship written by Paul to the Corinthians. It would do us good to look once more into the noble but stern faces of Cromwell, Milton, and John Knox; to stand with Cushman and Carver in the "Common House" of Plymouth, and with uncovered heads and bowed hearts listen to the name and word of God. Nay, the hush of a great mediæval cathedral, with its kneeling forms and dim light, is educationally, morally, better than the other extreme of garish, noisy, irreverent caricature of divine worship.

THE RELATION OF THOUGHT TO CHARACTER.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL M'KEAN, D.D.

Reputation is made by words and deeds, but character is formed by thoughts. A man may not really be what his speaking or acting make him seem to be, but "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." The power of thought is wonderful. We may retire within the realm of our own souls and commune with subjects almost unlimited in number and variety. And we may confine our meditations to our own consciousness, so that they shall be hidden from the view of others.

But whatever they may be, however trivial or important, hidden or revealed, they effect more or less the character and give tone to the life. 'Tis true that the occasional thinking upon a given subject may affect us but slightly; so slightly that we may be unconscious of its influence, but it will surely have some bearing upon our lives for good or for evil. But when the thoughts are much occupied with given subjects, the effect upon the life is very marked; so much so, that often the mental processes are clearly indicated by the external acts.

Nearly every mind has its favorite line of thought, and with each mind it is the line of thought most indulged which gives the leading features to the character and makes the man. Scientists seldom excel in many departments of science. They have their specialities to which they give their best energies. The thoughts of one are occupied with the earth—its physical features, the substances which compose it, their formations, positions and relations to each other. These thoughts make him a geologist. The thoughts of another ascend to the heavens. He is constantly prying into the mysteries connected with worlds already discovered, and is on the lookout for the undiscovered. His thoughts make him an astronomer.

The man of discovery finds inventions first thoughts and then acts. The great inventions given to the world have all been formed in the inventor's mind before they were wrought out by the hand of the workman. Watt's thought, studied and planned long and well on the steam en-

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