

and said something. What it was only a privileged few heard; the unprivileged many simply didn't care. When he had finished there was a general rising and drinking, with one or two exclamations of "The Queen." Then we knew that the chairman had been proposing that good lady's health. After some more undistinguishable remarks from headquarters, we had some music, a speech from Mr. Frankfort Moore, and another from Mr. Anthony Hope. Mr. Moore was funny, but long-winded. Mr. Hope was witty and brief. When they had both finished we had time to reflect on their remarks. They had been toasting and replying to the lady guests, and they did both well. But if the New Woman knows all she says she does, and if Mr. Moore and Mr. Hope are right in their estimate of her, I must come to no other conclusion than that she is a very bold, bad man. The songs and speeches finished we had our likenesses taken and then we thought it time to go home, and "then to bed," as old Pepys has it. The next morning we knew that we had dined at the "Vagabonds."

Mr. Hall Caine was "had." Just at present he is consumed with a desire to annihilate the publisher. On every possible occasion he vents his spleen on them in interminable speeches. The other day a secretary of an insignificant Newsagents' Society offered him the opportunity of addressing its members holding out the bait that the newsagents were forming a Booksellers' Union. The vanity of the author of "The Manxman" could not stand against this, and he seized the occasion with alacrity. He gave a long speech on the wickedness of publishers generally, and gently caressed the booksellers in his most suave diction. The bookseller is become almost an historic personage. Once upon a time he was an honourable and even dignified man, to-day he can hardly earn bread and butter. And all because the wicked publisher allows him no margin of profit. The publisher it is whose hand is against bookseller and author alike. Let the author and bookseller combine together and there will be no necessity for a middleman to step in and swallow all the gain. This and much more silly twaddle of a like kind was the tenor of the speech. But Mr. Hall Caine did not stop at this: knowing as he said, all about the publishing business, he gave figures to prove that out of a six-shilling novel the publisher makes a good shilling profit, the cost of its production amounting only to 1s. 7½d. Unfortunately for the effect of the speech it was pointed out by several publishers, in the leading "dailies," that Mr. Hall Caine had omitted to include the cost of paper! But Mr. Hall Caine had his little say, and I expect that is all he really wanted. If, instead of displaying his woful ignorance on matters beyond his ken, he were to sit quietly at home and meditate, he might become a little bit of a hero to the lovers of melo-drama. As it is, he has hung up his "glory" on a back yard wall. The truth of the whole matter must be that Mr. Hall Caine is not quite satisfied with the royalty his publisher allows him. In that case would it not be better for him to have it out with Mr. Heinemann quietly, in Bedford Street?

We have almost got accustomed to talk of Sir Walter Besant and Sir Lewis Morris. At first we hardly realized that it was a serious matter. We all thought that Lord Rosebery was poking fun at us, but it turns out to be quite true, incomprehensible as it may be. What Sir Walter Besant and Sir Lewis Morris have done to merit the honours conferred on them nobody as yet has been able to fathom. Still we felt that they were to be congratulated, and we did so accordingly, except the *Spectator* and the *Saturday Review*. These found it a very big pill to swallow, and they strained at it with very gruesome faces. I understand that both Sir Walter and Sir Lewis are very good Radicals, as well as lovers of the aristocracy, and that may account for something. But it seems that their honours were for literature. In that case one is nonplussed. However, I must again congratulate them on the realization of hopes for which they have so assiduously and so perseveringly laboured. Sir Walter has spun a good many yarns and Sir Lewis a good many miles of verse, but I doubt if there be in either of their spinning the stuff to make a lasting fabric. There is a serious side to these "birthday honours" and that is that the Government is going the right way to make them cheap. We shall be soon having a host of minor poets marching in procession

along Whitehall clamouring to be knighted, and that would be more than even the Philistine Englishman could stand. About Sir Walter Besant, well—it will be enough to remark in the words of a *Decadent* that he "and Providence have exhausted the obvious."

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I don't know whether you on your side of the Atlantic see much of *The World*, but in a late issue of that capital journal appeared a delightful parody on Mr. Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky." It was entitled "The Second Coming of Arthur," but it might better have been called "Yallerbocky." It is so good that I take the liberty of transcribing it for the benefit of your readers:

"'Twas rollog, and the minim potes
Did mime and mumble in the cafe;
All footly were the Phileroles,
And Daycadongs outstrafe.

"Beware the Yallerbock, my son!
The aims that rile, the art that racks,
Beware the Aub-Aub Bird, and shun
The stumious Beerbomax.

"He took Excalibur in hand;
Long time the canxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Jonbul tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

"Then, as veep Vigo's marge he trod,
The Yallerbock, with tongue of blue,
Came piffling through the Headley Bod,
And flippered as it flew.

One, two! one, two! And through and through
Excalibur went snicker-snack!
He took its dead and bodless head,
And went jucanding back.

"And hast thou slain the Yallerbock?
Come to my arms, my squeamish boy!
Oh, briteous peace! Parlieu! Parlice!
He jawbled in his joy.

"'Twas rollog, and the minim potes
Did mime and mumble in the cafe;
All footly were the Phil roles,
And Daycadongs outstrafe."

The literary world just now is very quiet. We hear only of rumours as to what is to come when the publishing season commences in the coming autumn. Miss Marie Corelli, I understand, has finished a new novel which is to be published in October. It has nothing to do with Barabas, for it is about modern society. Mr. Crockett is working hard at a story which he calls "Lochinvar." Mr. Stanley Weyman still gives us instalments of "The Red Cockade," and Dr. Conan Doyle does ditto with his "Adventures of Brigadier Gerard." The author of "Dodo" has just published a little story entitled "The Judgment Books," the idea of which we have already met in Oscar Wilde's "Dorian Grey." Miss Arabella Kenealy's "The Honourable Mrs. Spoor" is a powerful history of a new Mrs. Tanqueray. Mr. George Moore's "Celibates" has not had a remarkable reception. We don't like short stories, unless they are by Rudyard Kipling. A new "series" has just been inaugurated; it is called the "Zeit-Geist" series. So far the novels which have been included in it are by ladies. The new volume will also be by a lady, Mrs. Mannington Caffyn, the "Iota" of "Yellow Aster" fame. It will be called "A Comedy in Spasms." Perhaps it will deal with a late meeting of women writers which, from the report of the speeches delivered at their annual dinner, must have been a comedy of hysterical fits. The *Pall Mall Magazine* with its August issue will be increased in price to 1s. 6d. Evidently the promoters can't afford to give so many good things for a shilling. One doubts the wisdom of the change. Two important art books are to be issued in the autumn, one, a life and works of Sir Frederic Leighton, the other, a monograph on Velasquez. Both will be choicely illustrated with photogravures. My last piece of information is a volume of essays from the pen of Sir Walter Besant to be called, "As we Are, and As we May Be." He might have said "As I Was, and As I Am." I must not forget to mention Mr. Gilbert Parker's new novel "When Valmond came to Pontiac." It is, perhaps, the best work he has written, and it has received an open welcome. J. H. ISAACS.

London, England, June 19th, 1895.