

took care that none of the neighbours should see her, for how was I to prevent them from gossiping? But I had one friend, a very intimate friend, Gornostaf. He was devoted to her, and kissed her hands as if she were a noble lady. He was very wise and learned and taught my little Matrèna how to write. I gave her a wardrobe so that, as far as toilet went, she could outshine the wife of his excellency the governor. She had one coat in particular of crimson velvet with a collar of black fox fur. Ah, how lovely she looked in that—it was a 'madame' of Moscow who made it after the latest fashion.

"Sometimes it happened that Matrèna would sit for hours together, dreamy and motionless, her eyes fixed on the floor, and I would stay there fairly devouring her with my eyes, as if I had never seen her so lovely before. If she smiled my heart would die within me for happiness. Sometimes she would rush to me, seize upon me, and press me to her with so much ardour that my senses swam. It was a delirium of bliss, and my one thought from morning to night was to give her some fresh pleasure.

"Thus we passed five months. You can believe that I should have liked it to last forever, but I was born unlucky," said Karataef, with his familiar gesture of renouncement. "It was I who ruined her and sent all my happiness to the devil.

"Matrèna delighted in a sleigh ride, and I used to give her this pleasure toward the evening at an hour when there was small risk of any encounter. One day we planned a long excursion, and chose for it an afternoon of incomparable beauty. It was very cold, with a brilliant sunset and not a breath of wind. As we set off, Matrèna took possession of the reins, and I, contented and absent-minded, allowed her to keep them. When I looked around me to see where we were going, was she not taking the road to Koukouéka, her mistress' place, and we were very near the farm.

"Foolish child," I said, 'where are you going?'

"She glanced back at me over her shoulder and laughed, and I thought she wanted to have the pleasure this once of showing herself with the dress and turn-out of a great lady, and to pass in style the house where she once she—ah, it is sweet to her! And I was weak enough to let her go on.

"We pushed forward rapidly; my horses seemed to fly. Already the cross and roof of the little church were in sight—but, just before us, on the narrow road, we saw an old green carriage, creeping along like a tortoise, and behind stood a tall lackey, in the livery of the great lady's house. It was the old mistress, who, by some extraordinary chance was taking an evening airing. I was already intensely anxious about this meeting, but Matrèna hurried on right in a line with the heavy vehicle whose coachman seemed uneasy about the unruly *trouka* which seemed ready to fall like an avalanche upon his own horses. He wished to make way for us, pulled the bridle with too much zeal and—was upset in a turfy ditch.

"The glass of the window was broken, the lady cried out, her companion screamed to the coachman, but we—we fled like the wind.

"Can you believe it, sir? that everlasting old woman had recognized Matrèna and me and lodged a complaint against us, in which she declared that her slave girl, a fugitive from her house, lived in secret with Mr. Karataef, and was hidden on his property. In making this complaint she engaged the police to prosecute me.

"Of what vagaries are they not capable, these wealthy country ladies who die of ennui in their old manors? This one gave me no end of trouble. I threw away my money madly, and gained only short reprieves. I had immense difficulties in keeping Matrèna hidden. They spread twenty snares for me, in which it was a miracle I was not caught. I was tracked and hunted like a hare. The old lady grew more and more furious against me, and declared that, if it cost ten thousand roubles, she would have justice for those 'two turtle doves.' The secret of her anger was that when she first saw me she conceived the idea of marrying me to her 'companion,' the person in green, and my refusal, renewed later on, was the reason of this declaration of such bitter war against me.

"I fell into debt; I mortgaged all my land; I lost my health as well as my peace, and one night, as I was lying, sleepless, I cried aloud—Great God! what crime have I committed that I should suffer thus! what shall I do? I certainly cannot stop loving her; that is beyond my strength! I heard footsteps in my room, and saw Matrèna. I had hidden her in a farm about two verstes from my house, and her appearance now alarmed me, for I thought she had been discovered there.

"No," she answered, to my eager question, 'no one comes to Borebuova; but this can go no further, dear Petro Petrovitch. Your condition is deplorable, and I can no longer endure to see you in this state.

"My dearest, you know that I am incapable of ever forgetting the fourteen months of happiness that I owe to your love, but the moment has come when it is my duty to say farewell to you."

"What are you talking about? What do you mean by 'farewell,' and why should you bid me adieu?"

"Don't be agitated; think only of your health. I have had happiness unknown to my equals, and now I am going where duty calls me—to deliver myself up to the justice of my mistress."

"You are mad! Do you know that I am

going to lock you up in the garret? Do you wish to finish my ruin, to kill me with grief? Speak! Lift up your eyes! What is this new idea?—speak!"

"I can no longer be the cause of your ruin and your misery. I know what you suffer; I see it."

"Unhappy woman! Your mistress! your mistress! What shall I say to you? Oh, girl, you do not know—"

Here Karataef sobbed aloud, but hurried to finish his story.

"Well, what will you say to this," he cried, as he struck the table with his fist and wrinkled his brows, in a vain effort to check the tears which fell in streams over his flaming cheeks—"the unhappy creature went and gave herself up—went that night, on foot, a suppliant, to her lady's door and gave herself up!"

"Gentlemen, your horses are ready," announced the master of the station.

We rose, my companion of the samovar and I.

"And what did they do to the poor Matrèna?"

Mr. Karataef's only response was the gesture of which I have already spoken.

EFFECTS OF OPIUM-SMOKING.

EXPERIMENTS OF A BRITISH CONSUL WITH THE HABIT.

The British consul of Chefoo, in reporting on the opium trade, gives the following account of an experiment in opium-smoking as tried by himself:

"During my residence in China I have spent much time in visiting the opium shops of the large towns and small villages in many parts of the empire, and in conversation with the customers. I was surprised at the large numbers who told me that their first motive for smoking was to check the spitting of blood, to which they had become subject. In the end of 1865, being attacked with a severe fever, which left me so weak that I gave up hopes of recovery, I felt justified in trying upon myself the experiment of immoderate opium-smoking. The following were the results: 1. Temptation to excess greater than in the case of alcohol. 2. Excessive stimulation of the memory. 3. Utter indifference to cares and anxieties. 4. I only had one opium vision, and that was after 10 hours' hard smoking without intermission. The vision was of a pleasurable kind, the curtains of my couch extended, and I fancied I saw 'The Tempest,' acted by real Ariels and Prosperos. 5. A few months' excessive smoking produced the craving, or opiumania. 6. I suddenly gave up the habit, and suffered severe physical pain for three days, and discomfort recurring at irregular periods for over two years. The pain and discomfort were not accompanied by mental depression. Some of these effects may have been due to individual idiosyncrasies; but, from the study of my own and other cases I am inclined to believe: 1. That the temptation to excess is greater in the case of opium than in that of alcohol. But here it must be remarked that opium-smoking is, necessarily, a solitary enjoyment, and drinking a social one. The smoker, too, has to go deliberately to work; he has to lie down, light his opium-lamp, frizzle the opium, place the lump of opium outside his pipe carefully, so that the pipe may draw, fix the lamp in a position so that he can keep his pipe just over the flame of the lamp all the time he is smoking; in fact, go through long and tedious processes. A man cannot, therefore, be surprised into an excess of opium as he can into an excess of alcohol. Lastly, opium is not adulterated, and no artificial craving is created by poison, such as potato spirit, strychnine, and sulphuric acid, with which the drink of our poor is drugged. 2. It is possible that the long-continued course of opium-smoking might impair the intellectual faculties and blunt the moral sensibilities. 3. It is probable that excessive smoking impairs fertility, but the numerous cases I have known of immoderate smokers having large families does not confirm the view. 4. It is undeniable that many families are reduced from comfort to penury by their bread-winners spending an undue portion of their earnings in opium; also, that in a few isolated cases, poor smokers resort to theft to enable them to indulge in the pleasure. But the same may be said of any other habit of self-indulgence. 5. That many individuals suffer in health from excess is incontrovertible, but the number of these is not so great as is imagined. The denouncers of the drug are apt to be under the influence of a single idea, or, to speak in vulgar parlance, get opium on the brain, and whenever they see a person unwell who is an opium-smoker, at once attribute his illness to his opium-smoking, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. On the other hand, it is equally incontrovertible that thousands of hard-working people are indebted to opium-smoking for the continuance of lives agreeable to themselves and useful to society. 6. That the physical difficulty in breaking off the habit is greater and the moral difficulty less in opiumania than in dipsomania. The argument that those who use a commodity as a medicine and harmless luxury should not be deprived of it because weaker brethren abuse it is stronger in the case of opium than in that of alcohol. No one is maddened by smoking opium to crimes of violence, nor does the habit of smoking increase the criminal returns or swell the number of prison inmates."

THE TELEPHONE IN THE PULPIT.

On Sunday evening, the 30th ult., Mr. Garvey, city manager of the Dominion Telegraph Company, and Mr. Brown, manager of the Bell Telephone Exchange, invited some fifteen or twenty members of the city press to witness and participate in a most interesting test of the Bell Telephone. One of Bell's new microphone transmitters had been placed in the pulpit of Zion Church, from which a line extended to the central office of the Exchange, St. Francois Xavier street, where fifteen or twenty telephones were conveniently arranged upon a large table for the use of the reporters, and continuing on terminated in the palatial parlours of Mr. E. A. Prentice, St. James street, where a large party of gentlemen had assembled to hear the evening service. At seven o'clock the clear and harmonious organ voluntary, announcing the opening of the service, came over the wire with such perfect distinctness that optical verification only could convince one that he was not actually within the walls of Zion Church, and for a moment the reportorial pencil remained *in statu quo*; and when, in the opening hymn, the voices of the choir joined the organ, the effect was indescribably sweet—to use one hearer's words, it "sounded like music from heaven." The prayer and sermon, by Rev. A. J. Bray, as well as the hymns which followed, were as distinctly heard as if the telephonic auditors were actually present, and several of the reporters were able to take down the sermon *verbatim* in shorthand. So accurately was every sound transmitted that it was well understood when the collection was being taken up, and a wicked scribbler present remarked that he did not feel that selfishness during this part of the service which he experiences when in church. Notwithstanding the speaker was about 30 inches from the transmitter during the delivery of his sermon, every syllable was distinctly audible, thus proving the wonderful sensitiveness and power of the microphone, a description of which may not be uninteresting to those of our readers who are not acquainted with it. The principle upon which the instrument is constructed is that of variable and induced currents. A circular iron ring, secured vertically upon the inside of the box, has on one side a standard upon which is hung the simple combination of springs which renders the instrument so capable of responding to the most delicate sounds. Within this iron ring, and over the mouthpiece of the transmitter, the vibrating diaphragm is secured quite firmly in a rubber band which entirely surrounds it, and serves at once to increase the sensitiveness of the diaphragm and to electrically insulate the same from interference with the local battery current. Directly back of the combination of springs described, a small disc or button of carbon is suspended between the extremities of two light springs, one of which rests against the diaphragm and at the same time gently presses against the polished surface of the carbon button. A local battery—comprising a single cell—furnishes the primary current of a very small induction coil placed within the transmitter. The carbon being in the primary circuit it is evident that the vibrations of the diaphragm alternately pressing and releasing the surface of carbon varies the current at each movement, which variable current is reproduced and magnified in the secondary, or line, wire, and acts upon the receiving telephones, any number of which may be connected and used simultaneously, as shown by our illustration of Sunday evening's test. We may here state that the reporters who are represented as smoking did so, not during the sermon, but later, when listening to conversation from another distant quarter.

It is pleasing to know that invalids and others who are unable to attend divine worship or entertainments can avail themselves of such a perfectly satisfactory acoustical instrument. The public are commencing to fully appreciate the great convenience of the telephone as an instantaneous means of vocal communication, the Bell Telephone Exchange having some two hundred subscribers, although in operation only a little over two months. We wish the Exchange all the success it so well deserves.

WRITING TO ORDER.

That regularity is not absolutely incompatible with literary genius has, I think, been proved. Scott and Goethe were methodic, steady, industrious workers; Dickens was an admirable man of business; and Mr. Trollope, a true genius, is himself more regular than a postman. But the general rule, unquestionably, is that genius is irregular, occasional, subject to tidal ebb and flow, now depressed, now inflated, ever apt to kick over the traces, to fret against rules, to refuse to labour at stated times and to turn out a given amount. Genius is the Pegasus, talent the steady roadster. When well considered, even the literary history of Goethe, Scott and Dickens confirms this view of the matter. It was not the method-loving, scientifically calm and philosophically-regulated Goethe, that wrote the first part of Faust, which is almost good enough for Shakespeare, but that wrote the second part of Faust, which is almost too bad for Lord Lytton. The capable critic can distinguish in many instances, in Shakespeare's own work, between the places where genius alighted and the page became imbued with fiery life, and the places where the spirit of task-work ruled the pen. That I may not seem to speak at random, I would specify the

first few lines of conversation between Isabella and Claudio, in the first scene of the third act of "Measure for Measure," after the duke and the provost have withdrawn and left the brother and sister alone, as essentially poor and prosaic; whereas, when the poet, in the immediate sequel, warms to his work, as the hope of life dawns on Claudio and he begins to plead with Isabella to save him, and the genius of Shakespeare awakes in its might, and one of those passages in which the most secret depths of the human heart are explored, and the lineaments of passion are struck off with subtle and amazing accuracy, and in-sight, sympathy, expression, are all transcendently manifested, is the result. Scott also has many a comparatively flat and monotonous page, executed with conscientious determination at its appointed hour; but he frankly informs us that when he produced those parts of his books which sent the public wild with delight, and which even the critic dunces who pestered him with their rules admitted to be his best, he had not been thinking of rule or method at all, but had been run away by irresistible, boy-like delight in some Nicol Jarvie, or Dugald Dalgetty, or Jonathan Oldbuck, out of whose company he could not tear himself, let the story fare as it might. We may pronounce it one of the surest facts on which to base a science of criticism that the artist, literary or pictorial, who is always the master of his genius, has little genius of which to be master. The case of Mr. Trollope I take to be almost unexampled in literature. "Framleigh Parsonage" is one of the best novels that ever was written—I should hardly undertake to name a dozen superior to it in the English language—and yet it was done to order. Of such a feat I believe Thackeray to have been incapable; but Thackeray was a greater genius and a greater novelist than Mr. Trollope. Dickens was a marvel of method; but his task-work habits soon and greatly impaired his genius. I think also that Mr. Trollope's own fame would have been placed on a loftier pedestal if he had worked less to order. "Framleigh Parsonage" was a superb success, but "Rachel Ray" was not a success at all. Thackeray worked quite regularly enough, and cropped the fields of his brain every whit as often as was desirable.

VARIETIES.

LORD BEACONSFIELD.—Lord Beaconsfield is a Premier who occupies a very exceptional position. He is not only the First Minister of the British Crown, but he is the most indefatigable and accomplished courtier who ever bowed low before the Throne. It is no secret whatever that he has, by the exercises of arts in which he has acquired a rare proficiency, secured a personal degree of ascendancy over the Sovereign for which no parallel can be found in the present reign. Five-and-twenty years ago Mr. Disraeli was not tolerated at Court; both Prince Albert and Her Majesty signified to Lord Derby the dissatisfaction with which his lieutenant would be received as Minister in attendance. All this has changed now, and Lord Beaconsfield is a prime of Court favourites. The best courtier is he who humours prejudices, and who nurses sentiments till they become deeply rooted as convictions. No scruples have prevented Lord Beaconsfield from systematically adopting both these courses.

SERGEANT HOFF.—He is almost a legend of the Franco-Prussian war; he is now guardian of the Arc de Triomphe, where his duty consists in unlocking the door of the staircase in the morning, and locking it in the evening. As a result of his adventurous exploits during the war, his képi was riddled by eight balls; his blouse resembled a colander. He appears to have had a charmed life, for he certainly picked off fifty Prussian sentries, bringing in their helmet as proofs of his success, and he ran the enemy's lines with a message to Bazaine—at Metz. This bravery and patriotism deserve recognition, and the old sergeant, who is very modest, is to be entertained by young France at a banquet, and to be presented with a testimonial rifle. The *Continental Gazette* says that the banquet was to take place on Sunday, the 7th of December, at the Hôtel Continental, where 500 representatives of "la jeune France" were to be present on the occasion of this patriotic ceremony. The price of the tickets has been fixed at twenty francs. Victor Hugo, Jules Simon, M. Magnin, Jules Claretie, Erckmann-Chatrian, Bamberger, Floquet, Louis Blanc, Gambetta, the Abbé Crozes (of la Roquette), Anatole de la Forge, Edouard Siebecker, Etienne Arago, Juliette Lambert, Crémieux, Henri de la Pommeraye, and many other well-known personages, have announced their intention of being present at this interesting entertainment.

LITERARY.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS has gone to the South of France to devote his whole time to his forthcoming work on "Divorce."

The *Contemporary Review* for December contains a series of letters on the Lord's Prayer, addressed to the clergy by Mr. Ruskin.

Six thousand copies of Mr. Brassey's forthcoming book, "Sunshine and Storm in the East," (to be published by Longmans) have been already subscribed for.

The widow of Adolph Strödtmann, the biographer of Heine, is in possession of a lock of hair that was cut from the poet's head after death, and also of an oil-portrait of Heine, painted by Ludwig Gansen, of Munich, representing him in his twenty-eighth year. She is anxious to part with these two relics, for "nine hundred pieces."