

was overwhelmed with letters from all parts of the world. A good many came from admiring women, and some of them were vastly amusing. He used to let his grandchildren answer most of these, and no doubt his fair friends were rather disappointed on learning that he was not a young man. Then there were numbers of letters relating to the dream part of "Peter Ibbetson." He didn't really believe in any of that, of course, though he wrote it as if he did. Many people, however, took it seriously, and there was no computing the number of inquiries he had about it. "I have tried sleeping on my back," one would write, "with my feet crossed, as you described, but I can't succeed in dreaming true." Such complaints used to amuse him very much. He considered hypnotism an interesting subject, but did not investigate it particularly, nor believe much in it. Most of the personal characteristics of "Peter Ibbetson" were actually Mr. Du Maurier's own. He put himself into all his books; perhaps more directly into that than the others. The dislike of cruelty to animals, which he mentions in several places, was one of his conspicuous traits. As a young man, he would not shoot or hunt in any way. He did not object to boxing or any sort of reasonable encounter between men, but the idea of hurting helpless creatures lower in the scale, was very repulsive to him.

As a lecturer, Mr. Du Maurier was not altogether free from that distressing feeling called "stage fright." He was to lecture once in a large hall, upon his work as an artist for *Punch*, and went down with his wife beforehand to look the place over. The manager

took them upon the stage or platform, which was unusually large, and told Mr. Du Maurier that that was where he would stand. "And I suppose," said the lecturer, "the people who are to listen to me will just sit around here on the platform, too, won't they?" "Why, no!" exclaimed the manager, in amazement. "On the platform! My dear sir, this place will be packed to the ceiling and to the very doors," and he indicated the immense size of the house. "What!" exclaimed Mr. Du Maurier, "you don't mean to say there'll be people on all those hundreds and hundreds of seats? Heavens! I can never do it in the world." But he did, and it was a great success, his voice being heard in every part of the house.

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THERE is much nonsense extant about the sensation writers experience while composing, and if the following confession from Mr. Barrie is to be taken in good faith, then it is well that he does not write in public.

He says: "It is my contemptible weakness that if I say a character smiled vacuously, I must smile vacuously, if he frowns or leers, I frown or leer, if he is a coward, or given to contortion, I cringe or twist my legs until I have to stop writing to undo the knot. I bow with him, eat with him and gnaw my moustache with him. If the character be a lady with an exquisite laugh, I suddenly terrify you by laughing exquisitely." This is simply awful, and one cannot but think the gifted author is poking fun at Mr. Howells, who recently laid bare his throes of composition to the readers of a popular journal.

