

ROUND THE TABLE.

Mark Twain did not at all exaggerate the extreme vituperative character of Southern journalism in his sketch of the "Spirit of the Tennessee Press," nor does the clever humorist, whoever he is, who mimics the wild and untamed outbreaks of Western journalism as seen in the *Arizona Kicker*. But that peaceable Canadians have descended to this sort of writing we had no idea until we came across a vagrant copy of the *Rat Portage News* whose genial editor refers to his rival in highly-coloured and picturesque language as follows (we quote verbatim):

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"That dwarfed humpbacked specimen of humanity, who runs the *Qu'Appelle Progress*, has several times begged an exchange of *The News*, for the sheet published by himself, or rather by "E. J. Weidman," whoever that is, while the renowned and debit ledger notorious James is editor and manager. Because we did not choose to exchange with all such ventures, he makes an attack on *The News*, and in a fatherly way remarks that he started the first paper here. We might incidentally remark that many merchants in the town have not forgotten the fact that James did run a 2 x 4 sheet or thereabouts, for courtesy's sake called a newspaper. And several regret the fact very much. Now James, let us tell you a little story—We never when paying a visit to a town we previously left, found occasion to come at night or leave after dark—nor do we when going away leave on a freight train, or ride on the dark side of a train of box car—neither have we found occasion to walk down the line to the nearest flag station and take the train. Now James, probably our little story will interest you, at any rate it will let you know how *The News* is getting on. At the same time let us close with the remark, that you can have *The News* for \$1 a year IN ADVANCE."

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The two novels, published within the last decade, which have at once created the greatest sensation in all circles and exhibited most markedly two diametrically opposite phases of modern fiction, are Rider Haggard's "She" and Mrs. Ward's "Robert Elsmere." In the latter we behold the extreme development of the analytical novel, with its tedious descriptions of character and omni-present moral purpose, while the former offers us the most extravagant example of unbridled fiction in adventure. That "She," offering as it does unparalleled opportunities for scenic effect and bristling with thrilling situations, should have been arranged for the stage is not surprising. But that the play-wright, who managed this transformation, should have undertaken to perform the same service for "Robert Elsmere" must be certainly regarded as remarkable, and the result will be looked for with considerable curiosity.

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Under the title of "Borrowings of Modern from Ancient Poets" the late Sir John Bowring conveys some interesting information. We make the extracts from his paper in the Royal Historical Society transactions. In some instances he makes his charge of plagiarism clear enough, and we give some of his best parallel passages.

Ægrotat Dæmon, monachus tunc esse volebat,
Dæmon convaluit, Dænwn utante fuit.

When the Devil was sick, the Devil a saint would be,
When the Devil got well, the Devil a saint was he.

—Anon.

Multa cadunt inter calicem, supremaque labra.

There's many a slip
'Twixt the cup and the lip.

—Anon.

Qui pingit florem, non pinget floris odorem.

How'er you paint the flow'ret well,
You cannot paint the flow'ret's smell.

Pars sanitatis, velle sonare fuit (Seneca).

'Tis very certain the desire of life prolongs it. (Byron).

Certis rebus certa signa præcurrunt.
Coming events cast their shadows before.

(Campbell).

Often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow. (Coleridge.)
Natura dedit agros, ars humana aedificavit urbes. (Varro.)
God the first garden made, and the first city man. (Cowley.)
God made the country, and man made the town. (Cowper.)

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A recent contribution to THE VARSITY's literary columns dealt with the life and poems of Mr. William Telford, of Peterborough. It has evoked from the poet a long two-page foolscap letter of thanks with an appendix in the shape of a poem and certain notes on the work reviewed. We have not space to insert the letter itself; it gives quite a different idea of the poet from that derived from a perusal of his book. Mr. Telford appears to be a simple, good-hearted man, who has given up the spare hours of a hard-working life to the indulgence of his knack of rhyming. We print his poem, which is, we think in all seriousness, superior to most of his work; but which the reviewer's conscience would not let him enjoy:

* * *

How sweet to feel the sympathy of men,
While struggling onward on life's rugged road!
It gives fresh vigour to my humble pen;
Its soothing power relieves the crushing load.
It proves to me that I stand not alone
Like a dead tree amidst the forest drear
Braving life's storm; still persevering on
While friends like you my drooping spirit cheer.

* * *

On the reverse of the leaf on which this poem reached us, is the following. The whole is a pleasing mixture of poetry, business and humour: "To any friend on the receipt of one dollar, I will send one copy, postage paid. Five copies \$4.50, and for an order of ten I will send by express, freight paid, 11 copies; one for the person sending the \$10. Only fifty remains.

"When the store becomes diminished,
And the source runs dry;
For want of stock the sales are finished—
Friends won't get one to buy."

* * *

The Ingenious Man read the letter and all its enclosures with much interest. When he had finished them, he glanced furtively at the Poet and remarked on the essential similarity of the writings of all poets. He hinted at Wordsworth's endeavour "by precept and example" to prove the identity of prose and poetry; and went on with a malicious purpose to quote from Walt Whitman, for whom, be it known, the Poet has an idolatrous love. "It is evident," he declared, "that Mr. Whitman is a disciple of the Telford school. When Mr. Telford dilates on 'Mr. P. Morgan's Hotel,' we are irresistibly reminded of

"'Oh, to bathe in the swimming-bath, or in a good place along shore,'

or of the yet more prosaic and definite category:

"'Oh, the farmer's joys!
Ohioan's, Illinoisian's, Wisconsinese', Canadian's, Iowan's,
Kansian's, Missourian's, Oregonese' joys!'"

But the Poet stirred not. The Ingenious one tried yet again, declaiming in theatrical style:

"'I remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles;
He stayed with me a week before he was recuperated, and passed north.'"

In vain! Such criticism was beneath the notice of the Poet; he would not deign a reply. We were disappointed; and the Ingenious Man—who pines for a literary ruction as you, gentle readers, for an election, resigned himself to silence with a sigh.