

Mr. Jonathan Hodgson, who, with Mrs. and Miss Hodgson, have been for some time in New York, have returned to town.

Mrs. G. N. Hamilton and Miss Hamilton, Peel street, left this week on a short trip to England by the "Parisian."

Mr. Gerald E. Hart returned home from a ten days' visit to New York on Sunday last.

Miss Boyer and Miss Aumond have arrived safely in Genoa, after a most enjoyable sea voyage.

The Canadian commissioner at Paris, Mr. Hector Fabre and Mme. Fabre, gave a reception in Paris lately, in honor of Sir John and Lady Thompson, the Hon. C. H. Tupper and Mrs. Tupper, and Lady Caron. Mrs. W. C. Van Horne has left on a visit to New York, accompanied by Mr. B. Van Horne, who returns to West Point to pursue his studies having spent the Easter vacation in Montreal.

Mr. G. W. Stephens and Miss Stephens, who have been spending a week in New York, returned to town last Sunday morning. Mrs. Stephens remained for a few days longer in New York.

Mr. Thomas Tait, assistant manager Canadian Pacific Railway, has been on a visit to Washington, where he was joined by Mrs. Tait, who has been wintering at Ashville, N. C., and who will spend some weeks at Lakewood, N. J., before returning to Montreal.

My Favorite Author-Antidote

Just outside the city limits—to give the cabby his chance—is a sleepy lane, lent by the country to the town, and we have only to open a little gate off it to find ourselves in an old-fashioned garden. The house, with its many quaint windows, across which evergreens spread their open fingers as a child makes believe to shroud his eyes, has a literary look—at least, so it seems to me, but perhaps this is because I know the authoress who is at this moment advancing down the walk to meet me.

She has hastily laid aside her hoop, and crosses the grass with the dignity that becomes a woman of letters. Her hair falls over her forehead in an attractive way, and she is just the proper height for an authoress. The face, so open that one can watch the process of thinking out a new novel in it, from start to finish, is at times a little careworn, as if it found the world weighty, but at present there is a gracious smile on it, and she greets me heartily with one hand, while the other strays to her neck, to make sure that her lace collar is lying nicely. It would be idle to pretend that she is much more than eight years old, "but then Maurice is only six."



Stranger (to Solemn Individual); "Is this a funeral?"

Solemn Individual: "No, it's a Wedding."

Stranger; "Oh! I thought you were a mourner."

Solemn Individual: "No, I am the Son-in-Law of the Bride's Mother."

Like most literary people who put their friends into books, she is very modest, and it never seems to strike her that I would come all this way to see her.

"Mamma is out," she says simply, "but she will be back soon; and papa is at a meeting, but he will be back soon, too."

I know what meeting her papa is at. He is crazed with admiration for Stanley, and can speak of nothing but the Emin Relief Expedition. While he is away proposing that Stanley should get the freedom of Hampstead, now is my opportunity to interview the authoress.

"Won't you come into the house?"

I accompany the authoress to the house while we chat pleasantly on literary topics.

"Oh, there is Maurice, silly boy!"

Maurice is too busy shooting arrows into the next garden to pay much attention to me; and the authoress smiles at him good-naturedly.

"I hope you'll stay to dinner," he says to me, "because then we'll have two kinds of pudding."

The authoress and I give each other a look which means that children will be children, and then we go indoors.

"Are you not going to play any more?" cries Maurice to the authoress.

She blushes a little.

"I was playing with him," she explains, "to keep him out of mischief till mamma comes back."

In the drawing-room we talk for a time of ordinary matters—of the allowances one must make for a child like Maurice, for instance—and gradually we drift to the subject of literature. I know literary people sufficiently well to be aware that they will talk freely—almost too freely—of their work if approached in the proper *ex-rit*.

"Are you busy just now?" I ask, with assumed carelessness, and as if I had not

been preparing the question since I heard papa was out.

She looks at me, suspiciously, as authors usually do when asked such a question. They are not certain whether you are really sympathetic. However, she reads honesty in my eyes.

"Oh, well, I am doing a little thing." (They always say this.)

"A story or an article?"

"A story."

"I hope it will be good."

"I don't know. I don't like it much." (This is another thing they say, and then they wait for you to express incredulity.)

"I have no doubt it will be a fine thing. Have you given it a name?"

"Oh, yes; I always write the name. Sometimes I don't write any more."

As she was in a confidential mood this seemed an excellent chance for getting her view on some of the vexed literary questions of the day. For instance, everybody seems to be more interested in hearing during what hours of the day an author writes than in reading his book.

"Do you work best in the early part of day or at night?"

"I write my stories just before tea."

"That surprises me. Most writers, I have been told, get through a good deal of work in the morning."

"Oh, but I go to school as soon as breakfast is over."

"And you don't write at night?"

"No; nurse always turns the gas down." I had read somewhere that among the novelist's greatest difficulties is that of sustaining his own interest in a novel day by day until it is finished.

"Until your new work is completed do you fling your whole heart and soul into it? I mean, do you work straight on at it, so to speak, until you have finished the last chapter?"

"Oh, yes."

The novelists were lately reproved in a review for working too quickly, and it was said that one wrote a whole novel in two months.

"How long does it take you to write a novel?"

"Do you mean a long novel?"

"Yes."

"It takes me nearly an hour."

"For a really long novel?"

"Yes, in three volumes. I write in three exercise books—a volume in each."

"You write very quickly."

"Of course, a volume doesn't fill a whole exercise book. They are penny exercise books. I have a great many three-volume stories in the three exercise books."

"But are they really three-volume novels?"

"Yes, for they are in chapters, and one of them has twenty chapters."

"And how many chapters are there in a page?"