The Editor's Chair

MARK TWAIN'S attention having been called to the action of the authorities at Denver in barring "Huckleberry Finn" from the public library there on account of immorality, has written the following letter on the subject to a newspaper in Denver. He refers to the illness of his wife and her improvement and then goes on:—

"When the watch was relieved an hour ago and I left the sick chamber to take my respite, I began to frame answers to your despatch, but it was only to entertain myself, for I am aware that I am not privileged to speak freely in this matter, funny as the occasion is and dearly as I should like to laugh at it; and when I can't speak freely I don't speak at all.

"You see, there are two or three pointers.

"First—Huck Finn was turned out of a New England library seventeen years ago, ostensibly on account of morals; really to curry favor with a personage. There has been no other instances until now.

"Second—A few months ago I published an article which threw mud at that pinchbeck hero Funston and his extraordinary moral.

"Third—Huck's morals have stood the strain in Denver and in every English, German and French-speaking community in the world, save one, for seventeen years, until now.

"Fourth—The strain breaks the connection now.

"Fifth—In Denver alone.

"Seventh—And has dependents and influence.

"When one puts these things together the cat that is in the meal is disclosed—and quite unmistakably.

"Said cat consists of a few persons who wish to curry favor with Funston, and whom God has not dealt kindly with in the matter of wisdom.

"Everybody in Denver knows this, even the dead people in the cemeteries. It may be that Funston has wit enough to know that these good idiots are adding another howling absurdity to his funny history; it may be that God has charitably spared him that degree of penetration, slight as it is. In any case he is, as usual, a proper object of compassion, and the bowels of my sympathy are moved toward him.

"There is nobody for me to attack in this matter even with soft and gentle ridicule—and I shouldn't ever think of using a grown-up weapon in this kind of a nursery. Above all, I could not venture to attack the clergymen whom you mention, for I have their habits and live in the same glass house which they are occupying. I am always reading immoral books on the sly, and then selfishly trying to prevent other people from having the same wicked good time.

"No, if Satan's morals and Funston are preferable to Huck's, let Huck take a back seat; they can stand any ordinary competition, but not a combination like that. And I'm not going to defend them anyway."

Mr. Clemens puts the matter in a nutshell when he says that the people who wish to exclude "Huckleberry Finn" are people "whom God has not dealt kindly with in the matter of wisdom." They are poor unfortunate creatures upon whose boy consciousness the picture of that immortal outcast has never dawned. Not to know "Huckleberry Finn" is a misfortune, but not to love him is a crime.

A certain Mr. Crosland has written a book which he calls "The Unspeakable Scot." I have not read the book. I do not wish to read it. Manslaughter preceded by torture is not a thing of which the pleasureable contemplation should be encouraged in oneself. As most of the leader writers and reviewers on the London papers are either Scotch or Irish (Mr. Crosland and his book have received very faithful handling. But the only review which is in the least degree adequate to the offence is the one appearing in the London Times, which I append:—

We have all seen a child work itself into a fit of temper. We know how it screams and kicks, how it makes ugly faces and calls ugly names, how it beats its elders with puny, ineffective fist. The spectacle is not edifying; the feeling it excites is one of shame-faced pity—shame for poor human nature, pity for the individual child. The child itself knows that it is doing an unlovely thing. But it knows, too, that for the moment it has achieved notoriety and become the central figure of its little world. So it is with Mr. T. W. H. Crosland, the author of "The Unspeakable Scot" (Grant Richards, 5s.). The parallel is as exact as may be, from the ineffective fist and ephemeral notoriety to the pity which the exhibition provokes. At first one hopes that the whole thing may be an elaborate joke, slightly ponderous and wholly personal, but still pardonable in a wearer of the cap and bells. But very shortly it appears that Mr. Crosland mistakes rudeness for wit, because he is furiously angry with anything that has the remotest connexion with Scotland. Greatly daring, he attributes the "admitted" lack of humor in Punch to the fact that 75 per cent. of the jokes which it accepts from outsiders come from North of the Tweed. He calls Mr. George Wyndham "a shallow dandy," not because he has Scotch blood in him (though, as a matter of fact, he has), but because he is a protege of Mr. Balfour's, who himself is "so Scotch that he plays golf" and, for all Mr. Crosland knows, is a "hammer putter"! Of actual Scotchmen Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is a dullard, and Lord Rosebery has the voice of an anaemic curate. Carlyle and Scott "have both had their day"; the one is a Scotch rocket which has begun to descend, the other is a cumberer of space in private libraries, whose books are not read by persons of average tendencies. One of Mr. Crosland's most side-splitting jokes is to prefix what he calls "the august abdominal 'Dr.'" to the names of all Scotch writers, and his remarks about Drs. Burns, Crocket, Barrie, Archer, Robertson Nicoll, and many others are so vitriolic that such sane criticism as he has to offer on their literary efforts is quite discounted by the obvious bad temper which underlies every word of it. It is impossible here to reproduce a tithe of the impertinences contained in the book, of which those quoted are only mild samples. But enough has been said to show that Mr. Crosland has been guilty of a serious breach of literary good taste, unredeemed by the saving grace of real humor.

The two things about the Scotch that irritate the Croslands of this world are their high opinion of themselves and their aggressive indifference (if such a paradox is permissible) to the opinon and achievements of other people. A. J. Balfour's bon mot when the expression "Lord gie us a guid opeenion o' oorsels" was quoted is just now going the rounds of the press. He leant over and remarked "And that is the only prayer which the Gods always answer." It certainly has been answered in the case of the Scotch themselves. It leads to the conviction that there is nothing under the sun which they cannot accomplish rather better than other people. A conviction of that kind has a tremendous dynamic force and may to some extent account for the success of the Scotch at home and abroad.

Many people think that yellow journalism is merely offensive and unpleasant, but it is often decidedly injurious as well. The San Francisco Argonaut gives an instance of how the sensationalism of the dailies hurt California which is worth quoting. The occasion was a sand storm:—

It was nearly two months ago that certain of our daily newspapers—which are booming California—printed a detailed account of a calamitous sand-storm down at Indio, which had utterly destroyed the melon crop. These papers—in double columns, beneath scare-heads—asserted that

During three days the lowest temperature recorded at any time was one hundred and twenty-six degrees in the shade. That was the temperature underneath the ice-house (!!). No one will hazard a guess as to what the temperature was in the sun. All that is known is that every melon vine withered into a brown twig, to be scattered over the baking sands by the hot winds, while the melons were properly cooked. As a result, the Coachella farmers will ship no melons to eastern markets this season, and their prospects that were so rosy a few days ago have withered, like their melon vines, to mere nothing.

All this was very interesting, very unusual. So thought the Eastern journals, and accordingly printed the story with additions, embellishments, editorial comment. Here is an editorial extract from a late number of the Chicago Chronicle typical of them all:

They had had sand-storms before. But not this kind of sand-storms. The wind grew fiercer and fiercer, rolling clouds of sand before it and finally scooping up whole acres of it and hurling it upon the cultivated fields and fruit-fu. gardens of Indio. At the end of three days, when the desert wind ceased, the whole cultivated region was once more an arid desert, buried under sand many feet deep. Not a green thing was spared. Everything had been obliterated by the fierce breath of the simoon. The jealous desert had claimed its own again. Crops, irrigation ditches, and improvements valued at over one million dollars had vanished—blotted out by the shifting sands.

The moral that these papers drew was that irrigation was a bad thing—that a sand-storm was liable to come along and destroy everything; that Congress was foolish to have passed the irrigation bill; that irrigated States were poor places to go to; that Hoosiers and Buckeyes who had thought of coming West had better stay at home.

Of course the denials of this sensational story never reached the East. Denials are not interesting. The mischief is done: it is irreparable. As a matter of record, however, it may be well to set forth the facts of the case. The California Fruit Grower, on the publication of this queer story, expressed doubt of its accuracy, and pointed out inconsistencies. They stated that the prospects were for future shipment of about one hundred and fifty carloads of melons. A week later the leading editorial in that journal begins as follows:

"All that the California Fruit Grower said recently regarding Coachella Valley cantaloupes, grown below sea-level, is correct. About June 25th there was an extremely hot period, which lasted two days, during which time the melons which were ready to go forward were injured to the proportion of perhaps 25 per cent. Since that date there has been no trouble, and melons have been going forward, as already stated, regularly and in quantity."

This is the way the dailies "promote" California.

Verses Grave and Gay.

BARNYARD PHILOSOPHY.

The rain it raineth every day,
It's spilled a mighty lot o' hay,
But turnots! Hallelujerum!
Did y'ever see the likes of them?
The rain it raineth every night;
The lowland corn has got the blight,
But with our sev'ral million throats
Let's brag about our crop of oats!

It's rainin' hard, but this I know,
It makes the rich white clover grow,
White clover worth a mint o' money,
And that's the stuff makes milk and honey.

The rain it raineth night and day;
Jes' simply let her rain away;
The apple crop, the beet, the spud,
All prove the proverb, "Rich as mud."
Las' year the valleys had their turn,
This year the hills her wheat to burn;
Las' year the cows went dry for water,
This year—a case of teeter-totter!

If it was dry we'd wish it wet,
Vice versey we would grumble yet;
If it was cold we'd want it hot,
D'satisfied no matter what.
Th' indignant angels have observed,
They call us mosthickness deserved;
A wink's about as good's a nod,
Now, altogether, boys—thank Gawd!

—The Khan.

THE MAIDEN'S MISTAKE.

He fell on his knees before her;
As long as he lived, he said,
He'd worship her, love her, adore her—
But she presently turned her head,
And, thinking to act discreetly—
For another had deigned to smile—
She answered him softly, sweetly;
"I must study the case awhile."

She smiled on his rival daily,
But he, the ungrateful churl,
Walked up to the altar gayly,
One day, with another girl.
She sighed in a doleful fashion,
But at last, with a cry of joy,
She remembered the sweet, sweet passion
Consuming the other boy.

She hurried away to find him
Her heart was another's then;
His first love he'd left behind him;
It's a common way with the men.
She is sitting alone in sorrow,
Her youth is drifting away;
Girls, never put off till tomorrow
The boys you can have today.

THE ANNUAL PARODY.

Maud Muller—(Gentle reader, here 'S the parody that comes each year):

Maud Muller, on a summer's eve,
Pinned her skirt and tucked each sleeve.

She got the hose upon the lawn
And deftly turned the water on.

She sprinkled gayly on the grass,
And smiled on those who chanced to pass.

The judge came walking down the street,
And spied Miss Muller, trim and neat.

He raised his hat to speak to her;
His heart with love began to stir.

For Maud was young and fair to see,
The judge was rich as rich could be.

Just when he made his graceful bow
The water did not twist somehow.

It did not smite him on the ear;
It did not fill his soul with fear;

It did not swat him in the vest
And knock his garments galleywest:

It did not wash him from the spot—
No, gentle reader, it did not.

Instead, Maud turned the water off
Just when his hat received the doff.

The judge mused softly: "Such as she
Is the ideal wife for me."

And Maudie mused: "I'll change my name
By springing this domestic game."

The judge proposed—the rest you guess—
Maud Muller lost no time with "Yes."

And often now the judge will dream
Of how the setting sun's last gleam

Illumined Maudie, with the hose,
And how his ardor swiftly rose.

And Maudie, too, dreams of the eve
When, with tucked skirt and rolled-up sleeve,

She utilized her cunning tact
And engineered the lawn-hose act,

And posed there in the twilight dim,
And with deft science landed him.

Of all true words of tongue or pen
The truest are: "They fool the men."

TWO ROADS TO ONE GOAL

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I.

SHE was arrested in her action of filling a blue Delf jug with daffodils which she had gathered that afternoon, by a voice severely grave proceeding from another girl speaking over her shoulder, where she sat with her face to the light and her back to Lyddy, at the long quilting frame before the window.

"Are you expecting company, Lyddy?" enquired Joan Fordyce with a slightly sarcastic emphasis on the word company, "that you play yourself with those daffies? You have left me the whole afternoon to do my part, crossing my side of the petticoat as far as the middle, where you ought to have met me half way, and carried on the row till it reached your border."

"Never mind, Joan," Lyddy sought to comfort her sister by a little light and easy penitence, "I will work double time to-morrow. But, ho! it was bonnie this afternoon by the beck, bonnier than when every branch and twig were frosted silver with the sun shining on the river, and there were long crystal drops hanging from the banks and reaching under your feet at Lady Day. You mind it, Joan?"

"But what about the company you're making the tea table braw for, and did you see a feather of their tails down by the burn?" asked Joan with stern suspiciousness. Lyddy crossed her arms—they were bare to the elbow where the sleeves of her brown stuff frock ended in worked muslin ruffles, matching the clean starched muslin apron tied round her slender waist, the neckerchief crossing her bosom and the dainty mob cap perched on her fair curls. She looked half frightened, half saucily defiant at her sister. "There was nobody but Ned Moore fishing above the Clerk's Hole, where the student from Owsenford drowned himself a hundred years syne. Ned's basket was full of trout, and he said that he might look in as he passed, on his way back to the Craig, and leave us some fresh fish for our supper."

Joan shook her head, and tried to speak with crushing austerity. "Ned Moore looks in a thought too often on his way back from the beck to the Craig. As for fresh fish we're in no want. There are other fishers in the world forby Ned Moore;" and then she added hastily, as if to anticipate an inconvenient implication, "as the gloaming lengthens, our own men on the Hollins here like nothing better than to daunder down to the water and catch trout by the dozen. The idea that we should stand in need of fresh fish!" With an air of offended dignity Joan betook herself again to the quilting frame.

The two sisters were nearly of an age, and were dressed alike, but the effect of the dress on the one was quite different from what it was on the other. It was not that Joan was less comely or that she did not bear a considerable resemblance in soft indescribable features and fair rosy complexion to Lyddy, but that her twenty years to Lyddy's eighteen might have had six or eight years added to them. Staidness and discretion were written all over her smooth brow with a faint knit in the centre, the straight full line of her mouth and her square chin. She might have been a young matron with children at her knees, and the cares of a family and household on her shoulders. Whereas nobody in their senses would have mistaken Lyddy Fordyce for anything save what she was—a volatile young maid with her volatility just tempered by the fact, which only rendered her more charming, that she was no longer fancy-free like the skittish romp she had been at fifteen. Her step had slowed a little, her eyes fell more frequently, there was a shade of pathos mingling with her light-hearted mirth.

Joan and Lyddy Fordyce had been left orphans in childhood. There were the well-to-do only children of a small squire and dalesman in the North country. The Hollins, the old house with the grey slate roof, in which they dwelt, together with its moorland pasture and meadow land, and the brakes of holly which lent the place its name, belonged to them equally. They had no near relations, but they were provided with guardians in the shape of Mr. Curwen, the notary in Keswick, and Mr. Brathwaite, a neighboring yeoman in another grey house with a grey roof, a few miles distant. These gentlemen had managed the worldly affairs of their wards with assiduity and success, but as the one was a widower with sons and not daughters, and the other was a bachelor, the two left something to be desired in the shape of motherly protection for motherless girls.

II.

Ned Moore was not the only guest at the Hollins that afternoon; the young country doctor, who had just come back from college to take his late father's practice, whose house and dispensary were in the village of Beckfoot, had likewise turned up to avail himself of the Hollins hospitality. He was a big, rather heavy-looking, young man in his many tippeted driving-coat and top boots. His surname of Peppercorn was so singularly inappropriate, while it had suited well enough the late doctor, a little, dried-up shrimp of a man, that the son continued to be known by the title "Dr. John" which he had begun to bear in his father's lifetime.

Dr. John sat at Joan's right hand. He brought her the copper tea kettle, assisted her with the arrangement of the cups in the scarlet and gold lacquer teatray, and distributed them to their several owners. He saw that Joan was not forgotten in the consumption of the dainties of buttered scones and Eccles cakes with which the table was supplied. All this he did in spite of his somewhat clumsy bulk, with a serious nicety and precision which Lyddy attributed to his having been called upon to minister to the sick and helpless, to little children, and to aged and infirm people.

Of quite a different type was Ned Moore hovering at Lyddy's elbow on the opposite side of the tea table. He was a slight, lithe young fellow, dark-haired with merry black eyes, as might have been expected, seeing that he had been caught in the tolls of a fair-haired maiden. He was the well-born tacksman of the farm of the Craigs. He was without doubt the boldest rider, the best shot, the most skilful fisher far and near. When it is stated, in addition, that he was also the most agile and graceful dancer, the blythest and most tuneful singer at all the merry-makings in the district, it was a matter of little consequence, at least to a girl like Lyddy Fordyce, that in spite of his acknowledged industry and shrewdness in connection with his farm, his purse was still the lightest of all the young men's purses in the country side.

When the meal was over, Joan, at Dr. John's polite request, pulled on a shawl and tied a hood over her muslin cap and short curls, for the brisk air of the April sundown at the Hollins caused the blood to tinge in her veins. She had quietly agreed to go with him as far as one of her ploughmen's cottages, and to lend him the benefit of her opinion—Joan was fairly experienced in such matters,—on a child that had met with an accident in the hanger.

Lyddy and Moore still lingered by the tea table, though they had done drinking tea. Then Lyddy proceeded to wash and dry the teacups and plates, Ned Moore aiding her in standing them up to drip, and in stacking them as soon as they were ready to be removed to the cupboard. But though Lyddy's hands were light and deft of touch, in comparison with those of the servant maids, and her assistant was not uncouth or awkward in his movements, it was no wonder that the pair bungled, for he was whispering eagerly in her ear all the time. Surely if Joan Fordyce had guessed the nature of the whisper, she would not have stayed away so long consulting over little Sam Bulmer's broken arm and bruised head—nay, she would have left Dr. John to pay his professional visit without the benefit of her presence.

To do Lyddy justice she tried to put aside the whisper, shaking her curly, cap-crowned head in the negative, and half turning away. She even sought to procure a diversion in the talk by stopping the rinsing of a cup to stare at the dregs in the bottom. "It is my cup," she said, interrupting his flow of speech with an emphatic assertion, "and there is a fine pickle of grounds left in it. If old Dolly Peel had been here she would have read me a grand fortune. But what is to hinder me from telling my own fortune?" she demanded blythely. With three expert turns of her wrist she swung round the leafy grounds till they formed a pattern in the bottom of the cup. "What do they make?" she asked herself anxiously as if, in the very deed, jest were turned into earnest, and she peered at the contents of the cup.

"Let me see," pressed Ned Moore, starting up and bending over her, "we'll take it for a sign. Loses of me!" he cried the next instant, making use of a common colloquialism in the Cumberland dialest of the day, "I declare it is two figures on horseback, I see them as plain as print."

Lyddy recoiled with a little shiver of superstition, then looked again to test the truth of his assertion. By a strong, a very strong effort of imagination a person might be persuaded that the black tiny ribs and horns and dust of the tea which have a useful habit of falling into the rough outlines of purses, ships, houses, mountains, had in this case taken the shape of two huddled together figures crouching on the back of a skeleton horse. The fugitive lovers on the bridge in the willow pattern plate are not more dubiously defined than were pair which the dregs of the tea had thrown together. "There is no mistake," insisted Ned Moore with the loudness and positiveness with which one is accustomed to hear a doubtful proposition asserted, "there before you are you and me, and my beast Black Bess!"

"But I cannot do it, Ned, I cannot leave Joan, what would she think?" pleaded Lyddy, suddenly grown piteous, for "a sign" was a very solemn obligation to fight against.

"It is not what you can, it is what you will and you must when it is your weird," he argued vehemently. "It is the only way, Curwen and Brathwaite will never consent. Everybody in the country side kens that Curwen is keeping you two up for his sons. Do you want one of them, Leddy? Which do you want? Rob, the bookworm and dreamer, or Alan, the roarer and ranter, or Valentine, the sly dog who will worm himself into his father's good graces and get the lion's share of his gear?"

"Oh! none of them, none," cried Lyddy indignantly. "What have I done that you should mock me?"

"Canny lass, I was just asking a civil question. Brathwaite does not approve of marriages. He would have you and your sister bide old maids, like his peevish sister Babby. And hark you, Lyddy, you and Joan cannot get out of their clutches—Curwen's and Brathwaite's—for a matter of seven years, since your father elected you should not come of age till you were twenty-five—seven years! Why it is an eternity, Lyddy."

"Of course. Of course."

"The place is so peaceable and quiet, too, that's it real charm. Why, God bless my soul! We have a police force consisting of twenty members only, which keeps the city in an ideal state. I'm not saying, mind you, that you can't get into a row if you want to; you can, of course. But for an ordinary Christian church-going, quiet individual, there isn't a finer spot on the globe. No sir, not one."

The time came to leave for the flower show. Mr. Walker demurred at leaving the house unprotected. Davidson laughed at him. "I've lived in this town thirty-seven years, and never once have I had one of my belongings so much as interfered with. More than half the time we never even trouble to lock the window. In fact several times the very doors have been left unbolted."

"Extraordinary, extraordinary! But if you really think it's safe, I'll leave my watch and chain behind in my room. I'm rather afraid of pick-pockets in large crowds. The watch, by the way, is a sort of heirloom. It was a present from the Dauphin of France to my grandmother's father-in-law, when he was at the French court. I would rather hang than lose it."

"It's safer in this house than in the Bank of England; no fear of losing it here."

Off to the flower show they went, leaving the house unguarded, with several open windows. This was done by Davidson on purpose, to prove the truth of his words. It might be well to mention here that the Davidsons had quite a large quantity of silver, and a lot of old-fashioned jewelry, which had been given them, or left them by some of their ancestors.

While at the flower show, Mr. Davidson took a special amount of care to point out to Mr. Walker how well things were carried on. Several policemen were on the ground, two especially vigilant in the vicinity of the tents containing the silver used to decorate the tables. Not so much as a sprig of mignonette was stolen owing to the excellence with which these worthies performed their duties. The visitor from England returned home quite convinced.

When they arrived, they thought it would be a good plan to have some coffee. Mrs. Davidson went upstairs to take off her Parisian headgear, and those below were startled a few minutes later, by hearing shrieks from up above. They hastily ran upstairs.

"Oh, James, all my jewelry, my watches, chains, rings, everything, gone. What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do!"

Promptly she went into a violent fit of hysterics. Mr. Walker rushed to his room. Yes, it was gone. His watch and chain, the family heirloom presented by the Dauphin of France. Long and bitter were the bursts of his wrath showered on the unfortunate Davidson's head.

"It's enough to make my grandmother's father-in-law turn in his grave. I knew that something of the sort would happen. All your fault, too, entirely so. If you hadn't said that the place was infernally secure, I shouldn't have left the watch at home. I've been in crowds in London, fifty times the size of anything you could imagine, and never so much as lost a sixpenny bit. Now I come to your town in the backwoods, and lose one of my dearest possessions, a thing prized by my family for more than half a century. And my wife. What will she say?"

This seemed to finish him, so he left for home next day, with a trunk full of seal skins, so as to enable him to "break the news to mother" more gently.

Moral: It's a long burglar who never returns.

HIS SLEEPING BOOTS.

An army officer in charge of a native district in South Africa during the late war, presented the Kaffir boy who acted as his particular servant, with a pair of strong, heavily nailed ammunition boots. The boy was delighted with the gift, and at once sat down and put the boots on. They were the very first pair he had ever had in his life, and for several days afterwards he strutted proudly about the camp in them, his only other article of clothing being a leather waist belt with a goat skin tuft dependent from it back and front.

But the Kaffir a few days later appeared as usual in bare feet, with boots tied round his neck.

"Hallo, Threehapence!" said his master, for that was the name he went by, "why don't you wear your boots? Are they too small for you?"

"Oh, no, sah," replied Threehapence, "they plenty big. Berry nice boots, sah; but no good for walking or running. Make um fellah too much slow, sah. Keep boots now for wear in bed."

Victorian Fables

By "Waterwitch."

MR. JOHN WALKER, of London, Eng., was paying his long-talked-of visit to Victoria, B.C. His journey, owing to the, never-ceasing efforts of Mrs. John, had been a pleasant one. Although mid-summer, she had insisted on his taking three fur overcoats, and a supply of winter clothing, six pairs of blankets, a pair of gum boots, a mackintosh, and two umbrellas.

His visit was to Mr. James Davidson, who was at the wharf with a hack to meet him. Mr. Walker was secretly surprised to find that his friend was dressed in a tailor-made suit, and that he indulged in such luxuries as collars, cuffs, boots, and gloves. Visions of a native in war paint and feathers, awaiting him in a caleche, had risen in his mind.

But still greater was his surprise as they drove through the town to Mr. Davidson's residence, and he was unable to suppress his exclamations of delight at the stately homes, with their beautiful gardens. "I was under the impression that it was rather cold here for flowers," he said.

"Why, man, our city is noted for its horticultural show. By George! you've come just in time to see our flower show. It is to-morrow." So spoke Davidson.

The following day, Coronation Day, was spent by Mr. Davidson in showing his guest the sights. Unknown to his host, the latter carried a brace of revolvers in his back pockets.

"This city is a fairly quiet one, I 'spose?" he inquired.

"My dear fellow, no place could be nicer in every way. You can have all the fun and excitement you please, very cheaply, too. The electric cars take you to every point in the city. Of course, they break down occasionally, and you have to 'get out and push," but that's more detail."

"Of course. Of course."

"The place is so peaceable and quiet, too, that's it real charm. Why, God bless my soul! We have a police force consisting of twenty members only, which keeps the city in an ideal state. I'm not saying, mind you, that you can't get into a row if you want to; you can, of course. But for an ordinary Christian church-going, quiet individual, there isn't a finer spot on the globe. No sir, not one."

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While at the flower show, Mr. Davidson took a special amount of care to point out to Mr. Walker how well things were carried on. Several policemen were on the ground, two especially vigilant in the vicinity of the tents containing the silver used to decorate the tables. Not so much as a sprig of mignonette was stolen owing to the excellence with which these worthies performed their duties. The visitor from England returned home quite convinced.

When they arrived, they thought it would be a good plan to have some coffee. Mrs. Davidson went upstairs to take off her Parisian headgear, and those below were startled a few minutes later, by hearing shrieks from up above. They hastily ran upstairs.

"Oh, James, all my jewelry, my watches, chains, rings, everything, gone. What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do!"

Promptly she went into a violent fit of hysterics. Mr. Walker rushed to his room. Yes, it was gone. His watch and chain, the family heirloom presented by the Dauphin of France. Long and bitter were the bursts of his wrath showered on the unfortunate Davidson's head.

"It's enough to make my grandmother's father-in-law turn in his grave. I knew that something of the sort would happen. All your fault, too, entirely so. If you hadn't said that the place was infernally secure, I shouldn't have left the watch at home. I've been in crowds in London, fifty times the size of anything you could imagine, and never so much as lost a sixpenny bit. Now I come to your town in the backwoods, and lose one of my dearest possessions, a thing prized by my family for more than half a century. And my wife. What will she say?"

This seemed to finish him, so he left for home next day, with a trunk full of seal skins, so as to enable him to "break the news to mother" more gently.

Moral: It's a long burglar who never returns.

New Improvements in Victoria

Future historians who deal with the city of Victoria as a theme will unquestionably be inclined to state that the year 1902 marked the ushering in of an era of progress and development unprecedented in its life up to that date. That a city famed for its great natural beauties and glorious climate far and near, had so long neglected the duty of providing for itself the up-to-date necessities of communities with any pretentions to modernity, had long been a source of wonderment to visitors and to many citizens; but from now on Victoria must be given a first place among the well-cared-for cities of the progressive West.

It is only recently that Victorians seem to have awakened to a realization of the future of Victoria. Heretofore most of the efforts of the citizens were directed towards improving the city's commercial position, and little or no pains were taken to profit by the circumstance that Nature had declared that Victoria was destined to be the garden residential spot on the Pacific Coast of North America. But the awakening came at last; and now "those who have eyes to see and ears to hear" know that, whatever the future may hold for Victoria in the way of commercial growth, her position as a resort for tourists and a residential point has been firmly fixed and cannot be disturbed by the ambitions of rival cities anywhere on the Coast.

That Victoria possessed a climate unsurpassed anywhere in the world for charm and salubrity, that her scenic attractions and natural beauties are unrivalled, those who had lived here any length of time were thoroughly cognizant of; but it remained for the Victoria Tourist Association to make those facts known far and near and to place the proper information in the hands of those who were anxious to visit or take up their residence in a city so bountifully favored by nature. Too much praise cannot be given the Tourist Association for its splendid efforts at giving publicity to "the truth about Victoria." It began its work at a most opportune time; and it is peculiarly fitting that hand in hand with this should proceed the development of a well deserved policy for civic improvements by a progressive city council.

It is the intention in this article to endeavor to demonstrate by a brief citation of the more notable public improvements which have been under way during 1902 and the presenting of data showing the progress in building in Victoria in the same period, that the city is growing rapidly in importance and stability and is ultimately destined to be—if not a great commercial centre—the premier residential point on the Pacific Slope.

The clearest evidence of faith in a city's future is shown by the willingness of the taxpayers to sanction public improvements, and that that evidency is at hand in ample quantity is shown in the paving work now under way on the principal streets, the beautiful retaining wall at James Bay and the intention to proceed in due course with the erection of a new steel bridge at Point Ellice and a Carnegie library, when the site for the latter shall have been chosen. The erection of a splendid new High school may also be mentioned in this connection.

But shrewd business men and private citizens have not been laggard in demonstrating their faith in the future of the city, the former undertaking large improvements and enterprises involving the expenditure of thousands of dollars, and the latter—embracing all classes, from the capitalist to the wage-earner—erecting residences and homes for themselves in the prettiest city of the West.

Take, for instance, the work done by the Tramway Company. At an expenditure of thousands of dollars it has double tracked a large portion of its system, intends laying heavier rails on all lines and is arranging to extend the system so as to take in the Gorge and provide transportation facilities for residents in that delightful section of the city. Then, again, those interested in the shipbuilding industry are showing their faith in Victoria n a very substantial fashion—the growth of this industry being really phenomenal.

But it is not alone those entrusted with the direction of huge enterprises who have shown that they can read the "handwriting on the wall"—the shrewd business men of the community are preparing for a future which can hold nothing but good for Victoria. In this latter connection it will be only necessary to mention a few of the instances in which the business men is showing his faith in Victoria. The improvements now under way at Spencer's Arcade, the great dry goods emporium, will permit Victorians shortly to declare with truth that their city possesses one of the finest establishments of the kind in the Dominion. A new building will have been erected when the carpenter and joiner and the mason have completed their labors. It will rise four stories in height of brick, with stone embellishments, and be a decided improvement to Government and Broad streets.

At an expenditure of $5,000, not to speak of interior fittings of the most elaborate character, Messrs. Challoner & Mitchell have undertaken improvements to the building which they occupy on Government street and they can now boast of possessing one of the most complete establishments of the kind in the West.

In hotel establishments the stimulus of faith in the city is also to be practically demonstrated. The Balmoral on Douglas street is to be enlarged by an additional storey, as is also, so it is said, that phenomenon of Western hostelries, the Dominion hotel on Yates street, which, in itself, under the magic guidance of Stephen Jones, has done much to add to the fame of Victoria.

Through the courtesy of Building Inspector Northcott the Colonist is enabled to present this morning a list of the new buildings and improvements to existing structures, with the estimated expenditures, for which permits were granted by the city since the opening of the year. It is as follows:—

Bank of British North America, one storey brick and stone building, Yates street	$10,000
Mrs. Brown, addition to "Cherry Bank," Victoria Crescent, (no figures given)	
E. Crow Baker, one storey school building	750
Challoner & Mitchell, alterations and additions to brick building, corner Douglas and Fort streets	1,800
Challoner & Mitchell, alterations to store on Government street	4,500
W. J. Clark, two-storey brick building on Government street	3,000
Richard Collister, two-storey frame dwelling, Beckley farm, facing Dallas road	2,000
Mrs. Mabel Champion, one-storey frame cottage, corner Niagara and Carr streets	1,000
H. Cathcart, addition to dwelling	600
John Clegg, one and a half storey frame building, Lindon avenue	2,500
Wm. Eddie, one-storey frame dwelling, Bank street (not estimated)	
J. P. Elford, two-storey frame dwelling	2,000
Hon. W. Hamley, Collinson street, one-storey frame building	600
Eli Harrison, two-storey frame dwelling, Cadboro Bay road	4,000
Jones & Helmcken, one and a half storey frame dwelling, Quebec St.	1,900
S. Joyce, half storey dwelling, Duchess street	900
A. E. Kent, two-storey brick building, Fort street	4,000
H. J. Knott, one-storey frame cottage, corner Seventh and King's road	1,000
two and a half storey frame building, facing Chatham, between Cook and Chambers	3,000
Mr. Kermode, one and a half storey facing Henry street	1,800
Mrs. Ling Long Shee, two-storey brick building, Chinatown	4,000
Mrs. M. Lamb, frame building, Earle's sub-division (not estimated)	
Mrs. Marry, building on Second St. (not estimated)	
Moore & Whittington, four frame buildings, one and a half storeys, on Spring Ridge	6,000
Mrs. G. E. Moss, one-storey frame building, Elford street	1,000
Mr. Matheson, one-storey frame building, corner Carr and Niagara streets	1,000
Mrs. M. A. Morrison, two storey dwelling, Discovery street	3,000
Mr. Marshall, two-storey frame dwelling, Harrison street	1,800
H. McCulloch, two-storey frame dwelling, Belleville street	2,500
Mrs. Clara Pennock, improvements to residence on Superior street	800
Royal Bank of Canada, new vault	400
Capt. Rudlin, three frame buildings Johnson street, Spring Ridge	4,500
Mr. Rocket, one-storey house, Pandora avenue	800
Jubilee Hospital, addition to Home for Aged and Infirm Women	1,200
Mr. Ralph, one-storey frame building, Clarence street	1,200
Dixi H. Ross & Co., brick and stone warehouse, two storeys	3,000
Mr. Redd, one and a half storey brick building, Johnson street	2,500
Alex. Stewart, addition to frame building corner Yates and Blanchard streets	250
Mrs. Sutton, three one and a half storey frame buildings, Beckley farm	5,400
H. Siebenbaum, one two-storey brick and stone building, Government street	2,000
St. Joseph's Hospital, improvements	500
S. T. Styles, two-storey frame dwelling, Johnson street	1,500
John Sheppard, two-story frame dwelling, Rae street	2,500
D. Spencer, brick and stone building, Government street	
W. H. Trousdale, one small frame dwelling, William street	500
Mrs. Tuck, one storey addition to "Rocabella"	700
Thos. Tubman, two-storey frame dwelling, Linden avenue	2,200
Victoria West Athletic Association, frame building	1,000

It will be seen from the above that the year 1902, which has some months yet to run before its expiration, has witnessed considerable progress in the building line. The list is necessarily incomplete in so far as showing accurately the number of buildings erected in Victoria, properly speaking, as building permits are only required from those who commence operations within the fire limits. Thus the great districts of Oak Bay and Esquimalt have witnessed much building during the past year no record of which is kept at the City Hall. Improvements, for instance, of very elaborate and costly character have been made this year at the residence of Mr. Henry Croft.

A Colonist representative inquired from the real estate agents, the architects and the mill men as to the outlook for the future in the building line, and all anticipate a busy time for the balance of the season of 1902 and for next year. There are but few empty houses in the city and the demand for residences with all modern improvements increases daily. One feature of interest in the situation is the disposition on the part of those who are building to erect dwellings of a style of architecture much superior to that in evidence heretofore, speaking generally.

Assuming that 1903 will witness the extension of the street car system along the Gorge road, it is altogether probable that building will receive a decided stimulus by such a move. The large tract of land known as "Finlayson's Field" on Douglas street, has been cut up into lots, and is now on the market; and no doubt next year will witness considerable activity in that section of the city in the building line.

Taking it all in all, Victorians have every reason to be satisfied with the progress made by their city during the period of 1902, which has already passed, and may look forward confidently that 1903 will witness to a still greater degree, development of a growth which is surely destined to assume large proportions.

IN MID OCEAN.

Scheme to Station Vessel for Wireless Telegraphy.

A scheme is on foot in Liverpool, according to the Electrical World and Engineer, which, it is claimed, will soon be in commercial operation for utilizing wireless telegraphy in a mid-ocean post office and signal station. It is the intention to permanently moor at a point 110 miles west of the Lizard a ship which will be equipped with a searchlight and a complete set of Marconi apparatus. As the water at the point selected will involve the use of a mooring chain 400 or 500 feet in length, the weight of which would prevent the bows from riding buoyantly over the heavy seas, the vessel will be provided with a horse-pipe placed in the keel of the foremast. The searchlight is to have a vertical beam for the purpose of illuminating the clouds and enabling the floating post office to be picked up at night from a distance of sixty miles or more. As the vessel will be located in the fair way of the English Channel, it will be advantageously placed for the distribution of orders sent from shore by the owners of vessels which are passing in or out of the Channel. Thus a ship coming in from the West or from the South could be directed, as soon as it picked up the station, to proceed either to Liverpool, Bristol, or an English Channel port. By this means pilotage and port dues would be reduced, and, of course, there would be a considerable saving of time. The vessel will serve as a