

rashly congratulate himself that he has reached smooth water. There is yet another bar to be crossed, and that is, "our present needs."

Having with infinite pains at length got the range of a given periodical, and having prepared for it, with joyous heart, a contribution that he is sure will wreath the editor's face in smiles, it seems somehow the unkindest cut of all to have it returned with the regretful intimation that while at any other time the *Omnibus* would be only too glad to avail itself of so capital a story, the MSS., unfortunately, was not suited to its present needs, and must therefore go back.

When the volunteer contributor has finally overcome even this obstacle, and learned how to do work that is "suited to the present needs" of the different periodicals at which he aims, then it may be said that his evolution is completed. He ceases to belong to the class of volunteer contributors, and joins the happy band of those—few but fit—who are able to boast that no manuscript of theirs ever goes a-begging.

But by this time he has learned many things that would otherwise have been missed from his experience. He has, for example, known a manuscript so lightly esteemed by its author as to be in the first instance submitted only to second-rate periodicals, to be unanimously rejected by them, and then in a sort of wild despair sent to a first-class periodical where it was cordially accepted.

Pondering over such a puzzling problem as thus presented, how could he do else than murmur with slow shake of head, "Verily, the ways of editors are past finding out."

Again he would be bewildered by having a contribution specially prepared for a periodical of a particular class, returned with regrets, subsequently accepted by another periodical of a wider scope, and then, on its appearance therein, copied *verbatim* by the first periodical with due acknowledgment.

"How is it," he queries "that what was not worth printing as an original contribution was quite worth copying after it had appeared elsewhere?"

Many like causes of bewilderment

might be noted. Yet after all they would only go to emphasize the fact that so long as human nature remains what it is, the volunteer contributor and the editor will never come to understand one another very much better than they do at present.

The enterprises of the former must continue to be in the vast majority of cases the drawing of a bow at a venture, and the chief business of the latter a zealous endeavor to, so far as possible, avoid being hit by the arrows for which he is the target.

In justice to the editor, it must be admitted that he has a story of his own to tell. Thus I had a friend, who, stimulated by my own example, made a venture in the same direction. As it chanced, he had had two somewhat picturesque and striking experiences, and these he worked up into short stories, and sent them to the most widely-circulated of young folks' periodicals. To his wild delight they were promptly accepted, and well paid for.

Yet that acceptance turned out ill for both writer and editor.

Carried away by such instant success the former invested in a typewriter, and for months thereafter bombarded that editor with manuscripts that were uniformly useless until his soul must have sickened at the very sight of the writer's name.

Such things cannot help making editors callous and cynical, and must be borne in mind when their case is up for a hearing before the court of contributors.

But the subject is one capable of indefinite expansion. With the marvellous modern development in periodicals of all kinds, the field of the volunteer contributor is ever widening. At no previous time did good magazine work command more liberal remuneration, and the fact that, after making all allowances the magazines themselves were never more richly instructive, nor vivaciously interesting, is conclusive proof that the volunteer contributor is fully alive to his opportunities, and, in spite of all the eccentricities of editors, is pegging away with high hope, and sublime persistence.

J. Macdonald Oxley.