

PEOPLE WE MEET.

A black and white portrait of a man with a mustache, wearing a suit and bow tie. The image is heavily stylized with heavy black lines and shading, particularly around the face and hair.

CHARLES MILNE

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F. A. Burns, well known in Skagway and Dyea during the boom days,

is in the city with a complete brewery plant which he is taking to Eagle where he will engage in manufacturing that most delicious of beverages, plain, vulgar beer. Mr. Burns is an expert in his line and the people of Eagle are to be congratulated upon the appearance of one who will create a demand for growlers. Dawsonites will continue to pay two-bits for a thumbful of the precious extract while her neighbors across the line will by the same token receive a bucket full to say nothing of a six inch collar.

In the outfit are 50 kegs, five tons of malt, hops and everything else necessary for equipment. Mr. Burns with his men leave in a scow tomorrow. He is also taking down on his boat 12½ tons of fesh meat for the post at Fort Egbert.

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practically, the author of "No. 51 in Street" is tall and large, with a heavily marked, regular features, brown eyes and grayish hair and a grained beard. To give an impression of Mr. Whiteing's personality from the inside, I will say, however, he is a very easy-going person. His point of view is by no means so far from the common as is his patent in conversing with him. He belongs to that rare order of human beings, doubly rare in England, who really take pleasure in smoothing the path of other weary wayfarers either by word or deed, or by both.

It is of course not so much a question of what a man says as of the way in which he says it; Mr. Whiteing's is large and tolerant and kindly. One should not feel put out by the apparent success of the writers of the nineteenth and fourth class of whom you read," he said in the course of a conversation that had started in the generalities of initial remarks; "remember they all do their best in working for what we may call the theory of literature; they fill a need, they educate the taste of their readers, they do better things. Theirs is still the work of the laborers of civilization. One should not start with trying to make the laborer desire carpets and tapes—no good such things; the first point is to get him a respect for his own appreciation of the primitive necessities of life. And that is just the part played in the literary field by the writers who appeal to readers of the tastes of those who naturally belong to the reading classes; they simulate a class of readers who did not previously exist at all and would not have existed save for them." And so he went on, unlettered boots, come usually these readers, who would not take to themselves, and they thus simulate new desires and aspirations. "Ah, but it isn't those writers," I interrupted, "to whose success I object, it is the class of writers who take themselves seriously and who are, moreover, taken seriously by a large portion of the community."

Mr. Whiteing smiled enigmatically and took position before the open fire, although the day was warm. As illustrative of the laborious, self-conscious manner in which "Marcella" was written, I repeated to my host the remark of the authoress to a mutual friend during the period of gestation that she was going down into the country to "study" the country people for her book.

"That is not the spirit in which one does things," said Mr. Whiteing; "in any way one does not properly see to it that one gets a good healthy cabbage, let alone human beings. Observation is a very subtle process, I am content. It is the very things that one does not conspicuously go out to see and see the best. That's the reason that for literary purposes we get much from our childhood, for as children our observation was purely objective and impersonal. And, likewise, that's why I suddenly discover things that my old uncle or my dog, or even I have known intimately for years, is a literary character. To me the best out of nature one must look about looking at her very differently from the pure scientist, who usually goes with the purpose of enumerating her peculiarities and outstanding manifestations."

Marcella, square, in which Mr. Whiteing lives, is an old-fashioned, double three-sided square, whose sides is made impossible by the needs of a founding hospital. Like many things in London, this square binds the present to the tenacious past; for in England the past is just; it clings to the skirts of the present and pleads with it to stay.

"This is a very nice, quiet neighborhood," said the author as he stepped me to the street door of the house. "As you see there is no past the house, as the street is nowhere except into the fence. It is a very nice, but there is just one drawback to these old houses—they are very falling to pieces in parts. This was said regretfully, sympathetically, as one might speak of increasing feebleness of a faithful dog or of whom, of course, I need not be out of the question to part with his residence simply because his house was falling to pieces in parts."

There was much in Mr. Whiteing's conversation that recalls the past with its picturesque and quaintness and charm. To those who appreciate going away from the bustle of everyday existence into the Mecklenburg square of life, nothing is to be so warmly recommended than to go three flights of stairs to the workshop of the author of "No. 51 in Street."

When I am struck," he said, after a moment's discussion of journalism for moments, by the difference between the modern literary work-

those of previous times. I remember the last, of what one might call London bohemians, men and women who lived and did their work, and good work it was, too, in many instances, in absolute disregard of the world's standards and regulations. Most of them perished miserably, to be sure, but it is a question which method is the best for literature as a whole—the old vagabond method or the present-day regulated, 'range' method.

"The trouble is, we don't know enough about the conditions under which all the masterpieces were produced to give an answer to this question. For instance, what do we know about the writing of the *Iliad*? It may have been produced in peaceful surroundings or under conditions of tumult. But just think of the manner in which Goldsmith wrote *The Deserted Village*, and so many other beautiful poems wandering aimlessly through France and literally living from the fruits of the country. See what the outcome of that journey was. Today Goldsmith would be under contract to his publisher to have his poem finished by a certain time and he would travel 'first-class' to the spot about which he was to write and put up at the best hotel.

"Without meaning to disparage the literature of the day, it is nevertheless true that it is absolutely commercialized; writing is nowadays just as much a business as any other part of work. But the astonishing thing is that under such a cut-and-dried system so much good stuff is produced. Indeed, it is that way in every line nowadays. For instance, a man is informed that he will be expected to speak at a dinner on such and such a night, and when the time comes he turns up knowing that he is expected to make the audience laugh or cry, or do both, and what is more he generally does what he is expected to do. The machine has got to be so big that it could not be run except in this regulated, well-ordered manner.

"To my mind, what is accomplished in these lines is just as wonderful as anything that the Edisons or Rockefellers do, this giving out of the spirit of spontaneity to order.

"Journalism is, I believe, mainly responsible for the change in method of work in literature, for despite a fact that is said against journalism, it is absolutely pitiless in its exacting regards regularly; I may write like an angel, as Goldsmith was said to have done, but unless I get my article in before the paper goes to press it is absolutely worthless."

"What you say about modern methods of work," I said, "is undoubtedly true, but I still believe it is very much a matter of temperament, and that although most writers conform of necessity to modern requirements there are still just as many bohemians in desire. At all events, nothing is true: nowadays authors are paid better than in former times. That is one consolation."

Mr. Whiteing laughed, and agreed that in this matter, at least, present-day writers were better situated than their predecessors. It was at this point that the conversation turned upon the unfair remuneration of writers of the semi-trashy order, who Mr. Whiteing charitably took under his protection, notably Harris Ainsworth, for the sole reason

representing several London papers in Paris and then becoming leader writer for the Daily News. It was while in this latter position that he wrote the book that made him famous; "No. 5 John Street," on which he worked during hours which should have been devoted to rest. The consequences of thus burning the candle at both ends was an illness which has seriously interfered with his work until recently.

"The idea for 'John Street,' he said in answer to a question, "came originally from a story I had heard of a visit of Rossetti to the slums and of his being fascinated by the wildness and fierceness of some terrible creature whom he encountered there and who was the terror of the neighborhood. I had often heard this anecdote and it rather took hold of my mind, and I asked myself what would be the result were a man of a high intellectual order to be mated to such a woman, whether he would elevate her or she drag him down. That was the idea with which I started out, but the book turned out before I finished it to be a study of different classes of society. After it was complete I found that it was necessary to rewrite a great portion of it entirely."

"That was discouraging, wasn't it?" I said.

"Oh, no, not at all; indeed, quite the reverse. If your heart's in a piece of work and you see that you have not made the most out of it, of course you cannot be happy until you have done the best with it of which you are capable."—New York Times.

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
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