

Bret Harte is chiefly associated in our minds with San Francisco, and tales of Western life among the rough and uncultured dwellers at 'Poker Flat' and such districts. Even in these dissolute and vicious and seemingly irreclaimable characters there are good points which Bret Harte has noticed, and sketched for us. Bret Harte preached the gospel of charity and toleration under the garb of a rough miner. As the Rev. H. R. Haweis—an eminent Church clergyman—said of him: 'Bret Harte has a gospel, in spite of his protest to the contrary. He preaches it informally, but not the less effectually. It is the old gospel of Belief in Human Nature, which is to be found in the New Testament, and which has been forgotten by most modern Theologians. He preaches the virtue of the Publican, the purity of the Harlot, the loveliness of the Sinner.' This may appear to be rather strange gospel, but listen again: 'The author of the Christian religion, if I remember rightly, gave great offence by maintaining similar paradoxes, when, turning to the self-satisfied and respectable people of the day, He remarked: "Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans and the Harlots go into the kingdom of Heaven before you."' Those who have read Bret Harte closely and sympathetically will rejoice to read such an eloquent testimony in his behalf, and given by such a competent critic.

Such a criticism reminds one of Thackeray's generous and appropriate remarks on Addison. In one of his Lectures on the English Humorists, the author of 'Pendennis' said: 'He came, in that artificial age, and began to speak with his noble, natural voice. He came, the gentle satirist, who hit no unfair blow; the kind judge, who castigated only in smiling.' And again: 'Is the glory of heaven to be sung only by gentlemen in black coats? Must the truth be only expounded in gown and surplice, and out of those two vestments can nobody preach it? Commend me to this dear preacher without orders, this parson in the tie-wig.*'

*Tie wigs were worn only by the laity. Clergymen did not think it decent to appear except in a full-bottomed wig.

The humorous articles are no doubt intended as a set off against the heavy political thunder, and the severe and scathing criticisms of men and things which are so characteristic of our modern newspapers. The humorous column has now become almost part and parcel of the average paper, and the 'Funny man' has now a recognized position in the editorial sanctum. So that now the man who prepares the articles on 'Trade and Commerce' has not to rack and cudgel his brains in order to manufacture the funny articles that are to amuse the readers of the paper. The 'Funny man' is usually described as a lean, lanky, cadaverous, and very woe-begone style of person. One whose outward appearance would indicate that he was employed solely for the purpose of tackling the ugly customers who invade the sanctums—the Lightning Rod, the Book Agents and others of that ilk—or to write the obituary notices for the paper. Whatever may be the style of the 'Funny man's' external appearance, certain it is that his sketches are often highly amusing, and sometimes very true to nature. Those who read the accounts of the proceedings of the Lime Kiln Club will not have failed to notice the shrewd and incisive remarks made by the President—Bro. Gardner. Among the best known humorists of the day I would place Robt. J. Burdette, of the Burlington *Hawkeye*. Perhaps the best way of supporting my opinion of him would be by giving a specimen from one of his inimitable sketches. It contains more solid common sense and good advice to the square inch clothed in unique language, than, perhaps, any piece he has written. It is called 'Night Thoughts.' Burdette says: 'Don't judge a man by his clothes. Can you tell what the circus is going to be like by looking at the Italian sunset pictures on the fence? Do you value the turkey for its plumage? And isn't the skin of the mink the most, and indeed, the only valuable part of him? There be men, fair to look upon, who wander up and down this country, and sit in the coolest places on the hotel piazzas, who are arranged in fine linen and cardinal socks, and who have to hold their hand over their scarf-pin when they want to see the moonlight; who, unassisted and unprompted, do not possess the discretion to come in when it rains, and don't know enough to punch a hole in the snow with an umbrella—new, soft snow at that, without any crust on it. Now and then, son, before you are as old as Methuselah, you will meet a man who wears a hat that is worth twice as much as the head it covers. On the other hand, don't fall into the error of believing that all the goodness, and honesty, and intelligence in the world goes about in shreds and patches. We have seen the tramp dressed in worse rags than you could rake out of the family rag-bag, and more dirt and hair on him than would suffice to protect a horse, who would step up to the front door and demand three kinds of cake, half an applepie, and then

steal every movable thing in the yard, kill the dog, choke up the pump with sand, tramp on the pansy bed, and girdle the cherry trees, because he could not carry them away. Good clothes are never an infallible index to a man that is in them.'

The foregoing is one amongst many other good specimens of Mr. Burdette's style. It deals with two important mistakes very often made—that the possession of wealth indicates the possession of real, genuine work and ability; and that goodness always masquerades in rags, and invariably lies concealed under the seedy garments of the average tramp.

I trust that, in the few remarks I have made upon this question, I have succeeded in demonstrating the somewhat paradoxical proposition of obtaining wheat from chaff; and that the average American humor of to-day is worthy of more attention than most people are inclined to give it.

—ERIC.

ALWAYS—NEVER.

ALWAYS:—A Manual of Etiquette for the Guidance of either sex into the Empurpled Penetralia of Fashionable Life. By Mentor, author of 'Never.'

NEVER:—A Hand-book for the Uninitiated and Inexperienced Aspirants to Refined Society's Giddy Heights and Glittering Attainments.

DEAR VARSITY,—Some months ago you published a review of a little volume entitled 'Don't,' which little volume, I will venture to remind your readers, is a modest compendium of the rules and precepts which ought to govern us in conduct and speech. Grateful as we all were to the author of 'Don't,' for crystallizing into palpable black and white those 'unwritten laws' of fashion which permit us to be reasonably wicked but not the least vulgar, grateful, as I personally was to him, for this excellent and beautiful work, yet I could not but feel, and your readers could not but feel, that situations might arise when even 'Don't' would fail to point out a course of action, that, in fact, its author had merely indicated, sketched and hinted, rather than written an exhaustive treatise on this fertile and interesting subject.

I am, therefore, much pleased (and you will be much pleased) to learn that the volumes above named have been published as supplemental to 'Don't,' and are worthy of their predecessor; that under the protecting wing of the directions contained therein, the trembling neophyte can fearlessly proceed into the very *sanctum sanctorum* of high life. That the man who studies diligently these hand-books, who makes them his companion, friend and adviser, will not be without his reward, nay, will reap a seven-fold guerdon, and may look back on his dead past and say, in the words of A. Ward, 'When I sirvay my hog-bristled, kallow daze, I am farelly appawled. Thank the Lord, I have *ettyketted* into something like bald-hedded pollish in my old age.'

And now permit me to lay before you a few specimen jewels from the riches of these mines. But, reader, be not content with these. Toil and delve, toil and delve. Other and fairer gems lie within thy very grasp.

Callers, make the following your own. I print without comment.

'Always, if a gentleman, have something unobtrusively elegant in the way of a visiting card. Glaring business cards, variety actresses' photographs, and playing cards, with your name written between the spots, are only permissible on exceptional occasions.'

'Always, if making a call with a lady, let her question the servant. Your idiotic joy on being informed that no one is at home, can then be fitly disguised.'

'Always appear totally unconcerned and self-possessed, even if too inebriated to talk. Calmly file in, bow, if you can safely hazard one, and wander in majestic silence to the next house on your list.'

'Never attempt to sing or play, even though pressed to do so, if you are absolutely ignorant of both vocal and instrumental music. Effects might indeed be produced, but would they be desirable?'

'Never be unduly "stuck up." Because you are yourself is no reason why you are William H. Vanderbilt or George Francis Train.'

Under the head of 'Parties, Balls, and Germans' the author delivers himself of the following nicely-considered sentences. It is, as he remarks, by trifles scarcely observable that the true gentleman is known:—

'Always attend a ball or large evening party in full evening dress. Hunting, yachting, business and bathing suits are alike debarred by that subtle, unwritten law, etiquette, of which you are now supposed to be a conscientious and enamored student.'

'Always, with your lady on your arm (not upon your back),