

Literary Notes

"The Quest," Justus M. Forman. Ward, Locke Co.

In this romance Mr. Forman shows weakness in unfolding the mystery of the disappearance of his hero, Arthur Benham. However, the characterisation is good, and Mr. Forman writes in his usual delightful whimsical style of the Parisian life he knows so well.

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Mr. Arthur Wing Pinero, or rather Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, for the great English dramatist was knighted the other day, is the hero of much newspaper gossip just now because of the recent honour conferred on him by His Majesty.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor says of him: "He is the pink and perfection of orderliness. In his study you see every single pen even in its proper place—clean, stainless, as if it belonged not to a masculine and revolutionary writer but a dainty young spinster."

M. A. P. relates a story illustrative of Sir Arthur's virtue of neatness:

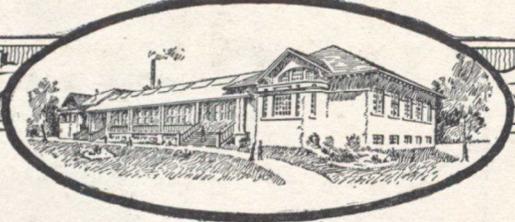
"Sir Arthur lives in a flat in Hanover Square. He used to do so, at all events, and I think he does now. His study window overlooks the neatly kept enclosure in the middle of the square. It is neatly kept, because the St. George's parish is very rich—and perhaps because the authorities, proud of having so distinguished a man of letters as a resident, are anxious to humour his pet weakness.

One day, as Arthur Wing Pinero was sitting at his study window, putting his mind in order for the thinking out of a new plot, he saw the waterman of the cab-rank below screw up a newspaper he had been reading—an ugly, flabby sheet of washed-out pink, containing "all the winners," and, judging from the waterman's manner, all the losers also—and toss it into that sacred enclosure upon whose railings he leaned for a living.

Sir Arthur was horrified. His face grew whiter and more hatchet-like, his nose sharper, his eyes blacker, and his lips thinner. A screwed-up evening racing "speshul" lying upon the mathematically-raked mould behind the railings of the Parish of St. George's neatly groomed enclosure! Did ever anyone hear of such an outrage? For a while the famous dramatist frowned through the window, with eyes that nearly burnt two little bullet-holes in the glass. Then, going into the hall, and unsheathing a marvellously rolled umbrella from a tin tube, like a cue-case, he descended into the square, and crossed the roadway in the direction of the waterman.

He did not set about that waterman with his umbrella. From such an assault it might have emerged unfolded and unkempt. Instead, with the patience of an angler beside a public pond, he set about fishing for the offensive "speshul extree" with its crook. Rewarded in course of time with a bite (it is not easy to fish for paper in a wind), Sir Arthur grasped the paper in his hand and breathed again. But where was he to put the rubbish?

A slowly-moving open taxi, the attention of whose driver was occupied for the moment in the direction of a likely fare, answered the question for him, and he stole quietly up behind the thing and stuffed the paper down into the folds of its hood. Then he walked back refreshed to "his flat in order."



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