

business. His wife always placed the utmost confidence in him and never suspected the possibility of his joking with her. This confidence gave him good sport on one occasion. A certain fish-woman came to the house every day with plaice, and Mrs. Hood received instructions to inspect the fish very carefully before purchasing, and never to buy at any price fish which had bright red spots on it. Accordingly, the next time the old fish-woman came round, the plaice was carefully examined and Mrs. Hood refused to purchase it, saying that it might be fresh, but she could not think of taking it with those horrid red spots, for her husband had explained to her quite recently that when plaice was spotted all over the back in bright red patches it was a sure sign the fish was stale. The old woman's indignation at this remark brought the author of the joke near enough for his laugh to be heard by the two at the door and to reveal the joke. The fish was afterwards purchased, and although it was covered with bright red spots, it was very much enjoyed by both.

(To be continued.)

HOW SIR WALTER SCOTT STUDIED.

How one man, and a busy man, who had, moreover, nothing of the hermit about him, could possibly produce all these wonderful books along with all his other work in the time that he did may well, as you can suppose, have puzzled even those who knew him. Scott had, of course, a wonderful facility of composition. He wrote very fast, and when the subject suited him he undoubtedly wrote best that way. We have seen at what a white heat "Waverley" was composed. "Guy Mannering," again, in design and construction the best, I think, of all the novels was the work of a Christmas vacation, by way of what he used to call refreshing the machine when tired of the routine of the law courts. He was also a man of very regular habits and an assiduous observer of his favourite maxim never to be doing nothing; he had no unconsidered trifles of time; every moment was turned to account, and thus he had leisure for everything. So long as his health permitted he used to work in the early morning, so that by breakfast time he had, as he expressed it, broken the neck of the day's work. Often these were the only hours he could spare, when Abbotsford was full of company, as it commonly was, and however busy he might be, when his guests had to be entertained there was Scott, always ready for them, the gayest of the gay, as though he had nothing in his head but the amusement of the hour, and no more to do with writing books than the youngest and idlest of the party. But the real secret of the way in which he managed to combine quality with quantity lies in the phrase. "He was making himself all the time." One of his friends said once to him: "I know that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere pen work; but when is it that you think?" "Oh," answered Scott, "I lie simm'ring over things for an hour or so before I get up; and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping, half-waking thoughts—and when I get the paper before me it commonly runs off pretty easily." And in his journal there is a passage in which he contrasts his advantages over the host of imitators that his success had flooded the market with. "They may do their fooling with better grace," he says, "but I, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, do it more natural"; he meant that they had to get their knowledge to write their books, while he wrote his books because he had got the knowledge. He had long ago, in short, made himself so thoroughly that when he sat down to his desk the ideas flowed as freely from his brain as the ink from his pen. "It commonly runs off pretty easily"; that it certainly did. I have seen some of his manuscripts, and they are marvels to look at—not exactly marvels of handwriting; indeed in that respect they bear a striking resemblance to certain other manuscripts you may perhaps have heard of by the name of *panas*. But the wonder of these sheets is that they are written almost wholly without erasures. Page after page the writing runs on exactly as you read it in print.—*Macmillan's Magazine.*



Montreal is becoming quite an amusement town, and the winter season promises to be a lively one in the way of professional and amateur entertainments. Not only have the two theatres provided a list of better-class attractions than ever before, but local, musical and dramatic organizations, which between them muster considerable talent, have been making great plans for the winter evenings.

The past week was a rather quiet one, however. "Captain Swift" at the Academy and "Out in the Streets" at the Royal drew their quota of admirers; but, besides these two attractions, very little was going on except Ragan's illustrated lectures. They were very interesting and filled the Queen's Hall every night. With Stoddard and Cromwell the lecturer forms a triumvirate that almost monopolizes this class of entertainments on the American continent, and of which Professor Ragan alone visits Canada.

Child actors are the thing nowadays, and a company of first-class people, assisted by an infantile phenomenon, will meet with success no matter what the piece presented may be. Plot or no plot, it matters not, as is proven by the latest production at the Academy—"Bootles' Baby." As a play it is a failure and much inferior to "Little Lord Fautleroy." But taken simply as a dramatic entertainment it was a great success, and certainly a spell of pure innocent amusement like that produced by Miss Claxton's company ought to be a pleasant variation of the average dramatic diet provided by nineteenth century playwrights and managers. As said before, the company is an excellent one. Mr. Chas. A. Stevenson was an ideal *Bootles*, and at the same time life-like enough to be real. It was a pity, of course, that Miss Claxton was not there, but Miss Edith Crane made an excellent substitute. As to Gertie Homan (it would be a pity to call her "Miss"), there can be but one opinion. She has the happy faculty which so many grown-up actors lack—that of losing the person in the part to be played, and the natural unaffected way in which every word is spoken and every motion made is delightfully refreshing. The finding of the baby, which, by the way, came in for a great deal of kind attention, and the love-making between the young girl and Captain Lucy, which part was taken by Mr. C. W. Garthorne, were evidently the best scenes of the evening. The entire company played well, and the members must have been selected with care. Mr. Ramsay Morris, of "Tigress" fame, who has charge of the production, has staged the piece in excellent style, and those seeking for clean, wholesome theatrical amusement, should by all means pay their respects to "Bootles' Baby."

With a much-promising title, "The Arabian Nights," as presented at the Royal, is far from realizing the expectations of the anxious play-goer who visits it with dreams and memories of the beautiful spectacle of this name that was presented at the Chicago Opera House three years ago for the first time. It seems as if the people that run the show somehow or other managed to get hold of a few people engaged in the original production and thought this sufficient to draw. The Ronaldos and the human dolls are really the only things worth noting, and even the latter are incomplete. Of course there are some pretty girls who show as much of their well-shaped forms as decency will permit, but the chorus is small and wretched; and the performance, which is announced by fac-simile printing of that of the original performance in the States, is little better than that of a second-rate variety show, and I doubt not that the managers of the theatre themselves were taken in. Charming "Corinne," the old favourite, will appear next week.

Amateur theatricals are becoming quite the rage. The first club to play this season was the Grand Trunk, who have cut themselves loose from the literary institute, and will give all their coming entertainments at their own risk. For the benefit of the Fresh Air Fund they played "Uncle Tom's Cabin" twice to large audiences. It is rather a pity that with the talent they have the members do not apply themselves to some better class of plays; but the reason therefor is probably to be found in the fact that their patrons and supporters enjoy the kind of melodrama which they put on, and their way of doing it is certainly very creditable. The next amateur performance has been advertised for Wednesday, to be given by the St. John Amateur Dramatic Club, as yet an unknown quantity, in aid of St. Margaret's Nursery. After that will come the opening performance of the Irving Amateur Dramatic Club, which during the past season has not only added materially to the treasury of some very worthy charitable institutions, but has treated us to some excellent plays, produced in first-class style, considering that most of the players were novices. They have engaged a new large hall for rehearsals, and have laid out quite a programme for the season. The opening will be on the 14th of November in the Armory, and consist of a grand temperance entertainment in aid of Terra Nova Lodge I.O.G.T., No. 78. They will produce the "Social Glass," the great American Temperance drama, and the farce "The Artful Dodger." The M.A.A.A. Dramatic Club will open in December. It comprises at present over a hundred members, besides a regularly established patronage. In future it will only

give one public performance and a dress-rehearsal for members.

The musical events this week are confined to the concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestral Club and the doings of the musical talent imported by the Halloween concert committee.

It is whispered that the musically-inclined students of McGill intend to spring a surprise upon the public which has been in preparation for some time.

A smoking concert for the benefit of the drum and bugle corps of the Vics will take place in the near future.

The Montreal Press Club have made up their minds to appear this winter as first class amusement caterers. Bill Nye and J. Whitcomb Riley will appear under their auspices in the Queen's Hall on the 15th and 16th of November, and Max O'Rell sometime in February.

A. DROMIO.

At Toronto there has of late been no lack of dramatic entertainment. At Jacobs & Sparrow's Opera House large audiences have witnessed the drama of "Harbour Lights," which was succeeded by B. Campbell's play, "The White Slave." The characters in the latter are spirited, the situations are striking, and the play, with a good company, maintains its popularity.

On November 4 Torontonians will have a treat in the presence of the Boston Symphony Club, with Miss Augusta Christom, the Swedish prima donna, and special European artistes, led by Mr. Alfred de Seve, at the Horticultural Pavilion.

At the same place the united bands of the Queen's Own and the 13th Battalion of Hamilton, gave an enjoyable entertainment on Thursday of last week. Mrs. McKelcan, of Hamilton, and Mr. Schuck, of Toronto, added considerably to the pleasure of the evening.

The preparations for the grand opening of Toronto's Academy of Music have of late been pushed on with energy. When our representative in Toronto visited the place a few days ago the confusion of the preceding weeks had been succeeded by the signs of order, denoting that the completion of the work was drawing near. The arrangements are of the most comprehensive nature, nothing being omitted that tends to make the audience comfortable. The curtain represents Toronto Bay, with the Island in the distance, and the ferry and other steamboats plying to and fro. It was painted by Mr. Baldwin, of Buffalo. The opening night on the 6th promises to be a grand occasion for Toronto music-lovers. We hope to let our readers have a full account of it.

M. T.

THE PANTHEIST.

He knows the name of every creeping thing
And every plant in all his country round,
And when and in what haunts it may be found.
To name a bird he needs but hear it sing.
He speculates what time it took a wing
To evolve and lift an eagle from the ground;
And scorning miracles, doth priests astound,
Saying Nature's laws can know no altering.

He reads the mystic story of the past
In hill and vale and rock, and says all life
Is one and flees from form to form from Death.
And man himself but part is of a vast
And universal energy, a breath
Of one great AM, with Nothingness at strife.

Detroit.
ARTHUR WEIR.

What well-directed training-schools can accomplish is illustrated in the case of the dairy schools of Denmark. The Government has for years spent over \$50,000 yearly for the maintenance of dairy schools. The result has been an immense improvement in dairy products, and a lively demand for Danish butter. Within twenty years Denmark's exports of butter have increased from \$2,100,000 to \$13,000,000 per annum.

LEGEND OF THE STONE OF SCONE.—The legend of the Fatal Stone of Scone relates that it was the pillow on which the patriarch Jacob slept at Bethel when he saw the vision of the ladder reaching to heaven. From Bethel the sons of Jacob carried the stone into Egypt. Thither came Gathelus the Greek, the son of Cecrops, the builder of Athens, who married Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh; but being alarmed at the judgments pronounced against Egypt by Moses, who had not then crossed the Red Sea, he fled to Spain where he built the city of Brigantia. With him he took the Stone of Bethel, seated upon which "he gave laws and administered justice unto his people, thereby to maintain them in wealth and quietness." In after days there was a king in Spain named Milo, of Scottish origin; and one of his younger sons, named Simon Breck, beloved by his father beyond all his brothers, was sent to conquer Ireland with an army that he might reduce it to his dominion, which he did and reigned there many years. His prosperity was due to a miracle, for when his ships lay off the coast of Ireland, as he drew in his anchors the famous stone was hauled up with the anchors into the ship. Received as a precious boon from heaven, it was placed upon the sacred Tarah, where it was called *Lia-fail*, the "Fatal Stone," and gave the ancient name of *Innis-fail*, or the "Island of Destiny" to the kingdom. On the hill of Tarah, Irish antiquaries maintain that the real stone still remains. *Selma, in Oban Telegraph.*