

cant, their mouthing insipidities—this is the fate of an editor! And if, in order to prevent the ghostly crew from dogging his very step, and making even his dreams hideous, he adopts the expedient of giving a mere mechanical attention to the words of the MS., this style of reading interferes with his mastery of the things he needs to read with the spirit and with the understanding also.

Who ever thinks of sitting down and writing a letter of condolence to an editor upon the rejection of a MS.? Who is there to remind him that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, etc., etc.! Here is he made by Providence the inflictor of a thousand hurts, and with no one to drop a sympathetic tear! Heavy-hearted, he frames gentle excuses and deprecatory declinations, knowing well that there is no art of putting things that can prevent a pang. The blow may be received with a sneer and a hit back; or with a real or feigned heartiness; or with hopeless resignation. The first experience, he supposed, is next in comfort to a letter of condolence; the second will do very well unless the author has taken too much encouragement, and is dooming himself to new and grave disappointments; but your resigned cases—there is the confounded part of it! It was never any portion of his literary ambition to perform the part of an executioner; he is too sensible of his own shortcomings to want to sit in judgment upon other people's work,—and yet he is made to figure, in the eyes of a host of good and gentle souls, either as a person of no heart or of no brains,—he is only too grateful when it is merely the lack of brains of which he is accused.

Of course—said my unhappy friend—there are certain MSS. that can be returned with few compunctions. If an editor could add to his printed and written "forms," one addressed to "idiots," another to "ignorant braggarts," another to "insolent grinders," another to "impertinent old ladies in pantaloons," his correspondence would be simplified, and his conscience saved. But what becomes of a man's moral nature after he has invented some nine hundred white lies in a twelve-month!

Again he paused. The same look that had frightened me before, once more crept across his face. His eyes, as then, seemed to go out over an awful sea, and his hand moved from side to side with the old pathetic gesture.

"Nice work this for New Year's," he burst forth at last—giving the little red bag a half-contemptuous push with the toe of his boot. The touch was an *open sesame*,—off flew the catch, and out sprang a dozen MSS., tumbling in confusion upon the carpet. He kneeled to gather the waifs, and as he was leisurely replacing them one by one in the bag, suddenly—as on a black night a porch is lit up when the hall door is flung wide open, or as the aurora makes luminous the darkness of the northern sky—his face was radiant with delight! He hadn't noticed the directions before, he said, but if there wasn't another poem from L. B.; and, he