



THE STAGE OF TO-DAY.

THEATRICAL MANAGER—"What's that you say—only been divorced once? Miss de Ballé, your rendition is excellent, but I could never think of engaging you unless you had a presentable list of divorces."

HE GOT A MOVE ON HIM.

LOOKING at the colloquial style of much of the local news in the Toronto papers of these days, recalls to me a little incident of by-gone times, when a well known reporter, whom I shall term Eph., because Eph. used to be his name, helped to fill page eight of the *Mail*.

Eph. had the *sine qua non* of the good reporter, a nose for news. But he lacked in style—that is to say, he hadn't modern enough "form" to suit the aspirations of the city *chef*, who wanted to have his items dressed in more breezy attire than his sober-going *aide* was in the habit of clothing them.

One day he called in Eph. and laid before him the plan of campaign that was to guide him in the future discharge of his assignments.

"You see, old man," the *chef* went on to explain, "half the interest in an item lies in the way you write it up. Kill that cross-roads-weekly style of yours, for Heaven's sake, and get a modern move on you. For instance, you can't tackle a simple runaway without starting off:—

"**RUNAWAY.**—'Yesterday morning a serious, but providentially not fatal accident happened in this city, the particulars of which are as follows:—It appears—'

"And so forth, and so on, just as if you had copied it out of the old *Leader* twenty-five years ago. You could just as well give it to us in this strain:—

'**FROLICKSOME HORSEMANSHIP.**

Lickitty-switch! went John Smith's milk-wagon down Yonge Street, yesterday morn, scattering everything before it in its festive way. No one held the ribbons, and the prancing steed tore like a streak of greased-lightning—!'

"Keep her going that fashion, sandwiching in the casualties here and there in unstudied shape, and wind up

with a joke or in some abrupt manner. See?"

Eph. nodded in a blank sort of way.

"Then, again, when you do a fire or an inquest, don't jam in a couple dozen "we's," as if you were writing a political leader, or owned the whole paper. Make your stuff colloquial and racy and rollicking and readable. D' you tumble, Eph.?"

Eph. expressed a vague apprehension of what was needed, and promised to begin that very day to reform. Whereat the *chef* smiled benignly and congratulated himself on his bloodless victory.

That day it was Eph.'s trip to Toronto General Hospital. He watched his chance while the city editor was busy with a theatre man wanting a good notice, handed in his "copy," and fled.

Eph. had practised the new style on his hospital item; and when the *chef* persued it this (about as near as I can

remember it) is what met his anxious eye:—

THINGS AT THE HOSPITAL!

A Mail Man's Jaunt to Toronto's Celebrated Public Infirmary.

Interesting chat with the affable superintendent—Everything quiet along the Physicianary Potomac.—Fruitless quest after powerful items of news.

"What, ho!" exclaimed our reporter, as he gaily sauntered into the General Hospital last eve. "What cheer, my merry men? Give me news or give me death!"

A cordial grasp of the hand by the worthy superintendent satisfied the reporter that his presence was not unwelcome. But that was all!

"Not a solitary item for you, my good friend, to-day," sadly said the superintendent, as he motioned his guest to an inviting chair.

From this the conversation gradually drifted to the crops, the political outlook, and every other interesting and enlivening subject.

At the close of our interesting interview we cavaorted outside, hailed a passing car, and were soon home again. We can stand the absence of hospital news if the public can. If the doctors can't have patients, we can have patience.

Eph.'s beautiful paragraph was reduced to a line stating that there was nothing new at the Hospital.

He never ventured to ask the *chef* what killed his item; but one of the other fellows casually informed him that he had heard it rumored that the city editor had finally concluded that Eph.'s native style was good enough, and that a move on him would be superfluous.

Thenceforth the old man never tried another move on himself until he got a chance in a certain direction offering easier work and better pay than reporting on the *Mail*.

T.T.