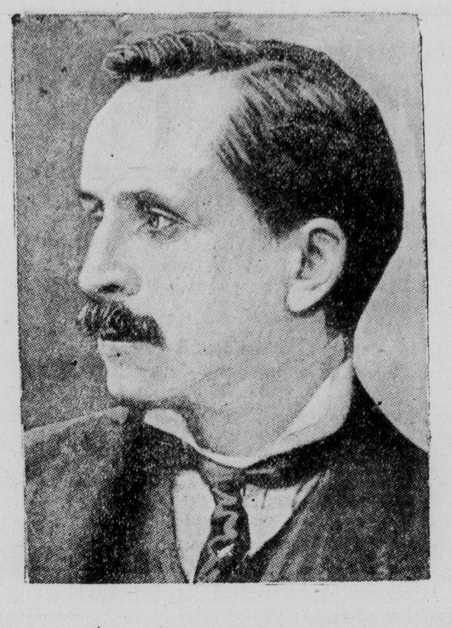
THE MAN WHO WROTE PETER PAN



THERE is a tiny "bit" of a town at the end of a "bit" of a railroad up in Scotland, where, some forty-odd years ago, a tiny bit of a lad was born.

His father was a tall, stooped-over man, who wore hobnailed shoes and loved to work in his garden. His mother was a sweet-faced, fragile woman, whom he loved better than anybody else on earth.

Beautiful woods surrounded the village, and mountains and valleys filled with "braes" rushing down to the distant sea.

The boy grew up into a slender, rather diffident young man, and went across the border to an English metropolis, where he secured a modest position on a newspaper.

After a few years of newspaper work he began to attempt story writing. His first book was a dead failure. The title, curiously enough, was "Better Dead."

Then his thoughts turned to the little home village of Kirriemuir, and he said to himself, "Well, I know my own home well enough to describe it, anyhow, so I think I'll try my hand at that."

So he did, and about the only change he made was in the name of the town, to which he gave the name of Thrums. The resulting story, short and simple, but written with a tender touch, was sent to a publisher. Much to the young author's surprise, it was accepted, and the publisher wrote: "Tell some more stories about Thrums."

So, at the age of 23, the young man—James Matthews Barrie—found himself on the ladder of success! And after that all he had to do was to keep on writing. Everybody looked eagerly forward to his stories and books, and every succeeding one made him more famous and more prosperous, until today he is said to be earning the largest annual income from his writings of all the book writers of the day.

And this is the man who wrote "Peter Pan," the most popular play ever written for children, which has also been published in a beautiful storybook, illustrated by a fine English artist. Two of the illustrations are reproduced on this page.

This story—taking its boy and girl readers into the charming Kensington Gardens of London, with their Boardwalk and animal cemetery and fairies and all—will ever be a favorite one in the same class as "Robinson Crusoe," "Gulliver's Travels" and "The Water Babies."

Mr. Barrie is affectionately spoken of as "The Children's Playwright." His knowledge and love of children are wonderful.

Mr J M Barrie
Whose delightful play Peter Pan has been revived again this season. Mr Barrie's plays are as popular in America as in England and he is said to earn the largest income of any literary man now living.

The fairies all tickled him on the shoulder

ON a splendid night in the cool of the year three young fellows sat out on the veldt in South Africa talking and laughing over their campfire.

They were on their way to the hunting grounds, and as yet it was quite safe to sit around the campfire without special precautions against marauding lions.

And as they sat there one of their number, Teddy Vandeleur, made a proposition to his mates:

"I suggest, fellows, that we take turns telling yarns these long nights around the campfire, and fine the one who cannot think of a tale when it comes his turn."

"Who wins?" asked Bobby Oakfield, laughing.

"Why, the one who has paid the fewest fines, sure," put in Ralph Denison, the third member of the party.

Lots were drawn for the first yarn, and the lot fell to Bobby.

Chatterbox for 1907 gives the yarn as follows:

I don't know whether any of you fellows have tried snowshoeing, began Bobby, ski-running, as they call it in Norway.

I was thinking of telling you how I and another fellow, Billy Onslow, took it up one winter when I was in Russia. We—at least I—had read about the competitions at Holmen Kollen, near Christiania, when the Norsemen have their annual fling for the great "ski-hop."

My cousin Tom, being an expert snowshoe runner, accompanied us to a country place in order to snow and explain how the thing was done.

The shoes are peculiar-looking things. They are about six or seven feet in length some four inches in width, and are made of thin, strong, seasoned wood, half an inch thick, running to a point in front, the "toes" turning up, of course, for otherwise they would catch in the snow. One stands in the middle, inserting the foot in a strap, which closes round the instep. Then one slides along the surface of the snow in the best way one can—which, at first, is a very awkward way, indeed.

We drove down to a shooting lodge, and then, having lunched, we called for snowshoes and strapped ourselves into them.

"Now then," said experienced Tom, "we will just walk off toward the gully, where there are some nice easy slopes for you to begin upon."

With these words Tom glided away upon his shoes, like a bird upon the wing, slid a dozen yards, turned, and came back to us.

"Lovely, isn't it?" he said. "Come along; just skate forward; keep the front part of the skis well apart, or the points will cross, and you will come to a sudden stop."

Billy made a few awkward slides forward; one of his shoes went southeast and the other southwest; one of his feet left the earth as though it would soar heavenward. Billy sat down with some violence.

"Here, I say, that won't do," he observed.

"What made the things behave like that?" I said.

"Keep the ends apart," Tom laughed; "but not so far as that—point them both the same way, but keep them six inches or so from one another."

Billy got up and tried again. The points of his shoes now rushed toward one another like old friends who meet after long parting. Billy's progress was instantly checked and he sprawled forward on his face in the most ignominious fashion.

Billy scrambled up awkwardly, for one of his skis would stand on the other and keep it down. He fell three times before he finally stood erect.

"You said it was so easy," he said, reproachfully. "Stop laughing, Bobby," he added, "and try it yourself."

I did so, profiting by Billy's experience, and slid carefully forward. Ten yards I covered in safety, then a small birch tree suddenly rose up before me. I knew no way of giving it the go-by. I tried to guide myself to one side of it, and, lo! one snowshoe went to the right of the tree, the other to the left, and I found myself jammed against the trunk.

"I say, help!" I cried. "Cut down the tree, or take me out of the snowshoes. I can't move!"

Tom shrieked with laughter; so did Billy, who ought to have known better.

"Try to back away from the tree," Tom suggested.

I endeavored to do so. This time the heel ends of the shoes crossed, and I sat down very suddenly, while Tom and Billy laughed even more rudely than before. I began to realize that the art of ski-running was not a perfectly easy one even upon the level. What would it be, I wondered, when we reached the hillside?

Bill took the first attempt. Tom had shown us how it was to be done. He had poised himself upon the top of a hill like a bird about to take wing. He had allowed his skis to tip over the edge and in an instant he was in full flight, going at nearly thirty miles an hour over the slippery, even surface of the snow, bending slightly forward, keeping his two shoes straight as arrows, and his two shoes straight as arrows, and two angry eyes, which shot murderous glances at us because we laughed. He said nothing—he could not until he had got rid of the snow which filled his mouth. When he spoke at last he only gasped, "All right, Bobby; your turn now. You will think it awfully funny when you have been buried alive in wet snow."

"I'm sorry," I said; "but you did look so frightfully funny coming out of the hillside in a kind of volcanic eruption."

"Oh, don't mention it!" said angry William.

We soothed him as best we could, but he informed me that the only consoling thing I could do would be to take my turn, while he watched. I braced myself up for the enterprise, took my position at the edge of the slope, adjusted the toes of my skis, and started.

Oh, the delight of it, this rapid passing through crisp air! And how well I was doing it—ten, twenty, fifty yards in safety! Why, it was quite easy. How disappointed dear old Billy would be! Then, suddenly, a check, a whirl through the air, a sense of chill and suffocation, blindness, deafness. What had happened? Where was I? What was this hard thing in my mouth? Why was I standing on my head? Where on earth were my arms and legs?

I found all these useful members presently. I also discovered that I was chewing the end of one of my snowshoes. I seemed to spend a century in making these discoveries, but I believe it was in reality a short half minute. Then I struggled up, spluttered the snow out of my mouth and looked around.

One of my skis was at the foot of the hill, and close by stood Billy Winslow, laughing so hard his body was all doubled up. For one minute I hated him, then I remembered this laugh was his due as consolation for his own troubles.

So that was the way Bill and I started in to learn ski-running.

"I STRUGGLED UP."

A False Alarm.

A little girl, unused to surpliced choirs, on seeing such a choir enter the church, whispered in dismay to her mother:

"They're not all going to preach, are they?"

Umbrellas and Sneezes

IT IS a popular error to suppose that John Hanway invented the umbrella, which was no novelty even to Sennacherib.

A bas-relief in the British Museum shows us that Assyrian monarch enjoying the advantages of both coach and umbrella as he moves at the head of his army. But long before his day, under the dim dynasties of Young China, the umbrella was in high honor.

A Chinese legend attributes the invention to the wife of Lou-pan, a celebrated carpenter of antiquity. "Sir," said this wonderful lady to her husband, "you may make with extreme cleverness houses for men, but it is impossible to make them move, while the object I am framing for their private use can be carried to any distance, beyond even a thousand leagues." And Lou-pan, stupefied by his wife's genius, then saw the unfolding of the first parasol.

The umbrella and the sunshade are essentially the same. An umbrella is merely a shade. As such it haunts the mysteries, the processions, and the gorgeous ceremonials of the East back into the morning mists of history.

In India it was always an emblem of majesty. The Mahratta Princes who reigned at Poona and Sattara held the title of "Lord of the Umbrella."

But so hard is it to keep track of an umbrella that many a mere American would forego being a Mahratta Prince if he could be lord of his umbrella for three months together.

Wouldn't you?

It is a very curious thing that all over the world there exists the same superstition in regard to the apparently trivial matter of sneezing.

In nearly every language under the sun there is some equivalent of "God bless you!" with which our oldest inhabitants in the country will salute a person who sneezes. To this salutation of France is added sometimes the phrase, "and preserve you from the fate of Tycho Brahe," who is believed to have got rid of a "death of cold" by a single sneeze—which killed him.

In England the regular saying is: "Once for a wish, twice for a kiss, three times for a letter, and four times for a disappointment." In Italy the salutation is simply "Felicita!" or "May you be fortunate!" In India it is customary when one sneezes to say, "May you live!" and the reply runs, "Long life to you!"

In ancient times the Romans, holding the idea that sneezing between noon and midnight was a good omen, believed that between midnight and noon it was most unlucky, and if they should chance to sneeze while getting up in the morning they would at once get into bed again.

The Germans say "Good health!" because they maintain, and not without reason, that sneezing is a warning of approaching catarrh, and also marks the moment when a charm, a wish or a suggestion may drive it away.

An Elopement

A Trick That Seems Impossible

CAN you remove a man's waistcoat without first causing him to remove his coat?

This is the way to do it: Ask him, in the first place, to wear an easy-fitting coat of some sort, say a loose overcoat.

Now, unbutton his waistcoat, unfasten the buckle at the back, and ask him to hold his arms above his head. Slip your hand down the back of the coat, grasp the bottom of the waistcoat and pull it up right over the head of the wearer.

Next, take the right-side bottom end of the front of the waistcoat and put it into the armhole of the coat at the shoulder, at the same time putting the hand up the sleeve and drawing down the end.

This will release one armhole. Next, draw the waistcoat up again, put the same end into the left armhole, put the hand up the left sleeve and draw the whole of the waistcoat down.

Smart.

A FAMOUS French painter had a fixed rule that none of his pupils were to be allowed to smoke in his studio.

One day, however, he came into the room and distinctly saw that one of the pupils had a lighted cigarette in his fingers, which he was endeavoring ineffectually to conceal. With a style of somewhat heavy banter the painter went up to him.

"That is a curious kind of pencil you have got there, my young friend," he remarked. "May I ask what you propose to draw with it?"

"Clouds," was the ready answer.

The Barber's Pole.

The origin of the custom of shaving the face is lost in antiquity. The Greeks and Romans had public shaving places in connection with their baths.

In the fourteenth century the barber's craft was recognized as a profession, being allied to surgery. The barbers were confined, as to surgery, to the letting of blood and leeching and the extracting of teeth, and the surgeons were prohibited from shaving the face.

The barber's sign was a striped pole as far back as 1650, the stripes around the pole being symbols of the bandages used in wrapping the arm or part from which the blood was to be let.

A Mimic Club

THIS game provides lots of amusement to a company of young folks, and to grown ones, too, if they wish to join in.

All the players with the exception of two leave the room. One of the outside party is then called in, and told that a new club has been formed and his name enrolled, but that he cannot be formally admitted unless he can guess the name of the club from the movements of the two members who remained in the room.

The "initiate" is then offered a chair, and everything he says and every movement he makes is mimicked by the other two.

Sometimes the new member guesses at once, but when unable to do this, it is very funny to watch the effect that the copying of his every movement has upon him, especially when six or seven have been admitted.

When the name of the club has been guessed, another new member is invited in, and the same programme takes place.

To Be Exact.

"Were you out in all that rain?" asked Mary.

"No," said the young woman from Vassar, "I was merely in the portion of the rain that descended in my immediate vicinity."—Stray Stories.

The Newest in Neckwear

AFTER a year of banishment, ornamental stock collars are coming in again. One style is of pink net and white ribbon—reversing the usual color combination—sewed together by opalescent beads.

The stiff white collars, with lining and tie of the ubiquitous heavy plaid silk, are quite new.

The new chiffon or maline ruffs are finished off by streamers of wide satin ribbon—sometimes in a contrasting color.

Some of the latest stock collars fasten with a bow on the side instead of in front—an awkward fashion, surely.

One white lace collar is piped with baby blue, pink, Nile green or violet velvet, and a rosette of the same color fastens it behind.

Stiff linen collars are embroidered with tiny flowers in black and other shades, besides the omnipresent Scotch plaid.

A white linen collar was trimmed with a band of Persian embroidery, ending in streamers finished with jeweled buttons.

All black silk scarfs, with jet trimmings, come for mourning. Some of these have a heavy silk fringe.

The old butterfly bows have at last gone out. All the new neckwear shows rosettes or a four-in-hand effect.

Do You Know?

That when a robin catches a big worm he cuts it in pieces before he eats it?

That school-children in the East Indies are taught to remember the multiplication table up to 40 times 40?

That whales live about 100 years, camels 75, lions 40, horses 25, dogs 14, and rabbits only 7?

That nutmegs are the kernels of the fruit of a kind of tree that grows wild in Asia, Africa and some parts of America?

That some birds can see mice and lizards on the ground when they themselves are so high in the sky that we cannot see them?

That a caterpillar eats twice its own weight in food every day?

That bees can fly for a short distance faster than pigeons?

That the King of Spain's full name is Alfonso Leon Fernando Maria Santiago Isidore Paschal Marcian?