

"Tay Pay's" Early Struggles With Shorthand When He Was a Young Reporter

Shorthand the Only Portal to Journalism in His Days
—Reported John Bright When He Was 19
Years Old—A Terrible Ordeal.

T. P. O'Connor, M. P., writes in T. P.'s Weekly:

The other day I was talking in the House of Commons to my brilliant friend and fellow-journalist, Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes. Everybody knows that there never was a more distinctive and instinctive journalist, and that in writing for something like a score of years, and every day during these years his paper appears, a delightfully humorous article, he has accomplished an almost unparalleled feat in his profession. Yet I was surprised—and, perhaps, even a little envious—when he told me how he had entered the profession for which he was so eminently adapted. He was getting a good salary as an engineer in Ransomes, down in his native Ipswich. He liked his work, he liked his people, and he never thought of any other occupation. He had, it is true, done some scribbling—perhaps more because he could not help it than from any idea that he would ever be a professional man of letters. And suddenly, one fine day, without any previous notice, much less anticipation, he received a message from Mr. F. W. Wilson, then and now the chief proprietor of the chief Ipswich daily. And when Mr. Hughes responded to

moment you see a messenger approach; he pushes up a note-book into the hands of the shorthand-writer; then takes away the book in which notes have been entered for a quarter or half an hour; that book is taken over to the office of Gurneys, and every word of it is transcribed by another corps, who have never heard a word of the notes they have to decipher—a marvellous feat! But the ordinary young man preparing to enter journalism by shorthand has to spend a couple of years before he is able to write well, if he has to learn by himself. And then he begins to find out how little he knows. For, as Charles Dickens says in his "David Copperfield," there are two processes—there is the process of writing; there is perhaps the more difficult process of reading. You may be able to do the one and find yourself quite unable to do the other.

When the unfortunate journalist has left his home and study behind him and begins reporting, he again finds that he has to learn all over again. It is all very well to write shorthand from dictation, for you can command the dictator; he goes slow or fast as you direct; but when you begin reporting you become slave instead of master. The speaker you are reporting does not care about you, does not even recognize you; you have to follow him instead of him following you. And these your first experiences are—at least my first experiences were—of shattering nervousness, of a sense of complete failure, and the haunting terror that you will be dismissed for incompetence, and have to begin again that weary and heart-breaking struggle to find some way of making your bread—that ever-recurring tragedy in society as at present constituted.

This is what happened to me. Oh, dear, what terrible days they were when first I became a reporter! The experience I remember best was an attempt—I can only call it an attempt—to report Dr. Magee, the bishop of Peterborough and afterwards archbishop of York. At the time to which I refer he was Dean of Cork and of the Chapel Royal, and it looked as if he would live and die in Ireland. He was a marvellous creature. I have scarcely ever seen an uglier man. The skin was yellow, the hair coal-black, the eyes were black and deep-set, and the nose long, the mouth protruding, and there was almost the suggestion of ape-like appearance in the whole effect. And yet it was an attractive face, for there gleamed almost demoniacal intelligence from every look. He was a great and mordant wit, and when he struck anybody it was as though there had been a lightning flash; the victim was twisted and curled up before he was killed. And he had magnificent powers of dazzling eloquence; sometimes he would utter sentences that lifted you to the empyrean. And—here came the difficulty—the poor reporter—he spoke at the rate of two hundred words a minute. The words did not flow—they rushed from his lips with the impetuosity and the rushing rapidity of a great mountain cataract.

And, then, I could not help thinking of how difficult it was in my young days for those who wanted to become journalists. It took me quite twenty years to get as far as Mr. Spencer Hughes reached in that one memorable hour in his life. In those far-off days when I began, any man who wanted to get into journalism—unless he was exceptionally favored by circumstances—had only one portal through which he could enter what he regarded as the enchanted land of letters, and that portal was shorthand. Charles Dickens had to learn shorthand to get his first foothold in journalism; so had Sir Edward Clarke, the great advocate; so had my poor friend, Justin McCarthy. It was through that portal also I had to enter. Few people who have not tried it can realize all the time, labor, and heart-breaking it costs to learn shorthand; indeed, to become a thoroughly good shorthand-writer is the work of many years. There is a great shorthand firm in London which has lasted, I believe, for more than a century; it is called "Gurneys." Many days during a parliamentary session you see some of Gurneys' men; they are the most perfect shorthand writers I have seen. You see this, to me, extraordinary spectacle: the shorthand writer sitting in the centre of the room, around which the members of the House who form the committee are arranged at a table of horseshoe shape. At a certain

SCALES, DANDRUFF AND ITCHING

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always represented as wearing a single eyeglass; he never wore a single eyeglass. There was this justification, however, for the caricature, that there was this curious impression of strength and severity in a man whose whole gospel was the Quaker doctrine of peace and good will. I have heard that that Bright's most potent physical gift as an orator was his wondrous voice. I have never heard a voice so beautiful, that produced such an immediate and wonderful effect upon an audience. I may appear to exaggerate but, literally, I felt thrills down my back whenever I heard that wonderful organ.

But, alas! I have now to add that, I fear, I made as bad hash of the speech—my trembling fingers refused to work rapidly; and, still more, I found it difficult to read my notes. In those days newspapers did not use the telegraph frequently. It was too expensive. In the dim light of railway carriage, and amid the noise and jolting, I had to try to read and write out my notes. It was an anxious time. And now, after all these years, I take up a book which tells the life of the man from whom I learned shorthand, and who thus helped to shape my whole career. For these fifteen—and his story I propose to tell next week.—T. P.

AMUSEMENTS

A Great Western Play.

"The County Sheriff," by Lem. B. Parker, will be presented at the Grand Theatre. The plot is new, original, and full of action with lightning touches of comedy scattered here and there. The staging is elaborate and a thoroughly enjoyable performance is promised.

Musical Show For Good Friday.

The attractions that will be seen at the Grand Friday, matinee and night, are "The Heart Breakers," a musical comedy, with George Damerel, last seen as the Prince in "The Merry Widow," and a large, singing and acting company, including the Perfect Princess Chorus, Manager Mori. H. Singer, who will present this dainty musical conceit, has given this his personal attention, and that is surely enough that the piece will be put on in the best possible manner. The music is of the whistling order and innumerable song hits abound. There are two acts, both masterpieces of the stage mechanic's skill, and a chorus of pretty girls are for their good looks but also for their singing and dancing ability. Mr. Damerel, who is known as one of the most graceful dancers on the stage, will be seen in a big number in the second act, assisted by Miss Myrtle Vail, the prima donna.

"Freckles."

"Freckles," by Gene Stratton-Porter, the most widely-read novel of the present decade, has been dramatized by Neil Twomey, and will be seen in this city at the Grand Saturday, matinee and night. It is the story of a girl, the daughter of a doctor, who is given the play a sumptuous setting, and has engaged a company of the best players. In the dramatization of the text faithfully reproducing every scene contained in the story. It is a pastoral play, beautiful in its simplicity and in telling the adventures and love story of a homeless Irish lad, who is a greater play than it was a novel; there is nothing left to the imagination.

Raymond Hitchcock in "The Red Widow."

When the curtain rises on the first act of "The Red Widow," the Grand Monday, matinee and night, there will be disclosed the foyer of the Alcazar Music Hall, London. The second act will take place in the leading hotel in St. Petersburg. The third act will be set in the gardens of the Czar's winter palace, where a "white fever" is in progress. The Russian characters represented in the play include Princess

France's Greatest Sculptor Is Auguste Rodin

He Seems to Make Masses of Stone and Iron Move—
Somewhat of a Symbolist—A Victor Hugo Story.

AUGUSTE RODIN is the greatest sculptor in France. His work adorns all the leading national galleries, and he is looked upon as the greatest artist in marble that his country has ever produced. Most of us who have looked upon marble or brass statues have enjoyed them, but few of us are able to give a reason for the pleasure which we experience in gazing upon such forms of beauty. It is one thing to appreciate a statue or a painting; it is quite another thing to dilate upon the laws of this or that art, to tell why a work is good or bad. It is of great value, therefore, to the majority of readers to hear from Rodin himself the canons of criticism which he follows, to have him explain the line points of the arts of the sculptor and painter. For this reason I have been intensely interested in a book entitled, "Art," by Auguste Rodin, from the French of Paul Gsell, by Mrs. Romilly Fedden (Hodder & Stoughton, London). This book has been written by a personal friend of the great sculptor, and is a most interesting and readable account of the theory of art, he has recorded conversations between himself and Rodin in the latter's studio. He makes Rodin discourse on his art in charmingly simple style, so easy and clear that the average reader can take in every word and by studying the excellent illustrations of the book in the light of Rodin's comments can arrive at a fair knowledge of the principles of art criticism.

How can the sculptor make masses of stone and iron seem to move? This was a leading question put to Rodin by his friend, Gsell. This is a question that has puzzled all of us, I dare say, and it comes as an illumination to hear Rodin reply, "Movement is the transition from one attitude to another. This is the key to the mystery. A great sculptor represents the transition from one pose to another—he indicates how intently the first glances to the second." In order to illustrate

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drawing-room chatting and laughing with his friends, the poor sculptor had to study him on the fly, and when he had got an impression make a run for the verandah to register it in clay.

THE GREATEST AUTHOR.

This amusing Hugo story is a sample of many anecdotes in the book. The solid information imparted by the sculptor, however, far outweighs the entertainment he provides. He deals with such themes as realism in art, drawing and color, mystery in art, thought in art, the beauty of woman, and Phidias and Michael Angelo. Each chapter is beautifully illustrated by reproductions of statues and paintings of which Rodin speaks. Altogether, the

Sophia, Countess Alexandra, Baron Maximilian Scareovich and Count Ivan Scorploff. It is claimed that the plot and the story is one of the most fascinating in the history of the theatre. It is a greater play than it was a novel; there is nothing left to the imagination. He gets into serious trouble by flirting with a pretty woman, who, unknown to him, is a dangerous nihilist; she leads him into all kinds of plots and dangers before he is able to free himself. The part of the Red Widow will be played by Flora Zabelle. Seat sale opens Tomorrow at 9 a.m. Manager Minchin looks for the largest advance sale in the history of the theatre.

as photography does, if he copies the lineaments of a face exactly, without reference to character, he deserves no admiration. The resemblance which he ought to obtain is that of the soul; that alone matters; it is that which the sculptor or painter should seek beneath the mask of features. In his opinion, the face never contradicts the soul. Every true artist will try to give the real character of the subject in the face. "Titian," says Rodin, "did not hesitate to give Pope Paul III, a marionette's snout, nor to emphasize the domineering hardness of Charles V., or the salaciousness of Francis I, and it does not appear to have damaged his reputation with them. But the men of today are so made that they fear truth and love a lie. They seem to appear to be displeased to appear in their busts as they are. They all want to have the air of hairdressers." One of Rodin's maxims is this: Nature is always beautiful. To him there is no face without expression, no face that is ugly.

One of the most striking faces chiselled by Rodin is a solid marble is that of Victor Hugo, the French poet and novelist. M. Gsell describes this Victor Hugo as deep in meditation, the forehead strangely furrowed, volcanic, the hair wild, almost like wild flames bursting from the skull. It is the very personification of modern lyricism, performed and tumultuous. Rodin informed his friend that he had a bad time getting Hugo to sit for this bust. Victor Hugo was always an irascible person, and when Rodin was introduced to him, the poet had just been martyred by a mediocre sculptor named Villain, who, to make a bad bush had insisted on thirty-eight sittings. So when Rodin asked permission to mold Hugo's features in marble the genius said to him: "I cannot prevent your working, but I warn you that I will not pose. I will not change one of my habits on your account. Make what arrangements you like." Nothing daunted, Rodin set up his stand and clay on Hugo's verandah. Then, while the poet walked up and down in his

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The famous French sculptor has reproduced in marble many of his great contemporaries. He believes that resemblance is a very important quality in a bust or portrait, but if the artist reproduces only the superficial features