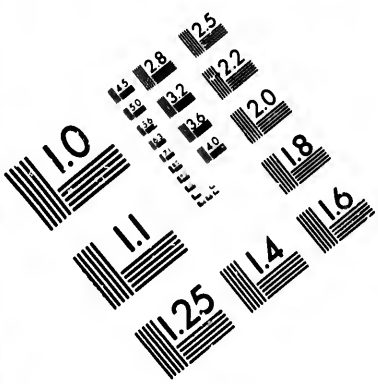

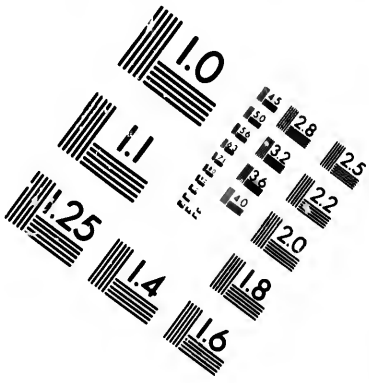

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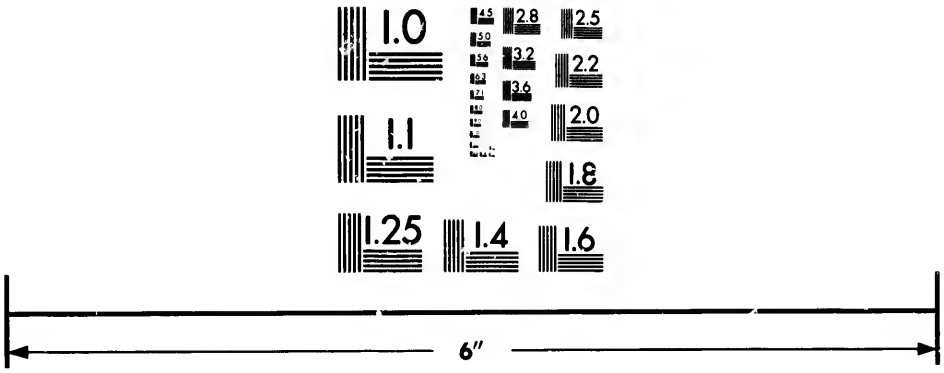

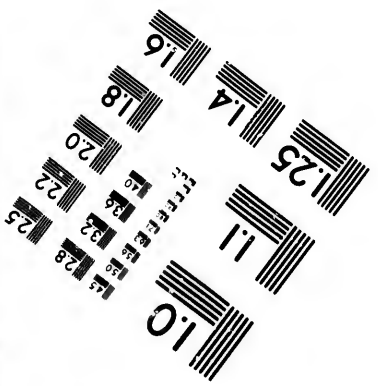

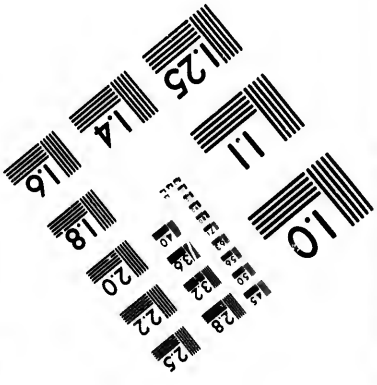

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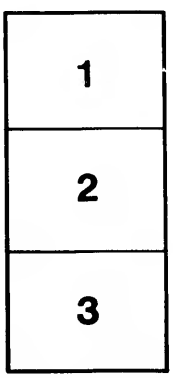

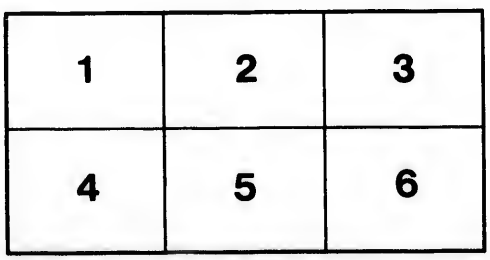

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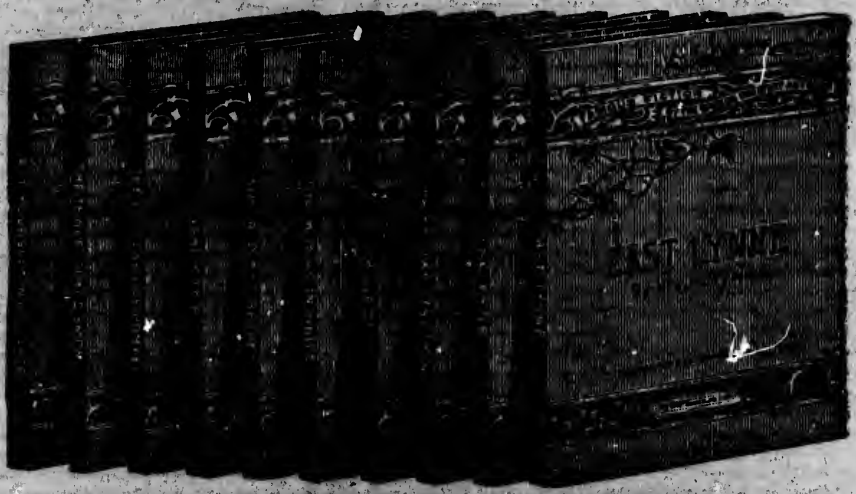

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THE MURDER OF BENWELL.

THE strange story of the murder of Fred. C. Benwell, the young Englishman, in the lonely and dismal swamp in Blenheim township, Oxford county, by his companion and guide, Reginald Birchall, has not yet been fully told, although the case has been discussed at greater length in the newspapers and by the fireside than any crime of modern times. The story of the murder so graphically told to Judge MacMahon and a jury at Woodstock a short time ago formed one of the most perfect chains of circumstantial evidence ever presented to a court, and in face of the fact that, outside of counsel's address, there was literally no defence, it is not to be wondered at that the trial resulted as it did, and that a vindication of the majesty of the law brought about a revenge both awful and complete. Notwithstanding all the evidence that led up to the conviction of Reginald Birchall, there are a large number of people who still believe that he was not the man who fired the fatal shots, and that he is simply the victim of a chain of circumstances; but those who followed the case closely, who observed the manner in which the different witnesses gave their testimony, and who listened to the speeches of Canada's cleverest lawyers and heard the learned judge's charge to the jury, have but one opinion in the matter, and that opinion coincides with the verdict returned.

E. C. BENWELL, THE VICTIM.

The murder of Benwell was one of the most diabolical crimes ever perpetrated in Canada, and was so cleverly planned and carefully executed that but for an accident the young Englishman's fate would probably never have been known. It seems certain that the crime was not the result of a suddenly conceived idea, but was first suggested in England months before the consummation, and the evidence points out how step by step the murderer carried out his scheme. His plans were so ingeniously laid and so skilfully executed that but for an apparently trifling circumstance the murderer of the hapless victim would never have been apprehended. The awful treachery, the infernal

cunning, and profound hypocrisy of the assassin suggests that he must have studied murder as a fine art, and his remarkable coolness in the time of danger indicated that he had the nerve to carry out the awful scheme his fertile brain had conceived. Men have slain each other in moments of passion, and have gone to their death voluntarily for the sake of love; but there is no record in the history of criminal jurisprudence in this country with which to compare Birchall's crime. In the expectation of making a sum of money he lured a young man from his home and friends in England, and after bringing him to an unknown country brutally murdered him in the hope of being able to rob his father. Poor Benwell came to America flushed with the hope of being able to carve out a name for himself, and the day he arrived in Canada he was murdered by the man whom he trusted, and who should have protected him from evil.

THE SWAMP MYSTERY.

Early on the morning of Friday, the 21st of February last, two brothers named George and Joseph Eldridge, who rent a farm about two miles west of Princeton, on

WHERE BENWELL WAS SHOT.

the road to Eastwood, in Oxford county, visited a place known as Blenheim Swamp, for the pupose of cutting saplings and firewood. The swamp is a little over half a mile in length and is divided by a corduroy road, the latter being a lonesome highway and one not generally used by the public. The swamp had been repeatedly visited by fire, and as a result half-burned pine trees and a dense growth of underwood and brush made it almost impossible for a person to pass through. Even an old trail formerly used by hunters was so blocked up that it fell into disuse, so that, with the exception of some sportsmen, few people had attempted to force a passage through the dense woods during the past two years. A few hundred yards to the north of the corduroy road there is a small body of water known as Pine Pond, which was at one time a popular resort for sportsmen; but the pond, like the swamp, became neglected owing to the trouble that was experienced in getting there.

Among the sparsely-settled neighbourhood the swamp was looked upon with a certain degree of supernatural awe, and more than one story was told of men disap-

peering forever within its dense recesses. Some years ago the skeleton of a man was found near the roadway, and the mystery surrounding his death was never explained. The bad reputation of the place had the effect of keeping sportsmen and farmers away from it, and it was simply necessity that forced the Eldridge brothers to go there in search of young saplings. Some months previous to the 21st of February the young men had visited the swamp and had cut down a number of young saplings, but for some reason or other they did not carry them away. They had then entered the swamp from the corduroy road about midway between one end and the other, and at a point where they could plainly see the house of the nearest neighbour, John Rabb, a German, who had resided in the locality for many years. After cutting a narrow trail into the swamp a distance of about one hundred yards, they cleared a small space with the intention of piling the saplings, but they never finished their work. Night overtook them and they left the place, and next day they secured their saplings from a point nearer their own home. The trail they had cut, however, was plainly discernible from the road, and on more than one occasion John Rabb saw men with guns in their hands go in there.

Soon after daylight on that fatal morning the Eldridge brothers set forth in search of more saplings, and by some strange fate went directly to the old trail they had cut. On their former visit they had decided that the saplings there did not suit them, and yet they returned to the old spot as if guided by intuition. There were thousands of young saplings growing along the edge of the swamp, but they passed by them with scarcely a glance, and upon arriving at the old trail set to work with their axes. Why they went there they have never been able to explain, but as with most people the Eldridge brothers had a vein of superstition running through them, and they now firmly believe that some occult power led them to the spot, in order that through them a murder most foul might be brought to light. Lustily swinging their axes the brothers gradually worked their way into the swamp, piling the saplings as they progressed, and pushing aside the underbrush so as to make their exit with their load as easy as possible. George Eldridge industriously worked his way through the dense growth, while his brother used his axe along the border of the swamp, and it was just as the former reached the little clearing that he beheld a sight that for the moment deprived him of muscular motion, and drove the blood in a flood from his heart.

On a pile of dead saplings he beheld the dead body of a young man lying on its back, with the overcoat, undercoat, vest, shirt, and undershirt thrown back, exposing the naked breast. The trousers were rolled up at the feet, and one leg was raised above the level of the body and rested on a small charred stump. Horrified at the

sight, George Eldridge dropped his axe and ran to his brother, and the two, without returning to the body, fled to the nearest house and notified John Rabb. Soon a crowd of farmers formed themselves into a body of investigation, and upon arriving at the old trail found the body as described by George Eldridge. The constable at Princeton was notified, and on the same afternoon he took charge of the body.

At the first glance it was thought that the remains were those of some tramp who had crawled into the swamp to die, but when the officer raised the head he found a small clot of blood on the ice that had formed under the body, and a further examination disclosed two bullet wounds in the back of the head. Either of these wounds must have caused instantaneous death, so that to the constable it seemed impossible that they could have been self-inflicted. He made a careful observation of the ground and body, and noted that the clothing of deceased was of a superior quality and not like clothing that would be worn by a tramp. Although the body was frozen stiff and the face was slightly discoloured, he noticed that the hands were not those of a man used to hard work, the palms being smooth and delicate, and the face was that of a man who had moved in the higher walks of life. The body was clothed in fine silk underwear, a light suit of West of England tweed, and a long, light macintosh with a large cape, such as are frequently worn by young Englishmen newly arrived in Canada. While the constable was noting these things he discovered that the dead man's linen had been tampered with; some one had cut away the owner's stencil marks from the shirt-undershirt, socks, and collar, the work having evidently been done with a pair of scissors. A felt hat, crushed in, was found about six feet from the body, and a little closer was picked up the deceased's linen collar. The stencil marks had been cut out so carefully from every piece of clothing, without the body having been undressed, that it was evident that the person who removed them knew just where to look to find them.

GEORGE ELDRIDGE.

Satisfied that a murder had been committed, but finding no clue whatever as to the deceased's identity, the constable had the body conveyed to Princeton, and notified the coroner. Next day, however, there was discovered the solitary clue that led to the identification of the murdered man, to the discovery of his history, and to the unfolding of a murder mystery as hideous and revolting as ever fell to the lot of a police officer to investigate. An ordinary cigar-case, with the name "F. C. Benwell" neatly printed on the inner case, was found partly imbedded in the snow under a piece of underbrush, close to where the body was found. It had evidently fallen from the coat pocket of deceased as he lurched forward after the fatal shots had been fired, and lay unnoticed by the murderer, the one single circumstance that led to the conviction of Reginald Birchall for the murder of his companion. The body of the murdered man was kept at

Princeton until decomposition made burial imperative, and as no one came forward to identify the remains the dead stranger was finally placed away in a lowly grave near the village, with no stone to tell his name, and apparently nothing to throw light upon his mysterious fate.

It was not until after the Government detectives were put upon the case, when THE TORONTO DAILY MAIL announced the finding of the fateful cigar-case, that public opinion became aroused, and then gradually but surely the wheels of justice commenced to grind. Simple circumstances, unnoticed at first, gradually unfolded themselves to the keen eyes of the detectives, until at last the identity of the dead stranger was discovered, and the curtain of mystery was drawn aside from as gigantic a swindle as ever was planned, and as foul a murder as ever shocked a community.

BIRCHALL, BENWELL, PELLY.

Until the trial at Woodstock it was not generally known in Canada that there existed in England regularly established agencies, organized for the purpose of sending young men, the sons of people in comfortable circumstances, to this country for the purpose of being educated as farmers. Under the law of primogeniture in England, the eldest son becomes the heir to the father's estate, and the younger sons are left to shift for themselves. The farm pupil business flourished because of this law, and the parents, naturally wishing their children to prosper, seized upon what they believed to be a good opportunity to start their younger sons upon a prosperous life in a new country. In many instances the parents were financially in high standing, and were willing to pay a reasonable sum to get their sons settled in life.

BIRCHALL AS AN UNDERGRADUATE.

Among those who were sent out to Canada as a farm pupil was Reginald Birchall, the son of a clergyman in England, who had been married but a short time before, and whose wild pranks had caused his parents deep anxiety and his wife's relatives a great deal of pain. He was but twenty-five years of age, and had spent a couple of years in Lincoln College, Oxford, where he acquired an unenviable reputation, his wild pranks having been the subject of many a discussion among the students and a source of trouble to the dons. It appears that he was popular with his associates, and although he was the leader in many a lively incident of college life, he was looked upon as a young man of fine impulses, being as generous as he was extravagant, and as talented as he was reckless. Tired of college life, he came to Canada as a farm pupil, but he soon became disgusted with the laborious life of a farmer, and went to Woodstock to live. He had,

apparently, any amount of money, and soon became an acknowledged leader in sporting circles in the lively western town. He spent his money lavishly, was hail-fellow-well-met with everyone, and it was not long before his handsome face and easy, graceful figure were well known, not only in Woodstock, but throughout the County of Oxford. His English manners were softened by his colonial experience, but in dress he was so dudish as to become almost fantastic. Knee-breeches and silk stockings, tied at the knee with bright-coloured ribbons, was his usual mode of exhibiting himself on the streets, so that it is not to be wondered at that he was talked about. And from his manner it was evident that he liked to be talked about. At this time he had dropped the name of Birchall and was known as Lord Somerset, and as he spent his money freely, dressed extravagantly well, and was exceedingly charming in manner and conversation, he soon became the centre of a large circle of sports. He was known everywhere in the county, and it was this very fact that led to his positive identification at a time when his movements should have been hidden from every eye. It has been said and repeated time and time again that Birchall was the victim of farm pupil sharks, and that after he had been swindled out of his money he became a willing agent of those who had fleeced him. During his sojourn in Woodstock his wife was with him, and, being an educated lady, was not less popular than her husband.

MRS. BIRCHALL.

A year ago Birchall, or Lord Somerset, left Woodstock with his wife, leaving sundry unpaid bills behind him, and he shortly afterwards appeared in New York where he exchanged a considerable sum of money for English currency. He started for England, and was not heard of again until last winter, when he entered into partnership with a man named Mellerish in the farm pupil business. They advertised their business extensively, and one of their cards attracted the attention of Frederick Cornwallis Benwell, a young Englishman of high connections, who was anxious to emigrate to a country where he might earn for himself a livelihood and a name.

Col. Benwell, the young man's father, had some acquaintance with Canada, he having been in Toronto at one time, when he was instrumental in forming the 100th Regiment, some thirty years ago. The father was at first averse to the son coming to America, but finally gave a reluctant consent, although he was not altogether satisfied with the representations made by Birchall. He advised his son to look closely after his money, and to pay over nothing until he had inspected the stock farm which Birchall said he owned near Niagara Falls, and which was said to be lighted by electricity. Birchall had offered as an inducement that Benwell might become a partner in this farm by the payment of £500, and it was through this offer that the young man decided to come to Canada.

About the same time another young Englishman named Douglas R. Pelly replied to one of the advertisements, and after several interviews with Birchall he arrived at an agreement by which he was to secure an interest in the electric-lighted farm by the payment of £170, which he finally paid over. At this time he was not acquainted with Benwell, and had no reason to believe that he was being swindled, or that Benwell was also accepted by Birchall as a partner in the farm. Birchall had demanded money from Benwell, but the young man, remembering his father's injunction, declined to pay over any money until he had inspected the farm.

On the 5th of February last young Benwell bade farewell to his parents and sailed from Liverpool for America with Reginald Birchall, his wife Florence, and Douglas R. Pelly. He had proposed to Birchall that he should have his linen marked, but Birchall advised him not to do so, explaining that it would be easier to pass unmarked goods through the Customs. Notwithstanding this advice, it appears that Benwell did have his clothing marked, and it is evident from what took place in the swamp that Birchall was aware of the fact. During the journey across the ocean both Birchall and his wife spoke in glowing terms of their farm near Niagara Falls, which was so wonderfully lighted, of their great stable of horses, and of their immense buildings. To Pelly Birchall repeatedly described the beauties of his possessions in Niagara district, and dilated on what a good paying basis they had been established.

While on board ship Birchall manipulated Benwell and Pelly so that they could not become on intimate terms. To Pelly he spoke in disparaging terms of Benwell, and to Benwell he spoke slightingly of Pelly, telling each that he was tired of the other, and that he would get rid of him on their arrival in America. In this way Birchall succeeded in keeping the young men apart, so that they knew little of each other on their arrival in New York on the 11th February. They remained there for a couple of days, and then started for Buffalo, where they arrived on the 16th of February, putting up at the Stafford house. While at this hotel Birchall and Benwell amused themselves by imitating each other's signatures, and late that night it was decided that Birchall and Benwell should start early next morning for Niagara Falls to inspect the former's stock farm. They left the hotel soon after daylight, and some hours later Mrs. Birchall and Pelly started for the Falls. They spent the day together, and at nine o'clock that night they were joined by Birchall, who was alone. Rooms had been engaged at the house of a Mr. Baldwin, and it was decided to spend several days there, as the house on the stock farm was said to be out of repair.

In answer to questions by Pelly, Birchall explained that Benwell, after leaving Buffalo, had suddenly decided to go as far as Woodstock or vicinity, on a tour of inspection through the country for the purpose of seeing if he could purchase for himself

a suitable farm. Birchall also explained that he had parted from Benwell at the Grand Trunk railway station at the Falls, and that the young man said he expected to be gone for several days. He spoke of Benwell in slighting terms, and expressed the hope that he would not return again, as he was tired of him. Pelly was not surprised to hear Birchall speak unfavourably of Benwell, as he himself had not been favourably impressed with him, owing to the conversations that occurred on board ship; and it will be remembered that at this time Pelly was not aware that he had been swindled.

Birchall and his wife and Pelly remained at the Falls for several days, and as no proposition was made to visit the electric-lighted farm the young Englishman's suspicions finally became aroused. He asked Birchall for an explanation as to what had become of Benwell, and in reply Birchall stated that the young man had become dissatisfied, had gone to New York, and requested him to forward his baggage to the Fifth avenue hotel. In the meantime the newspapers had taken up the case of the body found in Blenheim swamp, and mention was made of the finding of a cigar case with the name "F. C. Benwell" printed on it. One of these papers fell into Pelly's hands, and he at once called Birchall's attention to it. After some discussion it was decided that Birchall and his wife should go to Princeton and examine the stranger's body, while Pelly was to go to New York in quest of Benwell and his baggage. This programme was carried out, and, of course, Pelly found no trace of the man or his possessions. He at once returned to the Falls, only to find that Benwell's luggage was still in bond there, and that the keys of the trunks were in Birchall's possession.

It was at this time that the first glimmer of the truth dawned upon the young Englishman, and, filled with a terrible dread, he proceeded to the residence of Magistrate Hill, and told of his suspicions. Thomas Young, chief of the Ontario police, was sent for, and upon hearing Pelly's story that officer proceeded to the house of Mr. Baldwin and arrested Birchall on a charge of murder. Meanwhile Birchall and his wife had started for Princeton, and on their arrival there the authorities had the body exhumed. Although greatly decomposed the features of the dead man were plainly distinguishable, and Birchall and his wife had no trouble in recognizing in the familiar features the face of Fred Benwell, their young companion across the ocean. Birchall stood unmoved by the side of the grave of the murdered man, and gazed without flinching into the dead face that he had known so well in life. Without a tremor in his voice he told the officer in charge that he recognized in the face the features of his young friend Benwell, and then told of their journey across the ocean, and of the young man's disappearance at the Falls. Mrs. Birchall stood calmly by his side and spoke in kindly terms of the dead youth.

referring in feeling terms to their experience on board ship, and expressing the hope that the man who committed the murder might be made to expiate his crime.

It does not seem possible that Mrs. Birchall could have been aware of the facts at this time, and all the evidence goes to show that she, like the others, was misled by her husband's demoniac cunning. And so, after poor Benwell's identity had been established by the man whom it was afterwards proved slew him, the coffin was lowered again, and the earth once more hid the body of the murdered victim from view. Afterwards, when Pelly returned from New York, he too repaired to Princeton, and, like Birchall, he recognized in the dead face the features of young Benwell, so that when Birchall's mouth was closed by his arrest there still remained evidence of identity sufficient to satisfy the Crown.

REG. BIRCHALL'S ARREST.

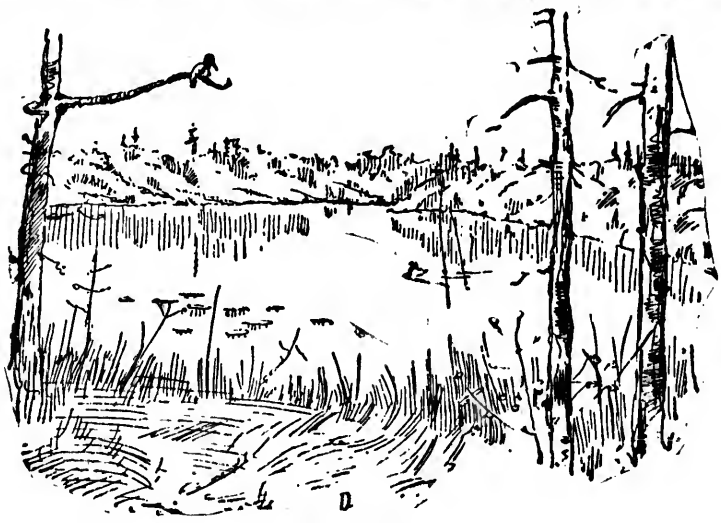
It seems singular, but up to the time of the arrest of Reginald Birchall there was not the slightest evidence to connect him with the case, and when Chief Constable Thomas Young took him into custody at Niagara Falls he did so simply on the strength of the statement made by Douglas

DETECTIVE MURRAY.

DETECTIVE GREER.

R. Pelly to Magistrate Hill. On searching the prisoner, however, the officer found articles that proved an important factor in the case, and went far in helping the jury to arrive at a verdict. In the prisoner's pocket was found a gold pencil case on which was engraved the deceased's initials, but time and usage had almost obliterated the engraving, and it is doubtful if Birchall knew that the initials were there. There was also found a bunch of keys, and these were afterwards found to fit young Benwell's trunks. While Chief Young was engaged in tracing up the dead man's baggage Detective John Murray appeared upon the scene, and for a time engaged himself in enquiring into the movements of two men named Baker and Caldwell. These two men had been on a spree, and one night about the time of the murder drove from Woodstock to Princeton, conducting themselves as

drunken loafers usually do. They called at several houses during their journey, and represented that they had lost their way, although those who recognized them knew that they were well acquainted with the neighbourhood. Murray carefully enquired into the movements of these men, and although it was learned that they had passed through Blenheim swamp on the night of the day on which Benwell was murdered, he satisfied himself that they knew nothing about the crime. He was at Paris making enquiries when he heard for the first time that the stranger's body had been identified, and shortly afterwards he came face to face with Reginald Birchall and his wife, the two being on their way to Niagara Falls from Princeton after identifying the body. At this time Detective Murray did not suspect Birchall as the murderer, but during a conversation the man's conduct was so peculiar that the officer's suspicions became aroused, and he quietly decided to watch him. In this conversation Birchall told Murray that he and his wife and Benwell left Buffalo together for the Falls on the 17th



MUD LAKE.

of February, and that afterwards Benwell left alone for the west, taking with him a large brown bag, which was afterwards found in Birchall's room at the Baldwin boarding-house. At this time, too, Birchall told the officer that when Benwell left him he wore a suit of blue, but young Pelly correctly described the clothing afterwards found on the body. Birchall also told Murray that he had received a letter from Benwell dated London, Ont., February 20th, or three days after his death, in which he enclosed a receipt for his baggage, and asking him to release the trunks from bond. Murray did not let Birchall see that he suspected him, but went quietly away, intending to accomplish his arrest when he had some of the dead man's property in his possession. Chief Young, however, stepped in in the meantime, and on the Sunday following the identification of the body arrested Birchall. Shortly after Birchall's wife was taken into custody, but at the preliminary investigation the charge against her of being an accessory was to all intents and purposes dropped, although an indictment against her was allowed to stand until her husband's trial and conviction.

THE TRIAL OF BIRCHALL.

On Monday, the 22nd of September, Reginald Birchall was brought before Judge MacMahon, at the Oxford County Court of Criminal Assize, held at Woodstock, and with his plea of "Not Guilty" there was commenced the most remarkable murder trial ever held in this country. It had not been usual in Canada for ladies to attend court in criminal cases, but so widespread was the interest in this most extraordinary trial that when the court was opened the gallery, the aisles, and the main body of the town hall was crowded with ladies, among them being fair representatives of Oxford's most prominent families. Day after day as the trial proceeded the interest increased, until it was found literally impossible to accommodate the large number of people from the town, the county, and the country who carried with them the Sheriff's ticket of admission. From nine o'clock in the morning until six in the evening thousands of men and women congregated in the market place in front of the town hall and eagerly waited for the adjournments in order that they might catch a glimpse of the prisoner, around whom so much interest centered. Reporters from the principal papers in the United States flocked to the scene, and so intense was the interest that the cable companies made arrangements whereby a verbatim report of the remarks of judge and counsel might appear simultaneously with the reports published in Canada. Forty reporters, trained to criminal work, occupied a large space in front of his Lordship, and an enterprising citizen of Woodstock had suspended from the ceiling telephones, with wires running to his hotel, so that a dozen people could occupy

MR. G. T. BLACKSTOCK.

his sitting-room, a quarter of a mile away, and hear all the evidence that was given.

Mr. George Tait Blackstock, Q.C., appeared as counsel for the prisoner, and Mr. S. G. McKay, of Woodstock, acted as

assistant counsel. Mr. B. B. Osler, Q.C., acted as Crown prosecutor, and he had associated with him Mr. F. R. Ball, County Crown Attorney for Oxford, and Mr. J. R. Cartwright, Deputy Attorney-General for the Province of Ontario. Owing to the great crowd in attendance his Lordship was obliged to occupy a seat on the stage, and behind him were seated a number of ladies, all appearing to be keenly interested in the evidence.

After a jury had been chosen Mr. Osler

MR. B. B. OSLER, CROWN COUNSEL.

opened the case by going over the different points the Crown proposed to prove, and concluded by reading a letter written by the accused on the 20th of February, three days after the murder. This letter was of such great importance in fixing the guilt upon the prisoner that Mr. Osler openly called the attention of the jury to it, and pointed out the prisoner's motive for the crime. The letter reads:—

Please address Messrs. Birchall & Benwell, P.O. Box 313, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada.

My Dear Sir,—We arrived safely here after a very pleasant journey, the sea being rather rough than otherwise. We came up by sleeping car from New York, and had a very pleasant trip indeed. Your son has inspected all my books and all my business arrangements, and I introduced him to people who know me well. He suggested taking other advice, so I, of course, was perfectly willing, and he consulted a barrister in London, Ontario, concerning the business, with satisfactory results; and he has decided to join me, as he has found all that he wished to be satisfactory. I think we shall make a very good business together. The books show a very good profit for last year. I think the best way is to place the money in our joint names in the bank to the credit of our reserve fund. We shall take the additional piece of land that I mentioned to you, as we shall now require it for produce. The best way to send money out is by banker's draft. Drafts for us should be drawn on the Bank of Montreal, New York. They have a branch in London, and I think the London and Westminster also do business for them. Letters of this kind should be insured and registered. We are holding a large sale early in March, and your son was somewhat anxious to share in the proceeds of the sale, which I am quite willing that he should do, and so we have signed our deed of partnership, and shall, I am sure, never regret doing so. Your son is, I think, writing you by this post. Kindly excuse bad writing on my part, but I am rather in a hurry to catch the mail. My letters are generally written by typewriter, as they are so much more legible and clear of any doubt as to words. We are having paper printed properly, and this will be ready in a few days.

I think you will be pleased that your son has found things satisfactory, and I quite agree that he did much the best thing in coming out to see the business first. I shall send you weekly particulars of all business done, so that you can see

for yourself how things go on. This will be satisfactory to you, I think.

Of course, with regard to the money, any bank in New York would do for a draft. We have opened a business account in our joint names at the American Bank here.

Your son will, doubtless, explain his views in his letter.

With kindest regards,
Believe me, dear sir,
Sincerely yours,
(Signed) J. R. BIRCHALL.

Lt.-Col. Benwell,
Iseultdene,
Cheltenham.

The first witness called was William McDonald, a retired farmer, who was acquainted with the prisoner, having met him about a year before the murder, when he was masquerading as Lord Somerset. The witness was previous to this agent for Ford & Rathbun, who conducted a Farming Pupil Agency in England, and received the prisoner as a pupil. Witness placed him on a farm, but he remained there only one night and then reported that he did

SHERIEF PERRY.

not come to this country to work on a farm. Prisoner remained in Woodstock for several months, and left for England in the early part of 1889.

Douglas Raymond Pelly, who came to America with Birchall and Benwell, was the next witness called in behalf of the Crown, and he was put through a most rigid examination. My homo, said he, is at Saffron-Walden, Sussex, and I graduated from Cambridge University four years ago.

When did you first meet the prisoner? In January last, at Saffron-Walden. I met him at the railway station, and he told me he had a business in Canada; that he purchased horses in the rough and prepared them for the market. He also told me that he had a farm on the Canadian side, about a mile and a half from the Falls, and that the farm was about 200 acres in extent. He told me there was a brick house on the farm, which was lighted

COUNTY CROWN ATTORNEY BALL.

by gas, and the barns and stables were lighted by electricity. He also told me he had a couple of hired men, and that a man named McDonald, a neighbour, acted as overseer. He also told me he had a contract with the C.P.R. to supply horses, and that he then had a comparatively large stock of horses on hand. He told me he had been in Canada off and on for eight years. He said that he had first come out as a farm pupil, and that his father had bought the farm on which he was placed to work. The letter now produced was received by me from the prisoner, and this letter, dated 10th December, 1889, I also received from the prisoner.

"What is the nature of these letters?"

asked Mr. Blackstock. "I do not propose to read the letters until his Lordship has ruled on the objection raised a moment ago; I simply put them in to prove the prisoner's handwriting."

The witness was then handed a batch of letters dated from December 10, 1889, to January, 1890, and also the original agreement that was drawn up between Birchall and Pelly, when the latter paid over the £170.

Birchall gave me his address, continued the witness, and I wrote to him on several occasions. It was in consequence of the representations in these letters and the agreement that I left England for Canada

CORONER M'LAY.

with Birchall. The endorsement on this cheque for £170 is in Birchall's handwriting, and the cheque is one that I gave to him. I think it was on the day I went to Liverpool to catch the ship that Birchall first mentioned Benwell's name. He told me that Benwell was going to Canada to get settled on a farm, and that he was going to look after him as a favour to his father. At Liverpool on the 5th of February Birchall introduced me to Benwell, and afterwards he spoke in such a way of him that I did not care to associate with him. Some time afterwards Benwell told me that he expected to go into partnership with Birchall in three months' time, and I told this to Birchall. The latter replied that Benwell might have understood that there was such an arrangement with the father, but there was no such thing arranged. Birchall also expressed his regret that he had had anything to do with Benwell, and said he would be glad when the young man was placed on a farm. During the journey from London to Liverpool Birchall showed me a small revolver, and I also had one in my pocket. On the way down to the vessel Benwell turned back, and, going into a store, purchased a single eye-glass. We arrived in New York on the 14th of February, and remained there until Saturday night, when we took an Erie train for Buffalo. On the voyage Benwell left some of his money with the purser, and in New York he got about 25 sovereigns changed. Birchall and I also got some money changed. We reached Buffalo about noon on Sunday, the 16th February, and during that day I saw Birchall and Benwell together. They were engaged in drawing pictures and making copies of each other's names. Benwell would write his name and Birchall would endeavour to make a copy of it, and then Birchall would write his name and Benwell would copy it. It was arranged that Birchall and Benwell were to go on to the Falls to inspect the farm on Monday morning, and Mrs. Birchall and I were to wait. He said it would be better for Benwell and him to go alone, as he wished to take the people on the farm unawares, and see how things were progressing. About six o'clock on the morning of February 17 Birchall came into my room, and, lighting the gas, talked to me. He said he had made final arrangements with Mrs. Birchall, and had left

money with Mrs. Birchall to pay the expenses if he telegraphed to us to come on to the Falls.

How was the prisoner then dressed? He had on a blue jacket, a cap of imitation black Astrachan, similar to the one now produced, and thick boots. On that morning I also heard Benwell speaking, and said "Good morning" to him, but I did not see him, I think. Either on that morning or the night before I told Benwell to have his luggage brought down to the office.

How was Benwell dressed? I cannot remember just exactly, but the clothes taken from the body at Princeton were the same as deceased generally wore. During that Monday I went to the office repeatedly and asked if there was a message for me, but I did not hear from Birchall until nine o'clock that night, when I received a telegraphic message from him, which message I here produce.

What was the message you received? That we were to stay another night in Buffalo.

Who came that night? Birchall.

What did you ask him? I asked him about Benwell, and he said that he had shown him the farm, but that he was sulky and displeased, and that he had sent him on, giving him addresses of other farmers about London.

What did he say about his farm? He said that his farm had been rented to McDonald, and that the house was dirty and out of repair, and that he would stay at Niagara for a few days.

Did he say anything else? He said that he had shown Benwell McDonald's farm, and that he had seen some men and collected some money.

Was Benwell's baggage at Niagara Falls? Yes; all but two boxes had been passed through the Customs. These two boxes had been forwarded to the Falls from New York. These were still in bond. Benwell had a canvas bag in his room.

Where did you check to? To Suspension Bridge, American side.

What boots did Birchall wear that day? A pair of field boots.

G. BENWELL.

Were they dirty? Yes, but he had them cleaned outside the railway station. I had made a mistake in the time, and he had time to do this. We saw the Falls and went up on the American side. In the evening we enquired for a boarding-house and selected Mrs. Baldwin's.

What else did you do that evening? We went across to get our baggage over, but missed the train, and had just enough taken over to do us for the night.

What did you do next day? We brought all the baggage over.

How did you get Benwell's baggage through? Birchall had keys (Keys produced.)

Were they like this? Yes, like that.

What did you do on the 19th? We went to the post-office and Birchall took a box.

What was the number? Three hundred and thirteen.

Now that you had a post-office box and the baggage passed, why did you not go to the farm? For various reasons given by Birchall.

What were they? He said that it was too muddy and stormy, etc.

Did you suspect him? Yes, I taxed him with being a fraud and having brought me out under false pretences, and he said I could believe him or not.

BIRCHALL IN CANADA.

Mr. Osler—With regard to his business relations, what did he say? He said he expected a cheque from England in a few days, and everything would be all right.

Did you ask him about his horses? Yes, he said they were safely housed in Toronto.

Did you go about the Falls with him? O, yes, we walked up along Suspension bridge and back.

Go anywhere about the cliffs? Yes, as I understood, in the direction of the farm, but never there.

What about Benwell? Birchall said that perhaps Benwell did not know we were at the Falls, and might be writing to the American side. On Thursday, 27th February, he said that he had received information with reference to the telegram and letter at the Stafford house, and he was going there. I went to St. Catharines.

What further did he say about this? That the letter and telegram were forwarded to Niagara Falls, and that upon opening them he found that Benwell wanted the baggage sent to 5th avenue, New York. I wondered how Benwell was getting along without any kit, and Birchall said that he might have enough clothing out of the baggage he took out of bond.

What further did he say about the baggage? That he had arranged to send it to New York next day.

Did he say anything about the letter? He said he had not seen it, as the clerk and operator at Buffalo had forwarded them to Niagara Falls to be repeated.

Did he make any arrangements as to letting Benwell know that he had expressed baggage to Niagara Falls? Yes; he said that he had wired Benwell to New York telling about arrangements.

Did he ever go out without you? Yes, he went out twice.

Did he tell you about going over once to the other side without you? Yes; he said he had been over looking for stables.

Did anything occur on February 28th? Yes; Birchall went out, as I understood, to forward the baggage. When he returned he threw a letter to me up the stairway, and told me about a cigar case being found on the dead man near Woodstock.

Can you identify this cigar case? No.

What did he say about this? He said we should go at once and see about the body. At the hotel he went to have a cheque cashed, and I had a look at the paper and saw the item. This was near noon. We found that we could not get out until the afternoon, so Birchall pro-

posed that we go over to the American side and cash the cheque there, as he had a bank account.

Did you go over? Yes, we went over, and he had the cheque cashed at the Bank of Niagara.

What did you do when you came back? Well, it was decided that Birchall and Mrs. Birchall should go to Paris and look at the body, and that I should go to New York.

Were these arrangements carried out? Yes.

Did you find Benwell there? No; I could find no trace of him.

Did you wire to Birchall? Yes, but never got an answer.

Did you say anything about the place where he should go to? Yes; I said that Princeton was the place where the body was found, but he said that Paris was the nearest.

Did you see anything further of Benwell's baggage? No.

Did he say anything later about his pistol? Yes. On Friday, 28th, he said:—Do you know Benwell has my pistol? I said:—Oh; why did you give it to him?

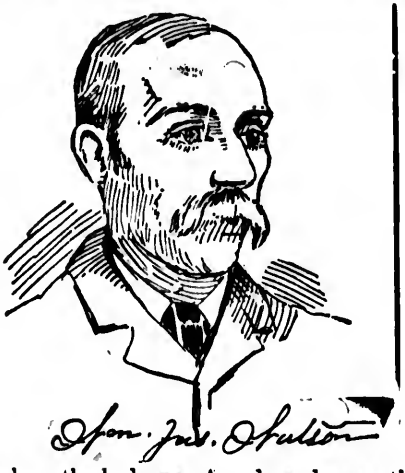
Now on 2nd tell me what took place. When I got back I went up to the boarding-house. Mr. Baldwin told me that Birchall had identified the body as Benwell's, and that detectives were watching Birchall.

Did you see them? Yes; I had not been long in the room when I was called to their room. Mrs. Birchall asked me who the man upstairs was. I knew who he was, but had been warned; so I did not tell. It was a detective.

Witness was then shown the clothing of the deceased, and identified the undercoat, tie, and hat. He could not swear to the trousers or to the mackintosh coat. Witness also identified Birchall's handwriting, and in answer to questions by Mr. Blackstock repeated the story he told to Mr. Osler.

Charles Benwell, brother of the murdered man, described the dead man's appearance, and told how he had arranged to come to Canada with the prisoner. Witness identified a pencil-case found with the prisoner, and stated that it had belonged to his brother, and he also identified the dead man's baggage which was found to be in Birchall's charge at the time of the arrest.

William M. Davis, town surveyor of Woodstock, produced a plan of the place



where the body was found, and gave the distance from Eastwood to the swamp, which was 4.61 miles. He also measured the route taken by Birchall and Benwell to the swamp, and the return journey, the latter being 4.83 miles. The total distance to and from the swamp was a little less than nine miles and a half, and as an actual experience he explained that he walked from Eastwood to the swamp in an hour and twenty-five minutes, and accomplished the return journey at an ordinary pace in an hour and twenty-three minutes.

Capt. John Ross, of the 34th Battalion,

testified that he walked from Eastwood to the swamp and back in two hours and forty minutes.

Joseph Eldridge, one of the brothers who found Benwell's body, was examined, and he told the story as it appears in an earlier chapter, and his testimony was corroborated by his brother George.

County Constable Watson testified that he removed the body to Princeton, and afterwards had it exhumed for identification. He recognized Birchall as the man who identified the body, and added that it was he who introduced Birchall to Detective Murray in Paris.

James H. Swartz, an undertaker of Princeton, told how Birchall came to him and asked him about the body that had

been found, saying that he had lost a friend, and the name "F. C. Benwell" on the cigar case had led him to believe that the body found in the swamp was that of his missing friend. He told Swartz that he and Benwell were in independent circumstances, and that they intended to take up a farm and build good houses thereon, but that Benwell had caused him a good deal of trouble and expense by frequenting disreputable houses.

Prisoner told witness that deceased had left him at Niagara Falls and had gone to London, where he had received a letter from him, but he was unable to produce the letter.

Drs. Taylor and Welford, who made a *post-mortem* examination of the body of deceased, testified that death was caused by two bullet-wounds in the head.

George A. Orchard, clerk of the township of Stamford, and Henry Thomas, assessor, were called to prove that the prisoner owned no land whatever in the county, the Crown doing this to show that Birchall was engaged in a swindling operation from the time he left England with his victim.

Prof. Wolverton, who had charge of the observatory at Woodstock College, was examined as to the weather between the 17th and 21st of February, and he showed that there was a fall of snow and sleet between these dates, with occasional hard frost.

George H. Phemister, telegraph operator at Niagara Falls, stated that he saw the prisoner at the Falls, and asked him if he had identified Benwell's body. He replied that he had, and that he had parted with him at the G. T. R. station at the Falls on the afternoon of the 17th of February. Witness also testified that prisoner told him Benwell had gone to London, from which place he had received a letter from him enclosing an order for the release of his baggage from the Customs.

George Hersee, owner of the swamp where the body was found, testified that he had met the prisoner in 1889, when he was known as Lord Somerset, and that the prisoner was well acquainted with the swamp and locality, as he used to go shooting there.

Joseph Piggott had seen the prisoner in the swamp about a year before the murder, and he was then within a short distance of

where Benwell's body was afterwards found.

Chief Constable Young, of the Falls, testified to having arrested the prisoner, to having found the keys of deceased's trunks in the prisoner's possession, and to having found in prisoner's pocket a gold pencil-case, afterwards identified as having belonged to Benwell.

Conductor W. H. Poole, Brakesman George Hayes, News Agent James Duffy, Elizabeth Lockhart, and Hannah Choate proved that on the morning of the 17th of February the prisoner and deceased travelled on a G.T.R. train from the Falls to Hamilton and from Hamilton to Eastwood, where they alighted.

Alfred Hayward, John Crosby, Ellen Fallon, and others testified to having seen the prisoner and deceased at different points between Eastwood and the swamp, and Charles Buck and other residents testified to having seen the prisoner return to Eastwood alone. Alice Smith, one of the Crown's most important witnesses, told how she had met the prisoner on the afternoon of the 17th of February after his return from the swamp, and explained that at the time he spoke to her he referred to events that had occurred the year before, so that she was positive as to his identification. When she met him his trousers were rolled up, and he looked as if he had been walking a considerable distance. Mr. Blackstock made a vigorous effort to shake the testimony of this witness, but failed, her evidence being corroborated by half a dozen witnesses who were at the station when Birchall took the train back to the Falls.

A number of telegrams were put in which it was shown the prisoner had sent to himself for the purpose of misleading Pelly and others as to the whereabouts of deceased.

By evidence that would not be shaken the prisoner and deceased were traced from the time they left Buffalo up to within half a mile of the swamp, and Birchall's movements were made clear from the time he was seen walking from the swamp to Eastwood until his arrival at the Falls on the night of the day on which Benwell was murdered.

An immense amount of testimony was put in to fill in the details of the Crown case, nearly all of it circumstantial, but the whole formed such a perfect chain that the defence failed completely to break a single link. In behalf of the prisoner, testimony

ALICE SMITH.

was submitted to show that the evidence of the identity of either the prisoner or deceased was insufficient, and Mr. Blackstock, in a four hours' address, endeavoured to convince the jury that there was a doubt as to whether Birchall was ever seen at Eastwood or in the vicinity of the "Swamp of Death."

One of the most remarkable features of this most remarkable case was Mr. Osler's address to the jury. He followed the movements of the prisoner and deceased from the time they became acquainted in England until Birchall's arrest, and in

scathing terms laid bare the swindling operations of the prisoner and the motive he had for accomplishing the death of his victim. His array of the evidence was masterly in the extreme, and all who heard it were convinced of the overwhelming nature of the evidence against the prisoner.

THE JUDGE'S CHARGE.

His Lordship began his address at 7.38, and in opening remarked that they were now drawing to the close of a grave and important case. As to the question of

JUDGE MACMAHON.

punishment, neither the jury nor himself had anything to do with it. The punishment for such cases was provided by the people to whom they looked up. On the threshold of the case he warned them to disabuse their minds of any statement they may have read in the press, and asked them as a solemn duty to relegate what they had read to the past, and leave their minds like an unwritten page to receive the evidence given in court under oath. In this case there was no direct evidence of guilt; yet, like many other crimes, it showed great depravity. He pointed out the difference between direct and circumstantial evidence, showing, as he desired, that the latter when conclusive was far more reliable. In this case the jury was called upon to consider the evidence according to the rules he had laid down in such cases. The Crown undertook to satisfy the jury as reasonable men that the prisoner at the bar murdered Benwell. The first thing to consider was, what was the object of the two men leaving Buffalo together? If we are to believe Pelly, they were to look at the farm and make preparations for receiving him and Birchall's wife. The prisoner and Benwell started out without any luggage, so that if they did not stop at the farm they would return shortly. We have it in evidence that Birchall had no farm at Niagara, therefore, what was his objective point? If they were not seen on the train then the case must naturally fail.

THE EARLY START FROM BUFFALO.

They left Buffalo at a very early hour for some reason, because Pelly said it was before six o'clock when he heard them leaving the hotel. The agent at the Bridge states that two tickets were sold to Eastwood, and the Crown asks you to believe that the prisoner and Benwell were the men who used these tickets, and that Poole collected these tickets between Hamilton and Eastwood. The conductor thought he saw these men get off at Eastwood, or rather there were two men on the train that morning who got off at Eastwood. Miss Lockhart says there were, and she identified the prisoner at the bar as one of those men. Miss Choate also recognized the prisoner on the train that morning. Albert Hayward gave a description of two men passing through his yard, and one of them threw a piece of snow at a cat. The defence attempted to break the force of this evidence because Hayward

did not remember Lawyer McKay calling on him, and further, because he could not recognize Constable Midgley in the gallery. Crosby's evidence went to show that one of two men had some parcel under his arm; yet this was the first heard of this. The jury would have to take this point into their consideration. The two Perrys and Pellow give you a description of the tracks in the field after these men passed through to the swamp. It was for the jury to say whether these tracks were made by the same men seen in the train. Then Edmison and Oldham spoke of the men in the second concession. Miss Fallon was positive about what she saw, and if you believe her evidence, then these were the same men. McGuire also saw the men, and passed the spot early in the morning where the body was found. There were no tracks there then. He referred to the statements made by the three men, who alleged that they heard the shots between two and three o'clock; of the statements made by Hersee and others as to prisoner's knowledge of this swamp. John Friedenberg's evidence is offered to show that he saw two men, but these could not have been the men whom Mrs. Ferguson saw just before going through the fields. Then there were several other persons who gave evidence about Baker and Caldwell going through that part of the country that week. The theory of the Crown is that the prisoner murdered Benwell in the swamp on Monday. If he did not murder him on that day then he is not guilty of this crime, because that is the only day he was in that neighbourhood. His Lordship dwelt upon Miss Smith's evidence, pointing out the force of her testimony. If true, she was the only one who had a conversation with Birchall at Eastwood, and in the witness-box said prisoner was that man. Was this statement of hers a pure fabrication? He did not approve of the method adopted by the Crown officers in identifying the prisoner in the gaol. It was unfair. Miss Cromwell swore she saw Birchall purchasing a ticket for Hamilton, and afterwards talking with Miss Smith. In all there were five persons who saw Birchall at Eastwood. It was for the jury to say, however, whether these persons had concocted this story for some motive of their own, or were they mistaken in their identification of Birchall? Hay swore he saw the ticket in Birchall's hand. If this be true, then it was material as strengthening the statements of Miss Cromwell, and after Hay, Duffy was also an important witness. After which came

ALFRED HAYWARD.

Phemister and the mysterious telegram. All these circumstances are urged to show you that Birchall is guilty. If you believe these witnesses, then the case against the prisoner presents very serious aspects. If you believe witnesses who swore that they saw the two men on the second concession, then the prisoner is accountable for Benwell's death. You will recollect there was no farm; therefore all the prisoner's statements about this were pure fabrication. They might be fabrication, yet not prove prisoner

guilty of murder unless they were convinced that Birchall went with Benwell on that trip on the 17th. It is important to remember that Birchall had the keys of Benwell's baggage, and then comes the letter written by prisoner to Benwell's father, saying that his son had inspected the farm and books and was satisfied. If £500 had been sent as requested by the prisoner in the firm's name, any member of the firm could claim

MISS LOCKHART.

the money. He was bound to tell them this as a matter of law. What was the object of this letter? Prisoner speaks of the purchase of another piece of property, and that his son was writing him by next mail. There was no farm, no horses, no business in Buffalo. All was deception, so that prisoner must have known that young Benwell would never write such a letter to his father. With the facts he had nothing to do, his duty was merely to comment upon the evidence and direct them as to the law bearing on the case. His Lordship then dwelt on the bank account opened at Niagara by prisoner and the money there deposited. The question that suggested itself then was, was this all the prisoner had? The condition of the body when found was reverted to, and he asked the question, did not it appear to them that the condition of the clothing disproved the theory of the defence that deceased was murdered for purposes of plunder? He thought the condition of the body showed, if it showed anything, that the bruises had been made in dragging the body there. If the theory of Dr. Welford be correct, then deceased must have been shot from behind when his coat-collar was turned up, and that shot produced instant death. The theory of the Crown is that another shot was fired afterward, and the Crown asks the jury to believe that these were the same shots heard by Macdonald, Friedenburg, and Hickson. He next spoke of the weather that week, and the condition of the body from exposure, showing that the left foot of the deceased was frozen in ice on Thursday night. It was a significant fact that every mark in the clothing had been removed, and had the cigar-holder not been found Benwell's death would have always remained a mystery. There was the stub of a cigar in the cigar-holder, showing deceased was smoking at the time of death, or had been just previously. His Lordship reviewed prisoner's statements to Constables Watson, Hull, and Cox, none of which agreed in detail. What was his object, then, in making these statements? If prisoner was telling these different stories to show how he came into possession of the baggage checks, then it was very cogent evidence to his mind that he did so to get possession of these checks by some improper means. If Benwell had gone west, who sent directions to forward the heavy baggage to New York? Certainly there was no such telegram sent by Benwell, and, therefore, if

he got his baggage at all he must get it in New York.

In speaking of the telegram, he said if the jury was satisfied that Birchall sent a telegram at Buffalo to himself at Niagara, then it was of the gravest moment to the prisoner. When it became known that the cigar-case was found, his Lordship thought prisoner's conduct very strong presumptive

EVIDENCE OF HIS GUILT.

prisoner was in Woodstock on that day. When the evidence was not only of a circumstantial nature, but of a strong convincing character, then it was stronger than direct evidence. The duty rested with the jury to pass upon the evidence, and theirs was a solemn one. With the punishment they have nothing to do.

At ten o'clock the jury retired, and an hour and a half later they returned a verdict of guilty. When the verdict was given

MISS SMITH UNDER CROSS-EXAMINATION.

If the prisoner sent these telegrams, it was evidence of the strongest character against the prisoner. He did not purpose to go into the medical testimony for obvious reasons, but passed on to the evidence of Old Man Rabb and others for the defence. Two witnesses speak of tracks they saw, and the defence ask the jury to believe that the body was carried there, while the Crown deny this theory. The evidence of Miliman and MacQueen was offered you to show how easily one could be mistaken, not to convince the jury the

the prisoner remained perfectly immovable, and betrayed not the slightest emotion. He stood up quietly when his Lordship proceeded to pass the sentence o death, and when asked if he had anything to say he quietly remarked :—

"Simply that I am not guilty of the crime, my Lord."

The prisoner was then sentenced to be hanged on the 14th of November, and five minutes later he was laughing and joking with reporters and friends as if he had no material interest in the case.

BIRCHALL

THE STORY OF HIS

LIFE, TRIAL, AND IMPRISONMENT

AS TOLD BY HIMSELF.

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.

BIRCHALL'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

PREFACE.

In placing on record these few reminiscences of a very varied and very checkered career, I wish to be distinctly and surely understood by all who may happen to peruse those pages that I am in no way prompted to write from an idea of gaining any worldly notoriety, or from a love of seeing my doings in print, or from a desire myself to write for writing's sake ; but the idea suggested itself to me that by compiling these few pages of an eventful and diversified experience I might, by the sale of the same, be enabled through a literary friend to add somewhat to the slender provision that I am otherwise able to make for my wife, and that while there is such a possibility there is no reason to doubt that it is my bounden duty to further that object by the present somewhat novel enterprise.

Of one thing there can be no doubt, and that is that to all young men who are about to enter upon the world, or may be a university experience, these few pages offer a sad and solemn warning ; and if they do no further good than to be of this service to those who are naturally inclined to follow the paths of idleness and folly, and in helping to show them the utter depth of misery into which such a life will lead them sooner or later, then, in addition to the purpose aforesaid, it will have attained beyond the limit hoped for by the writer. I shall endeavour not to bore the reader by long and wordy paragraphs, but to be short and to the point. To those who may have had some share in many of the exploits mentioned these pages will be of additional interest ; and so far as my memory serves me I shall try to place before the reader correctly some interesting and in some respects amusing details.

In treating of life at a university it may be necessary to offer some slight explanation of terms used commonly in the vast schools of learning, but wherever possible I would ask the reader to apply when in doubt to some college friend, who will, doubtless, be able to give all the help required. With the above few words I will enter straightway upon my narrative, which I shall illustrate with my own pen when occasion requires, and I hope that any one who may read this book will tolerate the writer for the time being for the sake of the object for which it was written.

WOODSTOCK GAOL, October, 1890.

A PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

I trust that I shall be forgiven if I say a few words about myself from my own standpoint. My character and antecedents have been placed before the public in the glaring light of the Canadian and American press, sometimes truly, I am sorry to have to admit ; but much has been said and stated authoritatively which is far from the truth, and is no doubt the outcome of some fertile and imaginative brain, which, in the heat of competition among the various papers for supremacy in the matter of giving what purported to be the fullest accounts and the most romantic details, has yielded to those powerful faculties of genius and imagination which newspaper writers alone possess.

The public taste must be satisfied—a desire for the sensational is all prevalent at such a time as when I was arrested—and therefore it behooves these knights of the pencil to do

their utmost to outstrip their rivals, and gain the most important details without loss of time; and what they cannot find out as fact, their imagination is largely drawn upon to supply the deficiency. Of that all necessary qualification for a writer, namely, the power of imagination, these gentlemen apparently possess an unfailing supply; and in my own case it has on more than one occasion stood them in good stead. In no way would I curtail the power of the press. It does much good, and I firmly believe cannot be overestimated in its beneficial effect upon the public as a body; but some little allowance must be made for an individual member of that body if he raise a feeble voice to protest against the substitution of imagination for facts when the latter cannot be obtained.

I may quote one or two instances which have a special bearing on what I have just alluded to.

In this work I have gone into my career as a theatrical manager. I was, as I have said, at Burton, England, in that capacity. Two or three days after my arrest I saw in the paper that I was at one time manager of Wallack's theatre, New York, stated as a positive fact. A slight mistake, truly, but doubtless originated by the idea that I was in a theatrical enterprise somewhere, and Wallack's theatre was as good for the public as any other theatre.

One thing that has been stated over and over again in the press that I have a great love for notoriety, and, to quote the words of that strange and misguided specimen of humanity, Dr. Bessey, "I am vainglorious as any peacock." Of the aforesaid gentleman I will say but little, save that from seeing me through the bars for one minute he went away and wrote two columns in the *Globe* on his "Psychological Examination of Birchall." Wonderful man! How lost and hidden under a bushel his candle is! How can the Dominion any longer ignore this noble mind! Well may I apply to him the words used in reference to Mr. Gladstone by the late Lord Beaconsfield, and say that "truly he is intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity."

A DIFFERENCE WHICH IS ALSO A DISTINCTION.

To return, however, to the love of notoriety, I emphatically deny that I love notoriety; and whatsoever notoriety I have gained has been thrust upon me in connection with my case. These flaring reports now for the first time find their way into print, and reminiscences of the days gone by have been hunted up by enterprising press men which were practically dead for ever. In all my doings at Oxford I sought no notoriety in any one way; it was thrust upon me by my utterly foolish acts and escapades, which so much differed from the ordinary pursuits of the average 'Varsity man that they became talked of in many circles simply on account of their strangeness and unique standing. I did these things and enjoyed them at the time, and in doing them my idea was that of enjoyment in its true sense, which occurs not in the same way to two persons alike. It isn't the love of notoriety that prompts a man to enjoy life. It is only when a certain class of people take upon themselves to take exception to and criticise the manner in which a fellow-being occupies his time and treats his surroundings that they, finding ideas of life to differ widely from theirs, failing to impress upon him the desirability of following in their footsteps, immediately stamp him with that strange word "notorious." Any man who steps flagrantly out of the beaten track becomes notorious, but not necessarily for love of notoriety, and unless we know personally the subject of discussion and the feelings that prompt strange acts in life, then it is not incumbent upon us to discuss these actions at all.

There are in this world many excellent maxims that our fathers have handed down to us, and which we are, sad to relate, forgetting day by day, but there is one that is not difficult to remember if we try very hard to do so, and I would therefore commend it to all who may happen to read these pages. I allude to that grand old maxim and unfailing piece of good advice, namely, "Mind your own business."

Call my acts the result of inborn or contracted folly if you like, but not love of notoriety. The ways of men are hard to understand, as they are also narrow, and the acts of one jar the nerves of another. Due allowance should in every case be made.

If my small contribution to the free spirits of the time be as great as the accounts would lead the public to believe, and if they accept without reserve the statement that appears in these pages, cut from the Canadian press, that "my wild ways were notorious throughout the length and breadth of the university," what, then, shall be said of those members in by-gone days, by the side of whose acts and ways mine sink into utter ignominy and contempt? What term shall be applied to them? Can the word "notorious" be applied to them? Truly it falls short of the mark. What old Oxford man has not heard of the doings of the Hell Fire Club at Brasenose College, at whose meetings an empty chair was always left for his Satanic Majesty to occupy in invisible form?

Who remembers not the "Town and Gown" fights of the days gone by, which are almost things of the past? The outrage-

ous acts perpetrated by the free spirits of long ago, and the practical jokes then practised by our fathers?

Go to any college porter of any long standing, to any hotelkeeper who can date back twenty or thirty years, or to the old inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and to those who lived when the Bullingdon Club was in its prime, and ask them to tell you their experience and recollection of the "free spirits" of their time; and then you will see into what utter insignificance and shade any of my so-called "wild ways" will sink. If I could only give you the names of some who occur to me as I write I could give you many amusing and startling details, but the present position of the participants prevents me from so doing.

But enough of this. I am not writiug a book of excuses, only facts for your consideration and perusal. It is not necessary for me to remind some of my readers of the old saying, that when a man is down then trample on him. If proof of the saying be wanting to any, then I step forward and offer myself as a brilliant example.

Since so many and various reports have been circulated by the press of and about my doings, I shall endeavour to give you a true picture of all these, without varnish or addition to the actual fact. Oxford ways and customs are unique, and can only be correctly understood by those who have had practical experience of them; but from my account I shall hope to aid the reader in trying to discern some of the mysteries of the ancient seat of learning.

SOME NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS.

In concluding this somewhat lengthy explanation I shall be forgiven I hope if I pay a passing tribute to THE TORONTO MAIL and staff and the New York *Herald* as exceptions to my somewhat harsh criticism by the press. Since my arrest, during my incarceration here and during the trial I have been privileged to meet several gentlemen connected with these publications. This work of mine will be their exclusive property, and I desire to express to them through the medium of their own columns my sincere thanks and gratitude for the many kindnesses which I have received at their hands; and were it for no other reason than my pleasant personal acquaintance with the gentlemen in question, I should ever entertain a very pleasing memory of these papers.

HOME, SCHOOL, AND COLLEGE.

WELL BORN, EDUCATED AT GOOD PREPARATORY SCHOOLS, AND SENT TO OXFORD.

I am the son of the Rev. Joseph Birchall, M.A., late rector of Church-Kirk, near Accrington, Lancashire, England, Rural Dean of Whalley and Proctor in Convocation for the Archdeaconry of Manchester. My father was a very well-known man in the North of England, and was an intimate friend of the late Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, and was considered an authority on matters pertaining to ecclesiastical law. He was a graduate of Brasenose College, Oxford, and a Hulmeian scholar of the same institution.

I was born on the 25th day of May, 1866. Hence at the time when I am writing I am twenty-four years of age, and it is principally of the last fourteen years of this period that I propose to treat in the following pages:—

TOOK LIFE EASILY.

I was naturally jolly, to use a slang expression. For me the world had very few cares that presented any serious difficulty. I used to go on the old saying, which so naively remarks, "Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you," and in these few words I used to find much spurious comfort.

I was likewise a warm supporter of the distorted adage which says, "Never do to-day what you can do to-morrow," and whenever anything could be left undone that ought to be done, I think the former result generally applied.

Of course when about ten years of age I began to receive tuition in Latin and Greek from my father, and under a stern régime made considerable progress with the study and knowledge of those ancient languages, and added to a general acquaintance of those elementary facts which go to form the modern schoolboy's stock in trade. At the age of twelve I was pronounced ready for school which in my case proved to be the preliminary canter for the race furnished by the university later on.

MAKING HIS PLACE AMONG THE BOYS.

After much argument anent the different schools, it was at length decided that I should be sent to Rossall, a large Public school close to that far-famed seaside resort, Blackpool, in Lancashire. My father had an interest in the school, and hence the choice. It was a beautiful spot, close to the sea, with about twenty-two acres of playgrounds and fine buildings. I think the number of boys in my time was about three hundred, or a few more. The headmaster was the Rev. H. H. James, B.D., now headmaster of Cheltenham College, England. This was in the year 1878. I entered the house of Captain H. M. Ormsby, one of the junior masters, and after a somewhat searching interview and examination by one of the other masters I was placed in the first form. There was

one form still lower, I may mention, but I was not relegated to that low estate. Of course, besides a great deal of good advice from my parents and others, I brought with me the usual supply of eatables which schoolboys alone know how to appreciate in their leisure hours. For a time all went well. I had the usual questions asked of me that are put to every new boy—how old I was, how old my father was, what he was, why he was, and if so why not? To all these would-be thirsters for knowledge I returned the stern and boastful reply that my father was a life governor of the school, and as such would be present at the annual meeting, and to all who were deserving of censure, in my opinion, to those justice would be promptly meted out on that auspicious day. These tactics had good effect and secured for me considerable respect among my fellows. Notwithstanding these flowery pretensions I experienced the usual fights for supremacy in matters of all kinds, with varying success, sometimes proving victorious, sometimes being vanquished very ignominiously.

AN IRREPARABLE LOSS.

I had only been at school a little over one month when I received the sad and terrible news that my father had died very suddenly, and that my presence was immediately required at home. I was completely heart-broken at the time, and hardly knew what to do or say. My father was the best and kindest of fathers to me, humoring my every whim, and ever ready to help, please, or grant me anything within his power. He had endeared himself to me so completely in so many ways that I may truthfully say that I felt then the truest and most sincere grief that I have ever felt, save for my past misspent life and the disgrace I have brought upon my family, and for my broken-hearted wife, who has stood by me through good and evil report (to quote the words of my able advocate, Mr. G. T. Blackstock, Q.C.,) with closest clinging and through darkest storm. Of this and other matters I shall, however, speak later.

I arrived home shortly after the news of my father's death had reached me, and found all my relatives assembled at the old home. The funeral was a public one, as my father was so widely known and respected. He was a Freemason, and belonged to other orders also. All were fully represented upon that memorable occasion, and many of the inhabitants of the town remember yet vividly the details. My elder brothers and I were chief mourners, and I myself well remember the sad occasion. After assembling together to hear our father's will read, and after being informed that we were well provided for, we prepared to go our various ways again whence we had come together for this purpose.

FOND OF ATHLETIC SPORTS.

I returned to school again, and spent the remainder of that term in a very moody and miserable frame of mind, rarely associating with anyone at all save at the hours when lessons were going on. I used to wander off alone to the seashore and there spend many lonely hours.

After a somewhat dull vacation of five weeks I returned, a good deal better both in body and mind, and prepared to go in strongly for athletic pursuits, for which I had a strong taste. The school was divided into seven clubs for cricket and football, and I was placed in the fifth club, which was composed of some thirty or forty members. We played the Association game as at present known, and had a very good ground allotted to us. I soon rose to be captain of this club, a promotion much envied by others, and steadily made progress onward in the line of sports and pastimes.

GOOD AT SCIENCE AND SONG.

In work I kept on pretty steadily, and soon was promoted to the third form, but this was a veritable slough of despond; out of it I could not get, and I remained a fixture for a long time. Finding myself unable to emerge from this form, owing to the superior classical work of those above me, I set to work to study science, and with such success that I carried off the division prize for that subject at the end of the Christmas term in 1880, being a long way ahead of any other competitor, and very proud I was to see my name heading the published list with a total of 147 marks out of a possible 200. I also joined the choir in the school chapel, and, being then possessed of a very fair treble voice, I sang much at concerts, etc., with some success, my nerve standing me in good stead, and often leading to success where others failed from sheer nervousness, a very common failing among schoolboys.

During this period at Rossall I got into a good many scrapes, but was somewhat lucky in escaping detection on more than one occasion when I was deserving of punishment. I was pursued by farmers when in search of birds' eggs, chased by irate gamekeepers in the most flagrant acts of trespass, and though constantly suspected for various untimely events that happened, I escaped many times without my deserts, the *argumentum ad hominem* being generally used instead of the more effective *argumentum ad posteriorem*, so much in vogue in schools at the present time.

Early in 1881 my guardians thought fit to remove me from Rossall just when I was

getting on nicely, and had emerged from that dreadful third form into the fourth, and very nearly gained the fifth, giving as their reason that it was too far north, since they lived in the south, for me to come and go, and that they had decided to send me for the future to Reading in Berkshire, England. I took all this with very bad grace, and it was with the greatest regret that I bade adieu to my old school friends, with whom I had grown so familiar and spent so many happy days in their company. When I look back over the list of those who were there with me, even in this short space of time, they are vastly changed. Many are dead, some of those I knew best; one of my best friends there was drowned, and many have gone out into the world as clergymen, members of different professions, and a few, I am sorry to say, have followed the idler's path.

THE BEGINNING OF MISCHIEF.

Having bade adieu to Rossall I then arrived on the scene at Reading. It was a large school, standing on fine ground and surrounded by the fine town which has made a name in English history for its seeds and biscuits. I was placed in the head master's house, and very soon discovered that between the discipline of the two schools there was a big difference, the standard at Reading being fifty per cent. lower in favour of the pupil than it was at Rossall. This I was not slow to appreciate, and very soon began a turn in affairs which laid the foundation of my wasted and riotous career at Oxford.

I was placed in the fourth form and found myself away ahead of those in it in many ways, the standard at the other school being very much higher than here; so I had a good deal of spare time on my hands. We each had a separate bed-room, and I was privileged to work in my own room in the evening instead of down stairs with the crowd. Along with a few other privileged ones I used to hold a kind of "at home" from seven till nine, and we used to meet regularly to consume such eatables as cannot be easily perceived either by remains or savoury odour. I must also say that we went to the length of providing intoxicating liquors, which one of us procured from a neighbouring "pub" which we sometimes frequented during forbidden hours. Thus our work was allowed to slide, and we generally trusted to luck or to some one else having to construe the one hundred lines of Virgil or Greek author that happened to be on the tapis. Luck generally favoured us, however, and hardly ever did we suffer physically for our carousals.

EXPERT FORAGERS.

At nine o'clock p.m. we used to assemble in the dining-hall for a hymn and prayers, after that supper, consisting of bread and cheese and one glass of beer (the word beer is not to be taken literally here—it was too bad for that), and then to bed, except those who were allowed to sit up and work (?). The masters had their supper after we did, and on many occasions the mysterious disappearance of a leg of mutton or a pie and other articles declared necessary by schoolboys has been to those poor masters an unsolved problem. Oftentimes the choice viands prepared for the pedagogues have gone to supply the wants of hungry souls for which they were never intended. However, we could often give the masters a start and a beating in the matter of suppers, for we held them on a grand scale in defiance of all rules and regulations, and late into the night we revelled safe from observation.

BAD COMPANY CONVENIENT.

I was appointed a monitor by the head master, and this conferred the privileges of using a walking stick and going to town whenever one liked; and this suited me well. I also rose to prominence in the athletic department, and was awarded a place on both the cricket and football teams, and was also appointed the secretary of the Games Committee, which position I held up till the time I left. We had many matches with the colleges at Oxford, which was only thirty-seven miles away; and we were also near the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and a certain army tutor's establishment (which shall be nameless), which was the terror of the neighbourhood. This latter place and the members who composed it had peculiar fascinations for me. Their style, loud and horsey; their assumption of bogus authority, and their practical jokes, carried sometimes to startling reality, were very much to my taste, and I immediately strove to get acquainted with some of them, which I did in the following way:

Being secretary of the games I used generally to make up the list of players together with the captain, who used generally to take my advice on all matters of this kind; and I thought it advisable to procure some extraneous help when necessary, and therefore I wrote to the tutor's establishment to ask some of them to come over when we wanted them to help us, and they very readily assented to do so; we often asked them and I was very pleased indeed when they came, as they imparted considerable life to the games, and their manners were very taking with those of us who were inclined to be rowdy. They encouraged us in making fun of the master, in smoking and the like, things that were strictly against the rules of the school, and when the college teams used to come down they only added to these desires, and I

formed a very strong impression that the life they led was very fascinating and jolly. This quite settled my mind that I must go to Oxford; until then I had been undecided about it. When we went away from the school to play any match we were generally trusted to take care of ourselves, and we invariably betrayed that trust reposed in us in a multitude of different ways. We were no sooner out of sight of the school than we began to smoke, having laid in a supply of material for that pernicious habit in boys, and generally we indulged in some intoxicating drink, sang songs, and generally misbehaved ourselves. Together with this grew a spirit of insubordination toward the masters, which eventually culminated in open rebellion and brought on the downfall of that school from its former high position to its present low ebb. Long after we left and went to Oxford meetings were held by trustees to enquire into the state of things, the headmaster was called upon to resign and almost every master and boy left.

If only they had sent for us we could have explained the whole thing in very few words. I was sent for, and so far as I could I took the part of the staff against the trustees, but it made no difference; we had ruined the place, and they knew it only too well when too late. Openly we used to refuse to obey the dictum of the masters and they were powerless to do anything.

PRIZES AND PRANKS.

I carried off a number of prizes during my stay of some three years—several science prizes, and one prize for public recitation on prize day was a prize I valued much. I won also athletic prizes of different kinds for running, tennis, etc.

We were strictly forbidden to go down to the River Thames, which was not far distant, but nevertheless upon Sundays, despite the disadvantages of Sunday clothes and plug hats which we were compelled to wear on that day, we managed to have many enjoyable days on the river, generally free from detection of any kind, actual or inferred.

In fact, whatsoever was against the rules and whatsoever was redolent of lawlessness and disorder, in that we found especial delight. I say we, because I had a small coterie of friends who heartily joined in with all these escapades, which, as I remarked before, were only the stepping stone to the further opportunities offered to us for the continuance of more advanced disorder within the walls of the great university.

"NON SATIS" AT OXFORD.

During the last few weeks of my stay at Reading I was preparing, in a measure, for passing the entrance examination at Oxford —not a very serious matter, but still one in which accuracy and detail played important parts; I entirely underestimated the standard, and upon my appearing previous to my entering upon residence in Oxford I was pronounced "*non satis*," which is to say, not up to the mark. At this time I was preparing to enter Jesus College, but being warned by friends not to do so on account of its bad standing in the 'Varsity, I therefore retired gracefully into the country to gain the requisite knowledge for the examination before mentioned.

A SOLEMN WARNING TO BOYS.

This brings me to what will be the longest part of my narrative, and perhaps the most interesting to my readers. Before I go any further let me beg of any of my readers who are about to enter upon a university career, no matter where, to recognize the truth of the warning that will be found in my university career, and to weigh with the utmost care and deliberation and to abjure as they would poison the two following acts, which are bound to lead to folly, sin, and ruin:—First, never get into debt. Second, never borrow money. If you can't get what you want and pay for it then and there it is better far to go without it. Debts accumulate before you are aware of it, and then the borrowing of money is gradually resorted to to prevent legal redress for debt or to keep the knowledge of the facts from sorrowing parents. I could quote many instances of loving parents who have stinted themselves of almost the bare necessities of life to keep their sons at Oxford, and how have their sons repaid them? By squandering the hardly earned means of the parents in idle dissipation and riotous living; in betting—that curse of mankind—may be on cards, or other forms of gambling to which they may be prone. I do not speak alone or unsupported in my testimony of this fact. There are thousands who will add their experience to mine in this way. And where does the fault lie? With the undergraduate? Not altogether. Let me tell you why, and let me show you the temptations.

UNLIMITED CREDIT.

A man goes up to Oxford. He enters college, be it which it may. He no sooner enters his rooms, which have been set apart for him, than he finds his table covered with letters from tradesmen who vie with each other for the honour of supplying him with all manner of things, necessary and unnecessary; and letters, even at this early stage of the proceedings, from money-lenders offering him any amount on his note of hand simply, some of them living perhaps in the adjoining street. He can get credit unlimited from the wine merchant, the grocer, cigar mer-

chant, who deems it a personal favour to be privileged to keep in condition a dozen boxes of the best Havanas for his use; the tailor, from whom he will afterward borrow many a five pound note and see it put down in the bill as clothes; the shoemaker, the book store, the Italian warehouse men, the restaurants, and if he be a hunting or driving man and does not keep his own horses, then his bills will be largely augmented by his stable account, which will reach a length and amount in a short time such as only Oxford men are used to the sight of.

From all these and a host of others he can get almost unlimited credit, and when his credit falls with one he then can transfer his orders and custom to another man who deals in the same class of goods. Now you see the temptation. A man goes up from school or home into a sea of life. There is practically nothing he sees there he wishes for he cannot have. His credit unlimited; he is his own master; life and liberty to do his pleasure are his. What greater temptation than these can be set out before a man starting life? And to me as I sit writing in my prison cell, I know that had it not been for these and other means of luring a man from the right path when starting life I should not be sitting here to-night. Let me beg of all those, then, as they read this tale of misery, to take warning themselves and to warn others of the fate that surely awaits all those who fall into these snares.

There are instances, it is true, in which men have extricated themselves from the mass of debt which they have incurred, but how long has it taken them, and to what extent kept them down and in want in life? It is in the commencement that a start must be made against debt, and by the man himself. Temptation is very strong, and for a time he will not notice any evil consequences, but wait a little longer and see the result of yielding.

SOME NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS.

A very well known tailor in Oxford once told me that he had just received £5 from a clergyman on account of his bill contracted when he was at Oxford many years before, and that he was constantly receiving sums due on accounts of ten and fifteen years' standing. Of course this ability to give such credit is due to several reasons. In the first place the tradesman is an old-established capitalist. He can afford to wait. In the second he charges enormous prices for his goods, so that those who do pay make up largely for those who do not. It is often said that if the tradesmen get half the amount of their claims they are well paid.

I know of a man who is said to have gone to Poole, the great tailor, and thinking to get Poole's out without such a frightful price, took his own cloth with him and asked him to have it made up for him. He was duly measured, the suit completed and sent home, the bill amounting to precisely the same as if Poole had supplied the cloth. Being angry he went to the shop and demanded the reason of the bill. The great Poole answered cynically:—

"My dear sir, we never charge for the cloth; it is only the style we charge for."

Such are the men with whom you have to deal, and there are many of them, unfortunately.

I once had a friend whose tailor was growing very importunate, and he knew not how to keep the man at bay. At last the tailor put the matter into the hands of the proctor, and my friend was bound to take action of some sort. He went therefore to S——, who was president of an important club in which were noblemen and others who dealt largely with the tailor in question, and paid him well. S—— went to the tailor and said:—

"You are suing Mr. So-and-So for his bill?"

"Yes, sir," said the tailor.

"Then," said S——, "I am sorry to inform you that we shall all withdraw our custom from you and shall have to let it be known that you have behaved so badly to my friend that we have had to leave you altogether."

"I beg of you not to do that, sir," said the tailor. "The bill shall not be sued for or sent in again till the gentleman calls or sends for it."

"In that case," said S——, "I may reconsider my decision," which of course he did. I might quote many instances of this kind of thing.

MONEY LENDERS ARE WORSE.

So much, then, for the tradesmen. Now a word about the money-lenders, into whose hands the tradesmen mostly play. These gentlemen are a very numerous class, and can easily be approached. The *modus operandi* at Oxford used to be the following:—

If you wanted say £50 pretty quickly, go to the lender you happen to know of, who was generally some accountant acting in the interest of some one else. Tell him your home and college and state your wants. He immediately satisfies himself of your identity by consulting the college list, and if he has any debts to collect against you, which is generally the case, he then writes out a promissory note for the amount, to which the interest is added. I know of no case where less than thirty per cent was charged, and often more. He bids you go and get certain of your friends to add their names as security, and if you do so, and call again in the even-

ing, the money is there for you. So far, so good, but wait a little while and see the sequel.

You have borrowed £50. He then finds out who your tradesmen are, with whom you deal, and talks the matter over with them. "Mr. X has to-day borrowed £50." "That looks bad," says the tradesman. "Yes," says the shark, "you had better give me your bill to collect for you," and this is done by others also. Then the shark writes to the unsuspecting idiot who has borrowed the £50 saying that the bills have been placed in his hands for collection and must be paid by a certain date. There are two courses open—the one pleasing to the shark—*i.e.*, to continue borrowing—or the other, which is by far the best in the end, provided you only do it once and there let it end, is to make a clean breast of your difficulties to your parents and get them to advise you; only don't impose upon them if they happen to help you once. Of course there are London sharks who try to get you into their net by all manner of schemes; only these wretches always find out your social status and your father's means, etc., before they ever communicate with you at all.

I myself once borrowed £100 with a friend to go to Ascot races with. We paid £30 for the use of it for a short time, and £1 as the man's charge for making the transaction!

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

With these two references to tradesmen and money lenders I will pass on to my entrance at the portal of Alma Mater, and shall notice benefits and evils side by side as we pass along. If the student or would-be student be like the writer, and enter in the spirit that he did, then would I say:

Abandon hope all ye who enter here.

But if with a right spirit and determination, then there is much that is good before him, and we may well say of him, in the words of Virgil, "*Macte virtute puer.*" The careers of many who have done so well are well known and need no reference. Therefore, mine may be interesting from another standpoint.

ENTERING OXFORD.

Having cast about for a suitable college to enter, Fate whispered in my ear that Lincoln College was to be the chosen one, and Lincoln it was. I presented myself at the entrance examination at that institution in the spring or rather late winter of 1885. I passed the examination creditably and became a resident of the college two days later. On arriving my first act was to get my cap and gown, necessary adjuncts for all students. I was then shown my rooms, which were very comfortable and well furnished, and on my table I found the class of correspondence to which I have previously made reference. I was not exactly a greenhorn to Oxford life, as some of my friends had preceded me thither, and I had paid them periodical visits from time to

SPECIMEN OF SPORTING PRINT COMMON IN STUDENTS' ROOMS.

time and gained an insight into 'Varsity ways. The town I knew thoroughly well from having lived so near to it for so many years. So with friends all ready to look me up and show me the way, or rather their way, and a knowledge of the ancient city, I was much ahead of the usual freshman entering upon his first term. I was ushered into the presence of the sub-warden very soon after I had bought my cap and gown, and that worthy admonished me concerning certain rules and regulations laid down by the college. He impressed upon me the necessity of attending chapel thirty-two times during the term at least, and more if possible, and asked me to try and be in college by midnight. As to work, he left me to make my own arrangements to suit myself best, which I did.

GETTING ACQUAINTED.

Having finished my interview with him I proceeded to make myself acquainted with the geography of the place, and made many discoveries. I then proceeded to find out who were also freshmen that term, as the rule is hard and fast that no freshman may speak to a senior until that senior has called upon him or in some way recognized his presence in the college. The first day or two passed very quietly, and I awaited callers, spending some time in arranging my rooms. They were handsomely got up in a sporting style—foxes' brushes, sporting prints, whips, and spurs being prominent. I also had a very good piano, which often aided in making night hideous to many of the quieter inmates of the place. One by one callers soon presented themselves, generally said but little, and invited me on departing to visit them. Of those who called formally upon me I only answered one of their calls, and that upon a

man whom I afterward hated most cordially for the harm he always tried to do me. He was the head of a religious sect, and lost no opportunity of trying to bring me to grass by his powerful invectives against my goings on. Had this been all I should not have cared, but he went further, and often made mischief for me with the authorities themselves which needed a good deal of patching up.

UNIVERSITY "SPORTS."

Soon after I had got to know my way about, the sporting fraternity appeared on the scene, and, instead of calling formally and politely, came and asked me to lunch or dinner or something of that sort, which seemed to savour more of genuineness than the pharisaic spirit of the other callers. I accepted many invitations from them, and also promised to give my hearty co-operation to the games. I was elected to a place in the football team after my first game, and continued in the same set in which I first began.

THE 'VARSITY HUNT.

The hunting season was on then, and they wished me to accompany them to the meet, which I promised to do, being anxious to create a favourable impression, and I knew the country and was an average fencer. The glories of the 'Varsity hunt are departed. Time was when you could see thirty or forty hunters waiting outside the college gate, but now perhaps only three or four, or may be half a dozen, and hardly a pink jacket among them. The hunt breakfast still remains, remnant of the past—cold roast beef, game pies, old college ale and other well-known Oxford dishes. No such thing as tea or coffee pervades the true hunting man's domain on a hunting morning.

THE HUNTSMAN.

Your boots cleaned up as only old Oxford servants can clean them, everything in the greatest perfection, so that other people envy your get up as you go along the road to the meet, and you can hear everybody saying, "There are some of the 'Oxford boys,'" or, "There goes a ''Varsity man.'" So different would the appearance be of the different followers of the hunt. Having once gone I went many times, and in my hunting experiences met many good fellows, some of whom I kept up a correspondence with, and others who have dropped out of my sight. Around Oxford were plenty of foxes and good hounds to hunt them and liberally supported. All Oxford sportsmen know the old Oxford toast:

Horses stout and hounds healthy,
Earths well stopped and foxes plenty,

which will always be dear to lovers of that finest of all pastimes—namely, fox hunting.

AN OXFORD HUNTING FARMER.

While Oxford offers exceptional facilities for all manner of sports, yet for none are there such inducements to follow as the pastime and art of driving, and it was this particular branch of sport that completely took me from anything else in point of importance. All through my life I was fond of driving, in any shape or form; whether single, double, four-in-hand, tandem, unicorn, or other mode of harnessing, I was familiar with them all. I may at once say that my driving was the result of careful study. I know the theory of driving as thoroughly as any man can know it, and this I learned from the very best men—Mr. James Selby (now dead, who was considered the best whip of his day, and he made the record for coaching, London to Brighton, 108 miles, in eight and a half hours); Mr. James Higgs, the oldest Oxford professional whip, whose name is known to every Oxford man during the last forty years, and Mr. Franklin, of Oxford, who was a great authority on tandem driving, and besides these well-known whips I have sat beside a host of other amateurs who were all good enough to belong to the Coaching and Four-in-Hand Club,

and could be trusted with a team in the crowded streets of London. While I was up at Oxford I did more driving than any one else there, and I did all I knew to revive the old days of driving and coaching.

HE STARTS A CLUB.

I started a club which will long be remembered for its rapid growth and notoriety, yclept the Black and Tan Club, and which has been freely commented upon by the papers in connection with my case. I may here append a cutting from the papers anent

OXFORD HUNTING FARMER IN FIELD.

my Oxford life which will show the idea that some had. The Black and Tan Club held meetings once a week. I was the first president, and generally we made a descent weekly upon some quiet, unsuspecting little town outside Oxford with a variety of equipages, spent the day in carousing about the town, starting back very late, and arriving in Oxford in time to partake of a very heavy supper, which generally resulted in an all night sitting. Dinners and drives were the chief aims of this club, and of drives and dinners we had a surfeit and no mistake. There was no place within driving distance of Oxford, be it twenty, thirty, or even forty miles, that we did not know of and give good cause to know us from our incursions upon its peaceful inhabitants at unexpected times. Sometimes the excited inhabitants would give vent to their outraged feelings and fly to the local papers, usually some journalistic excrescence, as often local papers are, for redress, and give forth many terrible sentences relative to our treatment of their quiet suburb.

A CRUEL LIE NAILED.

Several of my driving incidents have been referred to in press accounts of my case, and I may as well go into them here, so that the public will understand them better and know how far they are true. One especially has been mentioned which says that I killed a horse while driving home against time. It occurred in this way :—A friend of mine, L——, being anxious to celebrate his birthday, and being under a close surveillance of the authorities for rowdy conduct, resolved to celebrate the auspicious day beyond the pale of university law, and having gotten together a merry party of pals we all hied ourselves unto the old town of Whitney, about ten miles from Oxford, or a little more—perhaps twelve miles. A lot of us went, and we got there all right, with only one runaway—no damage, however—and spent the day in the usual way. Dinner and birthday toasts were freely quaffed, and singing and general rows were indulged in until evening, when we started out on the return journey. All went well till about four miles from home, and going down a very steep hill the party in front of me, who was driving in a curricle, and having dropped all argument with the horses as to who should guide, were calmly leaving all judgment to those worthy animals, when they started at something in the grass and set off down the hill.

I was driving behind, and just as I came to the top of the hill myself I saw one of the worst accidents that I ever witnessed while driving. The near side horse stumbled on a rolling pebble and fell sideways towards the roadside and came down with a frightful smash. The concussion was so great as to break (so we found afterwards) a piece right out of his backbone some three or four inches long. We got down and I rode back for a veterinary surgeon, who, though unwilling to come at first, eventually did so, and after looking very wise (as generally all "vets" do), he told us nothing, so we left the horse there and proceeded to wake up the rest of the party, who had fallen asleep in the ditch, with the exception of one, who was trying to arrange a fight with the local cabman, and we journeyed onward as best we could.

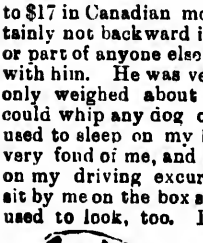
THE GIRL ONE MEETS AT THE SEASIDE.

I tell this story, as it was said I killed the horse. I can only say that had I treated my fellow creatures one-half as well as I always did my horses they would have precious little complaint to make against me. No one ever took more interest in or more care of a horse than I did, and I always attended to their wants before I did to my own. The horse is one of man's best friends, and he can show his appreciation to this class of dumb animals

in many ways that do not seem to have occurred to him yet. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is no sinicure, as we all know, and so long as the officials wink at cruelty to animals and impede the officers of the S.P.C.A. in finding out the offenders, there will be numerous cases of cruelty to and overworking horses that are unfit for work that are to be greatly deplored. A kind word to a horse is never lost. I have seen some most extraordinary instances of this. A dog is said to be the most sagacious of animals, but I do not think the horse is far off. He runs the dog very close, and in many cases the dog will have to finish strongly to get home first in the race for sagacity.

A word here may not be out of place with reference to what has been said about my bulldog that I had at Oxford. This dear old animal has been much maligned. He was given to me by a friend who was afraid of him for various reasons, and I was very glad to accept him, for he was very valuable. It has been laid to his charge by the press of America and Canada that he on one occasion killed a pig in the streets of Oxford. No such thing, I assure you. A pig was killed by a relative of his belonging to a Magdalen man, and his owner paid for the pig on the spot a sum equivalent to $17 in Canadian money. My dog was certainly not backward in taking his own part, or part of anyone else if they unduly meddled with him. He was very strong, although he only weighed about fifty pounds, yet he could whip any dog of his own weight. He used to sleep on my bed at night and grew very fond of me, and always accompanied me on my driving excursions. I taught him to sit by me on the box seat; and very funny he used to look, too. It has been said that I kept him to frighten away tradesmen who came with bills. Not a bit of it! Hardly anyone who met him in the town did not know him, and not only did they generally take some notice of him, but they often went out of their way to pet and feed him. I do not deny that there may have been a certain feeling of respect for him existing at that time. I think myself that there was. But of course bulldogs are ferocious-looking beasts, and we cannot expect everybody to fondle them as they would a toy terrier. At any rate his actions were much exaggerated by the press.

THE ROATING GIRL.



MY BULLDOG.

THE GIRLS AT OXFORD.

Before going further I may as well mention the different classes of companions and the society with which we associate at Oxford, beginning with the fair sex. Of society in Oxford without the college walls there is a great variety. If a man have friends among the towns-people he may spend some pleasant hours in their houses. Naturally the fair sex play an important part here as elsewhere; and it is a rare thing to enter a man's rooms without finding a few selected photographs of those nearest and dearest to them. I say a "few," for hearts at the 'Varsity are fickle and changing indeed.

THE DANCING GIRL.

Man's love is like the restless waves,
Ever at rise and fall;
The only love a woman craves,
It must be all in all.

But at Oxford I fancy it was pretty evenly divided. The girls you heard most of were "other fellows' sisters," and the speech often heard after a heavy supper, while intent upon the cigars and port wine, was in some such strain as this:—"Bai Jove, deah boy, did you see that sister of A.'s?"

AN OXFORD GIRL AT THE SEASIDE.

"Yes, isn't she wipping—must get introduced to her."

"Wat whot!" says Lord X. "That girl

in the pluk dwess? I didn't think much of her."

"Go way!" shout all. "You are jealous of C.'s getting an introduction," and so forth. Much time is spent in idle discussion of this kind.

ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF WOMEN.

There are many types of the fair sex—the boating girl, the dancing girl, the girl one meets out at dinner, the girl who studies and is very learned, the simple cousin from the country, and the girl you don't care to meet anywhere. I append illustrations of the most interesting of these types.

THE GIRL YOU MEET OUT AT DINNER.

The fair sex are, however, necessary and pleasant adjuncts to picnics, balls, dinners, parties, and on all occasions when on pleasure bent, especially during the weeks of the races, commemoration, and the summer term in general.

Some of the girls you meet are awfully funny. I remember hearing of two of these at the Eton and Harrow match. One said to the other:—

"Gertrude, dear, can you tell me which side is batting — Eton or Harrow?"

"Don't you know that, dear?" quoth her companion. "Well, Eton is in at one end and Harrow at the other."

Another misguided rosebud asked the pertinent question, "Which are they playing—Rugby or Association?"

Another gir', whose brother was captain of the Harrow team, by name Jackson, when asked if she had seen Mr. Gladstone, who was standing near, said, "No; but have you seen Jackson?" How fleeting is popularity!

Reader, have you any sisters? If so, before you take them to a cricket match instruct them in a few terms used in the game, and then their simple remarks will not afterward be served up as dainty dishes in the comic papers of the day.

I have often heard the old lines spoken in Oxford that

Who loves not woman, wine, and song,
Remains a fool his whole life long.

For the truth of this I cannot vouch. I leave it with you to decide. Another saying I used often to hear when in the neighbouring hotels, when the jovial hour of the evening drew on apace, that the things which would bring a man to ruin the quickest were—

Women, wine, and horses,
Beer, baccy, and billiards.

This is partly a contradiction of the former couplet. I leave the reader to pass judgment on this also.

NO GIRLS IN SCHOOL.

With life in college the female sex have little or nothing to do, save an occasional visit with an aunt or some other ancient fossil to do duty as a chaperon, to partake of tea in some friend's rooms. In many rooms may the hand of a loving mother or sister be traced in the handiwork that women excel so much in—the worked slippers, the border on the mantel shelf, and other bits of bric-a-brac.

A COQUETTE.

At times the college hall is turned into a ballroom by express permission of the dons, and the gardens, arranged with festoons of Chinese and other lights, present a particularly pretty aspect and form the basis of many innocent flirtations, often preconceived and specially arranged. I was always fond of dancing, and took part in many of the larger festivities held in my time. We were always pleased to see our own sisters, but we were still more pleased to see any other fellow's sisters. Strange, but true.

Having explained *en passant* our relations with the fair sex in the town and from the country I pass on to other topics.

VARIOUS EXPERIENCES.

LARKS AND LOVE AT OXFORD—A WONDERFUL WEDDING—RELIGIOUS MEN OF VARIOUS KINDS.

With regard to the "places of call" that were frequented in the university I will say a few words. There were many places where we used to pass away a few careless hours, and where we could meet without being interrupted by the ruthless rule and eye of

the grim and grasping proctors. Much has been said about my fondness for card-playing, but this is a mistake. True, I generally took a hand in a game of nap, whist, or écarte when I had a party on, but I was not a systematic card player by any means. I usually found that it took up too much time, and unless one played for pretty high stakes—which I never did—there was very little inducement to spend so much time in such a pursuit, and especially for me, who preferred something with more movement and "go" in it, and I think that of all the games that are played and resorted to in order to find enjoyment, or as the French have it, simply *pour passer le temps*, card playing was the least popular. In order to make a dinner or "gaudy" successful it was necessary to invite so many different people, and all these with different qualifications among them. For instance, if you are going to invite a few just to spend a social evening you must get one or two who can talk well and on almost any sporting subject (that is, of course, if you are a sporting character yourself); also one or two who can perform upon some musical instruments other than the piano—upon which latter instrument most men at Oxford could do a little vamping which served as the unlearned accompaniment to a comic song—or the noisy banjo. Not that the songs were all comic by any means; far from it, for I have heard in my own rooms some very excellent ballad and other songs which find a high place in the musical world, and very well sung they were, too. I have spoken previously of the number of theatrical artists I used to entertain, and from many of them we heard capital operatic and other songs, and I had many friends who could take their place in the concert room and do credit to themselves and to their university.

A MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

Much was said some time ago about a party of men calling themselves the "mysterious musicians," who, disguised in dominos and long black cloaks, after the manner suggested by the characters in "Les Manteaux Noirs," appeared at several seaside resorts singing upon the parades in the evening to the accompaniment of a piano, which was carried upon a cart drawn by a pony. They were evidently of good birth, so said the public, from their manner and voice; but who were they? Ah! there was the mystery. I can tell them; they were three undergraduates well known in Oxford, who started out thus in order to get funds (by passing round the hat) for some charitable object; and such a furor did they create that funds did flow into their coffers very freely. Alas! the frailty of human nature! We all know that charity begins at home—and so did the "mysterious musicians," and they acted upon that most excellent of precepts, so that I fear the charitable object turned out to be only themselves.

A PECULIAR CHARACTER.

Some of the friends that I had were possessed of very peculiar traits of character. I knew one man especially who attracted a good deal of notice by his eccentric habits. He was so well known, though, that we generally took little or no notice of what he said and did. He had one favourite dodge, however, which is worth relating. He often ran short of cash—a most necessary commodity among Oxford men—and, knowing that he was always borrowing from us, felt a little ashamed to come boldly and seek the proverdial "fiver" or even the modest quid, so resorted to artifice; he would dress himself in black, with silk hat and gloves to match, and hie himself to the nearest friend's rooms, and with a plaintive note commence a tale of woe, with a very woebegone face, generally that he had had a telegram saying that his sister was dead and that he had no money to go down to the funeral with. Such an application could not possibly be refused, and he always met with success at first. He then went to each in turn and made the same request. Sometimes we might not happen to compare notes, and he generally kept out of the way at the time for a day or two. But his sister died too often—sometimes once a fortnight—and then followed in rapid succession the death of his father, mother, aunt, and other relatives, which naturally led to suspicion, and mutual explanations and roars of laughter, in which he heartily joined.

PLAYING PROCTOR.

Upon one occasion this interesting individual dressed up as the proctor, with some of us as "bulldogs," and paraded the quiet streets of Oxford late in the evening, and pounced upon several unsuspecting freshmen, whom he directed to call upon the real proctor at ten o'clock the following morning, a proceeding which caused that worthy official a good deal of surprise and annoyance on the morrow when he found a train of freshmen calling upon him whom he had never met and knew not why they came. He had a knack of appearing in very strange disguises. I have seen him driving in a cab, quite intoxicated, dressed as a bachelor of music in the blue silk gown significant of that degree; I have seen him as a clergyman in a music hall in London, as a don parading the streets in a gown he had no right to wear at all, and half a dozen different styles. He had a penchant for the society of cabmen, and I have often

seen the *elite* of the 'Varsity cabmen at his table as though they were 'Varsity men themselves, eating his choicest viands and smoking his finest Havanas. One thing about him often caused great admiration, and that was his goodness to the poor. Open-handed as the day, many a poor and starved wayfarer has gone on his way rejoicing at the alms received, and many a sorrowful and heavy heart has been rendered light and happy for a time by the ready help and generous response to his appeal for aid in distress.

GOOD-HEARTED FELLOWS ALL.

Indeed, I saw much of this kind of thing. It is a rare thing not to be able to find some gentle trait or good point in any man's character. We are all prone to err, and we are told that charity covereth a multitude of sins, and I had no friend, I may truly say, who would not readily share his last shilling with a poor soul in distress. Though I say it myself (and I know those who knew me best will bear me out), I never refused to help a man or woman in want, and I have often given the money I needed myself to help another out of difficulties. I do not wish to appear anxious to make myself out a saint, far from it; but I do beg in this book to offer a most emphatic protest against those who have stamped me as mean and selfish. I was always ready to help a friend in need as they were always ready to help me; and if I had only kept all the money I lent and squandered recklessly to give my friends pleasure I should be very well off indeed now. I was fond of giving a good dinner, I own, and nothing gave me more pleasure than to see my guests thoroughly enjoying themselves in my rooms, be it dinner, wine or meeting, and at all times of the day, to the disadvantage of my work, I extended a cordial welcome to those who came, and to those who know the term I simply say that "my oak was never sported," which is to say my heavy outer door was never barred on the inside as is the custom of reading men. I often played billiards, and at the English game was a fair player—*i. e.*, I could run up thirty or so in a break. I hardly ever played pool or pyramids; I never gave them much attention, and the class of men who did play these games were generally a low lot. Unfortunately we had no billiard rooms in college, and had to go out to some of the public or pseudo private rooms kept by outsiders, and into these the loafers of the town used to congregate, together with a few betting sharps and others whose fame savoured of the back yard, stable, and kennel. Occasionally, however, we had a quiet game and enjoyed it much.

A friend of mine, who shall be nameless as he is now dead, once went to play a game of billiards in the public rooms, and finding his companion who had promised to turn up fail to do so, looked about for a player to try his skill with. He perceived an unknown man standing by the fire, and asked him if he played.

"A little," replied the stranger.

"Will you have a game with me?" said my friend.

"I will try," said the stranger, taking up a cue, "but you must give me some start."

"Marker!" said my friend, addressing the boy, sharply, "give this gentleman 50 in 200."

The boy grinned and obeyed. My friend broke the balls. The stranger replied with 150, unfinished. With an affable smile he said to my now dumbfounded friend:

"Allow me to introduce myself. I am John Roberts, champion billiard player of the world." My friend told me he has always fought very shy ever since of inviting a stranger to join him in a game since that somewhat novel and startling experience.

One of the most contemptible of persons is the billiard sharp. He lies in wait to catch the unwary, and very often does so. He pretends he cannot play and lets his dupe win for a time till he has a good stake on, and then of course he shows his true form and runs right away, both with the game and the dupe's money. There is only one effective way of dealing with this unwelcome personage and that is to "punch his head," and hard, too. It will have a beneficial effect. It is said of Donnybrook fair in Ireland that the rule laid down for the guidance of those attending that somewhat noisy gathering was, "When you see a head—hit it," and hit it they did. An old Irishman naively remarked to me that there was "no fun at all" there now, that the old custom of cracking the skulls had gone out. This treatment is good for the billiard sharp when you can catch him.

Talking of a fair, there was an old and time-honoured fair held in Oxford every year known as "St. Giles' Fair," and a very rowdy affair it was, too—all the usual crowd of shows and paraphernalia of a show ground. We used to go down and take it all in, ride on roundabouts, go into shows, and "do the thing up proper;" as the saying is.

AN AMERICAN SHOWMAN.

I once went into a show with a friend, the attraction of which was an "American knife throwing" business and a few other divertissements. We were very much struck by the young fellows, who threw the knives splendidly, their sister standing up against a board while they threw the knives all around her and each side of her outstretched arms.

We waited until the show was over, and then introduced ourselves to the showman, whom we found to be a typical American. We invited him to a hotel and broke a bottle of wine with him. After some preliminary talk he offered to introduce us to the company, and so we sent to invite them around to a private room in the hotel. They came, and oh! what a surprise! Such a transformation as we could never have believed; with the exception of the eldest son, who was a very good-looking fellow with a rather cowboylike appearance, they were awful—the ladies especially. From being smartly dressed, *chic* looking damsels, they were now old hags, and our estimation of them dropped cent per cent on the spot. However, we got a lot of good jokes and anecdotes out of the father, and we invited the sons to go fishing with us next day, which they did, and in the evening we again patronized the show, my friend standing up to be thrown at with great success. We spent the evening at the hotel, and on the following morning we appeased the old lady of the show with a bouquet of flowers, as she was extremely wroth with her husband for his having yielded to the seductive powers of the "old port" on the previous evening. We heard her swearing away outside the window a good deal, and we took notice of her; hence our reparation in the morning. The bait took, and we were again firmly established in the old girl's favour. They showed us all over the caravans, and we promised to go on to the next town with them, which we did, and being well known we boomed their show up fifty per cent. We stood on the platform in front of the show. My friend sang and played the banjo, and many who knew me asked if I was running the show! This got too strong for us, and we left them on the following day with some degree of satisfaction at the way in which show life is conducted, and the insight we gained, although very expensive in the matter of drinks and cigars, was always with us a somewhat pleasant and amusing experience. I never met with them again, although I met a man who used to be with them, and we renewed our acquaintance in the usual way.

'VARSITY MASHERS AND MASHES.

When we had nothing better to do we used often to stroll down to the Great Western station, and spend the afternoon in the refreshment room. Many trains passed through in a day, and there was generally a lively scene on the arrival of each train. There was a very jolly old manageress there, in my time, to whom on the occasion of her wedding we gave a handsome present among us for favours received at her hands in the shape of admittance on Sundays, sundry bottles of extra good wine and other little attentions of the fair sex who looked after the wants of the general public behind the bar. These girls varied much, and vied much with each other in securing the 'Varsity men for a "mash," and countless silk handkerchiefs, flowers, and other such like small and early tokens of affection found their way stationward. It was very amusing to see a few townsmen trying to put on the appearance of the 'Varsity style and endeavouring to make the running with the ladies at the bar. But short lived was their chance when any of the real Johnnies appeared; exit townsmen in rapid confusion. A friend of mine got engaged to one of the girls behind the bar, and really became very fond of her. I think she was a very nice kind of girl, but by no means fit for him, and so thought his father, but eventually he relented and gave consent. I am in no way opposed to marriages of this kind, where both parties are of honest intention. There is far too much said about marrying for position or for money nowadays. I say let a man please himself. I know of another instance where a collegeman married a girl of rather low estate, but which marriage turned out all right in the end, as he had the girl educated at a good school, and quite altered her manners and bearing, which previously were very boorish and crude. Some of his engagement letters from her were very funny. She would commence, "My own darling," and end up with, "Yours respectfully," and all of it execrably spelled. In spite of all his friends did to dissuade him from such a step he insisted upon it, and I am very glad it has turned out so well.

A READING GIRL.

A MIXED MARRIAGE.

The wedding ceremony, however, deserves a passing notice. I cannot give names of course, but the girl's parents were engaged in that salubrious and lucrative merchandise—namely, rags and bones—and naturally they were pleased with their son-in-law. The arrangements for the wedding were carried out by a friend of mine, and very well too. He arranged all about going to the church and getting suitable dresses for the bridesmaids and the old mother and father, the former of

whom, previous to the wedding day, avowed her intention of looking like a "blooming duchess." She was arrayed in violent contrasts of colours, having been intrusted with the money wherewith to rig herself out befitting the occasion. The father was plainly but suitably clad, and both of them had imbibed pretty freely of whiskey before they made their appearance. The appearance of the party at the church was very grotesque, but the service was successfully consummated, despite the protest of one man, who offered to fight the parson for as much money as he could put up, and the party adjourned to the wedding breakfast, which was laid at the nearest hotel. Words fail me to express to my readers any idea of that wedding breakfast and its guests. The happy pair, the old mother, who was growing very noisy, and drank, not only out of her own glass, but that of her neighbour also; the aged father, who ere long disappeared under the table intoxicated with success and whiskey; the local butcher and costermonger, who sat cheek by jowl with the sons of an aristocratic family, and the élite of the 'Varsity.

THE WEDDING BREAKFAST.

The breakfast was elaborate, and from the way in which occasionally a phalanx of forks and spoons and hands would descend upon some particular dish was proof of its giving thorough satisfaction. Whiskey and soda water was the chief drink, for of course the palate required lubrication, and the invitation to "'Ave a glass along wi' me?" was frequently mooted. Champagne they cared not for—thought it was "rot." Give them the good old Scotch, said they—and Scotch they had.

I think the climax was reached when the father was called upon to make a speech. He could not be found, however, for a time, as he had fallen asleep under the table, overcome completely by his wealth of bliss. He was at length dragged forth and propped up, and endeavoured to express himself. He remarked that he "wasn't going home till morning," and that he was "jolly good fellosh"; he also gave out that "Britains never would be slaves," and amid loud and prolonged applause he gave emphasis to his remarks by bringing down his hand with a terrible smack upon the bald head of an ancient fishmonger who sat next him. The latter protested strongly and rose to order.

"Sit down, you bald-headed old pirate!" said the father in sonorous and commanding tones, as the worthy fishmonger passed his hand anxiously over the giant roc's egg to see if any damage was done. The father then called upon the mother for a song, and disappeared with a crash again beneath the table amid loud applause. The old girl spoke a few words, and made a touching allusion to her own get-up, saying, "Lor blimey, if this get-up won't fetch 'em I'd like to know wot will?" and theng sang with touching pathos that beautiful ballad so full of a mother's tenderest love, yclept, "I Breathed on Them Gently, and They Died," and we believed it, too.

A DISTURBING ELEMENT.

All was going very amicably when one man, on the strength of what he had imbibed, got up and declared himself to be, without doubt, the best man in the room. This was more than the rest could stand, and in an instant the whole place was in a disgraceful uproar. The table was upset and the women bolted hastily from the room. All went for this braggart who got by far the worst of it, and others fought freely among themselves. The happy pair bolted off to London, and when we gazed upon the scene in the coming twilight at parting, where in the early morning had been a sumptuous table, spread with richest delicacies and strewn with flowers, there was now a confused mass of dishes, food, glasses, etc., and in the centre of the heap, sleeping peacefully, lay the aged and respected father. Such experiences are, however—and fortunately, too—very rare. It was, indeed, startling. Of course, it got all over the town and was mercilessly criticised. "Marriage in High Life" and such like announcements appeared in due form, and we all came in for unqualified chaff among our pals. However, as I said before, it turned out all right, and we all know that "all's well that ends well."

A LIVE THEATRE.

We had a very good theatre latterly called the Theatre Royal, and it supplied a long-felt want. Previous to its building we had a performance in the town hall and the old Victoria theatre, or, better still, the "old Vic," as it was known then, a very ramshackle old building, and utterly unfit for a theatre. We had some good fun, though, in this old building, and many a time has a well-directed orange caused the leader of the orchestra great discomfort. Sometimes we used to address remarks to those on the stage, and sometimes they would answer back again. One rather rash actor once made a reply to a man who addressed him, "One fool at a time, please." In an instant the place was in an uproar and summary vengeance executed upon the miscreant actor. Many like scenes were enacted in the old Vic.

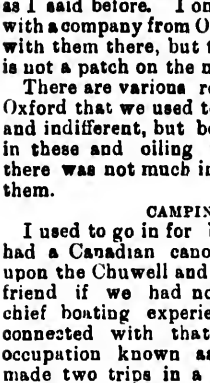
Not so in the new theatre, though, although I have seen some most extraordinary outbursts of enthusiasm evoked by the ap-

pearance of an old favourite or some pregnant joke or witty remark, and on the other hand a poor actor will not be tolerated at all. He who cannot please the crowd must hide his head when he comes to Oxford; for he must please the majority. The stage door rushes which are so prevalent at most of our theatres is not observed here, since the company generally accept some invitation beforehand, and thus are not assailed by supper-givers and bottle-crackers promiscuously. I hardly ever missed anything at the theatre, as I said before. I once went to Cambridge with a company from Oxford and stayed awhile with them there, but the Cambridge theatre is not a patch on the new theatre at Oxford.

There are various restaurants and bars in Oxford that we used to frequent, good, bad, and indifferent, but beyond meeting friends in these and oiling the machinery withal, there was not much interest connected with them.

CAMPING OUT.

I used to go in for boating of a kind. I had a Canadian canoe, and used to go out upon the Chuwell and lie and smoke with a friend if we had nothing else to do. My chief boating experiences at Oxford were connected with that healthy and bracing occupation known as "camping out." I made two trips in a large boat, fitted up properly with tent and stores, from Oxford to the source of the River Thames and back again, and a very good time we had. We used to take a dog and a gun, and always had something to show for ourselves at the end of each day. A few rabbits shot on the slopes by the river, and a brace or two of partridges bagged after pitching the camp in the evening, were often the results of a little innocent poaching upon an unsuspecting neighbour's land. One of us did the cooking, another looked after the boat and tent, and a third did the hunting. We used to bathe in the early morning, sleep most of the day, and progress onward in the evening. I made other trips down toward London, but never had such good fun or so pleasant a time as on the way up to the source. We often spent a month or six weeks in this manner, and derived considerable benefit from our rural and simple life that we led during the time that we were camping out.



BOATING MAN.

At the time when I was resident in Oxford I did not seem to make many enemies, at least I thought not, but it is quite evident that I did. The art of making enemies, or the gentle art of making enemies (as Mr. Whistler so aptly puts it in his excellent work), as pleasingly exemplified in many instances wherein the serious ones of this earth, carefully exasperated, have been prettily spurred on to unseemliness and indiscretion, while overcome with an undue sense of right, is not at all difficult to acquire and applies truly to my case. I knew that there were many who did not approve of or agree with my doings at Oxford, and openly said so, but to them I paid no heed, regarding them as cranks. Since my trial I have had letters from men whom I knew as rowdy characters, and friends who profess to have been converted and are leading a good and holy life, and who give me much good counsel and advice. I append some of these letters to show how time has affected them, and I am glad to hear of the change, for there was much room for it:

47 COLLEGE STREET, NORTHAMPTON,
September 26, 1890.

DEAR BIRCHALL,—I have been lay assistant to a clergyman in this town since August 1, and have been passing thro' many trials. I dare say you remember I was no canting hypocrite at Oxford, but since those days I have found out that there is no true peace and happiness except in Christ, and the faith which supports me in everything will support you even unto the end. "This God is our God for ever and for ever—He shall be our guide unto death." Of course you remember me. I have watched your course, how you started with bright prospects at school. Your Oxford course, like mine, became worse, and there was something in you which I always liked, altho' I did not approve of all your proceedings. And now, knowing the plight you are in by the papers, I cannot refrain from writing to you some words of sympathy and advice. Time is short, eternity is at hand. Give your heart to your Saviour now; before long you may be called upon to meet him. Remember that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin." "Cleanseth"—it is a present, continual, and effective operation. And if we are found in Him at the last, not having our own righteousness, but being made the righteousness of God in him, we shall pass thro' the grave and gate of death to our joyful resurrection beyond the grave. With much sympathy and heartfelt prayer that you may believe in Him, I remain yours very sincerely.

STEPHEN SWABEY.

ELLINGTON HOUSE,
MAIDENHEAD, Berks, Oct. 16, 1890.

MY DEAR BIRCHALL,—You will doubtless be surprised at receiving a letter from me; but I have it greatly on my heart to write to you and to tell you first that since I last saw you the Lord has saved my soul. He showed me that not only was I lost by nature (Eph. ii., 3), a child of wrath and hence capable of almost any wickedness (Eph. ii., 12), but also that I had sinned innumerable sins (Rom. iii., 23) against a holy God and was justly deserving of His righteous wrath, and unfit for His holy presence (Rom. ii., 18); yea, His presence would have been intolerable to me (Isaiah, vi., 5), and so in danger of spending an eternity of woe in outer darkness, where there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. (Matt., viii., 12). But what else did I find! I found that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have eternal life;" (John, iii., 16); that that beloved Son of God "bore my sins in His own body on the tree" (I. Peter, ii., 24). I believed this record that God gave of His son, rejoiced in the wondrous grace that could blot all my sins out and save me, and now he helps me to lead a new life (Titus, ii., 11, 12).

"Ah, wherefore, sinner, die?
Why to hell's lake descend?
The love of God, so deep, so high,
Doth unto thee extend.
His whosoever (John, iii., 13) meaneth thee,
The filthy and polluted thee,
Ungodly thee and me."

Yes, Birchall, God loves you, and though you have sinned against him, not only in this last and monstrous deed, but (if you consider) how many times *before*. He willeth not that you should perish. (II. Peter, iii., 9), but offers you forgiveness (Acts, v., 31; xiii., 38; xvi., 18). He can do this righteously because Jesus died and made atonement for the sins of the world (Rom., iii., 25, 26).

Oh, consider what an awful thing sin is in the sight of God; think how utterly vile and loathsome the sinner is in the sight of a thrice holy God, and then consider His infinite love, when *we deserved* His righteous wrath, in sending His holy son Jesus to die that shameful death on the cross; and oh, turn to Him (Luke, xv.), tell Him that you have sinned against Him, let *His* goodness melt your proud heart, and lead you to repentance. Your sins are great, but God's mercy is greater. You are vile, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanseth from all sin (I. John, i., 7). "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Oh, do not turn a deaf ear to such love; believe it and rejoice. You have only a short time to live, and then eternity begins for you. Where will you spend it, in heaven or hell? If you reject infinite mercy and love, nothing remains but infinite wrath. Let not Satan delude you that all is well.

Yours most sincerely,
ARTHUR W. FELLER.

I had indeed a large number of friends at Oxford, and almost all of them stay by me even now, which shows the true friendship they had with me and for me. A good many times I came across men of the religious type by accident or otherwise, and I had one slight experience of these men.

CRICKET AS RELIGIOUS BAIT.

I was staying in Scarborough, a fashionable seaside resort in the north of England, and having noticed in the local paper an announcement that members of the university were cordially invited to make use of a cricket ground there on application to a Mr. Arrowsmith, whose address was given, I sent around my card and duly received a ticket for the ground. I went up and took part in the game. So far so good. Immediately the game was over I was packing my cricket bag preparatory to going away again, when I was buttonholed by the gentleman in question, who asked me where I intended to spend the evening. "At the theatre," replied I promptly. "Won't you be there?" "No," said he solemnly. "I shall be at my mission room, and I want you to be there, too." I immediately saw that the cricket ground was the bait held out to catch fish for the mission room to go and hear him hold forth. After some argument he, finding that I still held to the theatre, then made me promise to be present at a service on the sands the next morning. I duly appeared and at once a number of hymn sheets were thrust into my hand to give round to the bystanders. I handed them to another chap and quietly sloped. I felt bound to go after having used the cricket ground, which was offered certainly under false pretences, and I am of opinion that if you can't get people to listen to religion or religious teaching for the sake of itself, then it is not right to try and entrap them, a bait for the preaching later on. I left off going to the cricket ground and pursued the somewhat uneven tenor of my way. The gentlemen who were holding this mission were mostly Oxford men, whom I knew something of up at the 'Varsity.

I have met so many religious humbugs (in the truest sense of the word), men whom I know are utterly unfit for the calling they occupy as would-be teachers of matters per-

taining to the soul, that I always fight shy of anyone who preaches religion in that style so well known in all these living examples of Dr. Jeykll and Mr. Hyde, and who adjure you carefully to follow their precepts and life, instead of being like the honest and sporting parson so dear to the days gone by who said :—" Brethren, do as I tell you, and not as I do myself !"

OXFORD NOT A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

During the whole of my time at Oxford I never heard a word of religious teaching save when I went to chapel, which I was compelled to do at least once every Sunday.

FROM A PEN-AND-INK SKETCH BY BIRCHALL, MADE IN PRISON.

No word of kindly advice from anyone is given gratuitously ; no kind of interest in the spiritual welfare of the student. I well remember the case of a young fellow who was about to enter Sandhurst as a university candidate for the army examination. He was a guileless youth when he came up to the 'Varsity, but did not remain so long, and when he went home in the vacation his good and loving mother noticed with sadness the change that so short an absence from home had worked upon him. She wrote to his tutor and complained that he had contracted the bad habit of swearing and other disgraceful manners, and asked why it should be so at such an ancient and dignified institution. The tutor made reply :—" Madam, I undertook to get your son's body into Sandhurst and not his soul !" This speaks for itself.

PERSONAL OPINION OF FAITH AND UNBELIEF.

I went several times to the Roman Catholic chapel in Oxford, prompted chiefly by curiosity and encouraged by a friend who had been converted (so he said) by the priest. The service appeared to me to be constantly hovering upon the border line between the sublime and the ridiculous, and the somewhat lengthy discourse of the priest, who, by emitting a cloud of words, sought to conceal his ignorance of the subject of which he was attempting to treat, was somewhat tiring. Perhaps I am prejudiced against Roman Catholics, especially the priests. Since my imprisonment here I received a few visits from these men, who came to me like wolves in sheep's clothing, as I afterwards found out from their conversation about me outside the gaol.

It has been stated that I am an atheist. Not a bit of it. I may have, to all intents and purposes, been leading the life of a practical atheist to a great extent, but I hold no faith in atheistic doctrine whatsoever. To define an atheist is a somewhat hard thing, as there are so many different classes of them. But I am not here to write a religious dissertation.

THE AUTHOR'S PHRENOLOGICAL CHART.

I have met occasionally with professors of the phrenological art. Several there were in Oxford, and the latest that I have met is Professor Cavanagh, of Toronto, a gentleman well known in scientific circles. I append the *resume* of his examination of my cranium. If there be any truth in phrenology, then I have at least one or two good points, but many shake their heads sadly and think such methods savour of the mysterious Black Art. A favourite expression of this country is to say that so and so has a great head. To an Oxford man this rather unique piece of information would mean that the possessor of the enlarged top-piece had been on a protracted spree the night before.

MAXIMUM MARKS, 7.

Amativeness, 6 (restrain) ; parental love, 6 ; inhabitiveness, 6 ; continuity, 6 ; combativeness, 5 ; destructiveness, 6, acquisitiveness, 6 ; secretiveness, 6 ; cautiousness, 6 (active) : approbativeness, 6 (self-love, large) ; R —firmness (will power), 7, very large, 14⅝ over ear ; conscientiousness, 4 (cultivate) ; hope, 4, (this has become smaller of late years, and your cautiousness larger) ; colour,

6; order, 6 (clean and tidy); calculation, 5; time, better than most folks to remember dates; tune, should play by ear or note; language, 6 (a good talker); causality, (reason), 4; comparison, 6 (a sharp, acute critic in many ways); human nature, 5; agreeableness, 6; veneration, 4 (not much influence); benevolence, 4; constructiveness, 5; ideality, 5; sublimity, 5; imitation, 6 (should be able, to copy, write, draw, etc., with or without colours); mirthfulness, 6 (active, jovial); individuality, 6 (very shrewd observer); form, 6 (excellent memory of faces and forms, could become a good shorthand writer); size, 6; weight, 5 (could be a good rider, rifle shot, and are sure footed.)

However, customs and expressions differ, so we cannot judge them alike, and I think that I am safe in saying that many things about my doings round here, when I was here before, people took exception to simply through ignorance of the customs which pre-

THE BALLET GIRL.

vail in the universities and among the more sporting communities in the Old Country. I saw an article in the *Sentinel-Review* that I was too much of a cad to be admitted into Woodstock society, but let me inform the so-called *elite* of Woodstock that I have enjoyed the advantages which accrue from the social intercourse with various noblemen and other aristocratic families not only when at Oxford, but through my own people—society to which the majority of the people of this town could never hope to rise or to mingle with. These little sallies at the expense of the truth amuse me much, as they are so transparent, and are only, as I have before stated, the parting shots of a carefully exasperated and narrow-minded nature, which, in its utter incompetency of self-control, lets fly broadcast upon the winds these quite too miserable and contemptible bagatelles of effete spleen.

COLLEGE MEN.

I have already spoken of the fair sex, now let me add a word about the men one meets at the 'varsity. Of the dons and tutors I would make but passing reference. But few of the really old typical dons that we read of remain at the present time. A younger generation is fast creeping up, and soon the last of the good old "three bottle" stamp will have drunk their last glass.

A DISCIPLE OF OLD PORT.

Reader, have you ever tasted the joys of the real old Oxford port? If not, there is a treat in store for you—especially if you are any judge of that royal beverage. You need not fear the ruthless eye of criticism. Deep in some college cellar, away from the noise and tumult of this busy world, safe from the watchful gossip-mongers so plentiful everywhere; deep down in a recess, where never yet whiskey detective with fishy eye and rigid Scott Act penetrated—there you may taste the joys of Oxford port. No ten cent whiskey that! The real old '47, which delighteth the heart of him who can lay claim to such a luxury.

Many are the thrilling anecdotes, many the reminiscences called up by that king of beverages. When I think of it myself I wander far away from this dismal scene into the glorious halo of the past, and my memory carries me back to the days when, gathered together to some jovial meeting, we sat and under the genial influence of the old port and the fine-flavoured Cabanas we recounted ourselves and listened to others recount experiences that shall never be forgotten.

ONE OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

To me, as I sit writing in this prison cell, what memories return, what half forgotten figures rise from the mists of oblivion and march past me as I write! A motley procession truly—grave and gay, old and young, wish and foolish, sober and bibulous, learned and unlearned; what plans were made, what practical and other jokes were hatched, what an utter absence of care and sorrow! Not one sad face among us all. No thought of what the morrow should bring for us, no wish to pierce the gloomy shade of the future and to endeavour to anticipate Fate's mighty hand. "No time like the present," said we, and in the present we lived, and many was the time we swore eternal friendship ere we sang "Auld Lang Syne," which we generally did with hands and arms interlocked before we said farewell.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DUDE.

I can remember well such a party; and when I look back on those present and recall them to my memory, of a party of seven two are now dead. I am soon to follow them. One is in India, one is a clergyman, one a merchant, and the last a barrister—all in widely different spheres of life. Even in this awful position those who knew me then have not deserted me, and by their kind and sympathetic letters have helped to alleviate the loneliness which I must otherwise have felt so keenly. Indeed, we may truly say with the poet:

When Fortune falls and fate doth cease to smile,
Dear is the friend that's constant all the while

Many such letters I have had—links that bind me to the bygone days, coming as they did like

Loving voices of old companions
Stealing out of the past once more.

They were indeed welcome, and the true spirit of friendship was stamped on every page. It has been asserted that I had no friends, but those who are best qualified to speak on the matter can testify to the contrary—and not only friends but friends of whose acquaintance any one might be justly proud. But I am diverging and becoming egotistical.

TYPES OF STUDENTS.

To return to our subject, that of the types of men we meet at the 'Varsity. There is the scholar who broods over his classics and who speaks in measured tones — with him I had but little in common; the would-be poet, at whom it is kindness to throw a brick; the athletic man, who is generally a good fellow, who often combines a fair amount of work with a great deal more play; the smug, who spends his time in uppish thought and hides himself by day within the shelter of his rooms, emerging like an owl at night to prowl around; the rowing man, wedded to the river; the religious man, he of many tracts and much preaching; the hunting man, the driving man, and the general all-round man, who combines a little of everything—and this latter class is by far the most numerous.

A YOUNG DUDE.

IMPORTANT CORRECTION.

It has been said that I passed no examination when at Oxford. This is erroneous. I passed three—matriculation, the first public examination, and Holy Scripture—the certificates of which can be seen in the 'Varsity books to this day. This is by way of correction.

A DUDE'S MORNING—READS THE PAPERS TO KILL TIME.

With all these different companions to choose from, a man need not complain of being unable to suit his taste. Of course there are some awful cads at the 'Varsity, whose people are low-born, but perhaps wealthy. I give you the remark of one of these on the occasion of his entrance examination. Quoth he:

"By gad, sir, I shall shortly appear in a gown of such dimensions as will make the old vice-chancellor bust himself." The vice-chancellor has not "bust" himself up to date of writing. He came from an ignorant place,

as the following anecdote will show: In the country town a Greek play by Sophocles was acted. The audience was very well pleased, and when finally the curtain was rung down on the last act the audience unanimously shouted for So-foccles (as they were pleased to pronounce the celebrated writer's name) as the author; and only when the manager had explained to them that Sophocles had been dead many hundreds of years did they realize the gross act of ignorance which they had perpetrated.

NOT THAT KIND OF A HORSE.

To turn to a somewhat similar case, only not so inexcusable, I knew of a man who had gone up to Oxford and naturally soon acquired a number of slang terms, including the word "pony," which is the slang for £25, a word often used on the race-course, and "monkey," which is the slang equivalent for £500. This fellow wrote to his mother, and, forgetting that good woman's ignorance of such words in their slang meaning, asked her to send him a pony immediately, as he wanted it badly. By next train arrived a four-legged pony, an excellent specimen of horseflesh, for the man. Mutual explanations followed. There were many instances of these strange acts on the part of parents, which caused a great deal of amusement with fellows up there.

LIBERTIES WITH CLASSICAL AND SACRED SUBJECTS.

I well remember a good joke being perpetrated in Brasenose College. In the quadraugle of that college was a statue of Hercules on a lofty pedestal. The college colours were black and yellow. On the occasion of celebrating the success of the college boat in the races, it occured to some wag that Hercules should also take part in the honour which had fallen to his college. A supply, therefore, of yellow and black paints was soon secured, and in the night time the statue was duly painted with broad black and yellow stripes, which in the morning presented a most ludicrous appearance. The paint was removed by the authorities after a great deal of trouble; but the culprits were never discovered.

One man I knew in Queen's College had the flag of the Salvation Army suspended in his rooms after the manner of a trophy. It was captured from that organization after a somewhat sharp encounter without the gates of the college. The drum was also captured and taken within the college, where the ends were burst in and all who assisted in its capture crawled through both ends as a sign of victory. The Army sought no converts in Queen's after this.

JUBILEE DAY FESTIVITIES.

I even remember the festivities in Oxford on the Jubilee day and night in 1887. It was unanimously resolved to "do the thing in good style," and we organized special detachments of men to carry into effect various ideas formed beforehand of showing loyalty, etc. I myself was in charge of a party whose duty was to dispense free drinks to anyone who would come up into our rooms and partake of our hospitality, and I laid in a large supply of firecrackers, rockets, etc., which we let off from the windows among the crowd causing no small amount of consternation among the bystanders. We brought out all the old wine cases and wood that we could find and lit an extensive bonfire in the street. Despite the protests of the police and the authorities, we soon had an immense fire burning, and all the men who lived in that part brought something to throw on the fire, if it was only a few of the landlord's chairs or tables. It lit up the whole street, and burned all night. One of our friends drove a four-in-hand and coach through all the streets of the town in very good style, taking into consideration the difficult nature of such an exploit. We poured water copiously upon the passers-by, and, indeed, anything that could be thrown out of the window was thrown out. Free fights were very plentiful, and the streets were literally strewn with hats which had been sadly bent and otherwise used for purposes that they were never intended for. The police were powerless to do anything at all, and all college rules were thrown to the winds. That night in Oxford will be long remembered by those who witnessed the strange sights and doings enacted upon that auspicious occasion.

WATER-COLOUR SKETCH MADE IN PRISON.

There are certain important personages

called proctors at the university, called in slang phraseology "progs," who are appointed as moral censors for the time being. Of these there are four in number—two senior and two junior—who, in company with three detectives, make nightly prowls through the streets and sometimes patrol the country lanes and roads in the hope of catching some luckless undergraduate spending his time in moonlight lovemaking and the like pernicious habits. These detectives are called "bulldogs," and the hatred of them is extremely cordial on every hand, since they will stop at no deceit or unscrupulous means to attain their end. If a man be out of college after nine p.m. or, indeed, after dusk, without his cap and gown he is liable to a fine of five shillings. If dining in a public restaurant after eight o'clock about ten shillings, and so forth. Driving in any shape or form was most strictly prohibited, and a party of four in a dog cart who had the mis-

ON A COLLEGE BARGE.

fortune to fall into the hands of these harpies was generally fined as follows:—The driver about £5 and his friends either £2 or £1 each, as fancy directed. In addition to this they were generally reported to the college authorities, to be dealt with accordingly. With these hawk-eye people I had many hairbreadth escapes. They lay in wait for me continually on every hand. Sometimes they would come out three or four miles into the country to try and catch us. I generally circumvented them as follows, and if this meet the eye of the gentlemen who held office during my residence in Lincoln College let them now see and understand how it was that they failed to catch their humble and obedient servant, the writer.

For country drives I almost invariably drove a tandem, which was considered a very grave offence in itself, and the *modus operandi* was as follows:—We used to go to the stable and drive out of the yard with only one horse, and send on the other ahead a little way out of the town in charge of a man who "knew the ropes." When we met him outside the town he would tackle on the leader and away we went. I usually left instructions with him to be at the same spot coming back about midnight, or a little earlier, and if he saw nothing of the proctors he would be there all right. But often have we met him several miles out in the country, and a low and well known whistle from the hedge proclaimed his presence. He would then take off the leader and leave us to drive the cart into town with one horse, as it is no easy task for three men even to stop a determined rush past, which we made as soon as we saw the proctor approaching. This important personage could easily be recognized, as he wore a flowing gown with velvet sleeves and long, white bands at the throat, and they generally walked two and two.

Poor old proctors! Many a time we have laughed over the way in which we have dodged them and their devices to catch us. Twice only was I fined. Once for dining out after hours, caught easily and without any attempt to escape, and once for playing a selection of airs upon the coach horn in the stilly night, and casting down many missiles upon the devoted head of the policeman who protested against any such breach of the peace. Most unreasonable people these policemen are as a rule; their demands are preposterous. Sometimes they had the cheek to tell us to move on. It generally resulted in there moving on themselves, though, I noticed.

A GOOD WORD FOR THE POLICE.

The inspectors were good enough sorts, though, and many a time have they stood in the breach between us and conviction. So perhaps their good acts may be said to have covered a multitude of sins. Upon one occasion I assisted in putting a couple of policemen to bed who had drunk not wisely but too well of the "old port," and its effects upon them was very ludicrous. However, I will refrain from exposing the little weakness of this much-abused class, among whom I had many firm followers, and they are often useful, to quote the well-known song:—

If you want to get a drink,
Ask a policeman:
He will manage it, I think,
Will a policeman.
If the "pubs" are closed or not
He'll produce the merry pot;
He can open all the lot—
Ask a policeman.

Likewise :—

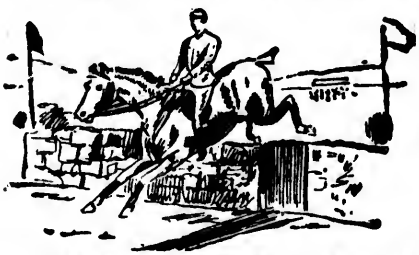
If you want to learn to run,
Ask a policeman;
How to fly, tho' eighteen stone,
Ask a policeman.
Watch a bobby in a fight;
In a trice he's out of sight—
For advice on rapid flight,
Ask a policeman.

But with all their faults we were often indebted to the "men in blue" for many things.

The 5th of November, popularly known as Guy Fawkes day, is now to a certain extent and formerly was a great day in Oxford and Cambridge. The fights known as the "Town and Gown" fights came off on that auspicious day. Bands of 'Varsity men parade the streets anxious to provoke a row with the townsmen, and many bitter and prolonged fights take place in the public streets. I myself took part in these organized rows, and although there is absolutely no sense or reason in keeping up such an entirely absurd custom; nevertheless, it is such an ancient tradition that we held it as sacred as the many old customs that time will never efface. I must say that we always beat the townspeople where fists came in—aye, and sticks, chair legs, and other instruments came in. I remember myself doing considerable execution with a skeleton leg of a man, which I borrowed from a local doctor by way of a novelty. We generally made a few wild charges through the people and tried to clear the streets. The majority of the townspeople liked to set upon a single college man if they could find one, and great were the rescues we took part in, often recapturing our friends even from the precincts of the police station itself. This custom is gradually dying out now, I think.

SOME NOTABLE COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENTS.

I once attended a fancy dress supper given in a friend's rooms, and was much concerned how to appear. I tried to secure the dress



AYLESBURY STEEPLECHASES—"THE STONE WALL."

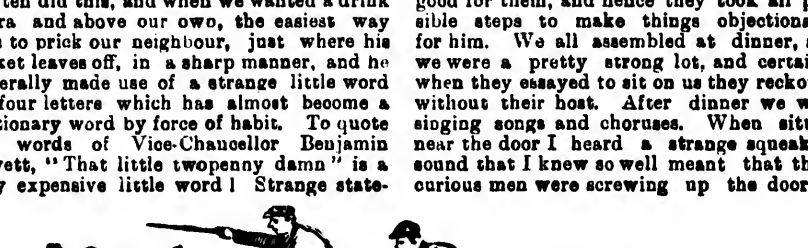
as worn by the Bishop of Oxford, with white wig, etc., but as I could not get it in time I obtained the dress of a pantaloon, as a friend was going as a clown, and I thought we should match very well. We arrived in a cab, amid the jeers of a crowd which had collected to watch us enter. A strange and motley crew we were. A couple of clowns, a Franciscan monk, a jockey, a church dignitary, several old English costumes, about Queen Anne's time, a toreador, myself a pantaloon, a Roman Emperor, Buffalo Bill, a Romish priest, and several others. At the start we looked very well, and as the evening wore on we looked still better. I sat next to my friend the clown, who had been surreptitiously putting into the huge pockets of his trousers such curious articles as chickens, lobster salads, bottles of wine, etc., and causing thereby a good deal of laughter. After the supper we began a kind of smoking concert. I presided at the piano, the monk sang a comic song, and the Romish priest executed a fine big boot dance and the church dignitary played the banjo. All took part, and some very weird and comical sights were witnessed during the late hours of the evening, especially at the close of the gathering, when we all sang "Auld Lang Syne" with joined hands, and then the well-known ditty, "We won't go home till morning," in which the clerically-attired gentleman heartily joined. I walked home with the monk, regardless of the public eye—my face being painted so that they could not well recognize me—and we stayed a short time on the way at one of the hotels and conversed with our friends, much to their amusement. Only one of us got into trouble; the clown, on returning to college, met the Dean in the porch, who simply requested him to call upon

PROF. CAVANAGH, PHRENOLOGIST.

him (the Dean) next morning, when he fined him £5 for what the respected Dean termed his inconceivable height of folly and idiocy.

FUN IN THE DINING HALL.

An old custom to which I often fell an easy prey was the forbidding of joke making at the hall dinner, which took place every evening at half past six. Anything partaking of the nature of a pun, or if one swore or used any bad language, was immediately punished by a sconce, which in other words meant that the offender had to stand "drinks all round." I often did this, and when we wanted a drink extra and above our own, the easiest way was to prick our neighbour, just where his jacket leaves off, in a sharp manner, and he generally made use of a strange little word of four letters which has almost become a dictionary word by force of habit. To quote the words of Vice-Chancellor Benjamin Jowett, "That little twopenny damn" is a very expensive little word! Strange statement for so learned a philosopher to give utterence to, strange indeed, but true.



A CLOSE FINISH.

We were supposed to go thirty-two times to chapel during every eight weeks, or, if we liked it better, to go to roll call, which was its equivalent. A slate was placed in the library for us to write our names on to show we were there, and we used to arrange to write each other's names, taking turn in this matter. I would do it one week and then someone else would do it the next, so that really it was no inconvenience for us to get up one week in the term and do our share. Unfortunately this dodge came to an untimely end, for one morning the Dean found the same name written down three times and demanded an explanation, which was not considered satisfactory by any means, and resulted in a different system being invented which was better for the college and worse for us.

We were supposed to be in college by midnight; after that hour we were fined considerable sums if caught. We had various ways of egress and ingress which were known to the select few, but which were not always available to us—"owing to a variety of circumstances over which we had no control."

A FIGHT IN "BOTANY BAY."

On one occasion I was invited, together with a party of friends, to dine with an out-college friend, whose rooms were not far away. This man was unpopular with his college for the simple reason that he was too good for them, and hence they took all possible steps to make things objectionable for him. We all assembled at dinner, and we were a pretty strong lot, and certainly when they essayed to sit on us they reckoned without their host. After dinner we were singing songs and choruses. When sitting near the door I heard a strange squeaking sound that I knew so well meant that those curious men were screwing up the door on the outside. Keeping the fact to myself, I told the party to keep on singing and took a hasty survey of the warlike resources of the room. A few old old swords, plenty of bottles (good sized ones, too), and fire-irons and a few good sticks were about all I could notice of any use to smash in the door with, which had to be done before we could proceed to deal with those on the outside. I then whispered to the others what I suspected was going on, and they quickly prepared themselves for the fray. Dress coats were hastily discarded and sleeves rolled up, and we made a combined rush with all our weapons on the panels of the door, which flew in all directions. We dashed upon them and fell upon the unsuspecting crowd with a vengeance, scattering them in all directions. However, like the cowards they were, they failed to show fight, and so we gave up the chase. I may mention that this took place in Worcester College, commonly called "Botany Bay," from its

remote position and the set of smugs which composed its inhabitants, the one exception to which was my friend Fox, who will not mind allusion to his name, I know, and who will long be remembered by the Worcester men as an example whom many of them might have followed with advantage.

I took part in many similar scenes too numerous to mention, and I just give passing examples to give the reader an idea of some of the doings which we participated in. One escapade which brought in its train serious trouble to many was the following.

A VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE.

We were strolling round the college one night about twelve o'clock, and I espied the college ladder leaning against the wall of the kitchen; I immediately thought of the idea of "fire!" and we took down the ladder and immediately placed it against a window on the second floor, calling loudly "Fire! fire!" One man broke the window with his mortar board and opened it, crawled in, and I followed, all the while shouting loudly at the top of our voices. The man to whom the rooms belonged got out of bed and protested strongly against our arrival on the scene without knocking at the door (although we had knocked hard enough on the window to break it), and declared most emphatically that there was no fire there; to this we replied that we would soon make one, and immediately set some papers, etc., afire. By this time a crowd of college men had assembled at the foot of the ladder, and we displayed burning papers, etc., at the top of the ladder, and called on them to ascend the ladder and come to us. In a moment they swarmed on to the ladder, and we at the top poured streams of water upon them and on those below, and threw down everything upon the crowd that would go out of the window. Men kept on arriving at the top of the ladder like drowned rats, and running down the stairs and up the ladder again and again. The place was a perfect pandemonium. We moved our quarters and attended similar fires in different parts of the college, the *modus operandi* being the same in every case.

SETTLING THE DAMAGES.

In the morning, however, we found a note on our table requesting us to be in college at a certain time, as we were wanted to see the dean. We understood, and presented ourselves before the tutors and the dean, who were arrayed in full war paint. The dean questioned me as to being captain of a fire brigade of whose previous organization nothing seemed to be known. I endeavoured to explain the necessity of having a fire drill, but the dean thought otherwise, and sagely remarked that midnight was not the most suitable time to carry on such operations. In scathing tones, at which I could hardly refrain from laughing, he pronounced sentence upon me, which was fortunately a very light one indeed, merely to go into lodgings for the rest of the term and be out of college by ten o'clock every night. This I didn't mind at all, but several of the others got it pretty hot, one being sent away for a term, which made his stern parent very wroth against him for a long time. Thus ended the prematurely formed fire brigade, which, however, did good service for one night, especially the salvage corps, who removed articles of furniture from the scene of the fire, which it took the owner a long time to restore again to their wonted places in his rooms.

MY CONNECTION WITH THE STAGE.

FACTS ABOUT THE AUTHOR'S DRAMATIC CAREER AND ABOUT THE STAGE GENERALLY.

I was always, from a youngster upward, attracted by the glare and glimmer of the footlights, and consequently was a constant frequenter of the theatre upon all occasions when I was able to give effect to that pleasurable occupation. I was fond of amateur acting, and this propensity was gradually developed by acting in small farces at home and at certain entertainments given for charity before I went to Oxford. While there I cultivated the acquaintance of all theatrical persons that I could get within reach of, by asking them, as a rule, to an extensive supper in my rooms, of which invitation they generally availed themselves. In this way I gathered a certain amount of theatrical knowledge, and used to follow the companies from place to place. A club was started in the 'Varsity yclept the "Oxford University Histrionic

THE VOCALIST.

Club," formed for the purpose of acting and carrying on the amateur performance of plays for charitable purposes. One of our first performances was given in Tenby, South Wales, for the benefit of the Royal Lifeboat Fund, under the patronage of the Mayor of that town. We arrived in the town, about a dozen of us, with the aid of some lady friends, and rehearsed fully for the piece. We were well up in our parts and had a professional wigster to assist us in our making up. I played the part of an irate old man—a somewhat unsuitable part for me, but I yielded the "fat" parts to my comrades, who were more suitable for them than I. We performed on the whole creditably, and we were eulogized by the press and public, only I believe a supper we held had a good deal to do with the favourable criticism. We played a couple of nights here with success, and then went on elsewhere, with varying success, till the very heavy expense of amateur acting caused us to conclude our tour—the effect, however, was left upon me.

THE AUTHOR BECOMES A MANAGER.

I ever afterwards hankered after the stage, not so much as an actual participator in the characters of the play, but as an accessory in any way to a theatrical company. In the long vacation of 1887 my wish was gratified, and I became acting manager by paying a premium to Mr. Edgar Colona, a well-known tragedian, who was travelling with his company in the provinces. He played "Hamlet," "Othello," "Richard III.," and other plays belonging to what actors called the "legitimate drama." We travelled through the provinces with varying success, during which time, under his able guidance, I became familiar with the details of management in all its branches. At times when by accident or sickness any member of the company failed to put in an appearance, I consented to fill the bill; but bold is the ignorant amateur who can face the music surrounded by professional brethren if he be without experience. However, I was not above taking hints from the older members of the company, and eventually got so far as to essay the part of George Peyton in that immortal drama the "Octoroon," and got through it without any hostile demonstration on the part of the audience, and without being the honoured recipient of a bouquet of rotten eggs.

However, I kept strictly to the management after this, and as Mr. Colona was lessee and manager of a theatre in the midlands and was unable to personally superintend this part of his business he appointed me manager of that theatre, to reside in the town in which the theatre was, and it was not long before I acquired from him the rights and lease of the place for myself.

KNEW WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTED.

I entered upon the managerial duties under somewhat pleasant auspices, as I found that in the town in which I was situated (Burton-on-Trent) there was a fair number of old 'Varsity acquaintances, who were learning brewing at the fine establishments of that class there. They soon found me out at my new post, as I made no secret of my name, and we used to meet every night and have great times. I catered for the public taste as I judged best. Generally we had a light show, a burlesque, or a music hall kind of entertainment, which was best suited to the tastes of the young men there, on whom I chiefly depended to fill the house, and which was entirely in accordance with my own idea of what best suited the public. I certainly made a wise choice, and succeeded far better with this light and airy entertainment than with the deep and cumbersome drama, which the more staid playgoers preferred. I met and formed the acquaintance of many well-known actors, and others who have risen into prominence since then, and I must say of actors, as a class, that a better-hearted, more generous-minded, brotherly class of men I have never chanced to meet with in the whole of my wanderings. As a rule they are poorly paid, and seldom rewarded save by the plaudits of an admiring public, but they are ever and always ready to help a friend in distress or give their services and time for any charitable purpose which is worthy their good offices.

A BALLET GIRL.

A SCENE IN A PENNY THEATRE.

I have visited, I think I may say, all the theatres and music halls of any note in London and the provinces, some of them on many occasions. Of course my being a manager myself procured for me a free seat in any one of them, and courtesy at the hands of the respective managers.

I well remember, in a common travelling theatre to which the admission was, I think, only a penny, on a show ground, a very unrehearsed effect taking place. The advertised play was "Richard III.," and the players were every one of them cockneys, with that very strong accent of speech so common to that class. The King was a gorgeously dressed specimen, with all the

clothes of all hues and colours that he could possibly crowd upon the surface of his somewhat extensive body. Where the speech comes in, "My lord, we've captured Buckingham!" and the King should reply, "Off with his head!" a frightfully-accented cockney rushed on to the stage and shouted out, "My lord, my lord, we've captured Buckingham, and we off with his head!" (all in cockney accent, of course). The King, not at all disturbed, replied (also in the same accent), "Oh! you have, have you; then you've been and spoilt the whole blooming piece, and we shall all have to go out and begin again!!!" Having asked the indulgence of the public, they commenced afresh, and finished the piece without any further mishap.

SOME TRICKS OF THE TRADE.

I should not from my experience advise the stage as a profession. Either sterling merit or influence is required to enable a young actor to rise, and the profession is entirely overcrowded. In the provincial towns this is especially the case. Of course anyone who has ever been on a stage calls himself an actor, and you often see such announcements as the following, which are very misleading to the uninitiated:—

THEATRE ROYAL, WOODSTOCK,
TO-NIGHT, at 7.

the talented actor, Mr. DE LITTLE BUNCO, from Drury Lane Theatre, London, and all the principal theatres,
assisted by the popular and emotional actress,
MADAME SHOWALEGSKI,
from the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera House, New York, &c., &c.

When we come to find out who these persons really are we find that the talented actor, Mr. De Little Bunco, on several occasions played the hind legs of an elepant in a pantomime at the house named, and for a small consideration was knocked down nightly by the clown in the same performance. Similarly we find that Mme. Showalegski played with great success the part of a sleeping nymph in the transformation scene, or else assisted some lady of distinction upon the stage to dress for the performance in which she was engaged. Verily, 'tis not fine feathers make fine birds! And to those who are about to enter upon the stage as a profession I would suggest to them to pause upon the threshold and to gaze at the sign which meets their eyes on every hand, and the truth of which no one will for a moment deny—namely, "All is not gold that glitters."

A LADY OF THE CHORUS.

DEVOTED TO HORSE RACING.

On the subject of horse racing I could write forever, I believe, but sufficient for me

SKETCH BY BIRCHALL.

will be to just outline my connection with this kingly sport, and to give my readers this piece of very, very stale information, that racing offers the best means of being able to lose a very large amount of money in the very shortest time if so disposed. When I was at Oxford there was no actual meeting there. When we spoke of the races we meant boat races. There were a few private sweepstakes got up from time to time by enterprising individuals, but not many. Our great meeting was at Aylesbury, a place easily reached by road or rail. Latterly the authorities have attempted in any way they could to put a stop to all 'Varsity men going there, but mostly without effect. Many are the good times we had in connection with this time-honoured meeting. I append a couple of illustrations of steeplechasing at Aylesbury.

Of course we were enabled by the efficient train service of the G. W. R. to get to any of the metropolitan race meetings and back again the same night, also to other provincial meetings in a similar way, and we were not slow to take advantage of this

benefit. There were several resident bookmakers in Oxford, so that we could invest our money without going to the races themselves if we so wished—a convenience that many appreciated muchly. There was lots of betting—much more than was ever known—and many men used to bet who could not afford to lose anything in reality, and when they did lose only plunged the more heavily into debt to try and recoup their loss. This was a bad state of things. As a matter of fact I always had pretty good luck at it myself, and generally came out on top, but not so with many others that I knew of, who lost all they had and borrowed also frequently to repay other debts, getting deeper and deeper into the mire. Sometimes fortune would smile, but oftener not.

PRACTICAL ADVICE TO GREENHORNS.

My advice to young men like myself after my experience of good and bad luck in myself and hundreds of others is, don't bet at all. But if you must and will do so, and you like to see your money in the air, then let me also give you a word of advice. Don't bet on every race—you are sure to lose in the long run—and don't bet according to any of the so-called systems; they are absolute rubbish. Wait for the good thing and then plank it down when it comes. Of course there are a hundred and one different systems which are all useless. Another thing—don't listen to touts and people who offer you cheap information. They know nothing at all about the matter.

Unless young men have lots of spare cash and they want to lose it or to transfer it over to other hands without much trouble, I heartily advise them not to go racing. I used to ride a good deal myself, and I have been told am a good horseman, both on the flat and across country. I have generally done very well despite a few accidents; I have managed as a rule to get the country. The last race I rode in was in August of last year. I append the cutting from the English *Sporting Life* showing the account of the race:—

[Copy.]

(From the London Sportsman, August 17, 1889)

STAINES RACES.

1.30 P.M.—Match for £20 a side, owners to ride.

	St.	Lbs.
Mr. Reg. Birchall's br. mare Pinky....	10	7 1
Mr. I. F. Lynch's b. mare The Kiddis..	11	7 2

Betting, 6—4 on Pinky. The pair ran together for a mile, where the favourite drew out; nearing home, however, the non-favourite drew up, but Pinky going on won easily by ten lengths.

I have done a little bookmaking, which is a far more profitable business than backing horses. I have been on almost all the race courses in England of any note, and seen the important races run. We used always to drive down to Ascot races when at Oxford, Ascot being the most fashionable meeting we have in England. We drove down in good style in a well-appointed coach, four-in-hand,

AYLESBURY STEEPLECHASES—THE FAVOURITE FALLS.

got up regardless of expense in the regulation dress—grey frock coats and white plug hats, lavender gloves, &c., &c.—and we generally had a very select party with us. It was great fun, and we always managed to dodge the authorities quite safely. After we left Oxford we used to make a point of meeting in London, and going down from some point in the road where we all met.

A GOOD WORD FOR RACING MEN.

Among the racing men I met there were certainly some of the kindest-hearted and most generous men that it was ever my lot to meet, and I have never seen any reason sufficiently strong or sound for the phalanx of bitter words that are so often poured forth against racing men as a class by their narrow-minded brethren. Of course there are dishonest men in this branch of sport, as in every other; this must, unfortunately, be ad-

mitted; but the majority, and a very large majority, of sporting men are away ahead in honesty and honourable conduct when you compare them with many other independent classes.

It ill becomes me in my present position to mention names, but I have met a large number of our leading sportsmen from time to time, and I could tell a great many very laughable anecdotes of some of them, but being devoid of names they would be likewise devoid of interest.

I followed racing more or less for about four or five years, and never got tired of it in any way. The more you see, I believe, the more you want to see, and the fascination grows upon you more and more. I know it did upon me, and others have told me the same.

FARM LIFE IN CANADA.

THE AUTHOR PAYS A PREMIUM TO STUDY FARMING, A LITTLE OF WHICH WAS ENOUGH.

In the autumn of 1888 I communicated with Ford & Rathbone, of London, whose names are well known in these parts. From my own experience I should say that Fraud & Rathbone would be a more fitting description of that firm. I had several times previously corresponded with them under the name of Birchall, and received replies concerning Canadian farming and living. I called upon them, and they assured me of the comfort and ease of the farmer's life, and of the quantity of sport of all kinds and the absence of much work.

I was taken with the idea, and after my marriage, as I had some money to spare, I thought it presented a good opening in life. It was then that I decided to take the name of Somerset out here, not that I had not used the name before in England, for I had, and it was on no account that I desired people to think me a lord or anything of the kind, but for a private reason and connection which I am not at liberty to make public here. When questioned as to whether I was Lord Somerset I always returned a negative answer, and Ford & Rathbone introduced me as plain Mr. Somerset.

After signing a contract with the above firm to live on a farm and in a house (a photograph of which was shown me), which never existed at all, save in their fertile imagination (the photograph being simply of some very fine and rich man's house and nothing like a farmhouse out here), I deposited with them £500 and sailed for Woodstock on November 21, 1888. After spending a few days in New York I arrived here and abode in the house of Mr. William McDonald, who is far too well known all over Canada to need any introduction from me. I found him kind and ready to give at all times most valuable advice, and that "what he said was true." He said he was afraid I should find things a little rough, and I began to grow suspicious. After remaining a few days with him he took me out upon a farm in company with a very talkative man named Moffatt, who told me much concerning himself—of his triumphs in the sporting arena, especially at Sheepshead Bay, where he had electrified the spectators by some marvellous feats of riding and driving. However, despite all these hindrances, we arrived at the Wilcox farm in Durham township.

QUICKLY DISENCHANTED.

Words fail me entirely, dear reader, to give you any idea of my impressions of farm life in Canada conducted in the style in which I saw it. I think the bonus of $125 which accrued to the farmer was the thing foremost in his mind. A dirty house, dirty children, a filthy bedroom, a bed that even the commonest gaol beds would give points to, were not calculated to increase one's faith in Fraud & Rathbone's gilded statements. So on the following day I left this human pig sty and returned to Woodstock, and demanded an explanation of Mr. McDonald. He explained the matter by saying he did not understand what I wanted, and that what he said was true, as usual. I very soon decided that farming was "off," and very much "off." However, as I had until the following May on my hands I set to work to make the best of it.

A VALUED OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

Be it here said to Mr. William McDonald's credit that, despite any unpleasantness that arose from that gentleman's strange and eccentric habits and the mysterious manner he used to put on when there was no mystery at all, he was always kind-hearted, and made me welcome whenever I called at his house, and the fault lay not at his door, but at that of the firm who employed him. He did his best and couldn't do more, and there were many points about "Billy" Macdonald that made him at once a genial and friendly character. Good old Billy! Many an amusing hour have you helped to while away and many a joke have we had at your expense, but you always took it well and in good part. There was one specially noticeable feature about Mr. McDonald—namely, that his body seemed possessed of the power of ubiquity.

AN EMPHATIC DENIAL.

My time here I spent chiefly in driving about different parts, and while I mention this I wish to state most emphatically that

on no occasion whatsoever, whether hunting, driving, riding, or fishing, or what not, was I ever within the swamp where the murder is said to have been committed. I was at Pine Pond always in the company of friends, and beyond being there and knowing one way to get there I never had the slightest knowledge of Mud lake or the swamp or their whereabouts, and there is not a man who can truthfully come forth and say that I did. I never was out hunting alone, and those who went with me on any of my hunting excursions will all be able to testify to the truth of what I say. Anyone, therefore, who stated that I had knowledge of Mud lake or was ever there told a wilful and corrupt lie.

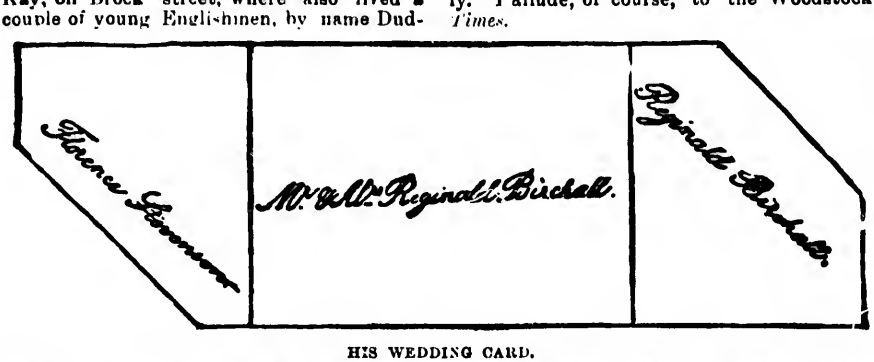
AMATEUR PRISON INSPECTION.

But to return to my subject. I stayed here until May, 1889, during which time I lived in the home of the late Mrs. John McKay, on Brock street, where also lived a couple of young Englishmen, by name Dudley and Overweg, both very gentlemanly fellows, and with whom I made firm friends; both these gentlemen were Fraud & Rathbone's protégés.

The only money I recovered from F. & B. was $125—the bonus which the poor farmer did not get after all—and when I returned home the firm had "busted up," as I always thought it would. I met many very nice folks in Woodstock and carried away pleasant memories of the place, but when on one occasion I went as a visitor through the gaol and was conducted on a tour of inspection through that strange building by that most excellent of men, Mr. James Forbes, I little thought that in so short a time I should be a prisoner there.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LOCAL PRESS.

I do not say much of my doings in Woodstock; they were pretty well known, and those who knew me here will best know how to deal with the reports that appeared in the papers thereon. I may here pay a passing tribute to the two local sheets yleept the *Standard* and the *Sentinel-Review*. To these I have nothing to be grateful for, but I think they ought to thank me for the increase of circulation which I caused them. Comparatively unknown until this case came up, they had doubtless managed to eke out a precarious living upon the streets of Woodstock, and they ought really to be grateful for the additional circulation that my case gave rise to. Doubtless now they will again return to their pristine stale and moribund condition, emerging only from the gloom of obscurity when some sensational and imaginative topic fills the bill, a period so dear to all such examples of journalistic excrescence. There is one paper, however, in the town which bears upon its face the hall mark of respectability. Old established, it has kept its head above the waves of the journalistic sea and still rides on steadily, and, I believe, prosperously. I allude, of course, to the Woodstock *Times*.



HIS WEDDING CARD.

As I have said, I left Woodstock in May, 1889, and returned to England shortly afterward. Thus ended my short experience of Canadian life during that period, and when I left I certainly left with the firm conviction resting upon my mind that I would never return again. In this I proved to be wrong, as the sequel will show.

EXPERIENCES AS A PHOTOGRAPHER.

THE AUTHOR "HUSTLES" FOR DESIRABLE CAMERA SUBJECTS AND ALWAYS GETS THEM.

When I returned home from Canada to England I did nothing particular except go to races for about a month. I lived in the house of Mr. David Stevenson, Bainbridge, Maberley road, Upper Norwood, S.E., whose name has been much brought into the press in connection with this case, being my wife's father. I have throughout refrained from mentioning my wife in any way whatsoever, save to refer to the fact of my marriage and

to acknowledge the faithful and loving way in which (to use the words of my eminent counsel, Mr. Blackstock) she has stood by me through good and evil report like a beautiful garland round my neck, with closest clinging and through darkest storm, and to acknowledge the true comfort that she has been to me in my sorrow, and the utter sorrow and grief I feel for having blighted her life as I have. She knew no dishonest or dishonourable action of mine, nor had she share or part in any of such actions, and had I followed her blameless life I should not have been here to-day. But I cannot bear to speak on this very tenderest subject. My readers will understand my feelings and spare me speaking on a subject which arouses in me such complete suffering and pain.

HIS FATHER-IN-LAW.

With regard to Mr. Stevenson, much has been put forward as his views about me and my marriage. I append a letter from him which I received shortly after my marriage. He was well aware that the marriage might take place any day, as he knew I had the license, but did not know the actual day until the afternoon of the day upon which I was married, and from the tone of the letter my readers may judge for themselves how he took the matter. This may correct many erroneous impressions that have been formed. I may say of the gentleman in question that he is somewhat eccentric and erratic, and that much of what he says in excitement he would not give utterance to in his sober moments. He is a genial old fellow in society, with an unfailing supply of anecdotes and spirited jokes, and is, in fact, a type of the almost extinct "three-bottle" men, referred to by me in a previous chapter. He is general traffic superintendent of the London and North-Western Railway Company in England, and is considered one of the oldest and best authorities on railway matters. A book will shortly be published by him in England and the States entitled, "Fifty Years with the London and North-Western Railway Company," which I have read and found full of interesting matter, and which will, no doubt, find a ready sale. Something has been said of his predicting an unhappy end for his daughter, but there is no word of truth in any of it. We were always on the best of terms, and our correspondence and dealings show it.

GOES INTO PHOTOGRAPHY.

But to return. I lived in his house, occupying a part of it with my wife. Growing tired of doing nothing, I had the offer of a position of advertising agent to a fashionable firm of photographers in London—Mayall & Co., No. 164 New Bond street, London, W. The name of Mayall is well known in connection with the photographic world. Mr. Mayall, however, after amassing a considerable fortune, lost it by speculation, and sold his business, which he had carried on so very successfully for many years, to a limited liability company, the directors of which bought nearly all the shares themselves. Mr. William J. Wright, of the well-known firm of H. S. King & Co., bankers, in London, was the managing director of the business. To the uninitiated a photographer's business presents a wide field for learning, and many things that had surprised me in the outer mazes of ignorance belittled themselves on acquaintance with the intricate art. A fashionable photographer differs greatly from an ordinary camera-slinger-take-you-just-as-you-are-price-25c. sort of an individual. The F. P. only takes the tip top people—the nobility, gentry, and the first-class artistes who are invited for the sake of advertisement. Mayall & Co. photographed her Majesty the Queen upon several occasions, and a group of all the royal family was also taken by royal command. We had albums of photographs of all the celebrities of the day, both in a good sense and a bad sense. When I speak of the tip-top society belles and swells of course I allude to them without their character, which matters little to F. P.

THE SORT OF WORK HE DID.

If there came a *cause celebre*, a divorce case in which the public interested themselves, a new play, an accident, a great fight, a death of any eminent man or woman, a boom in any parson's preaching, a public meeting of any note, a marriage in high life, a dashing soubrette, a tragic actress, an æsthetic fop, a well-known painter, a financial king, a fair debutante, a scandal, if any of them crossed the path of the F. P. then it became my duty to secure photographs of the principal actors in the comedy or tragedy, as the case might be, and they were generally secured, and in a few days the photographs would be on sale in all the fashionable resorts in the West End. After the drawing-rooms or levees held by the Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales, we generally had a crowd of the élite who came straight from the ceremony to be photographed just as they were, in full dress. Pardon me, dear reader, for using the word dress; it hardly covers the meaning—at least, it hardly covers the subject. To quote the words of the eminent comedian Arthur Roberts, when he says of a lady who sat next to him at a dinner, that her clothing consisted of

Shoulder straps, belt, and voluminous skirts,
And the rest of her dress, it was off!
Very much off!

Such was the case with many of those who invited us—and the gentlemen who had charge of the actual production of the pictures often told me how strangely these scions of gentility used to behave. Strangely indeed; alas for those who say that the lower classes should look up to the nobility! How many escutcheons of noble rank are now without some social stain? Few indeed, and they will be fewer still. Among the celebrities I myself had to do with were Mr. Fred Leslie, the great comedian of the Gaiety theatre; Miss Nellie Farren, who is too well known to need any mention; Mr. E. S. Willard, the great actor whose name will be remembered in "Jim the Penman" and later great successes; Mr. Marmaduke Wood, one of the three benighted dudes who tossed

THE SORT OF PICTURE WE LIKE TO TAKE.

a coin to see who should marry the now celebrated Lady Dunlo (*née* Belle Bilton); Lady Monckton, W. S. Penley, Edward Terry, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, whose photographs are always popular with the public; Mr. Gladstone, also very popular, and a host of others. I append some letters received by me in the course of business, which may be interesting:—

ROSEDALE ABBEY,
PICKERING, YORKSHIRE,
Saturday, Aug. 17.

Lady Monckton will be in town for a few days about the end of the first week in September, and will write Mr. Birchall appointing a sitting.

STRAND THEATRE, Aug. 23, 1889.

I shall be very pleased to give you a sitting for a portrait as requested. Any day next week after Tuesday would suit me. Yours truly,
MAY WHITLY.

R. Birchall, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Thank you very much for the enlargement. If you will send it to the theatre at once they have their instructions to place it in a conspicuous position. Yours very truly,
FRED'K LESLIE.

Gaiety Theatre, W.C., 5-12-'89.

TERRY'S THEATRE, STRAND, W.C., Sept. 27, 1889.

DEAR SIR,—I am engaged each day until the 5th prox.; after that date I shall be pleased to give you a sitting. Sincerely yours,
ANNIE IRISH.

To R. Birchall, Esq.

EMPIRE THEATRE, August 22.

Miss Starrett Vernon regrets delay in answering Mr. Birchall's letter, and is sorry she cannot give a sitting at present, but will be pleased to make an arrangement with him for next Xmas at an early date in her pantomime dresses, when her photos will be then even in more demand than they are just now.

PENMANSHIP AND PHYSIOGNOMY.

As a rule the handwriting of the stage is very bad, but there are, of course, exceptions to the rule. This latter class are by far the hardest to please; even when they have a face that would break a camera and wrinkles so long that you would have to enlarge the frame to take them in, they expect to appear in duplicate as beautiful as though they were sweet seventeen and fairy-like in stature and appearance. We had many of these, unfortunately. We didn't get many ugly, peevish people; our prices kept us clear of these. But we got a lot of ugly dowagers and staid matrons who sorely tried the patience of the operators. Faces like a pumpkin with three slits in it upside down and sack-like are expected to appear alike beautiful and young. Fancy youth and beauty produced from some old crackpot for £2 2s. a dozen! It wouldn't pay at the price. At any rate there is much to interest one in the business of an F. P., and anyone could do worse than go in for it. It is without doubt a paying business, and if worked the right way is generally a very profitable concern.

I had a very easy time, and was sorry when my agreement with the company expired, which it did at the end of the year, owing to depression in trade. My connection with this business took me much to the theatre, so that I might judge of those whom I thought best for selling purpose, and I generally managed to pick out the public favourite. I was often pestered greatly by miserable dudes who, knowing that I had the entrée behind the scenes, were anxious to get there too or to make me means of communication between them and their favourite "mash."

I met many and various theatrical people, and always found them in this way similar to the description which I have given in my chapter on the stage.

WOODSTOCK GAOL.

A FAMOUS YET UNPOPULAR HOSTELRY IN WHICH THE AUTHOR IS SPENDING THE SEASON.

And now I come to a somewhat interesting experience—namely, my incarceration in the common gaol of Woodstock, having been committed for trial by Magistrate Hill at Niagara Falls on the 13th day of March, 1890. In company with several menial officers of the Crown, a crowd of hungry press men, and the usual complement of spectators prompted by some spirit of morbid curiosity, I arrived safely at the ancient gaol of Woodstock, and was soon snugly ensconced in a cell in the west wing of the building.

Words fail me to accurately describe to the reader or to give anything like an adequate detail of this strange and weird institution, which is popularly known to the denizens of the town as "Castle Cameron." This name originates no doubt from the name of the governor of the gaol, Mr. John Cameron, who, aided by his trusty lieutenant, Mr. James Forbes, dispenses with lavish hand the hospitality of the Crown to all their visitors. Of the two gentlemen I shall have occasion to speak at length later on, as also I shall of the other officials connected with the domestic affairs and ruling of the place.

TRADITIONS OF CASTLE CAMERON.

Of the origin of the dilapidated mass of fabric known to the public under the style of Woodstock Gaol, little appears to be known; there are many theories anent its existence in the days gone by. Some say that it was accidentally discovered by Christopher Columbus when coon hunting with friends in the bush, and was used by them as a storehouse. Although the place is thoroughly in keeping with such an idea, this theory lacks confirmation; others, when questioned about this home of mystery, shake their heads sadly, and tell you that for long it was the home of a bold band of smugglers who were engaged in the illicit distillery of a strange liquid, which bore the curious name of whiskey; whether or not this be true, there still remain some who faintly smile, as though the name was familiar to them, although its taste and qualities seem to have faded out of memory in this moral suburb. I may mention here that there must have been some recollection of the evil effects of this unknown beverage upon the human frame, for a law, yclept the Scott Act, appears to have existed at one time in the country to prevent the reappearance of the mysterious liquid. We are told, however, that it was only with limited success that this arbitrary measure was rewarded, and despite the feeble protests of a few benighted and narrow-minded hypocrites it died a natural death in no lengthy period, a result which anyone endowed with the slightest grain of common sense predicted from the outset.

THEORIES OF THE STRUCTURE'S ORIGIN.

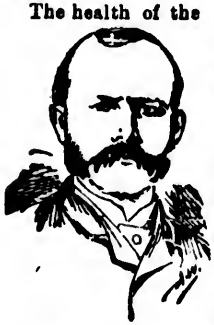
There is, among some who are qualified to speak with authority on the matter, a very prevalent notion that the building in question was the result of a violent earthquake, and, indeed, the confused mass of brick, stone, and mortar would lend colour to this theory. Of course in external appearance it has been much patched up and improved, so that the casual observer from outside might be led to think that it was really built within the present century, but only let him enter (if he can find the doorway) and see for himself what a strange and inexplicable puzzle this domicile presents.

To my readers, then, would I turn for aid in the matter and leave to them the task of deciphering and laying bare the halo of mystery that surrounds the common gaol of Woodstock—the revelation of the skeleton, the unmasking of the misty theories advanced respecting it, yet remain for them to do. One thing alone seems certain—that it is without doubt a relic of prehistoric times and barbarism.

THE INMATES AND CUSTOMS.

The gaol—let us call it such for the sake of illustration—contains 24 cells and 8 larger rooms, which are seldom all fully occupied, save by visitors in the winter months, who come during that time for the benefit of their health; from what particular treatment in the institution they derive such benefits as to make it such a popular winter resort I cannot say. Perhaps the absence of contact with the outer world, the select society they are privileged to enjoy within, and the regularity which they there pursue, may all be alluring bait in their way. The waters, which are largely drunk here, are beneficial, and the diet recommended by the medical faculty is largely responsible for the healthy condition of the guests. There is no doubt that most people eat too much, especially of those pernicious luxuries, "made dishes," but it is not so here; the diet is plain, and I am told by overwhelming testimony that a little goes a long way. This must be satisfactory to the authorities. There exists an old custom here which has never died out; it is not without parallel, for in some savage countries we are told a similar state of things exists; it is eating with the fingers from a metal platter, which is brought round to each guest by the butler of the institution. I once had one of these strange relics handed to me, but not being an antiquarian or an analytical chemist I was not

qualified to give any opinion as to the platter or its contents. The hours of meals are generally the same—at about half-past seven breakfast, at noon luncheon, and at five tea, and after that meal most of the guests retire to their rooms, the doors of which are perforated, which admits of better ventilation. It is not usual, I find, for guests to lock their doors on the inside, as is the case in most hotels; this is kindly done for them on the outside, to prevent anyone intruding, by one of the masters of the institution. This arrangement appears satisfactory, and complaints are rare. The rooms, without being elaborately or luxuriously furnished, are comfortable withal, the provision for an extensive toilet, however, being limited, though a tonsorial artist is provided who makes periodical visits in the interest of the guests, who have besides many other advantages—a bath-room, spacious halls, and fine grounds for outdoor exercise. A strange idea prevails here that too much exercise has a deterrent effect upon the body; consequently the area is limited by four walls, built sufficiently high to keep out the biting winds which occasionally howl around this pile of rock.



DR. A. T. RICE, THE PRISON PHYSICIAN.

The health of the inmates is attended to and cared for by an eminent physician and surgeon, Dr. A. T. Rice, of whom I shall speak fully later on. The exigencies of cases often cause the worthy doctor to adopt stringent remedies, and for the common or ordinary class of disorder a number of medicines are kept in readiness. Quantity appears to be necessary as well as quality, and quantity they can have. For instance, take the common salts, a small pailful is about the usual dose. I cannot say whether the worthy doctor knows aught of veterinary surgery, but if he did he might better be able to diagnose some of the cases set before him. However, be it here said to his credit, that while mortal mind and human skill could prevail over disease and disorder, he has prevailed, and in the case of lunatics he has never yet had any case in which he failed to demonstrate the power of human intellect over brute ferocity.

Periodical visits are made to the gaol by the Government inspector, and while I mention this officer I cannot pass on without referring to that kind-hearted man Dr. W. T. O'Reilly, whose sad and sudden death has been so lately recorded in the papers. In no way officious, a gentleman in word and deed, ever ready to alleviate the grievances of any who had such to put before him and to grant any privilege that lay in his power to give, he must have earned the deep respect and gratitude of every prisoner who had the honour to know him. Personally I experienced much kindness at his hands, which I could never forget, and the utmost courtesy and ready ear that he gave to any application, be it from great or small, was applicable to all alike. There can be no doubt that in him the Government had a valuable servant and the prisoners a true friend.

The grand juries also visit the gaol on the occasion of the assize being held here and pass their verdict, which is generally favourable to the gaoler and unfavourable to the gaol itself, which is in sad need of alteration and, better still, demolition.

THE GAOL IS ALSO THE POORHOUSE.

There is no poorhouse in the town or county, which appears a very strange thing; with such a liberal-minded council, composed as it is of patriotic and noble-minded men, whose desire is for the good of their town and county, and who never hesitate to vote money for any good object, saying with the poet, "Our good intent is all for your delight;" it is the more strange that there should be no such institutions. They are common in civilized countries, and no doubt some of these great-souled men may in the future leave their town and county a handsome legacy wherewith to provide the much-needed poorhouse, and then may he truly say of himself:—

"Tis not in mortals to command success,
But I've done more, Sempronius; I've deserved it.

Until some such place be provided, the aged poor of the district must make Castle Cameron their headquarters and spend their latter days in ignominy and disgrace. Poverty, indeed, is no crime, and why in Heaven's name should these poor old men be branded as gaolbirds simply because they are poor? Shame on the authorities who allow this state of things to continue! Shame on the mock economy and cringing meanness of those who oppose a poorhouse! And, verily, echo answers, shame!

VAGRANTS AND LUNATICS.

Of these men the gaol generally has a regular supply, most of them old and worn out and in a fossilized stage of life, to whom comforts other than they can get here are absolutely necessary for the prolongation of life. They inhabit the east wing of the gaol

for the most part, and among them are some rare and antique specimens of humanity.

There are generally a few occupants who are, to use a slang expression, slightly "off their base." These differ very much one from the other, and their doings and sayings, apart from the serious nature of their state, are extremely funny. Generally quiet at first, they become noisy, and *vice versa*, until they are removed to the asylum in London, where they remain until cured. Other inmates comprise those who have done something "contrary to the statute provided," and a grand rule in this town and county appears to be, "When in doubt, prefer a charge of vagrancy." If you can't get a man convicted of anything else that will do—vagrancy covers a very wide field.

There are not many ladies staying here at the time of writing. They evidently prefer some other fashionable resort. Even were there any, they are far removed from the curious eye of man, and therefore of their arrangements I know nothing.

RELIGIOUS SERVICE IN WOODSTOCK GAOL.

There being no properly appointed gaol chaplain in Woodstock gaol, it becomes necessary to fall back upon other extraneous sources for the religious instruction of the inmates. On the morning of each Sunday the gaol is attacked by a strong force of the Salvation Army, who, by firing a strong salvo of Gospel shots, and by the undying and pitiful expression that some poor ignorant wretch, beguiled by the glamour of the scarlet jersey and glittering dross which surrounds the bands and banners of this strange body, have succeeded in converting one prisoner for the lengthy period of three days! A strange, yet ominous looking document is thrust upon the prisoners, alike to young and old, which is found to be a paper called the *War Cry*. Who can read this belligerent organ or gaze upon the weird pictures it contains without a feeling of wonder, bewilderment, and pity? Who does not pause with bated breath at the "terrific onslaught and capture of two souls" by Captain Mary Jane Longwind, at Woodstock, and the faithful way these infatuated souls follow their leader, "Le brav Général," through weal and woe? It is claimed for the S. A. that they do much good. That may or may not be so. Certain it is that their ministrations within the gaol are quite ineffectual. I know not the reason of this, and I may add that no collection is taken up at the close of the service.

After discussing the doctrine of the Salvation Army, which as a rule calls forth a good deal of ridicule among the prisoners, preparations are going on for a second and more extensive attack in the afternoon. About half-past two the bells begin to ring and persons arrive in order, both male and female, to help conduct the afternoon issue. So far as I can make out the Sunday afternoon service at the gaol is merely a peg on which to hang a rehearsal of the very limited rhetorical powers of a few young students whom it is positively painful to hear playing with such a good subject, assisted by a couple of old pedagogues who are alike out of date and place. This unhappy combination are those who take upon themselves the spiritual welfare of the prisoners. I have listened carefully to their discourse, much as it jarred upon my nerves, and I must say it is nothing more nor less than a downright farce. Alike without basis or support, these fledglings propound theories which immediately land them to inextricable mazes of difficulty. Then the pedagogues come in; but their ignorance is so manifest, and their teaching so hollow, that it is altogether useless to go into it here. I have heard it said on all sides, and by every class of prisoner:—

MR. G S. PERRY, DAY GUARD.

"Why can't we have a decent parson once every Sunday?"

And why cannot they have one? The sooner the Government sees to this the better.

GOVERNOR CAMERON.

Chief among those with whom my gaol life has brought me in contact, Mr. John Cameron, governor of the Woodstock gaol, stands foremost. An elderly gentleman, of long experience, having held sway here for some twenty-three years, he is eminently fitted for the post which he occupies. Mr. Cameron has taken part in the administration of local matters, having been a magistrate and reeve of Nissouri. His keen penetration and powers of discipline, allied as they are with a kind heart and considerate nature, at once stamp him as the right man in the right place. Mr. Cameron has at all times warmly advocated the claims of prison reform, especially in the matter of the gaols being under complete control of the Government, including the appointment of gaol officers, and indeed he seems likely to have his ideas carried into effect by the Prison Commission lately held. From what I have observed myself I should say that everybody else thinks they have a right to run the gaol except the proper officer. There exists in Woodstock a strange combina-

tion of bombast and bones, who, although he has nothing whatever to do with the management of the gaol, appears to be constantly interfering in some way or other, and especially in my case has this been noticeable. Not content with doing his utmost against me without the gaol, this pampered menial of the Crown sought to make me as uncomfortable as possible within, issuing from his throne an order to have the carpet of my cell taken up twice a day; to have all my pictures removed; that I should only be allowed a lead spoon; that no one should be admitted into the cell, and such like idiotic ideas. Fortunately for me this empty braggart has no rule within the gaol, where common sense and humanity, as represented by Gaoler Cameron, take the place of his miserable and contemptible nature.

GAOLER AND FRIEND.

Next I come to Mr. Cameron's trusty lieutenant—Mr. James Forbes. Of this gentleman I saw more than of any one else in authority, and, indeed, the kindness and courtesy I received at his hands have left an impression upon my memory that will never be effaced. Fortunately for me I was acquainted with this gentleman when I was formerly in Woodstock, and spent many very pleasant and happy hours in his company. There are many points about Mr. Forbes which at once strike the keen observer very forcibly. His straightforward, honest look and bearing, his kind and humane expression, and his pleasant smile are all traits of the powerful nature within. During the whole of the time I knew him he was the same to me, and when, instead of meeting me outside, he met me as his prisoner, even that failed to effect a change, and the manly and generous-hearted way in which he has helped to alleviate my sorrow and the necessary ills of confinement, so far as lay in his power, his ever-ready kind word and genial disposition will live in my memory when all else is forgotten. I cannot pass on without taking this opportunity of tendering my warmest gratitude to both himself and his good wife, Mrs. Forbes, for their unbounded kindness to my dear wife in every way. Always carrying out the letter of the regulations and instructions laid down, Mr. Forbes was never officious in the least, but courteously and firmly carried out all these in such a way as to at once command the respect and esteem of every prisoner who had the good fortune to be under his charge. All spoke well of him, young and old, good and bad, like and indifferent. Mr. Forbes is most highly respected also without the gaol, and has held positions in municipal matters and was one of the founders of the Brookdale cheese factory, a prosperous institution. He was formerly a farmer out in Zorra, and a successful one, too; and the popularity which he enjoyed, and the esteem in which he was held by those around him, may be vouched for by the statement which I have inspected in the Embro *Courier* of October 28, 1885, which gives an account of a presentation of handsome gifts to himself and his worthy wife on their retirement from the farming arena to come into town. Mr. Forbes was for three years a member of the Township Council of West Zorra. He is also a member of the Canton of Oddfellows in this country, and in many ways a useful public man. To sum him up briefly, I would say that Mr. Forbes is a true friend, tried and trusted comrade, and a credit to the country which owns him.

A GOOD PHYSICIAN.

I have had periodical visits from Dr. Rice, the gaol surgeon, to whom I have made passing allusion before. The gaol is not a very happy hunting ground for the sawbones, but nevertheless, at times the need of a medical adviser is found to be essential, and therefore such is provided. Dr. Rice is a Canadian born and bred, and a highly educated and sound practical man, going straight to the point and not beating round the bush like many of the faddy and lapdog doctors that we meet with day by day. I always found this officer genial and courteous, and owe much to him for the comfort in which I have lived during my sojourn in Woodstock gaol.

THE SHERIFF.

Occasional visits are paid to the gaol by Sheriff Perry, who, unfortunately for all concerned, is getting somewhat old and infirm. He is, nevertheless, at his post in times of duty, and deserves great credit for the prompt and efficient way in which he discharges his many and various duties, which are in many cases alike arduous and painful. I have received very many kindnesses from him and am grateful to him in consequence of the same.

Sheriff Perry is aided in his official capacity by his worthy and substantial son, Mr. John Perry, whose genial face and hearty laugh are too well known almost to be spoken of. Always jolly, the cares of this gentleman (if he has any) sit lightly withal, and affect him in no manner perceptible. The very essence of kindness, he is a firm and old established favourite with everybody, and the unanimous opinion most undoubtedly is that John Perry is a "good sort."

AN UNWELCOME GUARD.

Next in order of the genus Perry comes George of that ilk, who was appointed day guard in the place of one Magee, a curious

and elderly production, whose *forte* seemed to be grumbling and growling at everybody save himself. So far as I could ascertain he was Irish, and settled originally in Hamilton, from which place the half-breeds fled at his approach. I can quite imagine it. He left me in a huff, and I was glad of it. Of Mr. George Perry I have nothing but the warmest praise. Like his grandfather and father, kindness in him predominates, and I shall ever remember him with mingled feelings of gratitude and affection.

ONE OF A DIFFERENT KIND.

During the night time during my imprisonment and before the trial Mr. John Entwhistle occupied a couch near my door, and kept me company during the dusky hours. He was a genial and amusing companion, full of wit with a keen sense of humour, and we whiled away many an hour in conversation that would otherwise have hung heavily upon our hands. He was most kind and attentive to me, and I had in him a good and trusty friend.

OTHER WELCOME COMPANY.

After the trial Mr. Entwhistle left to take a holiday, and there appeared upon the scene Colour-Sergeant Midgely, of the Twenty-second Battalion, Oxford Rifles, who is well known by all around as a warm supporter of all matters military and legal, being also a constable for the County of Oxford. I found out that Mr. Midgely was an Englishman, which at once struck a familiar chord in me, and very soon we were the best of friends. During the long hours of the night, when I was writing this history, Mr. Midgely and my black cat were my sole companions. Always cheerful, with an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes and humour, we got on admirably together, and the slow hours of the night seemed short, aided in their flight by the genial companionship of this worthy officer. From Mr. Midgley I learned much of the military life in Canada, for his long experience enabled him to treat largely of this subject. Mr. Midgely is largely known and highly respected by all who know him and I beg most heartily to endorse their good opinion.

I may here make passing mention of that most excellent of men, Mr. James Anderson, chairman of the Gaol Committee, who showed me many acts of courtesy and kindness, and I am only sorry I did not see more of this worthy official.

Likewise I would pay a tribute to Mr. John Coulson, of Welland gaol, who treated me most kindly and with the utmost consideration during my brief stay with him at Welland.

VISITORS, BAD AND GOOD.

During my stay in the gaol here I have been visited by many persons, some of them old friends, some of them friends who sympathised with an unfortunate, many merely prompted by morbid curiosity, and a few pharisaic humbugs, who might well have stopped away. Chief among the latter class was a Roman Catholic priest, sleek and with cat-like appearance, who would fain have cast his slim net around me, but naturally failed. When I heard of his remarks about me afterward I felt indeed glad that no such canting hypocrite should be able to say that I had in any way listened to his miserable dictation. There were others of this class, but generally inoffensive and mild in speech, so capable of toleration. Some few came in a kindly spirit, and I was very glad to see them, and they left pleasant thoughts and memories upon my mind. Chief among these was Mr. John Francis Waters, of Ottawa. This gentleman is an eminent essayist and scientist, and after leaving me wrote a very able article in the public press contradicting from his own observation much of the worthless trash written by pseudo specialists and others about me and my doings and sayings. This gentleman wrote me freely and feelingly from time to time, and forwarded me many books, papers, etc., suitable for a man in my position, and refrained from sending me preaching epistles and tracts by weight, giving as his reason that it was not for him to forestall the clergy in their work of religious instruction. He thought them quite capable, and I would that others had thought so too. He was quite right.

LADIES, TOO.

A few ladies ventured to penetrate the gloom of Castle Cameron and wend their way up the winding staircase to my cell; they were indeed plucky and deserved credit for braving the foul air and gloomy aspect of this miserable structure. A few clergymen also came, but only one who was always welcome to me, the Rev. Rural Dean Wade, of whom I shall speak fully in the last chapter of my book. Several eminent and distinguished gentlemen and rulers of the Dominion and province came also to perceive the strange prisoner. I was likewise "inspected" out in the yard by a few curious critics whose opinions varied greatly upon me. I always found it true of these that "those who know the most in reality know nothing," and generally they showed this trait very quickly. Old friends were always welcome at all times, and they came whenever permitted. The "old familiar faces" were always dear to me. It has been asserted in speaking of friends that "a friend in need is a friend indeed." This is true enough, and I would say also that a "friend in Woodstock gaol is a friend indeed."

THE TEST OF FRIENDSHIP.

Few people know the value of a kind word till they need it, and when but few are ready to speak it. If there be any of my readers who have experienced this feeling then truly can they say—"*Haud ignarus mali miseris succurrere disco*," as the poet hath it; and the force of that quotation will immediately appeal to them. The fact of the matter is, that a man never knows his friends till he wants them—and then when trouble overtakes him they cannot be found, in a majority of cases—it is then that true and lasting friendship can be discerned from the vain and fleeting so-called friendship that is so common nowadays. Friendship, too, often has an object; too often is being sought to advance the benefit of seeker; too often is surface-like, hollow and vacuous. There is far too little of the real thing. "Kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood."

However, I have spoken and shall speak elsewhere of my friends; the above remarks are true, I believe, of the community. I may, however, remind my readers, in a respectful manner, that

Gentle words and kindly deeds
Are never thrown away,
But bring unlooked-for harvest
On some cloudy autumn day.
'Tis little that we here can do,
But let us do our best,
With cheerful hearts and willingly,
And never mind the rest.

I would most heartily thank all those who did come in a genuine spirit of sympathy to see me, and they are more qualified, perhaps, to speak on this point than I am. We cannot see into every man's heart, and therefore must not judge too harshly in all instances, and I therefore take this opportunity of thanking those whom I have not been able to thank in person for the kindness to me here.

MUCH WORK FOR THE POST-OFFICE.

Since my imprisonment here I have received and written an immense amount of correspondence of all sorts and descriptions. From England I have received upward of seven hundred letters, and a large number of papers—sometimes twenty in a single mail. To England I have written more letters than I have received. I kept account of them up to about four hundred and then stopped, as I lost my list somewhere. From America and Canada I received a large number of letters and papers, chiefly from persons of whom I had no knowledge, many of them designed for the purpose of securing my autograph, should I answer, as a curiosity. Several of these enterprising individuals sent me requests to write in their autograph books for them, which in one case I acceded to, and wrote in a book sent from Dundas, which was filled with wretched specimens of domestic verse, the following somewhat apt lines:

'Tis only duffers when ideas run dry
The place of thought with doggerel verse supply.

I hope it appealed to the talented family who were the proud possessors of this poetic effusion. Many letters came from women who felt an interest in my spiritual welfare.

PECULIAR ORTHOGRAPHY.

The chief point to the casual observer appears to be the spelling of Canadians, which is simply atrocious, as a rule. I do not speak of the lower class only, but many well-to-do and "high class" people who should know better. I received a letter from some persons in the States promising effectually to procure my release from the gaol on payment of $1,000, saying that they had successfully operated upon other gaols. I did not reply.

AN EYE TO BUSINESS.

Many lawyers in Canada employed friends to write and endeavour to get them retained upon my case. In every case they were "the very best," "the most eminent," the "foremost," or the "greatest criminal" lawyers in the Dominion. I may here add that I was pestered by a certain Toronto newspaper correspondent (who, I believe, took a lively interest in the Cronin case) and his friend, a certain Toronto lawyer, who set on foot a very good scheme to go into the case, the correspondent acting as the stool pigeon for the lawyer. The latter wrote a long letter to the former, with instructions to show it to me, which he did, the letter being full of sympathy for me and disgust at the way my case was being handled in the early stages. I saw through this, and beat them off. I may mention that this took place on the train from Niagara Falls to Woodstock gaol. The same correspondent then proceeded to put some rather pertinent questions to me on behalf of the Crown detective who was with me, but failed to elicit any answer from me at all. On this train I was introduced to Mr. J. A. Currie, of THE MAIL, who was exceedingly courteous, and impressed me much by his unassuming manner and absence of any of the "bluff" and "bluster" so evident in those who do not know their business. Mr. Currie has throughout been most kind and thoughtful of me, sending me books, papers, cigars, and other little things most acceptable at such a time. Mr. Currie differed materially from my friend (?) who gained such a reputation for his Long interview with Dr. Cronin at the time that gentleman was lying dead in Chicago! and I may add that the difference was fully appreciated by the writer.

OTHER TORMENTORS.

To return, however, to the Toronto lawyer. Not to be denied, he came to see me in the gaol and told me that he had "great things" in his head! (It was pity he didn't get them out.) I did not wish to insult him, so I agreed with him that his head was above the average size. He left, and called again so frequently that I had to get the inspector to stop him as a nuisance. Failing to get any good from me, he wrote to Mr. Pelly and asked if Pelly would allow him to act as private prosecutor for him. Pelly declined with thanks, and in despair he made the same request of Colonel Benwell, who treated the letter with silent contempt. At length he returned to the old love and offered a detective employed by me $100 to get him retained on the defence. The detective tried his best, but it was no go. What wonders money will do! What power does the almighty dollar possess! Now, there are some who will do anything for money. My case was productive of profit to a good many people, and especially to a certain "Toronto private detective," I presume, for I do not suppose he gave the papers he had of mine to the *Globe*, and they were given with my own hand into his at his request, and were articles written to follow out certain theories advanced by him, and being a very unlearned man he was unable to write save pot hooks, and likewise could not spell, so all the writing devolved upon myself and a clerk. He will no doubt explain this ere these pages are in print. If he does not then I do so for him here, and apologize to detectives as a body for their brother's meanness and breach of confidence which he has so flagrantly committed. But I am digressing.

A LOYAL FAMILY.

I received a large number of letters from old friends, relations, and other acquaintances. My poor, dear mother wrote by every mail a long and loving letter of comfort which only a mother's tenderest love can give, and nothing but her utter helplessness into which the shock of my arrest and trial threw her prevented her from being with me in my troubles. She was always the kindest and best of mothers to me, and I cannot for one moment attempt to express my feelings with regard to her in this work. I have refrained from bringing my family into this work as much as possible, but as her name was mentioned in the local press as coming out after the trial, I give the true reason of her absence—the same reason applies to others. My brother and sisters wrote regularly, and old Oxford friends and others kept me well posted in the latest news, and with the aid of the papers I had plenty of reading matter to fall back upon.

MEMENTO HUNTERS.

I received a great many letters from cranks full of schemes and idiotic notions. As soon as the fact leaked out (and isn't it wonderful how these things get about?) that I was employing my spare time in sketching, I received a number of letters sympathizing (of course) with me and winding up with a request for a sketch as a memento of me. I received a letter from Al Emmett Foster, the well-known American actor and collector of curiosities, asking me to send him an autograph letter and a sketch. I did so, and he sent me $3 in a registered letter by return post. Evidently he thought he wasn't on the "free list." Not so the majority. To use a somewhat ungrammatical phrase, "All they sees they wants and all they wants they seizes." Pardon the bad pun and play upon words. I must bring in a few somewhere, you know.

A 'VARSITY "GHOST."

Several old friends wrote whom I had not heard of for years, and from most outlandish places, too. Mr. Arthur R. Leatham, formerly of Queen's College, Oxford (and who gives me full permission to give his name and refer to him in any way I like here), wrote to me from Montreal, where he is now residing. He was called "the Ghost" at the 'Varsity, and was a great friend of mine there, as he has proved himself to be here. He wrote me many times, and never changed in any way his tone. Even after the trial he was unshaken, as were all who knew me best, especially my own family. It was some years since I had heard anything of him, and I was glad to find the dear old chap again. He is a true type of an Oxford man, a fine fellow in every way, and thoroughly English in his ways. The song says:—

The things that we do, and the things that we see,
Are English, you know, quite English, you know;
To dash, and to mash, and to go on the spree,
Are English, quite English, you know.

A good many things may also be "Canadian, you bet," but I would have none of them.

ANONYMOUS LETTERS.

A large number of people wrote anonymously, and these I took very little notice of. If anyone is ashamed to put his name to a letter of religious or sympathetic nature he is ashamed to own to others that he is so, and therefore the missive loses its value. Give me those who speak out boldly in defiance of that wretched and hollow barrier, "Public Opinion." Why should we be afraid to speak our honest conviction? Why should we fear the wrath that immediately descends upon us from without? Truly, there should be no

such fear. But, nevertheless, it exists. Of those people's effusions, then, I took but little notice, generally relegating them to the waste paper basket—the proper place for them.

THE OMNIPRESENT TRACTS.

Tracts I sometimes read, and handed over to Mr. Cameron to give to the prisoners on Sunday to serve as a side dish to the *War Cry*. Whether they relished them or not I do not know. I read a good number altogether. But so many are the same story dished up anew, like a round of beef, boiled for dinner, hashed for supper, stewed up again for breakfast, fried for dinner next day, and finally made into potted meat. The average tract is like the average drama on the stage. The hero or heroine, the aged father and mother, the villain (who is eventually converted), and the village parson, all find places in this *multum in parvo* style of tract. Some of them are more extensive. I had one letter from a Roman Catholic, who told me to be sure and send for the priest, as that was my only chance of salvation. He also said:—"Always tell the priest secrets; he can keep them, because he isn't married. If you tell them to the clergyman he will tell his wife!" This strange individual, whom I afterwards ascertained was a local man, also sent a book, which appeared, so far as I was able to judge from the cover, to be a popish discourse. The cover was as far as I got. Poor fellow! he is to be pitied greatly.

SAID THEY KILLED BENWELL.

A large number of correspondents knew, so they said, of the doings of Mr. Benwell, and quite a few had killed him themselves, so they said. Some of these letters were very curious and interesting, a few being from women. One says:—"I hired a fast horse in Buffalo in the early morning and arrived at the swamp about noon," rather a lengthy ride for a morning's gallop. She says she and Benwell were lovers in England, that he deserted her, etc., etc., and she came after him, and so forth. Evidently a lunatic. Another woman says:—"There are some nice men on the Hamilton police force. When I arrived here I was so unnerved at shooting Benwell that I had to ask the name of the street where I lived." Plenty of men make similar statements. One man writing from Hamilton on a post card remarks:—"You have shown a great deal of grit in this case, and I hope you will fool them yet, but if not, when they go to put the black cap over your eyes to hang you, sing out, 'Down went McGinty.'" This gentleman takes the prize without competition. Some write saying they have found it absolutely necessary to do so (sweet creatures) as I couldn't get on unless they did so. I have always heard it said that if you cannot get on you must get off. Perhaps they didn't know this. One man wrote saying I must remember him at college in 1881 (a year when I was at school), and says that our mutual friend McLeod ran away to "make a mash" on some young ladies. He then signs the letter "Yours respectfully, your greatest chum, William Cooper." The "yours respectfully" was quite sufficient. Fancy an "oldest chum" signing his name like that!

THE PELLYS—FATHER AND SON.

I received, *mirabile dictu*, a very kind letter from the Rev. R. P. Pelly, father of Douglas, of that ilk. It is said that Pelly wrote a portion of one of the humorous books about me; I cannot say for whom, but at Niagara Falls he had a lady typewriter at work night and day for a long time writing up a tale about me. I received the information from the party herself, with reference to the tale, but I do not think Pelly seeks literary honours. I mention this *en passant*. Many religious books and papers have come to me since the trial from England, America, and Canada, several from a lady (from her handwriting) who signs herself *Agape*, the Greek word for "love." Some put their names on and some did not. Some one sent a hymn-book. Many have sent flowers, fruit, etc., etc., very kindly. One man wrote from Congleton, in Cheshire, England, enclosing a poem, which he requested me to have inserted in every paper in America and Canada—a rather large order. I might truly be called a man of "letters" since my arrival here. My wife has received, I might almost say, tons of letters of sympathy from all parts. Poor, dear girl, she deserves them, too, in the truest sense of the word. Mr. Blackstock has likewise been the recipient of many letters from cranks, which have caused him some amusement and surprise. Many of the letters were very lengthy, reaching nine or ten pages at times, and even longer than that.

HIS CORRESPONDENCE IN DEMAND.

I may add that many dodges have been resorted to to get hold of these letters by unscrupulous newspaper men, and even my guards have complained of bribes being offered them to steal my papers and manuscripts, as much as $700 being an offer for twenty-five pages. Fortunately for me my guards are neither of them "Toronto private detectives," so my MSS. will be sure to reach the right hands. Of course, all my correspondence was examined by the gaol authorities before receiving it, as also was all my correspondence going out, so it was impossible to write and post a letter without the authorities being aware of the fact. The longest letter I wrote

was, I think, thirteen sheets long to an old friend, and some nearly as long to my wife before she came up to Woodstock to take up her residence during the time of my imprisonment here. During the time of my arrest a number of letters and papers were stolen from my boxes while in possession of the Crown, so I am unable to append many that I should have liked to.

"TO RAISE THE WIND."

DEALINGS IN ENGLAND PREPARATORY TO COMING TO CANADA THE SECOND TIME.

Having no occupation in view after Christmas, 1889, I had been thinking about what I should do, and being somewhat tired of the subordinate position I was then holding, and likely to hold, I cast about for some new idea which might help me, and, after a good deal of thought, planned out a great scheme which I thought would land me safely upon the shore of comparative affluence and comfort. I spoke of it to others, who agreed and entered into it warmly. This scheme was, in short, to make a pile of money out of the English Derby, which would be run in 1890, and about which we had certain information that would have put us right, and as the race turned out we should have landed a big *coup*. But none of us had sufficient ready capital to work the scheme, and the question came up how were we to get it? After a good deal of thinking my former experience with Ford & Rathbone came up in my mind, and I thought there was a chance in this way. Of course I could not work the thing single handed, and so I arranged with others to "stand in," as the saying is. I then put an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph*, which is here appended, for a man with £500 for a partnership in a Canadian farm :—

CANADA—UNIVERSITY MAN, HAVING farm, wishes to MEET GENTLEMAN'S SON to live with him, and learn business, with a view to partnership; must invest £500 to extend stock; board, lodging, and five per cent. interest till partnership; highest references. Address OXON, Glen's, 379A, Strand, W.C.

FAIR TALENT.

We intended to get the money from one or two men, and then in Canada nothing could be said to us, as we could not be held in Canada for fraud committed in England, and wait until we had brought off our *coup* and then repay the men with something over to appease them, and say farewell to them in good part. It was a poor fraud, without doubt, but I thought so long as we repaid them afterwards it covered the fraud to a large extent, so far as my conscience, at any rate, was concerned. I may here state most emphatically, with all the force that my poor nature is capable of, that the idea of murder was never for a moment thought of or planned, and that it was a pure and simple fraud for the time being. If it failed, it failed on its own merits, said we, but as we had the thing down pretty fine it wasn't likely to do that.

THE FIRST BITE.

On the morning after the day I inserted the advertisement I called at the *Daily Telegraph* office in London to ask if any answers had been received for me. The clerk handed me a letter marked "immediate," and I hastened to break it open and read it. It was to the effect that the writer, whose name was T. G. Mellersh, wished to get a partnership such as I offered, and desired me to call upon him at his club, the "National Union," in Albemarle street, Piccadilly. I may here mention that the Crown took possession of all the correspondence they could find between myself and Mellersh, and much of it which showed that he knew of fraudulent transactions was suppressed by the Crown in order to shield him from the public indignation. I append, however, one of a few letters that I have in my possession pertaining to this man :—

2 SOUTHFIELD VILLAS,
CHELTENHAM, Jan. 31, 1890.

DEAR BIRCHALL,—Please write to R. Taylor, Esq., care R. Taylor, Esq., F.G.S., Cleveland house, Marshe by the Sea, Yorks. He wishes to go as a pupil to Canada, and is twenty-two years of age. I heard from him this morning, *re* advertisement.

When do you think of sailing, and have you booked through Mr. Squarey, 57 Charing cross, yet?

I am just off to Cheltenham. Very sorry you did not turn up at 4 Dash place to lunch yesterday. Yours sincerely, T. G. MELLERSH.

P. S.—Have you seen or heard of any of the pupils? T. G. M.

MELLERSH'S BUSINESS.

I went to his club, and met him there, and he at once told me that he didn't want the partnership for himself but for a friend, and that he was a party who brought other parties together, and said that if I would give him £50 he would get a man to pay me £500 on the conditions named. He told me he advertised constantly in a similar way and got replies, and then waited until he knew of anyone with a business or who wanted a partner, and then put the two into communication. He told me that he knew of some very good men, and we got pretty confidential on such matters and talked over the thing well. I told him of my experiences with Ford & Rathbone, and he laughed heartily thereat. He then produced a bag, which was full of applications from men wanting to invest money in such a business as mine purported

to be, and asked me to choose out some for myself.

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF BENWELL.

I chose out about four, and among these Mr. Benwell and Mr. Pelly. Mr. Benwell evidently had money and had, as he afterward told me, intended at one time to pay £1,500 for a business, or rather a share of a business. Mellersh recommended him, as he said he knew all about his father, who lived in Cheltenham, where Mellersh himself also lived, and said he would be a good man, and the fact of both Colonel Benwell and Mellersh living at Cheltenham, where the latter's brother was a respectable solicitor, would be a good point in facilitating matters. Mellersh then dictated to me a couple of letters, one to Pelly and one to Benwell, couched in pretty much the same terms. Of course I had no idea of what they would say in reply at all. I went away, arranging to see Mellersh, who said he would meet me again when I got replies. I heard from both, asking me to meet them, Pelly at his home in Saffron Walden, and Colonel Benwell at his club in London, the Army and Navy, in Pall Mall.

THE BENWELLS, FATHER AND SON.

I went to call upon the latter first, and the moment I saw him I perceived that he was like a good many other old military men—simple and credulous on business matters. I had a long interview, in which he asked me many questions, and I told him many lies, which apparently satisfied him so much that in a couple of days I had a letter from F. C. Benwell making an appointment at his club—the National Conservative—to talk matters over. I duly went and convinced him just as easily as his father before him, and he decided to go with me and pay the £500. Much as I would like to speak on the character and points that struck me about F. C. Benwell, I must perforce refrain, remembering that *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* must be my guiding principle here. He told me of the very hard life he had in Australia, where he worked upon a sheep walk, and had actually killed sheep himself and done all manner of dirty work for very little pay. He seemed keen to get away, and he was most decidedly afraid of his father, hardly daring to utter any opinion in his (the father's) presence, and the latter several times rebuked him sharply in my presence. I arranged to call again, and then returned to Mellersh with the news. He was pleased, but told me to make Benwell deposit £50 as a guarantee of good faith, and we would have £25 each. I said I didn't like to ask him for that yet, so the matter dropped, but I promised to pay him his £50 as soon as I got the money. I then journeyed down to Saffron Waldron, a somewhat antiquated little village in Essex, with houses built in a very ancient style.

THE AUTHOR MEETS PELLY.

I was met at the station by Pelly, who drove me to his father's house, a fine establishment, which was redolent of affluence and prosperity. He told me that his father had lately inherited some money, which had made a great difference to him and his mode of living, which was certainly rather high for a minister of such a countrified place. He kept butler and footman, carriage and pair, hacks and hunters, men and dogs—a collection which very few of our English clergy can lay claim to. However, that did not matter to me. The Pelly family entertained me hospitably, and I found the father, like most country clergymen, simple and confiding. I arranged to write Pelly with a definite offer, which I afterwards did, by which he paid me £170 for certain considerations. Pelly himself had been to Harrow school for a time, but was taken in and had to leave. He went afterwards to college at Cambridge and took the degree of B.C.L. He was also a prominent member of the local volunteer corps and had a local reputation. Being the only eligible young man in the place, and possessed of comfortable surroundings, the local belles and simple lassies looked upon him with soulful eyes and blushing countenances as a "good catch."

IN FANCY'S EYE.

Hence, no doubt, the "enthusiastic return" of my so-called "victim" that we read of in the local press. I can well picture the scene—the little village *en fete*, the rustic swains, the village maidens, the great and only Mrs. Bellingham, who, we are told, illuminated her house without and within for this festive occasion, the local band, with grating strain of ancient music, the triumphal arch stretched across the noble street of this benighted village—all stand forth in bold relief as we gaze in fancy upon the scene. Behold the hero of a hundred fights and hairbreadth 'scapes, borne along by the rejoicing crowd towards his ancestral home. The return of the wanderer, laden with spoil and witness tees, the sole and distinguished object of land and honour, truly in the minds of this noble band of peasants a thing of beauty and a joy forever—onward they go, with banners waving and crash of loudest braying from the village band, the hero bowing to the crowd, the carriage drawn not by horses or an elephant, but by the willing and demented power of these horny-handed sons of toil, eagerly vying with each other for the cigarette ends thrown them from his Excellency's carriage. The one thought upon that

great-souled hero's mind—Safe again, safe at last, the harbour's past, safe in my father's home—who shall say what mighty ocean of thought, what passing reverie of the loss to Canada that he would be, of the honour he brought with him to his country; of the broken hearts left behind him in the great North-West, of the noble band of tennis drilling maidens who followed him to victory at Niagara Falls, and worshipped the ground on which their leader stood. Who shall say how these things passed in rapid revolution through his mighty brain—*Veni, vidi, vici*, cries he, eagerly drinking to the dregs the cup of fleeting popularity, so soon laid down and vanished. Truly what littleness have we in our midst. Well may we say with the poet *In tenui labor*—verily the mountain has conceived and brought fourth a mouse. But I am diverging from my path.

HOW THE GAME WAS TO BE PLAYED.

I went away promising to write Pelly pretty soon, which I did, and I also went again to see Mellersh, who was very pleased, and suggested sharing with me, which I didn't see in the same light. I then wrote Pelly to meet me in London, which he did; and I invited him down to Upper Norwood, and introduced him to my wife. I likewise did the same by Benwell; and we discussed various matters relating to the day we should sail, and the steamer we should sail in. Benwell went back to Cheltenham, previous to which, however, I was invited to and went to lunch with Colonel Benwell in his London house, where we talked over a few general matters, my last agreement being with the father not to send any money until he had been fully satisfied by the son as to his having seen and examined the business spoken of, and also by a respectable solicitor who should draw up the necessary papers relating to the matter. Colonel Benwell also proposed to give his son introductions to several other friends, who would look up his son. Of course it must be distinctly understood by the reader that the scheme was all prearranged, and that of course it had been necessary to arrange to be able to show Benwell some property to satisfy him, and to execute a fraudulent deed upon, so that he should believe and be led to believe that it was mine, and mine alone. I cannot mention any names, unfortunately, here, and if I did it would do no good, as the parties to the fraud, so far as lending their property was concerned, need never be exposed. The public have formed their opinion in their inmost minds on this matter, I fancy. Pelly we didn't care a straw about. I was bound by the agreement to pay his board, lodging, and washing, which I did, and was prepared to do at the rate of $5 a week. Truly not a bad percentage in itself for the $800 he invested—something like thirty per cent. per annum and a little over. I wonder what more he expected. We intended to keep him doing something until we got the other money out, and if he wanted to work he could work in the capacity of my secretary, but at any rate I should not have pressed him to do so, but paid him a few small sums as profits supposed to be accruing to me, and which my manager forwarded me from time to time. Benwell was to go with my manager until the money came out, and during the short time that it would take to consummate the deal they were to travel about attending sales of horses, etc., for show, and of course not finding any suitable for my purpose. This would have obviated the necessity of taking up residence upon a farm which I arranged to do first of all. We were after the money by fraudulent means, but not by foul means, and there is a great and wide distinction here. It was never necessary for me for one moment ever to entertain a fraudulent scheme; for had I appealed to my people to help me they would doubtless have done so if they saw me in need, as they are all in good positions. I had, however, received such kindness at my brother's hands that I forebore to bother him for such a sum as we required, and hence the alternative which I took. The scheme was well laid, both in England and Canada, and was only entirely frustrated by the untimely death of F. C. Benwell.

HIS WIFE NOT AN ACCOMPLICE.

The details having been fixed, we decided upon the day of sailing. And before I embark with my readers on board the steamer there is another matter that I wish to see set right once and for all beyond all possible human doubt. I allude to what has been said by Pelly and by the general public of the knowledge that my wife had of the transactions I speak of. I had told my wife previous to my marriage that I owned property in Canada in the neighbourhood of the Falls, but that it was let to and looked after by others acting in my interest. I never told her the nature of my dealings with Ford & Rathbone, and when I went on to the farm when I first came to Canada I told her that it was with a view to get hold of just a few particulars in order to be able to manage my own property; and when I had money sent from England through Ford & Rathbone I told her that it was money accruing from the property in question. This she believed and never doubted, and though she often questioned me closely on the matter, I generally put her off in some way or another successfully. I had also mentioned this to several others in England, including her

father, and they, too, believed my statements at the time. I received communications from time to time relating to Canadian matters and these helped to lend colour to my statements, so that it became quite easy when I was leaving home to say that I was at length going to manage my own property, and no one doubted but that it was so.

A LA CLAUDE MELNOTTE.

Often I gave my wife full and graphic descriptions of this property, which existed only in my fertile imagination, and hence her ideas to Pelly on what it was like and the things she intended to get for the house. The poor dear girl was building her hopes on a comfortable home and having it got up to her own liking, and hence what she may have said was entirely misconstrued into a guilty knowledge of my fraudulent doings. She knew absolutely nothing of the fraud, of its inception, nature, or surroundings, and was just as much deceived as Pelly or Benwell, and the surprise has been just as genuine and just as terrible to her as to anyone; and it is positively cruel, inhuman, and fiendish that a totally innocent and good woman, as my dear wife undoubtedly is, should have been so spoken of, and that ill-minded and despicable hounds, as such people are, should have sought to add to her broken-hearted grief by adducing any such ideas, which are both impossible, false, and utterly wicked.

AN EARNEST DEFENCE OF MRS. BIRCHALL.

She has been a true, loving, and faithful wife to me, and if proof of that were wanting I merely call to the public eye and mind the noble, generous, and true loving way in which she has lingered near me here in gaol to minister to my wants and to cling to me, despite the public sentiment and even of the sentence passed upon me, and to offer in these last hours such loving words of truest devotion and wholly faithful trust, such as only so guileless and pure a being and loving angel as she is can give to a man situated as I am at present. Can anyone for one moment doubt the truth of these words respecting my wife? Do not the facts speak for themselves? Who shall dare to contradict them in the face of such overwhelming testimony as this mighty phalanx of invulnerable facts presents? Nay, not one. On every hand the base and cowardly insinuations of Pelly and his few adherents have been crushed and mangled beyond power of recognition. Were it not for the fact that there are some few people existing whose crass ignorance and bitter bigotry lead them into following the inane theory of these brazen and systematic would-be detractors of the fair fame of a good and honest woman, who simply because alone and a stranger, and unable to fight her own battle against such shameful slander, think that they can now broadcast their miserable and contemptible statements and theories on the public mind. Oh, truly human vipers, for men ye cannot be! How shall it be with you anon? Truly your day of reckoning will come, when for such vile and dastardly action you shall give account. It is utterly inconceivable to the educated mind that such creatures can exist, and it is the more shameful and humiliating to the people of Canada that they should and do exist.

All honour to those who have taken her part! All honour to those who openly and in defiance of public sentiment ground down to finest powder and exploded these pitiful notions! Verily, they will have their reward.

Having said this I have greatly relieved my mind. It is not necessary for me, then, to follow my wife's arrest in dealing with my case nor to refer at any length to her inhuman and brutal treatment at the hands of Detective Murray and his hellhounds. These are matters of history, and a lasting stain upon the administration of the country.

DEPARTURE FOR CANADA.

THE AUTHOR AND HIS WIFE, WITH BENWELL AND PELLY, LEAVE ENGLAND FOR "THE FARM."

I now take my readers down with me to Liverpool. My wife, myself, and Pelly left London together for Liverpool, and having arrived there, took up our quarters at the Railway Terminus hotel. We had previously taken passage on board the White Star steamer Britannic—a very good boat. I had sent on Benwell's ticket before to him, and had received a letter from his father stating that his son was going on to Liverpool, and that I should find him at another hotel in the town. I told Pelly that Benwell was going with me, and I told him that he was in a different capacity to him (Pelly). To Benwell I told the same tale. I liked Benwell very well at the time, and was pretty confidential with him as regarded Pelly. Later on Benwell took a violent dislike to Pelly, and I believe myself, and we have heard it from Pelly himself, that the dislike was mutual. Why, I don't know. He told me he thought Benwell was an "outsider," but certainly he was not that. He was studiously polite in manner and bearing, and a gentleman all the way through. However, this mutual dislike helped me a good deal, as it kept them apart, and effectually prevented them from comparing notes in any way. Pelly said he grew

suspicious on board ship. Not a bit of it. He was just as satisfied as could be all the time.

DID NOT ASSUME ANOTHER NAME.

It is said I avoided the passengers and gave a wrong name on the ship. My wife hastened to correct the mistake to the purser, as the name was entered wrongly, when he spoke to her of our places at meals, and Pelly's name was put down as Petty. What earthly reason could there be to put down a wrong name? It is said I was a bankrupt and desired to conceal my real name. True, I had been adjudicated a bankrupt during my absence abroad, but when I returned home I took advice and found that I was quite safe from any proceedings of any kind, and I openly and boldly returned to my old haunts, and met many of my Oxford acquaintances and some creditors, and nothing was done. Why not? Because there was no reason for proceedings. It is claimed that I made a fraudulent sale of property. They sought to make this out and failed. The sale was legally and properly executed long before any bankruptcy proceedings were ever heard of, and all that was done in my absence, and, added to that, the majority of my debts were contracted under age, so that had I cared I could have pleaded infancy. However, I need not go into this, as I am not posted on legal matters. The creditors knew where I was and took no action. The remedy lay with them if they had any.

NOT IN HIDING, BUT SICK.

With regard to avoiding the passengers:—I was very seasick, and anyone who has enjoyed that lovely sensation of parting with your latest meal under protest in the well-known and nauseating manner as at sea will bear me out in saying that seclusion is better than association with the general company when you have any doubt as to being able to retain possession of your breakfast or dinner when you are in that company. Seasickness is a deadly thing, and I am sure all who have been martyrs to this fell disorder will readily understand why I avoided the passengers. Whenever I could get upon deck I did so, and the last couple of days recovered sufficiently to take my meals in the saloon, where I had a seat opposite to my friend and legal adviser, Mr. Isadore Hellmuth, of London—a somewhat strange coincidence. We little thought of meeting again under such inauspicious circumstances.

MEETS MALONEY AND BUCKLEY.

We arrived in New York safely. Directly we arrived I received Mr. Maloney, whose name has been largely brought into the case. I at once recognized him, as on my previous visit to Canada I had an introduction to him from Ford and Rathbone, and also to Mr. Buckley. Both of these gentlemen are in the employ of the "Erie" railway, and cashed drafts for me and gave me particulars and tickets as mentioned by Ford and Rathbone. I append a card of introduction to Mr. Buckley. That of Mr. Maloney I gave to him and he introduced me personally to Mr. Buckley, so I didn't need the card. That was how I recognized Mr. Maloney, and I am glad to be able to give this explanation. I may also mention that the New York bank, which I fancy is called the First National or something like that, is close by the Erie office, on which Ford and Rathbone used to draw their American cheques. Having noticed Mr. Maloney I went up to him and shook hands. He appeared to recognize me, and I at once asked his help and influence, which he very readily gave. In fact, a more courteous official I never had the pleasure to meet. We then went to the Metropolitan hotel on Broadway, where I had stayed twice previously, and we registered our names there in the ordinary way, Pelly and Benwell having separate rooms. I saw a couple of persons in the hotel, whose names I shall not mention, whom I recognized.

OFF FOR CANADA.

We had dinner and then went to Niblo's theatre. My wife retired early, and I went out during the middle of the piece to consummate a few arrangements upon which so much depended, and having done this I returned to the theatre and saw the end of the performance. Pelly, Benwell, and myself then took a stroll, and they then returned to the hotel and retired for the night. I did not retire, having other arrangements which kept me till a late hour. I retired and told my wife of my determination to start the next day up country; but an appointment in the early morning prevented my leaving until night, and as Benwell and Pelly both had calls to pay in New York we all agreed upon the night train to Buffalo, which we took. We had sleeping berths, and we slept till morning, when we arrived in Buffalo and put up at the Stafford house on Sunday morning. We spent Sunday in strolling around Buffalo and in the hotel, and after dinner and a cigar Pelly retired, and I and Benwell were left together.

THAT "CONNY" PEN.

I may refer, however, to the incident that took place in the afternoon about writing each other's signature, which the Crown ingeniously tried to make out a point against me. Benwell was writing out some accounts, and he alluded to the way he made a B. I wrote two or three B's, and he said at any rate his signature was very difficult

to imitate. We were using the pen and pencil-case marked "Conny, N.Y." which he showed me with pride, and we fell to trying to imitate each other's writing. Pelly came in and joined in what was described at the trial a very "silly" occupation, and also tried to successfully imitate Benwell's writing. Pelly's writing was so bad as to render it a very difficult task to attempt anything like it, and we signally failed to do so. I borrowed the "Conny" pen to write some papers, and the Crown would have people believe that I stole it off the dead man's body. I knew of the marks upon it; I saw it frequently.

THE TRIAL.

RECOLLECTIONS CONCERNING COUNSEL, DETECTIVES, WITNESSES, AND JURYMEN, WITH SOME FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.

Previous to this great ordeal through which I had to pass I had retained the services of Mr. Hellmuth, of London, whom I have mentioned before. As he felt unable to give enough time to the case and from his inexperience in criminal cases he thought it necessary to secure further advice, I retained Messrs. Finkle, McKay & McMullen to act upon my behalf in Woodstock, and certainly all the work that was done in the case was done by these three gentlemen. Mr. Hellmuth had engaged Detective Bluett, of Toronto, to work up the case, and though he came apparently well recommended I never had any faith in him, and my opinion that I formed was afterward fully justified. I complained about him to Mr. Hellmuth, and said we were wasting good money on him. But Mr. Hellmuth thought the world of him. I wonder if he does so now! Mr. Hellmuth wanted to retain Mr. E. Meredith, of London, for the counsel, but I wanted either Mr. Blake or Mr. Blackstock, and after a great deal of unnecessary delay I retained Mr. Blackstock myself at the last minute.

WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM.

A good deal has been said about the funds used for the trial, and I give them, as it may interest the public to know what funds I used and whence I derived them. From my brother I received £100, from my sister £210, from my uncle £50, from an old Oxford friend, Mr. Lynch, £45; from Mr. Stevenson £45, from my aunt £10, from an old Lancashire friend £30, besides other small sums, all of which was entrusted to Messrs. Hellmuth & Ivey for the defence, making up a total of about £500. Mr. Blackstock very kindly accepted the modest fee of £100, and the remainder was paid to Messrs. Hellmuth & Ivey. So the public may judge of the costs of my part of the business. A further sum of £30 was sent by my brother to defray the cost of the petition here. I should like before I go any further to make my readers understand a little more clearly than many of them who have not experienced it themselves understand it now the way in which money goes in law, and with that end in view I will just give them an example of a lawyer's bill. At the time of writing Messrs. Finkle, McKay & McMullen have not been settled with, as their bill is over and above the balance of £400 which Messrs. Hellmuth & Ivey had, out of which they paid Bluett some $250 and a few witness' fees. By the time this is printed I expect Messrs. Finkle & Co.'s account will have been paid. They never bothered me for money at all. They made that quite a secondary consideration, and all honour and credit be to them for doing so.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF LEGAL EXPENSES.

But all lawyers are not built that way. What do my readers think of the following as a fair example of what some lawyers charge:—

To railroad fares coming to see you	$ 10
Cab to gaol	5
Getting into and out of cab	5
Entering gaol	5
Going up stairs	10
Speaking to you	50
Hearing you speak to me	50
Telling you what I heard some one say in Toronto	5
Knowing how to tell you	10
Shaking hands with you	5
Shaking hands with gaoler	5
Shaking hands with turnkey	5
Whistling to cabman	5
Whiskey for cabman (not wishing to appear mean)	5
Cigar for self	5
Thinking of your case while smoking	10
Total (for one visit)	$190

This is just by way of warning those who have not yet had any experience in such matters. Beware of the law. It is very unsavoury.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE CASE.

The above named gentlemen then set to work upon the case, which we found very difficult from the prejudice which had everywhere taken firm root. No one would give us any information if he could possibly help it, and this handicapped us greatly. The only man who volunteered any information was Constable Watson, of Princeton, who said he could give us some valuable information if we would pay his expenses up to London and give him $10 besides. We did so, and he said certain things, but withdrew them afterward. He also called upon my wife, professing great anxiety on my behalf, like a wolf in sheep's clothing. We were

greatly hampered for the want of a good detective, but having got Bluett at the start we couldn't very well change and couldn't afford a couple. None of the witnesses would give us their story as they told it at the trial. They generally prevaricated in some way or other, and naturally their imagination grew largely as the visits of Detective Murray took place, which happened about once a week. We kept on applying for copies of evidence, etc., but were met with delay every time. And in so far as the Crown could harass us in any way before the trial by throwing obstacles in our way they did so with a will—why I cannot tell; but it seemed to us anything but a spirit of fair play. So with all these difficulties to contend with

A CARICATURE BY THE AUTHOR.

my lot in working up the case was not an easy one by any means. Bluett would turn up with wonderful reports about the evidence he was getting, which, of course, exploded when touched, and such like bombastic conduct, which was very misleading. Mr. McKay worked like a Trojan, and indeed was very often up to see me. But he couldn't do everything.

WITNESSES AND JURORS.

I don't want to make this a chapter of complaints and bitter remarks about my case, but I may as well tell the truth for the benefit of my readers as to how my legal matters were often rather strained in their relations. Bluett kept on assuring me that the case was all right, and I believed it was, and no one was more thoroughly surprised at many of the Crown witnesses than I was. Of course men like Elias and Pigott, who deliberately came forward and swore to having seen me at a time when I wasn't in the country at all, it was only natural to be a little surprised at this; and others who, to put it mildly, were "mistaken;" it was somewhat galling to see and hear these good people telling their fairy-like tales with a pace and ease that would do credit to able counsel himself. Had I known or been in any way prepared for these productions I might have produced some testimony to show their "mistakes." With regard to the jury, I do not wish to say they were prejudiced, but I can tell my readers that out of the panel of seventy-two jurors called to serve over forty had expressed themselves prejudiced beforehand. So that may be taken as a criterion of the state of things existing. Some of them were honest enough to come to us and say they were prejudiced themselves. And if, as the local press sought to make out, there was no prejudice, why call seventy-two jurors?—a much larger number than is usually called for an assize? From what I have said previously about my journey to Eastwood my readers can judge pretty well of what witnesses were reliable and those who were not.

FORECASTING THE RESULT.

With the verdict, of course, I did not agree, and all along I had felt confident of success, but when I saw the array of witnesses and heard their embellished evidence, I began to foresee the end. I did not feel at all nervous during the trial, my good nerve standing me in excellent stead, and even in Mr. Osler's fierce address to the jury I kept, I consider, remarkably quiet. I had fully intended to make a statement to the jury, but I was advised that if they were prejudiced, as it appeared likely they would be, they would seek to make me an accessory, and, therefore, I should be no better off than if I made no statement. I think I should have done it all the same.

COURT-ROOM SCENES.

I was somewhat impressed with the court-room, such as it was. Part theatre, part court, its appearance was very grotesque to anyone who has been used to the judicial majesty of the English courts of justice. The motley crew of constables, their fairy wands, their withered garb, and their entire inability to cope with the crowd, likewise their total incapacity to receive any orders, were circumstances unknown to a respectable court-house. Another thing which greatly struck me was the very unseemly behaviour

of the women present, many of whom should have known better. Laughing and joking in a court where a man is on trial for his life is a very serious matter, and, as the judge himself remarked, was highly disgraceful. What brought such a crowd of women to hear such a case I cannot conceive. Some said that Pelly was the attraction; others that there were so many female witnesses. But this mystery is yet unsolved. The arrangements for the trial were a disgrace to any civilized country: cursing, pushing, and elbowing at the doors were frequent. Admittance being by ticket, of course only the favoured few were allowed the *entrée*. Women, and even children, and friends of the officials were politely ushered into the best seats, while outside the door stood thousands of sturdy yeomen of Oxford county, who pay their rates and help support their town of Woodstock nobly, who were unable to gain admittance. Whose fault was this? I wonder the people stood it at all.

DIFFERENCES IN WITNESS FEES.

In the matter of witness fees Pelly got $255, Benwell $255, for their testimony and attendance. In addition to which Pelly was allowed $50 a month pocket money by the Government during his stay in Canada before the trial. Another witness, S. B. Fuller, got $28 for the few words he had to say, whereas many of the witnesses who were subpœnaed by the Crown, on going to be paid their due, found nothing for them, and in some cases only a miserable pittance. Why should the value of testimony be priced like this? It certainly calls for explanation from those in charge of the matter; that is, of course, unless the witnesses are willing that fish be made of some, fowl of others, as the saying is.

A SERIOUS LACK AT THE START.

I have gone into the evidence pretty fully before this, so that there is not very much more to be said on that head. I was not represented at either the inquest or *post-mortem* examination, a piece of gross neglect which proved irreparable, and hence some of my difficulties arose in this way, as on all the preliminary investigations save one day I was unrepresented by any legal adviser, which handicapped me very much indeed, as I did not feel capable of cross-examining the witnesses myself. I thought Mr. Blackstock's speech in my behalf a wonderful effort, and I truly appreciated his touching allusions to my dear wife, which were more than fully deserved. Indeed, his whole conduct of the case, considering how he only came into it at the last minute, reflected the greatest credit upon him. I thought Mr. Osler handled the Crown case in a wonderful manner, and his address to the jury was a very fine effort indeed.

THE FATAL JOURNEY.

THE AUTHOR AND BENWELL PROCEED FROM NIAGARA FALLS TO THE SWAMP.

Long before we left England I had made arrangements for satisfying Benwell as to a farm being in existence and being mine; and now that I have been sentenced irrevocably, it is not incumbent on me in any way to go into the details of this scheme. Let me say, however, that the farm in question was not a hundred miles away from Pine Pond; and there are a couple of worthy persons who, if they would kindly come forward, could explain fully a great deal of what still remains unexplained. They were in the neighbourhood on the 17th of February, but I haven't seen them since, and shall probably never do so again. It was fully arranged in New York that Benwell was to go with me to Eastwood on the 17th of February to this place, which I beg most emphatically to state once more was not Mud Lake, which place I did not know of; and of course having been shown the farm the letter would be forthcoming as arranged. We left Buffalo in the early morning for Niagara Falls, where we got tickets for Eastwood, and proceeded to Hamilton. Benwell was under the impression that I owned two farms—an ordinary one near Pine Pond and a horse farm at Niagara. At Hamilton we had some time to wait, and went into the refreshment room to get some breakfast, which we had, consisting of ham sandwiches, coffee, and some kind of pie, and then started on for Eastwood by the slow train. We were *not* the only passengers who got off at Eastwood that morning. I saw Mr. Mat. Virtue on the train; he came for a minute into the smoking car where we were sitting, and he went out again. We were in the smoking car, and how those extraordinary mortals, Miss Lockhart and Miss Choate, came to see us sitting in front of them I don't know at all. They were certainly mistaken in what they professed to have seen and heard. However, we arrived there and got off. I think I remember Conductor Poole's pleasant face on the train.

ARRIVAL AT EASTWOOD.

It was about 11.14 when we arrived, and we alighted on the north side of the train right on to the track, so Miss Lockhart's brilliant idea of us going along the platform was also very much at fault. I may here mention that this woman told a friend of hers in town that Benwell was a "fair" man with a large fair moustache. We went through the little

gate, not meeting anyone at all; through the lane, and on to the Governor's Road. Old man Hayward certainly was not near enough to see who we were, and when in the gaol for the purpose of identifying me, he said he couldn't be at all sure; yet at the trial his memory increased so much as to swear positively that I was the man. But I don't think anybody believed him, so that didn't matter. If he failed to recognize his old friend Tom Midgely at 20 yards off—a man whom he had known for twenty years—it was hardly likely that he could recognize me, whom he had only seen once, over 200 feet off. "Distance lends enchantment to the view," I am told; evidently he is a believer in that noted maxim. We went along down the Governor's road to the place of appointment, a little beyond the blacksmith's shop, and proceeded to walk on straight east on the road upon which I had always gone to Pine Pond. We met no one after leaving the corner near the blacksmith's shop until about a mile further on, when we met an old man driving a team and a younger man driving a heavy-looking sulky. Of this pair neither appeared at the trial or for the purpose of identification. I walked myself as far as I could so as to give me plenty of time to get back to catch the train going east, as I had said I should be back that night. I left the party where the road crosses from the straight road leading to Pine Pond, and came back to Eastwood. Logan I never saw and he never saw me. Buck I did see but not where he swore to. I saw him close to Eastwood. Mrs. Ferguson was of course mistaken in us; at least I don't think she professed to be very certain about whom she saw and when she saw them. Crosby I am not sure about; I don't remember him. I arrived back at the station at Eastwood shortly after three; the roads were awful, and I was up to my ankles in mud all the time. I saw Miss Smith some way off and immediately went up and made myself known to her; in fact I had thought of calling there when I found I had time to do so. There were all sorts and conditions of women at the station; a selection of which gave evidence at the trial. Dunn, the station-master, I had a long talk with, but I suppose he forgot my face. As for the track across the field theory and the bunkum of the man Davis, C.E., probably the Pellows and Perrys and others made them themselves; no doubt the effects of the cheese meeting had something to do with it, or could it be Dake's ball, that historical landmark that will always be so dear to the hearts of Crown witnesses? It would be well to hold this ceremony about four times a year in order to give uncertain witnesses a chance to fix dates in their minds before they come into court. Hay and Duffy I saw on the train, but I emphatically deny telling Duffy that my name was Smith. I am not in the habit of growing so friendly with the newsagent on the train as to tell him my name, let alone to lay claim to the noble patronymic of Smith.

THE "BASTELL" TELEGRAM.

I booked for Hamilton, as I thought I would wait and catch the fast train on from there and get my dinner upon the dining car on that train, but found it too long to wait, and decided to go on by the slow train to the Falls, where I telegraphed to Pelly the telegram signed "Bastell," which was a mistake of the boy who wrote it and not done by me. If I was coming to the Falls the next day and making my name known there, and I was telegraphing to a place where it was also known, why seek to conceal the name? It would be ridiculous. I caught the train at the Falls for Buffalo about eight, and arrived at Buffalo about an hour or so later.

BACK IN BUFFALO.

On arriving back at the Stafford house I went up stairs and found Pelly and my wife in the parlour. I went straight into them without waiting to change my clothes or muddy boots and greeted them. They immediately asked me where Benwell was, and as I did not want Pelly to know that we had been away from Niagara Falls, as we told him on the previous night we were going straight to the farm, I was forced to prevaricate in order to allay any doubts that might arise in his mind about the farm. I said we had gone to the Falls and to the farm, but found it unfit to go on at present; this I said in order to account for taking rooms in the town at the Falls; so that Benwell could not stay there, nor could we until things were set straight again, which they would be shortly; and that finding that was so, Benwell seemed dissatisfied, and thought he would go to London; this I said in order that Pelly should think Benwell was not going to stay with me, and that Pelly would then be my sole partner, as he couldn't understand Benwell being a partner too on the face of my agreement with him (Pelly).

BENWELL'S BAGGAGE.

I said he would write me shortly as to his arrangements, and that he had given me his keys to bring his baggage from the hotel to the Falls, and pass it through the Canadian Customs. The brass checks for the baggage were all kept by Pelly on a ring affixed to his key chain, and he kept them all the time, and not, as the Crown sought to make out, sent to me by letter afterwards. What I did assert was that a check for some bonded bag-

gage was sent me afterwards to see after two cases that were in the Customs office there; and I attended to this matter on receipt of a telegram telling me to get all Benwell's goods out of my possession, and send them away. This telegram has never been produced. I feared that the Crown would seek at any rate to prove that I was an accessory, so I did not produce it at the trial, and did not give my lawyers any information concerning it, or to Detective Bluett. I sought to produce some letters and envelopes I had received; but these were taken by Detective Murray, and the Crown denied me the right to see or have possession of any of my papers for the purpose of my defence; and even now, after the trial they refuse to give them up, denying that they have them. And this is the spirit of fairness they treated me with. I know Detective Murray had the papers, which would have been invaluable for my defence, for I saw them in his hand at the preliminary investigation at the Falls. However I am anticipating somewhat.

THE BALDWIN BOARDING-HOUSE.

After smoking a cigar Pelly and I retired to rest, having decided on going on to the Falls the next day early. On the morrow we left the Stafford House and went to the Falls, and got our baggage out of the Customs, and after considerable hunting about found a boarding-house belonging to Mr. Baldwin, and agreed with him to stay there at the rate of $5 per week each. My wife had previously gone to the Imperial hotel, where we were acquainted before on our former visit, and we renewed the acquaintance, explaining the difference of name. We had tea there, and then took up our quarters at the boarding-house. We spent the time chiefly in roaming about, writing letters, and talking. Hearing nothing of Benwell for a day or two, we wondered what he was doing. I had his luggage brought up to the boarding-house, and told the landlord that I should require another room, maybe for a friend who had gone to London. I went to the post-office and got letters from time to time, some of which I destroyed, and others were kept by the Crown from me. I cannot very accurately remember the dates which are so important, since I cannot get the papers from the Crown, but as near as I can remember I received a letter on the Thursday after we arrived at the Falls, which was eminently unsatisfactory, although nothing was said about any such thing as murder. However, I took little notice of this; and later, not hearing further, I telegraphed at Pelly's suggestion to the Stafford House to see if there was any message there for me. There was, and the answer came to say so, and that there was a letter too. The letter at the Stafford House was merely the same as that I received at the Falls. I told them to re-repeat the message, which they did not do, and I thought I would go and see after it.

AN IMPORTANT LETTER.

However, I received another letter, which I have previously referred to, which at once told me that there was something wrong. I determined to go to Buffalo to keep an appointment that was made, and therefore went to Buffalo the next day, as Pelly wanted to go to St. Catharines to pay a call. I found out all particulars when in Buffalo, and my readers can well imagine the position in which I was placed. I was at a loss what to do, but I was bidden to have no fear about the matter; and I said that I couldn't very well send away all Benwell's things without some authority to show Pelly, the result of which was the telegram signed "Stafford," which everybody has seen. This telegram the Crown sought ineffectually to prove was in my handwriting by means of so-called experts. If I was the sender why did they not bring up the clerk who received it to identify me? For I was in the office upwards of twenty minutes, and had a considerable discussion about a telegram that had been lost in transmission; and the man could easily have recognized me, for he asked me my name, etc. This didn't suit the Crown, however; they would rather pay experts to try and convince the jury on this point.

DETERMINED TO STAND HIS GROUND.

However, having settled all that, I returned to the Falls, fully determined to stand my ground, and feeling sure that whatever might take place would in no way affect me, save in the matter of the fraud. Of course in the previous week I had written the letter to Col. Benwell, who had directed me to write so soon as his son should have seen the place, and in accordance with previous arrangements I wrote the flowery letter which has been given forth to the world. Speaking of the words of the Crown counsel that "the man who wrote that letter knew Benwell was dead;" this was an outrageous assertion, for if Benwell was to be shown a farm that was said to be mine, why should he not write to his father and say there was a farm and a good one too, and well stocked and well kept, the half of which would be dirt cheap at £500? Would he not rather jump at this apparently excellent and rare bargain? Of course he would; and I wrote off immediately, intending that both letters should go by the same mail to England as arranged.

THE TYPEWRITER.

With regard to the sentence in the letter about the typewriter, of which so much was made, it was a remark prompted by the fact

that Col. Benwell would think it business-like, and also the printed paper, and Benwell and I went to a shop in New York to buy one (a typewriter). Pelly was with us, and Benwell tried the machine there in the shop. It was contended that I was going to type-write a letter to the father and forge the name of the son. I did not even know what way the son signed himself or addressed his father in corresponding; and how was I going to keep up a correspondence with the mother, sisters, brothers, etc.? With regard to the words, "Please address Messrs. Birchall & Benwell," when I wrote the letter I did not mean to make the draft payable to "Birchall & Benwell"; for I was unaware that partners can draw sums made out to the joint order without the signatures of both being identified. But the letter was turned and twisted to the satisfaction of the jury. I shall speak, however, later of some of these things. I then went down to the Customs and told a man to come up and fetch Benwell's baggage down to the station for me to ship to the Fifth Avenue hotel, New York, and they promised to do so on the morrow, as it was then evening. In the morning I went down to see to this, and I went into the Imperial hotel and picked up the paper to see the news, when I perceived the name of "F. C. Benwell" in a column, and at once started to read it with interest.

THE AWFUL FACT.

I had previously read in one or two papers about a man being found murdered at Woodstock, but of course I did not pay much attention to it at the time. However, I was alert now, and when I read of the cigar case being found by the body, I at once knew that identification would be established. I was in a great state of mind, as I knew I had been seen with him in the neighbourhood, and hardly knew what to do. I made sure though that all would come right, and determined to go and see for myself, and hear further particulars. So I went back and told Pelly about it, and said that we ought to go at once. I brought him down to see the paper, and we agreed to go. We found on looking at the train card that there was no train save to Paris, as the express did not stop at Princeton. So I went back and told my wife who, with her dear loving nature, refused to let me go without her. I wanted her to stay behind, but she would not do so.

PELLY EVIDENTLY SUSPICIOUS.

Pelly at length appeared scared, and wanted to go and look for Benwell in New York, and bothered me so much not to go to Princeton that I said he could go to New York if he liked best, which he did. He told a cock-and-bull story about my trying to push him over the Falls and sundry other idiotic and childish ideas, which, of course, were without a shadow of the truth. He went off to New York and I to Paris. Having arrived there I at once hired a carriage and drove to Princeton; it was getting late in the afternoon, and the roads were simply awful, and it was a matter of great difficulty to get along at all. However, I got there eventually, and asked for the local constable. I was told he was away (as most constables generally are when they are wanted), but that Mr. Swartz, the undertaker, would give me all the information that I wanted. I was taken to this person's establishment and found him seated in the midst of an admiring crowd, spinning fairy-like yarns to them, as he did at the trial. I introduced myself, and he showed a woodcut of the man found, which was such a wretched thing that no one could tell who it was meant for. I enquired about his clothes, and when I heard the description I said at once I am afraid it is he. Swartz told me that the body had been buried that day, but that I could see it on the following day if I would stay all night. He offered me a bedroom in his house. He told me how well he had buried Benwell, and added that he hoped he would be well paid by Benwell's friends for so doing. He said of course "being an Englishman he saw that he was of wealthy parents by his clothes, and ought to be buried in good style;" whereas at the inquest he swore that he saw the dead man in Drumbo singing Indian war songs and selling jewellery. Consistency was not Mr. Swartz's strong point.

CONSTABLE WATSON APPEARS.

While we were talking, Constable Watson came in, having been rummaged up from some hotel or other, looking very wise, and after a lengthy introduction of himself, in which he said he was a detective from the States, a Canadian constable, a tradesman, and other occupations, he said he had charge of the case. Swartz told him all I had said, and Watson immediately asked if there was any chance of a reward. I told him that if the man was my friend when I saw the body in the morning, I would pay his expenses, etc., to track out the business. At that time I was undecided whether to tell the truth about being at Eastwood and confide in Watson about the fraud, and put him on the right track. But on second thought I decided to let them find out everything for themselves, as they were evidently a pair of numbskulls, and the theories they advanced respecting his death would have filled a volume. Certain it was, said they, that he was not killed on Monday for many reasons; chief

among which was that a man was on the spot on Monday afternoon, and the body was not there. His name was Maguire, and after the visit of Murray to him the time was strangely changed to Monday morning. They also made a great deal out of the shirt being so clean, and also the boots, showing that he had not walked through mud; also of the bruises which the judge and counsel sought to belittle at the trial; but which were never shaken for one minute by any of the evidence given. I grew tired of hearing these wise men and returned to the hotel, where I had supper and then agreed to return the next day to identify the body. I did so, driving home again through a blinding storm of snow and sleet, and arrived back very late at the hotel in Paris. I retired and rose early in the morning and drove up again to Princeton, where I was met by all the grandees of the village. I had a few words with those good and truthful men, Drs. Staples and Taylor, who forgot so much of what they told me at the trial. All along before the trial Dr. Staples professed to be such a good friend to me, and told Detective Bluett of what good evidence he would give for me, knowing all the time that he intended to do the opposite, and even refused to give my lawyers the particulars of his *post-mortem* examination. This was his idea of fair play. They, when they first met me, said there was no doubt "that the man was put there about Wednesday," two days before he was found; and in fact so said all.

HE IDENTIFIES THE BODY.

I went up to the cemetery and identified the body, and I was almost stunned when I saw poor Benwell dead, and I broke down and cried bitterly, Watson taking my arm kindly and assuring me that he would do all he could for me. I then went back to the hotel and told Watson to notify the coroner by telegraph, which he did, and also the detective department in Toronto. He said that there was a Government detective hanging around by the name of Murray, but he was no use, and that if there was any money into it, he wanted to get it, so he told me to try and keep Murray out of the case. I said we ought to let them know about it, so he telegraphed to a friend of his, a detective, to meet him in London that night, and he said he should disguise himself in a beard and go into the principal hotels in that city! What the use of that was I don't exactly know. When I got back to Paris I told my wife, who was naturally terribly distressed and fearful lest the blame be laid on me in any way. Even she did not know that I came further west than the Falls with Benwell.

DETECTIVE MURRAY ON THE SCENE.

After seeing my wife I met Detective John Murray, to whom Watson introduced me. I had some conversation with them both, and Murray sent Watson away, saying he wasn't wanted. I then had a long talk with Murray, in which he told me there was no doubt that Benwell was placed in the swamp on Wednesday, and many other theories. I gave him my address, etc., and he left, promising to call and see me shortly afterwards. We should no doubt have had the substance of my interview had the Crown dared to subject Murray to the cross-examination of Mr. Blackstock, but this of course they dared not do. So the public were spared a treat. I then returned to the Falls, where I was immediately accosted by interviewers eager to get all the news. Hardly knowing what best to say, I make it up as I went along, and hence a good many of the conflicting statements I made.

CHIEF YOUNG ON THE SCENT.

That night Chief Young, of the Falls, came up to the house before Pelly returned from New York, and set a watch on the premises, and I became aware that I should be arrested. All this time I kept the baggage check, keys, and pencil in my possession, and made no attempt to destroy them. If I had been the cunning villain that the Crown would have people believe, was it likely I should have kept these things for which I should be called to account? No, it is not. In the morning then I was arrested while in bed by Chief Young and Constable McMicking on a warrant issued by Police Magistrate Hill, and taken to the lock-up, where I remained all Sunday and the next day or two.

THE LOCK-UP AT NIAGARA FALLS.

It was a very cold, damp, narrow cell, dark, and with just a board in it to lie on. Nowhere to wash, and a very little dirty water to drink, and no air, smelling foully and thick with dirt. Such was the abode I enjoyed until they took me to Welland. When Murray came down to the Falls he and Chief Young came down to the cell and endeavoured by all the means they possibly could to extract some information from me. Neither of them cautioned me at all. Murray was very angry with me and kicked the bars of the cell, and said he would make me speak, but I merely remarked that my counsel had advised me to say nothing, and nothing it should be. In the evening Constable McMicking came down and said he had a great many questions to ask me, which he did with pencil and paper; I stuffed this poor man full of the most ridiculous nonsense you ever heard, all of which he put down on paper and took away. Chief Young told me that he (McMicking) went to him (Young) with all this information, and

Murray and he had a good long laugh over it.

THE ARREST OF MRS. BIRCHALL.

They then went to arrest my wife, and of the way in which she was treated I cannot speak in terms adequate to express my horror and indignation. Their treatment of her was brutal. They gave her morphine to stupify her. She was grossly insulted by the officers, and placed in a cold room upon the ground floor, having to sleep with the door open, and an officer outside to prevent her escaping! I cannot go into all the details here; my blood boils over as I write; and the way she suffered at their hands is a blot on the administration of Canadian justice.

COUNSEL RETAINED.

I retained Mr. Hellmuth, of the firm of Hellmuth & Ivey, of London, Ontario, to conduct my defence at the preliminary investigation; but he failed to turn up upon the opening day, when he was most wanted, and I was left to the tender mercies of the prosecution—a fatal mistake for which I all through suffered. At the preliminary investigation the evidence offered was taken down in writing by Police Magistrate Hill, assisted by Murray and Young, the former telling the witnesses what to say. There was a great buzz of expectation and excitement when Mr. Wm. McDonald appeared upon the scene, and the disappointment was just as great when he said very little and not to the point. I fancy, however, that he and an old friend were out for the day together.

I need not go into the preliminary investigation as I shall treat of the evidence at the trial. Suffice it to say that I was committed for trial to Woodstock, whither I arrived, as I have stated elsewhere, on the 13th March, 1890.

THE AUTHOR A MAN OF BOOKS.

MENTION OF SOME AUTHORS WHOM HE HAS READ AND GREATLY ENJOYED.

A good deal has been said about my "want of education," "scant reading," etc., by such eminent authorities and hair-splitting cavillers as Dr. Bessey and the *Globe*, but I may lay claim to having read pretty widely for my age. To pass any examination at Oxford necessitated a moderate acquaintance with a few Latin and Greek authors, not to mention the early introduction to such objectionable (to schoolboys) persons as Virgil, Homer, Livy, Pliny, Plautus, Æschylus, Thucydides, and other of the ancient fraternity, whose sole object appears to have been to lay the foundation of stumbling blocks and difficulties of every conceivable kind and manner for the benefit of the struggling schoolboy, who are forced to acknowledge the disagreeable existence of these worthy gentlemen. I myself had a fair knowledge of the above and read also many other classical writers and took some stock of ancient and modern history. It has been held up as a strange fact that I passed an examination in Holy Scriptures, but a fact, nevertheless; having successfully coped with the Old Testament and the Novum Testamentum in Greek.

FOND OF ABLE BOOKS.

I was fond of good writers as a change from the ordinary yellow back or 25-cent shocker, sometimes finding interest in Ruskin, De Quincy, Farrar (not to be confounded with Farrer of the *Globe*), and many poets of whose works I knew at least a fair synopsis. I have been fond of light reading, and especially during my confinement in the gaol. I have read some hundred odd works, chiefly by Charlotte Braeme, better known as the author of "Dora Thorne," Hawley Smart, and Mrs. Kennard, two excellent sporting writers and lovers of the field; Rider Haggard, with his weird productions, and "The Confessions of an Opium Eater," in which I took a deep interest; once and only once did I try the effect of this strange and potent drug, but without much effect of any specific nature. Mrs. Alexander, too, I have perused and found some of her works very interesting. My favourite book of light reading, or rather my two favourite books of reading, are "A Glorious Gallop," by Mrs. Kennard, and "From Post to Finish," by Hawley Smart. I have read such works as the "Pilgrim's Progress," but without much interest at the time I read them, and the same may be said of a somewhat ineffectual attempt to read "Arnold's Rugby Sermons." At times, especially at Oxford, one had quiet hours, and these were best whiled away by a few hours of reading. There is no time for reading, in my idea, like the night time, and the stillest hour of all seems that which immediately precedes the dawn, and I have seen this hour arrive in the sky perhaps oftener than most men of my age—a good deal too often, in fact.

A BELIEVER IN "LUCK."

I am in no way superstitious, but I have always had a strange idea of the true meaning of the word "luck," be it good or bad. The way some folks seem to get a long streak of luck and others just the opposite seems very strange, and one naturally hunts about for some explanation of the circumstances which attend or govern the "luck" of some people. In books one reads of this word "luck" so often that it is only natural to in-

quire what is "luck," and whence originating? Or, again, is there any such thing as "luck?" I followed a controversy in the English *Daily Telegraph*, that valuable medium of all vexed questions, concerning "luck," some acknowledging its existence, others scouting the term as vain and impossible. I should like to see the matter settled one way or the other, but I shall never have the "luck" to see that, and so I will say that my belief goes with the faction who support luck as an existent motor and a powerful one to success.

STRANGE SIGHTS.

I have seen some very strange and uncanny sights and heard some weird noises, which appeared at the time I saw them to call for some explanation which was not then forthcoming. Especially do these things occur out driving very late at night, and things such as a fox crossing almost beneath the horse's feet in the moonlight, or a patch of glowworms suddenly appearing in the damp grass, often lend a touch of weirdness to the scene. My readers will say, doubtless the "old port" again, or the result of a carouse which often produces a double focus, but it was not so always when I had the driving of a party, I nearly always made a point of being able to cry, "Hold, enough!" on those particular occasions. Not so, as a rule, with the party inside the vehicle, however.

"JONES IS MISSING."

I well remember one drive when, returning pretty late in the evening, many of the party were overcome by the influence of the "Dew of Ben Nevis" and sat huddled together in the brake, singing snatches of "We'll All Go a-Hunting To-Day," and such like inspiriting stanzas, when, on nearing Oxford, one of the party in a confidential tone whispered, "Jones is missing," and so he was. He had fallen out of the brake unobserved by anyone, and on returning to look for him he was discovered lying in the road, more shaken up than hurt. He rejoined the party and the return journey was resumed. Instances like this were somewhat frequent, I am sorry to say, but generally free from any serious accident, so far as we were concerned, but often in the case of other luckless wights things did not pan out so well, and broken bones and contused heads were not so rare.

GREAT HEADS IN ENGLAND.

The "great head" which is spoken of so much in connection with this country was not with us considered to be the mark of learning and dignity, but of a very different calibre; and those of us who had to use a shoehorn to enable us to get inside our hat generally knew that the enlargement of their top piece was the result of a protracted spree upon the (a) previous evening (forgive the joke, if it is one). It is said that "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," but it is also true that uneasy lies the head whose owner has been on too much of a spree. However, a bottle of soda water or two, a cold bath and morning gallop generally allayed these symptoms of "greatness" until they returned again on a subsequent occasion.

THE AUTHOR'S TEMPERANCE SPEECH AT OXFORD.

There is a debating society in each college at Oxford where "the great heads" (*a la* Canada) can diffuse their hidden and stored up knowledge to the more ignorant, and very good debates often took place. I took very little interest in these save to cry out "order" and interrupt some speaker on some point that happened to strike me as being out of reason or rule. I only made a speech once and then made rather a mess of it. The debate was on the subject of temperance finding almost everybody in the room [illegible] in favour of that excellent scheme, I felt obliged to say a few words, and after hearing the honourable mover of the question, a little stumped for words and facts in favour of temperance, I arose amid ironical jeers and expounded the subject, giving forth a phalanx of statistics and cold facts about temperance which I obtained from a rabid temperance paper which I had caught sight of a few minutes previously. My speaking in favour of [illegible]erance seemed after a time to bring a jocular feeling into the company and they began to change their opinion.

A WORD ON THE OTHER SIDE.

The next speakers, who were opposed to temperance, made capital speeches, and I felt I was going to be left in the minority. So I turned round and rose again, and said I had been convinced by their powerful rhetoric, and I made a short but pathetic appeal on behalf of Bacchus, quoting many instances in favour of the ancient god. The anti-temperance party carried the day and also carried the chief speaker in the debate home that night. That was my first and last attempt at speaking in debate, although I attended many others in the capacity of a listener. I have been in the House of Commons to hear one great statesman speak, and I enjoyed it muchly, and I have attended many public meetings at which we were required to applaud or otherwise, as the case required.

A SERIOUS COMPLAINT.

One thing I wish to mention in this work is the utterly unfair spirit with which the Crown treated me from start to finish. They took all my papers and refused to allow

anyone to see them; not even my lawyers. These were most important to me, and Mr. Murray knew it, too. So the papers were missing. Detective Bluett obtained leave from the Sheriff upon one occasion to come up and see me privately, which he did, but so soon as Mr. Ball heard of this he stopped it, and I was not allowed to see him any more, while the Crown employed the very best men they could get all over the place. However, it did not matter after all, seeing the shameful way Bluett behaved, and had we known what he was we should never have employed him at all. The Crown wanted to inspect all letters between myself and my solicitors, and gave an order that only one lawyer (Mr. Hellmuth) was to be admitted. We applied a dozen times for an order to see Benwell's clothes, but were put off each time, and when permission was given were not allowed to have a detective with Mr. McKay, although Detective Murray was there on behalf of the Crown. These are only examples of the way in which they sought to make everything as hard as possible for us, and to raise every obstacle that was possible in our way. They had two men constantly on the watch in Woodstock, who followed my wife and her sister all over the place and made themselves objectionable. I am not going to reason the matter out fully, I am tired of it, but many of the points that have been adduced for my defence will be proven by-and-bye. How to account for Benwell's boots I am utterly at a loss; the boots at the trial certainly were not the ones he had on when he was with me. Of his belongings, I have no knowledge of their hiding place. No doubt they will be found some day if not destroyed. I fully expected something to turn up to help me all summer, but nothing came. Once, and only once, did a herring cross the scent, but we could trace it no further. My revolver I threw away when I heard of the murder, as I did not know what calibre the bullets were found to be in his head, and I was afraid that whatever calibre my revolver was they might be said to be that calibre. I had no bullets, however, in my possession, and as matters turned out I might very well have kept my revolver, as it would not have helped the Crown at all. It was an English make, and carried a .380 cartridge. The bullets in Benwell's head were said to be .320—Smith and Wesson revolver bullets. Benwell had a revolver himself, but I don't know of what calibre it was or of what make. If the matter of my revolver had been brought up I should have produced an affidavit from the shop where I bought it. But it was only mentioned *en passant*. I suppose the swamp was thoroughly searched all round for any such thing as a revolver or anything else. However, as I have said, doubtless these missing things will appear later on, and it will be interesting to know whence, for I do not for one minute believe they have been destroyed.

NO "SENSATIONAL CONFESSION."

I have just given a rough outline of the journey on the 17th. It has been alleged by many papers, and I have been offered by various persons large sums to write up a "Sensational Confession" for them about the murder. I pleaded "not guilty" at the trial and I meant it as I said before; and I do not intend for any sum of money to make up any such tale as people might like to pay for and find satisfaction in reading. I have made up quite enough in my life time and it is high time to stop now, and to stop I intend. No doubt after I am dead there will be many so-called confessions published—but I have taken the precaution to leave behind me properly attested documents to the effect that NO CONFESSION whatsoever of the murder that may be published or scattered abroad by anyone came from me, and is therefore utterly and entirely fictitious.

THE "COLONEL'S" LETTERS.

With regard to the letters signed "Colonel," about which so much fuss has been made, they never came from me, nor were they in my handwriting. I endeavoured to find the sender of them, but failed to locate him in Jackson, Michigan. I received a post card soon after in the same handwriting from the same place. I have written nothing for any other paper save THE MAIL, and I have been faithful to my agreement with them. During the last few days of my life the officials, not satisfied with my life, have sought to make me as uncomfortable as possible.

THE NEW REGULATIONS.

Crown Attorney Ball and Inspector Christie descended upon the gaol with great violence, and made many new regulations: that I was not to have the papers to read. Fancy being deprived of the *Sentinel Review!* Alas, woe is me! Alack, I am undone; that I am not to have any letters except through F. R. Ball, and since I could not rely upon that gentleman I ordered Postmaster McLenaghan to hand all my mail to my wife. This latter change was a gross reflection upon Mr. Cameron, who has been the tried and trusted servant of the Government of the last twenty-three years. They ordered all the pictures to be taken down off my walls, and a flower-pot that remained came in for special censure. My wife has been rigorously kept away from me at this of all times when she should be near me;

and they sought to stop my writing any part of this manuscript, or handing it out to the publishers. Why all these restrictions I know not. All through the piece I have had one sort of order from the Inspector, and I then complained, and then another set came down forthwith. What are the officials to do? They cannot keep on remembering their many and changing orders. Confusion must ensue. The late Dr. O'Reilly kept on having letters from Mr. Ball complaining of indulgence being granted to me; and now that that good man is dead, I miss the firm hand which dealt with such meanness and narrow-minded conduct. What littleness have we in our midst! Truly may we say with the poet, "*in Tenui Labor.*" I should have thought my life was a sufficient penalty to pay for anything, let alone being kept from my poor, innocent, and suffering wife, who needs all the comfort that I or any other can give her.

DRAWING TO A CONCLUSION.

And now I am rapidly drawing to a conclusion the short and solemn warning given in these few pages. I have, I am glad to say, been able to see about half of it in print, and am very glad, indeed, to hear that it has found a ready sale. I have been accused of undue sarcasm at the expense of those who deserved it not. But my poor pen could never scathe the objects of my feeble railings with force sufficient to show them their contemptibility of bloated self-esteem. Naturally the local press have found great difficulty in deciphering much of my Oxford doings, as their knowledge of such an institution must be but slight, and their papers are better suited to the usual small-talk controversy which generally takes a bold part in their columns as between the *Sentinel-Review* and the Hamilton *Spectator*.

However, I have discussed most points that have suggested themselves to me, and I append at the end a number of very interesting letters from old friends and others, including my old nurse, whom I have not seen for very many years. I have spoken on most of the people that I have come in contact with; certainly I have not blamed anyone too much; but I fear I have fallen utterly short in my praise of others, especially the gaol officials, who have been pestered to death by local reporters and others; and their names dragged into breeches of duty which never occurred, and such like petty annoyances.

All those who have sent me a kind word, or have in any way contributed to the comfort of my dear wife by their word or deed, I beg to thank most respectfully and gratefully. Those who may have wronged me (and there are many) in thought, word, or deed, I most cordially forgive and forget, and having said this I am about finished.

DOES NOT FEAR DEATH.

As regards my book. I am now upon the eve of Death, which, let me say, I do not fear. For my poor wife and my relatives, the idea of the disgrace I bring upon them is heavy to bear; indeed it is always hard to part.

HIS SPIRITUAL ADVISER.

Still, guided through the darkened hours by that kindest and most excellent of men, the Rev. Rural Dean Wade, of Woodstock, and counselled by his faithful teaching I know there are better things in store for me than there have been in the past. Unceasing in his religious duties, and ever ready to help or guide when in doubt or difficulty, he has indeed become a dear friend and a welcome visitor. Alone of all the clergymen here, he came to see me after my arrest, and I appreciated the spirit in which he came; he has an open, frank, and pleasing manner—none of your canting, hypocritical, sly parsons, of whom I have seen so much. Mr. Wade tells you what he thinks right out, and isn't afraid to do so, either. But then he is an Englishman; that aids in his attraction to me also. We have had many talks and thoughts of which the public know nothing, and I have learned much from the good minister. Alone, of any that I saw, he spoke his mind, and never attempted to pat one on the back as do so many of our modern parsons; and for all his goodness to me and my dear wife, no words of mine can ever suffice to give due meed of gratitude. He will receive his due reward, however, from a Higher Power than mortals possess. So having come to the end of this book, which I trust has been a source of interest, and perhaps in places of slight amusement, and on the whole to me a terribly sorrowful experience to go through, I now continue to "set my house in order" to go on that journey—to the "bourne whence no traveller returns."

So unto Death I do commend my spirit,
And time which is in league with Death, that they
May hold in trust and see my kin inherit
All of me that is not clay;
Embalm my voice and keep it from decay,
Then I will not ask to stay.
Nay, rather start at once upon the way
Cheered by the faith that at our mortal birth
For some high reason beyond Reason's ken
We are put out to nurse on this strange earth
Until Death comes to take us home again.

And to Mr. Wade I would say:—

But though we two be severed quite
Your holy words will sound between
Our lives, like streams one hears at night,
Louder because it is not seen.

And now I say, Farewell! And in conclusion I beg to thank my good friends, Mr. C. W. Bunting and Mr. John Habberton, and others of THE MAIL and New York *Herald*, for their kindness to me and for the ready way in which they accepted my work. If this little work has done no good it cannot do any harm, and at any rate those who have read it may warn their children in time and season to beware of the follies and sin that led to the writing of this book and the untimely fate of the writer.

REGINALD BIRCHALL.

Woodstock Gaol, Nov. 12, 1890.

THE EXECUTION.

WOODSTOCK, Nov. 13.—As the hour for the execution draws near Birchall still continues to maintain his wonderful composure. He is a riddle to his gaolers, a wonder to his friends, and an enigma to the public. With such wonderful nerve, with such composed demeanour, and with a face cold and unimpassioned as the sphinx, he has spent six months in gaol and no one as yet has fathomed the depths of his mind. His character has two aspects. Viewed on one side, it is regarded by many well-constituted minds with disapprobation. Seen on the other, it irresistibly extorts applause. As the condemned murderer of Benwell, he appears despicable. As a man calmly smoking and uttering his jests on what he well knows to be his last day on earth, he cannot be contemplated without a certain degree of admiration.

HIS SPIRITUAL ADVISERS.

Rural Dean Wade, his spiritual adviser, spent the greater portion of last night with him in his cell. It was about two o'clock in the morning when Mr. Wade left the gaol. The prisoner then smoked a cigar, chatted awhile with his death watch, and calmly retired. He slept as quietly and peacefully as a child. It was one o'clock this afternoon when he woke up, dressed himself with care, and breakfasted the same as usual. After finishing his repast, the Bishop of Huron (Mr. Baldwin) and Rev. Dean Wade had a long interview with him, in the course of which there was prayer, Bible reading, and spiritual consolation from Bishop Baldwin, one of the most eloquent divines in the Canadian Episcopal Church. Birchall expressed himself as very highly pleased to see the Bishop, and paid a great deal of attention to what he had to say.

To-day the weather was bright and warm, and the sun flooded the corridors of the gloomy prison with a sea of golden light. It is Indian summer, and the prisoner spent a long time at his window gazing upon the limited horizon and the cold, blue Canadian sky overhead, drinking in the sights of nature which he could discern through the small-barred window almost for the last time. He sat thus until disturbed by the entrance of one of his guards, who asked him some questions about the clothing he desired to wear to-morrow.

THE GALLOWS.

It was a busy day about the gaol. The sheriff's officers were astir early in the morning completing the preparations for the execution and superintending the erection of the scaffold. This work was completed in the afternoon. The reporter of THE MAIL was admitted to the gaol yard by the hangman in the afternoon to witness the test made of the scaffold after it had been completely finished. The scaffold is erected in the north-west corner of the gaol yard. It consists of three pieces of timber, six by six inches. The uprights are seventeen feet long, and are planted three feet in the soil and about four feet from the wall, on the spot where Birchall and his guard used to sit basking in the sunlight during the summer days before the trial. The cross piece is about fourteen feet long, and one end is morticed into the wall of the gaol. Braces from the gaol wall steady the uprights. The rope was dangling through a hole in the centre of the cross bar and down between the uprights, which are planted about six feet apart. The rope then passes up over a pulley through a mortice to another pulley, which is located over a hole in the extending arm of the cross bar. Down through this hole it leads to a staple in the 350 lbs. weight. The hangman hoisted the weight to its place by means of the pulley to within a couple of feet of the cross beam, where it was fastened to a contrivance worked with a catch, and which is operated by a small rope. This gives the rope a slack of about three feet. The rope will be drawn taut from the prisoner, and he will be made to stand to one side close to one of the uprights. After this explanation the hangman gave the small rope he held in his hand a jerk, releasing the ponderous weight. It fell about three feet before it

jerked the noose into the air, sending it up about six feet. The weight sank fully four inches into the soil. "It will just go off like one-two," said the grim executioner, as he eyed his machine lovingly.

The hangman is J. R. R. Radclive, who during last summer was steward of a boating club in Toronto. He arrived on the morning train with the rope and other ghastly accoutrements of his profession. When he got off the train at the station he jumped into a cab, and was immediately driven to the gaol. When he reached the gaol he rang the bell, and Turnkey Forbes answered the summons. "Are you the man?" queried Forbes with a forced smile. Radclive nodded in the affirmative. The huge iron gate swung on its hinges, and he was admitted. Once inside he asked the guard where Birchall was, and was pointed to the door leading into the upper corridor. "I want to take a peep at him," he said, and stealthily and noiselessly he crept up the winding stairway to the corridor. Birchall was pacing up and down the corridor, but some strange fascination impelled the prisoner to turn and see the face of his executioner at the door. They both eyed each other for a moment, and then the hangman turned and walked down the stairs. He then repaired to the gaol yard, to take a look at the scaffold. He placed the long black rope he had with him in position and ordered some changes to be made to the scaffold. His reason for taking a look at Birchall was to size him up, judge of his weight and build, and thus arrange his ropes and fixtures so that there will be no blundering. He is a middle-aged Englishman, fair complexioned, and medium height. As stated the other day, this will be the fourth execution at which he has officiated in Canada. His first was Kane, who murdered his paramour in Toronto; second, Davis, who assassinated the husband of his paramour in Belleville; and third, Smith, who killed his wife in London. He has a wife and family in Toronto, and his profession is well known to many in that city. At Kane's execution he wore a mask, but has never worn one since. He says he has officiated or assisted at no less than eighteen executions, and thinks the rope he will use to-morrow will be worth a dollar an inch, and for this reason he had the scaffold built higher than usual. He will live in the gaol until after the execution.

INTERVIEW WITH DEAN WADE.

Rev. Dean Wade was seen this afternoon.

"Were you with Birchall long last night?"

"Yes, until long after midnight. I shall be with him again to-night."

"Have you been able to note any change of heart in the man?"

After a pause, he answered, "Well, he acts very nicely towards me."

PARTICULAR ABOUT HIS DRESS.

Birchall has always been very neat and careful in his dress, and, if anything, inclined to be a dandy. While at Woodstock on his first visit he won his nickname of "Lord Somerset" from his dressy appearance, and he seems inclined to carry out his *penchant* for style to the end. Yesterday he gave his friends a long list of articles of dress required by him for the day of execution, and they were purchased at one of the leading dry goods stores in town. He particularly wanted a fine flannel shirt with a turn-down collar for the final scene, and this could not be obtained here, so a message was sent to London for one. He will also wear a black silk four-in-hand tie. These articles were handed in to him this afternoon. After the execution the flannel shirt will be discarded for a white linen one. When Birchall saw the flannel shirt he laughingly held it up and said it would be worth something after he had worn it, and that it would be a good idea to auction it off.

DISCUSSING HIS HANGING.

When Birchall awakened this afternoon he stretched himself lazily, then quickly sitting upright asked the time. The guard pulled out his watch and told him, upon which the prisoner cast the blankets aside, and jumping quickly to the floor, exclaimed: "Well, I am late. Hurry up the breakfast, old fellow, I'm as hungry as a hawk." After taking a foot-bath, and while brushing his hair, he walked to the window and saw workmen carrying portions of the scaffold into the gaol yard. "That's a very crude-looking affair," he remarked, and then picking up his ready pencil he proceeded to compare his weight with the weight of iron that was to cause his death by dropping. "I was always good at mathematical problems," he continued, "and I am endeavouring to find out if that weight is sufficient to cause dislocation. How far did you say the weight will drop?" The guard stared in amazement at the doomed man, wondering if his apparent indifference was real or feigned. The prisoner pleasantly repeated his question, and upon receiving an answer, went on working out the problem. In a few minutes he threw his pencil down impatiently, exclaiming, "I would sooner have my breakfast than work at figures; but I do hope the machine will work satisfactorily. It's a weird-looking affair anyhow." While speaking, the prisoner walked again to the cell window, and after gazing down into the yard a moment, turned

suddenly to the guard. "Say, old fellow, come here. Is that the professor?"

"What professor?" enquired the puzzled guard, walking to the window.

"Why, the hangman, of course. He is a strange-looking being, to be sure. One would think he was a man from out West or a Mexican. I hope he has plenty of nerve, and won't make a bungle of the job."

At this moment breakfast was brought into the cell, and Birchall sat down and made a hearty meal, partaking of ham and eggs and fruit with evident relish. His appetite appeared to be as good as it was before his trial, and this afternoon his spirits were as light as they have been since his incarceration. He spoke freely to the guard of his approaching doom, and showed not the slightest trace of nervousness. In reply to a question, he said:—"No, I shall not speak from the scaffold. I have told all I have to say in my autobiography, published in THE MAIL. I have left nothing unsaid, so that I have nothing more to tell."

A MESSAGE FROM OLD CHUMS.

The prisoner busied himself this afternoon in writing his autograph on photos, which will be sent to friends, the while humming over the notes of a popular opera. While engaged in this work there was handed to him this cablegram from London, Eng.:—"Confidence unabated. Unable to write. Good-bye. (Signed) Edward and Johnny." "Poor fellows," exclaimed the prisoner as he threw the despatch on the table. "They were old chums of mine at Oxford when I was at college. They evidently believe in me. God bless them."

DISCUSSION ON CRIMINAL EXECUTION.

In the evening Dr. Rice, of Woodstock, called and had a long discussion with Birchall, the topic being "criminal execution." The prisoner was more than a listener, and gave an intelligent expression of opinion, naturally arguing against capital punishment, and concluding by expressing the hope that the executioner knew his business and that the affair of the morrow would not be bungled.

A GLOOMY CONVERSATION.

A reporter of THE MAIL saw Deputy Sheriff Perry this evening. He said:—"I saw Birchall this afternoon and he appeared to be quite cheerful. Speaking of the hangman Birchall said:—'He is a smart looking fellow.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'and they say that he is quite an enthusiast in the business.' 'So I am told,' was Birchall's cool response. After a moment's pause, the man who had but a few hours to live went on, 'But does this fellow make many mistakes?' 'I'm told not,' I said. 'At Belleville they say he did not do a very good job, but the man himself denies this.' 'Well, I hope he will be successful with me,' said Birchall, 'and I guess he will from what I've heard of him. Does he pull a lever?' 'No, he pulls a rope.' Then the discussion turned on the question of capital punishment as compared with life imprisonment. At first Birchall seemed to favour, as between the two, the latter evil, and attentively listened to the views of his attendant. 'It's like this, Birchall,' said I, 'as long as there is life there is hope.' The doomed man quickly caught the idea, and his face lighted up with a bright smile. 'Yes; and after you are in prison for a time the true facts of the case will become known and you will get reprieved, or by good behaviour you would get out in 10 or 15 years.' 'I would not care,' Birchall replied, 'to take chances on that. If I were guilty I would rather hang.' As I was about to leave Birchall grasped me warmly by the hand. 'Good-bye, old man, I will see you in the morning; but before you go let me present you with this memento,' and Birchall drew out from his pocket a photo of himself, on which he wrote in one corner, 'To John Perry, deputy sheriff, Oxford county.' On the opposite corner were the words, 'From Reginpye Birchall, Nov. 13, 1890.'"

A HEARTY SUPPER.

At 6.20 Henry Whitehead, the special cook engaged to prepare Birchall's meals, brought his supper up to him and passed it into his cell. The meal was a very hearty one, and was enough to sharpen the appetite of an Epicurean. It consisted of a bowl of oysters, a large steak of venison, potatoes, bread, and two cups of coffee. Birchall seemed to have a ravenous appetite, and ate everything before him while he conversed with his attendants. The venison he thought was too young, still he seemed to enjoy it. It was supplied by Mr. Joe Thompson, who recently returned from a hunting expedition at Long Point.

THE FINAL INTERVIEW.

Early this morning Mrs. Birchall was given a sleeping potion, and slept until about noon. As soon as she got up she began fretting and expressed a strong desire to see her husband again for a short while. Her friends endeavoured to dissuade her, but she would not be denied, and about eight o'clock this evening, she was driven in a close cab to the gaol along with Mrs. West-Jones and Mr. Leetham. They stayed there with the prisoner until close upon midnight. The inter-

view was touching in the extreme, and largely a repetition of the one last night. When the party drove up to the hotel after midnight some people were standing about the door. Mrs. Birchall saw them looking curiously at her, and in the midst of her tears she exclaimed, "How can you look at a woman in such distress as I am?" She is utterly prostrated, and became hysterical upon reaching her room, and several medical men had to be sent for. Shortly before she left the gaol a messenger came rushing into the hotel where Deputy Sheriff Perry is stopping, and they both started for the gaol on a run. It was surmised that the prisoner and his wife had committed suicide, and there was considerable excitement for some time. I called at the gaol at once, and found that the hangman, who was drunk, was threatening to "clean out" the institution, and the deputy sheriff, who is about the size of J. L. Sullivan, had to be called to quiet him.

THE LAST SCENE.

WOODSTOCK, Nov. 14.—This morning, at twenty-nine minutes after eight, the sentence of death pronounced upon Reginald Birchall by Judge MacMahon for the murder of Frederick C. Benwell in the Swamp of Death, in Blenheim township, was executed in the presence of about two hundred spectators. The execution was very impressive, and was carried out thoroughly in every detail.

The prisoner was one of the most noted criminals in the annals of crime in this country. The murder of which he was found guilty was of a terrible character, and the web of circumstantial evidence woven by the Crown was complete and inexorable, and his execution this morning in the presence of the representatives of the press was a fitting close of an ill-spent life.

Ever since the day of his arrest the prisoner exhibited a nerve that is the wonder of everyone. Not once did he falter during the period when he was first undergoing examination, not a tremor did he show during the long and painful trial; and when word was received from the Minister of Justice that all hope was at an end he was cheerful and composed, and he met his fate this morning with a smile and without the faintest trace of emotion. The spectacle of a man in the interval between his trial and execution sitting down calmly to write a history of his life is unique and impressive, and stamps Reginald Birchall as a man who, he was cowardly enough to shoot F. C. Benwell in the back, as the Crown proved to the satisfaction of twelve of his peers, certainly brave enough to face death in its most humiliating form unflinchingly. Throughout the trial and final days people maintained that he would break down. Those who saw him and spoke to him knew better. He was not an ordinary man. He was a bundle of paradoxes, and never did anything like other men. He was startlingly original in everything; in his life at college and as a boy this trait of his character is disclosed, and he kept up his originality to the end, only the manner of his execution was not different in its aspects from that of other criminals. A man with his talents and with the energy and ambition he displayed at the end might have made his mark in the world. But indolence and a taste for wild life and dissipations ruined him and he became an adventurer. Once entered upon the downward path the descent is easy, and in his case he has atoned for his escapades and sins.

THE MORNING HOURS.

As stated in to-day's MAIL, it was one o'clock in the morning when Mrs. Birchall left her doomed husband. When she was taken to the gaol she asked her sister, Mrs. West-Jones, and Mr. Arthur Leetham, who accompanied her in a cab, to return at eleven o'clock. They were on hand promptly at the appointed time, but the wife did not wish to leave just then, and they entered and took seats in Gaoler Cameron's private office. She had not been very long there when Mrs. West-Jones caught sight of the long snaky black rope to be used at the execution laying coiled in a corner. She sickened at the sight and almost fainted. "Take me out of here," she faltered, and she was led to Turnkey Forbes' room, where she passed the rest of the time quietly. It was well for her that she had gone to Mr. Forbes' room, for she had not been there very long when the hangman came along and began pounding on the gaol door for admission. He was intoxicated, and was followed at a respectful distance by half a dozen reporters eager to enter the gaol as soon as the door was opened to admit the public executioner. "Lemme in, lemme in, do you hear?" he shouted, for he had a faint lingering suspicion that some of the reporters were irate citizens waiting for a chance to crack his skull. Guard Midgley was on duty in the lower corridor, and upon hearing the noise he came to the door. Sergeant Midgley is an old soldier, and as he had no instructions to admit "Ketch," as he called him, he said he would carry out his instructions to the letter, and the P. E. could go and sleep in a dry goods box for all he cared, but he would not be admitted without

orders. The burly hangman raved and ripped out oaths big enough to shake a steeple, but Midgley held the fort and the drawbridge was up. "Lemme in I tell you, or I'll go right back to Toronto and leave the job to an amateur," he shouted, as he rattled the iron barred door until the noise echoed and re-echoed through the dim corridors, arousing the prisoners and creating a tremendous excitement among them, many of them thinking that Birchall had made a desperate attempt and broken gaol. Finally Deputy Sheriff John Perry, who had been sent for, arrived on the scene. He gave Midgley the order to admit the hangman, and that individual, muttering, curses entered the gloomy walls. Once inside the gaol, quarters were provided for the estimable judicial functionary, and he spent the rest of the night snoring and puffing like a donkey engine.

THE FINAL FAREWELL.

A short time after Mrs. Birchall was admitted into Birchall's cell, Rev. Dean Wade was ushered in. He spent the remainder of the night with the prisoner. The parting between husband and wife was very touching. As Mrs. Birchall was being led out on the kindly arm of Mr. Arthur Leetham, she burst into a terrible fit of weeping and moaning aloud, and would insist upon returning and having a last look at her husband through the door. Birchall stood at the door, gazing long and lovingly down upon her, and, as she turned back, waved his hand and said, "Good-bye, Flo. Don't take it too hard. God bless you." Rev. Dean Wade remained with him in conversation until about four o'clock, when the prisoner expressed a strong desire to see Turnkey Forbes. Mr. Forbes went to his cell, and Mr. Wade retired for a short time. The prisoner had quite a chat with Forbes, who was very much affected, and left some orders for him as one of his trustees, to be carried out. While the interview was going on Birchall appeared at the cell door and called to Sergt. Midgley, the night guard, with whom he was very intimate, and told him that he was going to bequeath to him a sword, which will be sent from England, and a gold pencil for Mr. Midgley's son Fred.

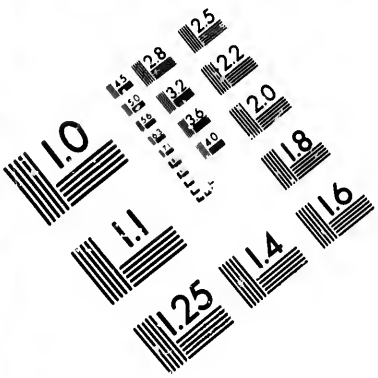
Birchall ordered a light luncheon at midnight, but as his wife was then with him he did not eat anything. At six o'clock in the morning the cook, Mr. Whitehead, brought the prisoner his breakfast. "Good morning," said Birchall with a forced smile. The meal consisted of three poached eggs, some toast, some blackberry preserves, and a cup of coffee. He ate the eggs and some toast, but he did not touch the preserves. At seven o'clock the barber arrived and shaved the prisoner. His friends were then admitted to bid him farewell.

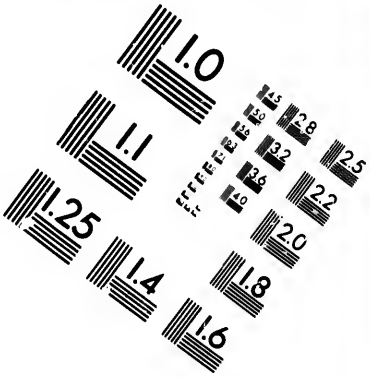
A SHIVERING CROWD.

Out in the gaol yard in the cool frosty morning half a hundred reporters moved restlessly about, some dreading the approaching ordeal and others eagerly waiting to flash the news across two continents, and conclude their work on the most sensational assignment for which they were ever detailed. Twice as many ordinary spectators, drawn thither principally from a morbid feeling of curiosity, wandered aimlessly about the yard, with pale faces and nervous movement, dreading what was to come, and yet anxious to witness what they would naturally term a vindication of the majesty of the law. Few were there whose hearts were not beating fast as the time approached for the execution, and none were there whose nerves were not strung to their utmost. It may have been the cold that made the whole concourse shiver, and start nervously every time the gaol yard door was opened, but the change of colour in the faces and the long-drawn breaths seemed to indicate that the nerves had more to do with the tremors than the cold thin air and the white frost that withered the grass on which the doomed man was wont to tread during the past four weeks. In a corner of the yard loomed up the awful machine of death, and, as Birchall yesterday remarked, it was indeed a crude-looking affair, a machine such as science would never suggest for the sacrifice of life, and one that a person might easily imagine would have been used when a scaffold was first introduced. But it did its work well.

A GLOOMY SPOT.

The scaffold, which has already been described in THE MAIL, was fixed with cross-pieces against the north-west corner of the gaol building—in the gloomiest corner of a gloomy yard—and appeared to be as simple in contrivance as an ordinary swing. This spot the sun seldom reached, and, as a consequence, the earth showed up dark and damp, the absence of grass, which grew abundantly elsewhere, suggesting that preparations for the grave had already been commenced. The ground was uneven, and the night's frost, already melting under the heat of the day, rendered a foothold insecure and walking unpleasant. Twenty yards to the west of the scaffold two operators of the Commercial Cable Co. stood leaning against the wall with instruments in hand, ready to wire to England the moment the drop fell, while inside the building operators of the Great North-Western sat with fingers on keys ready to tell the continent how Birchall died. Half a dozen constables, armed with long poles,





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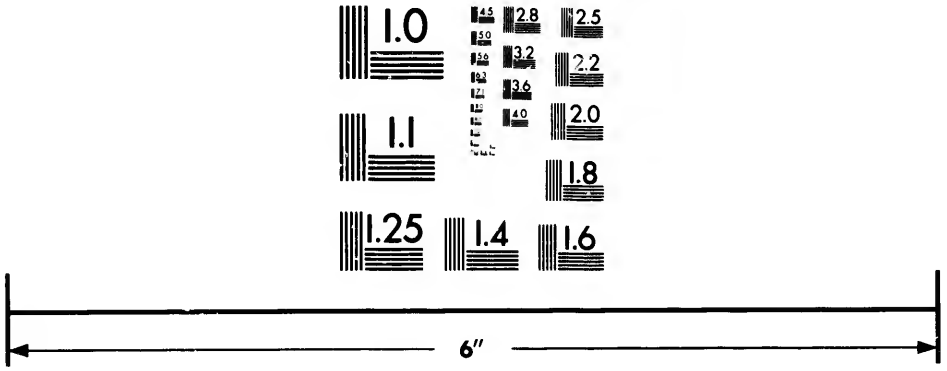

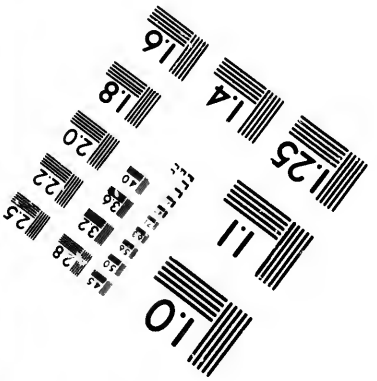

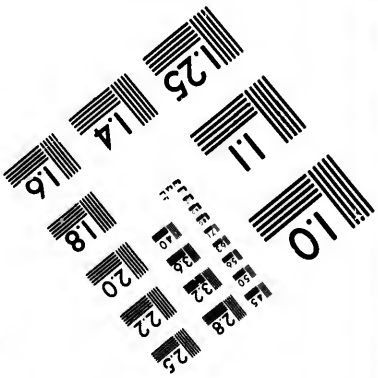

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formed a cordon round the scaffold, and in smothered words, so that they might not reach the ears of the victim, ordered the crowd backwards until there was an uninterrupted space for the use of the solemn procession so shortly expected. Birchall must have been well liked during his confinement, because constables and guards, with years of experience and hardened by constant intercourse with criminals, moved softly in and out of the corridor with heads bent and tear-stained cheeks, and none of them lost an opportunity to say a favourable word for the doomed felon. In the strength of their sympathy they forgot the Dismal Swamp and the cold, dead body of Fred. Benwell, in whose brain was imbedded the bullets of the man who voluntarily sacrificed his soul to his greed for gold. And it seemed well that the prisoner was able to draw from the hearts of these long-experienced representatives of the law a little of the milk of human kindness, because in his agonizing distress he sorely needed all the sympathy, all the affection, and all the tenderness and care that could be shown him. He was on the brink of eternity with the guilt of an awful crime upon his soul, and those who wept and prayed for him showed but a natural instinct to succur a fellow-being in sore distress.

MORBID CURIOSITY.

It may seem strange to newspaper readers, but not so to the reporter who has the misfortune to be detailed to write up an execution, to read that outside of the gaol walls there was congregated a great crowd, nearly all clamouring for admission, and many of those who were refused climbed up into the neighbouring trees and viewed the terrrible sight from a distance. The roofs of neighbouring buildings were also utilized unhindered by the police, although from such a distance the imagination had to lend assistance to the eyes. Those on the trees and on the house-tops could see the scaffold, could see the executioner making the final preparations, and could see the mournful procession as it filed from the prison, but none could hear the sad and solemn words of the clergyman as he sobbed out the solemn words of the last prayer for the dead; they could not hear the appeal or see the expression of distress on the face of the minister, or read the agony in the tones of his voice as he broke down again and again in his efforts to encourage the prisoner by maintaining his composure; and they could not hear the half-muttered responses of the doomed man as he walked towards the instrument of death with a step that was bold, and a demeanour that was reflective rather than defiant, boastful, or dejected, so that the lesson of the scene must have been lost upon them, except that it had been given to them to see a human life sacrificed without understanding or appreciating the solemnity with which the awful event was surrounded. Alongside that part of the ground close to the wall where Birchall was in the habit of taking daily exercise the grass was worn away, and as the sun's rays skirted the gloomy building and fell among the blades that were still green and yet white tipped with frost, the narrow foot-path looked lonesome in its very suggestiveness. One could easily see Birchall in imagination as he tramped round the yard with his ever-watchful guard by his side, and his favourite dog licking the prisoner's hand as he followed at heel.

THE EXECUTIONER.

When Radclive, the hangman, appeared upon the scene there was a momentary hush, and then a score of notebooks flashed from pockets and a score of pencils were set busily at work. Radclive looked better than he did last night, and had not the appearance of a dissipated man. As he adjusted the ropes, arranged the pulley, and got the ponderous weight into position he appeared as cool as if he was handling a hod, for which occupation he seems fitted; his hand was steady and his eye clear and true, showing no traces of the liquor he had consumed the night before, and his manner of going to work indicated that he was thoroughly competent to complete the contract he had made with the sheriff. When the ropes were adjusted Gaoler Cameron and three constables stepped forward, and with the puiley raised the 350-pound weight into position about ten feet from the ground, leaving the rope with the noose at its end dangling some five feet from the ground. From the corridor of the gaol came an incessant murmur telling of the efforts of those outside to get within and of the refusal of the guards to admit any but those who held the magical autograph of the sheriff. Standing at the foot of the winding staircase, and holding in his hand a belt-shaped leathern strap, was the executioner waiting for the signal which would give him absolute control over the body of Reginald Birchall. After seeing that the scaffold was in readiness for its victim Radclive quietly proceeded to the main corridor, where he informed Gaoler Cameron that he was prepared to execute his commission. The executioner has by no means the appearance of a callous ruffian, but he evidently believes that his mission is that of a public executioner. Coolly and deliberately he explained what steps he intended to take, and when at last the signal was given he

slipped noiselessly up the winding stairs and stood quietly in the corridor, to await the conclusion of a prayer that was then being offered up by Rural Dean Wade.

THE SUMMONS.

While he was waiting, Deputy Sheriff Perry, Dr. Chamberlain, the new Prison Inspector, and ex-Chief of Police Stewart, of Hamilton, entered the cell, and the inspector beckoned to the prisoner.

"Birchall," he asked, "do you intend to say anything on the scaffold; if so an opportunity will be given you to speak?"

"No," replied the prisoner. "I have said in my autobiography in THE MAIL all that I have to say, and will have nothing to tell on the scaffold."

Rev. Mr. Wade, who had spent the whole night with the prisoner, arose and touching Birchall on the shoulder invited him to the door. The prisoner turned with a smile to his spiritual adviser, and after taking a couple of steps forward turned, and walking quickly backward, betrayed a slight feeling of emotion as he grasped the hand of his old college chum and trustee Mr. Leetham, and bending his head quickly kissed him on the cheek. The action was so rapidly executed and so unlooked-for that Mr. Leetham for a moment stared dumbly at the prisoner, and then grasping him by the hand shook it warmly, the tears in quick succession coursing down his cheeks. Recovering as quickly as he had been affected, Birchall turned and with a steady and unsupported step walked to the door. By the expression in his eyes and by the ghastly pallor in his face it was clear that he knew what awaited him in the corridor, but he never faltered for a moment, walking with even steps through the iron-bound entrance into the corridor. He paused a moment as he reached the threshold, and then, turning silently to his executioner, he bowed his head and dumbly held out his hands. Radclive quietly slipped behind him, and grasping both elbows drew them sharply back. In another instant the leathern strap was passed over the doomed man's arms, and he was secured in such a manner that he could freely move his arms from his elbows down, but above those the limbs were powerless.

BIRCHALL'S COOLNESS.

While this work was in progress Birchall betrayed no emotion except that of curiosity. He leaned backward, and turning his head sidewise watched the hangman's nimble fingers with a curious expression on his face. As the hangman moved so moved the prisoner's head from side to side, watching each movement over his right and his left shoulder intently, as if he was desirous of mastering the secret of the executioner's work. His large full eyes, with pupils somewhat dilated, followed every move, and when Radclive strrightened up he wheeled round and cast a mute and appealing glance to his old-time chum.

"Yes," said the Deputy Sheriff, reading the glance. "You can take his arm, Mr. Leetham, and remain with him to the end if you wish."

"Yes," said Birchall, "take hold of my arm, old man, and walk with me as we used to do in the old days together."

Rev. Mr. Wade, wearing his white surplice, led the way to the stairs, followed by Deputy Sheriff John Perry and ex-Chief Stewart, the prisoner coming next, with Mr. Leetham on his right hand and day guard George Perry on his left. Following the prisoner were Inspector Chamberlain, Gaoler Cameron, and three constables, and last of all came the hangman, whose coolness was only exceeded by the prisoner's extraordinary composure. Down the winding stairs and into the western corridor the solemn procession moved through a line of terror-stricken prisoners, among whom was the man McCabe, who has been thrice tried for murder, and who twice narrowly escaped the death to which Birchall was so steadily marching.

"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

Clearly and distinctly the trembling words of the preacher fell upon the waiting crowd, and with one accord the spectators fell back to make way for those who came in sorrow and in mourning.

THE SERVICE FOR THE DEAD.

Tears were streaming down the blanched cheeks of the dean as he intoned the solemn service, and faintly behind came a response so heartfelt and sincere that the spectators bowed their uncovered heads and looked not upon the mournful procession as it passed down the short flight of steps and into the yard. While the preacher was reading the prayer Birchall appeared in the doorway, and his first glance was at the crowd that awaited him. Instead of features distorted with fear the spectators beheld a face on which there lingered a slight smile; a face pale in its ghastliness, yet firm, with head well thrown back, and form as upright as a soldier on parade. One glance he threw over the yard, and then his eyes involuntarily turned to the north-east corner, where they rested upon the dread engine of death. The slight breeze that prevailed swayed the ropes, and the chain attached to the weight clanked noisily against the iron, as if greedy for its victim.

The preacher read on, although at times his voice failed and the tears blinded his vision, until he arrived within twenty feet of the scaffold, when he stopped, and raising his arms pronounced a gentle benediction upon the assemblage.

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live." The dean's voice failed him, and he leaned heavily against Gaoler Cameron for support. At this moment the appearance of the preacher and the prisoner presented a singular contrast. The one, grey-haired, and feeble, mutely moving his arms, for his voice was gone, and the other, with chest thrown forward and rigid form, taking in with his eyes every piece of the fatal trap to which he was so soon to be introduced. Gasping, sobbing, and half-choked with the words he tried so hard to utter, the prisoner's spiritual adviser read the Collect, but when he commenced the Lord's Prayer his strength seemed to return and his voice grew firmer, although he faltered and turned his head away from the gallows as he concluded the pathetic appeal for mercy. Stepping forward at a signal from the executioner, Birchall placed himself under the gallows, and then without a tremor looked upward as if desirous at the last moment to understand its peculiar mechanism. Twisting his head from side to side like a bird, he examined the pulley and the noose and the weight, and then bending slightly forward he whispered something to his guard. In response the Dean stepped forward, and Birchall, kissing him quietly on the lips, straightened up as if he had drawn strength from the consolation given him. Just as the executioner was pulling the black cap over the doomed man's head the latter half turned and asked of the man who was about to kill him,

"Do you mind shaking hands with me?"

"Certainly not," replied Radclive, walking to the front. He put his hand in that of Birchall's, who gave it a hearty shake, saying, "Well, good-bye, old fellow."

Solemnly the sublime words of the Lord's Prayer rang out upon the keen and frosty air, the preacher's voice strengthening as he proceeded, but suddenly there was a deep hush, and almost in a whisper came the words "Forgive us our trespasses."

THE END OF ALL.

All eyes but those of the preacher were turned upon the scaffold, beside which stood the grim executioner with one arm upraised ready to send the felon's soul to eternity. The prisoner stood close to the upright on the left side with his face to the spectators, the rope drawn taut, and the knot close under his left ear. Close to his side stood Radclive, so close that he was prepared to support the prisoner if necessary, which it was not, and immediately in front were congregated those who were authorized to take part in the proceedings, the reporters and other spectators forming the segment of a circle on the outside.

"Deliver us from evil." The soul of the speaker seemed to go out with the words, and as he uttered the final "Amen" there was an awful stillness, and then a sharp, clicking sound. The executioner stepped quickly back, and as the ponderous weight fell Birchall's body quickly shot sidewise and then up as if propelled from a spring-board. There was a rebound of several feet, and then for the space of half a second the body remained rigid, but this condition was quickly followed by convulsive movements as if the man was making a desperate but unavailing attempt to breathe. His chest heaved and his legs were drawn up only to be relaxed again, and each muscular contraction grew weaker until at last the body swung limply to and fro, the face ever turning towards the spectators. The upward tendency of the rope raised the cap slightly, exposing the lower part of the face, and to hide it the hangman grasped the legs and turned the face to the wall; but it swung back again and again until the last glimpse showed a partly veiled face with the head turned to one side and almost resting on the shoulder, the trunk still rigid but the limbs limp and motionless. At the last moment, and just as the cord was drawn by the hangman, there was a slight smile on the doomed man's face, and those who made the *post-mortem* found it lingering still on the dead and discoloured countenance.

Barber James Sullivan, who was called to the gaol to shave Birchall shortly before his execution, says that when he entered the cell of death he asked the prisoner how he felt.

"Like this," replied Birchall, grasping the young man's hand warmly, and giving it a hearty shake.

All those who witnessed the execution were amazed at the coolness displayed by the prisoner, and were unanimous in saying that his was the most wonderful exhibition of nerve they had ever beheld.

On leaving the scaffold the hangman, who wore no mask, proceeded to the Thompson house, whither he was followed by a crowd of men and boys. It was thought unsafe for Radclive to leave the friendly shelter of the gaol, but the hangman had no such fear, and boldly ventured out among the crowd. The result justified his belief that he knew his own business best, as he was not molested.

At the hotel he was soon surrounded by an admiring crowd.

DEATH INSTANTANEOUS.

"How long did Birchall live after you allowed the weight to fall, Radclive?" asked a MAIL reporter.

"Not a moment," was the reply. "That is, he was not conscious of life after the weight fell. It was the neatest job I ever attempted, and ought to secure me the position of public executioner. You may also say that I have attended nineteen executions, and I never before beheld such a wonderful exhibition of nerve. Why, the fellow seemed to be all nerve and backbone. After he had taken up a position under the cross-piece, with the noose dangling about his ears, I found that he was standing too far to one side, and I touched him on the arm, intending to ask him to move over, but he seemed to understand what I wanted, and briskly stepped to one side as if anxious to have the scene over. I felt that it was a great pity to hang a man with such a nerve, but there is the law—the law, you know. The law has to be obeyed, and do you know, it just struck me that the very nerve he displayed made it plain to me how he could have committed the crime of which he was convicted."

THE INQUEST.

Immediately after the body had been cut down Coroner McLay empanelled a jury composed of the following gentlemen:—John Virtue, James Baird, John McKay, Peter Irwin, Thomas C. Grant, Angus Dent, M. Virtue, Geo. A. Fraser, Matthew Symes, George Pascoe, Wm. McDougall, Wm. Baldwin, A. P. Brown, and James Lyons. Mr. John Virtue was elected foreman, and after viewing the body and taking the usual evidence in such cases from the officers of the gaol and the sheriff, Dr. Odlum was appointed by the coroner, and Dr. Mearns by the jury, to make the *post-mortem* examination.

The *post-mortem* examination showed that death was caused by strangulation, although the medical men agree that the patient suffered no pain. The posterior ligaments of the upper vertebræ were slightly separated, allowing the bone to part slightly, but not sufficient to dislocate the spinal column. Death was almost instantaneous, and there was no pain. The other organs of the body were closely dissected, revealing many points of interest. The heart was normal and the stomach empty, with the exception of a slight fluid. The kidneys were slightly congested, liver normal. The brain was apparently normal in appearance, and weighed 50¾ oz. The average brain weighs 49 oz. Certain vessels, however, were particularly large, such as might not be expected in the brain of a man of Birchall's education.

Upon reassembling in the afternoon the jury returned a verdict that deceased came to his death from the combined effects of strangulation and the shock to his system. And that the sentence of the court had been carried out.

The body of the executed man was embalmed by an undertaker, placed in a metallic case, and buried in the gaol yard close to the western wall.

THE BURIAL.

About five o'clock in the afternoon the burial service took place in the gaol yard. The corpse had been placed in a metallic casket after having been embalmed. Those present were Dean Wade, Mrs. West-Jones, Mrs. Inglis, of Montreal: Mr. Leetham, George Forbes, Deputy Sheriff Perry, Prison Inspector Chamberlain, Registrar Patullo, Guard Midgley, Gaoler Cameron, and several representatives of the press.

Birchall, as he lay in the coffin, was dressed in evening costume, and on his breast was a gold locket containing a picture of his wife and a lock of her light flaxen hair. The casket was almost smothered with flowers when the officials reached the grave. While Mrs. West-Jones wept silently Rev. Mr. Wade stood by the open grave. Mr. Wade had refused to repeat the burial service of the Church of England, but extemporized the following prayer:—

"Almighty and everlasting God, who knowest the secrets of all men, and all about the crime for which this man has suffered, we look up to Thee as holder of all secrets, and look to that day when the books shall be opened and all deeds done in the body shall be revealed. We have prayed to Thee for the soul of this man. Man has done his best, the law has done its worst, and the sins committed in the body by this poor, wicked, sinful man we trust are forgiven through the Blessed One who forgives all sins. We commit this body to the dust. It is not for us to speak unkindly of the dead or judge the crime. We pray Thee, oh Lord, to have mercy upon us who are gathered here to-day. Oh have mercy upon us, upon his wife and mother and his brother in a far distant land, all sorrow-stricken on account of the sins of this blasted and blighted life. Oh Christ, do Thou wipe their tears away, and give them peace. We leave his body in Thy keeping. Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust. Have mercy upon us, oh God, and when we shall come before Thee to be complete in Christ answer our prayers, we beseech Thee, oh Lord, for Christ sake, Amen."

The coffin was lowered into the grave, and what remained on earth of Reginald Birchall received an unhallowed resting-place. The

gaol officials filled the grave, which is situated against the west wall a few feet from the scaffold, and his friends turned sorrowfully away as the sun sank in a golden sea of glory in the west.

BIRCHALL'S WILL.

The following is an authentic copy of Birchall's will :—

This is the last will and testament of me, Reginald Birchall, of the town of Woodstock, in the County of Oxford, in the Province of Ontario and Dominion of Canada, formerly of Church Kirk house, near Accrington, Lancashire, in that part of the Kingdom of Great Britain called England, gentleman, made this Eleventh day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety.

I do make, publish, and declare this to be my last will and testament in manner following, that is to say :—

I devise and bequeath all my real and personal estate of every nature and kind soever and wheresoever situate, whether in possession or expectancy, unto my wife Florence Birchall absolutely.

I appoint Arthur R. Leetham, of the city of Montreal, in the Province of Quebec, Esquire, and James Forbes, of the said town of Woodstock, turnkey, and my said wife Florence Birchall, the executors and executrix of this my last will, hereby revoking all wills by me at any time heretofore made.

Signed, published and declared by the said testator Reginald Birchall as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us, who, both present at the same time at his request, in his presence, and in the presence of each other, have subscribed our names as witnesses thereto.

(Signed) REGINALD BIRCHALL.
(Signed) H. J. FINKLE, of Woodstock, Solicitor.
(Signed) G. E. PERRY, of Woodstock, Gentleman.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. LEETHAM.

THE MAIL representative had a long interview with Mr. Arthur Leetham, of Montreal, Birchall's old Oxford chum, this afternoon. He said :—"A great many people may think it strange that I have put myself to great personal inconvenience to come up from Montreal and spend the last days on earth with my old college friend Birchall. Well, it is just like this. Birchall was an old friend of mine, and after the trial he strongly protested his innocence of the terrible crime with which he is charged. Although the jury have found him guilty, still as an old friend I felt bound to consider him innocent, and to help him to bear up under the trials heaped upon him. I wrote to him, and knowing that he had very few old friends in America I came up to see him. I am not sorry for it now. I had several touching interviews with him. I saw him last night and spoke to him, while his wife was there, but I had the parting interview with him this morning. He asked me to act as trustee to his will, and I agreed to do so, and then he expressed it as his dying wish that I should be present at his execution. Although the idea was very revolting to me, still to gratify his wish I consented. I reached the gaol about 7.45 o'clock this morning, and was with him for some time. Mr. Wade was present with us for a while. We had a long chat about his friends in England, and he left a number of messages with me to his relatives. He asked me to assure them that he appreciated their confidence in him, and told me to tell them to think kindly of him. When Mr. Wade entered the scene was very affecting, and Birchall appeared to be touched. We repeated the "Gloria in Excelsis," and offered up prayer. He then said it was a great pleasure to have me with him during the final scene, and gave me his photograph as a student at Oxford to remind me of old times. On the photograph he had written the following inscription in Latin and in English :—

"Arthur R. Leetham, from his old and dear friend R. Birchall."

"Duo amici qui temporibus præteritis sempiternum bellum contra, Universitatis Oxoniensis regula gesserunt, ac usque ad finem fide maximâ et proximâ socii, nunquam se diviserunt, nec vita nec morte. Cordibus junctis, alteri legis et consilii decus, alteri præmium amicitiæ detur."

"To thee alone of all the old firm who was by my side when parting for the bourne from whence no traveller returns, I give this card to remind you of my heart, which was yours alike in life and death, and which you will think on kindly in the days to come.

"Take care of yourself, and remember the old, old firm. Thine ever,

"REX."

"At the last moment he wished me to look after his wife, Mrs. West-Jones, and his sister. He then shook me by the hand and said, 'Good bye, old chap, see you again." As the guard took him by the arm to lead him out he looked at me as much as appealing to me to take the other. Deputy Sheriff Perry, who saw the look, was touched, and intuitively surmised his wish, and asked me to take his arm. He was then led to the scaffold, and the service there was very painful to me indeed. Quite a number of gentlemen present were visibly affected."

INTERVIEW WITH THE NIGHT GUARD.

This evening a reporter of THE MAIL had a long interview with Sergt. Midgley, Birchall's night guard. All through the case Midgley has had very little to say, but now that the thing is over he conversed freely. Midgley is the soul of honour, and a military man imbued with a strong sense of duty. He soon became the friend and confidant of his

ward, whose sense of human nature did not take him long to find out what kind of stuff his guard was made of. Midgley said:—"Birchall was a wonderful man; one of the strangest characters I ever met. Although everyone's hand appeared to be against him, still I could not help liking him."

"How did he spend the time?"

"Well, we were never tired of each other's company. You know I took charge of him at night after Entwhistle was discharged, and I have spent every night with him ever since."

"How did he spend the time?"

"Well, we would chat for a while about military and other matters. He was well posted in military affairs and would have made a grand soldier. About eleven o'clock, when all was still, he would sit down and write for an hour at the autobiography which is appearing in THE MAIL. Then he would tilt his chair back, light a cigar, and read the stuff over to me. Then we would chat again for a while, and after passing about an hour this way he would go to work again, and I would sit by him and read. After writing about an hour the same thing would be repeated. He would keep this up until about five o'clock in the morning; then he would retire."

BIRCHALL'S PRAYER.

"Do you think Birchall was at all religious?"

"Well, I know this, and I alone knew of it, and never mentioned it to anybody. Ever since he gave up all hope of a commutation of his sentence every morning before retiring he would kneel at his bedside and pray. Sometimes for half an hour. He had a dread of being looked upon as a canting hypocrite, but knew that although I saw him perform his devotions I would respect his confidence. When others were around he would assume a gay and heartless manner, and they never dreamt of the internal struggle going on in the man and his prayers and appeals to the throne of grace. Even the Rev. Dean Wade thought him a trifle irreligious, but such was not the case. I did not wish to give food for newspaper sensations, so I keep my tongue still about him. I would not dream of violating the secret of his heart, but now that he is dead there is no harm in the world knowing that after all Birchall was not as black as he was painted."

"During the time youwere with him did he ever hint or let fall anything to you in the way of confession?"

"No; not to me directly in any way. On one occasion I remember Rev. Dean Wade was exhorting him to confess the crime and ask for forgiveness. Birchall after a while asked him very solemnly if he confessed to his God alone would he be forgiven, and the kind-hearted Dean said, "Yes, certainly, confess to the Lord Jesus Christ and ask forgiveness for your sins, and in His blood you will find an atonement.' After the dean had left he brought the conversation around about this and asked my opinion on the subject. I said that the dean had spoken truly as far as his light would go."

"Was this the only thing he ever dropped to you on the subject?"

"Yes, that was the only thing."

"Did he leave you any memento?"

"Yes, he is to have a sword sent to me from England and a gold pen to my boy. I never asked him for anything. I might have got lots of things from him and disposed of them to relic-hunters for big figures, but I would not think of doing such a thing."

"Did Birchall seem to take much interest in the story of his life?"

"Yes, he would have liked very much to have seen it in book form, but he knew that his time was too short. He kept his word with THE MAIL, and was very much afraid that some of the manuscript would go astray. A great deal of pressure was brought upon him to break faith with THE MAIL, but he resolutely set his face against such a transaction, and would hear nothing of it, although it would have been money in his pocket."

"What is your general opinion of Birchall?"

"Well, I think he was not a bad fellow after all, and whatever crimes he has committed he has amply atoned for them."

The hangman to-night came into town feeling rather hilarious. He was sober when he performed his hateful task, and as he stood in the corridor after the hanging while the doctors were performing the autopsy he was very nervous, and trembled like a leaf. Whether it was caused by the mental strain he had undergone or from the effects of bad whiskey imbibed the previous night it is hard to say, but in the evening he braced up with strong doses of whiskey, and when he left on the evening train he was very noisy.

This evening Mrs. Birchall was much more composed, and is to some extent recovering from the effects of the great mental strain which she has undergone.

NO CONFESSION.

Prior to his death Birchall made the following statement:

"WOODSTOCK GAOL, Nov. 10, 1890.

"*All Rights Reserved.*

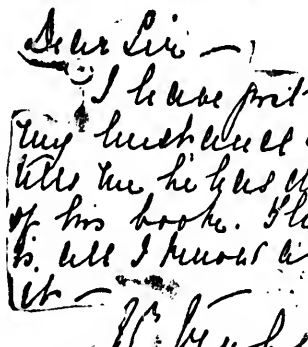
"If after my death there shall appear in the press or in any other manner whatsoever

any confession that I had any hand in the murder of Mr. F. C. Benwell, or any personal knowledge of said murder, with intent or malice aforethought, or any personal connection with the murder on the 17th February, or other day, or any knowledge that any such murder was likely to be committed, or any statement further than any that I may have made public previous to this date, I hand this statement to the care of Mr. George Perry of Woodstock, Ontario, that he may know that any confessions or partial confessions are entirely fictitious, and in no way were ever written by me, neither emanated from me, in any way whatsoever, to any person, and the whole are fictitious and without a word of truth. This likewise applies to my story in THE MAIL in which I have made no such confessions or partial confession. This holds good throughout.

(Signed),
"REG. BIRCHALL."

MRS. BIRCHALL'S WRITING.

The following letter is a *fac-simile* one of written by Mrs. Birchall to a representative of the press, who addressed an enquiry to her regarding her husband's autobiography:



NOTES.

A good deal has been published in the papers about Birchall's connection with the Masonic fraternity. His friends and all those in a position to know say that he is not a member of the craft and give the story the lie straight.

A Toronto paper published a paragraph this morning stating that the Attorney-General had given his consent to all of Birchall's friends having a final interview with him to-day. All the afternoon the street leading to the gaol was black with people wanting to have a final talk with him. Even the roads leading from the country were black with farmers coming in on this errand, as such news travels fast. The gaol was besieged, and the gaoler had to muffle the bell and have a man at the gaol door to explain that visitors were not admitted.

The manner in which Birchall behaved throughout was in remarkable keeping with the phrenological description given of him by Prof. Cavanagh. Those who were curious to read the professor's chart could not help being impressed with the coincidence between the traits of Birchall's character, as shown in his singular career, and the propensities noted by the phrenologist. This matter received some attention when, as the fatal day drew near, the condemned man showed no signs of wavering, and it will not be surprising if one of the effects of that interest will be found in a craze here after phrenological examinations. Determination, combativeness, and destructiveness were largely developed in the unfortunate man, and all authorities on the subject state these faculties to be those which, if conspicuous, lead to an exhibition of fearlessness, coolness, and *sang froid*, of which Birchall's conduct was a striking illustration.

The service given by the Great North-Western Telegraph Company at Woodstock during the past few days was the best that town has ever experienced, and the fifty newspaper reporters who worked night and day feel greatly indebted, not only to the company, but to the operators themselves, for the expeditious manner in which their despatches were wired to their respective papers. A special staff of experienced operators were kept constantly at work from daylight in the morning until four the next morning, and in not a single instance was the reporter disappointed or the despatch delayed. It seemed surprising that such a large amount of writing could be handled in such a short space of time, and it speaks well for the company as well as for the operators. The G. N. W. Telegraph Company had a special wire laid to the gaol, and in less than three minutes after the fall of the weight the news was tunnelled all over England and in every city in the United States

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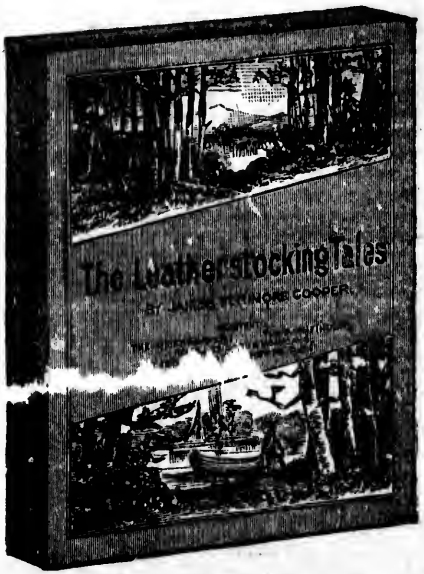

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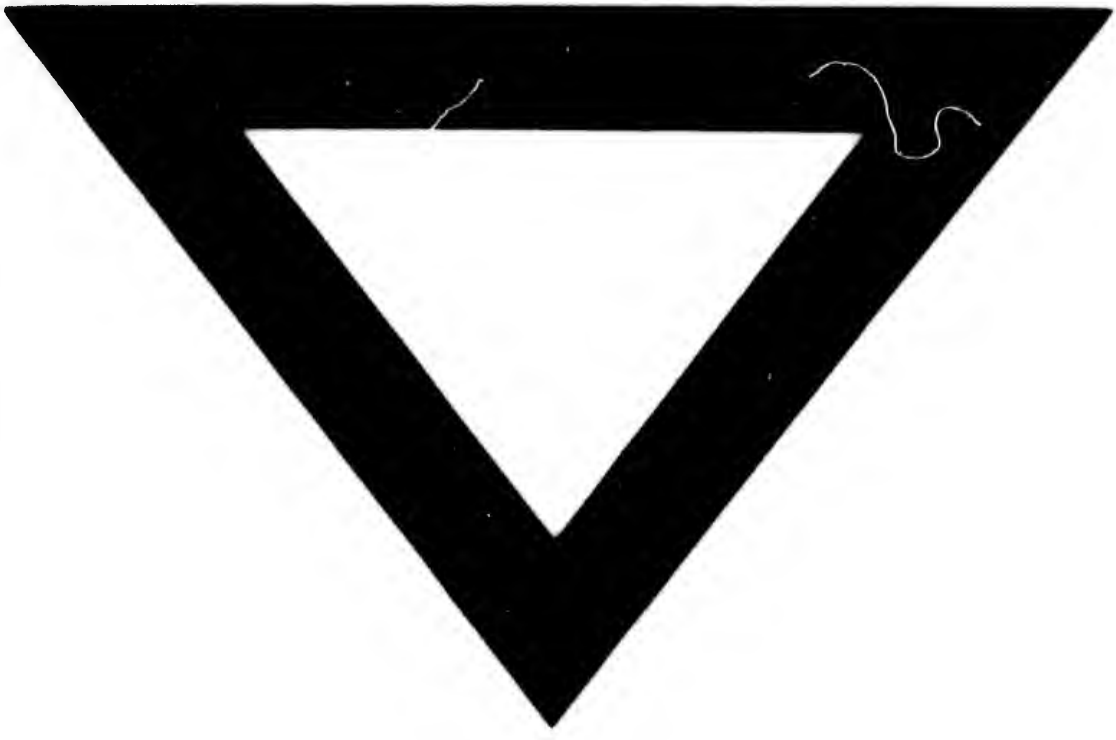
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