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The Portfolio.

Vita Sine Literis Mors Est.

VOL. 2.

HAMILTON, JANUARY, 1880.

No. 4.

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Scott and Dickens confirmed this view of the matter. It was not the method-loving, scientifically calm and philosophically regulated Goethe, that wrote the first part of Faust, which is almost good enough for Shakespeare, but that wrote the second part of Faust, which is almost too bad for Lord Lytton.

The capable critic can distinguish in many instances, in Shakespeare's own work, between the places where genius alighted and the page became imbued with fiery life, and the places where the spirit of task-work ruled the pen. That I may not seem to speak at random, I would specify the first few lines of conversation between Isabella and Claudio, in the first scene of the third of "Measure for Measure," after the duke and the provost have withdrawn and left the brother and sister alone, as essentially poor and prosaic; whereas when the poet, in the immediate sequel, warms to his work, as the hope of life dawns on Claudio, and he begins to plead with Isabella to save him, the genius of Shakespeare awakes in its might, and one of those passages in which the most secret depths of the human heart are explored, and the lineaments of passion are struck off with subtle and amazing accuracy, and insight, sympathy and expression are all transcendently manifested, is the result. Scott also has many a comparatively flat and monotonous page, executed with conscientious determination at its appointed hour; but he frankly informs us that when he produced those parts of his books which sent the public wild with delight and which even critic dunces, who pestered him with their rules, admitted to be his best, he had not been thinking of rule or method at all, but had been run away by irresistible, boy-like delight in some Nicol Jarvie, or Dugald Dagetty, or Jonathan Oldbuck, out of whose company he could not tear himself, let the story fare as it might. We may pronounce it one of the surest facts on which to base a science of criticism that the artist, literary or pictorial, who is always the master of his genius, has little genius of which to be master.

The case of Mr. Trollope I take to be almost unexampled in literature, "Framleigh Parsonage" is one of the best novels that was ever written—I would hardly undertake to name a dozen superior to it in the English language, and yet it was done to order. Of

such a feat I believe Thackeray to have been incapable, but Thackeray was a greater genius and a greater novelist than Mr. Trollope.

Dickens was a marvel of method, but his task-work habits soon and greatly impaired his genius. I think also that Mr. Trollope's own fame would have been placed on a loftier pedestal if he had worked less to order.

"Framleigh Parsonage" was a superb success, but "Rachel Ray" was not a success at all. Thackeray worked quite regularly enough and cropped the fields of his brain, every whit as often as was desirable.—*Canadian Illustrated News*.

Literary Items.

THE Bible has just been translated into the Korean tongue.

THE *Contemporary Review*, for December, contains a series of letters on the Lord's Prayer, addressed to the clergy, by Mr. Ruskin.

SIX thousand copies of Mr. Brassey's forthcoming book, "Sunshine and Storm in the East," (to be published by Longmans), have been already subscribed for.

VICTOR HUGO, indorses the opinion of Goethe, that a man who would gain literary fame, and who would write with purity, should know no other language than that of the country in which he lives.

THE widow of Adolph Strodman, the biographer of Heine, is in possession of a lock of hair which was cut from the poet's head after death, and also of an oil portrait of Heine, painted by Ludwig Gassen, of Munich, representing him in his twenty-eighth year. She is anxious to part with these two relics for "amateur prices."

DR. NORTHCOLE says that the word "axing," which is now voted a vulgarism, was considered good English not so long ago, and was really the more correct form. It was given in Wycliffe's Bible in the verse, "Ax and ye shall take." In some parallel instances we have retained the letter "x," as in the word "tax," which was preferred to "task," though in old dictionaries the latter will be found interpreted as a pecuniary payment.

The Portfolio.

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THE PORTFOLIO, HAMILTON, ONT.

We invite contributions and correspondence from the Alumnae and
former students.

THE holidays are over and with somewhat rueful countenances our students gather for the first time this year in the Collegiate Hall. The question passes round—"had a good time?" together with the laconic answer, "splendid." Classes are arranged, conflicts disposed of, and with the exception of the new faces added to our ranks, that slightly change the general aspect of affairs it seems as though we had never left our posts, never been disturbed in our regular routine.

Perhaps it would be well for us, looking at it in an intellectual light, if we could learn to look upon vacations as "necessary nuisances," but we fancy that by the time we would have arrived at so exceedingly learned a condition, and have become so thoroughly saturated with the hue of indigo, our friends and acquaintances would probably vote us "necessary nuisances" also. But happily, for our friends at least, we have not yet reached that stage, and candidly admit, though in so doing we exclude ourselves from the enviable class termed blue-sockings, that we have enjoyed the holidays.

We do not wish our readers to imagine for an instant that the rueful countenances mentioned above as seen at the re-opening of classes, remain rueful for any length of time, for the facts are quite the contrary, the sorrowful expression disappears almost immediately

upon the resuming of work, giving place to a thoughtful one, perhaps in some cases anxious yet not by any means unhappy.

The year lies before us to be moulded as we will, in regard to the doing or leaving undone our duty, it devolves upon ourselves to make it a successful one or otherwise. In wishing our friends a Happy New Year, we would add may it be a successful one also.

IN another column will be found the notice of Miss Paterson's wedding, the teacher who recently went from among us, whose ready smile and cheery helpfulness we have so greatly missed. On behalf of the students we wish Mrs. Rolls all possible joy, and heartily congratulate the gentleman who has been so fortunate in his choice. We are quite sure in whatsoever sphere her lot may be thrown, Mrs. Rolls will always prove as kind, faithful and true, as she has been in the years during which we have been privileged to look up to her as one of our College Faculty.

AMONG the numerous accomplishments which a young lady is expected to acquire before she can be said to have "finished her education," a scientific knowledge of cookery has hitherto been almost totally neglected, although it seems it was never so much needed as in the present age, when "Biddy," after ruining every meal, wasting and destroying more than her wages can replace, will suddenly "give warnin," and leave before her distracted mistress can secure another, however incompetent, to fill her situation. Our Alumnae, ever ready to further the interests of their Alma Mater, and at the same time benefit those residing in the city, have made arrangements for Miss Dods to deliver her course of demonstrative lectures on Cookery, in the large College Hall. Miss Dods is a Scotch lady,—a graduate of Kensington, where for several years she was teacher. Her lectures have every-

where had large and enthusiastic audiences, and we are confident that Hamilton will not be behind her sister cities in profiting by them. It is to be hoped that the expiration of this term will find those who are attending the lectures able to manage better than the young lady who was keeping house for the first time, and for several days in succession ordered a roast leg of lamb for dinner, until at length the cook proposed that there should be a change. "Change, Oh yes?" replied the young housekeeper. "Well, let us have a roast leg of beef."

ON entering the college after vacation, we were greeted from all quarters with news of every description, and not least in the category was the fact of further information from Ottawa concerning the "Silver Medal." So much we learned at the outset then despairing of full particulars amid the general confusion we repaired to head quarters, and were provided with the following statement:—"That a Silver Medal was to be awarded for the best examination in English Literature, said examination to embrace not only English Literature in general, but some particular author or authors." This is very satisfactory and we are sure that our fellow students could not wish a better subject. In this day when culture is everything, and indeed absolutely necessary for a position in society, what should afford a student more pleasure than to study those prominent men, and their works which form the standard libraries of English nations; and again how is this culture to be acquired save through a thorough knowledge of ones own language, and where is there a voice in the hand so powerful in governing speech as that of our greatest writers and poets; surely this fact will not be disputed, for in every home is there not a living illustration furnished by the Bible, one that is so thoroughly convincing and so generally known? The Bible that is read to-day differs but very lit-

tle from the modern mode of speech, and how far back does it date?—from the beginning of the Stuart time, 1611, nay more, we find that Tyndale's version of a century before (1526) was the guide for the translators, and therefore the contents are much alike. Now, why is it the language to-day is so similar to that of three centuries ago? Is not the answer to be found in the fact that the language of Sacred Writ has been familiar to us all our lives, and forged the first links in the chain that will forever bind us to our mother tongue? And do not other books exert their influence, each in its own sphere? Then why should we not make English Literature our chief study when we see the prominent position it occupies in educating our race. Even the universities are advocating a thorough English course in preference to a classical one. We are sure, in the face of all this, that all who possibly can will cheerfully enlist as competitors for the Silver Medal, in view of the good to be obtained from the study of this subject.

EXCHANGES.

IN answer to the kindly greetings and "happy new year" wished us by our exchanges we reply, "the same to you." The old year is gone, and with it our failures and successes, and we would add because—

"Concluded is the past,
Nor joys nor sorrows last;
Regret it not,"

but at the same time prepare to exert ourselves afresh, that we may the better accomplish the duties of the year just entered upon. Among the rest is the duty of noticing our exchanges, it is to be hoped that in the performance of it we may always prove the impartial critics that we aim to be.

WE are glad that we can no longer make the statement that ours is the only ladies' college in the Dominion that publishes a paper, for last month the first number of the *Sunbeam* appeared, issued by the Literary

Society of the Ladies' College, Whitby, Ont. We congratulate the editors of the *Sunbeam* on the appearance of its first issue, and offer our best wishes for its future.

THE Richmond College *Messenger*, for December, contains an article entitled "The Lawyer,—a Plea for the Proscribed," an able defence of the much-abused class, proving them to be worthy the admiration instead of the contumely of the "unprofessional public." We were quite amused on reading the lengthy editorial on the practice of calling new students "rats," which began by speaking of the usage as "well-established and heartily endorsed," and ended by declaring that "man's intellectual redemption and social salvation hinged upon the observance of the custom," after which it was concluded by an earnest appeal to the authorities of like institutions to see that it be introduced, "that it may have free course and be glorified."

PICKING up the Christmas number of the *Dalhousie Gazette* we began reading the opening editorial. The first topic touched upon in it was the old yuletide custom of burying the hatchet, and the necessity of it in the case of the *Gazette* owing to the polemic disposition of the Exchange Editor, and then the writer wandered on into an explanation of the probable origin of the word "halcyon," from that to the likeness between Kingfishers and some kinds of college students, and then to the thoughts given rise to by the sight of the words "*suggestion and digestion*," as connected with Christmas, and after offering encouragement to contributors the editor wound up by wishing every one the compliments of the season. Evidently, the underlying thought of the editor was of Christmas, but whether that or anything else constituted the subject matter of the article was more than we could tell. Possibly the nearness of the merry season upset the editor's mental equilibrium, possibly the Christmas dinner so near at hand occupied the larger

portion of his thoughts, leaving too few to be made up and consecutively arranged in the form of an editorial.

We find upon our exchange table this month a new friend from Cortland, N. Y.—the *Normal News*. Its general tone we think is excellent. There is one thing about it, however, which we do not like, and that is the tint of the paper on which it is printed. To judge from a communication contained in the columns of the *Normal*, the Normal School scholars must be prodigies of energy, their fault being, not that they work too little, but that they work too much. Of course in every educational establishment there are a few students who overwork, but a case where all the students had to be repressed rather than encouraged has never before come under our observation. The correspondent's advice to them was quite appropriate, to study—"steady by jerks," and to be "slightly lazy."

ALEXANDER DUMAS, has gone to the South of France, to devote his whole time to his forthcoming work on "Divorce."

THERE is a tradition among Italians that the linguistic powers of Cardinal Mezzofanti were miraculous, and conferred under the following circumstances:—While a young priest he was summoned to confess two foreign prisoners who were under sentence of death, and in one night acquired enough knowledge of their language to confess them. Thenceforward he could, in an incredibly short time, acquire any tongue he pleased.

If one should give me a dish of sand and tell me there's particles of iron in it, I might look with my eyes for them and search for them with my clumsy fingers and be unable to find them, but let me take a magnet and sweep it, and how it would draw to itself the most visible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings; only the iron in God's sand is gold.—*O. W. Holmes.*

College Items.

"WHO's the joke on?"

"INTELLECTUAL Science," it is said, is going at 2.40.

ONE of our students informs us that "moony evenings" were of alarmingly frequent occurrence during the holidays.

JOY exhibited itself in many countenances when the news spread that the College cook was going to attend Miss Dod's Lectures.

THE students who remained in the College report that, thanks to the kindness of city friends, they spent a most agreeable vacation.

WHAT can possess some students on a certain hall to spend half the night in talking when they know full well what the result will be?

TWO old students on their return had not been in the college half a day before they were heard to sigh for "Home Sweet Home."

MRS. LELEAN, a resident student in the college the first year of its existence, has returned to spend a few months in studying the fine arts under Mr. Martin.

ONE of the members of the editorial staff of an exchange spent the holidays in the city, and is said enjoyed them exceedingly, particularly the portion spent in skating.

FROM the glowing accounts recorded we would strongly advise all our fellow students to attend these most beneficial lectures on the culinary art delivered by Miss Dods tri-weekly.

"ON the 24th December, at the residence of the bride's mother, Chatham, Ont., by the Rev. Wm. Walker, James A. Rolls, Esq., to Mary, youngest daughter of the late Rev. J. Paterson."

THE sisters of the G. N. C. Club have taken unto themselves two companions as sharers in their joys and sorrows, and they wish to inform all whom it may concern that hereafter they shall be known as the "Patsy Ironsides." On the occasion of their initiation a supper was given to the new members.

TWO honorary members have recently been added to the O'Neil Family, it is to be hoped they will in a measure supply the place left vacant by Miss P. O'Neil, though to do so wholly, would be impossible.

SOME one in the Natural Philosophy Class was asked to give the properties of heat. She answered, "heat expands and cold contracts, and that is the reason why the days are longer in summer and shorter in winter."

"ON the 1st January, at the residence of the bride's father, by the Rev. James Hastie, G. H. Hopkins, Barrister, to Rose, youngest daughter of T. R. Adam, Esq., both of Lindsay." Miss Adam was a member of class of '77.

THE second evening lecture in Miss Dod's course of cookery lessons was attended by one of our canine friends. Evidently he was highly delighted with the proceedings, judging from his exuberant behaviour. The profane question was mooted, "Does Miss Dods deal in sausages?"

TWO distressed looking damsels stood irresolutely in the college hall gazing hither and thither for a way of escape from the overwhelming load of work. The last that was seen of them they were standing by the window with the air of martyrs, apparently deeply interested in the starry heavens.

THE evening of the Friday before Christmas, upon which classes were closed, the O'Neil Family gave a farewell supper to Miss Peggy O'Neil, who was about to take a final leave of the College and its inmates. Supper was neatly served at eight o'clock, and thanks to Mrs. Burns' kindly co-operation, was a decided success. All were present except the American member, who had been obliged to start for home that afternoon. After the edibles had been disposed of, Miss Peggy's health was proposed and drunk; several speeches followed, that of Miss Aileen's being remarkable for its eloquence and wit, the PORTFOLIO representatives present much regretted that it was not reported on the spot. Owing to the thought of their ensuing separation, the party was not as merry as is usual on such occasions. The following day amid the heartfelt regret of all her friends, and followed by their best wishes for her future happiness, Miss Peggy took her departure.

BUFO VULGARIS.

SHALL our noble race forever be crushed beneath the heel of a heedless humanity? Ye mortals who vainly fancy yourselves the lords of creation, open your eyes and endeavor, as far as your dull intellects will permit, to appreciate the more elevated characters you meet with in your daily walk. True, we cross your path as seldom as possible, for it invariable involves our receiving an impetus in another direction. Small minds always become irritated on coming in contact with superior ones. But our spirits are invincible, and no rebuff of Dame Fortune can ever make an impression upon our flexible natures. We are too modest and retiring in disposition to flaunt our charms in the broad daylight. If you would worship at our shrine you must leave the glare and dazzle of the public highway, and turn aside to a moist corner of the garden, or seek the seclusion of some savory cellar. There, "far from the madding crowd," we blush unseen and ponder upon affairs more weighty than those that have wrinkled your statesmen's brows.

Beauty is merely a matter of taste, and the day is coming when all critics will agree in voting our race to possess more of the elements of real loveliness than the prancing war horse or the petted ball-room belle. Nobody who has ever seen one after another of the insect tribe succumb to the force of my attractions, can deny that I have a very open countenance. Strange, indeed, that my pliant supple figure has never formed the theme for poet's eulogy. Stranger still that my liquid eyes have never called forth any amorous glances, nor my agile leaps elicited bursts of admiration. After making one of my most graceful springs I pause and gaze around for applause, but am ever sadly disappointed. There is an ease, a deliberation about my movements that hot-headed humanity cannot appreciate.

In the course of my long and varied experience, I have met with many kinds of treatment from the human race. The men in their infuriated bombast scornfully thrust me aside, but the women, dear souls, have a proper respect for my unrivalled person. Often a member of the gentle sex fairly shrieks with ecstasy at my sudden appearance, and oft have I been reverently ap-

proached and tenderly consigned to the outside world, by means of a pair of tongs. But the worst enemies of our race are those small specimens of humanity, denominated boys. Many a dreary hour have I passed with a lot of old nails, marbles, strings, and other questionable company, in a grimy pocket subject to the constant intrusion of a grimy paw.

Why cannot we be left to pursue our way in peace? We allow you to transact all your paltry business affairs without molestation, and hope that soon we shall meet with that consideration which our sensitive frames demand. In the meantime we shall continue to exercise our power over mankind, exerting an influence too subtle to be felt.

In every community there is a large and ever increasing class, deeply imbued with our spirit, who are the saving power of the race. Nobly do they strive to practice our virtues, as far as feeble human powers will permit; no amount of self-sacrifice is too difficult for them, no duty too low or debasing to be performed in the service of one, a step higher in the social scale. They look down with a noble contempt on those slightly beneath them, and ever aspire to reach higher themselves. Their natures are intensely sympathetic. They can find something clever or agreeable in the most insipid speeches of an aristocratic friend. All the actions of the great are meritorious in their eyes, and in their deep self-forgetfulness they pander to the tastes of the nerves they worship.

Happy am I to be able to state that this worthy class is to be found even among the youth of the human species. Our ideas are inculcated in early childhood, and seldom fail to take deep root. They are tenderly fostered in all schools and colleges, and flourish amazingly. Who can but admire the character of that young girl, who, with supernatural discernment, can discover so many distinguished virtues in her well-dressed associate. No amount of conceit or affectation can conceal them from her penetrating gaze. She has such a high respect for the judgment of the adored one that it colors all her own thoughts and opinions.

With such a hold upon the fair sex, who are the arbiters of the race, is it any wonder that we are making rapid strides in the favor

of the sterner one. Before long men's ideas of virtue and vice will be completely changed, and they will view all things from our stand point. Patience, then comrades, all things are possible for us if we will but wait.

✦ Clippings.

A PHRENOLOGIST having examined Queen Victoria's head said it greatly lacked adhesiveness. It was, however, her head on a postage stamp.

"OH, dear!" blubbered an urchin who had been undergoing an application of birch, "they tell me that forty rods make a furlong, but let 'em get such a plaguey lickin as I've had and they'll find out that one rod makes an acher."

THE Talmud has never been translated into English, valuable as are its contents for the theologian and the archæologist. The American Hebrew, of New York, has just begun to publish a translation of the treatise *Aboda Zara.*, (idolatry), by the Rev. Dr. De Sola Mendes, of the Forty-fourth Street Synagogue.

THE proverb that fingers were made before forks used to be sometimes quoted in connection with the alleged very modern origin of that useful implement. But forks, if not so old as fingers, are now ascertained to date a long way back—as far as the prehistoric age of our race. They have lately been found, formed of bones, and evidently for table use, in the debris from ancient lake dwellings, while spoons, which for many purposes forks have superseded, are of still greater antiquity.

THE first representation of Tennyson's one-act comedy "Falcon," at the St. James' Theatre, was a complete dramatic failure, notwithstanding the careful preparation and costly mounting. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal were unsuited to the chief parts, but no actors could secure success. The piece throughout is merely versified narrative and wants action and dramatic interest. The management placed "Falcon" as an after-piece, anticipating a catastrophe. The audience contained numerous friends of Tennyson. There was some applause, but the public received the piece with perfect coldness.

IN his new book on "Whist," Cavendish gives an admirable method of shutting up a nuisance who is to be met with at three tables out of four. This is the "if you had" partner, who, after every hand, informs you that "If you had done so and so we should have made so and so." This is the remedy:—"My favorite retort to him is to ask him if he has ever heard the story of "your uncle and your aunt?" If he has he does not want to hear it again, and is silent. If he has not, and innocently falls into the trap by expressing a desire to hear it, I say in a solemn voice, "If your aunt had been a man she would have been your uncle."

PRINCE BISMARCK is reported to have once said in one of his familiar discourses:—"In politics I act as I do out duck-shooting—I put my foot on one boulder, and do not take it off till I see my way to another. When I do, I step on to the new boulder and leave the old one behind; and so on until I am out of the marsh."

SAYS the London *Spectator*:—"Hardly anything that had a "purpose" in it which Dickens ever did was done well. His astonishing genius, his unfathomable stores of humor, his quaint and wild power of caricature, were all apt to go terribly astray directly they were put in harness by that—in his case—most destructive agency, a moral purpose.

JAPAN has iron coins worth about one-hundredth of a cent. They are alleged to be chiefly used for alms and offerings to gods.

THE population of our globe, estimated at about thirteen hundred millions, is raised to 12 emperors, 25 kings, 47 princes, 17 sultans, 12 khans, 6 grand dukes, 6 dukes, 1 vice-king, 1 nisam, 1 radia, 1 imam, 1 bey, and 28 presidents, besides a large number of chiefs of wild tribes. Of the republics, nineteen are found on American soil, having only nine for the rest of the world.

AN old Scotch lady was told that her minister used notes, but would not believe it. Said one, "Gang in to the gallery and see." She did so, and saw the written sermon. After the luckless preacher had concluded his reading on the last page, he said, "But I will not enlarge." The old woman called out from her lofty position, "Ye canna, ye canna, for your paper's give out."

AN alderman once called on Dr. Francis, when the following dialogue took place:—"Doctor, I have a strong tendency to gout, what shall I do to arrest it?" "Take a bucket of water and a ton of anthracite three times a week." "How?" "Drink the former, and carry the latter up three pair of stairs."

A scholar in a country school was asked, "How do you parse, Mary milked the cow?" The last word was disposed of as follows: "Cow, a noun, feminine gender, third person, and stands for Mary." "Stands for Mary! How do you make that out?" "Because," added the intelligent pupil, "if the cow didn't stand for Mary, how could she milk her?"

THE following notice once appeared on an Irish church door:—"This is to give notice that no person is to be buried in this churchyard but those living in the parish. Those who wish to be buried are desired to apply to me, Ephriam Grub, parish clerk." Here is another kindred specimen:—"Notice—The churchwardens will hold their quarterly meetings once in six weeks instead of half-yearly as formerly."

THE Princess Louise will be accompanied on her return to Canada by two newly-appointed ladies-in-waiting. Lady Sophia Macnamara remains in England. The Princess will pay another visit to England in the autumn.

THE Duke of Argyll was once giving evidence before a committee of the House of Commons on the temperance question. "But," said a member inquiringly, "one Bailie Macpherson, apparently a person of authority, deposes that he never saw any one drunk in his district?" "Very likely," replied His Grace, "Scotchmen will hardly allow a man to be drunk so long as he can lie still on the floor."

WHEN the Princess Louise (Marchioness of Lorne) came to Inverary Castle the Duke of Argyll made his tenants a great feast, and himself called on them to give "Three cheers for the Princess, my daughter."

WHOEVER finds a four-leaved clover is generally a liar. It is so much easier to detach one leaf from a five-leaved stalk than to hunt for one with four that the temptation to mendacity is too much for average clay.

MR. BOHM, the sculptor, has for some time been engaged on a bust of Mr. Gladstone, but finds it difficult to get sittings. Lord Rosebery asked Mr. Bohm to stay at Dalmeny during that memorable week of ovations and orations to meet Mr. Gladstone. When Mr. Gladstone heard Mr. Bohm was going he said: "Ah, that is a good thing, for I shall have plenty of leisure that week and can give you some sittings."

THE oldest newspaper in Ireland has just passed out of existence—*Saunders' News Letter and Daily Advertiser*. It counted its volumes from 1688, and for many years it was a familiar and flourishing "institution" in Ireland. In the days of our grandfathers no breakfast table was complete in Ireland that hadn't *Saunders* on it with the tea and toast. Several fortunes were made by it. Like many other ancient "institutions," it experienced severe reverses of fortune within the last twenty years. Ultimately it found itself in the Bankrupt Court, where it was purchased by its last owner for a trifle. He failed to work it up, and it was subsequently offered for sale by auction. There wasn't a single offer for it, and now the shutters are up in the old house in Dame street, Dublin, and the old paper is dead.

A BOY apparently very much agitated, rushed into the house and said to the lady:—"I don't want ter alarm yer, but I've got big news. The man sent me up from the livery stable to tell yer." "Good heavens! what is it?" "Why, you know your little boy Aleck, what the man can't keep out'n the livery stable around the corner?" "Yes—well?" "I told Aleck just now not to go inter the stable among the horses, but he wouldn't mind me." "Oh dear! what has happened?" "He said he wanted to see what a mule 'd do when yer tickled its heels with a straw." "Oh heavens!" gasped the lady, and clung to the mantel piece for support. "Well, sir, yer boy Aleck got a straw, snuck up behin' a sorrel mule, tickled him on the heels, an'—" The lady started for the door. "An the critter never lifted a hoof," called the boy. "Never so much as switched his tail. It's a mighty good thing for Aleck that it didn't, too; an' I thought I'd come up and tell yer." And he dodged out at the side entrance.

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