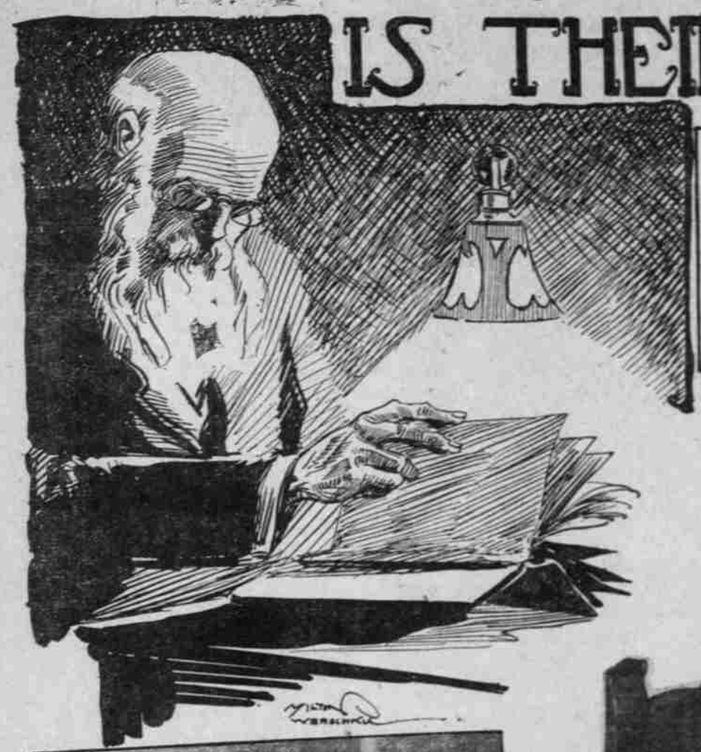
"BEST SELLING" AUTHORS AND OTHERS WHOSE LITERARY WORK IS THEIR AVOCATION



Frederick Upham Adams, An Inventor Who Gained Literary Fame With a Detective Story--Mayor McClellan's Authoritative Book on Venice, and A. Barton Hepburn's Standard Book on the History of Coinage and Currency.

Robert Grant, a Judge, Whose Novels Are Internationally Famous--Lawyer-Historians and Lawyer-Novelists--The Book of Travel by Our New Minister to the Argentine Republic--Why F. Hopkinson Smith Took to Writing and How He Writes

JUDGE ROBERT GRANT

MAYOR GEO. B. McCLELLAN OF NEW YORK

A. BARTON HEPBURN

FREDERIC J. STIMSON. (J. S. OF DALE)

F. HOPKINSON SMITH, A CHARACTERISTIC POSE. HIS LATEST PHOTOGRAPH

FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS

ELIHU ROOT, a few days after he had persuaded Congress to accept his plan for the reorganization of the Army, was congratulated by a friend in New York City, and was told that this achievement should establish for him permanent fame. The Secretary of War, as Mr. Root then was, replied somewhat sadly, saying that in the United States there is no permanent fame excepting for a writer or for a military hero. No lawyer, no Cabinet officer, ever gained more than a fleeting reputation, he asserted. It may be that the ambition to become famous and to be known to posterity explains why it is that so many men of the professions, and of even high business achievement, have undertaken to write books, not as a vocation, but as an avocation. Some of the most successful of recent writers are men whose business in life is the practice of law or of medicine or the discounting of notes or directing of other banking business or politics.

Edward M. Shepard, who was candidate for Mayor of New York, but was defeated by Seth Low, and who, many politicians think, will be the next candidate of his party for Governor of New York, will probably be remembered longest by a biographical work with which he has occupied his leisure moments for many months. Where Mr. Shepard found time to write the life of Martin Van Buren has been a mystery to his friends. He is presumed to have written much of this life at his Summer place on Lake George, although he is so hospitable a host that he must have stolen some hours in the late night, or have arisen early in order to prepare this biography. He wrote this life with a sense of pleasure, and without any feeling of labor. He found in its writing intellectual recreation and healthful stimulus, and many critics declared when the biography was published that undoubtedly a great historical writer was lost when Edward M. Shepard became a lawyer.

Inventor Wrote Detective Story.

One of the strangest of the impulses which lead men active in affairs to writing for pleasure or for fame was that which inspired a very successful inventor to write what proved to be one of the most popular of the detective stories published some years ago.

Frederick Upham Adams often is spoken of as a born inventor. The order of his intellect seems, like Edison's, to center upon discovery and constructive work involving invention. Every electric lamppost in the United States represents Mr. Adams' inventive talent, for these posts are standardized. He also constructed an experimental railway train, which was reported to have broken speed records in the year 1900. But while Mr. Adams was busily occupied with science in the laboratory and in the workshop, he was tempted to work out a detective story, whose plot, as he imagined it, seemed capable of good literary development. Therefore, at odd moments, and when he had a vacation of a week or two, he worked diligently at the manuscript of a story which was published under the title of "The Kidnaped Millionaires." Upon publication it attracted wide attention, and there was astonishment that the inventor, who had published various highly technical scientific treatises, and who had written somewhat upon social reform, should have had the skillful fancy and the light and yet exciting touch which made possible so fascinating a story.

A Judge Who Wrote Plays.

One of the ablest Judges who ever served upon the bench of the higher courts of New York State was George C. Barrett. If ever a lawyer who seemed to be dominated by the philosophy and the practice of law sat upon the bench, Justice Barrett was that man. And yet he had ambitions to write a great play. Sometimes, after a busy day in the courtroom, when the arguments had been dry and mentally exhausting, or the issue involved presented difficult points to a Justice, Justice Barrett returned to his home, went into his library, pushed his law books aside, took from his desk various manuscripts and set at work upon a scene or an act in a play in which he was greatly interested. He never became a successful playwright, and yet he sometimes told his friends that he found almost as much enjoyment in the writing of a play—for his characters seemed to live and to be companionable with him—as he would have found in the production of it.

Another man who was well-known in his day, and who had an ambition to write a successful play, was that lawyer who was, first, District Attorney of New York City, and afterward its Mayor, A. Oakey Hall. And not only did Hall actually write a play and have it produced, but he further temporarily held the public eye by taking one of the parts in his play. Its title was "The Crucible," but whatever pleasure Mr. Hall may have derived from writing the play, while still practicing law, the actual production of it was a real crucible test, in which failure was discovered.

The most prolific writer whose literary work is an avocation rather than a vocation is F. Hopkinson Smith. Although an engineer by profession, and so great an engineer that he built the Government sea wall around Governor's Island, New York, and the foundation for the Statue of Liberty, and accomplished the very difficult construction of the Race Rock lighthouse, at the entrance of Long Island Sound, yet Mr. Smith has written and published, in the course of 25 years, 25 novels, every one of which gained for him some success and some of which are numbered among the so-called "best sellers." And in addition to his profession as an engineer, and his literary craftsmanship, Mr. Smith, as is widely known, has gained distinction as an artist. While he took up literature as an avocation, it has sometimes been thought that the money returns received from his novels must have equaled in the aggregate the payments made to him for his professional work as an engineer.

How Mr. Smith is able to accomplish so many things along different lines lies in his ability to economize time. If he has five minutes on a subway train, or while waiting in an office, he takes a pad from his pocket and sets down a few lines, so that in the course of the day he may have been able to save as much as an hour or two hours and to have written a thousand words perhaps. And so, little by little, the manuscript grows, representing economy of time, until at last the novel is completed. Of course there is ultimate revision, which often means protracted labor and always much drudgery. But the point to be emphasized here is that this engineer is one of the most successful of American novelists, and is also a favorably known artist, because he has learned how to save the moments as they fly. In the writing of stories Mr. Smith finds exactly the helpful recreation which relieves his mind from the tension occasioned by concentration upon the important engineering works which he directs.

McClellan's History of Venice.

When George B. McClellan was carrying on the first of his canvasses for election as Mayor of New York City, his time seemed to be so completely occupied that it was sometimes wondered whether he spared enough each day to obtain the needed sleep. And yet, during that campaign, Mayor McClellan was diverting his mind by the writing of a work upon historic Venice. He found in this composition, and in the excitement of receiving and revising proof slips, such perfect change from the exhausting labors of the campaign that the work really served him as a tonic. The book was published a few weeks after its author was first inaugurated as Mayor, and it at once numbered the young metropolitan executive among the successful authors of his time, although the character of the work was such as to preclude it from very wide reading. It was designed chiefly for scholars, or for those who knew Venice and are fond of delving into the history of that mystic city.

Of course Mayor McClellan's political prominence, and especially the factional disturbances in his party which he was compelled to face, distracted attention from the book. But the writing and the publication of it illustrate the disposition among men of affairs in all walks of life to enter the field of literature, seeking there an avocation instead of a vocation. Recently President Woodrow Wilson, of Princeton, of which university Mayor McClellan is a graduate, spoke before 500 Princeton graduates of Mayor McClellan's scholarship and literary skill, intimating that they were acquired incidentally during a very brief public life in Congress and as Mayor of New York.

Humor and Novels by Judges.

In 1873 Robert Grant, of Boston birth, and in his childhood brought into association with that remarkable group of authors who made Boston for years the literary center of the United States, was graduated from Harvard College, and six years later from the Harvard Law School. For many years he has been Judge of the Probate Court, and of the Court of Insolvency for Suffolk County, Massachusetts. On the bench Judge Grant has all of the dignity and gravity which are associated with judicial office. No one seeing him presiding over a trial would suspect him of being one of the most prolific of living American authors.

Judge Grant had been out of the law school only a year when his "Confessions of a Frivolous Girl" was published, and it was said at the time that the success of the romance would justify the author in abandoning any idea of practicing law and in devoting himself wholly to literature. But Judge Grant perceived that literature is precarious, and the law, after practice has been established, is certain. Therefore he has devoted an hour or two every day, usually in the evening, to the writing of his various stories, and recently has published a fiction comedy which is spoken of as one of the best depictions of manners that has been published in many a year. His method of work resembles somewhat that of F. Hopkinson Smith. Since he, too, knows how to economize time to the last waking minute.

The readers of the present generation doubtless will fail to recognize the name of Judge Halliburton. He was for many years the presiding justice of the highest court of Nova Scotia. His home was in Halifax, but he made frequent visits to New England, and was almost as much at home in Boston as in Halifax. Upon the bench Judge Halliburton was the personification of dignity and sternness, being careful always to maintain rigidly the somewhat severe etiquette that prevails in the English courts. And yet he had gained an international reputation as a writer of deliciously humorous sketches. He was the creator of the character of Sam Slick, who personified a sort of Yankee shrewdness and humor. Judge Halliburton's humorous writings preceded those of Artemus Ward, Mark Twain and the American school of humorists. Even now in England the works of this Judge as a humorist are read and admired.

About 20 years ago there was published a novel entitled "Guerndale," the author hiding his identity by means of a nom de plume, "J. S. of Dale." This story was recognized at once both by the public and the critics as the work of a master of fiction, and when it was discovered that "J. S. of Dale" was a young lawyer, and had been admitted to practice both before the courts of New York State and of Massachusetts, all the greater was the astonishment that one trained as a lawyer should have the intellectual gift that made it possible for him to write so fascinating a story as "Guerndale."

This lawyer-author is Frederick J. Stimson, and while writing novels he also has been Assistant Attorney-General of Massachusetts, and was at one time a candidate for Congress in one of the Massachusetts districts. While serving his state as Assistant Attorney-General he found time and delight in writing a novel that had wide circulation in its day, "The Crime of Henry Vane." With Mr. Stimson the writing of fiction has been an avocation wholly, since he finds in the work mental recreation and healthful stimulus in the conceiving of his characters and the working out of his plots. His friends say that for him to write a story is as pleasant an experience as it is for him to witness a play. He is fond of sandwiching in, so to speak, between his novels highly technical and important law treatises.

Some three years ago an English manufacturer who had gained a considerable fortune in the manufacture of an article much used by artists published a novel entitled "Joseph Vance." This story commanded such instant and admiring attention that both in the United States and in England there were many inquiries respecting the identity of the author, for the name on the book—William de Morgan—was one unknown to literature. It was disclosed at last that the writer of this brilliant novel was past 60 years of age, and had had no thought until he was more than 60 of taking up the pen with literary intent. It sometimes has been said that this is an unprecedented record.

Dr. S. Weir Mitchell.

But it has been matched and in the number of works of fiction surpassed by the achievement of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who first had gained wide reputation as possibly the foremost of American men of medicine. After he had passed his 60th birthday there was published a novel written by him which instantly gained popular favor and established his reputation as one of the most brilliant latter-day American writers of fiction. This work was followed by others, and now, in his 78th year, Dr. Mitchell is still writing fiction. Those among his friends who should know say that Dr. Mitchell began to write because he found that the conceiving and perfecting of character and plot served to rest both his body and his mind. After a busy day and when those of his household were asleep, he formed the custom of retiring to his library and spending an hour in composition. This work of writing was soothing, and yet healthfully exhilarating.

Another physician, who also gained high reputation as an alienist and who was Surgeon-General in the Army of the United States at one time, Dr. William A. Hammond, discovered that he, too, could gain mental rest, composure to his nerves and such perfect relaxation of his physical organism as led to healthful sleep if he devoted an hour or two each evening to the writing of works of fiction. He wrote one novel, entitled "Lal," which had wide circulation, and he judged by his own experience that if men greatly occupied in professional activities were to spend a half-hour or an hour each day in literary work, cultivating the field to which their talents were best fitted, they would find in mental labor of this kind healthful resources.

A Lawyer-Historian.

One of the best-known historians of the present day is Frederick Trevor Hill, who was graduated from Yale in 1887 and the Columbia Law School in 1889. He began the practice of law immediately after his admission to the bar, and was not known to his profession to have any other ambition than to succeed as a lawyer. But from 1901 to 1905 inclusive there appeared from his pen three novels. These did not bring him great popular favor, although the workmanship was regarded as of high quality. Then Mr. Hill, busy though he was with his law practice, discovered that his greater literary ability lay in biography and three years ago he had published what is regarded as the most masterly presentation of Abraham Lincoln as a lawyer. This was written by Mr. Hill during many evenings, and yet it refreshed him for the busy professional labors of the day. Since that time Mr. Hill has written a history of Wall Street from the romantic point of view, and also a brief study of Lincoln, published at the time of the Lincoln centenary.

Lawyer, Politician and Writer.

When in college Charles H. Sherrill, recently appointed by President Taft United States Minister to the Argentine Republic, gained a reputation which was far more than local, since he was regarded as one of the most expert and successful of college athletes. In addition to his muscular prowess, his endurance and skill, he possessed much of the executive ability which made Walter Camp the foremost American authority upon football.

After Sherrill was graduated from Yale he came to New York, studied law and was admitted to the bar, and a professional career sure to be successful was predicted for him. He ventured into politics, became a leader in his district, and was one of the organizers of a national association of young men who took prominent part in the Presidential canvasses of 1904 and 1908. In view of his legal and political activities, how Mr. Sherrill was able to find time to write a book is a mystery to his friends. This book, written during the Presidential campaign of last year and recently published, is descriptive of travels in Europe, and reveals a power of narrative and an artistic and true literary touch which, were its author to devote himself to literature, would doubtless bring him high literary honors.

A Banker-Author.

The list of the political offices held by A. Barton Hepburn, head of one of the country's most noted banks, is a long one. He was superintendent of the banking department of New York State when he was 34 years old. He was chairman of the legislative committee before whom Jay Gould was examined, and to whom Mr. Gould made his famous reply that he was a Democrat to a Democratic district and a Republican in a Republican. Mr. Hepburn was a national bank examiner, his district being the old city of New York, and he was controller of the currency at Washington in the last year of President Harrison's administration. For ten years he has been president of the Chase National Bank.

Busily occupied as Mr. Hepburn has been, he has yet found time and inclination to write and have published a history of coinage and currency and numerous articles for reviews and magazines. In what was probably the busiest year of his life he was able to prepare his history of coinage and currency, a voluminous work, which is now recognized as the authoritative history in its field. Mr. Hepburn tells his friends that although the preparation of this work involved great labor and much research, yet he found when he turned to it after a busy day in the whirl of financial life in New York City, there came composure, rest and at the same time a healthful stimulus, so that the writing of this book, which placed Mr. Hepburn among the "reference" authors, was a recreation and an avocation in the best meaning of that term.

Of course, those two multimillionaires, Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, have written not for the money there is in writing, but for the pleasure they derived by setting down their views on various matters in black and white. But while Mr. Rockefeller can boast of having produced only one book, Mr. Carnegie could fill a little bookshelf with the books that have come from his pen, wielded by him to secure freedom from the cares that the manufacture and sale of steel by the millions of tons bring.

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DECLARES HE SAVED THE GOVERNMENT $10,000,000 A YEAR.

Charles Augustus Crow, Member of Congress.

WASHINGTON, May 15.—(Special.)—Charles Augustus Crow is one of the new members of Congress. He comes from Caruthersville, Mo. He was born in Missouri and reared on a farm. He had a common-school education. He remained near his birthplace for 22 years and then moved to another part of the state, still remaining a farmer. The only office he held before his election to Congress was that of Postmaster at Caruthersville. Mr. Crow takes credit to himself for the revision of the law for weighing the mail, by which $10,000,000 a year, he says, was saved. He called the attention of the department to it several times while he was postmaster.