



A PRACTICAL TEST.

THE curtain rang down, and the play was over. A drama it had been called, but it partook of tragedy, and its strong climaxes, handled as they were by competent players, were received by the audience with uncontrolled storms of applause.

My friend Lester and I, old theater goers as we were, thrilled with the others at the strong human touch of the actors' art, and were silent as we slowly moved outward in the perturbed crush and chatter of the fashionable crowd. We went to a quiet restaurant we knew of, where the noisier pleasure seekers did not follow, and ordered our chops and ale.

Released from the spell of the counterfeit world in which we had lived for some two hours, the prosaic reality of actual life soon brought us back to our normal condition of mind.

"Doesn't it seem strange," said Lester, who carried all kinds of theories in his head, "that a play like that should impress any one as a true representation of life?"

"So it seemed to me," I answered, in some surprise, for Lester, I had noticed, had yielded as fully, if not more so, to the spell of the performance than I myself had. "The plot was far less improbable than the happenings set forth in our daily papers, the situations were brought about naturally, and the handling of the characters unusually well managed."

"Yes," said Lester, "I know that's true, but you haven't caught my idea. No wonder, though, for I haven't advanced it yet. I was just thinking of the language that playwrights and novelists put in the mouths of their characters. When do you ever hear real people use such stilted high-down talk? Of course I know it's necessary for them to improve on our everyday slipshod lingo, or the whole thing would be a farce, but, all the same it isn't true to nature. I refer particularly to strong emotional scenes. In such crises in real life the participants will always lose what little ideas of grammar, construction, and choice of language they generally have, and either stammer out a lot of idiotic commonplaces, simply swear, or turn dumb as brutes. Now in the novel or the drama their talk always rises to the emergency. That's art, of course, but it isn't truth."

"I don't altogether agree with you," I said. "I think that even in actual life men and women when confronted with some great and sudden danger, sorrow, or other moving sentiment, rise above their petty conventionalities of expression and use language sometimes as passionate, lofty, and dramatic as that belonging to literature or the stage. We modern people have become slaves to the artificial and have frittered away our souls on sordid things. We express ourselves jerkily, slangily, and poorly. We aim at pertness, and brevity, and have a foolish dislike for allowing others to see what is in our hearts. Our whole talk is devoted to diplomacy, deception, and the concealment of our thoughts. But, at heart we are still men and women, and a genuine and powerful emotion will, I think, in five cases out of six, bring to the lips words fully as theatrical, melodramatic and 'stagey' as those we heard on the boards to-night or read in books."

"You're wrong, old man," said Lester in his positive way. "We're hopelessly unpicturesque in our parlance. Get one of us into an end of fifth act denouement, and we either get tongue-tied or talk unintelligible rot. Give us half an hour for preparation, and we might think up something appropriate to say, but not off hand. We let down just as the fellow did who on coming home and finding his horse and family burned up, remarked: 'Well, I declare, this is 'dientious'! Grief knocks out grammar, and sudden shocks are fatal to syntax. People don't indulge in heroics nowadays. They simply can't do it. The twentieth century atmosphere is unfavorable to them. Remember in the play to-night the pathetic and wonderfully fetching monologue of the artist's wife when he is brought to her killed in the duel? What would a woman off the stage do? Cry, of course, and about all she would say would be something like, 'Oh, isn't it too awfully awful!'"

"Well," I said, as the chops came up brown and fragrant, "you can't expect people to talk blank verse and indulge in elevated apostrophe on ordinary occasions, but I dare say that the first time you happen to witness a scene with the proper amount of tragedy in it, you'll hear some talk very much the same kind you find between novel covers and across the footlights."

"I guess not," said Lester.

Lester was a brilliant young man,

and had a future before him. I also pursued with some eagerness the phantom of hope, and we confided in each other concerning the cut and fit of our coming laurel wreaths.

Lester was engaged to a girl with the air and direct frankness of a child, and eyes forty-seven fathoms deep. I had looked into them and always felt like drawing back a step or two when I did. Her eyelashes looked to me like rushes on a river bank that was likely to cave in. She was devoted to Lester, and he—well, whenever we met I had girl served up in every possible style and eyes for dessert. I envied him his buoyant happiness, and encouraged him in his belief that the earth was made for her to inhabit.

There was no nonsense, and very little romance about Lester. He was intensely practical, and when he called on the girl he talked about his business and the architecture and drainage of the house they were to build. It seemed to me, for safety's sake, he should have talked more of stars and roses and affinity and those things. It occurred to my mind that those eyes were out after matter of that sort.

The wedding day was set and a rush of engagements kept me too busy to see much of Lester until three or four days before the time. I was to act as best man, and one afternoon I ran down to his rooms to see him about the arrangements. I overtook him on the street and we walked down together. He carried in his hand a bunch of letters he had just received by mail.

Lester opened his door and turned on the light.

"Tumble those things out of the rocker," he said, "and excuse my glancing over this mail."

He quickly drew out of the bunch the square white envelope I knew he was most anxious to find. They used to write to each other every day. It was so long from each night to the next, at which time they were together.

I lit a cigar, sat down, and waited. I heard the tearing of the envelope, and the rustle of its contents as he unfolded it. Then there was such a long silence that I looked up. Lester was staring at the letter in his hand with a face white as chalk and a look upon it like that of an animal when it dies.

I started up.

"What —," I began.

Lester tossed me the letter.

It was from the girl.

I made out of the scrawling, sloping characters that she had married another man that afternoon. There were a few vague excuses and regrets that only accentuated the horror of the bare fact.

I tried to say something.

"Old man," I said; "er—you must—you know—bear up—she's—you know —"

Lester didn't hear me. He straightened up and held his hand high above his head.

"False!" he cried, "oh, God! false! Infinite and all powerful Ruler of the universe, is love but another name for lies, and faith but a mockery?"

"Lester," I said, "listen to me. It's hard, I know, but —"

"Eyes with heaven's own light in them," he went on, with his arm still raised; "lips that seemed the dwelling place of truth—heart from which I thought angels might have learned loyalty and love—soul that seemed whiter than the robes of saints!—honor is but a rag and constancy a devil's lie."

Somebody knocked at the door and I sprang toward it. Lester opened a drawer to his table and fumbled in it.

A man had brought a package for Lester. It was the girl's presents returned. While I was closing the door Lester got his pistol and put the ball straight for his heart. I knelt in the smoke and raised his head. A brief gleam of his old quizzical, philosophical humor came into his eye.

"Frank," he said, with a faint smile, "did you hear me get off my stage talk? You were right—right—about—that—after all."—Detroit Free Press.

Shrugging the Shoulders.

Shrugging the shoulders in cold weather is probably the survival of an old instinct, which prompts them to put the skin of the back on the stretch, and so erect the hairy covering of that part. The hair is now reduced to a mere downy covering, but the old instinct still remains in common with others; the rule apparently being that all instincts which are harmless to their possessors are constant, in spite of any change of structure. All animals with long hair or feathers erect their coats in cold weather, for the warmth of such a covering depends on its thickness and the amount of air it contains rather than on its bulk.

A HAIR-DRESSER'S GRATITUDE.

He Restored the Priceless Crown Jewels of France.

On the 16th of September, 1792, the crown jewels of France were stolen. The following curious story of their theft and recovery was afterward contributed to the *Revue Retrospective* by Sergeant Marceau, an official of the National Assembly. Marceau was one day visiting the prisons, when a convict sent for him. The creature was shivering with fear, and begged piteously that he might be allowed to be shaved. This was against the prison regulations, but the man was insistent, crying out:

"Oh, be merciful, Monsieur Administrator, and let me be shaved! I, who never have done anybody any harm, look like some ferocious assassin with my hair thus! Let me be shaved and decently dressed, so that I may receive some pity when I go to the scaffold! I was by occupation a ladies' hair-dresser, so you can see I was not a scoundrel."

Marceau was so touched by this strange and pathetic appeal that he granted the favor.

In the stress of affairs he thought no more about the wretched barber, who he supposed had been executed. Shortly afterward the crown jewels disappeared, and though every effort was made, no trace of them could be found.

One day a mulatto woman, who came constantly to the tribune of the Jacobin Club, approached Marceau, who was a member, and said:

"What would you say if I enabled you to recover the missing crown jewels? I know a man who has the secret, but he declares that he will reveal it to no living human being but you. He is under an obligation to you, he says."

With little faith in the woman's story, Marceau answered:

"Bring him in at once!"

An hour later a man dressed in the uniform of the National Guard entered the apartment, and said, in a faltering voice:

"Monsieur Administrator, I can show you where to find the crown jewels, but you must give me your word of honor not to denounce me."

"Denounce you for rendering such an important service?" replied Marceau.

"You will rather deserve a reward."

"I can take no reward except my life. My name cannot appear in this matter without risking my head."

"Speak! I promise you what you ask," said the magistrate.

"Do you not recognize me, then, monsieur?" inquired the National Guardsman.

"No, I never saw you before."

"Oh, sir, let me have your word as a magistrate that you will not give me up," cried the man again.

"Why all this mystery?" demanded the magistrate. "If you know anything, reveal it. If you were an accomplice, I will protect you."

"No, sir," was the reply, "I had nothing to do with it. I am Lamiere, the hair-dresser, whom you allowed to be shaved at the conciergerie. Although I have been set free by the popular judges, the tribunal may arrest me again."

"Do not be afraid," said Marceau. "Tell what you know about this theft."

After kissing the magistrate's hand, the hair-dresser continued:

"Two fellow-prisoners of mine were talking together one night about the theft, and although they used thieves' slang I was able to understand them. I pretended to be asleep, and I heard them say that all the crown jewels were concealed in two beams of a house in Dash street. Send there as quickly as possible, for they may not yet have been taken away. But I entreat you not to mention my name!"

The search was made, and the jewels were discovered, concealed exactly where the hair-dresser had said they were. The thieves were never traced.

No Success Without Work.

When Charles Dickens said that all that he had accomplished had been achieved by diligent, patient, persevering application, he only stated what has been the experience of every successful man. Nothing is more important to young men than that they should early learn and fully comprehend this great truth.

It is step by step, by toilsome effort added to toilsome effort, that all great achievements are made. As has been well remarked, there is no royal road to anything else of great value in this life. Work—steady, long-continued and regular application—is the only price for which anything worth the having can be bought. There is no great success of any kind without great labor.

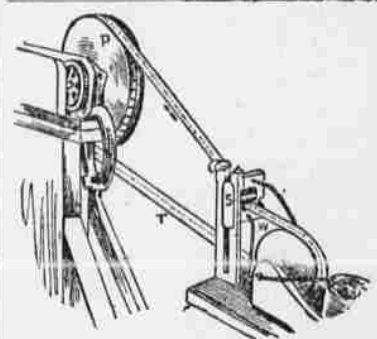
Pure Food in France.

Anybody who doubts the genuineness of an article of food that he has purchased from a Parisian tradesman may take it to the municipal laboratory for analysis. It will cost him nothing to have it analyzed, and the fact determined whether it is unadulterated or adulterated, and, if the latter, the law deals with the offender without further action on the part of the purchaser. The shopkeeper is liable to be heavily fined, imprisoned, deprived of the few civil rights he is supposed to be otherwise entitled to, and has to display conspicuously in his shop window or on his door for a year a large placard bearing the words "Convicted of adulteration."

THE FUTURE TELEGRAPHY.

Every Man Will Prepare His Own Message Slip.

An increasing amount of attention is being given nowadays to the possibilities of rapid telegraphy. By the Wheatstone system, in which a previously punched strip of paper is fed into the transmitter, from 100 to 150 words a minute are now easily sent over a single wire, a speed which is three or four times that of the operator who manipulates a Morse key. By the Rogers system, not yet in general use, it is claimed that 200 words a minute can be handled and printed on

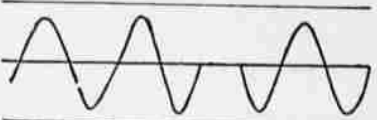


THE NEW TRANSMITTER.

a typewriter automatically. What is called the Delany system is still more rapid. But all these achievements and projects are surpassed by a plan described by Lieut. George Owen Squier of the Third United States artillery and assistant professor of physics at Dartmouth. In some experiments conducted by Lieutenant Squier, in cooperation with Prof. A. C. Crehore at Fort Monroe, a speed of 1,200 words per minute was actually attained, and the assertion is made that from 3,000 to 6,000 words a minute may be sent by the same system between points as far apart as New York and Chicago.

One great novelty about the new plan is that it utilizes an alternating current instead of a constant one. Now, if an alternating current be interrupted, and if the interruption occurs at just the stage of an alternation which is midway between a positive and a negative wave, there will be no spark, because the force which was flowing in one direction subsides to zero before it begins to flow in the other. What Messrs. Squier and Crehore propose, then, is to interrupt their current and restore it at just such "zero points" in the oscillation as this. But the sparks will not disappear unless the "make" and "break" occur at precisely the right instant; and thus a simple and valuable guide is afforded the operator in adjusting his apparatus. When he finds that sparking has ceased, he knows that his transmitter interrupts and restores the flow at the zero stage, and is working in perfect harmony with the particular frequency of alternation employed.

Now, let us suppose that the Morse alphabet, which is composed of dots and dashes, is to be tried with this system. In that case a break lasting from the beginning of a positive wave until its end might stand for the dot, and a break from the beginning of a positive wave, but continuing past its subsidence through the rise and fall of the



negative wave also, would make a dash.

The machine by which messages are sent with an alternating current, is very simple. A narrow wheel with a flat, narrow periphery is kept in rotation at a rate which is rapid and is equal to an integer number of cycles. Let us imagine, now, that the wire carrying the message is cut in two, and the adjacent ends are provided with flexible metallic tips, or "brushes," and that these two brushes rest, side by side, on the periphery of the wheel. Obviously the current will flow from one brush into the metal of the wheel, and thence into the other brush, so long as the wheel remains clean. If, however, a little patch of paper or other insulating material be attached to the periphery at a certain point, every time it comes around it will break the contact between one brush and the wheel, and thus open the circuit. As soon as the patch is past the connection will be restored.

This, however, was not the exact plan really pursued. In practice a long, narrow strip of paper was kept in motion by the wheel, just as a belt is by a pulley. This strip has been previously perforated with holes of different lengths, long or short, and carefully spaced. One brush rested on top of it, and the other pressed upward against it from below, the two being removed a short distance from the wheel, and situated one directly above the other. So long as the brushes were separated by the paper strip no current would flow, but when a hole permitted one to reach through and touch the other the current would be restored. The interruption and restorations of the current always occurred at the zero stage, between positive and negative waves, so that no sparking resulted after the brushes were once adjusted. The wheel P was geared to the dynamo so as to make one revolution to every 184 half-cycles. The perforated tape is indicated at T. The current

wires are shown at W. W. brushes are hidden by the adjacent support S. An actual speed of 1,200 words a minute was secured in this way, and three or four times that is said to be entirely feasible.

It is thought that a telegraph company of the future will fulfill a somewhat different function from the present ones. The company will own its own wires and rights of way, but the tendency of the office will be to transmit and receive messages already prepared, rather than undertake the preparation of the message as well. When the system comes into general use, business offices will have their own perforators, and it will come necessary for the operator to learn the telegraph alphabet as a stenographer and typewriter. The three-key perforating machine is comparatively expensive, but undoubtedly a machine could be devised at an early date, for the purpose of perforating messages at the same time that they are written by the typewriter in the office. These perforated strips of paper will be carried to the telegraph office, and the telegraph operator will slip the strip on the machine, and will go the message.

BROTHER OF THE NOVELIST.

W. H. D. Haggard the New Minister to Caracas.

W. H. D. Haggard, the new

minister resident at Caracas in Venezuela, is a brother of the famous novelist, Rider Haggard. He is the diplomatic agent to be sent to South American country in many years. The relations of the two nations have



W. H. D. HAGGARD.

not been such as to permit the presence of a British minister in Caracas. But that these relations have made way for a more cordial feeling the intervening has been resumed. Mr. Haggard is one of the oldest men in the service. He has been in the consular department for full thirty years and has filled minor offices. Since 1894 he has been British consul general at Tunis. His mission to Caracas is in the way of promotion. Mr. Haggard will be succeeded at Tunis by Sir Henry Johnston.

DANCING HAS DEGENERATED.

This Dec'aration Is Made by the Countess of Ancaster.

The Countess of Ancaster, who has created a great stir in the fashionable world of London by her declaration that dancing has degenerated into a graceless romp, is the wife of Lord Willoughby d' Eresby, the baron of England. The countess' daughter, Evelyn Clementina, is married to Maj.-Gen. Henry Ewart, the queen's equerry. The fact and the very high social position of the countess herself give more than ordinary importance to her opinions on matters concerning society, and dancing is certainly one of the Countess Ancaster's husband's family



COUNTESS OF ANCASTER.

is one of the most ancient in the human nobility of England. He is the twenty-second Lord Willoughby. The first was Walter de Bec, upon whom William the Conqueror settled the barony. Lady Willoughby herself is the second daughter of the late Marquis of Huntly, the tenth of that title.

Density of Deep Water.

So dense is the water in the deeper parts of the ocean that an ironclad if it were to sink, would never reach the bottom.