

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

By JOHN K. WETHERELL.

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"My son," said Mr. Fairchild of the great publishing house of Fairchild & Co., "I think I see in you a very dangerous tendency."

"In what respect, father?"

"I fear you have literary tastes."

"But, father, I thought you were very proud of my literary success at college."

"Proud of it—yes, but since you are to take my place in this business I consider it a dangerous gift."

"I don't believe it."

"Unfortunately old people cannot transmit their experiences to the young. You will have to pay to learn what I tell you, just as you will have to pay for books containing in themselves large advertisement."

The next day Mr. Fairchild died of apoplexy, and his son, who had had six months' experience in the business, took his place. The young publisher determined to test his "readers." While in college he had written a novel of university life. Calling his manager of the department for examining manuscripts into his private office, he handed him a package and said:

"Mr. Burton, there is a manuscript written by myself. Give it to the readers, keeping the authorship a secret, and when the reports are all in let me have them."

Mr. Burton took the manuscript and retired. In a week he laid the reports before the head of the firm. Fairchild read them, threw them in the wastebasket, tapped a bell and recalled Burton.

"Mr. Burton," he said, "we must reorganize our corps of readers. I find it impossible to get an honest opinion on my own manuscript. If I as head of the firm can't do this, how can I expect to get at the merit of the manuscripts of others? That novel of mine is a juvenile production of no value whatever, and yet not a single reader has condemned it."

There was trouble among the readers, most of them receiving their discharge. A year passed, and the circumstance, though not forgotten, ceased to be a terrible remembrance. All was running smoothly in the publishing house of Fairchild & Co. when one day a manuscript novel was sent in by express. It was started through the readers' mill, but got no further than the "weeder," whose duty it was to eliminate all manuscripts that were not worth serious consideration. It was returned to the author, who again expressed it to the firm with a note stating that the name attached to it was fictitious and hinting that it was by an author of reputation. This insured its being thoroughly examined, but it was again returned, notwithstanding the hint, the readers assuming that the author had used a very commonplace device to secure attention. A few days after the second return the chief of readers was called into Mr. Fairchild's office. The rejected manuscript lay on the desk.

"Mr. Burton," said the head of the firm, "that manuscript was prepared expressly under my direction. It is one of Edgar Allan Poe's longest stories, with names and incidents substituted so as to partly conceal the authorship and not in the least to detract from its literary value. You will please discharge all your readers. I have engaged an old woman who doesn't know the meaning of the word

literature. She will hereafter read the manuscripts of fiction, and we will be guided by her reports. My father before he died told me that I must learn by experience. I am learning, but I still feel that I have a great deal to learn."

The firm of Fairchild & Co. continued to publish fiction with varying success. One day the head of the firm called for Mr. Burton and said to him:

"This manuscript novel was left here by Agnes Darlington, whose 'Deserted Wife' we published last season and which has had, as you know, a very large sale. It was not the best seller of the season, but came very near being such. This manuscript is by Miss Darlington's grandmother, who has been bedridden for twenty years. I have looked it over and found it worthless. But we cannot afford to offend Miss Darlington, who is to give us another novel in a few months and which the Clymers are endeavoring to get away from us. This thing, 'A Life of Ease,' must be published to prevent the Clymers getting ahead of us. We will lose something on it, but make a large sum on Miss Darlington's new story."

Mr. Burton retired with the manuscript. "A Life of Ease" was issued in an inexpensive form as the Fairchilds dared publish it without giving offense to its invalid author and her granddaughter. The first edition was exhausted and another put forth. This failed to satisfy the growing interest in the book, and one edition after another was given to the dealers. At the end of the season when the records of sales were figured up "A Life of Ease" was found to be the second best seller. When this fact was announced to the head of the firm he tapped his bell for Mr. Burton and when that gentleman arrived said to him:

"Mr. Burton, you will discharge our regular reader and put the porter in her place."

"But the porter can't read, sir."
"So much the better. Hire some one to read the manuscripts to him."

The Only Trouble.

School Visitor—I hear, my good woman, you have a case of somnambulism in your family. Perturbed Mother—'Tain't no sech thing, ma'am. We ain't never had one of them ketching things here. The only trouble is that Mamie walks in her sleep.—Baltimore American.

All Shell and No Kernel.

Charley—My friends tell me that I have all the eccentricities of genius. Beatrice—What a pity it is, Charley, that you have not got the genius itself!

CURIOUS COLOR NAMES.

There Was Once an Extensive Group of Flea Shades.

"Puce," which was for a long time the name given an exceedingly popular hue, is when translated from the French simply "flea." It appears that the accidental admission of a flea at a court festivity in France and the subsequent discovery and capture of the uninvited guest gave rise to a host of jokes and anecdotes, and so a new color was jocularly named in the insect's honor. Indeed, there was an extensive group of flea shades—old flea, young flea, flea's foot, lively flea and others. Puce, which was a kind of drab, is still familiar to the reading public through its frequent mention in literature, drama and letters of noted personages in the past.

Few of us, however, know anything of the following colors, each of which was a favorite in its day and as familiar to the speech of fashionable ladies and gentlemen as are the cerise, old rose, etc., of our own time. Here is a little list of them:

Marathon blue, drooping poppy, green of the Oreads, triumph of Aspasia, robe of Venus, bridal blush, canary's

tail, merry hunter, flying chaff, dolphin about to die, thundercloud, innocent infant, caterpillar brown, fading hope, Cinderella russet, smoke of Vesuvius, penitent hermit, dissolving pearl, Cupid's feather, captain's glory, beautiful savage, ambushed wild beast, rose of Eden, faithful shepherd, weary traveler's shoe, agitated nymph and dream of the beloved one pink.—Exchange.

SLIPS IN WRITING.

Curious Blunders Made by Reporters and Correspondents.

Every once in awhile some school-teacher comes forward with a list of ludicrous mistakes made in composition by her infant charges. The following laughable "breaks" were not made by school children, but by newspaper reporters and correspondents. Writing is their business, but they often make ridiculous mistakes in the haste of "catching an edition."

In a story about a mad dog scare on Staten Island the reporter wrote, "Policeman Jones drove the dog into ambush and killed it."

The head of a prominent Wall street house, in telling about the action of the directors of a certain company, was quoted as saying, "It came like a cannon ball out of a clear sky."

The report of the result of a damage suit: "Carmini Carusini was awarded a verdict of \$2,000 for injuries received by the jury from the Erie Railroad company."

This from a Brooklyn reporter: "He tried to end his life by suicide."

This one might have been due to an error in typewriting: "The girl was afflicted with typhoid fever."

A correspondent in a small town on Long Island, evidently laboring under great excitement, wired, "Mrs. George K. Blank was the heroine of the holocaust." (She played a garden hose on a burning barn.) In further describing the blaze he said, "The flames swept into furious environment."—New York World.

How Eggs Are Hatched in China.

There is in China a curious method of hatching eggs. First the eggs are placed in tiers in a large basket, twice the size of an ordinary barrel, which is thickly lined with hay and carefully closed from the air by a tight fitting cover of twisted straw. In three days' time the eggs are taken out and replaced in a different order, those at the surface being put in the lower tier. This is repeated every third day for a fortnight, when the eggs are removed from the basket and placed on a shelf in another room, being carefully covered with bran. In a day or two the chickens chip the shells and make their appearance into the world. The success of this method is attributed to the fact that the animal heat of the egg, being retained by the basket, which is formed of material not conducting caloric, is sufficient to support animal life and develop it.—Detroit Free Press.

Thought Once Was Enough.

The Sunday school lesson was from that Scripture which teaches that if your brother strikes you on the cheek you should turn the other also and endure even for seventy times seven. Johnny had listened to his teacher very attentively while she emphasized this fact, and after the lesson the superintendent rose to make a few remarks.

"Now, boys," she said, "how many times ought another boy to strike you before you hit him back?"

"Just about once!" promptly answered Johnny.—Judge.

A Bismarck Story.

Lord Amthill once found Bismarck reading Andersen's story on the "Ugly Duckling," which relates how a duck

hatched a swan's egg and how the cygnet was jeered at by his putative brethren, the ducklings, until one day a troop of lordly swans floating down the river saluted him as one of their race. "Ah," observed Bismarck, "it was a long time before my poor mother could be persuaded that in hatching me she had not produced a goose."

The Sacrifice.

Mrs. Richleigh (scornfully)—I wish you had more brains, Ferdinand, instead of so much money. Ferdinand (unmoved)—I did once, dear, but it took all of them to get the money.—Widow.

The manly part is to do with might and main what you can do.—Emerson.

Danced in Court.

An unusual scene was once witnessed in a French law court, the civil tribunal at Nantes. The proprietor of a local theater had engaged a young lady dancer, whose performances at rehearsals did not come up to his expectations. He therefore would not let her appear, and the fair dancer took action against him for breach of contract. The defendant alleged that she had not even learned the first steps of her art, and, here being a plain issue, the judge determined to decide for himself. A space was accordingly forthwith cleared on the floor of the court, and in these unusual surroundings the young lady duly went through her steps and pirouettes. In the result the judge felt justified in certifying that she was quite an expert dancer and decided the case in her favor. Henceforth she advertised herself as the only dancer in the country with a legal certificate of proficiency.—London Tit-Bits.

Poets and Dogs.

Poets have always loved dogs. In this poets and boys resemble each other. Walter Savage Landor was devoted to his dog Giallo and Byron's epitaph upon his dog Boatswain we all remember:

To mark a friend's remains these stones arise.

I never had but one, and there he lies.

Cowper was very fond of his dog, and we know how Charles Lamb, who was a prose poet, loved his Dash and how Mrs. Browning appreciated the little Flush to whom she indited a poem. The Earl of Shaftesbury kept his noble collie in his library with him at all times and Samuel Rogers always walked out with his dog. Scott declined an invitation to dinner when his dog died, saying that he could not accept on account of the "loss of an old friend."—St. James' Gazette.

The Cassowary.

The cassowary is a natural boxer and the only bird, except perhaps the ostrich, whose method of defense and attack in warfare is the forward kick—straight out, like a man—is calculated to arouse envy in the breast of any save a crack athlete. Another peculiarity of this bird is his ability to perform a sort of war dance over any particular object, a bit of rag, a stick or a stone, that attracts his attention.

Varied Views of Marriage.

Marriage is a lottery to the bachelor, an urgent necessity in the opinion of the widower, a delightful temptation to the widow, a habit with a good many.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A Good Talker.

Yeast—Did you ever have the acoustic properties of your house tested? Crimsonbeak—Oh, yes; my wife is testing them all the time.—Yonkers Statesman.

No man sympathizes with the sorrows of vanity.—Johnson.