#### PURVEYORS OF NEWS.

WALTER WELLMAN WRITES OF WALK-ING ENCYCLOPEDIAS.

Bow the Washington Correspondent Gath ers and Dispenses Information of Cu: rent Events-His All Embracing, Birds eye View of Legislation.

(Special Correspo WASHINGTON, April 7.—In this capital city of the United States of America there is no profession so interesting as the profession of journalism. Here we have professional politicians, professional statesmen, professional lobbyists, professional farmers, professional every-thing; but of them all none form such a thing; but of them all none form such a compact, picturesque, little understood and withal so useful a corps of workers as the newspaper correspondents. Being a member of this corps, I hope I shall not be accused of blowing my horn when I say that I am often amazed at the intelligence, the industry, the widerange of information, the acumen and shrewdness of the men who represent here the great newspapers of the land.

I would sooner take the judgment of the correspondents on the probable outcome of an attempt to pass a certain

come of an attempt to pass a certain bill, on the nominations to be made by the great political parties, or anything of that sort in which information and discernment are requisite to the making of a good cetimate, than the judgment of all the senators or all the members of house, or both combined. I will tell you why. When a senator or a reprentative wants to inquire about somehing he hunts up a newspaper corre-pondent. Experience has taught him where to go for trustworthy informaon. Of course the correspondents are constantly asking the statesmen for ows, too, and thus we have here an adairable system of reciprocity in the spread of intelligence. But there is a markable difference between what the statesmen know and what the scribes

The first know some things—the legis-tion in which they are directly inter-sed, the politics of their particular seccated, the politics of their particular section of the country and so on—better
than the other fellows; but their general information is much more limited
than that of the correspondents. The
latter know about all that all of the
statesmen know. Their information is
encyclopedic. They know the senate as
well as the house of representatives, who
wrote Congressman Blank's speech, what
was done in the last executive session,
what this or that leader of his party is
working for and how he intends to accomplish it, the political drift by states,
coteries, sections of country, the country
as a whole, who are in favor of a given coteries, sections of country, the country as a whole, who are in favor of a given bill and who are not, and a thousand other things. These men make it the business of their lives to know things: they spend all their time hunting for facts. They are trained to the work, their scent is sharpened by necessity, they have splendid opportunities and they help one another. Why shouldn't they be the best informed men in Washinston?

Newspaper men know better what is kely to happen in the senate or house an the statesmen themselves. The atter have a narrow view, confined to heir particular friends, the line of legtees. The view of the scribe is as from a bird's eye. He sees it all, and he is gifted with the power of generalization. A curious incident of this was afforded A curious incident of this was afforded in the recent struggle over the Bland silver bill. The leaders on the opposing sides did not have as accurate an idea of the situation and their own strength as the newspaper men had. While the antisilver leaders were giving up the fight and acknowledging that they would be beaten by thirty or forty majority, the correspondents saw that the vote was going to be very close, perhaps not ten going to be very close, perhaps not ten majority either way. You will remem-ber that the first or test vote came out a

During this roll call, which was one of the most sensational ballots we have ever had in the house, I was much interested in watching a certain newspaper man who sat beside me with a tally sheet in his hand. When a man voted sheet in his hand. When a man voted yea he made a mark at the left of his name, and those who voted nay were checked at the right. As the roll call proceeded, the pencil of my friend preceded the responses of the members on the floor below. He checked the names before the responses were uttered, and in only five instances was he compelled to change his marks. In other words, he knew how all those 800 men, saving five, would vote; and he could have sat down before the roll call was begun and made up a tally sheet with this remarkable accuracy. There wasn't a member on the floor, not even a leader for or against the bill, who had anything like so clear an idea as this of what the result was going to be. oult was going to be.

Newspaper correspondents in Washington have nothing to do but watch what is going on, study the men who are making laws and controlling poliare making laws and controlling poli-tios, converse with senators, representa-tives and all sorts and conditions of men who are likely to be possessed of infor-mation, and give to their papers the re-sult of their observations and inquiries. A good deal is said about the unreli-ability of the press. A large class of persons appear to think it smart to say to themselves and to one another, "If to themselves and to one another, "If you see it in a newspaper it isn't so." But let me tell them that I do now know a correspondent for the press in Washington, and I know them all, who isn't as particular to be accurate and trustworthy in what he writes—that is, as accurate as possible, for the ideal is never attainable—as he would be were he a lawyer making up his evidence or writing out his brief.

The one struggle in which we are all canaged is to get facts and to report

engaged is to get facts and to report them pleasantly, concisely, faithfully. The reggesminitives of the press at this capital are not sensation mongers, they are not even partisans, except in a mild degree, and under compulsion from their

paper, and would make his news and his writings savor less of political bias if he writings savor less of political bias if he thought his managing editor wou. I stand it. It is a remarkable fact that a great majority of the men who come to Washington to serve as correspondents for newspapers become absolute independents in politics. They give up the allegiance which they once owned to this party or that, and become mere students and analysts.

WHAT LEADING LITERARY MEN OF BRITAIN THOUGHT OF HIM.

"The Mermaid Club" in Dublin University—Society of "The Waltwhitmaniscs"—Professor Dowden's Views on the Character and Influence of Whitman.

Naturally, they are a keen, suspicious, cynical, critical lot, these men who sit in the galleries and make or unmake statesmen with mere twists of the wrist. There is so much hypocrisy among the professional statesmen, so much posing and insincerity, so much protestation and rhetoric for the benefit of "the district" at home, that the scribes soon lose patience with that sort of thing and learn to judge the men on the floor be-low at their true value. I do not mean to say that all statesmen are insincere, nothing but actors, striving for popular-ity. But many of them are, and I state without fear of contradiction that a majority of them are moral cowards in the face of public opinion. Day after day face of public opinion. Day after day we see men voting on questions present-ed for their consideration, acting net upon their judgment or their conviction of what is right, but with sole reference to what the popular opinion is in their districts. It is almost pitiful to see a man of sense and experience, of good judgment and wide knowledge, sitting here a mere slave to the caprice or notions of his constituents

Take the silver bill which I have mentioned, for example. I personally know of at least twenty men who voted on that bill, some for it and some against it, who would have reversed their votes had they dared to express their hones convictions. Of course their excuse is that they are representatives and not free agents; that it is their duty to act as a majority of their constituents would have them and not to express their own beliefs. They argue that the house of beliefs. They argue that the house of representatives was created and organized with this in view; that it was intended to be a reflex of the opinions and desires of the people rather than a place for men to exercise their judgment. This view of the duty of a congressment is held, I think, by a majority of the members of the house, and this is one of the many reasons why I should infinitely prefer a seat in the press gallery to one on the floor. A Republican may represent a Democratic newspaper, or a Democrat a Republican paper, with much less sacrifice of self respect and wrenching of his conscience than is required to represent a congressional dis-trict in the house.

Once in awhile some statesman be comes offended at the whole corps of cordents and starts out to "get even" respondents and starts out to "get even" nated by Tennyson and debauched by with the press gallery. A number of Swinburne. As we had vague ideas bold men have tried this little thing, that Victor Hugo's romanticism had and they have always failed. In a conand they have always failed. In a contest between statesmen and scribes the latter invariably stand together, and invariably get the best of their adversary. Colonel Sterett, of Texas, the best story teller in the press gallery, has his unique way of describing the fate of the statesman who starts out to get ahead of the

"When I see a plain, ordinary senator | believe in the thirty-nine articles. or representative go on the rampage try-ing to do up the press gallery," says Colonel Sterett, "I am reminded of the Texas whipped John L. Sullivan. His name was Marks—Al Marks, a cotname was Marks—Al Marks, a cot-ton screwer in Galveston—one of the a university education. His father did strongest men and gamest fighters in not spend as much money in having him Texas. Sullivan came down there on a taught to write bad Latin and worse tour and offered \$500 to any man who Greek verses as our fathers have spent would stand in front of him with gloves three rounds. Marks accepted the challenge. After the contest, two weeks after it, I interviewed Marks, and this is the way he told his story: 'As I walked up to the stage people cheered me, and I felt pretty proud. I was going to put my hands up against the great Sullivan. my hands up against the great Sullivan. I felt sure I could whip him. But when got into the ring and John L. stood in ront of me he appeared to be a heap pigger than he had looked from my seat. But the people cheered me and I determined to astonish him right from the jump. So after we had shaken hands I let him have a good one right in the jaw. Sullivan looked at me in a surprised sort of way, and I saw that I had his heart broken. Said I to myself, this man has met his match at last, and he knows it. He is afraid of me. So 1 gave him some more hard knocks. John L. looked at me almost appealingly.
He tried to stop my blows, but he
was slow and clumsy. Said I to
myself: "Marks, you are a made
man. You'll whip this fellow easy. He is so slow with his paws that you can batter him all to pieces." But I made up my mind I wouldn't knock him out till near the end of the third round-I didn't want to rob the people of their sport. At the end of the round I asked Sullivan how he was getting along, and he looked kind o' scared and said only tolerable. In the second round I gave him several more hard ones and he continued to look scared. I said to myself it was ridiculous for this man to be posing as the cham-pion of the world, and determined that in the next round I'd put an end to his absurd pretensions. About the mid-dle of the third round, just as I was getting ready to do Sullivan up, I saw another sort of look come into his eyes. He looked like some wild animal. In the next second he caught me under the left jaw with his right and lifted me up from the floor till my toes barely touched. At this instant his terrible

left caught me on the other side of my

face, and'- I'll have to finish the

and went and hid himself in the wings of the theater."

WALTER WELLMAN.

WHITMAN ABROAD.

[Special Correspondence.] NEW YORK, April 7.—Some eighteen years ago, when I was an undergraduate of Trinity college, Dublin university, one of the most agreeable literary societies to which it was then considered fashionable to belong, was known as the Mermaid club, the title of which was borrowed from the famous gathering which included such wits as Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher and other world renowned worthies of the Elizabethan era.

Foremost among the scholars and thinkers, not only of the society, but of the university, stood Edward Dowden, university professor of English literature, a man with mind of the strongest and finest fiber and a character of such force and elevation as to challenge the reverence of the wildest undergraduates and the most sincere respect of his col-leagues among the fellows and profess-

The Mermaid club met once in two weeks at the college rooms or private residence of some member in rotation, and during term we held one or two meetings at the house of Mr. Dowden. Upon one of the latter occasions I happened to see upon the library table a paper covered volume of Walt Whit-man's "Leaves of Grass," a book which for some time had been attracting considerable attention among university men and in literary circles of the Irish

Mr. Dowden, whose word was law upon such matters, had recently delivered a lecture upon Walt Whitman, and ored a lecture upon Walt Whitman, and young men who remembered Longfellow's advice about "ever seeking something new" professed enthusiasm on the subject of this new evangel. Disciples of the western teacher were known as "Waltwhitmaniacs," and on the well established principle that martyrs' blood is the seed of the church, our organization prospered through auffering. Wa tion prospered through suffering. We met contempt with scorn and greeted criticism with the retort that "Father Walt" was above criticism.

The fact of the matter is that many of us did not understand what Whitman was "driving at," and the small movement with which we were asso-ciated may have been merely a revolt against the satiety of super-refinement in a literature which was being dominated by Tennyson and debauched by broken through the traditions of French classical drama, so we believed that Whitman's realist furnished a new link in the chain of worldwide poetic development. At all events the unin-telligible is always magnificent to youthful and aspiring "souls," and according-ly we had faith in Whitman for the same reason that other good Christians

Anxious then for Mr. Dowden's opinion, I ventured to say, upon the occasion mentioned, "Mr. Dowden, do you regard Walt Whitman as an educated man?

"Well," he said, "Walt has probably exponent of a world embracing democracy, he opens our hearts and minds to greater possibilities for the whole human race than any writer is capable of doing who works within the prescribed

literary formulas.

"The ideas upon which much of our poetry rests have been few in number. practically exclusive, and now worn almost threadbare. Whitman adds enormously to the number and magnitude of poetical subjects. He has gone into the coal mine, the canal boat, miserable dens in tenement houses and on the back streets of great cities; into jails, almshouses, churches, hospitals and workshops, and moving freely among all classes of the world's toilers he has observed the dignity and worth and noble possibilities of human character, even under sordid and frequently tragic con-

"He has felt keenly this misery of the human race, and to the best of his ability has offered remedies, but his most effective one is his constant and strong expression of hopefulness in the destiny of the race, as indicated by confidence in the progress of America, in the power of human reason. of human reason and effort to remove prevailing distress, and implicit belief in the wisdom of the scheme upon which this universe was conceived and devel-

"In other words, he is a democrat in the old sense. He believes that the sup-pression of the people must give place to freedom for their fullest development; and he is an optimist who trusts to natural forces for a millennium which has been conceived in America, and which can only be realized on the lines laid down under the favorable condi-tions which have prevailed in that coun-try for the first time in the world's history. Such opinions are of the gravest import to a community whose best poetry is penetrated with the sadness of existence and the futility of human aims, and whose general literature is one long glorification of wealth, social

face, and — I'll have to finish the story," continued Sterett, "for Markadidn't know much about the subsequent proceedings. When he had raised his man clear of the floor, just as a football player lifts the ball preparatory to a kick, he hit poor Marks a crack which knocked him over the ropes and down into the orchestra, where two chairs and three violins were broken and where Marks was picked up unconscious. Sullivan thought he had killed the man and went and hid himself in the wines. position or military power."
Shortly after this meeting of the "Mermaid club" Mr. Dowden was challenged by certain people prominent in-literary and art circles to defend in a public discussion Whitman's literary methods and social views. The pro-fessor, although a very modest and re-tiring man, felt it his duty to do battle

for an absent friend. A great meeting was arranged and largely attended by those who regarded Whitman as a literary scavenger, and who were anxious to relieve the university and polite society from all complicity with Mr. Dowden in the expression of respect for one who was said to have had nothing but contempt shown him in his own country.

Speakers representing various colleges and nearly all the learned professions rose in turn, and with disconnected passages for texts proceeded to overwhelm Whitman's book with ridicule. There were a few timid speakers for the de-fense, but Dowden, who had opened the discussion, enjoyed the privilege of re-plying in full to all that was said during the entire evening. Accordingly he girded himself for the conflict. He took notes of the various speeches and was kept busily employed arranging book markers in certain volumes before him on the table. His spirited reply consisted of (1) a brief general review of poetry, (2) sketch of modern democracy. (3) series of ad hominem arguments which fairly "knocked the bottom" out of attacks based upon detached sen-tences and made by men whose critical faculty seemed to have been guided by pruriency rather than principle in their reading of Whitman.

Dowden took each important quotation made by his adversaries, showed it's relation to the context and explained the bearing of the entire passage or poem upon Whitman's leading ideas of de-mocracy and optimism. With great en-thusiasm he brushed away the cobweb fancies of mere prettiness and jingle which make up a great part of so called poetry to the detriment of wide views and sound sentiment.

He had much to say of magazine poetry, of what Professor Huxley calls the "sensual caterwauling school," and of the long dallying with nastiness in fine phrases and classical allusions. He then spoke of the "mortal race of men" and of the mighty perturbations of society, which seem necessary for the establishment of humanity's claims; of establishment of humanity's claims; of the crusades, the reformation, the French revolution and the civil war in the United States. Reviewing the re-sults of the last great commotion he traced the growth of new desires, new demands, new tendencies and new attitudes toward life and death, and all permanent subjects of human thought or interest. He regarded Walt Whitman as the most profitable and original inter-preter of the new age, and declared that the great western republic will not rest satisfied with the tags and rags of Europe any more in poetry than in politics; that the jinglings of Alexander Pope's moral platitudes are as much out of date under existing conditions in the United States as the successful interfer-

When his remarks upon Whitman's own methods were concluded, Dowden called attention to the critics who had just spoken in something like the following terms:

"In estimating the value of a criti-cism, particularly upon such important subjects as those with which Walt Whitman d-als, it is not unnatural to make some inquir: se into the character and capacity of each different critic. Some of the gentlemen who have spoken tofriends for many years. They are all honorable men, and in their own special callings speak with authority. They understand the technicalities of common law, equity, horses, billiards, choice wines, foreign cigars and 'good society.'
They are capable of discussing with intelligence the niceties of ancient and modern literature, including French novels and dramas adapted from the

"They can sit at the windows of the University or Kildare Street clubs, and with mathematical accuracy point out the merits and defects of a woman or a rse. In private life I have no doubt that they are the best of good fellows. They are the fortunates of the earth and have fairly 'touched the Happy Isles.' But we have not heard that they have ever raised a voice on behalf of any movement which tends to the amelioration of that large portion of the human race which is so profoundly unfortunate and so far away from any happy prospect in this world.

"They have done nothing to mitigate the misery of the hungry, the houseless, the deprayed and abandoned of the world. These gentlemen live, and their predecessors of the same temperament have lived and died, apparently unconscious of, or indifferent to, the hard lot of the poor and the oppressed. We do not blame them for this callous indifference. They are so constituted and really the difference. ence. They are so constituted and probably would not wish to be otherwise. But we do blame them when they insult a great writer and thinker who views life with clearer vision than they possess, and who dares to hold out brighter prospects for the millions. "These excellent judges of good wines

and fast horses, then, are the gentlemen who tonight accuse Whitman of ignorance, indecency, obscenity and the rest of it. They denounce him for a plain, healthy statement of facts which, when thoroughly understood, will do much to establish true decency and morality in place of the sham articles which now so frequently prevail. We have seen the men who are against Whitman, now let us see those who are for him." Dowden then read the names of poets, literary men, journalists and critics whom he considered competent to judge the value of Whitman's work. Coupled with each name he read a sentence or paragraph of praise for the American poet, and in conclusion he said:

"Among those who are for us in be-half of Walt Whitman are Emerson, Longfellow, Tennyson, Browning and the Rosettis among poets, along with a whole host of those whose names are synonyms for all that is great and hon-

ored, pure, dignified and of good repute in contemporary literature."

Dowden's speech utterly discomfited the local critics and won over many recruits to the little band of "Waltwhit-

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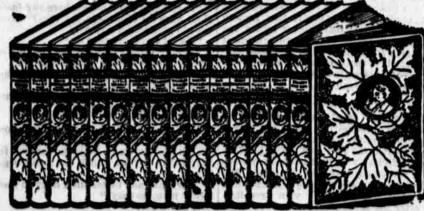
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