

THE LATEST STYLE.

Dame Fashion, concocting the style for the spring, in dress and in cloak had contrived just the thing; but, these all completed, she found scarce a thread of all her materials left for the head.

Some odd scraps of lace, though, she knotted together. No larger in all than a she-turkey's feather; then, pinning two wide-flowing ribbons upon it, she christened the nondescript object—a bonnet!

FACT AND FICTION.

It is a common charge against the novelists and dramatists of the present day that they effect the sensational to a degree that renders their works untruthful; creating impossible characters, constructing incredible plots, and portraying scenes that never have their counterpart in actual life. To those who do not scan closely the daily record of incident and crime, the charge may seem well founded, but the columns of the newspaper prove the truth of Byron's assertion that

"truth is always strange,
Stranger than fiction."

and that the conceptions of the most extravagant sensation writers are paralleled, if not exceeded, by the daily events of real life.

In making the comparison we can afford to set aside the history of the past four or five years in this country. Novelist and dramatist can scarcely dare to rise to "the height of this great argument," and the future historian will need

"a muse of fire, that would ascend
The highest heaven of invention."

to narrate the progress of the solemn drama. The awful mysteries of the old Greek tragedy, in which both crime and retribution make the earth shudder and fill the heavens with horror, are at least equalled by the dread tragedy at Washington and the terrible retribution in the burning barn in Virginia. What highly wrought novel, what stately tragedy, what startling melodrama can rival in sensational intensity the scenes and incidents, the pageants, the desolation, the crimes, the sufferings, and the heroic deeds of the late war?

But turning aside from these, as exceptional, and not affording a true view of the events of ordinary life, we find in the annals of a community undisturbed by the convulsions of civil or foreign war, unlimited materials for sensational literature of every description. In scanning the well filled pages of a recent English weekly, we find in the records of that week stock enough to set up a dozen or more novelists and dramatists with startling plots and incidents. Eugene Sue or Victor Hugo never drew, in all their exciting scenes of foul Parisian life, a more terrible picture than that of the death of a woman, who, drunk and with profligate companions in a low den in London, was burned to death, none can exactly say how. Then there is a young wife almost murdered by her husband, who attempted, perhaps not without success, to commit suicide; another wife dying from the effects of the ferocity of her brutal husband; and a woman—not a wife, but living as a wife—who is also in all probability dying from a similar cause. A woman is seen for the last time in a boat with a man, on the Thames, at night. Her companion returns alone, and some days afterwards her body drifts ashore. What a theme for a skilful novelist—the slow gliding boat, the murky air, and the sluggish river for accessories. How she died is not known, but the story is a tragic one. A confession of murder, long hidden and painfully mysterious, and the secrets of the confessional, are involved in the road murder, than which nothing more strange or exciting has ever been written by Wilkie Collins or Miss Braddon.

The worst writers who deal in sensation stories, delight in the character of a hypocritical parson, who, under the guise of extreme sanctity, attempts the virtue of the women of his flock. Two such cases are reported among the incidents of the week, one being charged with endeavoring to corrupt his curate's wife and sister, another wife sending infamous letters to a young girl. There is a case of the most heartless seduction; and, in addition, the story of a woman who in a police court openly stated that she was determined to be revenged on a man she had formerly lived with, and that she helped to get up a case, and appeared as a witness, from no other motive. Melodramatic incidents of the strongest kind are found in the reports of acts of Italian brigandage, of massacres of peasants in a field, and setting up the head of one as a mark to be fired at.

Nor is the farcical element wanting. A farmer elopes with a curate's daughter, and his friends have a jollification to celebrate the event, and drink to the health of the gay rattlebrain. A young man writes to a young lady, asking for an interview, and telling her that, as he is looking out in another quarter, he should like to know her opinion of him at once. Is there anything more absurd in the broadest farce? Nor

is there less ludicrousness in the treatment of the too candid lover by the young lady's brothers, who kicked common sense into him, and washed out his conceit by dipping him in a trough of water. The extravagant hoax played on the people of a country town, who got up a grand public reception for a regiment of soldiers who were not to arrive, is another exceedingly farcical incident.

Is there not, in the record of one week's ordinary events, in one geographically small country, enough testimony to prove that what seems most unreal and absurd in fiction, may be paralleled in the incidents of actual life?

WANT TO STAY IN THE UNION.

Indignant rebels used to say, and some of them, we fear, to swear, that they would never live under the government or in the boundaries of the United States. They now appear to be of a different mind. They not only are disposed to live in the United States, but many of them seem to prefer the once hated Yankee part of the country. Large numbers, we hear, are already moving northward, and seeking houses and employment in the loyal states. These are probably pursuing a wise course. The negroes, who, according to the gloomy vaticinations of some, were to pour over the north like flights of ravens, are content to remain in the sunny south. Freedom, without migration, satisfies them.

We are not surprised, nor sorry, at the Northern proclivities of our Southern people. Their advantages will be promoted, we hope, by a closer view of the old free states, and by a better acquaintance with their people. Good will also result to the country from the mixing up and assimilation of its citizens. Northern men are, with their families, looking toward the summer climes of the South, as their future homes. The character of our people will become more unique, by the interchanges that will occur. The Union will be strengthened by it; sectional jealousies will die out; antipathies will coalesce into friendship; new relations will be formed; unity will be perpetuated.

We hope the people who come North or go South, will bear along with them enough good sense and virtue, to conduct themselves with propriety; to ease off as far as practicable, the embarrassments growing out of the recent hostility, and to live sober, righteous and godly lives, in their new homes.

THE DEACON'S NOSE.

Deacon Converse, of Hartford, Conn., is well known as being provided with an enormous handle to his countenance, in the shape of a huge nose; in fact, it was remarkable for its unusual length. On a late occasion, when taking up a collection in the church to which he belonged, as he passed through the congregation, every person to whom he presented the box seemed to be possessed by a sudden and uncontrollable desire to laugh. The deacon did not know what to make of it. He had often passed the box around before, but had witnessed no such effect. The deacon was fairly puzzled. The secret, however, leaked out. He had been afflicted for a day or two with a sore on his nasal appendage, and had placed a small piece of sticking plaster over it. During the morning of the day in question, the plaster had dropped off; the deacon picked up from the floor what he supposed was the plaster, and stuck it on again. But, alas for men who sometimes make great mistakes, he picked up instead, a piece of paper which the manufacturer of spool cotton paste on one end of every spool, and which read, "Warranted to hold out 200 yards."

WHERE WAS OPHIR?—Professor Max Muller, in his "Lectures on the Science of Language," takes up the question, which has so long been an open question, where the Ophir of the Scripture was situated. He confirms what has long been the prevailing opinion—that it was India; but he does this by an argument somewhat new and unique. He says: "A great deal has been written to find out where this Ophir was; but there can be no doubt that it was in India. The names of apes, peacocks, ivory, and almug-trees, (brought by Solomon's fleet from Ophir, are foreign words in Hebrew, as much as gutta-percha or tobacco are in English. Now, if we wished to know from what part of the world gutta-percha was first imported into England, we might safely conclude that it came from that country where the name gutta-percha formed part of the spoken language. If, therefore, we can find a language in which the names for peacock, apes, ivory and almug-tree, which are foreign to the Hebrew, are indigenous, we may be certain that the country in which that language was spoken must have been the Ophir of the Bible. That language is no other but Sanscrit."

A COURTIER OUTWITTING A TAILOR.

Charance was one of the pages of King Louis XIV., and officer in his body guard. In early life he had played some very strange pranks, but had always met with favor and protection from the king. He did many clever things, but one in particular in which he was engaged made everybody laugh. He had a long and handsome avenue to his chateau in Anjou, in which a peasant had a little house and garden which had stood in the same avenue long before the avenue was planted, and which neither Charance nor father could persuade the peasant to sell on any terms. This, observes Saint Simon, with proper disdain for so low a person, is a species of obstinacy which petty proprietors often show expressly to annoy people of condition. Charance pretended to let the matter drop; and for a long time said no more about it. At last, disgusted that a paltry cottage should intercept the sweep of his fine avenue, he conceived a scheme to get rid of it. It chanced that the owner of the cottage was a tailor, and worked at his trade whenever an opportunity offered. He lived alone, having neither wife nor children. One fine day Charance sent for him, and said that he was suddenly ordered up to Court to fill an office of great importance, that he was anxious to get there as soon as possible, and, as he had no liveries for his servants, he wished him to make them forthwith. The tailor agreed, and the bargain was struck on the spot. Charance stipulated, however, that to avoid unnecessary delay he should do the work at the chateau, and that if he promised not to quit the work until it was finished, he would pay him something over and above, besides board and lodging him. The tailor set to work on the spot. In the meantime, Charance got an architect to make an exact plan of the house and garden, the rooms, the furniture, and even the kitchen utensils. He then sent workmen to pull down the house, take away everything that was in it, and reconstruct it exactly as it had been, internally and externally, at some distance from the avenue, with every article in its accustomed place; and the garden exactly as it had been. They then cleared away all traces of it from the ground it originally stood upon, so that nobody could guess that it had ever been there at all. This was completed before the tailor, who was carefully watched, had finished his liveries. When the liveries were completed, Charance paid his man well, kept him to supper, and then dismissed him. The tailor set out for his home at nightfall. He found the avenue unusually long, thought he had gone too far, retraced his steps and looked about for the well-known trees near which his house stood. The night was dark, and he groped his way through them as well as he could; but was astonished to find his house nowhere. He passed the whole of the long night in this way. When day broke he saw that he had not gone astray; but that house and garden and all had disappeared, and he came to the conclusion that he was the sport of some evil spirit. After wandering about a good deal, he thought he perceived at a considerable distance from the avenue a cottage which resembled his own, though he knew that there never had been one in the same place. He approached it, examined it closer, and the more he did so, the more he was struck with the exact resemblance. He was curious to try whether the key he had in his pocket would fit the lock. It did fit the lock. He opened the door, walked in, and was thunder-struck on finding not only that the rooms were the same, but that every single article of furniture was the same, and precisely in the spot where he had left them. He was near fainting with fright; he fell on his knees and prayed, for he religiously believed that the demon had played him this trick. The following day, however, he learnt the truth from the mocking and laughing of the villagers to whom he told his story. He got furious, went with his complaint to the Intendant of the province, and insisted upon getting satisfaction; but he only got laughed at. The king heard the story and laughed more than anybody, and Charance had the avenue as he wished it. "Ah!" concludes St. Simon, "had Charance never done worse than what he did to the tailor, he would have preserved his reputation and his liberty."

—A young lady, being told that her lover was suddenly killed, exclaimed: "Oh, that splendid gold watch of his! Give it to me that I may remember him and cherish his dear memory."

—How long Eve, the first woman, lived, we do not know. It is a curious fact that in sacred history the age, death and burial of only one woman, Sarah the wife of Abraham, is distinctly noted. Woman's age ever since appears not to have been a subject for history or discussion.

INFLUENCE OF FEMALES.

It is better for you to pass an evening, once or twice a week, in a lady's drawing room, even though the conversation is slow, and you know the girl's songs by heart, than in a club, tavern, or the pit of a theatre. All amusements of youth to which virtuous women are not admitted, rely on it, are deleterious in their nature. All men who avoid female society have dull perceptions and are stupid, or have gross tastes, and revolt against what is pure. Your club swaggers, who are sucking the butts of billiard cues all night, call female society insipid. Poetry is uninspiring to a yokel; beauty has no charms for a blind man; music does not please a poor beast who does not know one tune from another; but, as a true epicure is hardly ever tired of water, sauce, and brown bread and butter, I protest I can sit for a whole night talking to a well-regulated kindly woman about her girl Fanny, or her boy Frank, and like the evening's entertainment. One of the great benefits a man may derive from woman's society is, that he is bound to be respectful to her. The habit is of great good to your moral men, depend upon it. Our education makes us the most eminently selfish men in the world. We fight for ourselves, we push for ourselves, we yawn for ourselves, we light our pipes and say we won't go out, we prefer ourselves and our ease; and the greatest benefit that comes to man from a woman's society is, that he has to think of somebody to whom he is bound to be constantly attentive and respectful.

—The Delhi (India) Gazette has the following: A Hindoo was afflicted with a series of family misfortunes—frequent intercessions to the gods proved unavailing for their relief, and another Hindoo, an employee on the railroad, was consulted as to what was to be done. He advised that the new deity which had recently come among them—the locomotive—should be appeased by the usual votive offerings. Accordingly, the other day, flowers, ghee, rice, &c., were prepared, and the man took his stand on the line waiting for the god. Down came the locomotive, the offering was presented—and the man was crushed to death.

—The Round Table, a miscellaneous weekly, which made a good reputation during the brief period of its existence, is about to be revived, in accordance with a pledge made by the publisher at the time of its temporary suspension.

—A reverend divine, who was but a so-so preacher, being called on accidentally for a sermon, asked a friend what he should preach about, to which the other coolly replied, "About five minutes."

—The huge necklaces which are now worn in Paris, even above high dresses, have all large crosses suspended from them. These crosses are in style somewhat similar to those worn formerly by the French peasants, and called *la Jennette*, the only difference being that they are a trifle flatter. The jet necklets have jet crosses barred vertically; with the gold necklets the crosses are made of dead gold studded with stars. Many ladies belonging to the higher circles are wearing large necklaces, the beads and crosses of which are made of sandalwood.

MORE TAXES.

A tax upon any one talking about the weather. Upon all amateurs on the flute, violin, and cornet, without exception.

Upon all after-dinner speeches over three minutes in length.

Upon all young ladies singing Italian song without understanding the language.

Upon all young ladies or gentlemen singing any song whatever, and, by their affected pronunciation rendering the words totally unintelligible.

All long wandering stories without any point to be heavily taxed.

A tax upon any one who objects to smoking in a railway carriage.

A tax of 100 per cent. on every one who won't lend you five dollars.

A tax upon every sermon that shall exceed fifteen minutes.

A tax upon mothers-in-law. Heavy.

—A German paper tells a curious story of the coolness of an opera singer. Her dress took fire at the foot lights and the audience rose and shrieked with affright. Beating four bars to allow for the interruption, she extinguished the flames, and then taking up the air where she had left it, sang it through calmly to the close.