

PRINCES OF BAD WRITING

(Tit-Bits.)

"Tell the gentleman who copied this despatch to write a larger, rounder hand, to join on the letters in the words and to use blacker ink." Thus wrote Lord Palmerston, who was himself the most careful and beautiful writer, and a great stickler for care and legibility in this respect, to the Duke of Argyll in 1851.

But his admonitions were evidently not taken to heart by parliamentarians for in 1867 when the House of Lords was in committee on the reform bill, the clerk of the House received an amendment, the writing of which was so bad that he could neither read it nor learn who had sent it. It afterwards transpired that Lord Lytton was the writer and that the amendment proposed the disfranchising of all persons unable to write.

Lord Curzon whatever he may be to day, was in his college days an extremely illegible writer, and he is perhaps the only man who has made money out of an absolutely unreadable "list."

One day when a young man, he wrote two letters—one in studied phrases to a relative—and the other containing some very sarcastic comments on the relative; to an intimate friend. Young Curzon unfortunately put the letters into the wrong envelopes and too late discovered that he had sent his candid criticisms, meant for his friend's eyes, to the relative, whom they concerned. He was perfectly horrified and awaited his relative's reply in fear and trembling. It came:—

"I have been unable to read a line of your scrawl," he said, "but suppose it's money you're after, so I enclose a check."

The illegibility of Horace Greeley's handwriting was notorious, but he had a formidable rival in Joseph Choate, a former ambassador to the court of St. James. Choate wished to obtain designs for a chimney piece for a new house he was having built from a certain artist, but being unable to get what he wanted, wrote to the builder telling him to cancel the order. Instead the workman immediately began the chimney piece. The builder has taken Choate's letter to be a rough sketch of it.

Among living authors the palm for bad writing has been awarded to Cunningham Graham, who some years ago wrote a letter for publication in one of the newspapers. The letter duly appeared, but in so mutilated a condition that the author wrote again remonstrating indignantly with the editor. The editor retorted by publishing the letter of remonstrance with the comment: "In the future, Mr. Graham will sit in a chair when writing and not on horseback, and use a pen instead of candle snuffers, we think we may be able to do him justice."

The late Joaquin Miller "the poet of the Sierras" can claim to be one of the worst writers among authors that ever lived. The secretary of a literary society received an invitation to attend a banquet but could not decipher a word. He wrote to the poet explaining his difficulty and asking if the poet in replying would merely place a cross at the bottom of his note if he was coming or a circle if he was not. Miller graciously complied with the request but his intentions had to remain a mystery until the night of the banquet, for it was impossible to tell whether

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her the mark at the bottom of his note was a cross or a circle.

From Germany comes the crowning instance of illegibility in writing. Johann Bacher, a musician of the last century spent fifteen years in compiling a history of the Viennese opera. When the work was finished he submitted it to the Imperial academy. In three months it was returned with an intimation that no member of the Academy could read it. Bacher tried to have it copied but no copyist would undertake the task after seeing the manuscript.

In despair Bacher decided to dictate the work, only to find that even to himself the handwriting was indecipherable. The thought of the wasted years of unceasing research work unhinged his brain and in a fit of depression he committed suicide.

ALL IN YOUR EYE

EVERY time I hear somebody or other say that they know a certain chap is crooked because he can't look 'em straight in the face when he's talkin' to 'em, it makes me hot under the collar. After knockin' about this big world for nigh onto eighty years I've quit drawin' foolish deductions and I sartainly do contend that "can't look ye straight in the eye" stuff won't stand washin', anyway. I might say, just here, that durlin' my little sojourn I've had my pockets picked twice and checks raised on me on sundry occasions, and every one of th' fellers who worked the trick looked me so straight in the eyes that I felt like apologisin' to 'em for bein' in the way.

When you get so all-fired clever that you kin tell a crook from an honest man by the way he meets your eye it's time that you was totin' your belongin's to some safety vault. Just about the time you think you know a piece of rock from a puff-ball is when you're goin' to get a stone-bruise, so don't you go pluppin' your faith to anythin' as flimsy as an eye-to-eye contest. Keep your optics on the feller's fingers and let him look any dinged way he pleases. It's much safer.

The Marvels of Nature

The stage-drivers in Yellowstone Park are bothered considerably by the foolish questions asked by their passengers, and often resort to satirical answers. Once a lady tourist, who seemed deeply interested in the hot springs, inquired:

"Driver, do these springs freeze over in winter?"

"Oh, yes, yes; a lady was skating here last winter and broke through and got her foot scalded."

Very Curious

Sandy came to Canada from a Highland village where the "post office" is included in a little general shop that sells, not only stamps, but bacon, and practically everything else you can think of.

The first day Sandy reached Montreal he walked into the post office there, and asked doubtfully:

"Will this be the post office?"

"Y-s," he was told.

"Fenny post affee funny post affee," said Sandy. "No home!"

HORSE, "WALK PLANK"

They Cross a Deep Ravine on a Single Log

The surefootedness of the mule is proverbial, but the feats of this animal are rivalled by those of the pack-horses used in the wild timbered regions of northern Canada and the Rocky Mountains. Laden though they are with "grub," as the surveyor terms provisions, these horses can swim wide rivers, ford shallow ones, or follow the men of the party over a single log, often no more than a foot in diameter, which bridges a deep narrow mountain gorge where a fall would mean instant death or worse. They can even follow the foresters through the sloughs, muskegs and wind-thrown brule characteristic of this northern forest, which is saying a good deal for a mere horse, for as one of the forest surveyors writes from the primeval forest near Lesser Slave Lake, "A forester needs to be here, besides all other professional titles, a real bushman, an axe-man and a jumper."

There were eight forest survey parties engaged in demarking forest and agricultural lands in the far west last summer, and their reports contain accounts of actual adventures which rival the most fictitious. The total area examined was about 11,000,000 acres, some on the rough slopes of the Rockies, some in the rocky areas of Manitoba and Saskatchewan and some in the low-lying and muskeg region of northern Alberta. Very little land was found fit for agriculture in these regions, and most of it is recommended as forest reserves. The present area of the Dominion Forest Reserves is 23,017,504 acres, or nearly 36,000 square miles. In comparison, the National Forests of the United States cover an area of 257,855 square miles, yet Canada is larger than the United States and contain larger land areas fit only for tree growth.

Cocoanuts in Ceylon

The natives of Ceylon eat one and a half million cocoanuts a day. There are sixty million coconut trees on this island, and the surplus production of nuts is chiefly used to make copra, the dried "meat" of the nut, which is a valuable source of vegetable oils. It is estimated that there are produced yearly 600,000 to 700,000 tons of copra, valued at sixty-five million dollars. One-quarter of the world's production comes from the Philippine Islands.

Edible Snails

So much greater is the demand for edible snails in France that the supply that artificial snails have been invented, the only genuine portions of which are the shells.

Measuring Spoons

For the housewife there has been invented a set of three measuring spoons of different sizes, fastened together at the handles with a rivet.

No Orphan Asylums

Australia avoids orphan asylums by sending parentless children to private families, which are paid for their care until they are 14 years old.

Push Button

An ordinary electric push button can be used as a floor push by mounting it under a floor and using a long nail through the floor to press it.

Without a Brain

Two eminent German physicians have reported the case of a child that lived until its fourth year without a brain.

FOR SUCCESSFUL FARMING

(Canadian Courier)

Success in farming in Ontario depends, so far as the State is concerned, on three great factors: agricultural education, freedom from communicable disease, and good roads. A pleasant and profitable industry given these three, farming should be for an industrious people. Yet Ontario is lamentably weak in all these factors.

Ontario has no consolidated rural schools as Manitoba has. It has no rural high schools as have New Brunswick and Alberta. It has no textbook on agriculture as have British Columbia, Manitoba and Nova Scotia. It is doing nothing to educate the farmers' children for farming life except by a little desultory, narrow-based nature study.

Something has been done to eliminate bovine tuberculosis and to prevent its transfer from animals to human beings—but mainly through private effort. The poorer farmer would object to stringent laws on this subject and the department only follows public sentiment, never leads. Such improved methods as are in vogue are due to the teaching in the O.A.C., and the preaching in the farm journals.

As for good roads, the Ontario attempts to produce them are one large joke. No one in Canada ever built a road four feet deep, as they do in the New England States and in Great Britain. Our good roads are only surfaced with iron and go to pieces every spring. We have not overcome the evil influences of Jack Frost. Nor have we learned the art of continuous repair. The commission which reported last week advises an expenditure in Ontario of thirty million dollars in fifteen years, under a Central Highways department. The advice is excellent, but the method of building is the thing. If new methods are not adopted, the money would be wasted.

A NEW LIGHT

When the wireless invades the polar regions:

"Bless me, if that isn't a new constellation in the heavens!"

"Nix, professor; that's a wireless message frozen in transit."

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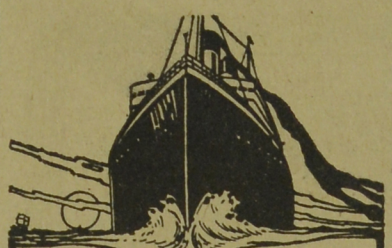
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A stable costing \$30,000 begun by the late J. Howard Ford, has just been completed at Goshen, N.Y., adjoining the Orange County Driving Park. It is understood that Mr. Ford's brother will continue to maintain the historic Stony Ford stud and training stable as well. William Hodson will have charge of Lord Allen, 2:11 and the Stony Ford trotters this year.

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