

not deceived him; the head of the hammer was buried in the earth, within a foot of the wall, against which, no doubt, the haft had struck as it hurtled past.

"I've no' reached the wall—I ken'd that weel," said Gordon; "but it's no' a bad cast, it's no' a bad cast; it's a gude foot further than I ever yet pitched the weepen, a gude foot; the thought o' the Gordons nerved my arm. Now, Captain, it's your turn; will you mend that throw, think ye?"

"I'll try," said Harry.

We went slowly back to the casting point, Harry swinging the hammer backwards and forwards as he walked along. As soon as he reached the spot he faced about, raised the weapon on high, swung it twice round his head, and sent it whizzing from his grasp.

There was neither effort nor attitude in his manner of delivery, and I confess my heart sunk within me, for I fully expected to see the hammer descend half way between us and the wall. A cloud passed before the moon as the missile left his hand, and we lost sight of it. We listened eagerly for the sound of its fall, but could hear nothing. Not a word was spoken for fully a minute; we stood staring at each other in speechless surprise.

"Hae ye thrown the weepen intil the moon, Captain?" exclaimed the bushier at length; "for not a bit o' it has come to earth again!"

Harry smiled, and took another whiff of his cigar.

"Let's go and look for it," he said.

And we did look for it: for ten minutes we searched in every possible and impossible place between us and the wall, but all to no purpose; the hammer had vanished from the face of the earth, and, for aught we could tell, might still be revolving on its axis through illimitable space.

Meanwhile, Harry was sitting on the wall, watching, but not aiding our quest.

I straightened my back, which was half broken with stooping. "Where have you thrown the thing to, Harry? and why do you sit grinning and smoking at your ease there, instead of helping us look for it?" I said.

"I believe he has got it in his pocket," said Rington; "he never threw it at all, but passed it, by sleight-of-hand, down his sleeve."

Harry laughed, and slid off the wall into the yard. "Suppose you try this side?" he said.

"This side!" Such an idea had never entered our heads.

We scrambled after him, without saying a word. He was standing by a heap of "trash," which, the reader doubtless is aware, is the term applied to sugar canes with the sugar squeezed out of them. "I fancy it must be somewhere here," he said, kicking the trash about as he spoke. We never offered to help him; but we stood round, gaping and wondering whether he was in jest or earnest.

"Ah! I thought so; here it is. I thought I heard it fall about here." He stooped down and cleared a small space with his hands.

There was the hammer, sure enough, embedded in the trash, the moonbeams playing on the haft

as it stuck bolt upright. The softness of the bed into which it had fallen had completely deadened all sound; and, moreover, the distance he had thrown it had served to deceive us. We never listened for any sound out there. Even I, who knew his immense strength so well, was astonished at this exhibition of it.

Jim Gordon's face was a study for a painter. Surprise, admiration, and disgust, were strangely and strongly portrayed on his harsh features; but I must do him the justice to say that the two first feelings speedily banished the last. He looked at Harry, then at the hammer, four or five times in rapid succession, as though to assure himself that facts were as they seemed; then, stretching out his hand, he grasped Harry's and shook it warmly.

"Nae one likes to be beat," he said, "'specially at his ain game, and wi' his ain weepen; but that feelin's gone by, as richt it should, and I hae great pleasure in shakin' the han' o' the strongest man an' the maist skilfu' wi' the hammer fra' this spot to John o' Groat's; they'd no match you throw through the hale o' Scotland! I wish Sandy Macdonald (whoever that might be) had seen you throw; I'd gie a pund Scot he war here the noo. Hech, sirs! the chiel would ha' gane cleen daft wi' wonderment an' deesmay: he passed me by twa feet lang syne, tho' I doubt he'd no' do sae the noo; but he could never match yon cast, not by twa feet twice told, an' mair, an' mair than that!"

Jim Gordon was so delighted at the picture of big Sandy's ideal defeat, and consequent disgust, that he seemed entirely to forget his own. Sandy Macdonald had evidently been a youthful competitor in the athletic arena, who had proved more than a match even for the stalwart Gordon.

Harry thanked the bushier for his friendly warmth, which made his fingers tingle, or I am much mistaken, and he stooped down to pick up the hammer.

"Dinna move it, sir! dinna move it!" cried Gordon.

"I must mark the spot, 'deed must I. Mac, lad, rin intil the hoose, an' bring the mallet and ane o' the stoutest pegs: rin, man. I'll jest step the deestance while the chiel is awa," he added.

He set his heel to the hammer, and strode to the wall.

"Twa yards, an' a gude foot over—and a foot the ither side, an' the wall itsel' is a foot wide—that makes nine feet. Nine feet beyond the langest cast ever I made, or, for the matter o' that, ever will make: it was a wonderful throw!"

Mac now rejoined us with the mallet, and a long iron spike painted white; *this the bushier drove into the ground where the head of the hammer lay, and there, no doubt, it is to this day.*

REPORTERS AND SHORTHAND WRITERS.

THE reporting profession is divided into two separate and distinct branches—reporters and shorthand writers.

Shorthand writers are those gentlemen who take what is literally a verbatim note of proceedings,

and write them out without venturing, for the sake even of grammatical considerations, to alter a single word. Shorthand writers are many of them perfect marvels in the way of rapid writing: the facility and accuracy with which they will jot down word for word of the most rapid, indistinct, and troublesome of speakers, is astounding to the general public, who know next to nothing of the difficulties of the task, while even to those who, like ourselves, have written shorthand for a long series of years, this peculiar power seems to have a touch of the magical about it. But, strange to say, the possession of this power by no means necessarily implies any extraordinary amount of intellectual ability. On the contrary, incredible feats of rapidity and accuracy have been performed by men of but shallow pretensions to general ability, and who, considering the advantages which the very exercise of the profession affords for the acquisition of useful knowledge, must be reckoned as hopelessly obtuse. With them, shorthand writing is little else than the exhibition of a large measure of mechanical dexterity, with the smallest modicum of mental effort; and hence, if a word be lost, or indistinctly uttered, the chances are remote of its being correctly supplied. On the other hand, some shorthand writers are men of great mental power, of varied acquirements, of a finely cultivated ear, a quick eye, and digits of wondrous suppleness. With them, the stenographic art attains its highest pitch of perfection. So acute and finely cultivated are their ears, trained by lengthened practice, and aided by intellectual powers of no mean order, that while you will hardly hear half the words that a speaker is uttering, the shorthand writer sitting next to you jots down every single word. We have ourselves been witness to some all but incredible instances of this—instances all but incredible even to us, after some ten or a dozen years of active professional reporting. Another faculty is also cultivated to a fine point, and that is the power of remembering and distinguishing voices. An experienced parliamentary reporter will often be able to recognise, while stretched at full length on the seat in the gallery waiting for his turn, the voices of twenty or thirty of the members whom he is most frequently in the habit of hearing.

Shorthand writers frequent the courts of law, and there they find the larger portion of their employment. The *ipsissima verba* of judicial deliverances, and of the evidence on which they are based, are thus preserved for the use and information of parties concerned. Here, too, are some of the most difficult of all living speakers for verbatim reporting—men who are the terror of the tyro and the torment of the more experienced shorthand writer. The nature of the work, too, renders the task the more anxious, for a hair-splitting difference is often all that exists between a plaintiff and a defendant—all that has led to the litigation and expense which concludes with the judicial deliverance—every single word of which of course will be read with the most eager interest by the parties concerned, and pondered with that patience and attention which self-interest alone can secure.

It makes a wondrous difference to the shorthand

writer, particularly where the speakers are at all obscure, or more than ordinarily rapid, if he should happen to be conversant with the subject in hand. We may safely affirm that a third-rate shorthand writer, familiar with the matter in hand, is placed on a par with a first-rate shorthand writer who knows nothing of it. This is true of all reporting, and more particularly so of shorthand writing, where every word must be taken, and where you cannot apply the maxim that mere reporters have and act on: "What you can't *make out*, *leave out*."

But shorthand writers by no means confine themselves to the courts of law: they are engaged in a vast variety of other matters, and notably in committees of the House of Commons, and cases of arbitration. In the committees of the House of Commons there is always an official shorthand writer from the establishment of the Messrs. Gurney; and his duty is to take every word of both question and answer, and to reproduce everything said with the most scrupulous verbatim accuracy. In this way are got up those lively and entertaining productions, the reports of select committees, known as blue books, which sometimes extend to a very enormous size. The general character of their contents is such that the very name of a blue book is synonymous with all that is dull, tedious, long-drawn-out, and incapable of being perused with profit or with pleasure. But, in spite of the popular prejudice on the subject, it is a fact that these reports are very often perfect mines of valuable and unique information. If any one gifted with a light and pleasing style were to make it his business to explore these blue mountains, and reproduce, in a readable form, what he finds there, a very large amount of useful knowledge would be promulgated which at present remains in the hands of the few. But this is by the way.

Shorthand writers also find employment in arbitration cases, and in reporting lectures and sermons. It has become the habit of some public companies, who do not admit the representatives of the press to their meetings, to have, nevertheless, an official reporter present, who takes a shorthand note of all that transpires. These notes are transcribed on foolscap, and, as they accumulate, are bound up in volumes. The advantages of this plan are so obvious that they need not be pointed out. The shorthand writer's productions are rarely published, except in committees of the House of Commons, when they are issued, as I have stated, in the form of blue books, and in a few of the more important trials, when they are printed in the pamphlet form.

The reporter, on the other hand, is connected with the newspapers, and all that he writes is, as a rule, intended to be printed. It is true that both branches are sometimes united in one person; but the reporter, properly so called, is distinguished from the shorthand writer properly so called, both by his connection with the press, and by the fact that his reports are rarely *verbatim*, but are condensed according to the circumstances of the case, so as to economize the space of the paper. A reporter's duties are varied and numerous, especially in connection with one of the great daily journals. Meetings of all sorts have to be reported—some at

full length, and others in mere paragraphs. One day it is a charity for the blind, the deformed, the incurable, orphans, widows, governesses, decayed grocers, cheesemongers, fishmongers, poulterers, or furniture brokers. Next day, with the fragrance of the good deeds of the charitable and the gratitude of the distressed perfuming the atmosphere which surrounds you with odours the most grateful, you plunge into the annual gathering of the promoters of the Great Wheal Blackhole Copper Mining and Smelting Company. Here the clamour for filthy lucre, the charges of deceit and trickery, the wily answers of the party in power, and the cunning manœuvres to eject them by those who wish to take their places, show you a totally different aspect of human nature. You are expected, of course, not to be so deplorably ignorant as not to know the history of the Company, and the struggles which have taken place at various annual meetings for the last ten years between Wiggins the independent shareholder, who "goes in" for economy, and Stiggins the extravagant secretary, who (as of course you are aware) is the chairman's own son-in-law, which accounts for his appointment, and also for his keeping his place so long. If you believe what these folk say of each other, there must on both sides be persons of a somewhat indifferent reputation.

Next day a concert, at Willis's Rooms or Hanover Square, engages your attention; and you are expected by some people to know each particular excellence of both the vocalists and instrumentalists there present, and to give a discriminating criticism of whatever takes place. You are to know the productions of Mozart, Handel, Beethoven, Bellini, Mendelssohn, Rossini, Verdi, and a host of others; to make a comparative estimate of their merits, and to give a sensible opinion as to whether the *débutante* or *beneficiare* on the occasion gave a faithful rendering, or otherwise, of the piece she attempted. You go home, regretting that your knowledge of musical science and your familiarity with the great productions are so limited. You have picked up a smattering of the subject, and had the advantage of extracting information at first hand, perhaps from the performers themselves. You resolve (if young and green) that you will study music, so as to be more at home when you next attend a concert.

Then a gallery of paintings will claim your attention, and the excellencies of the several artists must be noticed with more or less detail. All leading productions must be especially pointed out. Here you meet a totally different class of men, though, as far as you are concerned, in many respects similar. They talk to you about the great masters, about modern art, as if your whole life (like theirs) had been devoted to nothing else. Of course you have made up your mind as to the comparative merits of Herring and Rosa Bonheur in the matter of horses; if you have not, you ought. You have also heard about the last portraits and landscapes of the Royal Academicians. You know who comes nearest Landseer in animals, and who is worthy to be compared with Lance for his fruits. A pang of sorrow moves your breast that you have

not cultivated painting, and that you are not able to produce something worthy of general approbation. You make up your mind to pay more attention to the fine arts for the future, having picked up a great many interesting and useful facts in the course of the day's visit.

Next day the annual meeting of an insurance company requires to be reported. You must now put away all thoughts of Titian, of Rubens, of Rembrandt, of Claude, of Reynolds, of Paul Veronese, of Herring, Bonheur, Lance, Landseer, and other masters of the pencil. You must cast aside Mozart, Verdi, Beethoven, Handel, Mendelssohn, Auber, Rossini, Bellini, Balfe, and all their world-renowned productions. You must dismiss from your minds Jenny Lind, Sims Reeves, Novello, Sainton-Dolby, and all their enchanting strains. You must address yourself to a totally new class of facts, and you now require to know the average duration of life at a given age, and the position of that particular company with respect to its stability and income and investments, as compared with *other* leading offices. Of course you know all about the Carlisle and Northampton tables, and are aware of the actuaries' or experience table, and also of the "English Life Tables" by the celebrated Dr. Farr. You know all about premiums and policies, and bonuses and dividends, capital, rates of interests, commission to agents, working expenses, new business, and renewal premiums. You know what proportion of claims should fall due, and what is the value of the profit obtained by selection. You know the whole dispute between ancient and modern offices; what is the value of a reversionary bonus, or of a deferred annuity at any given age. You know the names of the secretaries of the leading life companies, and who are the editors of the insurance periodicals, as well as the amount of the office income which ought to be held in reserve to meet claims under policies, and you end the day with a feeling of amazement that comparatively so few avail themselves of the advantages which life assurance offers.

In political movements you find a great variety of opinions, and each particular project offers fresh facts and fresh faces. In religious matters, too, the diversities are endless; but yet, if your work is to go smoothly, you must know at least the elementary facts in all these cases, or else you will be liable to misreport individuals, and can hardly fail to get into trouble. Notices of scientific and mechanical matters, together with a host of patented inventions, extend still further the sphere of your labours, and increase most materially the demands which are made upon your general information. One day you inspect a *steam gun*, next day the site of a new dock, then you describe the laying of the foundation stone of a church or chapel, or corn or coal exchange, or the turning of the first sod of a railway. A daily paper is a great compromise; a popular singer, a popular actor, and a popular preacher, hold in its columns much the same place relatively; for it is a reflex, not merely of the religious world, the artistic world, the musical world, the sporting world, or the scientific world, but of the entire social fabric, and

every class must have its share of space and of attention. These contrasts are sometimes singularly striking; but we never knew one more so than occurred to the present writer on the Monday after the last Christmas day, which fell upon a Sunday. In the morning he went to Dr. Fletcher's chapel, Finsbury Circus, where that venerable divine was addressing some 4000 Sabbath school children and teachers. When they lifted up their infant voices in the praise of God, it was indeed a sight and a sound that can never be forgotten. It was a glorious spectacle for the well-wisher of his species, to behold these thousands of youthful minds receiving religious impressions, which would serve to form not merely their own characters, but to influence materially the generation which is to follow us. In the evening he was sent to an equally spacious edifice, an equally crowded and enthusiastic audience; but, alas! of how opposite a character! It was one of the great Shoreditch theatres, where one of those ridiculous and unmeaning exhibitions known as "pantomimes" had been got up at immense expense, for the amusement of the particular section of society which frequent such places. On these occasions every reporter must go somewhere, so that the notices of all the theatres may appear simultaneously. In the morning there were songs of praise, and all was calm and dignified, chaste and scriptural: in the evening the comic song, the indecent ballet, shouts and laughter, beer and gin in the galleries, and in the pit husky voices calling out, "oranges, ginger beer, bill of the play, house bill to-night, sir?" The minister and teachers in the morning, the lessee and actors in the evening, morality and immorality, the hopeful and the dangerous classes, the future christians and the future criminals!

Such is society, and the reporter sees all sides of it; of each, to be efficient, he must have a good general knowledge; and when he goes where his sympathies do not take him, he must observe a judicious silence, or turn the conversation to a neutral topic. One evening we have "dined in black and white" with a party of noblemen and gentlemen at one of the great taverns, and the next night have been sent to report the complaints of a body of poor half-starved Spitalfields weavers, assembled in a dilapidated skittle alley in their own neighbourhood, with a gaunt and hungry look, with little work and poor pay, capable of subsisting—the whole body of them—for a month or more upon the money spent for the single meal of the same number of fellow creatures the evening before!

These are contrasts that give a man of feeling many a heart-ache. But the subject is too painful to be pursued. The result of all this is, that an intelligent and observant reporter is often a man of vast and varied general information. No class of men have a greater variety of topics brought under their notice.

As to reporters themselves, they are as diverse as the duties they are called on to perform, not merely in abilities and in manners, but in dress, habits, social position, and appearance. Some are men with university honours; others are innocent

both of the ancient and the modern languages, and possess only a limited familiarity with the best productions in their native tongue. Some are *au fait* at two or three subjects, and not to be relied on in any except in such matters; while there are others who come straight from the opera, and write a review of a volume of sermons, or a three-volume novel, or perchance translate from the "Moniteur" the latest news of the French capital. These are the "general utility" men, as they are sometimes facetiously called by those whose genius is not quite so versatile. Most men, however, have their speciality. One does reviewing, another the musical, a third the theatrical, a fourth the opera, a fifth scientific notices, a sixth general business meetings, a seventh ecclesiastical and university intelligence, an eighth benevolent and charitable institutions. The higher ranks of the profession are devoted to parliamentary reporting, and to special works in various parts. But we must stop here. Of "the Reporter in the British Senate" we have often spoken in these pages; special reporters and newspaper correspondents we must leave for separate papers.

ADVENTURE AMONG THE HUDSON'S BAY FUR-HUNTERS.

OUR brigade of four boats lay moored on the banks of the great Saskatchewan; which river, taking its rise amid the rugged steepes of the Rocky Mountains, flows through the great prairies and woodlands of the interior of Rupert's Land, and discharges into Lake Winnipeg.

The men were ashore at breakfast. On a low gravelly point that jutted out into the stream, smoked three large fires, over which stood three rudely-constructed tripods, from which depended three enormous tin kettles. Robbiboo was the delectable substance contained in these kettles. Pemmican is a compound of dried buffalo meat, melted fat, and hair—the latter being an accidental ingredient. Mix pemmican with flour and water, boil and stir till it thickens, and the result will be "robbiboo."

Around these kettles stood, and sat, and reclined, and smoked, about thirty of the wildest and heartiest fellows that ever trod the wilderness. Most of them were French Canadians; many were half-breeds; some were Orkneymen, and one or two were the copper-coloured natives of the soil. But Canadians, Scotch, and savages alike, were servants of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company; they were all burned to the same degree of brownness by the summer sun; they all laughed and talked, and ate robbiboo more or less—generally more; and they were all clad in the picturesque habiliments of the north-west *voyageur*. A loose-fitting capote, with a hood hanging down the back; a broad scarlet or parti-coloured worsted sash round the waist; a pair of cloth leggings, sometimes blue, sometimes scarlet, occasionally ornamented with bright silk or bead-work, and gartered at the knees; a pair of chamois-leather-like mocassins made of deer skin; a round bonnet, or a red nightcap, or a nondescript