

THE WEEKLY DIRECTORY.

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A NEW PROPHECY.

Whether there is any difference between prophecy and well directed imagination, if, indeed, imagination can be directed at all, is a question we do not propose settling here. But anyway, there have been imaginations that turned out to be prophecies. So, an imagination that comes true is thereafter termed a prophecy. A class in English Composition was once asked to write an imaginary story. The purpose of the instructor was to ascertain the power of imagination which each member of the class possessed. One member of the class laid his story in the year 6,000 A. D. Upon the arrival of this distant Century the Atlantic Ocean had gone dry and the American continents were vast oceans joined by the strait of Panama. The bottom of the Atlantic was a vast fertile continent studded with cities of marvelous cleanliness and beauty, and the most astonishing discoveries had been made by science. Fuel was being manufactured from the air, and also a thousand and one other, now unbelievable, conveniences. Mind reading was as prevalent as the reading of books now. Thus the hiding places of deception and other forms of sin were becoming as scarce as the hiding places for game in the most densely populated parts of Europe to-day. The Pacific Ocean was one vast succession of broken mountain ranges and lakes and swamps. The power that drives the planetary worlds in their orbits had been discovered and was the principal power used in travel, manufacturing and all kinds of domestic life.

Whether the student who wrote such a story is the author of the following prophecy in Harper's Weekly for October 22, 1910, I do not know, but it sounds very much like him. Here it is: "Contracts were signed yesterday by the New York, Saturn and Milky Way Transportation Company for the construction of two new radium airships accommodating 8,000 first class passengers, each to ply between New York City and all cerulean parts from the Polar Star to the Southern Cross. They are required to have a speed capacity of 8,000,000 knots per hour and are expected to be ready for traffic on or about January 1, 2912. The vessels are to be built by the Maritan Radium Car and Ship Corporation, at a cost of \$3,000,000 apiece.

A new series of elevators has just been installed in the Gridiron Suburban Home Building in the Borough of Philadelphia,

of Greater Manhattan. At present they are working a little stiffly, but within two or three weeks are expected to make the round trip from the cellar to the roof in five hours. Their installation has been made necessary by the recent addition of five hundred more stories to this architectural wonder, in order to accommodate the enormous increase in this deservedly popular enterprise. Villa plots on the upper floors of the building are selling at two thousand dollars a square foot.

The House of Representatives yesterday passed to its third reading the bill providing for the extension of the current day from forty-eight to ninety-six hours. The Solar Light Trust has fought the measure tooth and nail, from the beginning, but it has been a losing battle all along the line. At the same time, it is expected that when the bill reaches the Senate something will be done for its relief, possibly by an amendment providing that its contract remuneration for light furnished be regulated by meter, and not paid for as at present, on the diem basis.

An interesting paper was read last night before the Dramatic-Historical Society of Boston, by Mrs. Sadie Hickendrooper Jones, advancing the theory that the Classic Comedy, "The Merry Widow," hitherto supposed to have been the work of William Shakespeare, was really written by Mr. G. Ibsen-Adei, a playwright of some distinction in Norway, in the latter part of the middle ages just before the Ethiopian ascendancy. Mrs. Jones paper was received with considerable enthusiasm by even the most conservative members of the Society, but rather for the daring of its arguments than for any convincing quality in her thesis. The general feeling is against her view, and as for ourselves, frankly we do not take any stock in the lady's arguments at all. It is as clear to our minds from the internal evidence of the lines that the "Merry Widow" was written by the same hand that wrote the "Texas Steer," which is undeniably Shakespeare's.

The Allied Libraries of New York, Boston, and Chicago report a generous gift from an unknown benefactor of ten thousand disks for the novelophone, containing the complete works of Victor Hugo, including his famous "Nicholas Carter Stories;" the best of William Makepeace Dickens, including "Mabel the Cloak-Maker's Model," Susan the Sewing Girl, and others; and the Rollo Books, said to have been written by Gustave Flambert, a French writer of distinction, in collaboration with that famous American humorist, Samuel Johnson, whose relaxation from literature back in the nineteenth century, or possibly it was the twentieth, took the unusual form of the prize-ring. We understand that upon the first presentation of these records at the Reading Stadium in Boston over thirty thousand listeners attended, and that they were completely enthralled by the lofty sentiments so graciously expressed by these authors of a well-nigh forgotten past."

Although this is a new prophet thus giving us a glimpse of the distant future, yet it is not a new form of composition. Dean Swift used this same style of composition in much that he wrote, and especially in that part of "Gulliver's Travels" which gives an account of the visit to the Flying Island. In response to Gulliver's request that the authorities call

up some of the spirits of the departed, a feat they frequently indulged in, a number of the interpreters of Homer were first called up, and finally Homer himself was called for, and on suddenly appearing in the midst of his critics was not recognized by a single one of them. Another book written in a kindred style is Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward, 2,000," which has had almost as wide a reading as "Gulliver's Travels," and perhaps will be read as long as the latter has been.

The reason that such writing appeals to the average intellect is on the same basis on which the appeal of fortune-telling and phrenology rests. We have a personal interest in what the seer discovers ahead of us on life's path. So also are we interested in what the jesting prophet half seriously intimates is to be revealed by coming centuries.

A LITTLE STORY OF REAL LIFE.

The Coveted Prince Albert.

(By Belle Kant in Everybody's).

Solomon Cohen ran his hands fiercely through his shock of gray hair and stormed back and forth in the dormitory. Through a veil of tobacco-smoke the two old men on the sofa watched him indifferently, but Mrs. Marks, the matron, raised a silence-imploing hand against his harangue.

"My brother-in-law's cousin is a director of this home," he shouted hoarsely. "I will see that he hears about the way you have divided the things. He has a say about them, surely, if any has. If I don't get that Prince Albert coat—if I don't—you'll see. There will be trouble, Mrs. Marks!" He thrust his bullet-head forward aggressively, and, his breath and bluster giving out, sank into a chair.

"You can't deny that we have an equal right to it," said Hyman Mendel, one of the occupants of the sofa, after impressively clearing his throat. He was a lean stooping old man with a long, white, patriarchal beard. His bald head shone like ivory. "David and I have a right, too, and Daniel Stern—peace be upon him!—if he were alive could also claim it. The bundle of clothes was sent to his room for distribution. You got the shoes and hat that you wanted, and David the underclothes, and I the knitted jacket. But that"—he pointed to the frock-coat that the matron held, a garment frayed at the edges and plentifully besprinkled with spots, but smooth and satiny still with the gloss of expensive broadcloth—"truly, Mrs. Marks, you know that I have need of it."

"Yes, yes, I understand," the matron cried impatiently. "But if I give it to you, hear the fuss that Mr. Cohen will make."

"Of course, Mr. Mendel, who walks to the synagogue with Mrs. Marks every Sabbath morning, must get the best always from the cloth that are sent here," Solomon sneered. "But if it is given to him Mrs. Marks, I go and tell my brother-in-law's cousin."

David Hertz, the little hunchback, was the only one in the room who had not spoken. From beneath a black skull-cap his mournful, childlike, brown eyes looked wistfully at the coat. How often he had seen just such, about the prosperous forms of the pillars of the synagogue. No member of the Home for Aged Hebrews possessed so fine a garment. That was why Solomon and Hyman were wrangling so for its ownership. David had no hope;

he had not put in any claim against the stronger opponents; but he could not help wondering earnestly if beneath its voluminous folds his deformity might not be less noticeable.

"When Mrs. Marks was re-lected it was on account of her well-known justice and ability," Hyman went on pacifically, striving to fan a spark of independence in the depths of the matron's mind. "She has the trust and confidence of the president and the directors, and she sees fit to bestow the coat where—"

"Nonsense!" snapped Solomon. "That is what you said when she gave you Daniel Stern's silver-headed cane."

"But you already had one cane." "That has nothing to do with it. And this I will have! It can be made to fit me if the buttons are moved."

Hyman turned to the matron and spread out his hands appealingly. "Now, Mrs. Marks, does he speak the truth? Is not the coat almost as if it were made for me, while he looks like a—like a—like an over-stuffed sausage in it?"

"Sausage, indeed!" Solomon retorted. "It hangs around you as it would around a stick. I have the figure to wear a Prince Albert, but you—you look in it like a sausage-skin which is emptied of all the meat. I—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Cohen," David here interrupted gently. "Here are three collars, number seventeens, that Mrs. Marks gave me. I can't wear them—they are too big. If you could use—"

"Yes," Solomon ungraciously accepted them. He was gathering his forces for another word-war with Hyman. Mrs. Marks looked helplessly about. There seemed no avenue of escape, and two determined men noted her every movement. Finally, plucking up courage, she went to the door and hung the coat on a neutral hook.

"I must see about dinner," she said, heedless of their remonstrances. "In the morning I will decide which of you is to have it—not until then."

The late afternoon shadows crowded the

Dr. J. H. Brooks.

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