

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Interesting Anecdotes of the Great Novelist, Who was Born Just One Hundred Years Ago

One day in 1818 an English woman was much troubled because her husband's hat fitted the head of her seven-year-old nephew. She hastened to an eminent physician. She feared that something was radically wrong. The physician re-assured her, saying that the head was large, but that it had a good deal in it. The truth of his words was proved nearly fifty years later, when the brain in that large head was found to weigh fifty-eight and half ounces.

The large head belonged to William Makepeace Thackeray, destined to become one of the world's greatest novelists, who was born in India, July 18, 1811. Owing to the death of his father, he was sent to England when he was six years old. There he grew to manhood and did his life-work. And there the centenary of his birth will be celebrated this summer.

Little is known of the life of the boy William till he entered the famous old Charterhouse, a school for boys in the heart of London. Of his experience there we have a few glimpses through letters written to relatives by the student, and through "Pendennis," one of the novels that made the name of Thackeray famous. In the experiences of the boy Pendennis, it is believed, the author gave reminiscences of his own boyhood, especially of his school life.

In School Days.
In one of his letters this reference is made to his school life:

"I really think I am becoming terribly industrious, though I can't get Dr. Russell to think so. It is so hard, when you endeavor to work hard, to find your attempts nipped in the bud.... There are but 370 in the school. I wish there were only 369."

Dr. Russell was the original of the portrait of the teacher in "Pendennis," who said to the hero:

"Pendennis, sir, your idleness is incorrigible and your stupidity beyond example. You are a disgrace to your school and to your family, and I have no doubt will prove so in after-life to your country.... Miserable trifler! A boy who construes 'de,' 'and,' instead of 'de,' 'but,' at sixteen years of age, is guilty not merely of folly and ignorance and dulness inconceivable, but of crime, of filial ingratitude, which I tremble to contemplate. A boy, sir, who does not learn his Greek play cheats the parent who spends money for his education. A boy who cheats his parents is not very far from robbing or forging upon his neighbor. A man who forges on his neighbor pays the penalty of his crime at the gallows. And it is not such a one that I pity (for he will be deservedly cut off), but his maddened and heartbroken parents, who are driven to a premature grave by his crimes, or, if they live, drag on a wretched and dishonored old age. Go on, sir, and I warn you that the very next mistake that you make shall subject you to the punishment of the rod."

Perhaps there was some justification for the doctor's faultfinding. Those that knew Thackeray in school testified that he was not very studious. He was bright, and he went through with his work as easily as possible. His copy of Horace, preserved for many years, was said to be "clean, beautifully clean, unquarred, unsoiled—what second-hand dealers describe as 'in fine condition.'"

However, books were not neglected for the sake of sport. The boy seemed to care nothing for games. He was fonder of writing poetry than of playing cricket. He enjoyed looking on as others played, but play seemed to have been left out of his make-up.

Yet in spite of his tendency to slight his lessons he was popular with the teachers, and in spite of his distaste for sport he was popular among his companions. Nobody could help liking him, he was such a jolly companion, such a lover of fun. Whether he was exercising his satirical gifts at the expense of some teacher or fellow student, or writing a take-off on a popular poem, he was irresistible.

His first literary effort of which there is any record was a parody on a popular sentimental poem, "Violets! deep-blue violets." He began his effusion, "Cabbages! bright-green cabbages!" The third stanza of "Violets" read:

"And when the grave shall open for me—

I care not how soon that time may be—
Never a rose shall bloom on my tomb;
It breathes too much of hope and bloom;
But let me have there the meek regret
Of the bending and deep-blue violet."

For this sentimental twaddle the schoolboy substituted:

"And when the dinner-bell sounds for me—
I care not how soon that time may be—
Carrots shall never be served on my cloth;
They are far too sweet for a boy of my broth;
But let me have there a mighty mess
Of smoking hot beef and cabbages."

As a schoolboy Thackeray was a spendthrift: money burned a hole in his pocket. He himself told of the sorrow caused by one bit of extravagance. When he was twelve years old, he was to go to his mother's for the holidays. His tutor gave him five shillings for himself and twenty-five shillings to be handed to his step-father. His own money was spent at once without a thought for the needs of the journey. Then came mealtime. He was hungry. He knew he ought not to touch his step-father's money. But he spent fourpence for food and felt miserable all the way home. Once there he lost no time in confessing and seeking forgiveness.

Thackeray very soon realized that his besetting sins were idleness and luxury, and he tried to overcome them. Only a year or two before his death he said to a friend: "I never take up my pen without an effort. I work only from necessity. I never walk without seeing some pretty useless thing which I want to buy. Sometimes I pass the same shop window every day for months, and resist the temptation, and think I am safe; then comes the day of weakness, and I yield."

Thackeray was nineteen when he went to Cambridge. He did not take his degree, but after two years at Trinity College went to Germany for further training. Then he entered himself as a student of law at the Middle Temple. The law had no attraction for him; so he left the Temple as soon as he became twenty-one. Perhaps his reasons for taking this step are revealed in this picture in Pendennis: "On the other side of the third landing.... till long after midnight sits Mr. Paley, who took the highest honors, and who is a fellow of his college, who will sit and read and note cases until two o'clock in the morning; who will rise at seven and be at the pleaders' chambers as soon as they are open, where he will work until an hour before dinner-time; who will come from hall and read and note cases again until dawn next day."

Thackeray was ready to be industrious, but this was not the sort of industry that appealed to him. He thought he would be a newspaper man; so he bought The National Standard, conducted it for a time, and sank in the venture almost all of his inherited property. Several other misfortunes took the remainder. A second newspaper with which he was connected as Paris correspondent paid him £400 a year. On this amount he felt rich enough to marry. Six months later the paper suspended publication, and he was once more penniless.

Then came the real beginning of his literary career. Under the spur of necessity he wrote scores of newspaper and magazine articles, seldom using his own name, but choosing a number of fantastic noms de plume. Later he realized that by so doing he made a mistake; public recognition was comparatively slow in coming to him, for the public did not know his work. Yet he felt that he had no choice. Publishers would not use too many articles by the same contributor. He had to have money for many articles. So he made himself into many men.

In 1840 he was contributing a longer article than usual to Fraser's Magazine, "A Shabby Genteel Story." It had reached its ninth chapter, and the people were beginning to realize that the author was a man to be reckoned with, when the instalments were interrupted. The story was never completed.

Only Thackeray's intimate friends

knew the explanation which was not given to the general public until seventeen years later. Mrs. Thackeray became melancholy and then hopelessly insane. Soon his home was broken up. Mrs. Thackeray retired to a country village, where she was under the care of nurses for more than half a century. Death came to her relief in 1894, more than thirty years after her husband passed away.

A Terrible Blow.

Thackeray was crushed. His home had been everything to him. The foundations of his life seemed to be removed. He was unable to complete the work on which he had been engaged when his wife became ill. But it was more than ever necessary to write in order to meet the increased bills for the support of those dependent on him. From that day he gave himself to the task of earning enough money to make secure the future of his loved ones. Often he worked beyond his strength. Probably his death was hastened by the extreme tension under which he worked for the rest of his life.

But he never was too busy to care for his children. He talked to them of their mother by the hour. On their birthdays he would take them to the Colosseum. Again they would go to the Zoological Gardens or to the Exhibition. He had always had a warm place in his heart for children, but from the day his wife was taken from the home he was devoted to them.

Few things touched him so much as the needs of children, and those that ministered to these needs were heroes to him. Once, when he was lecturing in America, Croker, the famous chief of Tammany Hall, died. The name of the man was hateful to Thackeray until he learned that the politician had once begged his wife to fetch from the city a number of homeless children, that they might stay in the country over Sunday. "They will destroy your flower-beds and upset my inkstands," he said, "but we can help them more than they can hurt us."

The thought of his wife was always with him. Once he gave a glimpse of his thoughts of her when he wrote:

"Canst thou, O friendly reader, count upon the fidelity of an artless heart as tender as true, and reckon among the blessings which Heaven hath bestowed on thee the love of faithful women? Purify thine own heart, and try to make it worthy of theirs. All the prizes of life are nothing compared to that one. All the rewards of ambition, wealth, pleasure, only vanity and disappointment, grasped at greedily and fought for fiercely, and over and over again found worthless by the weary winners."

Misfortune had a softening effect on Thackeray's life. "His fortune lost, his talents unrecognized, except in a very small circle, his second child dead, his beloved wife taken from him!" his biographer exclaims. "The great sorrow chastened his soul, and made his later writings more sympathetic than his earlier; and the only use he made of his grand power of sarcasm was to chide, nearly always with gentle hand, the follies of his fellow men, in the endeavor to show them the path of honor, virtue, goodness, and mercy, which he himself endeavored to follow."

His new gentleness was apparent when his name was put up for membership in the Athenaeum Club. He was blackballed by one member, probably because of his satirical writings. Thackeray took the rejection in good part. He said:

"There must be thousands of men to whom the practice of ridicule must be very offensive; doesn't one see such in society, and in one's own family? persons whom nature has not gifted with a sense of humor. Such a man would be wrong not to give me a blackball.... May we all be honest fellows, and keep our heads from too much vanity."

For years Thackeray did not have much opportunity to be vain. In spite of magazine articles, and his contributions to Punch, and his drawings,—he was an artist of ability, as his illustrations of his own novels show,—in 1846, when he was thirty-five years old, he "was unknown outside literary circles and his own friends." In that year he wrote "Vanity Fair," which was published in twenty monthly parts. The publishers paid him fifty guineas for each part. The public bought eagerly. The reviewers received the book graciously. The Edinburgh Review said the work was "as sure of immortality as ninety-nine-hundredths of modern novels are sure of annihilation." Thackeray had come into his own. Later novels like "The Newcomes," "Pendennis," "Henry Esmond," only increased his fame and fortune.

But fortune was not increasing fast enough for the husband and father.

(Continued on seventh page.)

WAS CURED OF PELLAGRA.

Mr. Pearson Tells Friends of Recovery From Disease.

Mr. Cecil Pearson, of Chatham county was in the city yesterday and while here told of his recent visit to Columbia, S. C., where he went in search of finding a cure for pellagra. Mr. Pearson stated that he was suffering from a bad case of this peculiar disease, and that his sister, Miss Dardie Pearson died in the spring of the same disease. He says that he believes the cure will be permanent.

Mr. Pearson is a son of Mr. Claud Pearson, who was supervisor for the fourth district during the taking of the last census, and is well known in Durham.—Durham Sun.

ELON COLLEGE.

Situated in the delightful hill country of North Carolina. All modern conveniences in equipment and advantages in instruction. Special Courses in Music, Art, Expression, Normal, Commercial, and Preparatory Departments. Terms very reasonable—\$135 to \$187 per session of 10 months. Twenty-second session opens September 6. Co-educational. For catalogue or other information, address,

President W. A. HARPER,
Elon College, N. C.

THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE NORMAL AND INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

Maintained by the State for the women of North Carolina. Five regular Courses leading to Degrees. Special Courses for teachers. Free tuition to those who agree to become teachers in the State. Fall session begins September 13th, 1911. For catalogue and other information address

JULIUS I. FOUST, - President
GREENSBORO, N. C.

Oxford College

OXFORD, N. C.

FOUNDED IN 1850.

Literary, Music, Art, Business and Teaching Courses. Two Degrees, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science. The course leading to the degree of B. A. has been extended by one full year's work. The Bachelor of Science course is shorter by one year. It omits Latin after Caesar, Math. after Algebra, and French after first year, but retains the full English, Science, History, and moral Philosophy Courses. The Science course is made just as practical as possible.

FACULTY.

The heads of departments are specialists, and represent in their training some of the great Universities and Standard Colleges of the land, such as Vassar College of N. Y., Smith College, of Mass., Hollins, of Va., the Institute of Applied Music of N. Y., the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music of Ohio, the National Academy of Design and Students' Art League of N. Y. Location noted for healthfulness—free from malaria and without a case of typhoid fever in thirty-one years. Board and Literary Tuition a year \$166.00. Apply for illustrated Catalogue to

F. P. HOBGOOD

President.

The North Carolina COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND MECHANIC ARTS

The State's INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

Four-year courses in Agriculture; in Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering; in Industrial Chemistry; in Cotton Manufacturing and Dyeing. Two-year courses in Mechanic Arts and in Textile Art. One-year course in Agriculture. These courses are both practical and scientific. Examinations for admission are held at all county seats on July 13. For catalog address

THE REGISTRAR,

West Raleigh, N. C.

Not Sisters

Now and again you see two women passing down the street who look like sisters. You are astonished to learn that they are mother and daughter, and you realize that a woman at forty or forty-five ought to be at her finest and fairest. Why isn't it so?

The general health of woman is so intimately associated with the local health of the essentially feminine organs that there can be no red cheeks and round form where there is female weakness.

Women who have suffered from this trouble have found prompt relief and cure in the use of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It gives vigor and vitality to the organs of womanhood. It clears the complexion, brightens the eyes and reddens the cheeks.

No alcohol, or habit-forming drugs is contained in "Favorite Prescription." Any sick woman may consult Dr. Pierce by letter, free. Every letter is held as sacredly confidential, and answered in a plain envelope. Address: World's Dispensary Medical Association, Dr. R. V. Pierce, Pres., Buffalo, N. Y.



EAST CAROLINA TEACHERS TRAINING SCHOOL

A State school to train teachers for the public schools of North Carolina. Every energy is directed to this one purpose. Tuition free to all who agree to teach. Fall term begins September 26th, 1911.

FOR CATALOGUE AND OTHER INFORMATION, ADDRESS
ROBT. H. WRIGHT, President, : Greenville, N. C.

LOUISBURG COLLEGE

NORTH CAROLINA

The One Hundredth and Ninth Session of this School Will Begin September 13, 1911

Here Girls and Young Ladies can secure, at moderate cost, pleasant homelike surroundings, Healthful conditions, thorough intellectual training, liberal culture under true Christian influences. All the requirements for a well-equipped life. Address

MRS. MARY DAVIS ALLEN, : : President,
LOUISBURG, NORTH CAROLINA.

CORTRIGHT METAL SHINGLES
THE TIGHT ROOF

Never Leak—Never Need Repairs—Fireproof—Storm-proof—Handsome—Inexpensive—Suitable for all kinds of buildings. For further detailed information apply to

S. B. JOHNSON SMITHFIELD, N. C.

TRINITY COLLEGE

1859 1892 1910-1911

Three memorable dates: The Granting of the Charter for Trinity College; the Removal of the College to the growing and prosperous City of Durham; the Building of the New and Greater Trinity.

Magnificent new buildings with new equipment and enlarged facilities. Comfortable hygienic dormitories and beautiful pleasant surroundings. Five departments: Academic; Mechanical, Civil, and Electrical Engineering; Law; Education; Graduate.

For catalogue and other information, address

R. L. FLOWERS, Secretary, Durham, N. C.

Trinity Park School

ESTABLISHED 1898.

Location ideal; Equipment unsurpassed.

Students have use of the library, gymnasium, and athletic fields of Trinity College. Special attention given to health. A teacher in each dormitory looks after the living conditions of boys under his care.

Faculty of college graduates. Most modern methods of instruction.

Fall term opens September 13.

For illustrated catalogue, address

W. W. PEELE, Headmaster, Durham, N. C.

REPORT OF AUDITING COMMITTEE, Farmers Commercial Bank, Benson, N. C.

We, the Undersigned, Directors and Auditing Committee of the Farmers Commercial Bank, Benson, N. C., do hereby certify that we have this day completed a thorough examination of the books and records of said bank; that we have counted the cash, balanced the individual ledger, notes, certificate of deposit book, savings ledger, checked all bank reconciliation sheets, and find that each and every one balance to a penny. The loans are exceptionally well secured and considered by the undersigned absolutely good.

We heartily endorse the management of the institution, and by reason of its available assets, consider it one of the strongest banks of this section.

Those desiring to do a banking business, will, in our opinion, make no mistake in opening an account with this bank.

Respectfully submitted,

Wm. D. BOON C. T. JOHNSON
P. B. JOHNSON PRESTON WOODALL
Directors and Auditing Committee.

This July 13th, 1911.

Farmers Commercial Bank, : Benson, N. C.
CAPITAL \$12,000.00