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tional Catholic doctrines. Perhaps this ended Miss Paget's interest in him. We can conjecture some of her response to him from Henry James's letter to her: "Yes, Bourget is very interesting and very exasperating. I am sorry for him. ..."). (PMLA, September 1953, p. 693.)

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH WRITES TO AN ENGLISH ECCENTRIC

By Richard Cary

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836-1907) was born and spent his boyhood in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He loved the New England scene ardently and turned it to account with charm and whimsy in his most popular works. He recreated his maternal home as the Nutter House in The Story of a Bad Boy; situated "Marjorie Daw" at The Pines, near Rye, New Hampshire; and based Ponkapog Papers on his pleasurable years in Ponkapog, then a tiny village on the slope of Blue Hill, Massachusetts.

Best remembered as the distinguished editor of the Atlantic Monthly from 1881 to 1890, Aldrich was at an earlier time (1866-1874) editor of Every Saturday, an eclectic weekly with the formidable subtitle A Journal of Choice Reading Selected from Foreign Current Literature. Absence of an international copyright law made possible the existence of Every Saturday, which subsisted almost entirely upon serialized novels, short stories, articles, and poems culled from French, German, and British periodicals. With the exception of occasional poems by Paul Hamilton Hayne and William Dean Howells, several Pike County Ballads by John Hay, and one of Bret Harte's "condensed novels," original belles lettres were strangers to the columns of Every Saturday. Aldrich relied principally upon materi-
Mr. Thomas Purnell

al pirated from such eminent Victorians as Dickens, Swinburne, Tennyson, Arnold, Eliot, Collins, Christina Rossetti, Reade, Kingsley, Boucicault, Huxley, Mrs. Oliphant, and Robert Buchanan.

The following letter, recently acquired by the Colby Library Associates for the College manuscript collection, evokes several interesting personalities from the literary world of this older era and recalls some amusing incidents in which they were involved.

Dec. 23rd 1867.

My dear Sir:

It seems as if the Fates had made it their special duty to prevent me acknowledging your polite favor and its enclosures. New duties have fallen upon me, in addition to my own work, which piles itself up in drifts at this season. Hence my delay.

With regard to your kind offer to furnish us weekly with miscellaneous items, etc., etc., etc., I hardly know what to say. Sometimes such assistance would be beyond price; but as a general thing we are unable to use more than half of the matter brought us by the foreign papers and our correspondents in Paris and Vienna. The copy you have sent from time to time, has been excellent; but a hundred editorial and typographical reasons, which need no explanation for you, rendered most of it unavailable. If you can suggest any arrangement by which we can be of more service to each other, I shall be very glad to cooperate with you.

Our friend Mr. Osgood is in New York, with Mr. Dickens; I shall venture, however, to send you his best regards. At the same time will you allow me to thank you for the very pleasant evening which I recently passed with a volume of yours,—"Literature and its Professors"? Mr. O. loaned me the book. I found it admirable both in manner and material.

Yours Respectfully
T. B. ALDRICH

Mr. Thomas Purnell

The "miscellaneous items" which Aldrich regretfully rejected were, quite apparently, tidbits of London literary and theatrical news intended for the department "Foreign Notes" which appeared regularly in Every Saturday. Never averse to turning over an extra shilling or two, Purnell ran athwart the economics of scissoring; it was cheaper for Al-
Mr. Thomas Purnell, author of "Literature and its Professors," a valuable and entertaining work, has edited for the Roxburghe Club, Herd's curious "Latin Metrical History of England" [Historia Quatuor Regum Angliae. London, 1868], during four reigns,—those namely, of Henry VII. and his three immediate predecessors. The Athenaeum adds: "Two copies only of the work are known to exist; one is in the British Museum, and the other, which forms the text of the present edition, belongs to Sir Thomas E. Winnington."

Aldrich seemed blithely unaware of the double irony he was perpetrating on Purnell: snipping from The Athenaeum precisely the sort of item he had refused from Purnell, and then using it to Purnell's own benefit!

The letter at hand is typical of Aldrich's correspondence and demonstrates plainly why, with hundreds of his letters available for publication, there has been no stampede to present an edition of them. As a letter writer, Aldrich was neither profound nor provocative. His style is bland, his subject matter pedestrian or sentimental. Although his letters to Bayard Taylor¹ prove that Aldrich had illusions of grandeur concerning his position in the hierarchy of immortal authors, he was certain that his poetic, not his epistolary, efforts would put him there. He made no pretense at literary depth or polish in these quotidian notes. He reserved his competence for his euphonic verse, his orderly short stories, and his dramatic fantasies. To Aldrich a letter was a practical courier, to conclude a piece of business or to cement a friendship.

Among his circle of close acquaintances (Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, Edmund Clarence Stedman, William Dean Howells), Aldrich was notable for his un-

¹ Manuscript Division, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, N. Y.
failing affability. Essentially large-souled, optimistic and kindly, he could be depended upon to revive desponding spirits with a nimble quip. Alert to human sensitivities, Aldrich carefully bridged every gap in his relations with a mild rejoinder, a verbal pat on the back. Witness his tactful veto of Purnell’s offer, his amenable attitude toward reciprocal aid, his generous tribute to Purnell’s book. The Biblical admonition of “a soft answer” was Aldrich’s guiding principle.

Habitual with Aldrich, too, are the lackadaisical punctuation and slovenly spelling evident in this note. The error in acknowledging, the inconsistent pointing of the date lines, the omission of a period after the first *etc.*, the questionable comma after *time*, and the classic bareness of the complimentary close are characteristic Aldrich practices. Particularly inexcusable in a littérateur and editor, these lapses may be condoned on two counts: first, his disesteem of the ultimate literary value of ordinary letters; second, the relentless pressure of work. His fondest pun at this time was that he was as busy as a bee, “busier than a T.B. likes to be.”

In a letter to Mrs. James T. Fields, Aldrich divulged one of the harassing “new duties” which were piling up “in drifts at this season”:

*The idea is this: To have sixteen impartial notices (written by me!) of E.S. [Every Saturday] each week, for those editors who have not the time or the skill to direct the attention of the public to our little journal. Now, how to say the same thing sixteen different ways, week after week, is a problem which I am obliged to solve every Monday and Tuesday.*

Aldrich’s correspondent, Thomas Purnell (1834-1889), was a bird of totally dissimilar plumage. Born in Tenby, Pembrokeshire, he matriculated at Dublin’s Trinity College in 1852, and afterward gravitated around London, engaged variously as secretary, librarian, and journalist. As

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2 Ferris Greenslet, *Thomas Bailey Aldrich* (Boston, 1908), 84.
sturdily as Aldrich was a family man (he delighted to repeat that his initials stood for "Twin Babies Aldrich"). Purnell was as obversely a bohemian. Described as "brilliant, versatile, and inconstant," he consorted with a mercurial coterie of artists and sensualists that made its headquarters in London. Eventually organized as an exclusive club called the "Decemviri," its two most prominent members were Swinburne and Whistler.

Aldrich and Purnell were diametric in another respect. Where Aldrich conspicuously avoided overt censure, dispensing blandishment instead of barbs, Purnell seemed to revel in controversy and flayed away at his opponents without compunction. Whereas Aldrich was universally acclaimed a prince of good fellows, Edmund Gosse refers to Purnell as "that rather trying journalist," and is clearly pleased at his discomfiture during the Charles Lamb anniversary dinner on February 10, 1875:

> It was magnificent to see him [Swinburne], when Purnell, who was a reckless speaker, "went too far," bringing back the conversation into the paths of decorum. He was so severe, so unwontedly severe, that Purnell sulked, and taking out a church-warden, left us at table and smoked in the chimney-corner.\(^4\)

Other reasons for Purnell's unpopularity among his contemporaries may be discovered in the trenchant series of dramatic criticisms which he contributed to *The Athenaeum* under the signature "Q." Beginning with an article on Thomas William Robertson in the issue of November 19, 1870, he discoursed successively upon John Westland Marston, Dion Bouiccault, Francis Cowley Burnand, Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, John Oxenford, and concluded April 22, 1871, with an essay on Tom Taylor's art. The critiques bristle with sharp adjudications of the playwrights and their plays. Probably owing to the publisher's insistence, Purnell's harshest gibes did not reappear in his

\(^3\) *The Athenaeum* (December 21, 1889), 860.
volume *Dramatists of the Present Day* (London, 1871), under which title the essays were collected and reissued. Purnell's assertions that Robertson should confine himself to "tea-cup-and-saucer" dramas, in which line he was "supreme," and that Boucicault's "dramas leave a savour of uncleanness on his audience," typify the critical thrusts omitted in the book.

These and others of their genre were passed off without public recrimination, but it was Purnell's screed on Tom Taylor which excited tones of pain and resentment from that personage and prompted Charles Reade, the novelist, to assume the unsolicited rôle of champion. On April 22, 1871, Purnell objected to Taylor's calling his French-inspired *The Fool's Revenge* a "new" play, accused him of ignorance regarding the meaning of *original*, dubbed him "the great foster-father of the Gallic drama," and opined that he was obviously "educated above his capacities." For six consecutive weeks thereafter the columns of *The Athenaeum* resounded with blast and counterblast.

Probably because he had collaborated with Taylor on sundry occasions and had been stung by Purnell on others, Charles Reade injected himself into this logomachy as a vociferous ally of Taylor. In a postscript to his May 20 response to Taylor (p. 634), Purnell referred bitterly to a certain "playful letter" of Reade's which had been refused publication in *The Athenaeum* and other journals but had finally found haven in the *Pall Mall Gazette* a fortnight later. Up to this point the argument had proceeded on a gentlemanly plane; with this letter it deteriorated into a brawl.

Reade, a titillating name-caller, began by classifying Purnell among "the mere shrimps and minnows who

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5 *The Athenaeum* (November 19, 1870), 663.
6 *Ibid.* (December 3, 1870), 731.
write about literature, because they cannot write literature”; gleefully reduced his zoological analogy, “Mr. Q. is a variety of the literary insect ‘Criticaster’”; and summed up contemptuously, “when little men, with little heads, little hearts, little knowledge, little sensibility, and great vanity, go into a theatre, not to take in knowledge and humanity, but to give out ignorance and malice, not to profit by their mental superior, but to disparage him, they are steeled against ennobling influences, and blinded to beauties, however obvious.”

Not to be outdone, Purnell rebutted with comparable vehemence: “[Reade] reminds me when he has a quarrel, of one of those nondescript dogs which one sometimes meets in out-of-the-way farm-houses in Wales. You accidentally rub against him, and the casual collision is resented. A gesture excites him. From good-nature you stroke him in passing, and are rewarded with a yelp. The poor dog does not mean harm: it is his nature to yelp, and he yelps. This is the case with Mr. Reade.” He then intimated that even a Welsh cur will mind its own business if not jostled, which virtue Mr. Reade could not honestly profess. There is little question that in respect to the milk of human kindness Purnell was no Aldrich.

In addition to Historia Quatuor Regum Angliae (1868), and Dramatists of the Present Day (1871), already mentioned, Purnell turned out a number of other volumes of passing interest. Literature and its Professors (1867), which Aldrich praises in this letter, contains a set of essays on the diverse types of men who have contributed to the world’s store of great writing: Giraldus Cambrensis, Montaigne, Roger Williams, Steele, Sterne, Mazzini, Swift. Purnell edited Charles Lamb’s Correspondence and Works (1871) in four volumes, “aided by recollections of the author’s adopted
daughter,“ Emma Isola, wife of the publisher Edward Moxon. To London and elsewhere (1881) and Dust and Diamonds (1888) are collections of his miscellaneous newspaper and periodical articles. The Lady Drusilla: a Psychological Romance (1886) was rated “a strange, original, and tantalizing book, sombre, and almost morbid in some respects,” by an Athenaeum reviewer.\textsuperscript{11}

A not unimpressive list, but Purnell’s nearest approach to literary fame came in his association with Swinburne. How intimate the relationship was may be gathered from Purnell’s inclusion in the small clique which comprised a conseil de famille to help resolve some of Swinburne’s pressing difficulties in October 1867.\textsuperscript{12} In 1871 Purnell dedicated Dramatists of the Present Day to “Algernon Swinburne,” but his most cherished service to Swinburne occurred in April, 1867, when he escorted the poet to Karl Blind’s lodgings on Winchester Road and introduced him to Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), Italy’s most fervid fighter for national unification. It was out of gratitude for this act that Swinburne permitted his A Year’s Letters to appear serially in The Tatler (August 25-December 29, 1877), a second-rate periodical edited at the time by Purnell.

Aldrich was not on particularly familiar terms with Charles Dickens. In Crowding Memories,\textsuperscript{13} Mrs. Aldrich glowingly records the single occasion upon which the noted novelist, under tow of the American publisher James T. Fields (1817-1881), visited the Aldrich family in their modest “workbox” house at 84 Pinckney Street, Boston. On the other hand, Aldrich was in constant contact with James Ripley Osgood (1836-1892), originally clerk, then partner, and finally successor to the Boston firm of Ticknor & Fields, publisher of every important American au-

\textsuperscript{11} December 21, 1889, 860.
\textsuperscript{12} Georges Lafourcade, Swinburne, A Literary Biography (London, 1932), 189.
\textsuperscript{13} Boston, 1920, 102-105.
thor of the period. On November 22, 1867, twenty-five years after his first distressful sojourn in the United States, Dickens landed in Boston, his head bulging with details of an extensive, projected reading tour. At the moment of Aldrich's writing to Purnell, Osgood was a member of the entourage accompanying Dickens on his itinerary. He had joined Dickens' party as agent for Ticknor & Fields but was appointed permanent treasurer when the readings showed unmistakable signs of lucrative success. Nevertheless, as attested by J. W. T. Ley, his value to Dickens transcended that of mere financial factotum.

Dickens appears not to have been excessively happy on this tour. Toward the end of February, 1868, he was dourly awaiting "the arrival of the day when I can say 'next month!' for home." At this juncture, his manager, George Dolby, and Osgood ("who do the most ridiculous things to keep me in spirits") proposed to engage in a Great International Walking Match, if Dickens would draw up Articles of Agreement, act as trainer, and write an account of the match after it had taken place. Welcoming the diversion, Dickens consented. The race was held on February 29, a distance of six and a half miles along Mill Dam Road to Newton Centre and then back, with James T. Fields ("Massachusetts Jemmy") and Dickens ("The Gad's Hill Gasper") as "umpires and starters and declarers of victory." Osgood ("The Boston Bantam") crossed the finish line first, but only because Mrs. Fields followed in her carriage and plied him "the whole time with bread soaked in brandy!"—or so claimed Dolby ("The Man of Ross") in his lively reminiscences. Dickens walked the entire course himself, arriving home winded but apparently purged of his nostalgia. Among the guests of honor at the

14 *The Dickens Circle* (London, 1918), 206.
16 Ibid., III, 426.
17 *Charles Dickens As I Knew Him* (Philadelphia, 1885), 269.
banquet held in the Parker House that evening to commemorate the competition were "Hyperion" (Longfellow), "Hosai Biglow" (Lowell), "The Autocrat" (Holmes), and "The Bad Boy" (Aldrich). Later, Dickens obliged with a narrative of the match, a vivacious broadside aping the vernacular of the sports world. Dolby presents transcripts of the "Articles" and the "Narrative" in Charles Dickens As I Knew Him (Philadelphia, 1885, 261-270), as does Fields in Yesteryears With Authors (Boston, 1872, 177-183).

RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS OF HARDY

By Carl J. Weber

An interesting and informative article entitled "Russian Translations of Nineteenth Century Fiction" in the December 1953 issue of Nineteenth-Century Fiction (Berkeley, California) contains six or seven sentences about Thomas Hardy which invite further comment. Although the reader of that article was warned (p. 189) that "the present essay is based on only one source, ... A Bibliographical Index ... published in St. Petersburg in 1897," the conclusions and judgments later expressed in the article are likely to lead the reader to regard the information as conclusive and definitive—at least as far as Thomas Hardy is concerned—instead of being what it is: tentative, fragmentary, and inconclusive. These are the statements:

Hardy is represented only by Tess of the D'Urbervilles, translated in 1893. The ignorance of the work of this major novelist defies explanation. He often uses a rustic dialect, to be sure, but dialect had been no bar to the translation of Scott and Dickens. ... Why was Hardy neglected? His folk tragedies should have been of enormous concern to readers of Dostoevsky. The reasons for such an oversight are not clear. It may well be that there are no reasons—that Hardy's relative obscurity in Russia was a matter of blind chance. (Pages 191 and 197)