

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

**Forty Years an Advertising  
Agent 1865-1905**

**George Presbury Rowell**



*Routledge Revivals*

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**by  
George Presbury Rowell**



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THE  
HISTORY OF  
**ADVERTISING**

40  
MAJOR BOOKS  
IN FACSIMILE

Edited by  
HENRY ASSAEL  
C. SAMUEL CRAIG  
New York University

A  
GARLAND  
SERIES



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FORTY YEARS AN  
**ADVERTISING  
AGENT**  
1865–1905

GEORGE PRESBURY ROWELL

GARLAND PUBLISHING, INC.  
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1985

For a complete list of the titles in this series  
see the final pages of this volume.

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ADVERTISING AGENT



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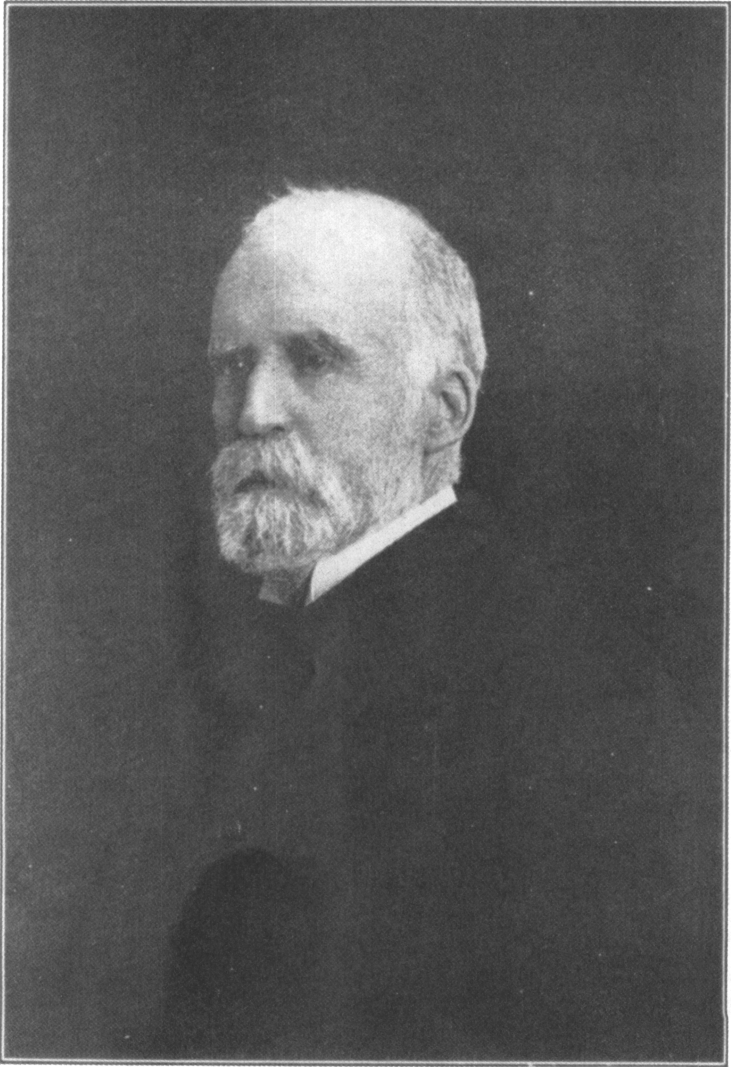
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*George P. Rowell*

# FORTY YEARS AN ADVERTISING AGENT

1865-1905

BY

**GEORGE PRESBURY ROWELL**

FOUNDER OF THE ADVERTISING AGENCY OF GEO. P. ROWELL & Co.,  
MARCH 5TH, 1865—RETIRED AUGUST 31ST, 1905.  
FOUNDER OF ROWELL'S AMERICAN NEWSPAPER DIRECTORY IN 1869, THE FIRST  
SERIOUS EFFORT EVER MADE TO ASCERTAIN AND MAKE KNOWN  
THE CIRCULATIONS OF NEWSPAPERS THAT COMPETE  
FOR ADVERTISING PATRONAGE.  
FOUNDER OF PRINTERS' INK IN 1888: A JOURNAL FOR ADVERTISERS,  
THE FIRST PERIODICAL EVER ESTABLISHED FOR THE  
SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF ADVERTISING  
AS A BUSINESS FORCE.

PRINTERS' INK PUBLISHING CO.

NEW YORK

1906

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*Published January, 1906.*

## FOREWORD

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The fifty-two chapters or papers that make up the contents of this volume were not begun with a thought of preserving them in any more permanent or accessible form than would be accomplished by their appearance in the columns of *Printers' Ink*. When the first installment was given out the writer had not decided to attach his name. His feelings were expressed in a paragraph which preceded the initiatory installment and which read as follows :

A man, whose name will occur to many as one who for nearly half a century has been closely in touch with newspapers and advertising, has consented to tell the story of his experience in a series of papers to be published in *Printers' Ink*. The first installment is here given ; others will follow from week to week until it appears that readers fail to find in them very much of instruction or interest, or the writer tires of his self-imposed task, or the editor should conclude that a pressure of matter of more importance will forbid the further devotion of so much space to old stories and ancient history.

As the work progressed there were evidences that the papers were being read with interest, not only by men of the writer's generation, but, in business houses where advertising formed a part of the conduct of affairs, it was made to appear that they had the attention of clerks and office boys, from among whom the advertising men of the future are likely to be recruited. On this account the writer's interest in his work grew more pronounced, and eventually he thought it might be possible to continue the papers through the fifty-two numbers of *Printers' Ink* that would make up the volume for the year 1905.

That ambition having been achieved, and the series completed, a review of the many comments and suggestions, made and sent in by correspondents, appeared to indicate an interest in the story greater than would be expected for material usually considered so dry and uninteresting. Ex-

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tracts from some of the comments that led to the final decision to make a book out of the papers are here reproduced:

Advertising literature would have lost much if Mr. Rowell had not written these papers.

They bring so freshly to mind men who in a past generation left their mark and imprint on our history's page.

They set forth the inception, the development, and the growth of the art (or science) of advertising in a practical way that none of to-day's theories can possibly do.

They bring back old *times* when the future looked bright and radiant.

They are the most interesting papers that have ever appeared in any publication devoted to advertising.

The papers are practical and inspiring; they are nothing short of an education to the beginner who would succeed.

The work has permanent value as a contribution to the history of American journalism, and particularly as a clear exposition of one of its comparatively little understood but most important phases.

My wife doesn't know much about advertising, but she shares the great interest I feel in these naively written reminiscences.

They are written in a style peculiar to the author and can hardly fail to attract attention.

They are too good to pass without emphasis and hearty approbation. Every newspaper man in the Union feels an interest in that familiar name which carries so much influence among advertisers.

There seems to be a charm about them that I have not been able precisely to analyze.

They are written in language most captivating and tell a story full of interest to every newspaper man.

I thought as I read those very instructive and interesting articles I was just sitting beside Mr. Rowell and could hear him explaining.

The style could not be better for the subject. It will be a real book; there are few of them, most are a rehash or warmed over.

What particularly impresses me in reading them all is the absence of any remark or comment that could be construed as an ill-natured criticism or wound the feelings of any one whose name is mentioned.

There is scarcely a man who made his own first start in a modest way who will not be taken back to his own early experiences by those of Mr. Rowell.

They're the best ever.

After all, what more agreeable reading can there be than the confessions of an old sinner?

I must express sincere admiration for the simplicity of the style as well as the easy run of the narrative.

Being of the younger school of advertising I particularly appreciate Mr. Rowell's reminiscences, as there is food for thought in every year of his long experience.

I appreciate the extreme care he is taking in the preparation of these articles and their refreshing, reminiscent, humorous style. It has been my pleasure to meet and know well many of the persons he is describing, and I must say he "hits the nail squarely on the head" in these descriptions.

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They are very interesting to me, because, as a new advertiser, I want to know something about advertising in days gone by, and about the men who made advertising what it is to-day.

They are a review of old times, old friends, and show to the present young men what patience, privations and hard work it took to get a foothold on that ladder of fame that we all strive to climb. If those letters could be read by every young man in the land it would be a God-send to many a parent; for they would cause many a young man to realize what honesty of purpose were required to stand well with his fellow-man and secure, honestly, sufficient to make his declining years a pleasure.

They offer a very valuable contribution to the history of newspapers and advertising in America.

They are full of instruction and profitable suggestions to every man who prints and thinks; and they are written in English that Washington Irving would have delighted in could he but have dipped into them.

Are the most interesting articles that have appeared in the advertising world.

I want to add my voice to the chorus which acclaim the unequalled interest of Mr. Rowell's recollections.

To the young man who is following the advertising game they are worth more than can be measured in mere dollars and cents.

These letters have given me thoughts and ideas for reflection that I could not have secured in any manner except by purchase through years of "bumping" experience. Of course, experience is the only real teacher, but the man who goes for a slide down the toboggan, having been informed in advance of a steep incline at a given point that is bound to take his breath, can in a measure prepare for the "bump" and only needs to give half a gasp, while the fellow who goes uninformed gives a gasp and a half.

They are an excellent piece of history writing, but particularly interesting to those who have ever had any hand in the business.

What funny stories! I nearly had hysterics over the man who saw *bugs*.

To a young man it presents ideals in the business world that are seldom revealed in so clear a manner. Let it be said that this story will reach down as a triumph of its kind.

I do not suppose the younger portion of the fraternity take as much interest in it as we old-timers do.

I like to read them. It leaves a nice taste in your mouth, to say nothing of the information to be gained.

The manner of setting forth the stages through which advertising has passed during the last forty years helps one to understand more fully why certain conditions now exist.

I think the advertising world can be congratulated that Mr. Rowell was one of the first—and therefore the pacemaker—of the advertising agency.

I heartily appreciate the remarkable felicity in narration, and in the happy blending of sententious humor and sound sense with which these unique "recollections" are fairly saturated.

While what he tells is readable, the way he tells it is delightful.

As to the correctness of Mr. Rowell's recollections, I am pleased to say that they have the admiration of every man familiar with the period that he has been describing.

I have found them most delightful, at times even fascinating.

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He certainly knows how to tell a story in the most entertaining way.

The reminiscences have great interest for me, not only because they are so entertainingly written, and bring to mind so many interesting facts relating to men and events long forgotten, but also because they throw strong sidelights upon the business of the advertising agent as it was formerly conducted.

His characterization of men whom I know has been so perfect that an artist ought to be able to make a picture of them from his word-painting.

After reading his letters I would like very much to meet him. I have formed a high opinion of his force of character and worth as a successful business man with high ideals.

I think that no piece of literature that has appeared for a number of years has proven as interesting to advertising men.

They are the most charmingly written and intensely interesting chapters of business history ever published.

It seems as though each one was better than the last.

Probably the best history of the growth of the advertising business that has ever appeared in print.

I am neither a publisher nor an advertising agent, but I have derived a very great deal of valuable information from Mr. Rowell's papers. He has the rare gift of imparting knowledge in an entertaining manner. I can imagine I hear his kindly voice as I read. I am quite sure he is a man who is honored and respected by his associates. He is so intensely human.

It is an incentive, a help to any one at all discouraged, to read such cheering words.

'The story is mightily interesting, and especially so to newspaper men.

Though not an advertising man, they hold my interest as very few reminiscent recitals do. My guess is that it is because he has something to tell and knows how to tell it in words "without trimmings."

I don't know how it is about these papers, but if you begin one you can't lay it down until you have read it all.

I enjoyed the article relating to fishing and hunting very much. It has the true flavor of the woods about it, and I am passing it around among my fishing and hunting friends.

The world lost a facile writer of good English when Mr. Rowell lost himself in the advertising business.

These reminiscences are the first readable articles of a personal nature which have appeared in the advertising field. They light up the dry routine of "Essays on the Theory of Advertising," "Studies of Systems," and criticisms from boy archers who know *so* much.

Interesting in themselves, they are expressed in such frank stories of success and mistake, of victory and defeat, that no reader in or out of the craft of advertising can fail to be attracted by the personality of the man who remembers so well and spares himself so little.

I can scarcely conceive it possible that better advice can be given to a young canvasser. And, moreover, the whole is written in a style so delightful and simple that it would be pleasing to the outsider to read. The whole series has been pervaded by a charming and educating mode of writing, and carry hope, encouragement and

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precious wisdom to young newspaper men and others all over the English-speaking world.

The possible republication in book form of Mr. Rowell's reminiscences is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Bring it to book—to not do so would be a crime.

In my opinion, they will bring him a more lasting fame than either the American Newspaper Directory or the Great Advertising Agency of which he has been the successful head.

With so many commendations before him, worded in language indicating both earnestness and good faith, and conscious not only of a wish to see his recollections in a form more conveniently accessible and more likely to be preserved than when scattered through the pages of fifty-two issues of a weekly paper, and also of an only half-admitted desire to see his name appear as author on the title page of a real book, the writer finally decided that he might venture to put the papers into the form in which they are now presented. If the matter, as a whole, is as well received as has been its serial appearance, from week to week, he hardly knows whether he will be more pleased or amazed. One effect of the many kind words with which his work has been favored has been to recall a memory of two young people, whom he knew in boyhood, who, displaying the beauty and perfection of their first baby, in the sunshine of a Sunday morning—in a perambulator newly purchased for the purpose—showed a great deal of appreciation of every compliment bestowed upon the result of their efforts, admitting without hesitation that, having had no previous experience, they had not expected they would be able to do so well, and they were on that account all the more gratified with the result.



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# Forty Years an Advertising Agent

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## FIRST PAPER

The first newspaper I remember was the *Caledonian*. It was published at St. Johnsbury, the place where the Fairbanks scales are made. The name came from that of the county, Caledonia, one of the northern tier in the little New England border State of Vermont. My father was a Whig in politics. The *Caledonian* was naturally of that stripe and complexion. Our nearest neighbor, a man named May, was a Democrat, and he, too, took a paper that sustained his political views. His paper became known to me about as soon as the other. It was called the *North Star* and was printed at Danville, a town of more importance then than now. One of these papers carried at its head a verse which I still recall. It read :

Here shall the press  
The people's rights maintain,  
Unawed by influence  
And unbribed by gain.

My memory does not distinctly recall which paper it was that proclaimed these high, brave and virtuous principles, probably it was the *North Star*, for it ceased to exist half a century ago, while the *Caledonian* continues even until this day.

There was not much occasion for newspapers in that primitive forest region in the northern part of the Green Mountain State at the time my memory first began to take note of affairs. Our nearest neighbor was very near indeed, for both his family and ours found shelter under the hospitable roof of a single log cabin. No advertisement, story, or editorial, made any lasting impression on a nascent brain that recalls with distinctness the spicy taste of the bark of the yellow birch twigs that grew in the woods near by and the beauty of the miniature trout in the little pool in the

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brook, where the water was dipped up for family consumption, which allowed itself to be impounded within the shiny tin pail and revealed the vermilion spots on its sides to the admiring eyes of the boy of four or five. That must have been about the time of these first memories, for the mind's eye still brings before it the cover pages of the Thomas Almanacs of that period, bearing, as the most conspicuous line, the figures 1842 and 1843. Now and then in literature one comes across a reference to the latch string which, when it hung out, was an evidence of open hospitality, an invitation to enter, and which, when withdrawn, closed the door even more effectively than a lock; and it is always a joy to remember that our house, too, had a latch string and that it *always* hung out.

Although the mind recalls no newspaper advertisement at this time there is a memory of the presence in the house of a bottle containing a liquid of a golden pomegranate color, enclosed in a paper wrapper somewhat approaching the same shade, the taste of the liquid suggesting something akin to the flavor of the meats in the black cherry stones with which a country boy was likely to be acquainted on account of their close connection with a delicacy known as cherry rum. This wonderful patent medicine is still to be found at drug stores, still has the same color, same wrapper and is still known as Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. The only other result of advertising that made an impression on the memory that time has not effaced was a certain poster picture of a sort of calico horse of Arabian pattern and vast grace and beauty, all calculated to emphasize benefits that might be derived from a compound known as Merchants' Gargling Oil. This preparation, too, I am led to believe is still to be found in the drug stores of the country. Not Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair," to my maturer and more critical eyes in later years, ever equaled the grace and beauty nor the coloring of that splendid Arabian steed. Having a bearing upon the comparative merits of the two pictures here referred to, there comes to mind a story that used to be told by that eminent advertising agent, scholarly gentleman and

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prince of raconteurs, the late James H. Bates. "A boy from the western section of the State," he said "had come for a visit to New York City and a whilom schoolmate, who had for some time held a clerkship in the metropolis, took him in hand to show him the sights. Nothing, however, excited his wonder nor aroused any enthusiasm until at last when he had been taken to the great store of A. T. Stewart & Co., at Broadway and Tenth street (now Wanamaker's), after inspecting the display of merchandise, the army of clerks, the crowd of shoppers, the two finally stood in the great central rotunda, where looking upward the eye counted story after story, balcony above balcony, all surmounted by the great skylight overhead, a gleam of satisfaction appeared in the country boy's eyes and he admitted to his friend 'This is something like Rochester.'"

In the matter of newspapers and advertisements that made an impression on the memory, there seems to have been an interim until, in the early fifties of the last century, the parental home had moved across the Connecticut into the Granite State. Lancaster, New Hampshire, was the capital and principal town of Coos County, situated in the northern part of New Hampshire. New Hampshire was a Democratic State, Coos County was the most Democratic portion of the State and Lancaster more intensely Democratic than any other town in the County. There did not live anywhere a more earnest Democrat than James M. Rix and he edited and printed a small weekly paper known, and still known at this day (1905), as the Coos County *Democrat*. It used to be said by those who had an opportunity to take note of such matters that in every remote homestead in Upper Coos (pronounced Co-os), in the best room, there would be found a "light stand" covered with a white cloth, and on the cloth the family Bible and on the Bible a folded copy of Rix's Coos *Democrat*. From his office went out into the wider world many men who became prominent. Col. Edward F. Cross, of the New Hampshire Fighting Fifth, was a printer boy in Rix's office and there, too, served for a time the inimitable Charles F. Browne, who after-

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wards became known everywhere as Artemus Ward. Browne was finally discharged by Rix on account of a fight with another apprentice, during which they overturned the imposing stone and succeeded in pying a page of that week's paper. Browne's other exploits, as reported by those who still remember him, were limited to striping a sign post in front of the temperance tavern, transforming it into a barber's pole, and in substituting a green pumpkin for a great watermelon that Editor Rix had grown with care from a seed furnished by a friendly Congressman, watched with pride, boasted of with complacency, and finally had promised should regale his guests on an auspicious occasion to occur on a specified date. It is related that so well did the substitute pumpkin match the purloined melon, so judiciously was the stem adjusted, that the exchange was not noticed nor suspected until the grand occasion came, the company had assembled, and Mr. Rix proceeded to cut the melon.

Of the advertisements in the *Democrat* only a few are recalled. One had a picture of a soldier and a horse, and announced the merits of Redding's Russia Salve. Another told of Wistar's Balsam of Wild Cherry and a third offered for sale a certain house in the village, the owner being about to go West; the remarkable thing about this announcement being that the house was not at the time for sale, the alleged owner who advertised it having actually sold it and actually gone West some years before, but the advertisement still stood and did occasional service in filling out a column.

Most citizens who wished for a paper of wider range read the New Hampshire *Patriot*, published at Concord, the State Capital, a paper of an even more rabid stripe of Democracy than Thomas Jefferson would have desired, while those of Whig proclivities subscribed to the *Independent Statesman*, also published at Concord. My father read the Boston *Journal* and there was a considerable package of New York *Tribunes* regularly received at the postoffice. All of these were weekly issues. The daily was not then much of a factor in farming regions or village communities.

## SECOND PAPER

The Arab hopes at some period of his life to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Good Americans, it has been said, go to Paris when they die. More certain than either is it that the boy of Northern New England, when the time arrives for entering upon a business or professional career, will go to Boston. It was to Boston then that the writer made his way in the Spring of 1856, to return to the parental home after losing a situation with attendant salary on account of the financial panic of 1857. During the Winter that followed it is remembered that the Want advertisements in the *Boston Daily Journal* were read with care, while he who perused them was earning, or leastwise receiving, twenty dollars a month for teaching a district school in a neighboring town, the salary being supplemented by free food and lodging on the plan of "boarding around," staying with each family from a day to a week according to the number of pupils coming from that house.

I have always thought I derived much benefit and instruction from a book presented to me by a relative that Winter called *Freedley's Essay on Business*. It was mainly a compilation, but told much of interest about men and methods. In it I read that it was not an unusual thing for the living expenses of a successful wholesale merchant doing business in a great city to reach the sum of \$5,000 in a year. Much that the book contained seemed wise and reasonable, but this particular paragraph was turned down as preposterously impossible. How a single family could run through so great a sum in so short a time was beyond my comprehension. Why, not half a dozen persons in the town where I was teaching had acquired so considerable a property as to be worth a total of \$5,000, and the few who had were considered wealthy men. Possibly the figures were a misprint. It is perhaps needless to admit that the accuracy of

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Freedley was afterwards acquiesced in and that, too, long before the late Pierre Lorillard had proclaimed that no gentleman ought to be expected to live on a lesser expenditure than \$1,000 a day.

Among the advertisements in the daily *Boston Journal*, that were read with so much care, those that spoke of opportunities offered to young men to earn money by becoming agents for the sale of books seemed most attractive. The Spring of 1858 found me in Boston again, and it came about that living in apartments in the house where I boarded was a certain Mrs. Bailey, a lady of advanced years, a sister of Col. Charles Gordon Greene, the editor of the *Boston Post* and at that time naval officer of the port of Boston. She was also the mother of Edwin C. Bailey, then, if my memory serves me, Postmaster of Boston and owner of the *Boston Herald*. The good lady's girlhood had been passed in the Granite State and she took a kindly interest in the country boy just come out in the world to make his fortune. One morning she called me into her room and read to me from the *Post* an announcement of the death of a certain Mr. Slack who had been employed in that office as collector from a time to which the memory of man did not run to the contrary, and who, she told me, received the enormously lucrative salary of \$2,000 a year. "Now," said she, "you go right down there and give Charles this note and I think he will give you the place." Charles was not as enthusiastic as his sister; furthermore, he was the editor and the vacancy was in the business office controlled by a partner. The partner was shocked beyond expression at the idea of filling Mr. Slack's place before he should have entered into his grave and, I thought, even more pained that the editor should assume to nominate a candidate for a counting room vacancy. The most surprising thing of all, however, was the fact that I did get the place, not at \$2,000 a year, but at the more just and moderate compensation of \$8 a week, and very good pay it was, and a very good place it proved.

And here for seven years I remained. I boarded in the last street below the Roxbury line and although the work

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of the day was walking, walking, walking, it was found that the 60 cents a week that might be saved on car fares formed an appreciable addition to that part of the salary left over after settling for board and washing. The walking done in those seven years gave me a pair of calves that would have been a source of pride had knickerbockers been in fashion, and they had hardly got down to normal when, twenty years later, knickerbockers did come into common use with the bicycle and game of golf.

At this time (1858), the best or most popular daily paper in Boston was the *Journal*. Charles O. Rogers was owner and supreme in its control. He was a wonder. Never to be found at his office, as it seemed to me, nearly always to be seen at some saloon near by, red of face, not always steady of gait, not a specially meritorious citizen as seen by an outsider, he was possessed of more business sense than found place in any other newspaper office in Boston, and his paper was run on a higher plane, I think, than any other, from the business, the literary, the ethical, in fact from every standpoint from which it could be viewed, and, while Rogers lived, it did not cease to be the best paper, the most popular, the least objectionable, the most profitable, and to have the largest circle of readers, that is the greatest circulation. Col. Rogers died in 1869. While he lived he held the position in advance of all competitors; but no sooner had he disappeared than the *Herald* advanced to first place.

At the time of my first recollection of it the most conspicuous feature of the Boston *Herald* was an entire first page filled full with the sort of advertisements that appeal to weak men or to such as have acquired diseases through giving away to weaknesses more human than moral. The *Herald* was a survival of numerous unsuccessful journalistic enterprises, and had the popular advantage of being sold at a lower price than any other Boston daily. Under the Bailey management it appeared to take on a lease of vigorous life, was toned down, and improved in every way, and afforded a moderately satisfactory income to its owner.

Besides the *Journal* and the *Herald* there was the *Bee*,

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edited by Col. Schouler, a great friend of Col. Greene's in private and a vigorous enemy and savage critic in his editorial capacity. The *Bee* was Republican in politics, the *Post* Democratic. A story was often told of an indignant friend of Greene's who repaired to the office of the *Bee* on one occasion determined to chastise Schouler, but desisted because on entering he there found the two editorial enemies discussing some new story on the most friendly and intimate terms.

The *Post* was a good commercial paper and Democratic, as has been said. The *Advertiser* was also a good commercial paper and Republican. It was the more conservative and sometimes the advocates of the *Post* used to assert of the two that the Boston merchants read the *Post* and filed the *Advertiser*.

There was another commercial paper, the *Courier*. It had once held a high position in the people's regard, but was not prosperous at this time. It still exists, I think (1905), but is now issued weekly. From time to time during the last twenty years or more the New York *Sun* has, in its Sunday column of "Poems Worth Reading," published numerous specimens of witty, satirical verse credited to the Boston *Courier*, that have been of a quality to cause regret that no one has found it worth while to make and publish a collection of the productions of that man, whoever he may be. There is a humor about them that is inimitable.

Besides these there was the Boston *Transcript*, then as now a woman's paper, "the tea table paper of Boston." Col. Greene always caressingly referred to it as "Little Crinoline." Then as now it was about the cleanest, nicest thing in the way of a daily newspaper that anyone knew anything about.

And finally there was the *Traveler*, an evening paper that made a living, and was an extra good paper on Saturdays. Samuel Bowles, who achieved a marked success as publisher of the Springfield *Republican*, had come to Boston for a time and tried his hand on the *Traveler*, but succeeded no better than did Mr. Charles A. Dana when he left New York to see what he could do with a Chicago paper.

## SECOND PAPER

There were no Sunday papers then, but Col. W. W. Clapp (who long afterwards was in control of the *Boston Journal*) issued from an office in Franklin street the *Saturday Evening Gazette*, a clean family paper that had a fair circulation and earned a good living for its proprietor. It is alive to this day, as is the *Courier*. There is nothing in this world so hard to kill as a newspaper; and when one is dead that it will stay dead is an assertion that no prudent man will venture to make. It was on Col. Clapp's desk, in that Franklin street office, that for the first time in my life I saw exhibited the placard "This is My Busy Day."

The names of not many papers known at this time can now be recalled. *Gleason's Pictorial* had made a fortune for its owner and had become *Ballou's Pictorial* under the control of M. M. Ballou, who seemed to get as much fun out of it as any editor and publisher could ever hope for. Mr. Ballou afterwards became the founder of the *Boston Globe*, and it ruined him financially. There was a story paper known as the *Olive Branch* that had so many readers that the wonder is why it ceased to exist; also the *True Flag*; all made up of completed stories. *Harper's Magazine* was a pronounced success; the *Knickerbocker* had succumbed to lack of patronage; *Putnam's* appeared; but was making nobody rich. The *Atlantic Monthly* had just been launched upon the sea of popular favor. Bound copies of the first seven volumes have had a place on my library shelves for nearly fifty years, and there are few other books, among many hundreds, that would be more unwillingly parted with. In these appeared the *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, *Elsie Venner*, *The Minister's Wooing* by Mrs. Stowe; and I doubt if in any equal number of pages of the magnificent monthly periodicals of to-day (1905) can be found so much of literature that will survive the test of half a century.

From Augusta, Maine, a supposedly religious paper called the *Gospel Banner* is remembered, but as it was of a denomination called Universalists and argued that all mankind would eventually be saved, it was, I thought, looked upon with disfavor by self-respecting Christians who "hoped for better things."

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A comic paper called *Nic Nax*, published in New York, extracted its price from my small surplus pretty regularly, and as much may be said of another of similar character called the *Picayune*. In the last named I recall a cartoon representing the Harper Brothers, who had achieved a marked success for their *Weekly* and launched their *Bazar* with such favor that it was said to have netted a profit of a hundred thousand dollars the first year of its life. The four earnest men were listening to a reporter who asserted that he had been at the office of the *Picayune*, and while there that the owner of that publication had been seen to laugh. "Laugh! did he," said the elder Harper—"we'll start a *Picayune!*"

Mr. Gilbert, in his operetta of H. M. S. Pinafore, causes the Admiral to say

I believe that on the seas  
The expression "If you please"  
A particularly gentlemanly tone implants.

Some such idea as this prevailed concerning the influence of the New York *Home Journal*, then conducted by Gen. Geo. P. Morris and Nathaniel P. Willis. I read the paper weekly with profit, I trust, and never ceased to have a sort of reverential regard for Mr. Morris Phillips, who was no relative to Gen. Morris, but succeeded to the control of the paper, and continued it until its merger, in recent years, with the very excellent society journal known as *Town and Country*. Morris Phillips, if not a great man, was a kindly one. Of many good acts of his I have had knowledge and sorry I am that I shall see his face on earth no more.

A paper called *Brother Jonathan*, issued either monthly or occasionally, was more attractive than any other. Its size was enormous, exceeding the dimensions of any I have ever seen, and as to its pictures they were uncountable. The publisher, a man named Day, was also the founder of the New York *Sun*, which, by the way, was the first American daily ever sold for one cent a copy. He is reported to have made a fortune and numerous descendants of his are well known and highly regarded in New York society to-day.

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The *Gleason's Pictorial* has been said to have been the first illustrated weekly in America ; for years I retained copies containing a thrilling story called "The Robber of the Rhine Valley," concerning which I now only remember that the heroine was described as having "eyes as blue as London milk." Mr. Gleason, in the day of his success, secured from England the services of a man named Carter, who had originally been a bookbinder and later achieved some facility as an engraver on wood. This man afterwards came to New York and set up for himself, discarding the name of Carter and taking the prettier sounding one of Frank Leslie ; under which he long exercised a tremendous influence upon the publication of picture papers, illustrated magazines and story books. He died, perhaps, twenty-five years ago and, after his death, his second wife assumed the name of Frank Leslie by Legislative permission and for a considerable time continued the business with perhaps more marked success than her husband had achieved. *Leslie's Weekly*, under different ownership, is to-day a remaining monument to the energy and ability of the English Mr. Carter.

It is an interesting fact that *Harper's Magazine* was originally established solely as an advertising medium for promoting the sale of the books published by that enterprising firm. For many years all outside advertising patronage was refused and the writer remembers listening, with staring eyes, while Fletcher Harper the younger related that he had that week refused an offer of \$18,000 for the use of the last page for a year for an advertisement of the Howe Sewing Machine. It was Commodore Alden B. Stockwell, son-in-law of Elias Howe, and at one time a conspicuous person in Wall Street, who made this offer.

Robert Bonner's New York *Ledger* was as conspicuous on the newsstands as Mr. Curtis's *Saturday Evening Post* is to-day. Bonner had been a compositor on the Hartford *Times*. Coming to New York he acquired the *Merchants' Ledger*, a commercial paper of no prominence or importance, changed its character and in part its name, filled it full of stories, engaged good writers, paid them well and,

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notwithstanding the admitted fact that novel reading was a wicked waste of time, probably there are few men or women to-day of the age of seventy or thereabouts who do not recall the thrilling interest with which, with or without parental approval, they absorbed the chapters of Sylvanus Cobb's "Gun Maker of Moscow" and "The Hidden Hand" by Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth. Fanny Fern wrote exclusively for the *Ledger*. When Edward Everett had accepted the presidency of the Ladies' Mount Vernon Society, having in hand the object of acquiring and preserving for posterity the home of Washington, he found himself unable to decline the, as it then seemed, princely offer of ten thousand dollars for a series of fifty-two articles to appear one column a week for the period of a year, the money to go to increase the funds of the Society. Admiration for Mr. Bonner's enterprise, when I read of it, caused me to become a regular reader of the *Ledger*, and such for numerous years I continued to be. Doubtless that \$10,000 investment was a paying advertisement.

Mr. Bonner's most successful method of advertising was the publication of a page or so of a story in the columns of the leading papers having at the foot of the last paragraph the words *Continued in the New York Ledger*. The idea was new and took wonderfully. When he used display his method consisted of column after column and page after page sometimes of agate caps, wherein were repeated the same words over and over, something like this, which I well remember :

THE NEW YORK LEDGER  
THE NEW YORK LEDGER  
THE NEW YORK LEDGER  
WILL BE FOR SALE  
WILL BE FOR SALE  
WILL BE FOR SALE  
TO-MORROW MORNING  
TO-MORROW MORNING  
TO-MORROW MORNING  
THROUGHOUT THE  
THROUGHOUT THE  
THROUGHOUT THE  
UNITED STATES  
UNITED STATES  
UNITED STATES  
AND NEW JERSEY  
AND NEW JERSEY  
AND NEW JERSEY

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The suggestion that New Jersey is outside of the United States is not often touched upon nowadays, but for many years the references to it were as common as the recurrence of the mother-in-law joke. The origin of the idea came from a condition under which the Camden and Amboy Railroad held its charter, which provided that out of the railroad receipts one dollar should be paid into the State treasury for every through passenger. With that praiseworthy prudence that has raised railroad managers into such prominence among business men and financiers, the directors ordered that a dollar should be added to the regular fare on every through ticket. As transportation began at Jersey City, across the North River from New York, and ended at Camden, across the Schuylkill from Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, it became equivalent to a tax on any citizen of any State who had occasion to travel across the territory of New Jersey.

It has been related that Bonner was often heard to say, when speaking of his success as an advertiser, that over and over he would gather together all the money he could lay his hands on and "throw it all out to the newspapers" and that it seemed as though before he could get back to his office it would all be there again and a whole lot more with it. By and by he had gained riches, and bought trotting horses, which he enjoyed more than confinement to an office, and the paper fell off somewhat from its highest tide of success. More than once he made spasmodic efforts to renew the methods that had been so effective, but the novelty had departed and the money did not so readily return. Finally, when he had become old, he presented the paper to his sons, and they, too, tried to resuscitate its shrinking fortunes, but without success. Then it was changed to a monthly, but that did not go, and now (1905) it is not issued at all. It is a surprising fact that during the days of its great success, the days when it made a millionaire of its owner, it never inserted a single advertisement. It is the only instance I can recall wherein a paper has been specially prosperous without the aid of what is, on all sides, supposed to be the

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life and soul of a newspaper—the advertising patronage which its fame and circulation brings.

There arose and flourished, for a little time, emanating from New York, a certain paper named *Venus' Miscellany*, such a journal as would be appreciated by the cadets of the red-light district. The knowledge of the contents of a single number would cause the heart of Mr. Anthony Comstock

to beat,  
And blossom in purple and red.

It soon ceased to appear, and the impression prevailed that on account of it more than one newsdealer was led to spend a longer or shorter period in a penitentiary.

There was also a weekly whose office of publication was not readily located, but which was as eagerly sought for as is our own *Town Topics* at the present time. It was called *Life in Boston* and was nothing like as nice as *Town Topics*, but seemed to be fully as interesting.

I also recall one other rather saffron journal published in New York by one George W. Matsell, who had once been chief of the city police. It was the *New York Police Gazette*, and it is still alive to-day (1905). I often think of a certain Sunday when I had carried a copy home, and my grandmother, a country bred New England woman then in her seventies, took it up and devoted considerable time to its perusal. To her a murder was a rare and dreadful occurrence, to be talked about for months. Here she found murders by the dozen and other outrages without number. Evidently her first thought was that an epidemic of crime had opened up about her. She wiped her glasses and read and read and wiped her glasses again until finally, in wonder and horror, she laid the paper down and looking at me, not unkindly but with staring eyes, exclaimed, with measured delay and emphasis on every word, "George! What—sort—of—a—paper—is—this?"

The only advertisements during this time that made any impression that has remained in my mind, as I now recall, were those of Geo. W. Simmons, proprietor of a clothing store in North Street, Boston, known as Oak Hall. The

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situation of this great mart was even more unfavorable than Chatham Square would be to-day in the City of New York, but Mr. Simmons had a great trade, made a fortune, and he and his family maintained an excellent social position in exclusive Boston. The announcements of the business seemed to be everywhere, on fences and rocks as well as in newspapers; and it used to be related that on one occasion a White Mountain tourist, at vast pains and some expense, had ascended Profile Mountain and caused himself to be let down with ropes until his feet finally rested upon the bridge of the nose of "the Old Man of the Mountain." He looked above, at the peaks at the right and left, at Profile Lake at his feet, and congratulated himself that where he stood the foot of man had never been before. Finally facing about, preparatory to permitting himself to be drawn up to the ledge from which he had descended, to his amazement and disgust, he read in bold letters painted on the smooth face of a rock close at hand, the words—VISIT OAK HALL, BOSTON.

### THIRD PAPER

In the office of the *Boston Post* I was not long in coming to the conclusion that the value of advertising space was largely influenced by circumstances and conditions, some of which were difficult to understand. The basis of charge was the "square." Originally, doubtless, that word meant a space down the column equal to the width thereof, but when smaller type came to be used in the setting of advertisements the number of lines that had filled the space was still construed to be a proper equivalent for the square, and by and by a still smaller number of lines was adopted; until the square at last became an arbitrary measure, differing in each office, and having a range of anywhere between four and thirty-two lines. In the office of the *Post* a square was eight lines, and the cost of insertion one dollar for the first and fifty cents for each subsequent appearance. If advertisements were frequent or continued, a discount was allowed varying from 10 to 50 per cent, according as the gross total ranged between \$10 and \$100 within a period of three months. A gross bill of \$100 might be reduced one-half and settled for \$50, but a gross bill of \$90 carried with it a right to no more than 33 1-3 per cent discount and, therefore, could not be liquidated for less than \$60. Sometimes an advertiser would ask how much he must advertise to secure 100 per cent discount, but such inquiries were treated as frivolous. Once there was a lawsuit with a publisher who offered \$50 in settlement of a gross bill of \$97.50, while the office insisted upon receiving \$65, and this contention the Court upheld. I was a witness in the case and, on taking my seat after leaving the stand, the defendant asked me, in a low tone, whether I had ever read the story of Ananias, and appeared too disgusted for anything when I told him I never had, and asked him who published it, and if it was good. I found it not customary to take off any discount

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from an advertising bill unless a discount was asked for. Sometimes after the money had been paid and the bill receipted, the belated inquiry about a discount would be made. The question was embarrassing at the moment, but in such a case there was never any discount.

There were certain classes, such as Wants, To Lets, Co-partnership and Legal advertisements, upon which no discount was ever allowed, and the same rule applied to announcements under the heading of Special Notices or a certain other caption, specified as Business Notices, that contained paragraphs set in reading matter type and charged for at twenty cents a line. The same rule of no discount also applied to any charge for real reading matter, for which fifty cents a line was demanded if it was to be paid for at all.

In addition to the scale of discounts outlined there was an established yearly rate under which a merchant might use the space of a square for \$40 per annum or, if to the inquiry whether "inside" insertions were wanted, the answer should be affirmative, the price would in that case be \$80 or about the equivalent of fifty per cent reduction from the gross rate charged at fifty cents a square for all insertions after the first.

I never could perceive that there was any special difference in the position actually given, whether the advertiser paid \$40 or \$80. There was a usage that assumed that the paper might omit yearly advertisements, in the case of an occasional press of matter, and, as an offset to this concession, the yearly advertiser might on occasion occupy space in excess of one square without paying additional. From this the transition was easy to now and then using over-space which, at times, in the case of some customers, would run up to more than half-a-dozen squares. I recall one case of a real estate man who, on such a contract, at \$40 a year, used to run in a picture of his office building, occupying five inches of space down the column. And yet the paper was pretty stiff and held customers rather firmly to the letter of a contract. I was able to make excellent use of the possibilities under a flexible rate on an occasion when I nego-

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tiated a contract with Mr. Lewis Rice, proprietor of the American House, by which he gave me board and room for a year at \$416, and the office, having the case of the real estate man brought up as a precedent, allowed me to balance the charge by a cash payment of \$40.

The interest of all this is mainly in the establishment of the fact that advertising space had at that time no recognized measure or standard of value. Practically, within certain limits, it amounted to getting as much as possible and taking what one could get; and my memory does not remind me that those who paid a low price for a large space were, as a rule, any better satisfied than those were who paid a higher price for a smaller space. Then as now the idea that "advertising always pays" was promulgated and the assertion was made then as frequently as now, and is now made as frequently as then, that advertising does not amount to anything and is a waste of money.

I think the hotel incident illustrates that people will often make trades that are payable in swaps and exchanges when they would not for a moment think of paying for the thing obtained the actual money cost to them of the thing to be given in exchange.

The inconsistencies revealed by the methods of charging outlined are not more apparent than real, but they were no greater than is common to-day in a great majority of newspaper offices. Almost every man connected with the business office of a newspaper acquires a habit of speaking of this customer and that as "willing to pay a fair price" or "never willing to pay a fair price," seemingly oblivious of the fact that no such question would arise were the rates uniformly the same to everyone. It is only a first-rate paper that can afford to have a uniform rate of charge, but not every first-class paper by any means does have such a rate.

The New York *Herald*, at the present time (1905), will insert a three line Situation Wanted advertisement for a servant maid for fifteen cents, but will demand thirty cents from her mistress for the same number of words expressing that a servant is wanted. If the mistress should advertise

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under the heading of Personals, for information about an old servant, the charge for those lines would be ninety cents. If the master, a widower, should wish the address of an old servant and state matrimony as his object the clerk at the *Herald's* advertising counter will mulct him of \$3 for three lines, or precisely twenty times as much as he would demand from the missing maid if she should advertise for a situation. Evidently it is not the space he occupies that an advertiser pays for, but an indefinite something the exact value of which neither the man who buys nor the man who sells quite understands.

Advertising is publicity, a means of causing it to be known what service you or I can render, what wants we can satisfy; and the reasons why that service should be sought at our hands. Sometimes a little publicity brings many customers and in that case advertising pays and pays well. An advertisement of a piano, inserted in the bulletin of a church fair, may cost a dollar or two, and its probable power to do good, as compared with other methods of publicity, may not be worth so many cents, but it may chance that the advertisement is seen by a girl whose father has promised to buy her a piano, while she is in the company of another girl whose opinion she values, and they both happen to notice the piano advertisement, and the other girl to remark that her own piano is of that make, and that she thinks it the best of all. Next day, it may be, the girl and the father visit the piano store, mention seeing the advertisement in the church fair bulletin and the dealer pockets a profit of \$100 from an outlay of an inconsiderable fraction of that amount. He immediately concludes that advertising is profitable, and that church fair bulletins as advertising media cannot be surpassed. So, too, now and then some one invests a dollar or several dollars in the purchase of a lottery ticket and draws the grand prize or a portion of it, and then he and those who knew of his venture are inclined, for a while at least, to think a lottery a paying investment, although knowing full well that all the prizes do not amount to so much as one-half of the money paid for tickets.

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It is the lottery feature about advertising that leads inexperienced persons to think the value of one paper about as great as that of any other, and to be willing to pay, say \$5 each, for the service of twenty small papers, when they would hesitate long before consenting to pay \$50 for a similar announcement in a single great paper that they know full well not only prints and circulates more copies than all the twenty, but know just as well that the average purchasing power of each reader of the great paper is more than twice that of the average purchasing power of each of the readers of the many smaller ones, and that the influence of the great paper is much larger on each of its readers, and their confidence in anything they see announced in its columns is many times greater. The science of advertising is still a puzzle, and those who give advice about it with greatest confidence are always to be found in the ranks of those whose experience is but moderate.

## FOURTH PAPER

It has been already stated that my business in the office of the *Boston Post* was to look after the collection of bills and accounts due to the office. Naturally, however, it came about, there being no advertisement solicitor employed, that Mr. James H. Beals, my chief, would suggest that as I knew Mr. So-and-So by sight I should step into his place of business and ask him if the advertisement seen this morning in the *Journal*, the *Advertiser* or the *Courier* should not also appear in the *Post*. Every one who has been young, and while young has attempted to solicit orders for advertising, can appreciate the dread with which I approached this or that great man to beg his patronage and the feeling of something almost like joy that welled in my bosom when I discovered that the man with the requisite authority was out to luncheon, or, better still, out of town. There were exceptions, however. The experiences were not all disagreeable. Now and then the advertiser seemed to want to see me, and gave an order as though it was a favor to him; and out of acquaintances begun or improved in this way I found friends who were pleasant then and useful and profitable in after years. If a young man represents a newspaper of merit, and will tell his story clearly, distinctly, and without circumlocution, he will have few experiences that he need regard as disagreeable and many times will admit, when the day is over, that its hours have not only produced profit but pleasure and satisfaction as well.

Having become familiar with Boston, its crooked streets and alleyways, I had a longing for a sight of the great metropolis, the City of New York, and one time, in midsummer, in the year 1860, my ambition was gratified. I was given a list of persons to be called on and consulted on the subject of advertising in the *Post*. There was also a package of bills for varying amounts for services rendered, as it

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seemed to me, at a date that indicated neglect on the part of the office bookkeeper that they had not been sent in before. I had a pass on the railroad to Stonington, Connecticut, and on the steamer from that port to New York and, better than all, a due bill taken in payment for advertising done in the *Post* for the Fifth Avenue Hotel. It was a grand hotel in those days, the finest in America. It had one grave fault, it was too far up town, so far, in fact, that a business man could hardly afford the time needed to go and come. The Astor House, corner of Barclay street, the Metropolitan, near Prince street, and the St. Nicholas between were the popular houses.

Paran Stevens kept the Fifth Avenue, also the Revere House in Boston, the Continental in Philadelphia, the Battle House in Mobile, and I know not how many others, and the Fifth Avenue made more money than all the others, and more than any hotel had ever made before—and not many have ever made so much since. It was a gold mine. Amos R. Eno owned it. When Mr. Eno died his estate counted up numerous millions, but in the financial panic of 1857 he was “land poor” and became embarrassed. He had projected a great block of stores, the walls were built, he was in a quandary; when one day Mr. Stevens came to him, induced him to change his stores into a hotel and advanced the money to enable him to carry out the new suggestion. Who looks at a plan of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, either of the ground floor or any other, will not fail to note that it is intersected by thick walls running from front to rear; and everyone knows that the principal office or exchange is planned precisely as it would be for an ordinary store, being of uniform width throughout the entire length.

It was at the Fifth Avenue that the Western man was said to have had the experience I heard Senator Wolcott, of Colorado, relate to the New England Society on one occasion. The man had disappeared, his family, who had accompanied him to the city, became uneasy about him. At last he came to his room, and to the anxious inquiry of his wife, “Where in the world have you been all day?” he responded

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calmly, "I've just been in the cuspidor walking pro and con." Senator Platt, Senator Gorman, of Maryland, Senator Aldrich, of Rhode Island, Governor Odell and many other Senators and Governors may be often found at this house to-day. It is perhaps the best specimen in the world (1905) of a hotel conducted on the American plan. I am living there myself this winter, but this is no paid notice. In this house in 1860 the writer first saw and rode in a passenger elevator or "lift," and in the place where it is situated there is to-day a notice that in the year 1859 was installed in the space, "the first passenger elevator ever used in any hotel, or any other building, in this country or the world."

Paran Stevens was a Vermont man. It has been related that while young he thought well of himself when he owned and attended a well-known stallion, but, becoming a hotel man, he soon made himself the best hotel man America had ever seen. Late in life he married a beautiful girl who had been a mill hand in a cotton factory at Lowell, Mass. She long outlived her husband, became a leader in the ultra-fashionable set in New York society, and the names of her daughter and of her daughter's daughter are often seen in society notes—the Hon. Mrs. Paget, etc., etc.

New York was different from Boston. One could stop on Broadway without creating surprise, and might stand in a doorway to look over memoranda without exciting attention or curiosity. The men whom I was to see about advertising orders were mainly out of town or out of business, and those against whom I had bills to collect appeared to be mainly out of business, or dead, or both. I located one man in Morrisania, a place situated many miles away and approached by horse cars through Third avenue, fare five cents each way. After three trips, two made by appointment, this good man paid over to me \$2 on account. I never saw him more, nor was the account ever balanced. Another man, a hairdresser, after some demur, paid me \$10, the amount of the bill against him, and ordered his advertisement stopped. He seemed to be pretty earnest about it. I got no other money. My feet were sore, my shoes were

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somewhat depleted in the matter of thickness of sole, I had collected \$12 and paid out thirty cents for car fare to and from Morrisania. I had my hotel bill entered on the back of the due bill I had in my pocket. It was \$12.50, being \$2.50 a day for five days (they charge more in 1905), and by means of my passes on boat and railroad was back in Boston after an absence of six days and six nights. I did not feel enthusiastic as I made my report to my employers and the office bookkeeper, but no fault was found, no unpleasant comments made; in fact, the tendency seemed rather in the direction of smiling acquiescence rather than any disposition to criticise. Some months afterward I learned that the wonder on the part of the manager, who usually attended personally to New York business, was, not that I only collected \$12, but that I succeeded in getting so much as one dollar or, for that matter, so much as a cent.

"Mr. Batcheller said he wanted his advertisement stopped," I reminded Mr. Beals when credit for the payment had been posted on the ledger. He made no comment and I repeated the statement, whereupon he looked at me with an amused expression and said, "I guess Batcheller has ordered that advertisement stopped as often as four times a year for the last four years."

## FIFTH PAPER

Du Maurier, in his story of "Triiby," that everybody once read and no one now knows anything about, resurrected the lines of a once popular ballad:

Don't you remember  
Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt,  
Sweet Alice, whose hair  
Was so brown?

There was a later suggestion that Alice now lay in the churchyard. The thought may run on to a still later time when her boy sweetheart no longer expresses a remembrance because he has joined her and is not here to speak. The mind can look forward to another not very distant period when there will be few, or none, who can recall any memory of either Alice or Ben, because both of them had passed from human vision before those had come into being to whose memory the appeal would have to be addressed.

These thoughts come to mind in connection with recollections of persons with whose faces I became familiar in the years of that early connection with a newspaper office. I recall a bare room, not a very tidy one, with a single desk, two chairs, a man, not old but with thin hair—foretelling baldness—sitting, his face in his hands, his elbows resting upon the desk. It was Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, in his not much used Boston office, a year or two before the Civil War.

In a busier, better organized lawyer's office I recall a bright, round, kindly face, good wholesome color, dark hair, a brisk manner, and remember that the man became very conspicuous soon after as the great War Governor, John A. Andrew.

In still another office, not appearing so brisk as the last named but much more so than the first, I recall the kindly, thoughtful, wrinkled—oh! so wrinkled—face of Rufus Choate; and that the name on the check given in payment for

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a year's subscription resembled a spider track more than a signature.

The home of Wendell Phillips was in Essex, not far from Washington street, and the orator himself sometimes opened the door in answer to the ring. The quiet of the library, the dignity, the kindly dignity of the man, an air of refinement about the surroundings: a memory of all these comes before me when the name of the great Anti-Slavery champion is mentioned.

Over the Quincy market, that was an eighth of a mile in length, the old firm of Oliver Ames & Son, makers of shovels and that sort of thing, had a mammoth wareroom (this was before Oakes Ames and the days of the Credit Mobilier), and a partner of the house was Peter Harvey, a heavily built, florid man with, as it seemed to me, a choleric temper and a disposition to allow me to call numerous times to collect his subscription to the paper. He was generally known and spoken of as "the friend of Daniel Webster." In after years I often wondered how so chilly a personage as he appeared to be could have written so charming a book as his biography of Webster certainly is.

An elderly man with a brisk, nervous manner was in the counting room, from time to time, in the interest of life insurance, and I recall the pride and satisfaction with which he replied to inquiries about the progress of a son who had gone to New York, and became active in the line of business with which the father's interest seemed to be joined. That son was Henry B. Hyde, so long the head, almost the creator, of the great Equitable Life Assurance Society.

An older man, of reserved, dignified manner, came in now and then to look at files of the paper, to resurrect some paragraph that had interest for him, and I learned that his name was Motley, and that he had a son named John Lothrop Motley, then United States Minister at The Hague.

Still another old man, less active, less prosperous, less self-assertive than either of the others, was a Mr. Derby; and he, too, is remembered on account of his son, one of the

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earliest American humorists, known to those who remember him at all as John Phoenix.

The face of one other man comes before me, a tall, large, wholesome-looking personage, perhaps not quite up to the times in appearance and manner, always wearing a curious deprecating smile—not a frequent but an occasional visitor at the office. The business that brought him being generally an announcement of a railroad excursion of not any great importance to some point not far away. There seemed to be a disposition, on the part of the manager, to have fun with this man, always in a half bantering, but not wholly disrespectful way, and I remember that anything he really seemed to want to have done or said by the paper was usually acquiesced in; and it was also understood that if his bills were not promptly paid no fuss would be made about it. I believe, however, that his bills were always paid, eventually. When he went from the office, on the first occasion that I recall seeing him, the manager, looking at the retreating figure rather quizzically, told me “That man has a charter from the Congress of the United States to build a railroad to the Pacific Ocean.” San Francisco was not twenty years old then; Omaha was the name of an Indian tribe, not of a city; Los Angeles was a village inhabited by a few score people of Spanish origin, and Denver had no place on the map. By and by I heard of George Francis Train, Oakes Ames, the Credit Mobilier, and knew that a Pacific railroad had been built and that the charter, which had been Mr. Josiah Perham’s cherished possession, and about which he was so often ridiculed, really did come into effective use in carrying forward the great enterprise. I never see the kindly but rather bucolic countenance of the venerable Mr. Russell Sage without being reminded of Perham; the same face, the same smile, only Mr. Sage is much older—but then Mr. Perham is dead.

In one lawyer’s office on Court street, the office of Stillman B. Allen, a considerable collection business was done, and there at one time appeared a square-shouldered, curly-haired, red-cheeked young man, who was always so polite,

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attentive, civil and prompt, that to have occasion to be brought into contact with him was a pleasure. Before I left Boston his name appeared on the sign, which became Allen & Long, and later I was glad to hear of him as Congressman, Governor and Secretary of the Navy. He was John D. Long, now as then of Hingham, Mass.

Fletcher Webster, a son of Daniel Webster, had an office in the Surveyor's Department of the Custom House. He may have held the office of Surveyor. He was slow pay and impressed one as a dull man, although rather fine looking, with black hair and eyes. He became Colonel of a regiment in the Civil War, but I do not remember that he distinguished himself either by the exhibition of great ability or the lack of it.

Then there was the Pension Commissioner, Isaac O'Barns, a man who had been, I think, a personal friend of and an appointee under President Franklin Pierce, and whom no subsequent President seemed to feel like displacing. He was a tall, broad-shouldered, white-haired old man, a typical old school gentleman. He boarded at the Bromfield House. His office was at the Custom House, where he went late and from whence he returned early. He had lost his voice and spoke only in a hoarse whisper, and the unexpected quality of his few sentences led to as many funny stories being attributed to him as, in later days, was the case with that famous Baltimorean who reformed and became a New Yorker, I mean the late William M. Travers. It was told of Isaac O'Barns that he promised to subscribe for the erection of a Baptist church somewhere on the one condition that they should "Baptize 'em in hot water;" that when he had asked at the Tremont House bar for "rot gut" and been handed out the brandy decanter—the barkeeper knowing he always drank brandy—he remarked, after completing the transaction, "You keep a pretty good house here, don't you?" To which the man responding that such was the intention, asked "What do you find this morning to specially commend, Mr. O'Barns?" received for answer, "You give a man just what he calls for." Again, one day

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stopping on the edge of a crowd in State street, at the scene of the Boston massacre, just below the old State House, where an itinerant preacher was holding forth, he asked "What's this? What's this?" and was told that it was a meeting of Second Adventists. "What are they? What are they?" whispered the old gentleman, and being told that they looked for the second coming of Christ he seemed to wait several minutes with interest, but finally inquired in his loudest whisper, "Expect him to-day?" Finally on his death bed, or when he thought he was dying, and the doctor had pronounced his feet warm and said no one ever died with warm feet, the old gentleman inquired in his whisper whether the doctor had forgotten the case of John Rogers.

Of all the men of that day there are a few still remaining, and one of these I sometimes meet in recent years, I refer to J. Parker Whitney, who in 1858 was a dealer in paints in Union street near Hanover. I recall an occasion when a hotel man, proposing to do the honors of his place, asked whether we would drink claret or champagne, and Whitney said, in response, that we would as soon have both as either, and we had both. Whitney always seemed to get all there was to be had. He graduated from paints and oils, did something in mines, gold and copper, has a California ranch to-day with sixty miles of stone wall upon it, came near being the first United States Senator from Colorado, has long been rated a millionaire by the mercantile agencies, and has been made more or less conspicuous the past year or two on account of the frolics of a fun-loving son and a Hebe-like daughter, who, beautiful as she may be, can hardly compete in loveliness with the memory of her mother when, twenty years ago, she, too, was just out of school. Mr. Whitney is known to all who go fishing at the Rangeley Lakes, for his Camp there, at Mosquito Brook on Lake Molychuckamuck, has stood for more than forty years, and there has not been perhaps a single winter of them all that he has not been there, with good company, long enough to get a deer or two, a touch of zero weather, and to renew the memory of visits made before and friends who will not come

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again because they have now gone beyond earth's boundary lines. At one time Mr. Gilbert E. Jones, long of the *New York Times*, was associated with Mr. Whitney in the management of the Mosquito Brook Camp, as is evidenced in the combination of their two monograms, still to be noted artistically carved by Gillic's own hand, and affixed to the door that fronts the Lake, as the writer well remembers.

An editorial writer on the *Post*, at this time, was B. P. Shilliber, whose *nom de plume* was Mrs. Partington. His humorous sayings had a wide vogue, but probably did not produce much of an addition to his income, which was a stated salary of \$15 a week. The business of selling jokes in the open market was not then established. Mrs. Partington was a Boston Mrs. Malaprop, and a great many of her sayings were comments upon the conduct and experiences of Ike, a grandson or nephew, who was a sort of pre-historic Buster Brown. Ike had to be vaccinated, and the old lady, mentioning the matter, said he was "nocolated by an oculist." A woman who said that she could not bear children was comforted with the remark, "Perhaps if you could you would like them better."

I have before referred to a Mrs. Bailey, to whom I was indebted for a valuable service. It became a part of my duty, as years went on, to collect a sum of money for this good lady and to take it to her on a specified day each month, Col. Greene, her brother, paying half and Edwin C. Bailey, her son and owner of the *Boston Herald*, the other half. The cashier at the *Herald* office, R. M. Pulsifer, by name, had instructions to honor my demands. The draft was not a heavy one, I think about seventeen dollars from each contributor. The lady then lived at Chestnut Hill, some miles out of Boston, and in the goodness of her dear old heart she would have me stay to drink a cup of tea with her on these occasions, and more than likely there would be hot biscuits and a slice of ham or cold tongue, a bit of jam or preserves, and I would be called upon to tell as much of the world's affairs as passed under my immediate eye, and in return was often taken into her confidence, we being both from the

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Granite State, and she as near her eighties as I to my twenties.

On one occasion there was mention made that Mr. Salmon P. Chase had retired from Lincoln's Cabinet and his successor as Secretary of the Treasury would be William Pitt Fessenden of Maine, and I came away with the impression that the new Secretary was a cousin or nephew of my good friend, Col. Greene of the *Post*. Next morning I stood in the counting room, behind the newspaper counter, when Col. Greene came in, as was his custom, to take a copy of the morning issue in his hand, and, as I handed him the paper and said good morning, I ventured to ask him about his relationship to the new Secretary. He looked at me through his gold-bowed spectacles with, I thought, a shade of annoyance, and turned away without answering, but, pausing at the door, he turned to me and said "Before you go out to-day come up to my room." I did this a little later. He sat at his desk, a pretty plain affair, in his editorial sanctum—decidedly primitive quarters he had—but he a handsome, stately, kindly, well-dressed, clean-shaven, healthy man of between fifty and sixty years of age. He did not ask me to be seated, but spoke in earnest tones. "You know my sister is much older than I. She was a young woman when I was a baby. When she was a young woman she had an experience of the sort that people, who have had such, do not talk about. The father of her son had been the principal of the Academy at Boscawen and from there went to another academy at Fryeburg, Maine, and there the boy was brought up. The father's name was Fessenden and Pitt was the son. He is about my own age and a mighty good fellow he is, too. Now," continued the Colonel, "you can see that if you had known a little more this morning you wouldn't have been asking questions, and now that you know so much I think I can trust you to keep your mouth shut." I would not have told the story here had it not come to me, many years later, from a very old man who, relating a personal interview had with Daniel Webster at the time he had failed to receive the

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Presidential nomination that went to Gen. Scott, and the great expounder somewhat repiningly found fault with the bad faith, as he thought it, of a young politician in Maine, who had failed to support his claims ; and then the great man proceeded to tell of a certain horseback ride he had taken thirty years before, from Boscawen in New Hampshire, to interview the principal of the academy at Fryeburg, Maine, in the interest of a certain baby boy who, had he remembered and acknowledged the obligation now, might have been a help, but had not so proved himself.

## SIXTH PAPER

There was one experience in connection with my service with the *Post* that has always impressed me as almost wonderful, and I mention it here believing it may encourage some young man to attempt to overcome a bad habit before it is too late. The outcome in my case is not as encouraging as I could wish, but there certainly was progress made; perhaps a stronger will would have achieved a permanent success. The case was this: from boyhood -I had been afflicted with a bad memory for names. I even forgot the names of boys who had been schoolmates. On one occasion, during my experiences in Boston in a thread and needle store in 1856, a young man from my own New Hampshire town had a job driving a market wagon, and occasionally called at the store where I was employed, and once came in to spend a Sunday with me and brought a watermelon for our personal delectation. Late in the afternoon of that Sunday I had to ask this friend to tell me his name. This weakness seemed so serious a fault that I thought very likely it might lead to my losing the good place I had fallen into, and I resolved to overcome the deficiency if I possibly could. So effective was that resolve that during the entire seven years of my employment there arose no case where I had difficulty about remembering a name; and there is no name that became known to me during that seven years that I cannot now recall without effort, after a lapse of more than forty years, and yet (and this is the discouraging part of the story) no sooner had I left the employment, wherein that resolve had been made, and commenced a business of my own, than the old infirmity reasserted itself, and has continued to this day; to such an extent that I confidently expect some day to have to consult my card case to ascertain my own name.

Pursuing my duties as collector, I conceived it to be important to keep appointments with care. If a man said "Call