

GEORGE D. PRENTICE.

From Lippincott's Magazine for November. Mr. Prentice's forte as an editor consists in his wit and sarcasm. At his table, with his spare notes and a rapid amanuensis before him, he pulls forth strings of witty sayings from his brain as a musician pulls forth coils of silken ribbons from a hat. Whenever a point suggests itself to him he will let it down no matter where he is or what accommodations for jotting down are at hand. He generally has a pencil and a slip of paper, sometimes only the debris of an old envelope, about him, but for a desk he will with equal readiness make use of his hat or of a head with a lamp-post. The note, consisting probably of only a word, is then consigned to apparent oblivion in the depths of a pocket or the inside of his hat, to be brought out only by chance among a number of 'boon companions in the same place. When he feels inclined to wit, he takes from receptacles where he has placed his more fortunate notes, thick slips of tiny manuscripts, with bare suggestions of a joke. On these he commences a process of incubation that is quite as rapid as that of the famous hen-peacemaker. He dictates in a slow and serious manner, with his eyes fixed alternately on his own list of slip of paper and on the ceiling, punctuating as he goes, never halting to supply a word or two to embellish a figure, but straight on as if he were Wendell Phillips or Susan B. Anthony in a fervor. His conversational powers, strangely enough, are very deficient. He becomes painfully dull and awkward when brought into brilliant company. Introduce him to a noted wit, and although he may laugh at the jokes of his new acquaintance, the laugh is partially forced, and his replies, as the attempts may be, are irrelevant and pointless. He is apt of making any attempt at wit and humor, and seems strongly inclined to discourtesy, such as an attempt on the part of another. His wit is apparent only in the columns of a newspaper, for it requires to be pruned and finished before it is presentable. He does not say things that are bright, but he thinks and writes a great many.

blood, and was yet known as 'Bloody Monday' in the annals of the city. Mr. Prentice undoubtedly assisted in allaying the popular tumult, and probably saved a rival office and a very fine Catholic cathedral from destruction. On several occasions, however, he has himself been compelled to flee before the wrath of the people. During the Ward riots, when Matt. Ward, who murdered the school teacher Butler, was the object of vengeance, Mr. Prentice, who defended Ward in his columns for reasons never definitely known, took horse at midnight and galloped to a place of safety. When the news of the Bull Run fight reached Louisville, the intensest excitement prevailed, and the Rebel population paraded the streets, swearing vengeance against all the loyal men who came in contact with them. The Journal office had long been floating a United States flag from a staff on the roof, but the staff being sent for early in the day to put up a longer one. He arrived at the time quite a threatening demonstration was being made in front. The Courier office, which was on the opposite side of the same street, was intensely Rebel, and it was bruited about that a Confederate flag would be hoisted upon it during the day. The crowd between the two offices was clamorous for the raising of one flag and the lowering of the other. At this juncture, Mr. Prentice was informed by an excited employe from the counting-room that somebody was on the roof pulling down the flag. The old man's eyes flashed fire. "Then, by G—," said he, "go up there and throw the scoundrel down among the mob." Up rushed the willing employe. The flag was already half-masted, and the carpenter, intent mainly on earning his wages, though not insensible to the cries of the admiring crowd beneath, was busily engaged in untying it from the balyards. To his infinite disgust, however, before his work was completed, he found himself buried back-and-forth by a strong hand, which in the next breath flung the flag again to the peak and tied the balyards in an impenetrable knot to the staff. The honest carpenter was then lustily kicked down the skylight, and thrust the rest of the way down two pieces of stairs to the street door, where he received an energetic patting shute, and found himself landed among his late admirers, without having a single chance to receive or tender an explanation. This bold stroke touched the generous impulses of the mob, if they had any, and all demonstrations against the Journal and its flag ceased. The crowd, in fact, turned its ridicule on the mounting carpenter, who with difficulty made his way to his shop with unbroken bones. Notwithstanding his frequent personal encounters, Mr. Prentice never accepted a challenge or fought a duel. James B. Clay, the son of the Sage of Kentucky, once challenged him for remarks made in his paper in an editorial version on Clay's sale of his father's homestead. In his reply declining, Mr. Prentice made probably the most effective argument ever urged against duelling. After offering as a side issue the fact of his arm being paralyzed and young James being the son of one of his dearest friends, he urged that the anxious nights preceding a duel were tortures that he could not endure. He would be willing to fight on sight, but he could not deliberately plan how, when, and where. Wordy retorts between rivals of note generally make pretty good reading in newspapers that contain but lit the startling news and few solid editorials, and they become particularly interesting when all parties are personally known to nearly every reader. Mr. Prentice was an adept in the art, and usually found room for a wordy exchange among the editorial fraternity in Kentucky. Shadrach Penn was one of these worthy foemen, and the battle generally raged fiercely between the two. He and Prentice were intimate friends and almost continually together, but they would time and again violate each other's most sacred confidences for the purpose of some paltry joke or home thrust. On one occasion the two were bathing in a Saratoga, and Mr. Prentice fell fast asleep in his bath-tub. Penn saw him, and laughing innocently at the prospect of a good joke the next morning, betook himself to his office, where he prepared an elaborate sketch for publication, detailing the fact that Prentice was drunk in a bath-tub. He had no foolish scruples about mentioning names. Prentice, however, was awakened by Penn's profligate laughter, and he belabored his brain, and he immediately comprehended the situation. He also returned instantly to his office and prepared an elaborate account of the affair, embellishing and coloring it to suit the desperate circumstances under which he labored, but substituting the name of Penn for Prentice in the cast of characters. Both paragraphs appeared next morning, each in its respective sheet, but as Prentice's was the most highly colored, the people gladly accepted it as the true narrative. On one occasion, however, Mr. Prentice was the victim of a shrewd joke that any one had had practical on others. For a long time he was engaged to contribute weekly to the New York Ledger a half column of "Wit and Wisdom, original and selected." For this he received one thousand dollars annually, which, in truth, of gold and silver, and considering that the wit was more selected than original, was very good pay. Jasper H. Johnson, a queer genius and a race humorist, put together, and who does not know his own worth, was an editor-of-all-work on the Courier at the time, and succeeded admirably in burlesquing Prentice's half column in the Ledger by a similar half column in the two weeks before its natural time, being dated well into the future. Johnson saw in this a chance for a point, and after intimating several times that the public and the Ledger were swindled by wholesale plagiarisms from the Courier, on the part of Mr. Prentice, he springing his mine by publishing in the Courier of May 1 the precise wit and wisdom already given to the world in the Ledger of May 11. He again taxed Mr. Prentice with plagiarisms, and held up these 'damning proofs' to the public. Prentice, who seldom looked at the Ledger, except to see that his contribution was in its accustomed place, was nonplussed by this complete satire, and it is doubtful if he ever accurately understood how the thing happened. After the Ward riots, Mr. Prentice found his subscription that woefully depleted by the withdrawal of subscribers who consigned the course he had taken during the trial. In order to retrieve this loss he published daily for a week or two several columns of letters from imaginary subscribers who, having withdrawn, were anxious to subscribe again. These writers declared that they had been afflicted with terrible pains and "miseries" in the chest or head or stomach, or with rheumatic and consumptive ailments; and solemnly took oath that one reading of the Journal cured them completely. One individual declared that he had a tricky horse, but that he commenced taking the Journal again, and the

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