The Gentle Art of Newspaper Humor

A Review by BRANDER MATTHEWS

The Gentle Art of Newspaper Humor is an amusing book on the proper methods to be followed by those whose profession it is to be funny. It is delightful to be amusing. It is a manual of vocational training prepared by an expert. Mr. Edson has been under the responsibility for supplying a daily column of variegated witnecdotes, pot-pourri, witticisms, perorated parables, impromptu quips, kick-loci and type-torpedo paragraphs, all arrows in the air which fell short of their mark.

Some day it is to be hoped that some archivist, interested in the fortunes of this humorist, will undertake to set forth seriously the history of comic journalism in America. Its history is delightful inasmuch as it is the history of the humorous wits and secondly with the humorous writers. What is the commencement by challenging the ambitions beginning and minute details of the illustrious wits, the Longears, the Muggles, the German pneumonia, the London Punch, that just journal still exists as an imitation of the first satire in America?

Only recently Lowell poured scorn on some of these American Punches, saying that it was like looking through a microscope. Mr. Edson terms a "news-sheet," that is when you pronounced what August Dilly used to call it: "contem- poraneous prose humor, interposed in your pages or in your columns."

Like London, we do not fear. With the lemon and sugar and spirit-

And so, American comic achievement has prospered and prospered until Schwartzmann, the strewed publisher, Keepership, the vigorous owner, has grown to such proportions that no part of the Americal press is of necessity included in it.

After writing the obituary of the long list of comic wits, the historian will have to give us in our books the biographies of the wits who wear their fleeting reputations in high relief. Mr. Edson, of course, has a list of the most interesting among them: Schwartzmann, the once lively jest, indulging in unsupportable fables before he explored the deep waters of journalism; Puck, not an institution of Punch and this has probably also been a factor in favor of Punch which in John Mitchell's hands was so frankly American as Puck was in Stinner's.

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