shrined, idolised, while she, his true wife, had been left to loneliness, poverty, hardship and dishonour. Finding some letters of Madame de Pastourelle's, which she does not scruple to read, and which have constituted Fenwick's highest education, she finds what she considers confirmatory proof of their mutual love, and determines to leave him, taking Carrie with her, and to leave no clue behind her as to her whereabouts, which project she puts into immediate execution, and when Fenwick returns elated, flushed with happiness, he finds that Phoebe has been and gone, leaving nothing but a note, which tells him she has left him for ever. He uses every effort to find her, but in vain, and bribing his landlady to secrecy, goes on acting a lie. Twelve years elapse between the second and third part of the book, and in this time Fenwick has run the whole gamut of experience known to the successful artist. After Phoebe's flight, for some years he had flourished exceedingly, but his earlier faults proved his ruin. He had continued his virulent articles to the "Mirror" with disastrous results to his pocket, friendships, and reputation, and at this time was bankrupt in all three; and was at last glad to take a commission to paint the scenery for a play that was to be produced in London, for which some scenes of the Royal palace at Versailles were required. At Versailles he meets Madame de Pastourelles, whom he has not seen for some time. The old friendship is renewed, much to the regret of "Arthur Welby," an old lover of Madame de Pastourelles, but now married to her cousin. Welby does not think Fenwick worthy of Madame de Pastourelles, which opinion Lord Findon shares. But Nemesis, in the shape of Bella Morrison, is at last on Fenwick's track. Seeing Fenwick with Welby, she finds out where they are staying, and, waylaying Welby, she tells him of Phoebe's flight and Fenwick's history. Welby insists on his leaving Versailles, which Fenwick is only too glad to do, but before going consents to see Madame de Pastourelles, who insists as her right that she be allowed to help to find Phoebe, to which he consents, and after many days she is found, only just in time, as Fenwick, tired of himself and the world, is about to put an end to his life. Knowledge by suffering entereth, and of suffering Phoebe had partaken largely since her flight, never having ceased to reproach herself for forsaking her duty. For a time Fenwick could only just tolerate Phoebe, but seemed to derive great pleasure from Carrie's ministrations; but, when fully restored to health, bodily and mentally, complete reconciliation takes place, and Fenwick, clothed in his right mind, gets back his cunning and Phoenix-like rises out of the ashes of his former ruin, and wins to greater heights. In the preface to the book the author touches on plagiarism, which she declares to be the "literary crime of crimes." But it is exceedingly difficult to define plagiarism. If the choosing of a certain type, made use of before by a writer, and investing it with the same emotion, under stress of which anyone of that type would act similarly, be plagiarism, then is Mrs Ward convicted of that "literary crime of crimes," for the conception of Fenwick and the Tito Melema of George Eliot's "Romola" are almost identically the same. The destruction by Phoebe of Madame de Pastourelle's picture has its counterpart in Kipling's "Light That Failed," where Dick Heldar's model destroys his masterpiece. To duplicate a common, or certain type, is not plagiarism. The writer's delineation of Fenwick is a very powerful one, and shows very plainly the limitations of the artistic temperament and the excesses it is prone to. In his rehabilitation the author has reached the highest pinnacle of Art from a humanitarian point of view. It may be more in accordance with Old World tradition, that the wages of sin being death, he should have died, but sin repented of, condoned, and atoned for, together with the rehabilitation of the sinner, is a much higher gospel. Madame de Pastourelle is a very rare type of the spiritual, which is too often confounded with the merely ascetic. Married at an early age to a man round whom was thrown the halo of an historic name, she before long discovered that the man she had married was either very wicked or very mad. Being what she was, she preferred to believe the latter, and refused, though strongly urged by her family, to sue for the divorce she was entitled to. Bereft of the consolations of wife and motherhood she mothered humanity, and, motherlike, the most faulty had the greatest claim on her sympathies. Had Phoebe been more spiritual or less ascetic she could have held Fenwick against all-comers, both on account of his weakness and his love of her beauty. Carrie is a pleasing example of the girl of English parentage, brought up and educated unconventionally in a colony where versatility and resourcefulness are more in request than accomplishments. There are some interesting details of art and artists, all the more interesting as they have been authenticated by the artist, whose illustrations have accentuated the value of the book.

DELTA.

The Wizard of Wessex.

Thomas Hardy, whose second volume of "The Dynasts" was published a little time ago, alone among the many novelists, sees country life as no other writer can, his whole nature is attuned to its beauties. Sixty-six years ago he was born in one of the humblest little cottages in Dorset, which is still standing about two miles from Dorchester on the verge of "the vast unenclosed tract of land known as Egdon Heath," as he calls it in "The Return of the Native," but better known to local Hodges as Puddletown Heath. The cottage contains four rooms and is thatched—many of the straws from that thatch have gone to America, for Americans, who appreciate Hardy even better than we do, flock to the spot to carry away relics, says a writer in a Home journal. There is a rambling old garden with a high hedge at the back, and in front miles of bronzed heath. Here young Hardy lived as a boy with the music of the neighbouring pines always in his ears, mingling with the cries of wild birds, almost cut off from civilization in the great wilderness.

It is said that the first book Thomas Hardy ever wrote has never been published, and the man who persuaded him not to publish it was no other than George Meredith. The book was called "The Poor Man and the Lady," and contained some strong revolutionary principles. But it was a novel of great promise, and this the reader for the publishing house to which it was submitted quickly recognised, for he sent for Hardy to come and see him, and told him plainly that the great B.P. would account it presumption for a young man to force such views down its throat. And so Thomas Hardy took George Meredith's advice, and went home to remedy the defects, and by a curious freak of chance he called his next novel "Desperate Remedies."

It was not until "Far from the Madding Crowd" appeared that Hardy began to be talked about, although his previous novel, "Under the Greenwood Tree," was pronounced by Tinsley to be the greatest novel he had ever read. Nevertheless, at the time it was an ignominious failure—a failure which came as the greatest blow of his life to Tinsley, though the novel subsequently came into its own. "Tess," the most dramatic though not by any means the best of Hardy's books, was inspired by the sight of a girl's face. Its author was walking down a lane in West Dorset when a farmer's cart rumbled past on, which was seated the original of "Tess." The novelist never saw her again, but he found himself weaving a romance around the girl, and in due time, "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" appeared.

With all due respect to Dorset, Hardy is not recognised as he should be in his own county. Occasionally you will see a copy of one of his works in a shop window, but nine out of every ten people in Casterbridge, to give Dorchester its Hardyesque title, know that he is a novelist and no more. I believe in that romantic old town he has won greater fame as a magistrate. But what probably made Hardy take to verse was a remark Coventry Patmore made to him when "A Pair of Blue Eyes" was published, which was: "Wonderful book—wonderful! But how much finer if it had been written in blank verse!"

Thomas Hardy can often be seen in Dorchester. He is carelessly dressed, for Hardy was never a Beau Brummell—what true lover of the country is? He walks with his hand behind his back and his head usually bent, a slow, shambling walk like that of a man prematurely aged. The whole face is finely chiselled, but it is the forehead which stands out paramount.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN AN ELEPHANT.

As the guard of the Rotorua train about to start from Auckland was standing by the luggage van, he was accosted by a smartly dressed English tourist: "Ah, guard, that's my trunk," pointing within the open van, "that leather one near the wicker basket. You'll look after it, won't you? See that it is not thrown off before we reach Rotorua."

The guard had many matters on his mind other than a care for individual pieces of luggage, but with Scotch shrewdness he foresaw a possible tip, so he answered, amiably enough:

"Oh, aye, sir, a'll see tae ner."

Stopping at Mercer when one-third of the journey had been travelled, John was again accosted by the tourist:

"Guard, is my trunk all right?" and again he was assured that his trunk was being looked after.

The guard had to account for that trunk upon three subsequent occasions before the train stopped for the last time before reaching the terminus and then once more came the drawling query:

"Guard, is my trunk all right?"

John turned quickly and seeing no signs of the looked-for tip, his tried patience gave way.

"Yer trunk is in the van, but," he added testily, "A'm thinking that instead o' being the ass ye are, ye should hae been an elephant, for then ye could carry yer trunk yersel."

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SAGACIOUS DOGS.

There was a Chinaman who had three dogs. When he came home one evening he found them asleep on his couch of teakwood and marble. He whipped them and drove them forth.

The next night, when he came home, the dogs were lying on the floor. But he placed his hand on the couch and found it warm from their bodies. Therefore he gave them another whipping.

The third night, returning earlier than usual, he found the dogs sitting before the couch, blowing on it to cool it.

✦ ✦ ✦

RESIGNED TO THEIR FATE.

A man out West says he moved so often during one year that whenever covered waggons stopped at the gate his chickens would fall on their backs and hold up their feet in order to be tied and thrown in.

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A SNOWSTORM IN A BALLROOM.

A snowstorm in a room actually occurred at a court ball in St. Petersburg. The temperature indoors had gone up to some 90 degrees, and, several ladies having fainted, a rush was made to open the windows.

There was no storm outside, but as soon as the windows were thrown up snow began to fall inside the ballroom, the moisture in the air being suddenly condensed by the extreme cold without.

✦ ✦ ✦

A BLOW-OUT.

Witherby paused in front of a haberdasher's window. He needed a new cravat.

"That's a stunning-looking thing," he said to himself.

He stepped inside.

The cravat was ten shillings—more than Witherby had ever paid—but after some discussion of its merits, he bought it and walked out.

As the knowledge of the new cravat began to work into his consciousness Witherby awoke to the fact that his shirts were not what they should be—nor did the collars he wore go with that tie—they were too cheap.

He went back and ordered some shirts and collars.

Then he stopped at his tailors' to get a new suit.

Then it occurred to him that his evening clothes were altogether too shabby for a gentleman of his standing.

In two hours' time he had spent nearly £60 on a new wardrobe.

Shame-faced, remorseful, hating himself heartily, he made his way home.

He entered the hall. He walked upstairs. At the door of her dressing-room his wife came forward. In an excess of affection she threw her arms about his neck.

"Darling," she murmured, "will you forgive me?"

"What have you done?"

"I've been shopping—and I've been extravagant. I started with a simple little gown. One thing led to another—I'm afraid I've ordered a lot. Oh, dear, I know you will never forgive me!"

Witherby, unable to contain himself, danced about the room in an excess of joy.

"Horray!" he exclaimed.

His astonished wife gazed at him in anxiety. "What can you mean?" she cried. "What is the matter?"

"Why," cried Witherby, "when I came home just now I actually believed that I was the biggest fool in the world. And it's such a relief to know that I'm not!"

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A DANDY BARBER.

Customer: "Hair cut, please. Short."

Barber: "Yes, sir." (Ten minutes elapse.) "That about right, sir?"

Customer: "I suppose my head is full of dandruff, but I have no time to-day."

Barber: "Very clean, sir; no use of shampooing it."

Customer: "And possibly my whiskers want trimming, but—"

Barber: "Not at all. They are very neatly trimmed already, and I could not improve them."

Customer: "And you have no hair lotion to sell?"

Barber: "Not unless people ask for it."

(And then the man awoke! It was all a dream.)

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TOOK THE WHOLE HOG.

Whether "a lie well told and stuck to afterwards is as good as the truth," was debated at the dinner table where a man was sitting one day this week, and it brought out the following story from a rather dyspeptic-looking man who had eaten very sparingly:—"I used to live up in the country," said he. "One of my neighbours, an unlucky, unthrifty sort of a man, killed a pig one day with the aid of a local butcher, and after the killing he said to the butcher:—"By jinks, Sam, I hate to cut up that pig." "Why?" "'Cause you see I'm owin' 'most everybody around here a piece of pork, and if I cut up the pig I'll have to give most of him away." "I tell you what to do," said the butcher. "What's that?" "I'd have the pig hung up out doors till twelve o'clock at night, then take him in and give out the next morning that he's been stolen." "By jinks, I'll do it!"

It was a wonderfully fine plan the farmer thought, and he left the pig hanging out as the butcher suggested.

At eleven o'clock the butcher himself came along, and loaded the pork into his team. It was not there when the farmer went out after it.

The next day, with a long face, he accused the butcher in a hoarse whisper. "I say, Sam, somebody did really steal that." "That's right," said the butcher, nudging him and winking wickedly at the same time. "But, by jinks, the pig was really stolen." "That's right; you stick to that and you'll be all right," said the butcher, encouragingly, and he hurried off, leaving his friend in a most bewildered state of mind, from I don't think he ever fuly emerged.