

or Greek, or in any of the dialects of these languages. Although there were but few responses to this challenge, the complex and intricate nature of these responses, and the swift and unerring manner in which Poe solved them, served to bear out in no doubtful way Poe's contention that undecipherable cryptogram had never yet been found.



In the article on William Harrison Ainsworth in the February number we omitted giving credit to the Lippincott Company, who are the American publishers of the Windsor edition. For the portrait of Mr. James L. Ford in the January number, credit should be given to Miss Ben Yusuf.



The subject of the accompanying curious bit of Thackerayana is the famous fight between Tom Sayers and Heenan, the "Benicia Boy," in 1858. Some of the newspaper accounts of the battle reported Thackeray as having been present with a number of his literary friends and members of both Houses of Parliament. But this Thackeray denied. "If so," he wrote in the *Roundabout Paper* "On Some Late Great Victories," "I must have walked to the station in my sleep, paid three guineas in a profound state of mental abstraction, and returned to bed unconscious, for I certainly woke there about the time that history relates that the fight was over. I do not know whose colours I wore—the Benician's or those of the Irish champion—which, indeed, no somnambulist is bound to recollect." Despite this denial, Thackeray's literary predilections for making use of the language and figures of the prize ring were such that the artist could not allow the chance to escape. Paul du Chaillu had just returned from Africa, and his book on gorillas was being much talked about. Hence the appearance presented by Heenan and Sayers and their seconds in the ring.



It was unfortunate for Count Robert de Montesquiou that the "bright young men" on the New York *Sun* saw in him such excellent material for their wittiest and most di-

**The Count
de Montesquiou.**

verting "copy." Montesquiou is a man of about forty, coming of a really good family in France, and possessed of ample means, whose sole interest in life is the pursuit of those finer and more delicate shades of literary and artistic criticism which the modern Frenchman is forever pursuing. Actually he is no mean critic, a volume of his writings in this field having been taken seriously on the other side by some of the least tolerant of modern men of letters. If his mind has a fault, it is the fault of preciosity, amateurishness, over-cultivation, call it what you will—*décadence* even. With him comes his friend, Gabriel de Yturri, a Spaniard, with similar tastes and similar "preciosities." These two have come here seriously to deliver a series of *conférences* on topics entirely out of tune with modern American life and manners. It is inevitable that Montesquiou should be laughed at and derided here. The American spirit is all against him, and perhaps rightly so. But the newspaper "gems" that have appeared from time to time concerning the poor gentleman's plush waistcoats, his *trois mousquetaires* hat, and his orchid shirt collar, are, of course, simply emanations of the Park Row spirit. His vogue in society thus far has been more or less pronounced, but amounts to little more than the idle curiosity which Americans are prone to show for the latest "novelty" from the other side. The Count understands America not in the least, and it is idle to suppose that he will long be taken seriously here.



"I could not write at all, if I did not delight in such employment," said Mr. F. Marion Crawford interviewed. on Crawford, when being interviewed the other day by Mr. Charles Hall Garrett for THE BOOKMAN. "I know of no one who has written many books who would willingly lay down his or her pen. After twenty years of continuous writing it has become second nature to me. I should be unhappy if I stopped. Can you name a well-known writer of romance who is not in harness, or has not died in harness? The writing of a novel is as absorbing to the author as the painting of a picture to a painter or the modelling of a statue to a sculptor, and in criticism

**F. Marion Crawford
interviewed.**

should be considered in the same light. So you see I do not believe in a novel being written with what is called 'a purpose.' The main aim of the novel is to amuse, and the best way to win the reader's sympathy is to draw some character he would like to be—or it would be good for him to be. Does any artist think of any admonishing, or revolutionising, effect of his work when he is painting, or a sculptor when modelling? Neither should a novelist. That would be preaching and necessarily narrowing to the poetical scope of every endeavour. Of course many great novels have, incidentally, served a purpose, but it has been

only secondary, the writer in no way restricting his liberty, or confining himself to pointing a moral.

"Novel writing is much like picture painting," he continued. "That there be correct proportion and distribution, there must be, as in a picture, foreground, middle distance and background, to present a harmonious whole. Nor is this accomplished by commencing without a definite idea and plan, and allowing a novel to develop itself as you write. Some novelists' first work has been done in this way; but it is nothing but luck if the result is satisfactory. The more you



COMTE MONTESQUIOU FÉZENSAC.