OF THE LECTURE FIELD.

IT'S AS RICH NOW, THEY SAY, AS IT EVER WAS.

Conditions Have Changed Greatly, However—To Make Money Now You Must Have an Especially Good Story to Tell or Be Somebody in Particular.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, Sept. 28.—It is more than twenty years—twenty can't be exactly—since the business of lecturing gave to such dimensions that an agency was formed for the convenience of lecturers and of the lyceums that wanted their services a necessity. James Redpath, the famous journalist and agitator, saw the necessity and established a bureau. Now there are several such institutions that do a business estimated at a million of dollars a year.

It is true that lecturing, as a business, was "played out" some ten years ago, excepting for a few of the greatest public favorites. Henry Ward Beecher, either in lecture rooms, could always command $100 a night, even when men of less fame could get no engagements whatever. Income the public was tired of hearing him. And what was true of him was true of a few others.

It is now not for the gradual and unavoidable revival of public interest in the old fashioned lecture it would be hardly worth while to recall the olden days, but it is true that the business today is as flourishing as it was in its best days, with a few important differences. It is not so easy today for men and women who have not anything some sort of fame bestowed on get a hearing on the lecture platform, but for those to whom the public is interested personally there is more money in lecturing now than ever before.

The list of names in Redpath's first circular is interesting reading, however, in comparison with some of the equally interesting lists of the present season. Among the former were Professor Agassiz, George William Curtis, Bayard Taylor, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Frederick Douglass, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sumner, Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips, E. H. Chapin, Patrick Henry, Nasby, Josh Billings, Mark Twain, P. T. Barnum, Anna Dickinson, Olive Logan, Paul Du Chaillu, Rev. G. H. Hepworth, George Francis Train, Hannibal Hamlin, Robert Collyer, Colonel Hazleton, Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, Theodore Tilton and many others. Here afterward John B. Gough and Henry Ward Beecher were added to the list.

More than half of them, who were all at the same time at their zenith, died years and years ago and who were easily in the first rank, are now dead. Of the survivors, some have lost their power, and only Gough or Sam could now draw an audience.

Later lists contain the names of many foreigners, among whom were Dean Stanley, Canon Kingsley, George MacDonald, Wilkie Collins, Bret Harte, George Henry Lewes, Emory Pattisson, Thomas Hughes, M. Prevost, Henry Viveux, Edward Dicey, Jerome (author of "Three Men in a Boat"), Matthew Arnold, Canon Farrar and Justin McCarthy.

In the lists of the coming season, issued by different bureaus, we find the Earls Arnold, George W. Curtis, Will Carleton, Paul Du Chaillu, Henry Ward Beecher, Jr., Conan Doyle, Joaquin Miller, Max O'Rell, Carl Schurz, Garrett P. Serviss, F. Hopkinson Smith, T. DeWitt Talmage and Joe Cook, Henry Watterson, Robert J. Burdette, Rev. Will Carleton, Rose Field, Helene Harper, Mrs. Frank Leslie, Chapter Hatfield, Mrs. Mary Dodge Mapes, Major Henry C. Deere, Colonel Tanner, Bishop Vincent, ex-Senator Ingalls and Judge Lawrence Maxwell.

Most of these prominent names are familiar, some more readily than Henry M. Stanley. Joe Cook is another who does amazing and unique business, and Joe is the Daniel Dougherty, Rob Ingersoll practice over connected and some prohibitive than lecturing.

It is not to be covered that a president or a monarch has taken to lecture platform, but it is a fact that a subject is never announced for lecture without attracting to the reading room those who did not have some right to the theme of the case of Boston than the rest too. He is Prince Peter Kropotkin, who is a descendant in right line from the old Russian princes of the original royal house of Rurik.

He is known to be a wonderful man for after graduating from the College of the Page of the Russian court, he chose scientific pursuits and only entered court service on compulsion. Changing his mind, he resigned his commission, he joined the International society, and being discovered passed in a terrible struggle, from which America alone of the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, from which escape is said to be impossible. He was transferred to a hospital after his health had been broken, and then escaped.

The subjects on which he is to lecture have not been announced, but it is not hard to imagine what they will be.

It was under the management of Major J. P. Pond that Henry M. Stanley delivered his lectures in the United States last winter. The first of Stanley's lectures was the most noteworthy event of the kind in the lecture history. The major had engaged him straight for the season, buying his time for a fixed sum and running the chances of clearing money on the investment.

"I told him to the Summit Cottage—at Saratoga—for $1,000 for the first lecture," he says, "and it was delivered in the Morse Opera house. The gross receipts of that night were $12,000."

"I should say, however, that taking everything into consideration the most popular and interesting character who ever lectured in this country is George Kennan. His articles in The Century Magazine not only raised interest in his subject, but inspired the reader with a strong desire to see the writer. Then his lectures themselves increased his popularity wonderfully. He spoke well, he looked well, he dressed well, and confine himself to a description of what he actually saw in Russia."

Major Pond's theory about securing a very simple one. "Any one can speak after a fashion," he says, "and after a few seasons lecturing comes quite easily to almost anybody. Stanley had quite exceptional difficulty at first in public speaking, but soon he is one of the best lecturers in the world. What I want is a man who is a lecturer to have something to tell which the people want to hear, or for him to be somebody that the people want to see. The latter qualification is the best. If I could get Gladstone or Lord Tennyson to come to America, I would not care a penny what either one would talk about. It would satisfy the public just to see them."

The pecuniary returns to the lecturer vary widely, of course. The "cross roads" speaker, who is eager to hear five dollars a night and pay his own expenses, seldom gets rich, but there are men who do, as Senator Ingalls, for example, is now sure of about $5,000 before next spring, if he keeps the engagements already made for him. Stanley, Miss Amelia B. Edwards, Dr. Joseph Parker, Canon Farrar, Matthew Arnold and Justin McCarthy cleared from $50,000 to $100,000 each in a single season by lecturing, and they are by no means the only ones who do so every year. The Rev. Dr. Talmage is as good a draw now as ever, but they are men who do, or have done, something remarkable to lecture on the subject, but forms them ever to lie speak. In consequence from fifty to $1,000 a night, and is able to give only a comparatively small portion of his time to the platform. He

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