Olim Meminisse.

As a record of his early struggles, Mr. Trowbridge's autobiography* is as entertaining as a novel. Indeed, in its sense of the romance of reality, it is not so very different from such compositions as Mr. Howells' "Modern Instance," or "The Minister's Charge," tho the comparison hardly extends to the character of the hero.

Mr. Trowbridge was born in Ogden, N. Y., in 1827, a date which makes him a veteran of American letters, and was brought up there on his father's farm, which was one of the pioneer settlements of the region. After a very indifferent schooling and a few seasons of teaching on his own account, he burnt his ships behind him and came to New York in 1847 to try his fortune in the republic of letters. He was then nineteen years old. Since that time he has lived entirely on the produce of his pen.

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* My Own Story. *By J. T. Trowbridge.* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. $2.50.

But what is perhaps most remarkable in this rather remarkable career is the fact, to which he calls attention himself, that it is not as a reviewer nor yet as an editor that he has made his way, but as a free lance and almost exclusivey by original production. The only exceptions are his brief editorship of *The Yankee Nation* in 1849 and of *Our Young Folks* in 1870. In fact, of hack work in the strict sense, he seems to have done almost nothing, unless "The South," which he was hired to prepare in 1866, on the condition of the slave States after the war, be accounted such.

When he first came to New York he had already written a good deal of verse, some of which he had published in the local papers. But on the recommendation of Major Noah, editor and proprietor of the *Sunday Times,* he began his professional career by writing stories at a dollar a page, or two dollars and a half a chapter. On this magnificent remuneration, eked out the first winter by the engraving of pencil cases, he managed to support himself until in the fall of 1848 he removed to Boston. There he secured almost immediate recognition and success, first as a writer of stories and sketches and then as a novelist. The establishment of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857 gave him, like many another American writer, an excellent market for his wares, and what was perhaps equally important, made him acquainted with such men as Lowell, Longfellow and Holmes, his recollections of whom, together with Emerson and Walt Whitman, add not a little to the significance of his memoirs. It is interesting to notice that he is, with one exception, the sole surviving contributor to the first number of the *Atlantic.* But it was for *Our Young Folks, Saint Nicholas* and the *Youth's Companion* that he wrote the work by which he is in all probability most popularly known—"namely, a style of story that should not be bad as literature, and which should interest at the same time young and old."

Toward the close of the book Mr. Trowbridge raises several interesting questions, especially the following: What difference, he asks, would it have made to his gifts, had his early training been more thorough and academic? But surely such a question, while important in the abstract, is one impossible, not to say ungrateful, to answer in a particular case. We can only suggest that, while literary tradition is of inestimable benefit in many ways, yet literature, if it is to live at all, must be constantly freshened and renewed from without. And how can that be done better than by turning upon it every now and then a stream of lively and undulled experience? At all events, in regard to this one book there can be no doubt that it owes its interest very largely to the unconventionality of its author's career.