

pearance of an effective stroke toward the ultimate regeneration of the English-speaking stage. There is at least good ground for hoping that within three or four years there will be half-a-dozen or more repertory theatres, to supplement the missionary work hitherto carried on by Mr. Benson's repertory company and one or two others. That they will continue to multiply as their superior powers of attraction are more generally recognized need not be doubted, and with their increase in numbers will come the needed supply of all-round actors, and, in due time, that honest and healthful competition which is the soul of all artistic inspiration.

With characteristic promptness in following a good lead, Charles Frohman has determined to have his own repertory theatres in London and New York. His scheme is excellent of its kind, but does not necessarily thus far involve any wide departure from his former policy. But his contracts with Granville Barker, John Galsworthy, J. M. Barrie, and Bernard Shaw enable him to sketch an attractive programme, and his bid for good one-act plays ought to bear fruit. Apparently, he has been doing violence to his own convictions all this long while. He acknowledges that there is a public demand—in London, at all events—for the higher drama, and that there are commercial, as well as artistic, objections to the long run. Such utterances coming from his lips have an heretical sound, but his conversion, if sincere and lasting, is a subject not for mockery, but congratulation. He and his allies, with their control of authors, plays, and actors, wield an enormous power for good as well as for mischief, and could, if they chose, establish a chain of repertory theatres which might prove dangerous rivals even to the New Theatre itself. Greater miracles than this have been wrought by the power of the popular will.

The English theatre in Germany is now reported to be an accomplished fact. Engagements have been made and rehearsals have begun. Mme. Meta Illing is the directress. The first performance will be given on May 17 at Wiesbaden, and will form part of the Imperial command dramatic festival given during the German Emperor's visit to that town. The play selected is R. C. Carton's comedy, "Mr. Hopkinson." The cast will include Herbert Waring, Miss Fortescue, Dawson Milward, Miss Ellen O'Malley, Mr. Sothorn, and Frank Stanmore. Nigel Playfair is the producer and general stage manager. After playing in Wiesbaden, the company will proceed to Karlsruhe, Darmstadt, and Frankfurt, giving a few performances in each of these towns, including two performances of Mr. Shaw's "Candida."

There is uncommon unanimity among the London critics concerning the general literary and dramatic feebleness of "The Conquest," an adaptation by "George Fleming" from Balzac's "La Duchesse de Langeais,"

which has just been produced in the London Lyric Theatre by Lewis Waller, with himself and Maxine Elliott in the principal characters. Nothing of Balzac seems to have been left in the piece except the extravagance; and scenes intended to be thrilling provoked innocent laughter.

Music.

Verily, William Ashton Ellis, Wagner's chief apostle in England, is as far superior to all other index makers as his idol is to all other opera composers. Mr. Ellis is apparently devoting his whole life to the translating of Wagner's prose writings and letters into English, and whereas the German volumes have no indexes at all, his versions are always followed by pages that are simply invaluable to those who, without having time to read everything that Wagner wrote, desire information on this or that point relating to his life and works. The latest achievement of Mr. Ellis is a translation of Wagner's letters to his first wife, Minna, which has been published in two volumes (Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons). There is an index of no fewer than forty-two columns. One of these columns is taken up with references to Wagner's experiences in London, and the most conspicuous entry (25 references) is under "longs to leave." The references to "Lohengrin" occupy a column, those to "Tristan" another. Minna has three columns, Wagner himself four, subdivided according to topics: abode, acrobatics, age, amnesty, animals ("see also Dogs"), birthday, childless, climbing, conductor, conjugal love (45 entries), courtship, diet, domesticity, dreams, dress, early to bed, excitability, and twenty-five other topics, including health, reading, solitude (68 entries), sensitiveness to noise, walks (61 entries), productivity. Under money matters we read "see Minna, allowance to, and almost every other page." In addition to this illuminating index, Mr. Ellis contributes an introduction of fourteen pages, in which he discusses various points in the tragic conjugal life of Richard and Minna Wagner, the most ill-mated couple that were ever brought together. "My marriage—not a soul knows what I have suffered through that," he wrote to his sister in 1866. Now all the world can read the story. The fact that Minna preserved these letters, containing so many lamentations and reproaches, is noted by Mr. Ellis as one of her good traits:

It is as though she dimly foresaw the day when herself she might be instrumental in triumphantly clearing her husband's name from calumnies reposing on a false assumption of her "martyrdom."

But why are not her own letters to her husband given to the world, too? Is it because they are not of any literary interest, Minna's mind having been of a purely domestic kind, or are there things in them the Bayreuth folk would rather keep suppressed? Perhaps they will be issued later on; nearly every year sees a new volume of Wagner letters, the latest being collections of those he wrote to the artists who helped him at Bayreuth, and of those received by his mother, sisters, and nieces. These *Familienbriefe* Mr. Ellis promises to translate next if there is a sufficient demand for

the letters to Minna to warrant such a step. The letters to Minna need not be further commented on here, as they were reviewed at some length in the *Nation* of May 7, 1908, when the German edition appeared.

Two decades ago it was still customary for expert flute-players to give recitals at which they exhibited their skill. To-day such a recital would not be likely to attract either critics or music-lovers—not, at any rate, in musical centres. The cloying richness of modern orchestral works has made the tone of the flute seem too pallid and monotonous to satisfy the ear for a whole evening. In the orchestra itself, on the other hand, the flute plays a more important part than ever, especially in the scores of Wagner, Tchaikovsky, and Strauss. For this growing importance the flute is largely indebted to the improvements, technical and tonal, made by the Bavarian court musician, Theobald Boehm. In 1871 Boehm published a little book in which he described these improvements and discoursed on the flute and flute-playing in general. He hoped it would be translated into other languages, including English; but this hope has only just been realized. With the consent of Boehm's grandson, Dayton C. Miller has made an English version which he has published in Cincinnati. It contains many useful hints both as regards the execution of florid music (which operatic audiences still dote on) and the expressive playing of sustained melodies.

"Songs Every One Should Know," edited by Clifton Johnson and published by the American Book Co. (Cincinnati), is a collection of two hundred favorite songs for school and home, intended to stimulate a love of good music "by the simple charm of the songs themselves." It is a good collection of its kind, and the songs are divided into groups: national hymns, war songs, ballads, Scotch songs, nature songs, college, minstrel, plantation, religious songs, and others. Coarseness and extreme sentimentality are carefully avoided.

After an absence of ten years, the eminent violinist, Willy Burmester, intends to make an American tour in 1910-11.

Art.

THE ART COLLECTOR: HIS FORTES AND FOIBLES.

Morally considered, the art collector is tainted with the fourth deadly sin; pathologically, he is often afflicted by a degree of mania. His distinguished kinsman, the connoisseur, scorns him as a kind of mercenary, or at best a manner of renegade. I shall never forget the expression with which a great connoisseur—who possesses one of the finest private collections in the Val d'Arno—in speaking of a famous colleague, declared, "Oh, X——! Why, X—— is merely a collector." The implication is, of course, that the one who loves art truly and knows it thoroughly will find full satisfaction in an enjoyment devoid alike of envy or the thought of possession. He is to adore

all beautiful objects with a Platonic fervor to which the idea of acquisition and domestication is repugnant. Before going into this lofty argument, I should perhaps explain the collection of my scornful friend. He would have said: "I see that as I put X—in his proper place, you look at my pictures and smile. You have rightly divined that they are of some rarity, of a sort, in fact, for which X—and his kind would sell their immortal souls. But I beg you to note that these pictures and bits of sculpture have been bought not at all for their rarity, nor even for their beauty as such, but simply because of their appropriateness as decorations for this particular villa. They represent not my energy as a collector, nor even my zeal as a connoisseur, but simply my normal activity as a man of taste. In this villa it happens that Italian old masters seem the proper material for decoration. In another house or in another land you might find me employing, again solely for decorative purposes, the prints of Japan, the landscapes of the modern impressionists, the rugs of the East, or the blankets of the Arizona desert. Free me, then, from the reproach implied in that covert leer at my Early Sienese." Yes, we must, I think, exclude from the ranks of the true zealots all who in any plausible fashion utilize the objects of art they buy. Excess, the craving to possess what he apparently does not need, is the mark of your true collector.

Now these visionaries—at least the true ones—honor each other according to the degree of "eye" that each possesses. By "eye" the collector means a faculty of discerning a fine object quickly and instinctively. And, in fact, the trained eye becomes a magically fine instrument. It detects the fractions of a millimetre by which a copy belies its original. In colors it distinguishes nuances that a moderately trained vision will declare non-existent. Nor is the trained collector bound by the evidence of the eye alone. Of certain things he knows the taste or adhesiveness. His ear grasps the true ring of certain potteries, porcelains, or qualities of beaten metal. I know an expert on Japanese pottery who, when a sixth sense tells him that two pots apparently identical come really from different kilns, puts them behind his back and refers the matter from his retina to his finger-tips. Thus alternately challenged and trusted, the eye should become extraordinarily expert. A Florentine collector once saw in a junk-shop a marble head of beautiful workmanship. Ninety-nine amateurs out of a hundred would have said, "What a beautiful copy!" for the same head is exhibited in a famous museum and is reproduced in pasteboard, clay, metal, and stone *ad nauseam*. But this collector gave the ap-

parent copy a second look and a third. He reflected that the example in the museum was itself no original, but a school-piece, and as he gazed the conviction grew that here was the original. Since it was closing time, and the marble heavy, a bargain was struck for the morrow. After an anxious night, this fortunate amateur returned in a cab to bring home what criticism now admits is a superb Desiderio da Settignano. The incident illustrates capitally the combination of keenness and patience that goes to make the collector's eye.

We may divide collectors into those who play the game and those who do not. The wealthy gentleman who gives *carte blanche* to his dealers and agents is merely a spoil-sport. He makes what should be a matter of adroitness simply an issue of brute force. He robs of all delicacy what from the first glow of discovery to actual possession should be a fine transaction. Not only does he lose the real pleasures of the chase, but he raises up a special clan of sycophants to part him and his money. A mere handful of such—amassers, let us say—have demoralized the art market. According to the length of their purses, collectors may also be divided into those who seek and those who are sought. Wisdom lies in making the most of either condition. The seekers unquestionably get more pleasure; the sought achieve the more imposing results. The seekers depend chiefly on their own judgment, buying preferably of those who know less than themselves; the sought depend upon the judgment of those who know more than themselves, and, naturally, must pay for such vicarious expertise. And, rightly, they pay dear. Let no one who buys of a great dealer imagine that he pays simply the cost of an object plus a generous percentage of profit. No, much-sought amateur, you pay the rent of that palace in Bond Street or Fifth Avenue; you pay the salary of the gentlemanly assistant or partner whose time is at your disposal during your too rare visits; you pay the commissions of an army of agents throughout the world; you pay, alas! too often the cost of securing false "sale records" in classic auction rooms; and, finally, it is only too probable that you pay also a heavy secret commission to the disinterested friend who happened to remark there was an uncommonly fine object in Y—'s gallery. By a cheerful acquiescence in the suggestions that are daily made to you, you may accumulate old masters as impersonally, as genteelly, let me say, as you do railway bonds. But, of course, under these circumstances you must not expect bargains.

Now, in objects that are out of the fashion—a category including always many of the best things—and if approached in slack times, the great dealers will occasionally afford bargains, but

in general the economically minded collector, who is not necessarily the poor one, must intercept his prey before it reaches the capitals. That it makes all the difference from whom and where you buy, let a recent example attest. A year or two ago a fine Giorgionesque portrait was offered to an American amateur by a famous London dealer. At \$60,000 the refusal was granted for a few days only, subject to cable response. The photograph was tempting, but the besought amateur, knowing that the authenticity of the average Giorgione is somewhat less certain than, say, the period of the Book of Job, let the opportunity pass. A few months after learning of this incident, I had the pleasure of meeting in Florence an English art critic who expatiated upon the beauty of a Giorgione that he had just acquired at the very reasonable price of \$15,000. For particulars he referred me to one of the great dealers of Florence. The portrait, as I already suspected, was the one I had heard of in America. Forty-five thousand dollars represented the difference between buying it of a London rather than a Florentine dealer. Of course, the picture itself had never left Florence at all, the limited refusal and the rest were merely part of the usual comedy played between the great dealer and his client. On the other hand, if the lucky English collector had had the additional good fortune to make his find in an Italian auction-room or at a small dealer's, he would probably have paid little more than \$5,000, while the same purchase made of a wholly ignorant dealer or direct from the reduced family who sold this ancestor might have been made for a few hundred francs. With the seekers obviously lie all the mystery and romance of the pursuit. The rest surely need not be envied to the sought. One thinks of Consul J. J. Jarves gradually getting together that little collection of Italian primitives, at New Haven, which, scorned in his lifetime and actually foreclosed for a trifling debt, is now an object of pilgrimage for European amateurs and experts. One recalls the mouse-like activities of the Brothers Dutuit, unearthing here a gorgeous enamel, retrieving there a Rembrandt drawing, fetching out a Gothic ivory from a junkshop. One sighs for those days, and declares that they are forever past. Does not the sage M. Eudel warn us that there are no more finds—"Surtout ne comptez plus sur les trouvailles." Yet only the other day I mildly chid a seeker, him of the Desiderio, for not having one of his rare pictures photographed for the use of students. He smiled and admitted that I was perfectly right, but added pleadingly, "You know a negative costs about twenty francs, and for that one may often get an original." Why, even I who write—but I have promised

that this essay shall not exceed 4,000 words.

For the poor collector, however, the money consideration remains a source of manifold embarrassment, morally and otherwise. How many an enthusiast has justified an extravagant purchase by a flattering prevision of profits accruing to his widow and orphans? Let the recording angel reply. And such hopes are at times justified. There have been instances of men refused by the life insurance companies who have deliberately adopted the alternative of collecting for investment, and have done so successfully. Obviously, such persons fall into the class which the French call charitably the *marchand-amateur*. Note, however, that the merchant comes first. Now, to be a poor yet reasonably successful collector without becoming a *marchand-amateur* requires moral tact and resolution. The seeker of the short purse naturally becomes a sort of expert in prices. As he prowls he sees many fine things which he neither covets nor could afford to keep, but which are offered at prices temptingly below their value in the great shops. The temptation is strong to buy and resell. Naturally, one profitable transaction of this sort leads to another, and soon the amateur is in the attitude of "making the collection pay for itself." The inducement is so insidious that I presume there are rather few persistent collectors not wealthy who are not in a measure dealers. Now, to deal or not to deal might seem purely a matter of social and business expediency. But the issue really lies deeper. The difficulty is that of not letting your left hand know what your right hand does. A morally ambidextrous person may do what he pleases. He keeps the dealer and collector apart, and subject to his will one or the other emerges. The feat is too difficult for average humanity. In nearly every case a prolonged struggle will end in favor of the commercial self. I have followed the course of many collector-dealers, and I know very few instances in which the collection has not averaged down to the level of a shop—a fine shop, perhaps, but still a shop. I blame no man for following the wide road, but I feel more kinship with him who walks scrupulously in the narrow path of strict amateurism. Let me hasten to add that there are times when everybody must sell. Collections must periodically be weeded out; one may be hard up and sell his pictures as another in similar case his horses; artists will naturally draw into their studios beautiful objects which, occasion offering, they properly sell. With these obvious exceptions the line is absolutely sharp. Did you buy a thing to keep? Then you are an amateur, though later your convenience or necessity dictates a sale. Did you buy it to sell? Then you are a dealer.

The safety of the little collector lies in specialization, and there, too, lies his surest satisfaction. To have a well-defined specialty immediately simplifies the quest. There are many places where one need never go. Moreover, where nature has provided fair intelligence, one must die very young in order not to die an expert. As I write I think of D—, one of the last surviving philosophers. Born with the instincts of a man of letters, he declined to give himself to the gentler pursuit until he had made a little competence at the law. As he followed his disinterested course of writing and travel, his enthusiasm centred upon the antiquities of Greece and Rome. In the engraved gems of that time he found a beautiful epitome of his favorite studies. For ten years study and collecting have gone patiently hand in hand. He possesses some fifty classical gems, many of the best Greek period, all rare and interesting from material, subject, or workmanship, and he may have spent a hundred dollars in the process, but I rather doubt it. He knows his subject as well as he loves it. Some day he will write a book on intaglios, and it will be a good one. Meanwhile, if the fancy takes him to visit the site of the Bactrian Empire, he has only to put his collection in his pocket and enjoy it *en route*. I cannot too highly commend his example, and yet his course is too austere for many of us. Has untrammelled curiosity no charms? Would I, for example, forego my casual kakemonos, my ignorantly acquired majolica, some trifling accumulation of Greek coins, that handful of Eastern rugs? Could I prune away certain excrement minor Whistlers? those bits of ivory cutting from old Italy and Japan? those tarnished Tuscan panels?—in truth, I could and would not. Yet had I stuck to my first love, prints, I should by this time be mentioned respectfully among the initiated, my name would be found in the card-catalogues of the great dealers, my decease would be looked forward to with resignation by my junior colleagues. As it is, after twenty years of collecting, and an expenditure shameful in one of my fiscal estate, I have nothing that even courtesy itself could call a collection. In apology, I may plead only the sting of unchartered curiosity, the adventurous thrill of buying on half or no knowledge, the joy of an instinctive sympathy that, irrespective of boundaries, knows its own when it sees it. And you austere single-minded amateurs, you experts that surely shall be, I revere if I may not follow you.

We have left dangling from the first paragraph the morally important question, Is collecting merely an habitual contravention of the tenth commandment? Now, I am far from denying that collecting has its pathology, even its criminology, if you will. The mere lust of

acquisition may take the ugly form of coveting what one neither loves nor understands. This pit is digged for the rich collector. Poor collectors, on the other hand, have at times forgotten where enterprise ends and kleptomania begins. But these excesses are, after all, rare, and for that matter they are merely those that attach to all exagérations of legitimate passion. As for the notion that one should love beautiful things without desiring them, it seems to me to lie perilously near a sort of pseudo-Platonism, which, wherever it recurs, is the enemy of life itself. As I write, my eye falls upon a Japanese sword-guard. I have seen it a thousand times, but I never fail to feel the same thrill. Out of the disk of blued steel the artisan has worked the soaring form of a bird with upraised wings. It is indicated in skeleton fashion by bars extraordinarily energetic, yet suavely modulated. There must have been feeling and intelligence in every touch of the chisel and file that wrought it. Could that same object seen occasionally in a museum showcase afford me any comparable pleasure? Is not the education of the eye, like the education of the sentiments, dependent upon stable associations that can be many times repeated? Shall I seem merely covetous because I crave besides the casual and adventurous contact with beauty in the world, a gratification which is sure and ever waiting for me? But let me cite rather a certain collector and man of great affairs, who perforce spends his days in adjusting business interests that extend from the arctic snows to the tropics. His evenings belong generally to his friends, for he possesses in a rare degree the art of companionship. The small hours are his own, and frequently he spends them in painting beautiful copies of his Japanese potteries. It is his homage to the artisans who contrived those strange forms and imagined those gorgeous glazes. In the end he will have a catalogue illustrated from his own designs. Meanwhile, he knows his potteries as the shepherd knows his flock. What casuist will find the heart to deny him so innocent a pleasure? And he merely represents in a very high degree the sort of priestliness that the true collector feels towards his temporary possessions.

And this sense of the high, nay, supreme value of beautiful things, has its evident uses. That the beauty of art has not largely perished from the earth is due chiefly to the collector. He interposes his sensitiveness between the insensibility of the average man and the always exiled thing of beauty. If we have in a fractional measure the art treasures of the past, it has been because the collector has given them asylum. Museums, all manner of overt public activities, derive ultimately from

his initiative. It is he who asserts the continuity of art and illustrates its dignity. The stewardship of art is manifold, but no one has a clearer right to that honorable title. "Private vices, public virtues," I hear a cynical reader murmur. So be it. I am ready to stand with the latitudinarian Mandeville. The view makes for charity. I only plead that he who covets his neighbor's tear-jar—I assume a desirable one, say, in old brown Kioto—shall be judged less harshly than he who covets his neighbor's ox.

FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.

We have been somewhat remiss in noticing the successive numbers of the *Burlington Magazine* as they appeared, and must now dispose of three numbers at once: those of the quarter from February 15 to April 15 inclusive. Taking them thus together, one is even more impressed by their purely technical and antiquarian interest than when they appeared. They are almost entirely devoted to delicate points of connoisseurship and the exploration of byways of art history and criticism. They not only deal little with contemporary or modern art, but rarely with the great masters, containing only three short articles on "The Early Development of Correggio," the discovery of a so-called Leonardo at Milan, and a possible copy after Giorgione, respectively. For modern art there is an account of some interesting portraits by the English Alfred Stevens, some notes on contemporary portraits in the recent "Fair Women" exhibition, and two articles on the late Charles Conder, whose work, as here reproduced, hardly seems to justify the enthusiasm of Mr. Ricketts. It is only fair to say that Mr. Conder is described as essentially a colorist; therefore his best qualities are probably absent from black and white translation. Art in America is represented only by Oriental pottery and fourteenth century pictures. The magazine is interesting—essential even—to collectors, directors of museums, and the like, but it seems a pity that it should not more often treat in its scholarly manner matter of wider general interest.

Finance.

A QUESTION OF "WHEAT FAMINE."

It appears to be a matter of common agreement, in the grain trade, that the present situation regarding available wheat supplies is one which has rarely arisen in our recent history. The unusual thing is the abnormal price offered and paid for wheat by millers, at localities where it can scarcely be supposed that a speculative corner, in the usual sense at any rate, exists. In its most familiar form, a wheat corner arises from the purchase, by a powerful speculator, of contracts to deliver wheat to him at a stipulated date and in a stipulated market, in quantity greater than the available supply will make possible. Now, the process of cornering the

dealers who have contracted for such deliveries will naturally be facilitated to the extent that the corner manipulator gets into his own hands the actual wheat on which the contractors had relied for their deliveries. In a measure, such a condition existed in "May contracts" during Mr. Patten's recent speculations on the Chicago Board of Trade.

But there has been, from the first, one unusual circumstance in the present case. A corner such as has just been described will ordinarily have two results—first, the price of "wheat futures" on the market where the corner exists will be relatively higher than in the country at large, and, secondly, the movement of actual wheat will be in the direction of that market. Now, neither of these exists to-day. Last week's market closed, for instance, with wheat for May delivery selling at \$1.27½ per bushel on the Chicago Board of Trade. This, it is true, was 22 cents a bushel above the price of a year ago. But the actual cash price for wheat on the New York market last Saturday was \$1.44, or 33½ cents higher than a year ago. Not only so, but in the heart of the wheat country itself, millers have been paying such prices as \$1.40 and \$1.50 per bushel, purely for wheat to grind. Chicago dispatches tell us that wheat which was sold from Kansas City to Chicago two weeks ago, has since been resold and re-shipped to Kansas City at an advance of 10 cents or more. Within the present month, a fairly large amount of wheat, stored in New York, was actually sent by steamer to Galveston and thence forwarded by rail to markets in the wheat belt. Whatever may be said of Mr. Patten's recent exploit—and operations to force up the price are certainly no more respectable because there are signs of genuine scarcity—it should be plain that a peculiar and striking situation has arisen in the grain trade at large.

It need not be inferred, from the conditions thus shown to exist in the markets, that we are confronted by anything like exhaustion of wheat supplies. When the trade talks of the farm supply of wheat in Kansas or Nebraska being "used up," the expression is relative. The Agricultural Department's first March estimate of 143,000,000 bushels left on the country's farms from the crop of 1908, is disputed by the trade. The best-known private expert estimated 125,000,000; trade calculations ran as low as 100,000,000. But even if the lowest estimate were accepted, deliveries at market since March 1 have hardly reached 25,000,000 bushels; so that deliveries at the same rate, between now and the July harvest time, would still leave sufficient margin. The stock of wheat in granary in this country is actually some 7,000,000 bushels larger than it was a year ago, although 30,000,000 bushels less than in May, 1907. Europe is worse off for supplies

on hand than we are; its storehouses now hold 21,000,000 bushels less than a year ago, and 34,000,000 less than two years ago. But between now and the harvest, it has the Argentine exports to count on—which, though somewhat disappointing in quantity, will probably serve the purpose—or, at a pinch, it may reckon on the habitual makeshift of European consumers, the substitution of rye for wheat flour.

In brief, then, the real problem is not the feeding of the bread-consuming world this season, but to what extent the harvests of 1909 will rectify matters. The world's "visible supply" in the spring-time has been lower on other occasions than it is to-day; in May, 1898, for instance, it got down to 111,223,000 bushels, as against 118,800,000 estimated this month; but an increase of 600,000,000 bushels, or 27 per cent., in the world's yield of wheat that summer—a result largely brought about by the actual needs of consuming markets and by the high price offered in the preceding season—very quickly restored supplies to normal. The tendency, this year, will be the same; the doubtful question necessarily remains whether home and foreign weather will favor the wheat-grower as it did eleven years ago.

The season did not begin altogether favorably, this year; crops even now are not so far advanced as they should be, here or abroad, and this is perhaps the real explanation of the extraordinarily high prices asked for wheat, even on the farms. It must not be forgotten that a speculative period, such as the present time unquestionably is, finds expression not only in high bids by professional speculators for merchandise which they do not own, but in the holding-back of their merchandise for still higher prices by producers who actually possess it. Yet other seasons have started out with as indifferent promise as has 1909, and ended brilliantly. The next month or two will settle the question. Until then, it would be premature to discuss the results of another deficient harvest, coming on the present singular position of supplies. That it would be a calamity, no one is likely to deny; fortunately, it is a far less probable calamity, with the world-wide extension of area under wheat culture during the decade past, than it has been at any previous time.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

Allen, Gardner W. Our Naval War with France. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.50 net.
Bateson, W. Mendel's Principles of Heredity. Putnam. \$3.50 net.
Bindloss, Harold. Thrice Armed, Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Cain, Georges. Walks in Paris. Translated by Alfred Allinson. Macmillan, \$2 net.
Canning, George, and His Friends: Containing Hitherto Unpublished Letters, Jeux d'Esprit, etc. Edited by Capt. Joceline Bagot. 2 vols. Dutton. \$9 net.
Chittenden, "Larry." Bermuda Verses. Putnam. \$1.50 net.