

I never heard any anecdotes of his school days, but when he came up to Balliol, he did not amuse himself by "ragging the dons" in Shelley's manner. He lived very quietly, mainly in the society of Mr. Nichol, a Scottish student, who was later professor of English literature in Glasgow. He did not, like Calverley, leave a lively tradition behind him; scouts remembered him as "a very quiet gentleman." He obtained a university scholarship in modern languages, and, I think, took only a second class in moderations, though his Greek Elegies, in "Atalanta in Calydon," are not only good as Greek verse, but as poetry.

He was contemporary with Mr. T. R. Green, the Hegelian philosopher, who was not greatly addicted to the Muse; and he wrote a little, mainly against his *bête noire*, Napoleon III, in a serial called *Undergraduate Papers*. When Mr. Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon" and "Poems and Ballads" came out in 1865-1866, they captivated my undergraduate mind; the second volume was more popular with the young than that which I greatly preferred, "Atalanta." Balliol was not a literary college at that time, but Mr. Saintsbury records that "Poems and Ballads" had a *succès fou* at Mer-ton.

"Atalanta in Calydon" could not be ignored. To my taste, this work of his youth, for the merits of its blank verse and the varied music and original measures of the choruses, was his best. One opened it, knowing not even the name of the author, and one was carried away on the strong stream of the tragedy. It might not be Greek in sentiment—"Erechtheus," later, was much more Greek and much less captivating—but it was new poetry and true poetry: immortal poetry, I think.

The famous "Poems and Ballads" of 1866 really broke the spell, and the reading public, that little flock, careless of the revived Greek tragedy, was much excited about the new volume. A hub-bub of protest arose, not unnaturally, for while it is full of splendid lyrics, it also contains things which then, and now, I was, and am, Puritan enough to regret. The passion of a knight who loves a leprous lady, is not, I think, a subject for art; and Mr. Swinburne's passion was never natural and sincere; it was always declamatory and literary. This is the defect of his poetry, the emotions have a literary origin, and every character is equally copious, vigorous, and unconvincing. In the dramas it is the verbal music and the rhetoric that please us; Mary Stuart and Mary Beaton (who has an historical *alibi*, if that matters, and never saw her Queen after 1567) certainly did not express themselves in Mr. Swinburne's way, except when he does Casket Letter 11 into blank verse. We are not to look for humor in his plays; he very greatly

appreciated humor, especially that of Dickens among the moderns, but he was not a humorist. This defect permitted him to employ his unequalled vehemence of language in his prose. He greatly esteemed Scott, yet he wrote:

This insultingly reckless and savagely stupid example of headlong and brainless insularity is less inexplicable and scarcely more lamentable than the immoral and perverse infatuation which made Scott speak of one of the basest and shamefullest slanders that ever dropped from the lying lips of Byron as a mere sample of his love of mystifying: which may indeed be referred to that of mischief.

I have, by research, discovered the first of these sins of Sir Walter. He spoke of a certain Italian in London literary society as a noisy, illogical, ugly bore. It appears that this Italian was "a noble poet," but it does not follow that he was not, socially, an ugly, noisy, illogical bore. The second of Scott's sins was his attributing to Byron's love of mystification and of mischief, his story that Cam Hobhouse wrote a dedication to himself which Byron signed. This tale Byron imposed on Bankes, who told Scott, and what Scott did was to inform Bankes that Byron had gulled him—so as to prevent him from repeating the fable. Sir Walter took the most charitable view possible of Byron, though Byron had "bet him," as he said, with the public. I really do not think that he appears immoral in this matter, and cannot share the alliterative indignation of Mr. Swinburne.

His criticism, though so learned, is injured by his flights into the empyrean of praise and his frenzies of blame. *Non tanti est*, Sir Walter would have said, nothing is worth such "demoniacal-seraphic" floods of invective and applause. Byron and all the Bonapartes and Mr. Carlyle infuriated Mr. Swinburne. "Truth is truth," he says, "though it be a Carlyle or a Gladstone, a Pigott or a Parnell, who affirms it." What is "that famous effusion of pessimistic lechery which gives us in metrical form the moral quintessence of Calvin and Bacchus, of Priapus and Carlyle"? It must be a queer composition, but Mr. Swinburne knew so much that he puzzles the ignorance of an ordinary reader.

He seems always to have been young; age put no water to his wine; he was a patriot, though he called himself a republican; but other patriots, when he attacked our open enemies, wished that he would "draw it mild"; but that was the one thing which Mr. Swinburne could never do. In his use of language, he knew not limit.

It is a puzzle that his vast knowledge of the best literature never taught him limit, never enabled him to see that the rapier of Pascal is a better weapon than the bludgeons of Milton, when controversial, and of John Knox. *Suf-*

flaminandus erat, as Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare, but who could put the drag on Mr. Swinburne?

ANDREW LANG.

NEWS FOR BIBLIOPHILES.

The new "Index to Book-Prices Current" 1897 to 1906, compiled by William Jaggard, and just published by Eliot Stock, is an admirable piece of work, and one whose sale certainly can never recompense its editor for the three years spent upon it. It is a volume of nearly 1,100 pages—more than double the size of the Index to the first ten volumes of the annual, 1887-1896—containing about one hundred thousand entries under authors or titles with cross-references under important subject headings.

The following are new features of the work showing the improvement over the first volume: There is a great increase in the total number of anonymous and pseudonymous names, to hundreds of which are attached the real names of the authors; the names of editors, collaborators, composers, translators, and chief artists are indexed; to every entry, except in comparatively few cases where the year cannot be ascertained, the date of publication is appended; in numerous cases where the illustrations impart a special market value, the artist's name is indexed also. As Mr. Slater's annual record is arranged chronologically and the contents are inaccessible except through the Index appended, this combined Index to ten volumes adds largely to the utility of the series. It is prefaced by a chatty and interesting introduction by Mr. Jaggard, and by a list of Bibliophiles and Bibliopoles, that is of the collectors and owners of the chief libraries dispersed during the first twenty years of the lifetime of "Book-Prices Current," 1887-1896.

Frank Karslake, editor of "Book-Auction Records," has compiled and published "Notes from Sotheby's," a compilation of 2,032 notes from catalogues of book-sales held at Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge's rooms, between 1885 and 1909. Many of these contain bibliographical or literary information not readily accessible elsewhere; but some are mere statements of commonplace if not universal information, and as auctioneers are prone to exaggerate the rarity of their goods, some of the statements made as to the number of copies are not borne out by the facts. Thus, the note to the first copy offered of Lamb's "King and Queen of Hearts," 1809 (here misprinted 1509), sold on March 17, 1902, is given, with the misleading statement that "it is probable that 1809 is a misprint for 1806." In a later sale, June 3, 1902, a copy of an earlier edition dated 1806 was offered, but the note from that catalogue is not included. Several extremely rare Shelley items, which have been sold at Sotheby's, and to which important notes appeared in the catalogues are not found here, nor are the four extremely rare Frobenius items sold on March 16, 1907, included. The date of sale and catalogue lot numbers of the items, quoted are given but the price is not. This information might have been included. The volume has as frontispiece a reproduction of a photograph of Sotheby's auction rooms during the first Amherst sale last December, with a key to important persons in attendance.

On May 24 and 25 the Anderson Auction Co. will sell a collection of books including a private library from Oregon. A copy of the first edition of "The Federalist" (1788) in the original boards, uncut; a first edition of Irving's "History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker" (1809), and Ethan Allen's "Reason the Only Oracle of Man" (1789), are the more important of the older books. Bancroft's "Poems" (1823); "The Offering for 1829," containing Emerson's first appearance in a book, the first copy to be sold at auction; a broadside poem of James Russell Lowell's (1858), unknown to bibliographers; several presentation copies of Thomas William Parsons's poems, and important first editions of Thoreau, Holmes, Whittier, and Bryant also appear. On May 26 and 27 the same firm will sell a collection of autographs and manuscripts, among them being several unpublished poems by H. D. Thoreau. On the evening of May 27 they will hold a sale of engravings, etchings, and original drawings.

On May 25-28 the Merwin-Clayton Sales Co. offers the library of the late Andrew Merwin, one of the founders of the company, who had previously served for more than thirty years with Bangs & Co., the old house of book auctioneers. Included are a collection of editions of Homer and books about Homer (59 lots) and a Dante collection (23 lots). Other notable books are first editions of Thoreau's "Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" (1849) and "Walden" (1854); Whittier's "History of Haverhill" (1832); Emerson's "Poems" (1847), first edition, in the original boards with the label; publications of the Roycroft Press, books on folk-lore, books on natural history, etc.

On May 25 and 26 C. F. Libbie & Co. of Boston will sell the library of the late Prof. James Mills Peirce of Harvard University. A most important lot is the autograph manuscript of Benjamin Peirce's "History of Harvard University," including considerable material not in the work as printed. Professor Peirce was a friend of some of the leading writers of New England, and his library includes presentation copies of desirable first editions, among them Lowell's "Class Poem" (1838); Longfellow's "Hyperion" (1839); Holmes's "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," large paper (1859); "The Guardian Angel" (1867); and "Urania" (1846).

Correspondence.

THE STATE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: President Taft's political programme, although veiled by half-hearted denials, seems to include an attempt to break up the solid South, and should the undertaking succeed, its chief beneficiary would be the Democratic party. The greatest handicap to the success of real Democracy is that the aristocratic, labor-despising, and privilege-seeking South is depended upon to furnish the bulk of Democratic electoral votes.

I speak as a Democrat who wishes to see the party become what it ought to be, and

what it must be, either to succeed at the polls or to exist as a strong opposition, viz: a sane and progressive radical party, standing for the same issues in every State in the Union, and not for a different issue in every State. It cannot attain that desirable condition now, because every intelligent voter knows that, despite platform declarations, it cannot carry out any measure of real or radical reform while the Bourbon South dominates its councils. The attitude of Southern Democrats in Congress on the tariff question makes clear as noonday what was sufficiently clear before. The hope of Democratic success lies in opposition to special privilege in every form, and particularly in a form so odious as protection; but when the leaders of the dominant faction in the party are engaged in a frank and disgraceful struggle for a share of the protective loot, it is futile to hope that sincere opponents of privilege will ally themselves with such an organization.

Stripped of non-essentials the chief political issue now, of which the tariff question is only a phase, hinges upon the unequal distribution of wealth. There is no escape from this issue, and the man is willfully blind who persuades himself that the feeling of unrest which pervades the lower and middle walks of life is a temporary or ephemeral discontent. This feeling is certain to become more and more acute as intelligent minds inquire more closely into economic conditions which produce overgrown fortunes and squalid poverty side by side. What the ultimate outcome of the discussion of this many-sided issue will be no man can tell; but that it will certainly result in the withdrawing of every governmental privilege, whereby one man is permitted to appropriate wealth created by another, without rendering any return therefor, cannot be doubted by any person familiar with the history of the Anglo-Saxon people.

In such a political struggle as this issue involves, there is no room for two reactionary parties. The Republican party, by its more abject subservience to any crooked interest that will contribute to its campaign fund, and by reason of its perfect organization, has preempted the so-called conservative ground. The Democratic party cannot outbid it for the support of the privileged interests; even if the rank and file of the party would permit such a bid to be made. Moreover, the Western Democrats, in the Roosevelt-Parker campaign, showed what their verdict will be when their party managers make what they regard as a bid for the support of monopoly. The Socialist vote in the West is growing because thousands of men who do not believe the visionary nonsense of Debs and his disciples, feel that they have no other ticket to vote. And the Socialist vote will continue to increase until the Democratic party offers a political abiding place to men sincerely anxious for economic reform. If the Democratic party were to do this, the Socialist party in the West at least would be reduced to a handful of half-cracked extremists, whose ravings would disturb nobody. Not only that, but enormous inroads would be made upon the Republican ranks, and thousands of votes would be secured from men who, while tired of corporate domination of the

Republican party, now see no choice between it and the Democratic party.

But the Democratic party can hold out no hope to these thousands while Southern renegade protectionists, who are Republicans upon every vital political issue, except the negro question, are held up as Democratic leaders. So long as this condition prevails, the Democratic party can only continue to exist as a sectional party, without principle or conviction, and without the hope of gaining a single recruit. Parenthetically, I will say that I sympathize, in a general way, with the Southern attitude toward negro suffrage; but I protest against a condition which makes the Democratic party play second fiddle to Sambo.

It is a foolish waste of time to talk about building up a Democratic party in the West, except along radical lines, and under conditions which will eliminate not only Southern leadership, but a considerable, if disgusting, element of Eastern leadership as well. Western Democrats are not only weary of Bourbon control, but I think they have parted company finally and forever with Tammany Hall. Your Western Democrat is tired of seeing a blatant, cynical, and corrupt aggregation of political mercenaries coming in force to every national convention, arrogantly demanding platform concessions which will enable them to raise a corruption fund for their local purposes, and then returning home to trade off the national ticket for a New York Governorship. If the next national convention were to refuse to seat a single delegate from Tammany, on the broad ground that that such delegates are not Democrats, but political outlaws and guerrillas, it would mean a million votes to the party in the West and Middle West.

Two causes contributed mainly to Mr. Taft's majorities in the West last fall. One was an instinctive distrust of the ability of the heterogeneous mass calling itself the Democratic party to accomplish anything, if it were successful, and the other was a belief—a mistaken one, I think—that Mr. Taft represented the radicalism of Mr. Roosevelt. In saying this I do not wish to be understood as indorsing the Rooseveltian output of economic error and ignorance; but I say it to emphasize the fact that the West is definitely and permanently committed to radical political action. That radicalism, I hope and believe, can be directed along safe and wholesome lines, if the Democratic party proves sagacious enough to take advantage of its opportunities.

Western Senators and Representatives, who are standing out for high protection, particularly on raw materials, are misrepresenting their constituents; they represent merely the special interests to which they owe a prior allegiance. For example, the Spokane Chamber of Commerce memorialized Congress for a duty on lumber and lead ore. I am convinced that a plebiscite would show a majority of the people of this city of 100,000 or more inhabitants for free lumber and free lead; and I am morally certain that, were the immense farming districts of this section permitted to take part in the vote, the majority would be overwhelming, particularly for free lumber. A belief that the protec-