

the swinish multitude, to the indiscriminating million, to such as burnt the House of Priestley, such as murdered Fitzgerald," etc. Well, this female paragon closed her school, and joined the young married couple in July of 1812; in November of the same year she had left them, and Shelley is soon writing to his friend Hogg of "the Brown Demon, as we call our late tormentor and schoolmistress. . . . She is an artful, superficial, ugly, hermaphroditical beast of a woman." To another friend he describes her as "a woman of desperate views and dreadful passions, but of cool and undeviating revenge."

Are not these fragments of correspondence a curious comment on the statement of Mr. Clutton-Brock that most of the characters of "Prometheus" are "so abstract that we do not even know who they are"; and again that "The Cenci," which deals with human beings, is even "far more unreal" than the "Prometheus," which is professedly allegorical? As Shelley judged his friends from the immediate emotions they aroused in him, or from some fanciful association with the emotion dominant in his mind, without a care for the various and real springs of action in himself or them, so he created his poetical characters. P. E. M.

NEWS FOR BIBLIOPHILES.

Since printing our notes on Thackeray's "English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century" (*Nation*, January 27), we have examined a copy of the first American edition of the book published by Harper & Bros. the same year, 1853. Although the title-page of this edition does not contain the words "Delivered in England, Scotland, and the United States of America," agreeing in this with the first English edition, the variations of the text show that it was printed from the second English edition, and not from the first. This American edition has a positive first edition value as it contains a seventh lecture, "Charity and Humour," not printed in England until 1885. The lecture was written and delivered in New York for the benefit of the "Ladies Society for the Employment and Relief of the Poor."

It was with a shock of surprise that we read the title-page of the catalogue of Sotheby's sale of February 24 and 25: "Catalogue of Books, Pamphlets, Tracts, Poems, Plays, etc., from the Britwell Court Library." Now, the library at Britwell Court, Buckinghamshire, is regarded as about the finest in England remaining in private ownership. It was formed by William Henry Miller (1789-1848), who was one of the largest buyers, especially of English poetry, at the several sales of the great library of Richard Heber, dispersed in 1834, 1835, and 1836. The collection has been kept intact and enlarged by later owners. On the death of Wakefield Christie-Miller, in 1898, it passed to his sons, then minors, we believe. Although no such statement is made by the auctioneers, a glance at the sale catalogue shows that the books are dupli-

cates and imperfect copies, and not an important selection from the library itself. Some important and valuable books are, however, included, among them the first edition of Milton's "Areopagitica" (1644), uncut, and in the greater part unopened; Abraham Fraunce's "Countess of Pembroke's Yvychurch" and "Countess of Pembroke's Emanuel" (1591), both imperfect; "The Song of Mary the Mother of Christ" (1601), recently reprinted by William Loring Andrews; Painter's "Palace of Pleasure" (1566-1580), imperfect; Gay's first book, "Wine, a Poem" (1708); and several first editions of the books of Dryden, Pope, Swift, and other writers.

On February 15 and 16, C. F. Libbie & Co. of Boston will hold an important sale of autograph, letters and manuscripts, partly from the papers of Joseph Willard, president of Harvard College. Eight letters of Washington will be offered, one dated April, 1754, written to Gov. Dinwiddie, one dated May, 1758, and one dated November 3, 1761. Such early letters are extremely rare. Among other important Revolutionary names, specimens of which occur in the sale, are John Hancock, John Adams, Israel Putnam, Elbridge Gerry, William Heath, Benjamin Lincoln, and others. There are also many early documents written or signed by New Englanders of prominence before the Revolution, a set of Episcopal Bishops, comprising two hundred and fifteen names, and manuscripts and letters of Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Thoreau, and others.

On February 15 and 16 the Merwin-Clayton Sales Co. of this city sells a collection of books and pamphlets, and on February 17 a collection of books from the library of the late Dr. William H. Egle of Harrisburg, Pa. No items of special note are included.

Correspondence.

THE BACONIAN ACROSTIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In a letter printed in your issue of January 20, Mr. Frederick E. Pierce of Yale University makes public some calculations as to the possible frequency with which one might find a given name hidden by the application of a given method in the first folio of the plays of Mr. William Shakespeare.

I wonder whether Mr. Pierce could be persuaded to use the carefully and laboriously obtained figures, the results of which he gives us so lucidly, in another calculation which shall take into account *all* the factors of the problem. He says that "for the sake of simplicity" he has "disregarded certain factors."

When we are calculating the recurrence of a given name in *any* place, as is the case with Mr. Pierce, we should naturally pursue a different line of calculation from that which would be necessary to show what the chances are that a suspected name will recur in a series of closely corresponding places, such as the first or last page or column, the prologue or the epilogue, of works suspected on other grounds to be put forth by the man whose name is the subject of discussion. This point may be illustrated by analogy.

There are many marbles in the world. One could describe the methods by which

marbles are made. One could also calculate the average number of marbles which might be held in the pocket of each citizen. Quite another calculation would be necessary to determine the average number of marbles which would be held in the pockets of boys under twelve years of age. Still another calculation would be needed to determine how probable it is that any given kind of marble will be found in the pocket of the head boy of any given school.

The doctrine of chances is a difficult and subtle matter in mathematics, and yet we base our keenest bargains upon it, and most of the acts of everyday life. Its use in special cases is sometimes striking. For instance, the mind, in emergencies, makes curiously short cuts with the doctrine of chance. The mathematician can follow in the wake of the analytical faculty, and prove the validity of its deductions, but he cannot begin to equal the lightning rapidity of reason. Suppose I find a crowd in the street. A dead man lies in their midst, killed by a motor. A policeman comes up and asks if any one knows the name of the dead man. One says that he thinks that the dead man is John Jones of Summerville; another says, "No, I think his name is Brown; he lives in Worcester." Still another is quite sure that he is Ephraim Hutton of New Haven. And so on through the crowd. Perhaps several men will suggest other names. One little man, however, pushes his way through the crowd, and, after a careful look, says with some conviction in his tone, "I am pretty sure that that is John Spoopendyke of Podunk. He has been missing for some time, and that looks like him." The policeman then examines the dead man's pockets, and finds some letters; say, ten addressed to Henry Roberts, several letters addressed to other men also not suspected by the crowd, and one letter addressed to John Spoopendyke of Podunk. The policeman very naturally telephones to Mrs. John Spoopendyke, and tells her that her husband is hurt. He may prove to have been wrong in supposing that our Mr. Spoopendyke was her husband; for the dead man might be her cousin; but the policeman would in all probability have telephoned to the right place. The policeman would find it difficult to explain mathematically why he was so sure that the dead man was Mr. John Spoopendyke. The mathematician could compute the chances against the dead man being some one else. To the average intelligent mind such computation is unnecessary. In common phrase, a man "puts two and two together" very rapidly.

Had there been no little man to suspect that the dead man was John Spoopendyke of Podunk, the policeman would have hunted up the home of the man whose name occurred on most of the letters in the dead man's pockets. He would have been wrong had he suspected that that was the name of the dead man.

It is the factor of recurrence in corresponding places, and also the factor of pre-existing suspicion of identity, which Mr. Pierce has omitted from his calculation. They are the crucial factors in the mathematical problem presented by the acrostics as they are shown in my book.

Mr. Pierce characterizes my volume as "ponderous," and I am sorry that he found it heavy. No man could handle so large a book without becoming conscious of its

weight, and I am happy in having so good a reason for believing that a mere weariness of the flesh must have caused Mr. Pierce to overlook the two essential factors to which I have ventured to call his attention.

WILLIAM STONE BOOTH.

Cambridge, Mass., January 24.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Mr. Booth objects to my calculation, on the ground that I ignore a very important fact, *viz.*, that a large part of the acrostics which he found are on the first and last pages of the plays. I had not overlooked this fact, but refrained from discussing it before, purely for the sake of simplicity and brevity. I will take it up now.

It will be remembered that my calculation dealt only with spellings beginning with an F; and forms like BACON and BACONO are to be disposed of by a similar, but separate, process. How many F-acrostics should we expect on the first and last pages? A play in the First Folio contains, on an average, about twenty-five pages; consequently, all the first pages taken together would be about one-twenty-fifth of the whole book, and should contain about one-twenty-fifth of the total number of acrostics. One-twenty-fifth of 200-400 (my previous estimate for the whole Folio) would be between eight and sixteen. What are the facts? On the first pages of the plays there are fourteen F-acrostics. They are between eight and sixteen.

Now turn to the last pages, where we should also expect between eight and sixteen. At first it seems as if we had run into trouble here, for there are thirty. But a moment's observation shows us where the difficulty lies. At the bottom of each last page stands the word FINIS, and Mr. Booth uses the capital F of this repeatedly as a starting point. Since this word occurs on no other page, it obviously offers an unnatural stimulus to acrostics on the last page. It usually stands in the middle, where it can be taken with either column above it, and thus creates about seventy F-blocks in excess of the number which would have existed on a corresponding number of pages anywhere else. Nineteen of Mr. Booth's acrostics use the F of FINIS, and would not exist without it. Deducting these from the original thirty, we have (under the normal conditions existing on other pages) only eleven left. Again they are between eight and sixteen. In other words, on the first and last pages we find just what we should expect by the laws of chance.

As to the "preëxisting suspicion of identity," to which Mr. Booth calls attention, that means nothing here. The most ardent Baconian would not believe that Bacon, the omniscient, the life-long master of ciphers, used a form which could not be identified as intentional, even when discovered. The great philosopher would not have been so foolish.

I wish to say candidly that a skilful mathematician could find places in my previous paper where some deductions from my estimate would have to be made. But he would also find places where additions would have to be made; and the additions would offset the deductions. I am willing to discuss these points if the public wish it. But I doubt if this will

be necessary. If Mr. Booth's acrostics are to mean anything, he must prove that they occur not only more frequently than we should naturally expect, but more frequently than they could possibly be supposed to occur by chance. To do this, he would have to prove, not that I have made an error of ten or fifteen per cent., but that I have made an error of several hundred per cent.

FREDERICK E. PIERCE.

Yale University, January 29.

A GEM MUTILATED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: "Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus"—and never more inopportunately than when, in the dryness of age, he "revises" what he struck out in the rich glow of youth!

I am of those who place Holmes's "The Last Leaf" among the most exquisite of English lyrics. I should hardly dispute one who claimed for it the first place there. I experienced, therefore, a genuine shock, recently, when, on opening a newly acquired copy of the doctor's poems, I found a thoroughly destructive change in one of its most expressive stanzas.

Of the almost perfect poem, the fourth stanza is most beautiful:

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom.
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

And the third is almost equal to it, in all the qualities which make poetry precious:

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets,
So forlorn!
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said
"They are gone."

It was wonderful art, or rather supreme genius, which could make the attributes of senility contribute to a picture so graphic, so pathetic, and so poetical.

And in the two words of the third line of this stanza the whole burden and suggestion of the poem are actually condensed. Its point and climax are there. Alas, *where* there. For I find, in this recent edition, that some malign influence, at a time I know not of, led the gifted author to replace them with three others, quite commonplace and hardly better than padding—"Sad and wan."

What was the doctor thinking of, when he thus mutilated his own wonderful creation? Surely, he had but partly awakened from his after-dinner nap! Or, perhaps, some youngster from college assured him that such a rhyme as "-orn" with "gone" was inadmissible, and with hasty geniality the veteran of letters yielded to the sophomore—yet, even so, saved little to the rules.

Really, in this unhappy change of two words in the fine product of a young man's muse, English literature suffers a distinct loss. I earnestly appeal to Dr. Holmes's literary executors to restore the original reading in all future editions.

J. M.

Philadelphia, February 2.

COLLEGE TEACHING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: There is much in President Hyde's article in your last number that commands ready enough assent, the argument in favor of small classes and tutorial instruction being beyond discussion, as an average proposition. But the deductions of President Hyde will not hold as he presents them, because they are based on an assumption which, while it may possibly apply to a national system of schools, does not fit the case of the great universities.

He says, "all teaching that deals exclusively with men in large groups" is at best second rate. "If it is merely lectures, . . . with an occasional written examination, it is fourth rate." This is a beautiful example of methodology run to seed, and is so obviously untrue that were it not for the recent invasion of the intellectual field by highly organized and destructive hordes of standardizers, it would seem hardly worth dipping one's pen to reply.

The standardized teacher is one thing; the teacher that makes the greatness of a university is another; the argument that holds with the one does not hold with the other. And the system that deliberately turns its back on the first rate man is a faulty system. I have conversed with men who, nearly half a century after the event, were still under the influence of the almost legendary snap course of James Russell Lowell on Dante. Was this, then, a fourth-rate course according to the "new standards of college teaching"? Would it have been improved had Lowell been induced to eat into his time and mental energy by holding conferences with his men? The false assumption that lurks behind President Hyde's dicta is one that a commercial community has almost of necessity attached to its intellectual workers. The thing cuts very deep. Were certain tendencies unchecked, the intellect of our country would be standardized after the manner of our steel, beef, and oil enterprises, while our universities would be reduced to the exclusive functions of normal schools dedicated to the production of pedagogical Franksteins.

Still, we must live in hope, while uttering an occasional word of protest. After all, from Abélard to Nathaniel Shaler, the exponents of the "fourth rate teaching" have won the verdict of humanity, and so perhaps we need not view too despondingly the Draconian edicts of the "New Standard of College Teaching."

R. M. JOHNSTON.

Cambridge, Mass., February 5.

FORESTS AND RAINFALL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: May I be permitted to add a few lines to your recent editorial in regard to the effect of forests on rainfall, and, indirectly, on agriculture? Dr. Ellsworth Huntington, in his essay on "The Climate of the Historic Past," says:

It has often been asserted that the destruction of forests has been the cause of the diminution of rainfall. In the Lop basin the opposite appears to be the case; the supply of water has diminished and therefore the forests have died. Rainfall unquestionably controls forestation, but

neither in the Lop basin nor in other parts of central and western Asia is there any good evidence that forests have an appreciable effect upon rainfall.

Personally, I was impressed, both in Colombia and in Peru by the fact that agriculture is in a less developed stage in the tropical forests on the eastern slope of the Andes than in the semi-arid region of the plateau where there are no forests and do not seem to have been any for centuries. It would undoubtedly be a benefit to the people of the plateau were their governments to promote forestry, for it would add greatly to the comforts of life. But it seems to be extremely doubtful whether the presence of such forests would add to the rainfall.

HIRAM BINGHAM.

Yale University, February 4.

"CUSS" AND "KAUZ."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In Raabe's "Zum wilden Mann" I have just come across Kristeller's words: "Mein damaliger Prinzipal war ein drolliger alter Kauz"—and something in the tone prompted at once the rendering, "a funny old cuss." I drew on a vocabulary once quite respectable in a rural community I used to know, where men spoke of a "wammus" without ever suspecting, I think, that there was a German word "Wamms." This suggests to me an origin for the term "cuss" which would seem much more in keeping with its lenient tone than the usual connection with "curse."

May not this latter association be responsible for driving out of decent speech a word originally quite innocent of blasphemy?

E. V. M.

Chicago, February 3.

Literature.

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science. By Georgine Milmine. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. \$2 net.

The Mask of Christian Science. By Francis Edward Marsten. New York: American Tract Society. \$1.

Miss Milmine's study of the founder of Christian Science was first published in *McClure's Magazine*, about two years ago. It has since been brought up to date by the addition of a brief account of the controversy centring about Mrs. Augusta Stetson and the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in New York. The present volume recalls in more ways than one that other piece of historical writing from the hand of a woman which brought *McClure's* much profit and reputation about five years ago, namely, Miss Ida Tarbell's story of the rise of the Standard Oil Company. Since Miss Tarbell showed the way, the periodical press has been swamped with contemporary history and politics; but, in the entire clutter of denunciation, *exposé*, and "uplift," it is hard to find a trace of

either the scientific spirit or the scientific method, which the historian of John D. Rockefeller brought to her work. The present volume is one of the rare exceptions. If scientific history presupposes the absence of a definite point of view on the part of the writer, the term will not apply here. Miss Milmine, like Miss Tarbell, is plainly not in sympathy with the persons or the movement she describes. But the indictment, if we choose to call it that, is framed dispassionately. The damaging evidence is elaborately built up and skilfully arranged, but the reader is left largely to form his own conclusions. The amount of original research involved in the writing of the book must have been very great. The result is an historical record of high value and of fascinating interest; the credit for the latter we may assign in great measure to the inherent possibilities of the subject in itself without denying the author a generous share.

We imagine that the great majority of Christian Scientists will not find Miss Milmine's book particularly agreeable reading. At the same time, there is no reason why the ardent Christian Scientist should read and lose his equanimity. If we were asked to state in a single phrase what effect the book produces on the disinterested reader, we should say that it demolishes Mrs. Eddy without necessarily demolishing Christian Science. The destructive force of the story does not consist in the fact that from her earliest childhood Mary Baker G. Eddy is shown to have been a creature of nerves and hysteria, with all the symptoms of what grosser minds might interpret as a devilish temper. Criticism in delving into the origins of religious movements is prepared to deal with the phenomena of neurosis. More important is the fact that, in spite of very striking aberrations of will and intellect, the founder of Christian Science does not succeed in rising above the commonplace. There is nothing of the demonic drive that makes great prophets, even when they are false prophets. Up to the age of forty-five her life is restless, cramped, uncertain, in part unfortunate, and on the whole futile. In 1866, with the death of the healer, Quimby, at whose feet in Portland, Maine, the future Mrs. Eddy had spent an ardent novitiate, she begins to find herself. She appropriates Quimby's manuscripts and definitely gives herself to the pursuit of metaphysical therapeutics, for which New England had long offered a promising field. The virtues she now begins to display are dogged resolution and a Napoleonic recklessness in utilizing other people's labor and happiness for her own purposes. It was not till 1875 that "Science and Health" was published. It was not till the early eighties that Christian Science began to move rapidly forward.

Mrs. Eddy was above sixty when she began building up a new faith, a new church, and a large personal fortune. To have accomplished all that, and to remain, even to the present day as our author asserts, the absolute mistress of her church and her fortune, would apparently argue an exceptionally gifted personality. Yet that is not the impression the record of her life produces. Mrs. Eddy had will, it is true; but in addition to that she had nearly all the faults upon which an infant cause will often make shipwreck. She was irritable, violent, and tactless; she exacted blind obedience from her followers, and would not brook the mere thought of a possible rival in the field. Her earliest converts one after the other fell away or were driven away. The air of commercialism always hangs heavy about her. In 1881 she is the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, and charges \$300 for a course of twelve lessons in healing. In 1899 she calls upon all devout Christian Scientists to supply themselves with the "Mother Spoon," an ordinary silver spoon, sold at \$5 apiece by the Christian Science Souvenir Company of Concord. Christian Science literature remains to the present day Mrs. Eddy's jealously guarded monopoly. But it is evident that a leader who works for her own pocket all the time is not in the tradition of successful leadership. If Mrs. Eddy succeeded it must have been largely in spite of herself.

Hence we are tempted to take issue with Miss Milmine when she declares, towards the end of the volume, that "what Mrs. Eddy has accomplished has been due solely to her own compelling personality." There is far more truth in the statement that "her genius has been of the eminently practical kind, which can meet and overcome unfavorable conditions by sheer force of energy, and in Mrs. Eddy's case this potency has been accompanied by a remarkable shrewdness which has had its part in determining her career." But, after all, practical genius, energy, and shrewdness are not uncommon qualities. When they are unaccompanied, as in Mrs. Eddy's case, by any deep spiritual impetus, we are in danger of being compelled to admit that the qualities which explain the upbuilding of a large dry goods business will explain the upbuilding of a new church. For our own part, we prefer not to look to Mrs. Eddy at all for an explanation of her success, but to call it predominantly the work of chance. Among a large number of practitioners in the allied fields of mental healing, spiritism, new thought, and other branches of "metaphysics," Mrs. Eddy happened to be the lucky person.

When, therefore, we say that the devout Christian Scientist can let Miss Milmine have her way with Mrs. Eddy without feeling his faith imperilled thereby, it is precisely because such a