

tique remains of certain Swiss towns have not restrained those who seek to exploit their native land for the sake of "tourist-facilities" and other modern but tasteless "improvements." Adolphe Tièche, an excellent painter in water-colors, attempts to counteract this unfortunate tendency, and to make the people of Berne appreciate the beauty of the old town by publishing in a portfolio (Berne: A. Francke) about two dozen sketches of the place as it was in the eighteenth century. These are admirably executed *à la sanguine*, and are accompanied by a short preface in which the artist says:

I have made these sketches especially for the Bernese, who know so little of the real riches of their city, and who coldly delivered the most charming and graceful building in all Switzerland (the old Musée Historique) to the pickaxe of the destroyer.

He adds that large modern structures have disfigured the *cachet* of the ancient city, and that only in the last few years have people begun to open their eyes to this. Modern Berne has indeed been lavish in putting up imposing and even splendid buildings, of which the native is justly proud, but which have rivals elsewhere. To those, however, who have love of the past, artistic taste, or even ordinary curiosity, the charm of the Swiss capital lies not so much in the ambitious architecture and decoration of the Federal Palace and of the Art Museum, as in the old towers, arcades, and fountains grouped against the snowy background of the Bernese Oberland.

A correspondent of the *Journal de Genève* refers to Jean-Jacques Rousseau as one of the precursors of aviation. While secretary to the Venetian ambassador at Paris (1762), Rousseau wrote to Grimm concerning his own efforts to construct a flying machine. These seem to have been as unsuccessful as his endeavors to change the method of musical notation. The letter will be found in his "Correspondance littéraire."

A. ALEXANDER.

#### NEWS FOR BIBLIOPHILES.

The fourth volume of Dr. Thomas Lindsay Bradford's "Bibliographers' Manual of American History" (Philadelphia: Stan. V. Henkels & Co.) is in the hands of the subscribers. This covers R to Z, Nos. 4528 to 6056. Our notices of preceding volumes have not been very complimentary, and about all that can be said of the present volume is that it is no better and no worse than the others.

Neither the Williamsburg edition nor the London edition (both 1754) of George Washington's "Journal" is given, only the reprint by Toner (1893). Under Underhill's "News from America" (1638) no mention is made of the fact that the Deane copy, which sold for \$180 in 1898 lacked the plan or that Lord Sheffield's copy, which brought \$1,250 in 1908, possessed it. The Beckford record of £605 on Smith's "Historie of Virginia"

(1624) is given, but without the statement that it was a large paper copy. At the end of the record of John Smith's books are reprinted James Lenox's notes on the plates and maps in Smith's books published in *Norton's Literary Gazette* for March 15, 1854. Some additions and corrections have been discovered since. These are incorporated in the E. D. Church Catalogue, a work which Dr. Bradford might have consulted with profit in the case of a great many titles.

The eighth edition, for 1910, of James Clegg's "International Directory of Booksellers, and Bibliophile's Manual" (London: Elliot Stock; New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.) is just received. The numerical summary of addresses gives the total number of booksellers recorded as 12,163, of whom 4,060 are in England and Wales and 2,354 in the United States. Generally the entry is a single line only, but in some cases specialties are mentioned. The number of public libraries recorded is 4,774, of which 1,443 are in the United Kingdom and 1,274 in the United States. Other information, such as lists of auctioneers, record and literary searchers, bookbinders, etc., sizes of books, postage rates, lists of periodicals, etc., is included.

The Grolier Club published in December a bronze medallion portrait of Emerson, designed and modelled by Victor David Brenner and cast by John Williams. The medallion is seven and one-fourth inches across and is, in general, uniform with the Hawthorne, Lowell, and Poe medallions already issued by the club.

Members of the Bibliographical Society of America have just received Volume III of the "Proceedings and Papers." The most important single contribution in the volume is the "Bibliography of the Official Publications of the Confederate States of America," by Hugh A. Morrison of the Library of Congress. Other papers of interest are "Lincoln Collections and Lincoln Bibliography," by Daniel Fish; "Manuscript Hunting," by Dr. E. C. Richardson, and "The Coöperatively Printed Catalogue," by H. W. Wilson.

The Society of Dofobs of Chicago has issued the "Second Book of Dofobs." It is a quarto, limited to fifty copies, and contains, among other contributions, "Deliberations of a Dofob," by Adrian H. Joline of New York, a pleasant rambling essay on the pleasures of old bookishness, or, as he calls it, "Dofobery"; "Adventures of a Manuscript," by William K. Bixby of St. Louis, being the story of the manuscript of Scott's "Harold the Dauntless"; two letters of Hawthorne and a letter of Dickens, here first printed, and other pieces.

The Merwin-Clayton Sales Company of this city will sell on January 20 a portion of the library of Charles Burr Todd, including a long series of books on the Quakers, a copy of Rumsey's "Short Treatise on the Application of Steam" (1788), and other books of interest.

January 18, the Anderson Auction Company will hold a sale of autographs, including the collection of James J. Casey. Among important names included are Washington (an A. L. S., dated 1798, and an L. S. dated 1778), Lincoln, Grant, Jefferson, Hamilton, Lafayette, Wordsworth, Dickens, Swinburne, and others.

January 19 and 20, they sell the library of the late George Meredith of Elmira, N. Y. Smith's "History of the Province of New

York," first edition (1757), a piece cut from the title, but with the rare folding view; an extra-illustrated copy of Irving's "Life of Washington," the large paper edition of 1855-59; about one hundred titles on the Alps, mountain climbing, and allied subjects; a complete set, twenty-three volumes, of the publications of the Selden Society, and a collection of Shakespeareana are worthy of mention.

## Correspondence.

### DATES OF "THE RING AND THE BOOK."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: One may fairly expect accuracy in important dates—to say nothing of minor ones—in a biography of a famous poet. Yet, in recently perusing several discussions of Browning's "Ring and the Book," I was surprised to discover that no fewer than three distinguished critics had made a (seemingly) inexcusable blunder in referring to the genesis of that poem. Arthur Symonds, who is apparently the original sinner, and who perpetuates his mistake in his 1906 revision, asserts ("Introduction to Browning," revised and enlarged edition, p. 152) that the poet picked up the square yellow book upon which he founded his masterpiece, at Florence, "one day in June, 1865." Sharp ("Life of Browning," p. 116) repeats the error, probably following Symonds. He adds (p. 119) that Browning, on the afternoon on which he made his purchase, read the book from end to end. "The midsummer heats had caused thunder-clouds to congregate above Vallombrosa and the whole valley of Arno: and the air in Florence was painfully sultry. The poet stood by himself [Mrs. Browning died in 1861] on his terrace at Casa Guidi, and . . . his mind was busy in refashioning the old tale of loveless marriage and crime." Birrell (Globe one-volume edition of Browning, introductory note to "The Ring and the Book," p. 649) varies the comedy a trifle by reference to a "'memorable day' in June, 1862, when he [Browning] picked up, at a stall in the Piazza San Lorenzo in Florence, the 'square old yellow book.'"

On the other hand, Herford ("Life of Browning," p. 169) declares: "The story of Pompilia took shape in the gloom and glare of a stormy Italian night of June, 1860, as he watched from the balcony of Casa Guidi." He does not vouchsafe the date at which Browning bought the Yellow Book. Hordell ("The Old Yellow Book," p. 237) says: "He had discovered it amidst the rubbish of a market barrow in San Lorenzo Square. This was in June of 1860." Mrs. Sutherland Orr ("Life and Letters of Browning," Vol. 2, p. 378) irritates one's curiosity by remarking that "it has often been told, though with curious confusion as regards the date, how Mr. Browning picked up the original parchment-bound record." She offers no suggestion as to the solution of the "curious confusion." Dowden, however ("Life of Browning," p. 252), is absolutely explicit. He gives the date of purchase as June, 1859, and adds:

As he leaned by the fountain and walked through street and street, he read, and had mastered the contents before his foot was on the threshold of Casa Guidi. That night

his brain was a-work; pacing the terrace of Casa Guidi, . . . he gave himself up to the excitement of re-creating the actors and reenacting their deeds in his imagination. . . . When in the autumn he journeyed with his wife to Rome, the vellum-bound quarto was with him.

The most important point, of course, is that Browning had roughly sketched at least parts of his treatment of the theme during the lifetime of his wife, the "Lyric Love" to whom, in an ever-memorable passage, he dedicated the finished work; and that his plans were rudely and pathetically disturbed by the shock of her death. Sharp might have avoided his ridiculous mistake if he had remembered the fact which Herford states (p. 169): that shortly after Mrs. Browning died the poet left Florence forever. He could hardly have been standing, therefore, on the terrace of Casa Guidi in 1865! Whether Herford and Hodell or Dowden is correct with reference to this memorable night on the terrace, I have been unable to ascertain. The circumstantial nature of Dowden's account would seem to throw the balance in his favor, but for the fact that he obtained all his details from Browning's own lines in the first book of the poem (Globe edition, pp. 650 and 655):

That memorable day,  
(June was the month, Lorenzo named the square)  
I leaned a little and overlooked my prize  
By the low railing round the fountain-source.

Still read I on, from written title-page  
To written index, on, through street and street.

I fused my live soul and that inert stuff  
Before attempting smithcraft, on the night  
After the day when,—truth thus grasped and  
gained,—  
The book was shut and done with and laid by.

The while I read and read,  
I turned, to free myself and find the world,  
And stepped out on the narrow terrace, built  
Over the street and opposite the church,  
And paced its lozenge-brickwork sprinkled cool.

Mrs. Orr (p. 378) quotes the following from a letter of Browning to Miss Isa Blagden, dated September 19, 1862: "My new poem that is about to be; and of which the whole is pretty well in my head—the Roman murder story you know." But in none of his published letters of 1859-60 does he refer to the discovery of the Yellow Book.

HARRY T. BAKER.

Beloit College, Beloit, Wis., January 3.

#### PETRARCH AND GERBERT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In a review of a recent work on Petrarch, the following sentence is quoted from one of his letters as giving the "key-note" of his eager activities as a scholar and humanist:

If you love me, commission faithful and learned men to search through Tuscany, ransacking the bookshelves of the religious houses and of the men who are most addicted to study, and find means to discover something that will appease or stimulate my appetite. For the rest, you must know that I have made the same request of friends in England, France, and Spain.

For those who may be too prone to find novelty in the labors of this great humanist in promoting the revival of learning in the fourteenth century, I would offer the following parallel from the darkest depths

of the "dark ages." It is from a letter of Gerbert, who was born in Aquitaine about the year 950, and died as Pope Sylvester II, in 1002. The letter was written some time before he became Pope, and therefore at a period when it has been supposed that men in fear and trembling were awaiting the dreadful year 1000, which was to bring the world to an end. My extract reads:

I am eagerly collecting a library; and as formerly at Rome and elsewhere in Italy, so likewise in Germany and Belgium, I have obtained copyists and manuscripts with a mass of money and the help of friends in those parts. Permit me likewise to beg of you also to promote this end. We will append at the end of this letter a list of those writers we wish copied. We have sent for your disposal parchment for the scribes and money to defray the cost; not unmindful of your goodness.

This passage could easily be duplicated from other letters of Gerbert, and from the writings of other men of the next generation.

HENRY OSBORN TAYLOR.

No. 135 East Sixty-sixth Street, New York, January 3.

#### ANARCHICAL vs. PETRIFIED SPELLING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I note Dr. Cooper's letter in your issue of December 9, in which he refers to my address "On Some Life Ideals," and deplores the spelling used there, calling it a "caricature of English." I heartily agree with Dr. Cooper that, in spelling, as in any other human activity, all tendencies "on the part of the careless, inaccurate, and anarchical" should be vigorously combated by "all persons of good taste." However, I disagree with Dr. Cooper in his condemnation of the spellings used in my address. Far from being arbitrary, I endeavored to follow closely the amended spellings recommended by the American Philological Association (Transactions, 1886, Vol. XVII, 127). These spellings were also endorsed by the Philological Society of England, the Modern Language Association, and the Spelling Reform Association. They are also approved by the Standard Dictionary (page xvii). As a matter of fact, out of the twelve words cited by Dr. Cooper, nine are found in the list printed in the above-mentioned volume of Transactions (liv, hav, abstaînd, litl, dremt, curage, dubld, tripld, atmosfere).

V. KARAPETOFF.

Cornell University, January 3.

#### JEAN DORNIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In reference to the review in the *Nation*, January 6, of the "Essai sur Leconte de Lisle," by Jean Dornis, it may be worth noting that the catalogue of the Boston Public Library gives "Jean Dornis," author of "Leconte de Lisle intime," 1895, as the pseudonym of Mme. Guillaume Beer, at whose country house, I believe, Leconte de Lisle died.

Apropos of this poet, I should be glad if some reader of the *Nation* would explain the reference to "le Gardien pensif du mystique oranger," in "Epiphanie" ("Poèmes tragiques").

GEO. N. HENNING.

Washington, D. C., January 8.

## Literature.

### RECENT VERSE.

*The Poems of William Winter:* Author's Edition. New York: Moffat, Yard & Co.

*The Collected Poems of Arthur Upson.* Edited, with an Introduction, by Richard Burton. Minneapolis: Edmund D. Brooks.

*Drake: An English Epic.* By Alfred Noyes. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.

*Last Poems.* By George Meredith. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons.

*The Poems of Oscar Wilde:* Authorized Edition. Boston: John W. Luce & Co.

*New Poems.* By William Watson. New York: John Lane Co.

*New Poems.* By Richard LeGallienne. New York: John Lane Co.

As a poetical season this has been in some sort one of recollection, illustrated chiefly by familiar names. In some cases it is the poet's last appearance. Even where this is not so, it is given us to renew old acquaintance; the stranger can wait—he is sure of the morrow. In such a mood, the very limitation of Mr. Winter's poetry—which may be first considered—its decidedly personal and occasional character, seems an added attraction. Any one who will take pains to recall the part he has played in life and will read this final edition of his collected verse in connection with his recently published reminiscences, will have little reason to regret that his inspiration has been so largely centred in his own experience. Indeed, it is to this susceptibility to his immediate circumstances, to the promptings of friendship and affection, that his most memorable work is due—his poems to Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Augustin Daly, and Henry Irving.

To be sure, there is much about the *facture* of his verse which seems a little old-fashioned nowadays. There are few vivid figures; few hard, compact, and diamantine phrases. The rhymes are frequently far from "rich"; from the modern "artistic" point of view there is something slightly archaic about the diction and the poetic convention. If anything, the moral is over-obvious; it is, in a word, all very "facile." But such matters are of small importance. As Mr. Winter's own lines, "At Arlington," illustrate, even a taste for moral commonplace has not always proved incompatible with good poetry. It is more on disposition than on workmanship or even thought that the charm of a minor poet depends. And Mr. Winter's, as revealed in his verse, is admirably quiet, reflective, reminiscent—rather preoccupied with partings and death, but of a calm and reassuring