

the White Hall of the Castle in Berlin to some two hundred guests, including representatives of various universities and academies. The Emperor and the Empress, with ten members and guests of the royal family, occupied the centre of the great rectangular table, while the two hundred guests were arranged on both sides. The Imperial Chancellor was seated opposite their majesties, with the Minister of Public Instruction on his right and the Rector of the University on his left. Thus closed the university's first century as it had begun a hundred years before, with a royal act, but this time with Prussia's king no longer trembling before the Corsican, but triumphing as the German Emperor, and still the generous patron of liberal learning.

As one reads the roll of the great names of Berlin professors, and considers the growth of the number of students from 256 in 1810 to 9,242 in 1910, and attempts to compass the manifold activities in the various institutes of the university, one must feel that the words of Clemens Brentano's Festkannte dedicated to the university have been amply fulfilled:

Der. Ganzheit, Allheit, Einheit,  
Der Allgemeinheit  
Gelehrter Weisheit,  
Des Wissens Freiheit  
Gehört dies königliche Haus!  
So leg' ich auch die goldenen Worte aus:  
*Universitati Litterarum.*

The jubilee also called forth a great mass of literature relating to the university. The two works issued under the auspices of the university are "Geschichte der Königlich Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin," by Max Lenz (in two volumes), and "Berlin in Wissenschaft und Kunst," by Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Paszkowski. These works, and a bronze medal struck off in honor of the jubilee, with an equestrian statue of Emperor William II, were presented to the delegates by the university authorities.

MARION DEXTER LEARNED.

#### NEWS FOR BIBLIOPHILES.

The most important collection of books from the press of Benjamin Franklin which has appeared in the auction room since the sale of the first part of Gov. Pennypacker's library will be offered in Philadelphia by Stan. V. Henkels on November 11 and 12. It forms a part of the library of the late William Fisher Lewis, which includes also a perfect copy of the "Aitkin" Bible (Philadelphia, 1781), the first Bible in the English language printed in America; Thomas's "Pennsylvania and West New Jersey" (1698); William Penn's "Some Account of the Province of Pennsylvania in America" (1681); "The Frame of the Government of the Province of Pennsylvania" (1682), and his "Letter to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders" (1683); two of the exceedingly rare Army Lists of Officers serving under Sir William

Howe, 1777 and 1778, printed in New York by Macdonald and Cameron; a number of Revolutionary tracts, etc. Among the books printed by Franklin are three of the very rare "Treaties with the Indians of the Six Nations," being the Treaties held at Philadelphia in July, 1742, at Albany in October, 1745, and at Lancaster, in August, 1762. The last of these seems to have been unknown to Hildebrun, who records five others—Philadelphia, June, 1748; Philadelphia, November, 1747; Lancaster, July, 1748; and Carlisle, October, 1753—all printed by Franklin, besides two or three more printed by Andrew Bradford. These thin folio pamphlets must have been printed in a small number. Gov. Pennypacker did not have a single specimen. Bishop Hurst had two and one duplicate.

Several books printed by William Bradford are included in the Lewis collection; one, Daniel Leeds's "News of a Trumpet Sounding in the Wilderness" (New York, 1697), is of excessive rarity, no copy having appeared, apparently, in the auction room since Brinley's, which brought \$185 in 1880. There is a copy in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, one in the E. D. Church collection, and two in the Lenox Library. One of the latter, evidently intended for the English market, is the identical book, except for the title, which begins "A Trumpet Sounded Out of the Wilderness of America," and has the date 1699 instead of 1697.

Another portion of the library of the late E. B. Holden, being his books relating to the Fine Arts, will be sold by the Anderson Auction Co. on November 9, afternoon and evening. Smith's "British Mezzotinto Portraits," 5 vols., and portfolio of plates; Beraldi's "Graveurs du XIXe Siècle," 12 vols., and other important reference books are included. Besides his art works there are several books containing specimens of early American engraving, a collection of almanacs and several rare eighteenth-century New York pamphlets.

On November 10 and 11, the Anderson Co. sells a large collection of books on natural history including Blanco's "Flora de Filipinas," 5 vols., with 477 colored plates; Johnson's "Ferns of Great Britain," 2 vols.; Pratt's "Flowering Plants of Great Britain," 6 vols.; Seeborn's "Monograph of the Turdidae or Family of Thrushes," 2 vols., folio, with 149 colored plates; R. Bowdler Sharpe's "Monograph of the Paridae or Birds of Paradise," parts i-vi only, with 60 colored plates; and several hundred less notable though valuable works on birds, plants, shells, etc.

On November 7 and 9, the Merwin-Clayton Sales Co. will sell a collection containing Lincolniana; a long series of magazines containing articles by E. A. Poe, and books about him; books on the West, etc. On November 10 and 11 they offer a collection of miscellaneous books.

In Boston, on November 15, 16, and 17, C. F. Libbie & Co. will sell the libraries of the late Dr. William Everett of Quincy, Massachusetts, and of his father, the Honorable Edward Everett. The most notable book in the sale, and the most notable to appear in the auction room this season, is a perfect copy of the first edition of Eliot's Indian Bible, printed at Cambridge by Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson, the New Testament being finished in 1661, the Old Testament in 1663. Except that, for

some unknown reason, the diamond-shaped printer's ornament has been cut from the New Testament, the copy is fine and perfect. It has the Indian title-page and is one of the copies printed for the use of the Indians. Being a thick and heavy book and subject to hard usage by the Indian students, copies are almost always imperfect. No such copy as this has appeared in the auction room for many years. It is one of the most famous of American books and may be expected to bring a high price.

Among the other rare Americana in the Everett library are some of the standard State Histories such as Haywood's Tennessee, both series (1823); Marshall's Kentucky (1824); Martin's Louisiana (1827); Martin's North Carolina (1829); and Proud's Pennsylvania (1797-98). Mather's "Magnalia Christi Americana," first edition (1702); John de Laet's "Novus Orbis" (1633); and Ramusio's "Navigatione et Viaggi" (1554-65) are important books of earlier date. Audubon's "Birds of America," 7 vols. (1840-44); Michaux and Nuttall's "North American Sylva" (1854), and Wilson and Bonaparte's "American Ornithology," 13 vols. (1808-33), are important natural history books, with colored plates.

## Correspondence.

### PRIZE POETRY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I for one am weary of the charge that the students of our universities are un-intellectual. If meant relatively it is unjust, for those who make it forget that many of our boys belong to a class which never until this generation has been so much as interested in higher education. If meant absolutely it is nonsense. Intellectual and æsthetic powers make less noise in the college world than physical ones, partly because they are less noisy. They exact more from the circle that admires them, and, consequently, that circle is small. But they are more frequent and more highly estimated in college than the superficial observer suspects. I know no better evidence of this than the series of Yale prize poems, which, by annual award, has this year reached the number of thirteen.

Since the competition was established in 1898 by Prof. Albert S. Cook, seven undergraduates and six graduate students, one of them a woman, have won the prize. On the committee of award have been such poets and critics as Gilder, Woodberry, Johnson, Perry, and More, with professors of English from many universities. As many as seventy manuscripts have been submitted in a single competition, and the winning poems have been regularly published in like format. Two have been five-act dramas, three have been collections of sonnets, one a romantic narrative, two dramatic dialogues, three dramatic lyrics, and two of them collections of lyrics grouped about central themes. Some of these are much above mediocrity, none below it. When assembled, they make up a volume of recent American verse so varied and so indicative of mind and imagination that a reviewer cannot regard them merely as poetical exercises, of value for youth; he must see in this series a vigorous attempt to express

the poetry which lies in an American university.

As such, they deserve a reading which shall be as respectful and more sympathetic than would be given to an equivalent amount of professional verse, for it is our young men who should see the visions of which the next great poetry will be made. After such a reading, after a labor to reduce their dissimilarities of style and merit to a unity which might be called a Yale prize poem, I find sincere admiration and a vague disappointment as the two incongruous results.

The admiration is sincere. It would be difficult, I believe, to select as much verse from thirteen numbers of a standard magazine and find there more dignity than in these college productions. It would be still more difficult to bring together from such a source so much evidence of poetical labor nobly attempted and honestly done. In felicity of expression, in the manipulation of metre and of form, the comparison would be less favorable, but it is precisely in such matters of technique that we can afford to wait until a greater maturity than prize poetry permits of. If one may use "worthy" of poetry as one uses it of men, then in worthiness this verse takes rank with work of a much greater pretentiousness. The critic who seeks evidence of intellectual power among students will find it here. And yet to be really critical one must set one's ideal of college verse higher than a difficult intellectual task well done.

How much in these poems is there of the flame of poetry that should flicker or blaze in all youthful hearts? If is when we ask this question that vague disappointment creeps in. Such a disappointment is not new. It has often accompanied the reading of selected poems which some industrious reviewer has chosen from the books of the year. But with college verse, if no more natural, it is more poignant. For you know both throng and singer. You have felt, though dumb, what he must feel; crude and uninterpreted as were your own college days, you think that by a more expressive heart they might be interpreted. Out of those blind hopes, those painful uncertainties, those shocks, thrills, and ardors, passion, you believe, might find a way to expression, especially if gifted with clear verse such as these authors possess. But passion and these fruits of passion the prize poems most lack. I must speak with qualification, for what is wholly true of most is scarcely true of some; yet certainly I find, again and again, correctness, calm, or at most a timid romance, in place of the daring self-expression, the warm sensuousness, the impetuous liberty which were associated, in the last great poetic period, with youth.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. It is not *Sturm und Drang*, not emotionalism or sentimentality that I seek. Young men of our generation neither weep nor rave—even in private; why then should they do so in verse? But the peculiarly intense relations of youth with the world are no less vivid in the experience because, outwardly at least, we take them more calmly. In many respects we are more impressionable at twenty-one than were our great-grandfathers. Such things as beauty, heroism, the inspiration of great books, friendship, and love must move us, as then, strongly in the time of youth. And therefore in read-

ing these poems one is more surprised that intensity is ever absent than impressed by an occasional passionate appeal. Has budding love so little color that a young poet can afford to write with coldness on other themes? Or, if the old fires have lost their heat, has the death-struggle of our faith little significance, for of it—except for an excellent sermon in verse—one hears only a few weak and wandering cries! Does the grip upon power mean little for a youth entering upon a world where there was never before so much to conquer? It is well enough to say, "I cannot compare with an old man" in skill, in poise, in restraint; but if youth writes poetry at all it should spring from passion. It should express his mind if he has one; it should at all costs speak for his burning heart.

Some will object that it is not a lack of passion which is at the root of the difficulty, so much as a powerlessness to give form to the intensities, which burn themselves away into the ashes of a correct but passionless verse. Is not this an unjustifiable inversion of the truth? Will not the poet, when worthily inspired, find out some way which, even through crudities, will let the fire be seen? Can any student of technique equal for an instant him who passionately desires to express? I am borne out in this by the evidence of the poems themselves. The technique is not worst, but best, where feeling is the strongest, and many a colder poem shows more skill than is needed to give some hint at least of a soaring imagination or a tumultuous heart.

And yet there is one technical difficulty which has impeded, though it could not prevent, the flow of emotion into this prize poetry. It is a difficulty, or better, a misfortune, which belongs to all contemporary poetry, but by the young poet is it most keenly felt. I mean the lack of a style for poetry of our period, the eclecticism in our choice of models which makes our poetic literature a sample book of all the ages. In turning over these prize poems one passes from Shakespeare to Stephen Phillips, from Sophocles to Browning, from the twentieth century to mediævalism. It is like walking down a new residence street in an American city, where architects have tried their hands at all the styles that have been and some that never will be—save that there is nothing so monstrous in this poetry as are half the houses in a city block.

One is willing to be *laudator temporis acti* after such a perusal; would almost welcome back the easy days of the eighteenth century, when a young poet could see his first steps marked out before him in the heroic couplet, and know what he first must learn. I am not proposing that future prize poets should write in couplets, nor do I dare to name a style for the twentieth century upon which they should form their work, although I am sure that if there were one we should have better poetry from our young poets. And yet the very medley of these poems suggests that, in default of a modern style, any tried and proven mode of expression is an aid and a relief. And, indeed, the very best of these Yale poems are unquestionably those which are written in a style and often with a model that one can name. They are imitative; the author treads where greater men have trod; but this has kept his feet more sure, has freed his faculties for self-expression. For

an apparent loss of originality there has been a real gain in freedom and in power. If he has chosen to write, like one poet of this series, in a measure used by Hood of a story such as Poe used, he has known his medium from the start, and, like the Greek sculptor, has been able to add his own individuality to the type. If I were writing of rhetorical exercises instead of prize poems, I should say that this imitation of a well-defined style was the only way to begin. As it is, in spite of the dangers of slavishness and heterogeneity, it is the best and safest way, and may result in all but the most original poetry. Tennyson, and many another great name, is warrant for asserting that it may lead even to that. Yet those who adopt it should follow their leaders consciously, and not, as often in this series and out of it, half unawares. It will not do to catch at the form and miss the spirit, or seize upon the subject-matter and fail to master the form. To imitate the mannerisms of a great poet, and to write in his style, are two different things; it is the latter, naturally, that I advocate.

A sincere attempt to choose and learn a style would prevent some lamentable encounters with literary forms too difficult for the writer. The drama, for instance: no half-hearted imitation of the Elizabethans will make narrative dramatic. A deeper consideration of the masters of the five-act form, or of the nature of a romantic story, would, perhaps, have been profitable for two authors in this series; might have led them to believe that one thing at a time is enough, especially when dramaturgy is one and poetry the other. Or the sonnet—the sonnet in a sense is a style; perhaps that is one cause of its irresistible fascination for young poets. But its difficulty need not be re-emphasized here. Only one of the three groups of sonnets among the prize poems is really successful, and there it is a passionate reverence for the strong figures of the *Odyssey* which beats the verse into form.

Perhaps the most thoroughly poetical of the Yale poems is a fiery dramatic lyric of Ixion, lover of Juno, bound to his wheel, and turning eternally in endless pain. There is no difficulty in naming the style of this poem, for it is written in that modification of Keats and Tennyson which Stephen Phillips made popular in the nineties, and will bear comparison with the original. But here there is a new element of success. "*Ixion*" suggests our own imagination and our own time in a fashion not common in this poetry. It makes one wonder whether contemporaneity for our college writers is not a possible alternative to the choice of a classic style. The author of "*Ixion*" owes some of his success to his imitation of a practised poet, and to the comparative freshness of that poet's style; and yet a further reading of the prize poems strengthens the conclusion that if he had relied upon contemporaneity alone he would still have gone far. For instance, there is one poem which is excelled only by the best of those imitative in style, a poem on a mediæval theme, yet thoroughly modern in its feeling for the mystical charms of faith. "*Passio XL Martyrum*" is the title. A dramatized martyrdom of a Roman centurion and the thirty-nine Christians he renounces all to join, it has the studied simplicity, the some-

what too mediæval *naïveté*, the throbbing undercurrent of significance which Maeterlinck and Hauptmann, for example, have taught us to expect in such a tale. It lacks glory of language, in fact it can scarcely be said to have a style, and so far fails perhaps of complete effectiveness, but it grips the imagination nevertheless, and partly, I am sure, because it touches an imagination which is specifically of our day. If I am right, any poetical effort which sprang from a feeling for our problems, our loves, our aspirations, and our hates would have the same effect. The task is difficult, for it is hard to find the poetry at the heart of this generation, and it is still harder to extract it from the brief and artificial period embraced in the few years of college life. But one feels, nevertheless, that if our college poets can be contemporary, which does not mean, of course, to write of football and Young Men's Christian Association work; if they can be expressive of the subtle emotions which are moving their own or the greater world, they may succeed greatly in spite of the unhappy lack of a modern style.

Nothing is more dangerous than to generalize upon the virtues and defects of thirteen poems and groups of poems written in as many years, and by authors who had in common only the environment of university life. The delicacy and the difficulty of the task may excuse the lack of more specific criticism in this review. And yet the conclusions I have outlined above do seem to rise inevitably to the surface of this eddy in Hippocrene. One feels convinced, to repeat, that young poets are most effective when they choose a style with as much sincerity as good architects must use. Or, if they wish to be free from the shackles of precedent, if they wish to strike out boldly for themselves, that they are most sure of success when they link themselves determinedly with the world that is their own, our own, and no earlier age's. By such means their hearts and our own may be unlocked, the pulse of the young men felt beating.

And yet, though these aids to inspiration seem to have been truly helpful in the case of these Yale poems, should we not, even in proposing them, ask first for more frankness and for more passion from the college poet? Surely until there is passion flinging from the heart it is scarcely time to give counsel as to subject or form. There is such passion in Americans, though, save for Whitman, we have been so ignorant of ourselves, or so heavy of speech, that it has seldom found vent. Much of this fire of our life burns in our universities. It spurts with jets of passing flame in many quaint and many excellent fashions—at the games, in friendship, in loyalty, to the college which gave us our social and intellectual birth. But the American in college is shy in the presence of his emotions and reticent beyond the reticence of a none too expressive world outside. All forms of sentiment but the athletic he distrusts, and hides æsthetic speculation with his prayers and his mother's picture in his inmost chamber. He reads far more poetry than he confesses; he thinks far more, but seldom dares declare it his own. It is for the poet to give this frozen world relief. It is for the poet to speak out with passion if there is fire at the heart of our colleges. He may blunder, but if his need

to speak is strong the proper means of expression will be grasped by him more readily than by another. I for one would be sure of finding, sooner or later, sufficient technique, if we could count upon intensity in the writers of our prize poems.

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY.

Yale University, October 26.

#### PRONOUNCING SPANISH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: A correspondent (the *Nation*, October 20) regrets that misinformed travellers speak slightly of the language used in Spanish America; as if it were on a level with pidgin English, whereas, he says, it is good Castilian, and he refers to authorities. Inasmuch as Spanish-America has produced writers who have commanded the respectful attention of Spain's literary circles, he is correct, but the emphasis should not be on Castilian. Even uneducated Spanish-Americans speak their language with far more grammatical correctness than Americans speak English after several years in school, but the Castilian pronunciation is not used, just as it is not used in Andalusia, whence so many emigrated to the New World.

"Castilian" is not a language, but a particular way of pronouncing a language. Thus, in Spanish, pica type is called *cicero*; the Castilian pronounces it *thithero*, while the Andalusian and the Spanish-American pronounce it *sisero*. The most marked difference is in the sound given to soft c and to z. The Andalusians did not bring along and perpetuate the pronunciation used in their province by the ignorant, which consists chiefly of dropping the final s or substituting for it the guttural j. As some Americans affect "English" English, and succeed quite well if they speak slowly, and repeat the word now and then, so sometimes an Andalusian or a Spanish-American may mouth after the Castilian fashion and succeed quite well, provided he does not become excited. He may write *cizaña* and say *thithaña*; but if his temper rises, whatever he may write, he will drop the mushy Castilian and say *sisaña*.

HENRY J. SWIFT, S.J.

New York, October 26.

#### UNIVERSITY ADVERTISING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In these latter days of university advertising, when rumors are abroad that a Western institution is about to employ even the moving picture machine to flash its alluring university "life" before the wondering gaze of the prospective freshman, it may be of interest to your readers to see the very first recorded attempt to advertise a university.

In the spring of the year 1229 a very serious town and gown riot in Paris occasioned a temporary break-up of the great French university. Masters and students left Paris and dispersed to other old seats of learning, or established new ones. Many came to Toulouse in southern France and laid the foundation of a new university, which soon was recognized and privileged by the Pope. Towards the end of the year 1229, the masters of Toulouse sent out the following circular letter to advertise the newly founded institution. A copy of the

original Latin letter was found appended to the fifth book of the "*De triumphis ecclesiæ libri octo*" of John of Garland, an Englishman, who was a professor of grammar, and had come from Paris to Toulouse in 1229. In all probability John of Garland was the author of the letter. This supposition is strengthened by the numerous classical allusions in the letter. By 1229 interest in the classics had almost died out at universities, but this very John of Garland stands out as virtually the sole humanist among university professors of his age.

The following is a translation of the circular letter, with some minor omissions:

To all the faithful in Christ, and especially to the masters and students wheresoever they may be studying, who see this letter, the whole body of masters and students of the University of Toulouse, which is just being established, wish a long life of happiness and a blessed death.

No undertaking has a solid foundation which is not established firmly in Christ, the foundation of Holy Mother Church. With this in mind, we have made the greatest effort to lay, in Christ, the durable foundation of a philosophic university at Toulouse, upon which, along with us, let others build, and may their good intention to do so be illuminated by the shining rays of the Holy Spirit.

In order that the difficulty of beginning such work may not deter you, we have prepared the way, we have done the first irksome tasks, we unfurl before you the banner of security, so that with us preceding as your armorbearers, you, as soldiers of philosophy, may be strong to fight more securely by means of the art of Mercury, the shafts of Phoebus, the lance of Minerva. Moreover, that you may have confidence in the stability of the new institution, we have taken up this work with the authority of the church. For our Moses, the lord cardinal legate in the kingdom of France, next to God and the lord Pope, our leader and protector and founder, was so eager to get things started that he decreed that all studying at Toulouse, both masters and students, should obtain full pardon for all their sins. Therefore, on this account, and because of the regularity of lectures and disputations which the masters engage in more diligently and more frequently than they did at Paris, many students pour into Toulouse, seeing that the flowers have already appeared in our land and the time for pruning of trees is at hand. Hence, let no Deidamia delay our modern Achilles, champion of philosophy, from going up to another Troy, of which some modern Statius of Toulouse again might say:

Omnis honos illic, illic ingentia certant  
Nomina; vix timide matres aut agmina cessant  
Virginea; hic multum steriles damnatus in annos  
Ivisusque Deo, si quem hæc nova gloria segnem  
Ereterit.

Therefore, let each worthy individual assume the part of bold Achilles, lest the timid Thersites obtain the laurel promised to the noble Ajax, so that, now that the war is over, he may at least admire this school of soldiers and this school of philosophers. In order that students may better appreciate the splendor of Toulouse even apart from its university, they should know that this is a second land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, where the abundant pastures are green, where groves of fruit trees are in leaf, where Bacchus reigns in the vineyards, where Ceres is supreme in the fields, where the agreeable climate was preferred by ancient philosophers to that of all the lands of the earth.

In order that you may not bring your mattocks to unfruitful and uncultivated fields, the masters teaching at Toulouse have removed the thistles of rustic ignorance, the thorns of rough unfruitfulness, and other obstacles. For here theologians from their pulpits instruct the students, and on the crossroads they preach to the common people; logicians in the liberal

arts teach the beginners in Aristotle; grammarians fashion the tongues of the stammering children to the analogies of language; organists soothe the ears of the populace with the honey-throated organ; teachers of law praise the Justinian code, while near by the teachers of medicine vaunt Galen. Here the books on natural history, which have been prohibited at Paris, may be heard by all who wish to investigate thoroughly the innermost recesses of nature. What, therefore, will you lack? Scholastic liberty? By no means; for you will enjoy your own liberty subject to the control of no one. Perhaps you fear the hostility of a violent people or the tyranny of an unjust lord? Have no fear, for the liberality of the count of Toulouse has given us adequate security, both concerning our salary and our servants going to or from Toulouse. If, however, they should suffer loss of goods at the hands of robbers in the dominion of the count, he will pursue the criminals to our satisfaction, by means of the civic police, just as he does for citizens of Toulouse.

We must not fail to dwell upon the urbanity of the citizens of Toulouse. It even seems as if urban wit had here made a compact with the soldiery, as well as with the clergy. Therefore, if you should wish to marvel at even more good things than we have foretold, leave the paternal roof, sling your wallets on your backs, so that you may learn the meaning of this moral of Seneca: "I shall regard all lands as mine, and mine as belonging to all, because I shall live as though I realized that I was known of all men; for it is noble in man to attempt lofty things, and to plan even greater things."

Our boldest modern institutions might learn a lesson from this mediæval master of advertising.

LOUIS J. PAETOW.

Urbana, Ill., October 20.

#### "BACK OF."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In the "Minutes of the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies in the State of New York," recently published at Albany, I find this sentence in an entry dated November 3, 1780:

Col. Anthony Van Bergen appeared before the board and informed us that a number of disaffected persons have of late associated back of Cooksackie.

"At the back of" is standard English, but "back of," for "behind," I have always regarded as a comparatively modern Americanism. Does any one know how early it came into usage?

C. M. ANDREWS.

New Haven, Conn., October 27.

## Literature.

### PEARY'S GREAT ADVENTURE.

*The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909, under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club.* By Robert E. Peary. With an Introduction by Theodore Roosevelt, and a Foreword by Gilbert H. Grosvenor, Director and Editor, National Geographic Society; with numerous illustrations, including eight full-page reproductions of photographic enlargements colored by hand. New York: The Frederick H. Stokes Co. \$5 net.

It would be hard to give a satisfactory rational explanation of the inter-

est which mankind has taken in the search for the North Pole. The time was when polar exploration gained something from the accessory idea of a "northwest passage," practicable for commerce; but that idea had its life finally chilled away, and polar exploration went on. No appeal to human greed, no likelihood of rich prizes to tempt the lust for gold and land, lies behind the sacrifice of time and energy and comfort and life which at last reached its goal in the voyage described in the volume before us. And how easily one might belittle it all, if so disposed. A United States flag sticking in a mound of snow, gradually to be whipped to pieces by the chill winds, and by it a bottle containing, over the discoverer's signature, these words:

I have to-day hoisted the national ensign of the United States of America at this place, which my observations indicate to be the North Polar axis of the earth, and have formally taken possession of the entire region, and adjacent, for and in the name of the President of the United States of America. I leave this record and the United States flag in possession.

Passing beyond the point determined to be the Pole and then back again, the discoverer reflects that he is treading a trail "which none had ever seen before or would ever see again." Though various phenomena indicate the presence of a large body of land, or at least shoals, somewhere in the yet untraversed Arctic wastes, yet the soundings nearest the pole have shown deep water, and it seems established that the "polar pack" of ice on which our record of discovery and possession stands is itself not stationary in position. Clearly, the only material gain in sight from "our new possessions" (the Philippines are, of course, dislodged from that title) consists in the millions which we shall save from the impossibility of their fortification.

And yet if it were only as a demonstration of human persistence in the search for knowledge, only as a display of the hold which an *idea*, with no promise of material gain, can maintain upon the human imagination, from century to century, the adventure would be worth the cost. That there is something more than this, something of positive scientific value to be deduced from the observations of Peary and his assistants, we may, of course, take for granted, though sufficient time for the careful analysis and evaluation of such material has not as yet elapsed. In the present volume we have simply the story of the voyage related for the general reader, and it is a story of intense interest, effectively told. "I knew it was my last game upon the great Arctic chess-board," says the author in his opening chapter. He was fifty-three years of age, a point beyond which no one, perhaps, with the exception of Sir

John Franklin, has ever attempted the rigors of Arctic exploration. It was success now, or final defeat in the effort to which nearly a quarter-century of his strong manhood had been devoted. Each succeeding failure had been carefully studied for its record of avoidable mistakes, until he felt that all that human foresight and intelligence could contribute to success in this closing venture had been done. But there was one untoward possibility not capable of elimination. Again, as in the trial of 1905-1906, a season of violent and continued winds might disrupt the polar pack and leave him separated from his supporting parties, to face the alternative of retreat or starvation. As it turned out, the forces of nature withheld their dreaded veto, and human skill and persistence, schooled by the well-studied lessons of previous failure, at last won the day. After reading the whole story one cannot fail to realize how exceedingly slim is the possibility that any mere Arctic adventurer, devoid of scientific training and of scant experience in such work, with no trained assistants and no carefully detailed preparations, should by any lucky combination of circumstances beyond his own control ever attain to the goal which it took Peary such long years of well-directed effort to reach. "Fortitude and endurance alone," says Peary, "are not enough in themselves to carry a man to the North Pole. Only with years of experience in travelling in those regions, only with the aid of a large party, also experienced in that character of work, only with the knowledge of Arctic detail and the equipment necessary to prepare himself and his party for any and every emergency, is it possible for a man to reach that long-sought goal and return."

Of course, the fact of a successful outcome does not make the record of sledging experiences, crossing fresh leads, battling with pressure ridges, building igloos, killing weak dogs to feed to their more fortunate survivors, etc., essentially different from that of previous expeditions. It merely gives an added zest to the reader, which no amount of quotation could carry through the medium of a brief review. We have already said that the story as such is effectively told, and it is hardly necessary to say more on that point. An interesting side discussion deals with the question how nearly the location of the Pole can be determined. The character of the instruments, the personal accuracy of the observer, and the number of observations taken, are all involved. All thought of a mathematically exact determination Peary demolishes in one brief sentence: "If there were land at the Pole, and powerful instruments of great precision, such as are used in the world's great observatories, were mounted there on suitable foundations and