

by "Theodore Foster, Basement Rooms corner of Pine-Street and Broadway." The American edition is the only one I have been able to examine, but it was probably Poe's source. His mistake in giving the date of the trip from London to Weilburg as 1837 may be due to confusion with the date of the imprint.

Poe's use of the account is shown by a comparison of certain passages in the two accounts, the references being to the American edition of Mason and to Harrison's Virginia edition of Poe, volume five. In speaking of the use of coal gas for inflation, instead of the hydrogen gas formerly employed, they say:

Up to the period of that discovery, the process of inflation was one, the expense of which was only to be equalled by its uncertainty; two and sometimes three days of watchful anxiety have been expended in the vain endeavours to procure a sufficiency of hydrogen to fill a balloon, from which, on account of its peculiar affinities, it continued to escape. . . . I allude to the superior facility with which the latter (coal gas) is retained in the balloon, owing to the greater subtlety of the particles of hydrogen, and the strong affinity which they exhibit for those of the surrounding atmosphere. In a balloon sufficiently perfect to retain its contents of coal gas unaltered, in quality or amount, for six months, an equal quantity of hydrogen could not be maintained in equal purity for an equal number of weeks.—Mason, p. 7 and note.

In the description of the guide rope or equilibrator, a device Mason, Poe, and Wellman all united in using, there is equal similarity:

The progress of the guide rope being delayed to a certain extent by its motion over the more solid plane of the earth's surface, while the movement of the balloon is as freely as ever controlled by the propelling motion of the wind, it is evident that the direction of the latter when in progress, must ever be in advance of the former; a comparison therefore of the relative positions of these two objects by means of the compass, must at all times indicate the exact direction of her course; while with equal certainty, an estimate can at once be obtained of the velocity with which she is proceeding, by observing the angle formed by the guide rope, and the vertical axis of the machine. When the rope is dependent perpendicularly, no angle of course is formed, and the machine can be considered as perfectly stationary, or at least endowed with a rate of

motion too insignificant to be either appreciable or important.—Mason, p. 10, note.

Other similarities between the two accounts are in the various contrivances carried, particularly a coffee warmer using slacked lime; the carrying of passports directed to all parts of the continent of Europe, and the sudden explosions during the trip, caused, as each explain, by the changes in temperature. Everything, indeed, indicates that Poe depended very largely on Mason's narrative, even retaining at times some of his very phrases.

WALTER B. NORRIS.

U. S. Naval Academy, October 21.

ANCIENT COLLEGE LIFE IN THE ARGENTINE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Judging by the recent discussions relating to the work done by college students, one might suppose that the students of the present day were peculiarly prone to neglect the pursuit of learning. We condemn athletics, particularly intercollegiate athletics, because they attract the student's mind from his work. We condemn members of the faculty because they make his work too hard or too dull. We search heaven and earth to find out why it is that our present methods of teaching are not successful. And we continually imply that the problem before us is a new one, due to the distractions of life in the twentieth century.

It may comfort some distressed instructors to read what Professor Moses wrote a year or two ago regarding one of the most ancient universities in America, the University of Cordova, in the Argentine. The period under discussion is the seventeenth century:

The students gave little or no attention to any subjects except those on which they were to be examined for their degrees. They passed from one course to another with a very imperfect knowledge of the subjects supposed to constitute a necessary introduction to the course before them. When they found themselves near the final examination, a few undertook to repair their deficiencies by assiduous effort, but the majority found that the career of a scholar had not the attractions they fancied, and turned away to other pursuits. The evil of this state of things clearly demanded correction, and this was attempted, in 1680, by lengthening the course to ten months, and insisting on attendance. Annual examinations were established three years later, and it became necessary to pass them with approval in order to be advanced to the succeeding courses. This tightening of the lines of discipline led to acts of insubordination on the part of the students. That in an institution of learning they should be required to listen to lectures and pass examinations seemed to them an interference with their rights as students, and they instituted a rebellion. The *clausuro*, however, firmly supported the other authorities, and the two leaders of the rebellion were expelled and order restored.

There is something painfully familiar about all this. Can it be that we are witnessing in these early twentieth century days a reincarnation of seventeenth century Argentina? Anyhow, it is pleasant to think those old Jesuit fathers had the courage of their convictions. One reason for their temerity may have been that the boys' mothers were not likely to rush into print with a wholesale condemnation of university methods.

HIRAM BINGHAM.

New Haven, Conn., October 20.

Literature.

CIVIL WAR STUDIES.

The War of Secession, 1861-1862: Bull Run to Malvern Hill. Special Campaign Series. No. XI. By Major G. W. Redway. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$1.60.

The author, an officer of the British army, is known to American students of the civil war through his study of the battle of Fredericksburg, which was published as number iii of the same series. The present volume and numerous other recent books on the civil war by Englishmen, in which are evident original research and fresh treatment of the theme, seem to indicate that more interest is taken in that war just now in England than in this country. The convincing analysis of Grant's 1864 campaign by Lieut. C. F. Atkinson of the British army was at once recognized as a work of superlative merit, which no student of military history could afford to overlook. Major Redway's volume also compels attention because of its originality and frank, impartial criticism. The author's conclusions express the belief that most of the latter-day problems of defence were practically solved by the events of 1861-1862.

The difficulty of maintaining the armies on both sides and of repairing the large losses leads the author to point out that as late as the Boer war England had not profited by this experience. In the first flush of war excitement and patriotic fervor, volunteering can be depended upon to supply the raw material for armies, but the wearing quality of that system is poor. The bounty plan proves to be most unsatisfactory, and a rigid draft does great harm to the industries which must supply the means to wage the war. The question how best to maintain an army in a democracy remains for the present unanswered.

In the chapter on Policy and Strategy the author relieves McDowell of all blame for the battle of Bull Run, and condemns McClellan for his campaign of 1862. He declares that it is futile for a general to-day to ask for absolute power, but suggests that he should decline command until the just demands of strategy are satisfied by the government. It might be noted that if this had been done in the civil war, the Army of the Potomac would have been without a commander for a considerable part of the time. Reynolds did decline that command; Meade would have promptly resigned when in 1863 his government refused him permission to abandon the difficult Orange and Alexandria railway and take his position at Spottsylvania.

Of the military situation in 1861 on

both sides Major Redway says, "The conceit of ignorance, the fatuity of enthusiasm, and the machinations of political partisanship combined to produce a phantasmagoria of war which is almost without a parallel." Accepting the claim of the Southerner as to the right of his State to secede, the author does not spare criticism in dealing with Southern strategy and tactics. Jefferson Davis and "Stonewall" Jackson fare no better in this respect than do Abraham Lincoln and his military advisers. The true policy of the South, it is pointed out, should have been to retire slowly before the Northern advance, making the enemy's line as long and as difficult as possible, then to concentrate far to the rear and fight it out in one decisive battle. Compared to the desirable results of such a battle, the fall of Richmond and the impoverishment of Virginia and North Carolina, it is suggested, would have been of slight consequence. On the one side, the secondary operations in the Mississippi Valley drained the strength of the Eastern armies, and gave to the war, in the author's view, its peculiar character of costly inconclusiveness; whereas, the decisive point being east of the Alleghanies, a Union army at Hagerstown would have menaced the flank of any attack on Washington, while the manhood of a population of 20,000,000 would have been available for operations against the Confederate army rooted in front of Richmond. But for this concentration of interest upon Vicksburg to the exclusion of what was about to take place at Gettysburg, in spite of many preliminary warnings, it is within the bounds of military probabilities that an auxiliary army thrown upon Lee's line of retreat would have ended the war in 1863.

For the Confederates, says Major Redway, Virginia as a theatre of defensive war was the worst possible, because it offered to the "Federalists" an easy foothold at their very doors. The war, he declares elsewhere, was waged by committees; "the policy was parochial in character and the partial successes of a few able generals blinded the world then to the true military situation, as they have done ever since." To Gen. Patterson is accorded a full measure of censure for his share in the Bull Run fiasco, but it may be well to recall that so competent a soldier as Gen. George H. Thomas thought Patterson had done all that could fairly have been expected of him under his instructions. "Stonewall" Jackson, the author says, was a man of character, a fine soldier, and, in certain situations, a skilful general; but he could only with difficulty be induced to play his part loyally as a corps leader, as one of a team; nor had he apparently the higher gift of leadership, that of persuading abler men to do his bidding. Jackson's treatment of Longstreet after

Bull Run is declared to have been neither soldierly nor patriotic:

He was singularly fortunate in being able to operate for nearly two years over familiar ground against generals to whom the population was hostile; and for an ally he might almost have claimed President Lincoln himself, for Lincoln it was who supplanted Rosecrans and appointed Fremont to command in West Virginia, who selected Banks to be his factotum in the Valley and caused Shields to oscillate between McDowell and Banks under the eyes of Confederate scouts. None of these generals was first rate, but lest they should perchance gain some military insight or develop such a quality as initiative, and so give Jackson some trouble, the telegraph was continually bearing orders and counter-orders from Washington until, individually and collectively, the Federal detachment leaders became incapable of distinguishing good from evil in a military sense.

This criticism seems the more notable from the fact that the author accepts the Southern view of the right to secede, adopts the Confederate names of battles, calls the Union troops "Federalists," a Confederate term rejected by the troops of the North, and, although using the United States Government map based on Gen. Michler's surveys, calls it a map of the battlefields of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Certain American writers have declared that Lincoln was the ablest general in the North; Major Redway, on the other hand, thinks it was Lincoln who repaired the error of Jackson at Kernstown and robbed Shields of the fruits of his victory; and he declares that it was Lincoln, not Jackson, who detained the "Federalists" in the valley; and that Lincoln's conduct may be regarded either as a manifestation of "pure foolishness" or of a desire to figure in history as another Washington by baiting Jackson with weak detachments of Union forces in the hope that these could be reinforced in good time. In contrasting McClellan and Grant, the author expresses the idea that the man of strong character achieved more than the man with great ability. Lee was "hardly inferior to McClellan as an organizer," but the latter failed as a commander—which, after all, perhaps best accounts for Gen. Grant's opinion that if McClellan had begun as a brigade commander and learned the business of war by practice in a modest station, as all the successful generals did, he would have gone as far as any of them. The concluding chapter is given to Grant's successful operations in the West at Forts Donelson and Henry and at Shiloh. Fourteen loose maps are contained in a cover-pocket.

CURRENT FICTION.

Other Main-Travelled Roads. By Hamlin Garland. New York: Harper & Bros.

In one who has repeatedly detected himself in the ungracious act of greeting a new book by Mr. Garland with elegiac mention of "Main-Travelled Roads," the present volume must have excited uncommon interest. Here at last (could it be in any measure due to one's own persistent coaching?) was to be a return to the real thing, the product for which Mr. Garland's name is destined to stand. The title virtually implied the old material; would it be treated in the old mood or interpreted in the changed light of "twenty years after"? A glance at the preface disposes of one's best hope. The stories are not new, but "compiled from other volumes which now go out of print." They were written, says Mr. Garland, "at the same time and under the same impulse as those which compose its companion volume, 'Main-Travelled Roads'—and the entire series was the result of a summer-vacation visit to my old home in Iowa, to my father's farm in Dakota, and, last of all, to my birthplace in Wisconsin." This revisiting of old scenes took place in 1887, and in the two or three following years all the stories were written which are contained in this collection, and in its recently revised companion volume.

It must be said the stories now collected pretty plainly represent a second gleanings from that early field. Three or four of them might well have deserved to be added to the half-dozen which made up the original volume. "Lucretia Burns" and "Before the Low Green Door" echo most strongly the sombre note of "Up the Couleé" and "Mrs. Ripley's Trip." The privations and squalor of the farmer's life—a life in which the writer himself had played his painful boyish part—had overwhelmingly impressed the young man on his return from the East. Cherished platitudes about the return to nature, the beauty of contact with the soil, had become a mockery in his ears, and these tales express an almost fierce recoil. He has no notion of recanting at this day: "For the hired man and the renter farm life in the West is still a stern round of drudgery. My pages present it, not as the summer boarder or the young lady novelist sees it, but as the working farmer endures it." This life Mr. Garland does not picture as altogether unvisited by romance; but visited, at best, by a romance of escape. A down-trodden wife escapes her damning drudgery by flight or death; a girl is snatched away by some strong man, translated bodily to some happier air. A man goes somewhere else, does something else; and returns, perhaps, to torment the eyes of the luckless ones who