The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 41. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best sonnet called "The End of the World." (Entries should reach the Saturday Review office, 25 West 45th Street, New York, not later than the morning of Sep-

Competition No. 42. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best Lines on Receiving an X-Ray Photograph of Him (or Her) self. (Entries should reach the Saturday Review office not later than the morning of September 24.)

Attention is called to the rules printed below.

THE THIRTY-NINTH COMPETITION

The prize of fifteen dollars offered for the best short lyric imitating the mood and manner of Mr. A. E. Housman has been equally divided between John F. Doughty, of Austin, Texas, and Dalnar Devening, of San Bernardino, Cal.

THE PRIZE IMITATIONS

D^O what he will, man fashions A hope that there may be, After the stark, black minute,

The common thought, the doubting Once vexed me, but 'tis gone, Since the clear light of knowledge Spread round me like the dawn.

Of course there is no ending; 'Tis to look and see: Life may not be immortal, But death, at least, must be. JOHN F. DOUGHTY.

"Where do you go so gaily With laughter in your eye, You and those lads that daily I watch go singing by?

"What seek you in your questing, Oh, lad with dancing feet And lips forever jesting? What do you go to meet?"

"Old man whose bare bones rattle, We seek a joyous strife; We go to worst in battle That ancient braggart, Life."

"In what dear mart those glances And sighings have you bought, Sad youth?" "I've broken lances, Old man, with him I sought." DALNAR DEVENING.

This was an exceptionally popular and successful competition, and it goes to my heart not to have space for more than three or four of the large number of entries that deserve print. There was less than usual to choose between the very best of these; in fact, it is a long time since I found so much difficulty in deciding on a prizewinner. Among others, R. Desha Lucas will perhaps feel that I might have been kinder. Mr. Lucas in his last stanza and the first two lines of his second achieves excellent parody; but what remains is uneasy.

In Ludlow town when I was young And strolled along the street, What lusty lads, unloved, unhung, On every hand I'd meet.

Now some of them the gals have had, So I am all alone and sad, And life has spilled its zest.

For after all I've felt and seen It cannot help but hurt To think how lads once sweet and clean Are all mixed up with dirt.

Ella M. Johnston was even more amusing in her straight burlesque of "Is my team ploughing?"

"Are sweet things blooming That I so loved to see And watch their petals open As they looked up at me?"

Ay, the flowers are growing, Their fragrance fills the air, The soil is all the richer Now you are lying there.

Both poems had the right touch of ridicule, which is the parodist's deadliest weapon. But one or two of the stricter imitations were better, though even in them (as was to be expected) Mr. Housman's flawlessness is missing. Paul Horgan tried to climb in by the back window in several Jabberwockery-nonsense verses.

O, burkle Tom and glary Reg, Ye march an grenadier. O, wipple Bess and munny Meg, Ye drop the burrell tear.

O, drums go short and trumpet long, And long's the road to war; And deep's the earth where men belong, Though lads ye were and are.

Merrick Wells, by keeping as close as possible to his author, fused mood and manner rather better than most.

"You'd not be stay-at-homes, my lads, With wonders to be seen," Said Sergeant, "if you'll dress in red And travel for the Queen?"

Those ranging lads in Africa Are lying blind and still. I watch ten million miles of sky Standing on Wenlock hill.

His alternative entry also deserves quotation. Like the poems by Sara Henderson Hay, Mary Bloom, Doris W. Tripp, several by John F. Doughty, M. E. Ballantyne, W. L. Werner, M. H. McGee, Dorothy Homans, C. F. Marks, and Deborah Jones, space compels me to set it by. Jack Sprat deserves a word for the two lines "And lass, if you'll not be my own, I know a maid that will." John F. Doughty, who obviously battens on Housman and Heine, offered six pages of imitations, most of which would have done him additional credit here. Besides his prizewinning imitation one little piece may be quoted, although the author of "A Shropshire Lad" would never have committed the first three lines.

At ease in mine own tavern, With lads escaped from jail, Who much admire each other, We sit and drink our ale.

No hope of heaven bores us, We hold no hell in aswe; The dead are dead forever Hurrah, my lads, hurrah!

The rest, however, magnificently epitomizes (again with the right suggestion of ridicule) one of Mr. Housman's two prevailing moods. Dalnar Devening also submitted several entries, all of considerable merit. His best piece shares the prize equally with the best by Mr. Doughty; but I should have liked to print their alternative entries.

RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, The Saturday Review of Literature, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible-and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and The Scturday Review reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

The Compleat Collector.

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Conducted by Carl Purington Rollins

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A Pickwick Census

PRIME PICKWICKS IN PARTS: Census with complete collation, comparison, and comments. By John C. Eckel. New York: E. H. Wells & Company. 1928.

MR. ECKEL'S census labors primarily under a double disadvantage, the first, the questionable importance of such an undertaking, in spite of his personal enthusiasm and that shown by Mr. A. Edward Newton in his characteristic preface; and the second, the unfortunate alliteration of the title, which is, in all charity, rather silly. The census in itself is an excellent piece of work, careful, thorough, and detailed, showing infinite pains and infinite patience, and making a distinct contribution to the bibliography of Charles Dickens. It seems, therefore, a pity that the surrounding text cannot be spoken of in the same manner. Quite aside from the somewhat startling claims made both by Mr. Eckel and by Mr. Newton for "Pickwick" in its relation to English literature, there is no need for the overemphasis upon auction prices, and far less for the newspaper-headline style of the entire section called "Comparisons and Comments," with its large type headings, "Lt. Steele an early collector," "Importance of the frontispiece," "Huntington Library has no copy," and "Mr. Burgess was submerged." The phrase, "a Dicken's collection" with the apostrophe always carefully repeated, is undoubtedly a typographical error, but abbreviations employed throughout the text, "ad.," "Lt.," and "Capt.," can hardly be viewed in such a light. If bibliographies require conversational treatment to increase their popularity, the future may well be regarded with suspicion and horror.

G. M. T.

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G. M. T.

The total amount realized at the sale of the first part of the late Sir Edmund Gosse's library at Sotheby's on the thirtieth of July was about \$47,850. The highest single price, \$3,700, was paid for the autograph manuscript rough draft, thirty pages, of Thomas Hardy's "Wessex Folk," presented by the author to Sir Edmund. The other Hardy prices were proportionately high: the autograph manuscript of "God's Funeral," four pages, with a Hardy letter included, brought \$1,700; presentation copies of the second and third volumes of "The Dynasts," 1906-1908, \$1,250; "Far from the Madding Crowd," 1874, with an autograph letter inserted, \$825; "Two on a Tower," 1892, presentation copy, \$1,150; "Jude the Obscure," 1895, presentation copy, \$650. The "Westmoreland" manuscript of John Donne's poems, fifty folio pages, considered by Sir Edmund as his greatest treasure, brought only \$2,000, while a presentation copy of Barrie's "Tommy and Grizel," 1900, a volume that, in itself, has never had any great value until the present sale, sold for \$800. The first and second editions of Fitzgerald's translation of the "Rubáiyát," 1859-1868, rebound and slightly cut down, with a note in Gosse's hand explaining their condition, brought \$1,600.

There is, for modest book-collectors, an overwhelming sense of discouragement after considering prices of this kind, but until the present hysterical outburst is over, nothing can be done except by the booksellers themselves. And when a dealer like Quaritch of London, who has always charged the fairest amounts for his books, brings out a catalogue with eight of the signed Hardys from the Clement Shorter library and three pages of presentation Lewis Carrolls at prices ranging from £20.0.0. to £130.0.0., it seems wiser to cultivate a taste for the first editions of H. G. Wells and Rider Haggard, neither of whom has had, so far, any auction-room value. The demand is too great, which means that, eventually, when fashions in authors have changed, it may be possible for readers of "The Woodlanders" and "The Hunting of the Snark" to buy first editions with the writers' signatures at prices more in keeping with reasonable incomes.

G. M. T.

The New Books

Travel

(Continued from page 92) MARC LESCARBOT'S NOVA FRANCIA:

A Description of Acadia. Translated by P. ERONDELLE, 1609. (The Broadway Travellers.) Harpers. 1928. \$4.

Lescarbot was a Huguenot lawyer who attached himself at the beginning of the eenth century to the Sieur I with the intention of helping lay the foundation of a Protestant colony in the New World. Reaching Port Royal in Acadia in 1606, he saw a good deal of what is now Nova Scotia, and after a year of travel and observation returned to France. The result was a book of rare pith and freshness, which has too long been practically unavailable save in the French. As Parkman tells us, Lescarbot was no common man, for "his zeal, his good sense, the vigor of his understanding, and the breadth of his views, were as conspicuous as his quick wit and his lively fancy." He wrote of his voyage; of the "icy banks" and the "fish banks" of Newfoundland; of the life of the Indians, whom he really understood and regarded with great liberality; of the hardships of the French settlers in Port Royal; and of "diets, bad waters, airs, winds, lakes, corruption of woods, seasons, dispositions of bodies, of young, of old." The book has a delightful aroma of novelty and romance. Lescarbot hugely enjoyed himself from the moment when, approaching New France, he saw whales heaving out of water "above half an acre's length of their backs," until the moment of his final Indian banquet or tabagie. He beat the drum modestly for colonization, assuring all Frenchmen that "in that country he that will take pleasure, and as it were sport himself with sweet labor, he shall be assured to live out of bondage, and that his children shall yet be in better state than himself was. volume deserves a place in every collection of early American travels and pioneer narratives.

THE ROMANCE OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY. By ELEANOR ELSNER. Dodd, Mead. 1928. \$3.50.

A pleasantly descriptive book, which is not so much an account of the Basques as of the Pyrenees and the hill country to the north of them from Bayonne and the Atlantic border to Mount-Louis and Carcassonne. The book offers the historical background of the many famous places on the new automobile routes through this region. Here is a selected bibliography, to which Hilaire Belloc's book on the Pyrenees might have been added.

SAUNTERINGS IN LONDON. By Leopold Wagner. Houghton Mifflin.

Strange Corners of the World. By J. E.Wetherell. Nelson. \$1.75

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