

Points of View

Errors There Are

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

Of course the excellently entertaining article by Stella Benson some months ago based on the new edition of "Everyman's Encyclopædia," was not intended as a review of that publication. But inasmuch as such an article implies at least some recommendations it seems that certain further comments should be made for the benefit of your readers.

This "Revised Edition" is peppered with errors, ranging from comparatively unimportant misprints to substantial mistakes and positive mis-statements. I subjoin a few examples, picked more or less at random.

Our good friend Josephine Daskam appears under the disguise of Josephine Daskam Baker—under Baker in due alphabetical order.

If one were curious as to the École des Beaux-Arts he would read that—

"Beaux-Arts, Institute of Design (is) an American school of fine arts situated in New York, and modeled after the Analogous Society in Paris." And that is all he could learn. . . . There is something delightful about the capitals of the "Analogous Society."

Howlers such as these are not mere accidents or slips in proof reading. They show the lack of intelligent editing.

Incorrect dates are frequent. Under Aargau, the date of the Sonderbund (misspelled as Sunderbund) is given as 1841 instead of the correct 1847. The eruption of Bandai San in Japan is given as of 1889, whereas it happened on July 15, 1888. Ferdinand Bebel is recorded to have died in 1914, whereas he died August 13, 1913. And similar errors could be shown—plentifully. A few might be passed as proof errors, but they are too many for that excuse—if it is any excuse in a reference book.

Lake Balkash is stated to be "150 miles" long—whereas it is from 316 to 440 miles (according to the method of measuring its curves).

Nor are the frequent mis-spellings mere typographicals. They are sometimes badly misleading to the uninformed student. *Viola di bordone* becomes *bardone*; the Italian *da* becomes *di* in *basso da camera*—examples could be multiplied especially as to foreign words. Moreover when *Barabra* (Nubian) becomes *Berabra* it is taking on a disguise, which is complicated in this case by the allegation that it refers to a "people"—as if a tribe—whereas the word is merely a corruption of "barbarian" and is a general designation.

Substantive mistakes such as the illiterate etymology of belfry (which has, of course no connection with "bell") are not rare. Some are inheritances from the good old "Chambers" which seem to have been the foundation of the original "Everyman's,"—errors long since corrected in well made books. One could go on, indefinitely.

Something might also be said on the score of omissions, though that is a more difficult matter, as judgment might differ as to the values. But there is an abundance of entirely useless obsolete matter (from the standpoint of most buyers) most of it lifted from the venerable Chambers, and—for example—there is no entry of such up-to-date matter as the "Basket-makers," or such archaeological commonplaces as the "beaker folk," or "*Bügelkanne*"—to note, at random, items I looked for and did not find: items that the purchaser of any up-to-date reference book is entitled to ask for.

The advertisement, on the back cover of Vol. 1, claims that this "is a complete American biographical dictionary," and, also, "a complete gazetteer of the United States." To illustrate:

Under *Angell*, the only entry is of George T., the philanthropist. Neither James Rowland Angell, President of Yale, Judge A. C. Angell, nor their very eminent father, the late James B. Angell, can be found here. Incidentally Sir Norman Angell is also missing.

Judge Ebenezer Hoar, and his father, Samuel, are entered, but Senator George F. Hoar is not among those present.

Adams, Franklin P., is in; but Heywood Brown is not; neither is Don Marquis. Stephen Benét appears, but not William R. And Sherwood Anderson is not noticed. Neither is Norman Hapgood, nor Professor Henry A. Beers, nor Judge Gaynor, nor Anna Branch. . . . As a biographical dictionary this suggests some-

thing short of "completeness." It is hardly necessary to note that as a gazetteer of the United States no such encyclopædia could possibly approach "completeness." As the first example of an omission that occurs to me, Agawam, Mass. is not in—a town of considerable historic importance, with something well over 7,000 inhabitants—also a town to which literary references are not uncommon. Belmar, N. J. is missing.

The article "Boghaz Keui" makes no mention of the Hittites. One might suppose interest in the place to be exclusively Persian! This, it is true, is remedied in the article "Hittites," somewhat confusedly. But any seeker after information who started with only the place name as a clue would never discover any connection with the Hittite Empire.

The "Bogomils" appear, unaccountably, as "Bogomili" and it is asserted that they are "first mentioned in 1115," whereas there are probable traces of them in the ninth century and they certainly are in evidence at about 1,000. Also unaccountably, their "Satanæil" appears as "Satanæil" (diphthong æ). This, of course, is a very obscure and difficult topic, but recourse to such authority as Hastings's Encyclopædia might have aided the editing.

It might be called captious to criticize such entries as that on "Agathodæmon" which simply repeat common errors; the Britannica entry is little better, repeating the notion of a "good spirit attendant particularly upon cornfields and vineyards," with a reference to Aristophanes, as if that covered the subject. But such an entry betrays lack of up-to-date scholarship.

I am moved to wonder a little—though reasons are perhaps not hard to guess—why practically all books of reference in English are so inferior in accuracy to the German and French. For the past seven years a large part of my work has been such as to require constant use of nearly all modern encyclopædias and dictionaries—with frequent recourse to "original sources" wherever need arose—trusting none of them without all possible verification. And the English and American books—including the Fourteenth Britannica—make a very poor showing in contrast with Meyer, Brockhaus, and the new edition of Larousse (or, for that matter, the old Larousse). I have happened upon a few slips—chiefly typographical—in the German encyclopædias but not one in Larousse—though, of course, the Larousse is not so comprehensive as the others.

There are, of course, very many wholly admirable features in Everyman's Encyclopædia, and it contains a great deal of excellent new material. But it is certainly open to the charge of slipshod proof reading and some very loose editing. In fairness it should perhaps be added that many other encyclopædias and reference books in English are not without sin.

H. L. PANGBORN.

Springfield, Mass.

Help Wanted

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: I am most appreciative for the aid that I have received as the result of my various announcements that have appeared in your columns. The Jack London Bibliography received considerable help from several of your readers; their names will appear in the preface to the book to be published by the Huntington Press. The Sinclair Lewis Bibliography, recently issued by Doubleday, Doran with the Carl Van Doren essay, the Notebook of Stephen Crane to be a Spring publication of the Huntington Press, were all aided by your medium.

I am now at work on bibliographies of the writings of Willa Cather and Ellen Glasgow. The work will be completed under the supervision of the authors. It will be of interest to collectors to know that there are many "points" on the first editions of these two authors, hitherto unrevealed. I should appreciate coöperation from collectors and students. Also, there are several volumes of Miss Cather's books in vellum. Many I cannot locate for description. I should like the opportunity to inspect a complete set.

I have recently arranged with Mrs. Joseph Conrad's literary agents for the rights to many of Conrad's letters to Stephen Crane. However in my stack of Crane's replies I find many gaps; it is quite likely that they are in American collections. I should like copies of the let-

ters for inclusion. Full credit will be given to the owners of the originals. It is to be remembered that as literary manager of Crane's estate all publication arrangements of new material are handled through me. Publication rights to letters are owned by the author's estate.

HARVEY TAYLOR.

59 West 46th Street, New York City.

Recent Poetry

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: In his "Letter to Poets" in your issue of October 29th Mr. Louis Untermeyer delivers a sort of epilogue—or, if you will, epitaph—upon the performance of American poetry in the generation to which he belongs. It is in substance a frank and full recantation of faith. He apologizes in sackcloth for the show. American poetry during the past thirty years turned from the enthusiasm and tenderness enjoined by Wordsworth to a spirit of tired disillusionment. Worse still, it turned from its function of interpreting humanity in general to the exploitation of a self that "sat in a room alone at night with the blinds down." Instead of true creation there was only strained experiment. Mr. Untermeyer concludes with an adjuration to the new poets to do otherwise and to reaffirm the dignity of man.

As an active writer and editor of verse in the generation for which Mr. Untermeyer has spoken, I have read his words with deepest interest. His present statement of principles is that which I many times expressed as editor of the magazine *Contemporary Verse* from 1917 to 1926. May I, however, venture the opinion that in speaking of the failure of the past generation Mr. Untermeyer is rather the representative of the left wing than of American poetry as a whole? Even in Mr. Untermeyer's own work I could cite examples of fine affirmation, such as his poem "The American," in the first "Contemporary Verse Anthology."

I may possibly be prejudiced on the other side but my own impression of the past thirty years is one in the main of a broad and healthy vitality. The theoretical idealism of the Victorians had indeed been modified, but the influence of Wordsworth and Browning was still strong in the work of Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost. The "beauty craze," of which Walt Whitman complained, was superseded by a firmer grasp of actuality, both outward and inward, but enthusiasm and tenderness were there. I think of Vachel Lindsay, of Herman Hagedorn, John Hall Wheelock, the two Benét, Leonora Speyer, of Ezra Pound's "Ballad of Gloom," and Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Renaissance." There was a new beauty in much of the "Spoon River Anthology." It is worth noting that what of it seems most likely to survive is not the scandal part but such pieces as "Ann Rutledge" and "Hannah Armstrong."

It is true that there were many egocentric neophytes, much heralded by the cliques, who sprang up in the morning only to wither in the heat of the day. Paradoxically, the radical is often without roots. But it is likewise true that there were an unusual number of poets who were popular in the best sense of the word. I am thinking of T. A. Daly's admirable lyrics in Italian dialect; of Badger Clark, the Kipling of the cowboys; of Glenn Ward Dresbach and John G. Neihardt in the West, of Olive Tilford Dargan and DuBose Heyward in the South, of John V. A. Weaver in New York. There is a good earthiness about all of these; Walt Whitman would have approved of them. Last but not least there is Carl Sandburg, steeped in American folk tradition for all his surface appearance of modernism, a poet as tender in his own grim way as Longfellow or Whittier.

Besides these well-known names I could mention scores of other poets, mostly living in small towns, who have written humanly and beautifully without either affectation or sentimentality. It is a pleasure to look them over, to find how true they still ring, how direct is their phrasing, how firm is their technique. I cannot, therefore, agree with Mr. Untermeyer that the past thirty years of our poetry have been characterized by tired disillusionment. There has been much of it in the volumes most talked about among the cliques at any given moment but the prevalent quality of the period as a whole has, I believe, been that of the chastened yet heightened joy which comes of meeting life as it is and finding it still worth living.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK.

Chestnut Hill, Pa.

Price Of Books

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: In Dr. Canby's editorial on The Price of Books some time ago he stated that the publishers' discount to booksellers is about 40%. Since booksellers for many years have been working in vain for a flat 40% discount and have had to be content instead with one approximating 38%, if that, this error on Dr. Canby's part calls for prompt and prominent correction. With the other figures furnished him by publishers he was probably given 42% as their average discount, but this takes into consideration jobbers and book clubs as well as retail booksellers.

It is, of course, the bookseller who has continually to explain to the public, whom the publisher never sees, why books cost as much as they do. While he realizes the publishing difficulties Dr. Canby has set forth he knows also and must get over to the book-buyer his own difficulties—a discount of about 38% out of which, unless he operates in New York, must come the heavy cost of transportation, since Chicago, Colorado Springs, and San Francisco sell books for exactly what New York sells them for; and of infinitely greater moment the fact that he has to buy practically every new book he orders without having any personal knowledge that it is a good book. A previously successful author may write and get published an inferior book. In this case the bookseller is the one really to take the rap. He buys in advance of publication more than he can conscientiously sell and the copies that remain must be sold for a song if at all. In the case of new authors he is asked to coöperate by at least representing the book, again without knowing whether it has real merit and far too often finding that it has not. He takes from the publisher a very considerable part of the initial publishing risk and the discount given him is not adequate to justify taking any part of that risk. A buyer in another field makes mistakes, of course, but they are his own mistakes and he often profits by them in the long run. A bookseller, in addition to bearing the burden of his own errors of judgment must also carry that of the publishers, and in the very nature of the business he must continue to do this so long as the ancient and honorable profession of book-selling endures. But unless better discounts are possible for the bookseller and unless publishers can succeed in reducing substantially the present wastage, which Dr. Canby points out is altogether too high, the ancient and honorable profession of book-selling can no longer endure.

RUTH A. SILLIMAN.

Colorado Springs.

Chiversiana Wanted

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: In collaboration with Professor S. Foster Damon, I am preparing a "Life and Works of Thomas Holley Chivers" (1809?-1858) to be issued as a publication of the Harris Collection of American Poetry and Plays at Brown University. It is to be in four volumes: Manuscripts, Contributions to Magazines and Newspapers, Books, and Biography. Information in regard to Chivers or Chiversiana will be much appreciated and duly acknowledged.

LEWIS CHASE.

Brown University, Providence, R. I.

O'Neill Bibliography

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: I am compiling a bibliography of magazine and newspaper articles by and about Eugene O'Neill which have been published within the last twenty-five years. I am especially interested in those published before 1920. It will be appreciated if anyone having information about the above will communicate with me at 708 North Dearborn, Chicago, Ills.

NEWMAN H. BURNETT.

Kentuckiana

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: I am planning to write a book that will deal with the history of Kentucky, and would like to hear from anyone who has any historical material concerning that state. I am especially eager to see old pamphlets or old newspapers or old letters in which historical events or historical personages who were important to Kentucky at any time, were discussed.

EMANIE N. SACHS.

1125 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MRS. BECKER c/o *The Saturday Review*. As for reasons of space ninety percent of the inquiries cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

B. R., New York, asks for information on present political conditions in Germany. Two books have just come from the press; they should be read together. Edgar Ansel Mowrer's "Germany Puts the Clock Back" (Morrow) is none the worse for being journalism; it is being issued simultaneously in Germany, England, and America. The author, chief of the *Chicago Daily News* Bureau in Berlin, tells the story of Germany's revolt against its own republic in nervous, striking sentences, alive with interest. What he says will be endorsed by many on the field, but it will be news to many in other lands. Oswald Garrison Villard's "The German Phoenix" (Smith & Haas) goes much deeper—or rather, starting much further back, it takes off for a broader jump. For a thoughtful, sympathetic, and often saddened report of things as they are, nothing beats it. Less picturesque than Mr. Mowrer's book, it is more comprehensive. The former supplements and explains the newspapers; the latter illuminates contemporary history. It will be especially useful to the student to see where these two books agree and on what points they differ.

Another Good Samaritan, R. F. Flintermann, Detroit, Mich., has sent directions for "Senior Wrangler," so the inquirer from Oakland, California, is doubly supplied; the elaborate instructions are typed that someone else "may get as much pleasure out of the game as I know others have." P. C. C., Cheshire, Conn., asks me to pass on to B. De V., Lincoln, Mass., the name of "The Garden Guide," published by De La Mare and Co, saying he has used it for three years and various friends swear by and on it. It may be noted that the famous De la Mare garden books have been incorporated with those of Dodd, Mead & Co. E. C. K., Kansas City, Mo., has long been looking for a good large-type edition of "El Periquillo Sarniento," by El Pensador Mexicano (J. J. Fernandez Lizardi), which he of course desires in Spanish; he wonders if our "superior of avenues of information" can supply the address of a Spanish, Mexican, or South American publisher of a good edition of this work, which he can find only in one edition, small-type and paper-bound, published in Spain. Do I see help coming along one of these superior avenues?

Irma S. Rombauer, moved by the strong praise of her cook book in these columns, sent in by my *Trevlac*, Indiana, correspondent, sends me a copy to see for myself, and I can testify that Benj. Wallace Douglass, Hickory Hill, Indiana, who collects cook books has made no mistake in putting this into a high place in his outfit; it is the cream of thirty years of cooking as an avocation, an anthology of favorite recipes set down in a spirit of appreciation of good food. Meanwhile, noting my romantic feeling for a good cook book—for romance will not perish while cook books, seed catalogues, and books of building plans continue to come out—someone has sent me a most unusual and valuable work, "The National Cook Book," by Sheila Hibben (Harper). This

is the only cook book I have seen that deserves to rank as a serious contribution to our social history—though serious is the last word to use for a work whose directions are brisk and whose introduction is sparkling. "As the months of compiling this volume have gone by," says the author, "and I have sent and received hampers of correspondence with people interested in food all over the United States, I have let my spirits rise. I have felt as if I were writing not only a geography of this country, but a social study of its inhabitants, for I have been in communication with people who really believe that how we do things, as much as what we do, is significant—people who still hold that a thing, even an apple pie, must have style to be important." Pie? Style? I'll say so. For style in an apple pie means not only looks and taste but that indefinable tang of perfection to be found in certain sections of the Great American Pie Belt. In summer, made out of Early Transparents or Gravensteins, pie is lyric; even in the winter a good Greening can lift the heart. Pie begins on p. 362 and twenty-three states contribute to it; this gives you an idea how Mrs. Hibben goes to work. The meats, the soups, and especially the fish, are enough to make exiles homesick. Yes, it is truly national, and it may keep some dishes from belonging to a "passing America."

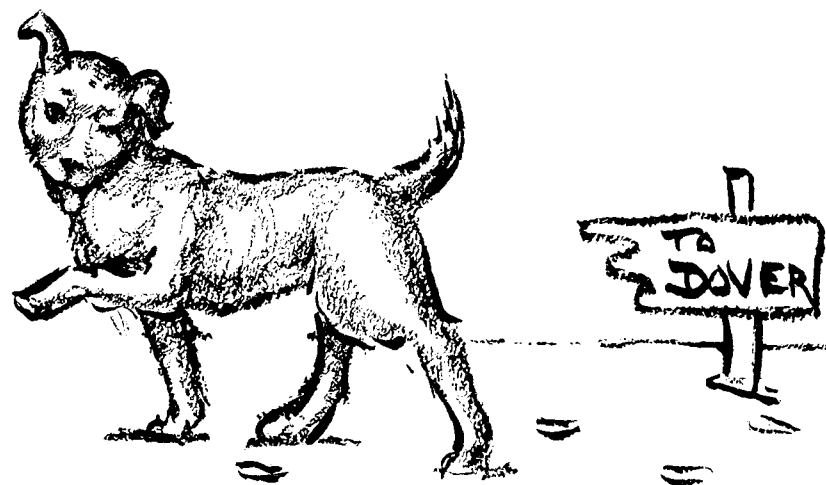
"What is the basis," asks H. W. C., Tucson, Arizona, "for Thomas Mann's extensive knowledge of tuberculosis? Did he have it himself, did one of his family ever have it, or has he ever practised medicine? His acquaintance with it is so authentic as to make us wonder."

IN 1812 the wife of Thomas Mann was attacked by catarrh of the tip of the lung. "Then, and again in the next year but one," he himself says, "she was obliged to stop for several months in the Alps. In May and June of 1912 I spent three weeks with her in Davos, and accumulated—the word but ill describes the passivity of my state—the fantastic impressions out of which the Horselberg idea shaped itself into a short tale." It was to have been a brief "satyr play"; the fascination of death, the triumph of extreme disorder over a life founded upon order and consecrated to it—these were to be reduced in scale and dignity by a humorous treatment." It seemed to him at first as if this would suffice. It always seems to him, he says, as if a book will be easy to bring about, and it never is. "Every working idea of mine presents itself to me in a harmless, simple, practicable light, involving no great effort in the execution." But this simple and harmless book had him "in its power for twelve years," and it was not until 1924 that he brought it finally to completion, a triumph of obstinacy. In these twelve years he had brought to an amazing masterliness the idea of epic prose composition as "a thought-texture woven of different themes, as a musically related complex"—an idea with which he had played in "Tod in Venedig," and one with which contemporary fiction has dallied more than with

any other method of literary composition. It is necessary only to examine André Gide's "The Counterfeiters," or Aldous Huxley's "Point Counter Point," in the light of some knowledge of musical architecture, or to recall that James Joyce was a deeply informed musician long before he wrote "Ulysses," to mark the interrelation of the arts in this generation of composers and novelists.

Thomas Mann did not make his first acquaintance with lung disease at Davos; his second sister, Carla, whose suicide in 1912 was one of the crucial tragedies of his life, had been ill in childhood with inflammation of the lungs. But the three

ing alike but with different meanings. "The Secretary's Guide to Correct Modern Usage," by C. Sylvester Mawson (Crowell), gives succinct advice on spelling, hyphens and divisions, capitals, punctuation, abbreviations, figures and numerals, as well as type-sizes, italics and their use, spacing and indentation, the preparation of manuscripts, and the essentials of correspondence. It is arranged for instant reference. For the second book, "Words Confused and Misused," by Maurice H. Weseen (Crowell), is a useful little desk-book, all the more practical because it does not disdain to deal with mistakes often before corrected.



weeks, off and on, in the sanitarium in the Alps sufficed for a documentation to whose accuracy other "lungers" than those in Arizona have testified." It may have been because of that very "passivity" of which he speaks that his observation was so sound, searching and comprehensive. It is my own opinion that such "passivity" is the only sound basis for observation, and that a novelist never really gets life by going strenuously after it with a notebook.

C. L. S., Wallingford, Conn., asks for a recent book, not necessarily fiction, for reading aloud at the meetings of an organization now working for the people of the Southern highlands. The non-fiction clause makes it possible to include a book every such group should read: "Machine Age in the Hills," by Malcolm Ross (Macmillan). It may hold up the work of the meeting now and again, while these poignant chapters quietly and without special pleading tell their story of how the machine age has "changed hill virtues into industrial vices." It does not leave things there; it looks ahead and shows a chance for the American people to act for assuaging the despair of the hills. But it makes its case by producing cases, and each of them is as telling as a novel.

If a novel is needed, an entertaining one that brings in all manner of picturesque elemental local superstitions is "Three Brothers and Seven Daddies," by Harry Harrison Kroll (Long & Smith). This takes place somewhere in the Southern highlands; if I knew my geography better I could tell where the mountains are whose cheerfully named peaks afford the book's title.

K. A. F., Minneapolis, Minn., needs books—not more than two—for a stenographer's desk, especially one that outlines the correct use of words sound-

THE question most often asked this department has never been answered in print. In one form or another it amounts to this: "How on earth do you manage to do so many things and keep your head?"

Asked this face to face, I am wont to reply by quoting my life's motto: "Leg over leg, as the dog went to Dover." This may call for a little explanation. The dog, confronted with the necessity of walking from London to Dover, a considerable distance, was at first daunted, till it dawned on him that by placing one leg in front of the other and repeating the process, he could in time arrive almost anywhere. Quoting this motto in the studio of Cateau de Leeuw, who made the brilliant illustrations for her sister Adele's Javanese story "Rika" (Macmillan), she was moved to make me the accompanying picture, now my priceless possession. No model being on hand, she says he is more heraldic than he needed to be, but what he may lack in anatomy he makes up in spirit. You can see in his eye that he has been caught at the moment when the great liberating thought struck him. His paw is posed for the *pas qui coule*.

I have been told that he is crying Eureka. This is clearly an error. He is making the all-sufficient statement *Cur Non?* Himself a motto, he has a motto for himself. The two will take one over long rough roads with a mind at ease and an eye cocked for the landscape.

An original copy of William Blake's "Songs of Innocence," with color plates, one of which is the only example in the world, has been presented to the British Museum. The donor is Miss E. J. Carey, and it was given to her great-grandfather by Blake himself.

THE MEMOIRS OF SATAN

The Private Life of the Devil

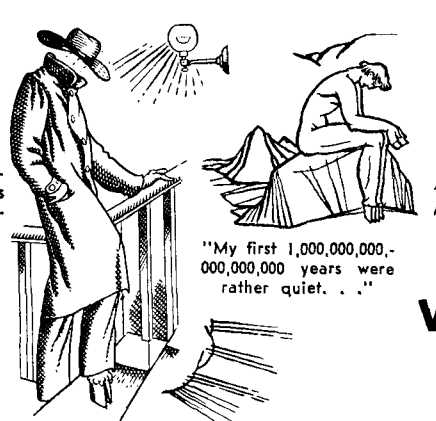


"Helen was an amusing and likeable little beast."

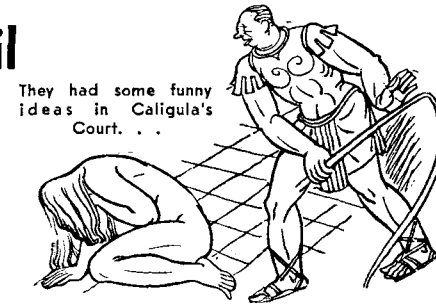


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Collated by
WILLIAM GERHARDI
Author of "The Polyglots"
and **BRIAN LUNN**