

THE BOOK SHELF.

[Conducted by ALBERT LEE, '91.]

Americans have come to look upon the average Englishman of trade as rather devoid of any sense of humor, or certainly devoid of that keen appreciation of the ridiculous which seems to be inborn with the great majority of Americans. The lack of a sense of humor implies a certain simplicity of mind, a childishness of intellect, so to speak, which requires an explanation in brackets of the perpetrated joke,—a sort of literary signpost with

HERE IS A JOKE

inscribed upon it. We all know how frequently English writers explain their attempted witticisms for the benefit of their readers; and what American has not felt a sense of personal injury at the manner in which the London comedian, in the imported burlesque, interrupts his dialogue to elaborate his latest pun, that the veriest lout in the top-loft may not miss it?

Of a similar nature must be the characteristic of the British reading public, which requires such a prefatory note as the following, with which Mr. Norman Gale has disfigured the opening page of his latest book of verse, "Songs for Little People," (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Company; New York: The Macmillan Co.): "Mothers and grown-up sisters or aunts, will, it is hoped, translate and explain whenever a young reader appears to be perplexed."

This is only the last sentence of a fifteen line note, but the preceding phrases merely lead up to this important statement. It is important because we have reason to believe that it throws a strong light upon the characters and dispositions of British mothers, grown-up sisters and aunts. It would seem that, unless urged to do so by Mr. Gale, the mothers, grown-up sisters and aunts would not pause in their lecture of Mr. Gale's verses—to which "a few rather difficult words have been allowed entry,"—"to translate and explain," whenever the young Briton's countenance assumed a blank expression of wonder and dismay.

Of course, if that is the case, Mr. Gale is fully justified in prefacing his book with such an injunction. But why restrict the admonition to mothers, grown-up sisters and aunts? Why not include fathers, brothers and uncles,—or does not the male Briton read verse to the young? And what are you going to do about the orphans, and the little ones who have no grown-up sisters or aunts? Are they not to be read to? And, if they are, why should not Mr. Gale, merely as a precautionary measure, likewise enjoin step-mothers, nurses, governesses, cousins, guardians, sisters-in-law, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, and great-aunts? This is a very perplexing question; but we trust that the mothers, grown-up sisters and aunts of Great Britain will, in some manner, free themselves from the stigma of indifference to the perplexity of the "young reader" which Mr. Gale has placed upon them.

The verses of this collection are not quite up to what we should have expected from Mr. Norman Gale; yet many of them have a true lyrical melody and should be pleasing to the ear of the "young reader," even if the stern mother, grown-up sister and aunt refuse to take things too seriously. One of the most rhythmical of all the songs is "The Bees," of which this is the last stanza:

You passionate, powdery, pastoral bandits

Who gave you your roaming and rollicking mandates?

Come out of my fox-glove; come out of my roses

You bees with the plushy and plausible noses.

The book leaves the impression that the poet has striven to furnish us with a second "Child Garden of Verses," and this impression is intensified by the manner of the illustration which, however, is so far, far be-

hind the graceful art of Mr. Charles Robinson as scarcely even to justify the mention of it.

Two books which are rather more about children than for children, are: "A Child World," by James Whitcomb Riley, (Indianapolis: The Bowen-Merrill Co.), and "W. V., Her Book," by William Canton, (New York: Stone & Kimball). The latter is pretty evenly divided between prose and verse, and the prose is so far ahead of the verse in quality and interest that we might well wish it were all prose. The book tells of the very charming views of life and philosophy held by a little four-year-old girl, "W. V.," in a manner so sympathetic as almost to make one feel the personality of the child. There are touches of pathos, too, made all the stronger by the atmosphere of probability which Mr. Canton has managed to put into his work. Especially attractive is the incident of Uncle Little John lost in the snow with W. V. Another book by the same author, to be entitled, "The Invisible Playmate," is announced; and if it is anything like "W. V.," it should be welcome.

Mr. Riley's, "A Child World," is verse throughout,—a sort of epic, lightened and brightened here and there with lyrics. James Whitcomb Riley stands to-day among the foremost of our living American poets, and his work is particularly noteworthy for its individualism and, I might say, Americanism. For that reason alone his latest work should command the attention of all who wish to keep abreast of what is being done by Americans in literature. "A Child World" describes the life of a village family in the middle West, fifty years ago, from a point of view that no other writer, to my knowledge, has ever taken, and describes it in a style so simple and yet so powerful as to bring the old days—and even the unfamiliar scenes—vividly before the reader.

Mr. Thomas B. Mosher, of Portland, Me., has been sending out into the world for the past two or three years a number of reprints of interesting works that limited editions have placed beyond the grasp of the majority, but I doubt if any of his previous publications have come from his press in a more attractive form than the three little volumes he has put into the "Brocade Series,"—"The Child in the House," by Walter Pater; "The Pageant of Summer," by Richard Jeffries, and "The Story of Amis and Amile," from the French by the late William Morris. These booklets are printed on vellum throughout and are veritable little bric-a-brac volumes. If they get a fair chance at the public's eye, they will ruin the Christmas card business, for they answer that holiday purpose surpassingly, both in appearance and price. Mr. Mosher also publishes Justin McCarthy's prose version of the Rubaiyat of Omar Kayyam—of which 550 copies only were issued in London in 1889. This volume will form an important addition to the Omar bibliography, and the form in which it appears will make it welcome to every book lover.

Prize Offered to College Seniors.

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution has offered a series of prizes, to be awarded for the best essays on "The Principles Fought for in the War of the American Revolution," written by Seniors in the principal colleges of the country. The winner of the prize in each college, taken separately, will receive a silver medal and the writer of the essay adjudged the best of all in the competition will be awarded a gold medal valued at \$100. The winning essay will be sent to the President-General of the society. The committee on award of the prize is to consist of the professors of American history and of American Constitutional law, and the award is to be submitted to the President of the University on or before the public exercises of Commencement Day. Each essay must contain not less than 1,600 words nor more than 2,000. All essays must be left with the committee on or before the first Monday in May.

ELIGIBILITY RULES.

Lack of Uniformity in Requirements of College Athletes.

[W. T. Bull in Leslie's Weekly.]

The question of eligibility of men in the various branches of college athletics should receive attention at this time, with the end in view of making uniform rules to be lived up to by one and all alike.

Now, at Princeton, Baird, who is playing fullback on the football team, is a Freshman. He was a Freshman last year. At certain other colleges Baird would be ineligible to play this year, being a dropped man.

At Yale a player on the football team must show a standing of two hundred and twenty-five in his studies; otherwise he is restrained from playing. Goodwin, the Freshman, is an example. Having failed to keep up, he was debarred, thus robbing the eleven of a first-class running halfback.

In the Harvard-Princeton football game Brewer played at end for Harvard. He was not graduated with his class last June, and he is now in the Law School. Should he have been permitted to play? This is a question for grave consideration.

Another case is this. Gailey, of Princeton, and Woodruff, of Pennsylvania, are married men. Should they be allowed to compete with boys?

So far as eligibility for standing in studies goes, the writer believes that if a student cannot engage in athletics and keep up with his class, then he should be made to quit. It is no credit to Princeton that Baird is allowed to play, and all fair-minded men will agree in this opinion. The case of Brewer is similar, and reflects a bad light on the Harvard Faculty.

ATHLETIC CLUB PROFESSIONALISM.

The defeat of the Harvard football team by an athletic club eleven, score 8-6, serves to emphasize the fact that the monopoly of decided superiority of the bigger college teams over their smaller brethren is a thing of the past. While the teams of Williams, of Wesleyan, of Amherst, of Cornell and of Trinity may not succeed in defeating Yale or Princeton or Harvard for some time to come, the athletic clubs, with their various and powerful resources for getting together star aggregations of players, are likely to do so at any time, that is if they get the chance. I say, "get the chance," because it is by no means improbable that college teams will shut down entirely on athletic club teams—that is, refuse to give them a place on their schedules until such time as these clubs show that they are properly influenced by the spirit of amateur sport.

This season of football just closed has proved a disgraceful one in a way—for professionalism has run rampant in the athletic clubs. To the writer's knowledge certain players representing athletic club teams were paid as high as three hundred dollars for one game, and five hundred dollars for two games.

Now, the colleges will not stand any such business as this; and, as the only way to stop the practice is to refuse to play games with them, then this should be done. The smaller college teams, however, are surely getting nearer their bigger rivals, but in a legitimate way—that is, through the coaching of experienced men.

New York Not the Place.

[New York Tribune.]

A multitude of New Yorkers would be grievously disappointed if the principal game of the year were hereafter to be played elsewhere, but we adhere to the opinion which we have repeatedly expressed, that this city is not the most suitable place for an athletic contest between colleges, especially when neither of them has its home here. College towns furnish the most appropriate arena for college games, unless they lack some essential condition of fairness or convenience, and in that case a neutral field so situated as to preserve the true college spirit of the sport ought, if pos-

sible, to be chosen. All who have attended a Yale-Harvard game at Springfield will acknowledge, we think, that it possessed a certain desirable element of interest and propriety which is lacking where the intimate sense of a college competition is lost in the general excitement of a great public spectacle.

The discussion of this point has been intelligent and amiable in the past, and we hope it will continue. In the meantime we congratulate the winners of yesterday's manly contest upon their brilliant victory and their possession of the many admirable qualities which it illustrated and rewarded. They won nothing which they had not honestly earned. As for Yale—well, Yale still has left a large and varied stock of athletic distinction, and can afford to take a beating cheerfully, in the confident expectation of being heard from another year.

What Football Defeat Means.

[New York Sun.]

The fact that some of the Yale undergraduates made some observations when the Boy Orator of Salt Creek urbanely mentioned the "ill-gotten gains" of their fathers still rankles in the Bryanite bosom. Thus our esteemed but happy contemporary, the Butte Miner, emits these bilious and revengeful sentiments in regard to the defeat of Dr. Dwight's eleven by Dr. Patton's eleven:

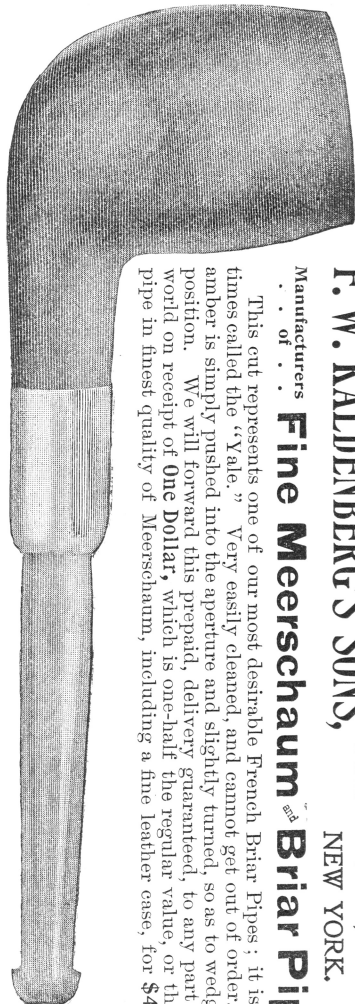
"Are there any tears in this vicinity over the defeat of the Yale team? Are the people of Butte sitting up nights nursing their sorrow over the humiliation of the sons of Eli? Do you hear any heavy sobs in this vicinity over the walloping of the pin-feathered Alecks of New Haven? Well, hardly. Yale is getting a part of the medicine it has earned. Never since the day when the students disturbed the Bryan meeting and made it impossible for the Democratic candidate for the Presidency to speak, has there been a warm and friendly feeling for the howling yawps of Yale."

This is eminently courteous language, and no doubt the young gentlemen at New Haven will accept the gentle rebuke and recognize in their overthrow at football the vengeance of the gods. Yet it must be admitted that there is no tradition of defeat at Yale; and next year the Butte worshippers of juvenile elocution may have reason to believe that the gods have short memories and have given up avenging the youthful prodigy.

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