THE BOOK SHELF.

[Conducted by ALBERT LEE, '91.]

There is enough of the real boy left in most of us to make us enjoy any story that treats of strong men, and although Porthos will always be the King and foremost of the all in our minds, we are glad to hear of the exploits of less famous giants. For this reason I think most readers will prefer the story of the "Three Strong Men" in Mr. Brun's "Tales of Languedoc," (San Francisco: William Doxey) to the many other provencal yarns he spins in the same book. These three fellows had great experiences, and all were so powerful that they played quoits with millstones as a diversion. One of them was surely a populist, for he had long whiskers that reached down to his feet, but they were of more use than any populists's whiskers I have ever heard of. For at one stage of the story, when the wanderers came to an unfordable river, one of them seized the end of his companion's beard, and His Whiskers, then went through the motions of throwing the hammer and hurled the other to the opposite bank of the stream. This same fellow, who played the part of the hammer in the previous incident, has a fight with the Devil. First, he gets him in a hole—which is where we would all of us like to get the Devil—and then follows a battle royal in which the Devil is finally killed. But I guess he must have come to life again, for he still seems to be getting in his good work. I wish the Three Strong Men would come to America and kill him, so that Harvard and Yale might reach an understanding and resume athletic relations.

In one of those moments of weakness which publishers, as well as other mortals, are doubtless subject to, Messrs. Stone & Kimball decided to publish "At the Sign of the Sphinx," by Caroline Wells, and did publish it, and their part of the work is exquisitely done. A prettier cover has not been put out, even by them, for many moons, and the whole make-up is delightful. The subject matter, however, is pretty light. It is a collection of charades, in verse, of which this is a fair sample:

"I am my whole, I have been married twice.
My first wife was my second long before
My second wife became my first. And more,
I was my whole to each. Let that suffice."

There is no particular value in this kind of writing, as poetry, and life is too short to spend any part of it in trying to guess Miss Wells' secrets. There are other things of more importance that keep us guessing now-a-days.

Much more to our taste are Mr. Shipman's "Urban Dialogues," (New York: Stone & Kimball). These little conversations are bright and vivacious, and contain some real humor with not a little satire. The illustrations by C. D. Gibson contribute their share of interest to the little volume.

It is plain that Mr. Stephen Crane used the same paint box when he prepared "The Little Regiment," (New York: D. Appleton & Co.), as that which he used when he laid in the color for "The Red Badge of Courage." The newer short stories are full of the same reds and blues and yellows, with a few "mystic" horses thrown in, but on the whole the general effect is better and more pleasing than that left by the book which made his reputation. Of the two I think I prefer "The Little Regiment," and there are a couple of stories in it which one may well take pleasure in reading again.

It is possible that I may be grossly misjudging the vast aggregation of A. B.'s who may properly be styled the "constant readers" of this department if I assume that only a very small number of them would look into a book which rests upon our shelf entitled "The Bible as Literature" (New York, T. Y. Crowell & Co.). I am prepared to admit that I should merely have glanced carelessly through its pages myself, if it had not been that one of its chapters was written by Prof. A. S. Cook, whom the Class of '91 initiated into the mysteries of pedagogy at Yale, while he introduced the Class of '91 to other mysteries. As to whether Professor Cook or the Class of '91 retains the deeper impression of the two ceremonies, I am at present unable to state; and the question (although important) certainly bears no relation whatever to the paper "On the Influence of Biblical upon Modern English Literature."

I had rather expect to find this an essay couched in the style of those lectures which formed a part of the mysteries to which the Class of '91 was introduced, and must therefore confess that I was considerably disappointed at discovering that the paper is largely a catalogue of examples from literature in which the influence of King James' version is plainly recognizable. All this shows that Professor Cook has read a great deal—which is not at all surprising—and that he has noted many of the peculiarities of the books that have come his way; but the subject he had to treat is one of considerable interest and one that we must regret he did not handle in a manner that would have called for more original thought and which consequently would have been of much greater interest to his readers. Having read Professor Cooks contribution to this book concerning Bible literature, I was curious to see what some of the other learned gentlemen had to say upon their various themes, and I must say that many of the dissertations are exceedingly interesting. Dr. Whiton's treatment of "Ruth and Esther" puts that Biblical romance into an entirely different light; and I forthwith took down my Bible and read the story again and found it most interesting, and much more dramatic (while naturally far better written), than any modern tale that the seekers after new effects have furnished us with this many a day.

"The Beginners of a Nation" (New York, D. Appleton & Co.) is the title of the first instalment of an important historical work which Mr. Edward Eggleston is writing upon the history of life in the United States. The present volume treats largely of the early settlements on this continent with the especial object of tracing from their source the various movements which prompt emigration. It is not a book that the average busy person will care to pick up for light reading, yet it is written in a style so pleasing and so clear that the subject is presented in a manner most tempting. What will probably appeal most strongly to those who are not especially interested in the doings of those early days is the discussion of the characters of those Puritans who have always been held up to us in the story books as very pious personages, but who, it seems, were about as promiscuous a lot, as to their virtues, as the average body of human beings nowadays. This makes one feel satisfied with the times, more or less, and conveys the impression very strongly that Mr. Eggleston is at last telling us the truth about a good many things which have hitherto been heavily veiled by misconceived reverence.

The most noteworthy of recent contributions to Omar literature is undoubtedly Mr. Nathan Haskell Dole's Variorum edition of the Rubaiyat (Boston, Joseph Knight Co.). A more complete compendium of information upon this absorbing topic has never before been presented. Not only have we biographical sketches of the principal translators of these poems, with countless bibliographical notes, but Mr. Dole gives us the readings from the various Fitzgerald editions, and many pages of comparative versions, so that we may see side by side the French of Nicolas, the German of Bodenstedt and Von Schack, the soft metre of Fitzgerald and the beautiful prose of McCarthy. But it makes a book lover and collector almost weep to read that Guaritch, who had 200 of the 250 of Fitzgerald's first edition, which was printed in 1859, sold almost all of them at one penny each, because he could not get anybody to pay more. Nowadays a copy of this first edition brings a somewhat higher price. In 1887 this same Guaritch (this same house of Guaritch, I might better say) sold a copy for four guineas, and in 1894 another copy brought six guineas. I don't suppose there are any for sale, even at that price, today.

Of the lighter literature of the day we have the usual variety at hand, and among the best, so far as story telling goes. is Conan Dayle's latest tale, "Rodney Stone," (New York; D. Appleton & Co.). Here we read of those days when Beau Brummel and the Prince of Wales went to prize fights, when everybody was a "dead game sport," and when no driver ever met another on the road that a race did not follow. One of these road races furnishes one of the most exciting incidents of the book—the struggle between the coach and the tandem comes very near being thrilling.

The Position of Yale in Chess.

In a recent interview published by the Yale Daily News, Mr. E. A. Caswell, the honorary manager of the Intercollegiate Chess tournament, spoke of the game of chess and the cause of Yale's weakness in the recent tournament as follows:

"If there is any game which denotes true intellectual development and careful mental training that game is chess. This fact does not seem to be generally recognized among college students. A few years ago the game was not uncommonly ridiculed and this idea seems now to exist to a certain extent at Yale. The importance of athletics should be in no way underrated, but should athletics be considered of so much more account than a game which requires intellect alone? A man is supposed to go to college for the sake of mental development. Chess is a most excellent test of this, while football, rowing and other sports, are not. If this fact were more fully appreciated at Yale the chess teams of the various years would have been more successful. The fact is the teams have no support from the College as a whole. If a half of the enthusiasm and spirit with which Yale supports her athletes were extended toward the chess team the club would have more financial support. This would secure the services of a competent coach for a longer time than this year and would also cause a larger number of men to compete for a place in the team."

In speaking of the tournament Mr. Caswell said:

"Better chess was played in the tournament this year than in the preceding contests and more general interest was taken. Over a hundred tickets were sold and many complimentary tickets were issued. The Yale team exhibited more experience and training this year than the team of last year."

Brawn and Brains.

[Kansas City Times.]

The attendance of 400 at the intercollegiate oratorical contest, compared with the crowd of 8,000 at the football game on Thanksgiving Day, shows that however much we may regret it, sports have a fascination for the American people that is not shared by intellectual contests.

There is one feature of the case, however, which is entirely overlooked by most of those who comment upon it. That is that college football games show the very highest order of sport, while college oratorical contests do not furnish the highest order of oratory. The youth is entering upon, if not at, his prime physically. The college debater, on the other hand, is immature intellectually. In fact, he is still about twenty-five years from his intellectual prime. Since college athletes, therefore, play football better than college orators speak, it is not strange that people crowd to see boys play football and do not crowd to hear boys speak.

There is of course more fascination for Anglo-Saxon people in sports than in intellectual pursuits. For one thing, the former are more easily followed by the audience and do more to entertain it. But it would be absurd to argue from this that the American people value strength above intellect or even above oratory. We have only recently seen the eagerness with which the people grapple with abstruse questions, and hang upon the words of those who employ their eloquence in the effort to elucidate them.

Chemical Club Organized.

Shortly before the close of the last term a meeting was held in Kent Laboratory for the purpose of organizing a Chemical Club. There were about twenty-five present, among others, Professors Johnson, Chittenden, Mixter, Gooch, Dr. Smith, Dean of the Medical School, and Dr. Wheeler of the Sheffield Laboratory. The object of the club is to bring together those in the University interested in Chemistry and to broaden the ideas of the members generally on the subject.

Tiffany & Co.

New Series of Gold Watches

An entirely new series of superior Gold Watches at the following attractive prices: for Ladies, in plain 18-karat gold open-face cases, $25. In enameled gold cases, with enameled dials, $40. In enameled gold cases, set with diamonds, $70, $75, and upwards.

For Men, extra flat open-face 18-karat Gold Watches, $100, $150, and upwards.

UNION SQUARE
NEW YORK

HERE IS A GOOD PROPOSITION:

THE GREAT

BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD

For $2.00 per year.

Replete with news from every section of the earth. Literary features in abundance.

A Page of Sporting News!
Social Page for Women!
A Page of Music!
Illustrated Fashions from Abroad!
A Page on Household Matters!

and many other attractions for men and women.

The Herald is easily

New England's Greatest Newspaper.

DAILY:

50 cents a month; $6.00 per year.