

Literary News and Criticism

The Pleasures of Reading the Dictionary.

THE CENTURY DICTIONARY SUPPLEMENT WITH CYCLOPEDIA OF NAMES SUPPLEMENT. Prepared under the supervision of Benjamin E. Smith, A. M., L. H. D. In two volumes. Illustrated. 12mo. pp. xi, 784, 894.

It is Mr. Austin Dobson who says: I doubt your painful pedant who can read the dictionary through.

The rest of the quatrain does not concern us here. We merely wish to suggest that he may well desire to erase these lines if ever he happens—as, of course, he will—upon these two supplementary volumes of the Century Dictionary. One can easily dip into them and continue to read, lured on by a fascinating realization of the magnitude of the progress made by humanity in the last two decades. These two volumes fill an actual and an urgent need. There is hardly a department of human knowledge and activity in which the last twenty years have not brought about changes and progress requiring the noting of new words, the extension or the modification of the meanings of old ones.

In medicine, in chemistry, in microscopy and biology, in agriculture, in engineering, in the laboratory and the workshop, in finance and the marts of trade revolutions have taken place, orderly and progressive, ticketed at each stage with new terms, often borrowed from the name of inventor or innovator, or from the language of his nationality. Since the original Century Dictionary was completed, the automobile, the wireless, the dirigible and the aeroplane have been added to our means of intercommunication. The turbine has been brought to perfection, naval construction has changed, serums and antitoxins have been placed at the service of medicine; surgery, far outstripping it, has among many other triumphs, proved that nephroptosis is a cure for Bright's disease—the Century Dictionary Supplement, while taking note of the operation, does not mention this, perhaps the most important of its benefits, discovered by the late Dr. Edebohls, of New York. But why continue? As a work of reference this Supplement is practically an independent work, complete in itself.

But there is more. Innumerable foreign words and phrases have come into the language from the Yeldt, the Philippines and Porto Rico, from Japan, and from the tongues brought to our shores by immigration. And, in addition to all this, our restless energy has been continually colloquialisms which certainly afford quicker travelling to our destination than formal speech, jocular, imaginative, often witty short-cuts packed with meaning for an optimistic, hustling age.

Here, however, we venture to become mildly critical. Why, for instance, grant American citizenship to the Yiddish *shchachan* and *berakub*, but ignore the *shchachan* and *berakub* without which no Yiddish is ever really joyful? And where would the *shchachan* be without the *hoopah*? Again, among French culinary delights, the Supplement specializes on delicious sauces, but leaves us in the dark regarding the difference, so important to American palates, between *Bordelaise* and *Provençale*. We welcome *barbecue*, and from Japan *bushido* and *buncai*. From Mexico and the demesnes that thereto adjacent lie, all the way to the Philippines, we borrow *manana*, which will always remain an exotic to us. We ask also if it is not invidious to single out the Black Hand for commendatory definition, while ignoring the two tons that do so much to liven up the monotony of our daily round? The Supplement has missed a golden opportunity here, for if anything is wanted by the New York police it is a workable, understandable definition of the Chinese secret societies.

These French sauces have given us an appetite; therefore we feel that we have a just grievance against the editors of the Supplement for the omission of that famous New York delicacy, the *Raines hotel sandwich*. Nay, more: the hotel itself is missing, and so is the statesman who made the law that made them both. From the missing sandwich we turn for consolation to its accompanying liquids, and meet with better luck. Here is the highball, but it is labelled "stagnant" — perish the thought! Here, too, just in season, is the rickety, but the less insidious horse's neck is passed over. Impelled solely by love of the language, and at the risk of sacrificing our investigation in its service, we pursue our investigation in the stock of "stagnant" in the Supplement, and find it to be rather low. The temperate editor knows only two kinds of cocktail: "one acquainted with men, not even lexicographers, who can name at least six varieties offhand, not counting the chacterier, the comst and the szyggy."

"Tank!" says the Supplement with startling distinctness. We stare, then see that no offence is meant, for, says the authority, "Tank—the stomach (slang)." Clasp the Englishman's jar to the Century's tank, we pass on. Led by a subconscious association of ideas, which we leave to Professor Muensterberg for analysis, we warn them (and they are many) who are looking for a handbook man that they won't find one in the pages of this dictionary. Turn we to more edifying words.

"Chesty" is here; it is much older than most of us know. And here's the "fan," both baseball and police. "Panata," that gem from the muck heap of the Lexow investigation, is admitted, although it did not hold the public favor long. And, speaking of muck, where is the "muckraker"? Surely, this is not slang? Bunyan gave it to Roosevelt. Can better credentials be asked? The Supplement is too conservative in the matter of slang, we think. Decidedly, the panic of 1907 was standing to the "has-been," not to mention the "has-wasner," a word invented in Chicago to meet a sudden need. And it was an unfeeling Wall Street stenographer who called her unfortunate employer a "used-to-k-do." We had hoped to find official confirmation of our derivation of "out of sight" from the German *ausgesicht*. But "hothin" fails.

It is a painful pedant who can read the dictionary through? It is a joy, it becomes an intoxication. Some words we love at first sight without even stopping to find out what they mean—"sissos," for instance, and "anally-goster." What would the fishwife have said if Dr. Johnson had called her an "ichthyologist" instead of the isosettes parallelipipedum that reduced her to silence? Then there is the "brunch-word," a variety of the telescope word, of which Lewis Carroll was a master. The brunch-word is an

arises, however, to which one refers only because the author is likely to do better things in the future. The plot of "The Wild Olive" is ingeniously constructed, without violence to probability; the background—the shores of Lake Champlain, Buenos Ayres and New York—is well drawn in telling outlines, and the leading characters have the semblance of life. Love is the theme, but love as it is understood by the women of an alien, more primitive race; its road does not run smooth in cleverly planned new circumstances, and the atmosphere of the tale is wholesome and bracing—the kind of novel which one can watch on its way toward the top among "best sellers" with a satisfaction that calls for no reservation.

EDMOND GOT BOOKS AND AUTHORS

The French Actor's Memories of J. Wilkes Booth.

The second volume of the "Journal" of Edmond Got, of the Comédie Française, published by Plon-Nourrit, covers the period from 1859 to 1893. Got, after fifty years of active service, retired from the stage in 1895, and died six years afterward. The concluding volume of the journal shows that a great comedian can also be a man of remarkable common sense. Got viewed events with sound judgment and a broad philosophy. He had a well balanced mind, and his comments not only on theatrical matters but on politics, literature and art are incisive, terse and almost always hit the nail on the head. For instance, in 1862, noted in the diary, on January 12, 1862, that the Archduke Maximilian was to become Emperor of Mexico. Got pronounced this as an "outburst of sheer folly." He asks whether the Emperor Napoleon had consulted the soothsayers, for such nonsense may bring about the fall of his dynasty. "The Tuilleries, which is secessionist at heart, thinks that this Mexican move will be a coup de Jarnac for the United States of the North." Got thought, on the contrary—and events afterward proved that he was right—that it was a "coup de Jarnac" for the Second Empire.

In 1867 Got writes that the empire seems to him like the captive balloon at the exposition that has the appearance of dominating all about it, but which may collapse at any moment owing to the pin pricks of ever increasing opposition every time that the rope pulls it nearer the ground. In June, 1869, he met the ex-Father Hyacinthe, who presided at the League of International Peace, which he characterizes as a "wild dream." After talking with Hyacinthe Got found him to be "a bit of a crank, but an eloquent advocate of a cause that must remain always and fatally lost." In December, 1869, commenting upon the inauguration of the Suez Canal, Got wrote: "This is a grand thing for the maritime world, and England will probably find some way before long of getting hold of it." This was written six years before Beaconsfield purchased the Khedive Ismail's shares, which gave England the control of the canal. After the session of the National Assembly at Versailles in January, 1875, Got wrote: "This republic, with its dissolvent factor of direct universal suffrage, must gradually slide away from the hands of the moderate men who now hold it to blaguers like Gambetta, Ranc or even Clemenceau." What a pity Got could not have lived to see Clemenceau Prime Minister. On June 17, 1888, Frederick III succeeded by William II. "Almost every one here feels that there will be a war in a short notice. I don't think so. The young Kaiser is far too wise to plunge France into a war, and content into a war where there is nothing to be gained." Got refers to Boulanger as "a general with a barbe blanche, capable of leading France into a sort of political and moral St. Vitus' dance." Had not Got been a consummate actor he might have become a masterful statesman.

The assassination of President Lincoln is recorded in the "Journal" on April 30, 1865. "Strange to say," writes Got, "I knew the principal actor of the tragedy." He then relates that three months before the crime a fine looking American with distinguished manners called upon him at his house at Auteuil and sent in his card, with the name J. Wilkes Booth. The card was accompanied by a letter of introduction from Got's friend and fellow actor, Charles Fechter, who was then playing in New York. Fechter presented Booth as a tragedian of brilliant talents, and recommended him as an excellent comrade, who would thoroughly appreciate any attentions that Got might show him. He mentioned also that his friend was very desirous of becoming acquainted with dramatic authors, artists and men of letters. Got asked Booth to stop with him as his guest until he found an apartment that suited him and a private carriage and coachman. He writes:

Booth remained with me three days. He was well educated and full of energy, but spoke French very imperfectly. I remember that he talked about Julius Cæsar, and about Brutus—of Brutus especially. "What do you think of Brutus?" he asked. I replied that we admitted him as a hero, especially after reading the Greek version of "Julius Cæsar." He was very grateful, sister dreamer, and a selfish egotist. And he said, "I am very glad to hear that you are so interested in Brutus. I have a book on him, and I would be glad to lend it to you." He used to go often to the theatre, and he was very often to the theatre. He used to go to the theatre in Paris. One evening at a party he was introduced to a young actress who was introduced to him by a friend. She was very beautiful, and he was very attracted to her. He used to go to the theatre in Paris. One evening at a party he was introduced to a young actress who was introduced to him by a friend. She was very beautiful, and he was very attracted to her.

Got's appreciations of men who afterward made their mark in the world are always accurate. In September, 1860, Edmond Adolphe brought to luncheon at his house "a stout youth named Francis Sarsay, rather provincial, and a novice in art, who, under the nom de plume 'De Surtires' has written some remarkable critical articles in the 'Figaro.'" He is a sincere searcher after truth and a hard worker. He will some day strike a note of sincerity and conviction amid the tohu-bohu of our present critics. In 1861 he singled out Edouard Dattelle in the Salon of that year as "a quite young pupil of Meissonier, who has the true artist's insight, and who already paints as well as his master." In July, 1877, Théophile Del-

cast, afterward Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote to Got asking him if he might venture to submit a five-act comedy to him for advice, suggestions and corrections. In May, 1888, he rehearsed in the "Filibuster" of Jean Richpin, who is described as "one of the most talented and best equipped of the young men who have escaped from Bohemianism." The "Journal" contains many interesting reminiscences of the Paris Commune, of London and Vienna, and many fresh anecdotes about Gambetta, the Duc d'Aumale, Princesse Metternich, Emile Perrin, Sarah Bernhardt, Delaunay, Coquelin, Sardou, Dumas fils, Emile Augier, Henri Beque and other commanding personalities during the Second Empire and the Third Republic.

shown to me with a regret that they were covered up, because they were added. "You know we are leaving town soon." Again the wondrous Queen of Scots! Mr. Andrew Lang, in reviewing the recently published "Bardon Papers"—which were described some weeks ago in this column—denies that he even defended Mary in the matter of Darnley. "I only pointed out defects, real or apparent," he says, "in the evidence brought against her by men themselves guilty. As I thought it highly probable that there was an interpolation into the first Casket Letter (usually numbered 1). But reconsideration led me to see points previously unobserved by critics, which convinced me that Mary wrote all of the fatal list original of this damning letter. I published my conclusions. As I proved that Mary's accusers perjured themselves and suppressed an essential piece of evidence, they were clearly capable of forgery. But it was superfluous. In a state paper Wharton coolly proposed to forge and publish a letter of Mary. Dr. Conyers Read's account of Mary's intrigues while a prisoner is as lucid as his brevity permits. She had a moral right to try to escape, and, as the austere Presbyterian Earl of Angus said, a moral right to have Elizabeth slain in the process. Elizabeth, in turn, tried to induce Paulet to murder Mary, but the Puritan refused to be an assassin. When I say 'a moral right' I mean a right in accordance with the public morals of the age." Mr. Lang adds:

The novel points contained in the Bardon papers are not numerous, and to discuss them here would demand the help of much detail. As I understand Dr. Conyers Read, he holds, as I do, that Philipps (Walsingham's true name) forged a postscript to Mary's fatal letter to Babington, and added that postscript, in cypher, to the letter. Walsingham knew this, and allies to it: "You will not believe how much I am grieved with the event of this cause, and how I am affected by the postscript which hath bred the jealousy." Walsingham, that is, fears that Babington will spill a fat in the forged postscript. Mary's letter, and will decamp. Walsingham was agent provocateur; he made opportunities for the Queen's enemies, and then opened the letters, read them, forwarded them, and had a postscript to one of them forged. It was a very cleverly contrived plot, innocuous, but, to say the least, it was a plot. Mary's death was not very much affected by the forgery. The original of the letter which she wrote to Paulet to induce him to murder Elizabeth was in the hands of the Countess of Arundel, and was destroyed by Babington to murder Elizabeth as a murderer. Mary's death was not very much affected by the forgery. The original of the letter which she wrote to Paulet to induce him to murder Elizabeth was in the hands of the Countess of Arundel, and was destroyed by Babington to murder Elizabeth as a murderer. Mary's death was not very much affected by the forgery.

The Popes, in 1565, said: "I do not know which of these two ladies is the better. There is no doubt as to which had the better nature, and the harder fortunes; no doubt that Elizabeth was more dignified, and set for her the trap of the Darnley marriage." **NAPOLEON'S DEATH MASK** A Curious Story as to Its Present Whereabouts.

Paris correspondence The London Globe. In his remarkable work on Napoleon, Lord Rosebery, speaking of Dr. Antommarchi, who attended the Emperor at St. Helena, says that he rendered humanity a service which almost effaced all the lies in his book—he took a cast of the features of Napoleon after his death. The original of this mask, according to the Laird of Dalmeiy, is in England. But it looks as if some doubt were permissible on the subject. A note recently published in the French papers states that the mask of Napoleon I is in the possession of the family of Antommarchi, and that General Niox, governor of the Hotel des Invalides, intended to dispose with the object of inducing the family to hand over this historic relic to the Invalides, so that it may take its place beside the tomb of Napoleon. If the statement of Dr. Antommarchi possesses the original mould of Napoleon's face, taken after his death, it is plain that it cannot be in England. The original mask is believed to have remained in the hands of the Countess Bertrand, and after the death of Marshal Bertrand it became the property of his daughter, Mme. Thayer, who gave it to Prince Victor Napoleon, the Emperor's great-grandson. The Emperor's great-grandson, Prince Victor Napoleon, was present when the inventory was drawn up, at the request of the Marquis de Biron, M. Thayer's brother-in-law, and he leaves himself justified in affirming that certain characteristics appeared to him to place it beyond doubt that he had before him the original plaster. But if the original mask is in the hands of the Antommarchi family, as declared by Lord Rosebery, reproduces the exquisite beauty of the original mould—the features of the Emperor's face, as they were, a question arises: Why is it that one only possesses the face and not the entire head? M. Frédéric Mason appears to have found the key to this problem. He has examined the original mould, and he has found that it was made by no fewer than eight doctors, including Antommarchi and an English medical man, Dr. Burton, who was also present at the autopsy. The Emperor's great-grandson, Prince Victor Napoleon, was present when the inventory was drawn up, at the request of the Marquis de Biron, M. Thayer's brother-in-law, and he leaves himself justified in affirming that certain characteristics appeared to him to place it beyond doubt that he had before him the original plaster. But if the original mask is in the hands of the Antommarchi family, as declared by Lord Rosebery, reproduces the exquisite beauty of the original mould—the features of the Emperor's face, as they were, a question arises: Why is it that one only possesses the face and not the entire head? M. Frédéric Mason appears to have found the key to this problem. 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