SOME NEW BOOKS.

The British Laureates.

How many students of English literature could name in the order of their succession the poets laureate of England, asks W. FORBES GRAY in his volume *The Poets Laureate of England, Their History and Their Odes* (E. P. Dutton and Company). The answer is more likely to shame the laureateship than the students of poetry, for of the sixteen worthies who held the post from the time of Ben Jonson, the first official laureate, to the present day there have been but three great poets, Jonson, Wordsworth and Tennyson; three minor poets, Dryden, Southey and the present incumbent. The rest were mere versifiers.

If poetry, indeed, be that fine particle within us "that expands, rarefies, refines, raises our whole being," "the stuff of which our life is made," the language of the imagination and the passions which alone drive home "to the bosoms and businesses of men," as Hazlitt says, then indeed the very method of appointment and those to whom the selection is entrusted would quite naturally cut off the official laureates from being poets. Chosen as these officials were for their political leanings, or for the momentary applause of the ignorant, for their purely negative qualities or their facility at flunkeyism, it is hardly surprising that four of them fail to receive even a casual mention in so detailed a work as Courthope's six volumes on "The History of English Poetry" and that six of them fail to appear in Ward's "English Poets."

Even if the student of English poetry had once memorized the list, what else is there but contemptuous pity to accord such names as Shadwell, Nahum Tate, Laurence Eusden, William Whitehead, Henry James Pye?

As the history, however, of a national office and commentary on the times and manners, Mr. Forbes Gray's volume is both valuable and diverting. It is a distinct contribution to that part of English literature which deals with character and custom rather than with production.

"What I have aimed at," says the author, "is not an elaborate treatise buttressed by recondite footnotes, but a concise and trustworthy narrative that shall include what is likely to instruct, interest and even amuse the reader who is desirous of making the acquaintance of those wearers of the laurel who have well nigh been eclipsed by the full orbed splendor of Tennyson. Consequently I have tried, by means of anecdote and otherwise, to concentrate attention upon the personalities of the earlier laureates, upon their friends, their literary feuds, the general conditions under which they wrote. The wretched odes which they usually composed are secondary."

Accepting as incontrovertible the perfectly pardonable ignorance of the literary student as to these inglorious incumbents, it may be well to name them in the order of their accession. Rare Ben Jonson headed the line, followed by Sir William Davenant, John Dryden, Thomas Shadwell, Nahum Tate, Nicholas Rowe, Laurence Eusden, Colley Cibber, William Whitehead, Thomas Warton, Henry James Pye, Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Alfred Tennyson, Alfred Austin and Robert Bridges. The sixteen of them reach from 1616 to the present day. Of these Wordsworth, with that stanch independence of character which marks him throughout, is the only one who never wrote an official ode. Indeed before he accepted the office he made it quite clear that all demands must be dropped. When the Prince Consort was elected Chancellor of Cambridge University his Royal Highness requested an ode from the laureate to be set to music and performed at the installation. Wordsworth consented at the moment, but his daughter Dora was critically ill and the poet deeply depressed, so he handed over the task to his son-in-law, Edward Quillinan, whose poem, revised by Wordsworth's nephew, Christopher Wordsworth, afterward Bishop of Lincoln, passed as the laureate's. In such matters, too, Wordsworth evidenced his sturdy nonchalance as to outside opinion, an independence which caused some one to comment that "he wrote an ode to Duty and then let it go at that," and led him to write himself to Lady Beaumont in 1807 anent his reviewers: "My ears are stone dead to this idle buzz and my flesh as insensible as iron to these petty stings."

Of the laureates Tennyson has not only the most glorious but the longest record, holding the office for forty-two years; Davenant and Southey each held it for thirty years; Shadwell and Rowe had the shortest laureateships, holding office each for three years. Warton's period of service was five years and Wordsworth's seven. The most youthful laureate, as well as the stupidest, was Eusden, appointed in his thirtieth year; the most elderly was Wordsworth, who was 73 years old when he reluctantly accepted the bays. All the laureates with the exception of Tate, born in Dublin, were English born, three, Johnson, Colley Cibber and Pye, being born in London; two in Yorkshire, Eusden, the worst, and Tennyson, the best laureate; one, William Whitehead, in Cambridge, and one, Davenant, in Oxford. Tennyson and Wordsworth only were poets by profession, all their energies dedicated to the Muse. Nine were playwrights; two were clergymen, one of them, Eusden, commonly referred to as the "drunken parson"; one, "poetical Pye," as Scott jeeringly calls him, was a police magistrate; Alfred Austin was a journalist and Dr. Bridges is a retired M. D. It seems appropriate to add to these statistics the quaint fact that two of the laureates, Wordsworth and Tennyson, both wore the same court suit to their first court function and that it was a discarded suit of Samuel Rogers, who had himself refused the laureateship. Also that two such prominent poets as Gray and Scott refused the laureateship.

It is now almost exactly 300 years since James I., by granting a pension of 100 marks per annum to Ben Jonson, virtually created the office of the laureateship in its main essentials, before that it had been little more than an empty title, adopted by those poets whose services were enlisted by or offered to the court.

Mr. Forbes Gray devotes his first chapter to outlining the history of the laureateship as a title of honor, relying more or less upon what Selden has written on the subject in "Titles of Honour." Nor does the present author fill in the gap left by Selden, who finds no example of the laureation of a poet in France. Provence even to-day offers charming spectacles of poetic fetes and laurel crowned poets. Gibbon traced the custom to the "Cesars of Germany," but naturally the term goes back to a much more remote antiquity in the crowning of the Greek poets with the leaf sacred to Apollo. The Romans adopted the practice, investing the ceremony with even greater pomp and splendor. While Alfred Austin in his "Autobiography" says his pleasure at being appointed laureate was chastened when he reflected upon what Petrarch in like case wrote to Boccaccio:

> The laurel brought me no increase of learning or literary power, as you may well imagine, while it destroyed my peace of mind by the infinite jealousy it aroused; for from that time well nigh every one sharpened his tongue against me. It was necessary to be constantly on the alert with banner flying, ready to repel an attack, now on the left, now on the right. In a word the laurel made me known only to be tormented. Without it I should have led the best of lives, as many deem a life of obscurity and peace.

In Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the custom of crowning distinguished poets with the laurel was prevalent and the right to do so was vested in the Emperor and the Counts Palatine. However, as time passed, the authority was extended to the universities, which used it indiscriminately until the title fell into disrepute. The earliest known laureate of Germany was one Conradus Celtes Protucius, created by Frederick III. between 1415 and 1493. Protucius later became Rector of the College of Poetry and Rhetoric in Vienna. It was in 1621 that Ferdinand II. transferred the right of creating laureates to the universities. The oaths taken by the candidate were: that he would sustain the privileges of the university; that he would not accept the crown from any other university or a Count Palatine, and that he would in all his poetical effusions acknowledge the glory of God and the honor of his Imperial Majesty.

This oath forms an interesting contrast to that oath recorded in a letter to his wife by Southey:

> A good old gentleman usher, a worthy sort of fat old man in a wig and bag and a snuff colored full dress suit, with cut steel buttons and a sword, administered the oath of the new laureate, who swore to be a faithful servant to the King, to reveal all treasons that might come to his knowledge and to obey the Lord Chamberlain in all matters of the King's service. On his way home from the Lord Chamberlain's office the elated laureate went into St. James's Park and there indited the following poetical epistle to his wife:
>
> "I have something to tell you which you
> shall not be sorry at,
> 'Tis that I am sworn in to the office of
> laureate.
> The oath that I took there could be nothing wrong in,
> 'Twas to do all the duties to the dignity
> belonging.
> Keep this, I pray you, as a precious gem,
> For this is the laureate's first poem."

Some of the majesty and awe had dropped from the office in four centuries.

It is somewhat difficult to trace the laureateship to its source in English annals. Thomas Warton, one of the laureates, and if not much of a poet a scholarly historian of poetry, shows that in England, as in Germany and Spain, the title of laureate was conferred in the Middle Ages by the universities on the graduates who showed proficiency in rhetoric and the making of Latin verse. John Skelton was known to have been crowned at Oxford before 1490. In view of the fact that many advocated William Watson as our last laureate it is interesting to know that so far back as 1511 one Edward Watson was laureated at Oxford in commendation of one hundred lines of smooth Latin verse in praise of his university.

Chaucer, though frequently hailed as a court poet, rests his claim on the slight foundation that Edward III. granted him two pensions of £13 6s. 8d. each, with a daily pitcher of wine, a pension commuted to an annual payment of twenty marks by Richard II.

One detail our present chronicler fails to give us, and that is just when the grant of wine to the laureate fell into disuse. That it was so old as Chaucer we see from the above.

We know that Charles granted Ben Jonson an annuity of £100 and "one terse of Canary Spanish wine yearly," and also that payment was frequently in arrears by the poet's complaint:

> What can the cause be, when the King
> hath given
> His poet sack, the household will not
> pay?
> Are they so scanted in their store? or
> driven
> For want of knowing the poet to say
> him nay?

In the time of Dryden the grant still included one "butt or pipe of best Canary wine." Yet we can hardly fancy a pitcher, butt or pipe of wine being offered to Southey and Wordsworth. Somewhere in the interim the bibulous portion of the emolument must have dropped off.

Ben Jonson was followed in office by Davenant, a man of action and experience but a poetaster of the slightest calibre. At different times in his life he was a fugitive, an exile, a brilliant soldier, a prisoner in the Tower. Perhaps the most romantic legend attaching to him was that he was the natural son of his godfather Shakespeare. Books have been written to prove this theory, but the truth probably lies buried with all the other secrets of Shakespeare's life. Certainly the proof is not, as Davenant himself would have it, that "often it seemed to him that he writ with the very spirit that Shakespeare did." The tale is founded on the fact that Davenant was the son of the hostess of the Crown Tavern, Oxford, where Shakespeare stopped on his journeys from London to Stratford. Davenant once mentioning that he was going to see his "godfather Shakespeare" received the answer from an old townsman: "Have a care that you don't take God's name in vain." Sir Sidney Lee dismissed the whole tale with scant consideration, and the main point is that whatever Davenant might have been he was certainly not the child of Shakespeare's spirit. His most ambitious work was *Gondibert*, a dull and lengthy disquisition which the kindly Scot damns with tepid praise as: "A meritorious though a misguided and unsuccessful effort to rescue poetry from becoming the mere handmaid of pleasure, or the partisan of personal and political disputes, and to restore her to her natural rank in society, as an auxiliary of religion, law and virtue."

Davenant was chosen by the Queen to take charge of an expedition to Virginia, but the ship in which he sailed was captured off the French coast and the poet laureate was confined in Cowes Castle. Regarded as an enemy of the Commonwealth he was rescued from a severe fate by the good offices of Milton, an indebtedness which he never forgot, and when the Royalists were again triumphant and Milton in trouble Davenant reciprocated and obtained the great poet's pardon. This is the last record of a kind action of one poet laureate to another until the reign of Victoria, when again poets seemed a somewhat more civilized class. Like many of the poets of his time and nearly all the poets laureate until Warton, much of Davenant's energy was employed in the mutilation of Shakespeare's plays. As a playwright Davenant was successful, his net earnings for his coarse and cheaply clever plays amounting at one time to £200 a week. He introduced the popular innovation of having women's parts played by women. Probably the only lines Davenant ever wrote that will live are those beginning:

> The lark now leaves his watery nest
> And climbing shakes his dewy wings;
> He takes this window for the East,
> And to implore your light he sings!

Of Dryden, who succeeded Davenant to the office under Charles II. and James II., Thomas Gray wrote that "he was as disgraceful to the office from his character as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses." The age was not distinguished by nobility of aspiration or thought, and Dryden was a true exponent of his age. He veered from Puritan to Royalist, from being a member of the Church of England to a devout Romanist, an admirer of Cromwell to poet laureate and friend of Charles II. He and Shadwell, his immediate successor, began that long series of coarse literary feuds that ended only in the reign of Victoria. The amenities offered the laureates and the responses composed would make by themselves an interesting chapter in English literature.

Of Dryden, Shadwell wrote:

> He turned a journeyman to a bookseller;
> Writ prefaces to books for meat and drink,
> And as it paid he both would write and
> think.

Later he boastfully declared that he required only the pension to write as well as the laureate, to which compliment the laureate replied:

> Mature in dullness from his tender years
> Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
> Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
> The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

Shadwell replied in the prologue to the "Emperor of Morocco":

> For you, we find, too often hiss and clap
> Just as you live, speak, think and fight—
> by hap.
> And poets we all know can change like you
> And are alone to their own interests true;
> Can write against all sense, nay even their
> own:
> The vehicle called Pension makes it down.
> No fear of cudgels where there's hope of
> bread;
> A well filled paunch forgets a broken head.

In "Absalom and Achitophel" Dryden refers to Shadwell as "a mass of foul, corrupted matter," and adds:

> For every inch that is not fool is rogue;
> * * * * *
> He curses God but God before cursed him.

The reply contains such abusive terms as "wretched poetitoes," "parasite," "knave," writer of "Grub street songs worse than Tom-farthing." There is nothing subtle or interesting in the quarrel, which is a mere continuous exchange of coarse insults.

Of Shadwell's successor, Nahum Tate, known as "the author of the worst alterations of Shakespeare, the worst version of the Psalms of David and the worst continuation of a great poem" (Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel"), Scott wrote with charity that he was "one of those second rate bards who by dint of pleonasm and expletive can find smooth lines if any one will furnish them with ideas." Tate's incumbency was happily as brief as inglorious, and his works, the felicities of which are frankly stolen from Shakespeare and Milton, are dead but the curious student of literary history. This laureate lives chiefly in Pope's suave description:

> The bard whom pilfered pastorals renown,
> Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,
> Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
> And strains from hard bound brains eight
> lines a year,
> He, who still wanting, though he lives on
> theft,
> Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing
> left.
> And he, who now to sense, now nonsense
> leaning
> Means not, but blunders round a meaning;
> And he whose fustian's so sublimely bad
> It is not poetry but prose run mad.
> All these my modest satire bade translate,
> And owned that nine such poets made a
> Tate!

At last in Nicholas Rowe, appointed to the laureateship in 1715, we come if not to a poet at least to a decent man and a scholar. He was well born and educated and had an adequate income. He was a lifelong friend of Pope and Addison. He turned out his negligible official odes with punctuality and is remembered to-day chiefly as the author of "Jane Shore" and as one of the pioneers in Shakespearian appreciation and study.

It would be a nice question to decide whether the laureateship was most disgraced by Tate, Eusden, Pye or Whitehead, but perhaps an impartial critic would give the palm to Eusden. He and Pye rivalled each other in the composition of undiluted doggerel. It is said that Gray had Eusden's inglorious record in mind when a generation later he contemptuously refused the laurels. It was an office, wrote Gray, that had always humbled its possessor, "if he were a poor writer, by making him more conspicuous; and if he were a good one, by setting him at war with the little fry of his own profession."

Writing again to his friend Mason through whom the offer of the bays had been made, Gray added:

> Though I very well know the bland, emollient, saponaceous qualities of sack and silver, yet if any man should say to me, "I make you a rat catcher to his Majesty with a salary of £300 and two butts of best Malaga; and though it has been usual to catch a mouse or two, for forms sake, in public once a year, yet to you, sir, we shall not stand upon these things," I cannot say I would jump at it; nay, if they would drop the very name of the office and call me Sinecure to the King's Majesty, I should still feel a little awkward, and think everybody I saw smelt a rat about me.

Indeed, with such forerunners as the "drunken parson," Eusden and the dramatist and actor Colley Cibber, whose "impenetrable impudence" roused Johnson's ire, Gray is hardly to be blamed. Cibber, however poor his odes are, was yet a clever gauger of the public taste in light drama. Moreover we owe him a debt for his "Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber," an excellent and sincere autobiography and as valuable as Pepys's "Diary" for giving an insight into the manners and customs of the day:

> Next Whitehead came, his worth a pinch
> of snuff,
> But for a Laureat—he was good enough.

These lines from "The Laurel" sum up the worth of Whitehead with rough and ready justice. He was made reader of plays for Garrick, wrote a "little whimsical trifle" called "Trip to Scotland," of which our author says: "The humor is so coarse, the dialogue so inane and the construction so poor, that the piece fairly responds to the author's own description." Of his "Tales for Married People" Mr. Birrell writes "it really is not very, very bad." The best that can be said for him is that although his odes were quite as dull as those of his predecessors, they were not quite so obsequious. The laureate was the natural target for the wits and Whitehead was followed to his grave by the following epitaph:

> Beneath this stone a poet laureate lies,
> Not great, nor good, nor foolish, nor yet
> wise;
> Not meanly humble nor yet swelled with
> pride,
> He simply lived—and just as simply died;
> Each year his Muse produced a birthday
> ode
> Composed with flattery in the usual mode.
> For this, and for this, to George's
> praise
> The Bard was pensioned and received the
> bays.

In this desert of bad poets and bad men Thomas Warton is a momentary relief. He was a student, he revived the sonnet form, and indeed he might quite well serve as a thesis on the beginning of the Romantic Revival. He published editions of Dryden and Pope, translated Virgil's "Georgics" and "Eclogues," and is most politely mentioned by Hazlitt in his lectures on the English poets. Moreover, he was a lovable man and is quoted by Mr. Mackail as one of the earliest Oxford poets. Indeed the lines descriptive of Oxford live in all its lovers' memories:

> Ye fretted pinnacles, ye fanes sublime,
> Ye towers that wear the mossy vest of
> time;
> Ye massy piles of old munificence
> At once the pride of learning and defence;
> Ye cloisters pale that lengthening to the
> sight
> To contemplation, step by step, invite;
> Ye high arched walks, where oft the whispers clear
> Of harps unseen have swept the poet's ear;
> Ye temples dim, where pious duty pays
> Her holy hymns of ever echoing praise;
> Lo, your loved Isis from the bordering vale
> With all a mother's fondness bids you
> hail!

One last disgrace, Henry James Pye, and we come to the reign of Victoria and the office is raised by such names as Southey, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Bridges.

"For two-and-twenty years," Mr. Forbes Gray writes, "Pye with distressing punctuality inflicted odes on George III. which for gross adulation, sheer impudence and poetic worthlessness had never been surpassed, not even by Eusden."

At Pye's death one thing was maintained with firmness: "there could be no more pyes." The office was offered to Scott, who while he refused it for himself because "the office is ridiculous," yet used his good offices to persuade Southey to accept it. The pension had dwindled to £90, and there was no more mention of sack, canary or malaga. Southey reluctantly accepted the office in what mirthful spirit we have shown above and for some years stuck to what he called his "odeous" job. His political opinions won him Byron's enmity and the rather undignified attack beginning:

> Bob Southey! you're a poet—Poet Laureate
> And representative of all the race.

Southey gave some dignity to the office so that at least Wordsworth was not ashamed to allow himself to accept the title, though he repudiated all its duties. Undoubtedly Tennyson was the first great Laureate. His stanch patriotism, his love of his own land and people, his unfeigned, bourgeois loyalty to the Queen and the royal family all helped to raise the office, and some of his finest verse was written in his official capacity. His "Britons Guard Your Own," the "Wellington Ode," the "Charge of the Light Brigade," "Defence of Lucknow," "Riflemen, Form," "Welcome to Alexandra" were poems and the first real poetry that the laureateship inspired.

Tennyson died in 1892, and it was a thousand pities that a great poet could not have succeeded him. Browning had preceded him, but Swinburne and William Morris were living. What a glorious succession that of Swinburne and then William Watson would have been! But for political reasons they were passed over and Alfred Austin was made laureate. "Oh, what a falling off was there!" His official odes amount to little, and the best one can say of him is that he had a sweet taste for gardens and wrote prettily of them.

Robert Bridges is a poet's poet, a master craftsman, more learned in prosody than any man of his day, but he lacks that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. When he was appointed there were to choose from such poets as William Watson, Alfred Noyes, Rudyard Kipling, Alice Meynell. The intricacies which guide the appointment are past finding out, and as a man Dr. Bridges will rank with the best and as a writer with Dryden, Southey and Warton.

"The Poets Laureate of England" is not only a diverting book to read but an excellent volume to keep within easy reach upon the reference shelf.

Waterloo.

Nothing is more inevitable than anniversaries, yet they never cease to cause admiration, even with something of the word's etymological implication of wonder. Now it is the centennial of Waterloo. One hundred years ago this month French, German and English soldiers were battling in Belgium. In the opening phase of the present war Sir John French, Von Kluck and Joffre matched Wellington, Blücher and Napoleon of the earlier campaign. Will this war educe such military reputations as the old wars did, or is it strictly an affair "of men, not generals," that the opportunity is less? How much encouragement for the apostles of permanent peace in Europe is there in the reflection that the Allies of the Hundred Days are the bitterest pair of opponents in the war of 1915? A century ago Prussia was in belligerent alliance with both Russia and England against France; it is impossible that a hundred years hence France and Germany will make common cause against England? Not international politics, however, but military science is the concern of Captain A. F. BECKE, late of the Royal Field Artillery, in *Napoleon and Waterloo* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner and Company), a study in strategy and tactics, viewed principally from the Napoleonic side and with some appearance of special favor for that arm in which the author served.

Paragraphs in the story of the Waterloo campaign look like very modern history, with a "drive at Paris" in consideration, with names like Liège, Namur, Mons, Maubeuge, Charleroi recurring insistently; with the Forest of Ardennes a hinge of strategy, and with a front extending from Brussels to Metz. But how utterly unlike are the tactics of 1815 and of 1915! Then the science of war centred in detailed maneuvring, thrust, parry and surprise, charge and grapple. In those days a cornfield might hide until the moment of fatefulness a force that would decide the balanced issue of the day. Now ranges are multiplied even as are the numbers of contestants; Mars burrows in the earth and gets wide views from mobile vantage places in the ocean of air. The science of killing men may have become more exact, more businesslike efficient; the color, flash and glory of the old field are gone.

It is easy, too easy, to compare the Napoleon of 1815 with the Napoleon of Austerlitz and Jena, to chatter glib nonsense about his "decay." Many errors apparent in the light of history were objects of admiration to the best contemporary judgment. Napoleon had detected the fallacy in many such where others had been blind to them, and there was his genius. Politically it was all up with him in 1815. That he possibly failed to perceive; but whatever the dark spots on his retina, they did not fall in the field of military science. Napoleon took the field in Belgium with only 125,000 men, leaving nearly 60,000 in purely secondary theatres. He might have increased the strength of the Grand Army to 162,000; but any error possibly discernible here is completely overshadowed by the masterly skill which the movements of the Army of the North were planned. What Napoleon had lost was the edge of his tremendous energy.

There were in the composition of the army elements of difficulty which he had not previously encountered; the generals were crippled no doubt to some extent, and to a climactically effectual extent in the moments of greatest stress, by the consciousness of their treachery to the Bourbons. The army had not been sufficiently drilled in its new organization. The mistakes that Napoleon made in his 1815 campaign were not of strategy or field tactics. Whatever change there was in him from the Napoleon of earlier years was in the energy of personal administration. Perhaps the dashing personal leadership of Murat in the cavalry would have been enough to swing the delicate balance; the Iron Duke called the battle "the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life." Be that as it may, and it can be only a matter of speculation with no possibility of proof one way or the other, the deficiency of the Army of the North was in staff work; and, in the delicate adjustment of the military machine, that may have been generated in a reflection of a letting up in Napoleon's characteristic completeness of personal oversight in the following up of orders.

In February Napoleon left Elba with only 1,000 men and four cannon. He landed in France on the first day of March, and the tricolor cockades began to supplant the white badges of the Bourbons with a rapidity that suggested the soldiers of France had kept them tucked away in their knapsacks in readiness for the "return." At Auxerre March 14 Napoleon met Ney, him who had boasted to King Louis that he would bring Napoleon back in an iron cage; and Ney went over with his army. For him, then, failure of the Napoleonic cause meant a felon's fate; and he is at Waterloo one of the most remarkable figures in history, seeking death on the field and passing unhurt through the thickest of the carnage. In December he was shot for treason.

The flight of the Eagle could not be stopped. On the twentieth day of March Napoleon reached, and the Bourbons left, the capital. Exit Louis XVIII., reenter Bonaparte. To what? On March 13 at Vienna the four great Powers, Great Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria, had solemnly declared Napoleon the enemy and disturber of the peace of the world, and decreed upon him, with themselves as agents, the vengeance of Europe. It was to be war, and war against a coalition; the sort of warfare to which Napoleon was peculiarly accustomed. The prime principle of his strategy in the field, to separate his enemies and smash them one by one, he attempted to apply in diplomacy. Prussia and Russia he knew for his implacable foes. Austria he thought, however, would not desire to see him humbled; the Austrian Emperor was his father-in-law. And in England the peace party might he worked upon. So he endeavored to persuade Austria and Great Britain to neutrality; with them out of the way he might dispose first of Prussia, then of Russia. The overtures were rejected. But Napoleon had not staked his all upon the diplomatic campaign; for he had been preparing, offensively and defensively, for the trial at arms. He had, for example, ordered a detailed report on the breadth of the Condé canals, of the Scheldt near Mons, of the Sambre near Charleroi; of the Bruges and Brussels canals, and of the Meuse near Maestricht. He had acquired the information necessary to a well planned campaign in Belgium. The offense was to be his defence.

He was surrounded by enemies, and had no ally whose force might be used to divert the foe's attention. He tried Murat against Austria, and Murat failed. "The King of Naples was," he said, "a Paladin in the field, but in the Cabinet destitute of either decision or judgment." Enraged at the failure, he gave Murat no place in the Army of the North; afterward he said, "at Waterloo Murat might have given us the victory. It required but little to break three or four English squares; and Murat was the best cavalry officer in the world."

At the end of May Napoleon had a corps each of his field force at Valenciennes, Avesnes, Rocroi, Metz, Strasburg, Soissons, Chambery, Hunningen and in Provence; the army of the Eastern Pyrenees at Toulouse, 10,000 men in La Vendee, the cavalry reserve at Guise and the Imperial Guard in Paris. His opponents were distributed as follows: the Anglo-Dutch army, cantoned in Belgium west of the Brussels-Charleroi road, commanded by the Duke of Wellington and 93,000 strong; the Prussian army, under Blücher, 117,000 strong, between the Brussels-Charleroi road and Liege; the Russian army, under Barclay de Tolly, 150,000. Wellington was to cross the frontier southwest of Mons; Blücher southwest of Namur. The Russian army was to be held in reserve as the Germans and English wedged into France. The Austrian army of 210,000, under Schwartzenberg, was to cross the upper Rhine and operate in conjunction with Wellington's and Blücher's forces, but Napoleon had no intention of waiting for that. The Austrian Army of Italy, 75,000, under General Frimont, was to debouch across the Alps, but, unlike the others, was to make Lyon, not Paris, its objective. Napoleon concentrated upon the British-Prussian threat from the north. The criticism of his policy in not engaging his entire resources in this concentration is insignificant in comparison with the masterly execution of the offensive defence, the drawing together of troops from the wings to the centre of a long front, achieving a brilliant surprise of his two opposing commanders and preventing the juncture of their forces until after he had defeated Blücher at Ligny. An attempt to cut off either of the allied generals from base would simply have forced that army to an immediate union with the other and defeated his own end. As it was, he rushed his army between the enemy forces and compelled them to concentrate actually on the battlefield. Better staff work might have prevented even that and won the day for him.

Captain Becke says:

> Napoleon apparently came to the conclusion that it was the Prussian army that would first concentrate a force that it would be worth his while to crush. The characteristics of the strategically circumspect but really overcautious Wellington, when compared with the reckless, dashing hussar spirit of old Blücher, together with the dispositions of the two armies, must have gone far to confirm him in this view. There is no doubt that, within certain limits, Napoleon had gauged correctly the personalities of the two allied Generals who confronted him in Belgium.
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> The Emperor's one fault was that his appreciation of Blücher's character did not go deep enough, for he did not appreciate at its true worth the Prussian Marshal's hatred of himself, loyalty to his ally, and adherence to the common and essential end to the campaign, Napoleon's overthrow. * * * Never having confronted Wellington personally, the Emperor hardly gave the great Englishman the full credit he deserved for his innate loyalty, his undeniable tactical skill, admirable obstinacy in battle, capacity for taking punishment and refusal to own that he was beaten.

These underestimations had a vital bearing on the outcome of the campaign, but for the opening moves the analysis proved correct; the choice of the Prussians for the first blow in the belief that "if the Prussian army was not the first selected for destruction, then it would move to support the Anglo-Dutch army with far greater celerity, mobility and zeal than the latter would exhibit in bringing help to Marshal Blücher." In May Napoleon's men had been strung out on a front of some 200 miles, Lille to Metz, while the Allies line was less than a hundred miles long, Ghent to Liege. By June 10 the Emperor had, without stirring the Allies to action, drawn in his scattered corps to a line of not more than twenty miles, which would decrease automatically as they closed in on Charleroi.

Capt. Becke's account of the crossing of the Sambre, the separation of the Allies, the battle of Ligny in four "phases"; "Grouchy's wanderings on June 17," and the five phases of Waterloo, the retreat of the French, the advance of the Allies on Paris and the end of the Hundred Days is spirited and a nice combination of the two interests, popular and military scientific. A tendency to repetition noticeable in the analysis of the strategy at the opening of the campaign disappears in the livelier narrative of events on the field of Waterloo. But many readers of the two volumes, after enjoying the work as a whole, will return for more reflective perusal not to the story of charge and countercharge but to the pages in which are traced the workings of the great General's mind upon a stiff problem. Many factors beyond calculation affected adversely the execution of the plan, but in its conception genius is seen with the wheels going round. The author gives special emphasis to the clear statement, in the order of June 16, to Ney, of the chief's intended use of his forces:

> I have adopted for this campaign the following general principle, to divide my army into two wings and a reserve. Your wing will be composed of four divisions of the First Corps, four divisions of the Second Corps, two divisions of light cavalry, and two divisions of the corps of the Duke of Valmy. This ought not to fall short of 45,000 to 50,000 men.
>
> Marshal Grouchy will have almost the same force and will command the right wing.
>
> The Guard will form the reserve, and I shall bring it into action on either wing just as the actual circumstances may dictate.

The conclusion is that such mistakes as that of letting Blücher slip away unobserved after Ligny "rest primarily on the Emperor's shoulders." They are explained by his ill health. "This campaign is inexplicable on the supposition that Napoleon's [physical] powers were not seriously impaired by the life he had led." His physician had told him a sedentary life would affect his circulation and vitality. He came back from Elba fat. Allow for Ney's "dire failure" of June 17 and Grouchy's "wretched manœuvres" on June 17 and 18 and still "it must be acknowledged that Napoleon himself was responsible, very largely, for the disaster which overtook the last and perhaps the most devoted of all the Grand Armies of that heroic age."

The Plaster Cast of Napoleon's Face.

Of the making of books there is no end. Some are made for the sake of their subject; some to instruct, amuse or inform; some to reveal the personality of the author himself. Mr. G. L. DE ST. M. WATSON'S *The Story of Napoleon's Death Mask* (John Lane Company) bears every mark of belonging to the last division. The book, handsomely printed on beautiful paper, has 196 pages and the author considerately sums up all his conclusions for the wearied reader in one and a half. His summary is as follows:

1. All death masks of Napoleon are derived from one and the same original mould, as is proved by the eyes and lids, the lips, and especially the ears.

2. That mould, a waste mould, was fashioned on the face of Napoleon by Dr. Francis Burton in the late afternoon of May 6, 1821.

3. One cast only—the "parent" or "original" cast—was "taken" on the morning of May 7 by Dr. Burton from his mould and the latter was necessarily, and not accidentally, broken in the process.

4. From this cast on May 7 Joseph William Rubidge took a "secondary" non-plaster impression.

5. From this cast, also, when in Bertrand's possession Antommarchi, in (?) the summer of 1822, took a secondary plaster piece mould.

6. From his secondary mould Rubidge, before leaving St. Helena (i. e., between May 7 and June 13, 1821) took the plaster cast now in Dr. Sankey's possession.

7. From his secondary mould Antommarchi in 1822 produced a secondary cast—now presumably at Bogota—and laid it aside until after Dr. Burton's death.

8. In 1830, and after, Antommarchi made various moulds and trial moulds from the preceding cast: from them proceeded the plaster and bronze masks of the 1833-34 "subscription issue."

9. To that issue, or to editions immediately following, belong the sundry death masks of Napoleon of known antiquity now found in museums and private collections.

We are reminded in wading through these pages of the timid undergraduate who asked Jowett, then dean of Balliol, which rooms had been Swinburne's and trembled as he heard in the master's high falsetto voice: 'I believe they were numbers 33 and 34, so far as that can be of the slightest importance to any one living, Mr. R.'

Had our supra-alphabetical author been considerate enough to print his conclusions at the beginning instead of at the end of the book the reader might be spared much pains. It is undoubtedly exhausting to have to cope with pages of such words as: diffiding, appulses, prosopomorphia; and phrases such as: 'thusly rhetorizes,' 'posterity are indebted,' 'it gravels us to explain.'

A good example of the author's exuberant style is the following paragraph:

> The wax cast is now in the possession of Capt. Winneberger of the Bavarian army. Bavaria—you have it! no doubt the monstrosity was moulded in wax one night by a slashed and salted young Fuchs, of plastic turn (who had seen the Arnott sketch) to the glory and the use of Gambrinus! For set that cylinderical side face upon end, let it rest on the cushion of its own double chin and it will recall, methinks, the prosopomorphic quart pot of a Munich beer cellar, minus the handle, snapped off in a students row.

In his despair over the state of Napoleonic iconography in England and America the author exclaims: "To see the illustrations of some Napoleonic books issued by publishers in London and New York in recent years one might suppose they had been selected by the charwoman and the office boy."

But it would be unfair not to give some of the author's more resplendent passages, splashed, as they are, with purple eloquence:

> Napoleon's last phase shall be the lofty theme of a poet and playwright yet unborn, who to a Dantesque soul vision will join the fatality of an Æschylus, and in that five years agony of the greatest of Moderns interweave a nemesis unmatched in mortal ken.

Lord Rosebery alone, of all those who have heretofore written of Napoleon, the author hails with enthusiasm:

> As you turn rather wearily from the hot sward play of polemic or the chill spade work of research of the enrolled St. Helenists, from the personalities of the Limitarians and the Anti-Limitarians or the more courteous debates of the Faculty—Carcinomists versus Climatists, Pineal Glandists a bye!—to the serene and sympathetic pages of Lord Rosebery, the only feeling there is room for is thankfulness that they exist.

The chief emotion inspired by Mr. Watson's book is thankfulness that it has an end.

ASTRONOMER SAW ECLIPSE.

But He Had to Use Balloon to Get Out of Paris.

M. Flammarion is a veteran of astronomy, for he was watching the heavens forty-five years ago, during the siege of Paris by the Prussians, his astronomical work, however, being subservient to his duties as a Captain in the Engineers.

In December, 1870, a solar eclipse occurred, the partial phases of which M. Flammarion observed while the enemy's shells were dropping in the besieged city. The total phase of the eclipse was visible in North Africa, and Bismarck, being aware that before the war arrangements had been made for Prof. Janssen to go to Africa to make scientific observations of totality on behalf of the Paris Observatory, sent a message into the city offering the scientist a safe conduct.

This was politely refused by Prof. Janssen, says the London *Standard*, but nevertheless he went to Africa to see the phenomenon, leaving Paris by way of the air in a balloon, thanks in large measure to the assistance of M. Flammarion in making the necessary arrangements.

TROLLOPE DIDN'T TOSS.

Publisher Tells of Accepting Novelist's Challenge.

Anthony Trollope, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the centenary of whose birth has just occurred, held a somewhat exaggerated opinion of the monetary value of his works.

George Smith, who founded both the *Cornhill Magazine* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, relates that Trollope, when offered £2,000 for a serial in the former publication, stood out for another £1,000, and suddenly suggested a toss for the amount in dispute. "I asked him if he wished to ruin me, and said if my banker heard of my tossing authors for their copyright he would certainly close my account.

"We ultimately came to an agreement on my terms, which were sufficiently liberal. But I felt uncomfortable. I felt mean. I had refused a challenge. To relieve my mind I said, 'Now that is settled, if you will come to my club, where we can have a little room to ourselves for five minutes, I will toss you for £1,000 with pleasure.' Mr. Trollope did not accept the offer."

POPE'S INFIRMITIES.

He Was Humpbacked, Deformed and of Diminutive Stature.

Those who imagine there is some necessary connection between literary genius and inches will have to explain away the case of Alexander Pope, says the London *Chronicle*. Pope was exactly 4 feet 6 inches high. He was humpbacked and deformed.

According to one of Lord Oxford's servants, he was "so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose he was invested in a bodice made of stiff canvas, being hardly able to stand erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid, for he was not able to dress or undress himself."

The Absentminded Professor in Japan.

Prof. Ikeno of Tokio University is well known for his absentmindedness. One evening on his way from school, says the *East and West News*, he struck his head against a telegraph post. "Pardon me, pardon me," he said, and quickened his gait. A certain colleague of the same university happened to see this from the other side of the street, and the following day said to the professor: "I was surprised last night by your carelessness, Mr. Ikeno. You dashed against a man in the street and I feel the pain still."

"Oh, was it you?" was the reply, "please excuse me. I did not know it was you; I felt wooden." To a roar of laughter went round the professor's room, all at the expense of the colleague.

IMPRESSIONS OF SWINBURNE.

"Unreasonable, Spoiled Child," Said Bayard Taylor.

In all important respects except one I found him to be very much what I anticipated, writes Laura Stedman in the *North American Review*, quoting Bayard Taylor's impression of Swinburne. The exception is instead of being a prematurely blasé young man of the world, he is rather a wilful, perverse, unreasonable, spoiled child. His nature is still that of the young Shelley, and my great fear is that it will never be otherwise.

He needs the influence of a nature stronger than his in everything but the imaginative faculty—such a nature as Byron's was to Shelley. * * * He has a weak moral sense, but his offences arise from a colossal unbalanced affectation. This, or something like it, is a disorganizing element in his nature which quite obscures the organizing—that is artistic—sense. What I admire in him—yet admire with a feeling of pain—is the mad, unrestrained preponderance of the imagination. It is a godlike quality, but he sometimes uses it like a devil. He greatly interests my intellect but does not touch me magnetically.

He could have no power over me, but on the contrary I felt that I should be able to influence him in a short time if I had a chance. I had a letter from him the other day which shows that he feels an intellectual relationship between us. Now, this is not a question of relative poetic power, but of a certain diversity of qualities and I don't mean to be egotistic in saying that I might perform somewhat of the same servvice for him as Byron for Shelley. I feel that (if it is not already too late) I could help him to some degree of poise, of system, of law, in short, Art.

In this sense he moves my deeper sympathy, for I see now the matter that might be moulded into a splendid poet relapsing into formless conditions. It is sad; it is tragic, and it is nevertheless. Without this sense of giving assistance in a weak alone with Swinburne would be intolerable to me or any other human being.

DECLINE IN LITIGATION.

One of the Effects of the War in England.

So rapid was the judicial methods of Sir George Jessel that he sometimes did not sit in court because there were no cases left for him to try.

> A judge sat on the judgment seat,
> A goodly judge was he.
> He said unto the Registrar,
> "Now call a cause for me."
> "There is no cause," said Registrar,
> And laughed aloud with glee.
> "A Jessel's wit has despatched them all;
> I can call no cause for thee."

The King's Bench judges are rapidly getting into the same position, says the London *Globe*. They started their sittings this week with only thirty-three jury actions in their lists and they have disposed of them all. If that nation is happy which has no litigation the war promises to secure for us at least this measure of bliss.

FIRST FARM PAPER IN 1681.

Made Up of Letters Telling Practical Experience.

So far as we can learn, says the *Rural New Yorker*, the first attempt at publishing an agricultural or farm paper was made in England in 1681. John Houghton started the "Collection of Letters for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade." As the name implies, Houghton had the right idea of a farm paper. He filled it with the practical experience of his readers.

In that age, 200 years ago, America was supposed to be a wilderness, yet it is probable that Boston and New York knew more of each other than one rural county of England knew of the next one. Those were the days when, in order to stimulate the clothing trade, the English Parliament passed laws ordering the burial of the dead in woollen. There is no record as to how Houghton obtained his subscribers.

MRS. STEVENSON'S HOME SOLD

San Francisco House of Novelist's Widow Has New Owner.

The quaint residence which the widow of Robert Louis Stevenson built for herself upon her return from the South Sea Islands on Lombard street has passed into strange hands, Katharine D. Osbourne having sold it to Benigno C. Grandi, wife of Salvatore Grandi.

The house with its very irregularly shaped lot adjoins the house which Lloyd Osbourne established at the northwest corner of Hyde and Lombard streets, and later sold to a religious order, says the San Francisco *Chronicle*. Together the houses had all the appearance of having been transplanted from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The Osbournes occupied them for years.

The selling price would appear from the revenue stamps in connection with a mortgage of $10,000 to be at least $40,000.

HOMER'S BIRTHPLACE.

Chios Shows the Poet's Cradle, School, Home and Tomb.

Chios, where a torpedo boat was destroyed, is the most probable birthplace of Homer, and shows the blind bard's cradle, school, house and tomb. Near the poet's alleged "school," says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, is a little wine shop bearing across the front the [illegible] saying of Hecuba to Hector: "Wine doth vastly increase the strength of a weary man."

Although almost exterminated by the terrible massacre of 1822, the people of Chios are the most prosperous in the Levant. Nearly all leading Greek bankers and merchants hail from this island and our own families of Ralli and Rodocanachi are of Chiot origin.

JOFFRE'S FAVORITE AUTHORS

French General's Warmest Admiration Was for the Classics.

Napoleon used to say that he detested mere word spinners, but he encouraged the tragic muse. Gen. Joffre's favorite authors, it appears, are Balzac, Victor Hugo, the elder Dumas, and Dickens.

The choice of Balzac is, perhaps, especially appropriate, since the author of the Human Comedy had intended to round off that work by a series of "Scenes from Military Life," and would probably have undertaken the task but for his untimely death. Gen. Joffre's literary predilections are characteristic. He, too, has "no use for" ideologues, and his warmest admiration goes out to the classic authors who knew humanity as it is.

Date of Shakespeare's and Cervantes's Death.

April 23, besides being the festival of England's national saint, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, is also the anniversary of the death of both Shakespeare and Cervantes. But though both Shakespeare and Cervantes died on April 23, 1616, there was actually an interval of ten days between the two deaths.

The explanation is that in 1616 England was still using the Julian Calendar, which in Roman Catholic countries had been superseded by the Gregorian Calendar in 1582. Cervantes died on Saturday; Shakespeare died on the Tuesday falling ten days later.