SOME NEW BOOKS.

Blake the Visionary.

I.

The making of books about the art, poetry, philosophy and personality of William Blake grows apace. Blake's prophetic books are still cloudy nightmares for all but the anointed, and not Swinburne, Gilchrist, Tatham, Richard Garnett, Ellis, Binyon, Yeats, Symons, Graham, Robertson, Alfred Story, Maclagan and Russell, Elizabeth Luther Cary and the others—for there are others—can wring from these orphic fragments more than occasional meaning or music. Blake seems now to be the prophet of a new dispensation. The newest aspirant for critical honors in his cause is CHARLES GARDNER, an Englishman whose "*Vision and Venture*" (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York), is devoted to Blake the visionary. The author is a mystic. But his mysticism is the reverse of the mediæval pattern; indeed, it might be included in Guyau's once famous but now partially forgotten "Irreligion of the Future." Mr. Gardner is modern, is practical, and in his discussion of Blake there is no attempt at dogmatism; rather a drawing out of the poet philosopher's ideas for our daily needs. Blake left no system. His latest expounder deals with the visionary's teaching in so far as it may prove a touchstone to our soul life and our social. The book is interesting, well written and suggestive. But Christ is the hero, not Blake.

It may surprise the student when the book refers to Goethe, Ibsen and Nietzsche as "working through tracts of thought which Blake left behind." There is not the slightest evidence, internal or external, that these three writers ever knew of Blake's existence. They drew their mystic ideas from the same sources as Blake. And we confess we cannot see precisely where Bernard Shaw comes in. He is not an original thinker. A fellow of infinite jest, he would "peep and botanize upon his mother's grave" if he thought he could raise a laugh—even a horse laugh in the pews of a tabernacle, as Goldsmith puts it. In his case it has been a matter of absorption and precipitation. He read, or misread, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Strindberg, Karl Marx—as filtered through the analytical brain of Sidney Webb—and Samuel Butler. He set his puppets dancing to their tunes, and, as the British theatre is notoriously lacking in ideas, Mr. Shaw has contrived to set up a philosophy shop on his own account. But he has deceived only persons with half baked intellects. Therefore it is rather a shock to find him in such exalted company. Mr. Gardner actually speaks seriously of Shaw's Superman as superseding the Superman of Nietzsche. That is—a ghost imitating a ghost; while Nietzsche's Superman is a counsel of self-perfection, he is also a metaphysical abstraction.

Mr. Shaw has no doubt studied Blake, but the only trophy he bore away from this study was his quotation: "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." The case of William Butler Yeats is different. He is a poet and a visionary. In his "Ideas of Good and Evil" his mystic kinship to Blake is unmistakable. The protean temperament of Mr. Shaw and his so-called vitalism—not to be confounded with the vitalistic doctrine in vogue during the last century—is a world asunder from the mysticism of Blake. Swinburne it was who first compared Blake with Walt Whitman in a prose passage of extraordinary eloquence. Yet we doubt if the Camden bard knew much of the English spiritual anarch. Mr. Gardner writes sanely of Nietzsche and places him in the unique niche he deserves. He considers Schopenhauer and Strindberg—the latter sat at the knees of Blake's master Swedenborg—and is not untroubled by "Sex and Holiness." The latter day mystic is full of sex. He finds that Swinburne and Whitman treated sex as it deserved, as a sacred matter. Both poets are neopagans. "Swinburne," says Mr. Gardner, "admired Whitman's freedom; but his criticism that Whitman was lacking in chivalrous feeling toward woman will appear just to most men, and to such the fire that burns in 'Calamus' must seem unhallowed." Blake's conception of sex is far finer. He preached: "Whatsoever lives is holy."

What is a saint? asks our author. Not a Shavian Superman, a saint "is one who fulfils all past values by transvaluing them; who creates new values; who is at one with God and himself." Christ is such a saint. He is, as we all are, a son of God. This sounds like purest Nietzsche. It is; though Mr. Gardner has described a circle that attains Christ after traversing much delectable and debatable territory. He is far from being an evangelical. Current morals, current religions, do not satisfy him. He believes that the age of miracles is to come, and while we cannot conceive him approving of Voltaire's wish that the bowels of the last king would be used to strangle the last priest—or is it the other way about?—nevertheless, he could quote with approval the dictum of one profounder than Voltaire, one who wrote: "You are mad if you think that there is anything in the universe, above or below, which can add or take from the laws of nature." Diderot wrote this.

II.

The happiest man that ever lived must have been William Blake. Not the metallic happiness of a fool's paradise, but a sharply defined ecstasy that was his companion from his earliest years to his very deathbed, that bed from which he passed away "singing of the things he saw in heaven" to a tune of his own improvised strange music. He seems to be the solitary man in art history who really fulfilled Walter Pater's test of success in life: "To burn always with this hard gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy." Blake easily maintained it. His face shone with it. Withal, he was sane in matters of mundane conduct, sensitive, quick to resent personal affront, and by no means one of those awful prophets going about proclaiming their self-imposed mission. But he held with Hosea that "the spiritual man was mad." An amiable being, quick to fly in and out of a passion, a gentleman of exquisite manners, he impressed those who met him intimately as a genius unqualified. Charles Lamb has told us of him. We have seen an engraving of his head after Linnell's miniature, and while his Irish paternity has never been thoroughly established—Yeats calls him an Irishman—there can be little doubt of his Celtic origin. His is the head of a poet, a patriot, a priest. The brow is wide and lofty, the hair flamelike in its upcurling. The eyes are true windows of a soul vividly aware of its preciousness; the mystic eye and also the eye of the prophet about to thunder his generation. The full lips and massive chin make up the ensemble of a singularly noble, inspired and well balanced head. Its keynote is symmetry. A god kindled face. Vainly one looks for any indication of the madman; Blake was called mad when he lived, and to-day he is considered mad by the world. Yet he was never mad as was John Martin, the mezzotinter, or Wiertz, the Belgian painter. The poet Cowper said to Blake: "Oh, that I were insane always. * * * Can you make me truly insane? * * * You retain health and yet are as mad as any of us—over us all—mad as a refuge from unbelief, from Bacon, Newton and Locke." The arid atheism or mechanical theism, which is about as bad, of his century was doubtless a contributory cause to the exacerbation of Blake's nerves. He believed himself a Christian, despite his heterodox sayings, and this belief is sincere. A true "Citizen of Eternity," as Yeats named him. And with all his lack of academic training, what a giant he was among the Fuselis, Stothards, Bartolozzis, Schiavonettis and the other successful mediocrities.

In the domain of the unconventional Blake is the Jupiter Tonans of English intellectual rebels. Shelley, Byron, Swinburne are timid amateurs compared with this man, who, with terrific speed traversed an apocalypse of art. He was never the idle dreamer of an empty day nor yet a mooning mystic. His energy is electric. It sounds a trumpet note in his verse and prose. It reveals itself in the fiery swirling of his line, a line always swift and personal. He has been called a heretic in the church of Swedenborg, but like a later rebel—Nietzsche, who renounced Schopenhauer—Blake soon renounced Swedenborg. Michelangelo remained his deity, and in his designs the influence of the mighty Italian is paramount. Blake might be described as an English primitive. He stems from the Florentines, but À la gauche. The bar sinister on his artistic coat of arms is the absence of fundamental training. He possesses a Gothic imagination, but his dreams lack architectonic. Goethe too had dreams, and we are the richer by Faust. And no doubt there are in Blake's works phrases that Nietzsche has seemed to repeat. It is the critical fashion just now to trace, whether for right or wrong, every idea of Nietzsche's to some one else! The truth is that the language of spiritual rebellion through the ages is monstrously the same. The mere gesture of revolt, as typified in the threatening arm of a Cain, a Prometheus, a Jesus, a Julian the Apostate, is no more unusual than the banal phraseology of the heretic. How many of them have written "inspired" bibles, from Mahomet to Zarathustra! Blake, his tumultuous imagination afire—remember that the artist doubled the poet in his amazing and versatile soul—poured forth his "sacred" books, his prophecies, his denouncements of mankind. His was a righteous indignation, though the method of his speech is obscure; in comparison the Mormon books of revelation are miracles of clarity. Let us leave these fuliginous vaticinations to the mystics. He has affected many poets and thinkers and artists. There are things in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" that Mr. Shaw might have said had not Blake forestalled him. Such is the cruelty of genius.

III.

Arthur Symons makes an apt comparison of Blake and Nietzsche: "There is nothing in good and evil, the virtues and vices; vices in the natural world are the highest sublimities in the spiritual world." This sentiment could have appeared over Nietzsche's signature in "Beyond Good and Evil." And the following, in his Marginalia, to Reynolds—Sir Joshua always professed a high regard for the genius of Blake: "The Enquiry in England is not whether a man has Talents and Genius, but whether he is passive and polite and a Virtuous Ass." The vocabulary of rebellion is always alike. Still more bitter is his speech about holiness: "The fool shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, let him be ever so pious." Blake glorified passion, which for him was the highest form of human energy. Mr. Gardner quotes his belief that "those who restrain desire do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained." His magic scrolls, emotional spirals and hallucinating arabesques are testimony to his lofty and subtle imagination. Unlike the Bergsonians, the intellect he worshipped was mere brute instinct—a mob god, and one whose temperament is ever hateful. Of pride we cannot have too much. It is rather late in the day to reiterate that as a lyric poet he is a peer in the "Holy Church of English Literature." The "Songs of Innocence" and the "Songs of Experience" have given him a place in the anthologies and thus have made him known to readers who had heard of him only as a pictorial genius. "Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright" is recited by sweet school misses, and because of its symbolic spirit is pondered by the moralists. And has Keats ever fashioned a lovelier image than this: "Let thy west wind sleep on the lake; spread silence with thy glimmering eye and wash the dusk with silver." As a singer Blake far outshines the painter and philosopher Blake.

IV.

Blake's gospel of art may be given in his own words: "The great and golden rule of art, as of life, is this: that the more distinct and wiry the boundary line, the more perfect the work of art; and the less keen and sharp, the greater is the evidence of weak imitation, plagiarism and bungling." Here the mystic talks. Blake would have understood Odilon Redon and the ideals of the cubists. He abominated the nacreous flesh tones of Titian, Correggio and Rubens. Reflected lights, he asserts, are sinful. The silhouette betrays the soul of the master. What would have happened to Blake if he had gone to Italy and studied the works of its great painters and sculptors? He was ignorant of an entire hemisphere of art. Turner has made us see his dreams of a gorgeous world. Blake, as through a scarcely open door, gives us breathless glimpses of a supernal land, whether heaven or hell, or both, we dare not aver. Italy might have calmed him, tamed him, banished his arrogance—as it did Goethe's. Suppose that Walt Whitman had written complete poems instead of magical and haunting headlines! And if Browning had made clear for us the serpenting thoughts of Sordello—what then? "What porridge had John Keats?" Why, then we would miss the sharp savor of the real Blake, the real Whitman, the real Browning. And what a number of fascinating critical volumes would have remained unwritten. "Oh, never star was lost here but it arose afar."

[illegible]

security which Blake suffered, and since his death the uncritical misunderstandings of his design and poetry and prophecies, it is disquieting to think of him as ever becoming the victim of a cult. He, of all men. Ibsen is, in an unwelcome sense, popular. A certain form of genius serves as a springboard for critical high diving. Blake is an admirable example, and Wagner and Browning are in the same class. Called cryptic by their own generation, they are only too well understood by the next. Wagner swam into the consciousness of the elect and was idolized. Baudelaire understood him, as did Liszt. To-day Wagner is the musical property of the man in the street who whistles him. Ibsen is painfully yielding up his secrets to relentless "expounding" of torturers, while Maeterlinck is become a byword in library clubs, where they discuss his "Bee" in company with the latest Shaw epigram, or one of Artzibasheff's appalling novels about the Russian heart of darkness. "Even cavlare, it seems, may become a little flyblown," exclaimed Mr. Dowden.

William Butler Yeats in his "Ideas of Good and Evil" called Blake a realist of the imagination and was the first to point out the analogy between his ideas and Nietzsche's. The English poet was "a symbolist who had to invent his symbols." What original artist does not? Wagner did. And Ibsen. And Nietzsche. Blake was much troubled over the imagination. It was the "spirit" for him, and in this "vegetable universe" of ours the Holy Ghost. All art that sets forth with any fulness the outward vesture of things is prompted by the "rotten rags of memory." That is why he loathed Rubens, why he deplores forms in his eagerness to portray the essential. Needless to add that for him the essential is the human soul. He believed in goading the imagination to vision, though not with opium; and we are led through a world, drugged with dreams, one in which his creatures bear little correspondence to earthly types. His illustrations to the Book of Job, to Dante, to Young's "Night Thoughts," bear witness to the intensity of his vision; though the faculty of attention halts betimes before these vast decorative whirls of flame carrying myriad souls through the illimitable firmament.

The divine awkwardness of his Adam and Eve in the "Ancient of Days" recalls something that might be either a marionette or an angel of light. To Blake both were angels. Of that there can be no doubt. But others of less fervent imagination may ask, as did Hotspur of Glendower—who had boasted that he could "call spirits from the vasty deep"—"Why, so can I, or so can any man. But will they come when you call for them?" quoth the gallant Percy. The majority of mankind is as unimaginative as Hotspur. Blake summoned his spirits; to him they appeared; to quote his own magnificent line: "The stars threw down their spears and watered heaven with their tears." We, alas! see neither stars nor spears, only eccentric draughtsmanship and bizarre designs. Such is the genius of this Englishman that on the thither side of his shadowy conceptions there intermittently shine pictures of a No Man's Land testifying to a burning fantasy hampered by imperfect tools. Yet how he evokes the supernaturals! "How do you know," he exclaims, "but every bird that cuts the airy way is an immense world of delight closed by your senses five?"

For the seers Blake will always be a pillar of enchanted smoke by day, a burning bush at night; for the normal man and woman, who cling to old fashioned notions of decency and honor, he will be an abomination, a debaser of the moral mintage, a monster, who, in the words of Jude, the Servant of Jesus Christ, "is one of those filthy dreamers that defile the flesh and speak evil of dignities."

J. H.

George Washington and the Ladies.

It would seem that everything had been written that there is to write concerning George Washington and his home at Mount Vernon; but PAUL WILSTACH has contrived to put history, biography, description and comment pleasantly together, with a flavor of "easy reading," in a moderate sized volume entitled *Mount Vernon: Washington's Home and the Nation's Shrine* (Doubleday, Page and Company).

The Mount Vernon that young George came to in 1747 was not the extensive mansion he left fifty years later and which the pilgrim sees to-day. There was no spreading village of outbuildings. The big brick barn and only a few frail sheds and cabins for the slaves stood detached from the house. There were no colonnades flung from the ends, no lofty portico on the river front, and the house itself was only a portion of the mansion into which it later expanded. But George saw cellars dug and walled, huge oaks felled and hewed and pinned in place, walls reared and roofed, for the house was a part of all his life. At the age of 20, after his brother's death, he came into ownership of the estate.

Even before this the young man had given proof that he was not going to take earnestly the warnings of his friend Lord Fairfax against women. In 1748, when he was 16 years old, he wrote to a friend:

"My place of residence is at present at his Lordship's, where I might, was my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly, as there's a very agreeable young lady lives in the same house [Col. George Fairfax's wife's sister]. But as that's only adding fuel to fire, it makes me the more uneasy, for by often and unavoidably being in company with her revives my former passion for your Lowland beauty, whereas was I to live more retired from young women I might in some measure eliviate my sorrows by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in the grave of oblivion or eternall forgetfulness, for as I am very well assured, that's the only antidote or remedy, that I shall ever be relieved by or the only recess that can administer any cure or help to me, as I am well convinced, was I ever to attempt anything, I should only get a denial which would be only adding grief to uneasiness."

Young George, though he remained several years a bachelor, appears to have been a persevering suitor. Among the young ladies he is said to have invited to become mistress of Mount Vernon were Sally Cary, who became the wife of his friend George William Fairfax; Mary Cary, who afterward married Edward Ambler; Lucy Grymes, who later became Mrs. Henry Lee, mother of "Lighthorse Harry"; and Mary Philipse, a New York Tory, who fled to England on the outbreak of the Revolution.

He met the lady who was to become the famous mistress of Mount Vernon when, while he had served on the western frontier under Braddock and had been made commander of all Virginia troops, he went to Williamsburg to report on affairs in the West. On his way to the capital, in crossing the ferry over the Pomunkey River, he chanced to fall in with one Mr. Chamberlayne, who carried the traveller off to his home in the neighborhood. And thus he chanced to meet Mrs. Martha Dandridge Custis, a lady "fair to behold, of fascinating manners and splendidly endowed with worldly benefits."

Mrs. Washington refurnished Mount Vernon throughout. She brought some things from her former homes and retained a few things left by Lawrence Washington, but mostly refurnished the house with articles ordered by mail from London. On one of the early lists were orders for these art objects, under the heading "Directions for the Busts":

"One of Alexander the Great; another of Julius Cæsar; another of Charles XII. of Sweden, and a fourth of the King of Prussia.

"N. B.—These are not to exceed fifteen inches in height nor ten in width.

"Other busts, of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, somewhat smaller.

"Wild Beasts, not to exceed twelve inches in height nor eighteen in length."

However, when the goods ordered arrived Washington was disappointed to find art substitutes, among them the following items:

"A group of Æneas carrying his Father out of Troy, with four statutes, viz., his Father Anchises, his wife Creusa and his son Ascanius, neatly finished and bronzed with copper.

"Two ornamental vases with Faces and Festoons of Grapes and vine Leaves finished neat & bronzed with copper."

Before the Revolution Mount Vernon bore its share of the hospitality which distinguished Virginia colonial life. Distances were great, travellers came with their own coach and horses and servants. Every one was welcome; brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, and cousins to remote degrees; friends passing north and south. And not the least welcome were strangers, with and often without letters.

The family were so rarely alone that when they were it was a matter of surprised comment and record. Day after day, year after year, the diary details the seemingly never ending procession of guests. Indeed, there probably never has been another American who has had so little privacy with his family as had Washington. For, after his twenty-five years of public service, when we find him once more gratefully "retiring" to Mount Vernon, and when he had been married forty years he wrote:

"Mrs. Washington & myself will do what I believe had not been done within the last twenty years by us—that is, set down to dinner by ourselves."

The author gives pictures of the Washington family, the home and the neighborhood during and after the Revolution, and includes the variegated later history of Mount Vernon, all presented in an unpretentious, readable style.

An Unconventional Librarian.

The substance of the articles on books and the way in which they may be made serviceable to the public, written in the last twenty years by JOHN COTTON DANA of the Newark Free Public Library and collected under the title *Libraries* (The H. W. Wilson Company, New York), will be found in the preface, for Mr. Dana has been for a quarter of a century in the forefront of the fight to make the libraries useful to the readers, and these articles are some of the weapons he has used. It is inevitable that he should pass over and even occasionally slur at one important function of libraries, namely that of being storehouses of all that has been printed which some one some time needs to consult, just as he seems to scorn the good books which he himself appreciates and others should read but never do. His fight has been to find out what people will actually read, to make the public libraries bring that within their reach and to devise practical methods to lead the common people without literary tastes to turn to the libraries for help.

He draws an interesting contrast between library conditions when he first set to work and those that prevail now. Then the library was a repository in which the books were guarded carefully and as many restrictions as possible were put in the way of their being handled by the public. Now, in the great majority of libraries, the shelves, not only of the books of reference but of all the books that are likely to attract, are thrown open to all who care to come, the risk that books may be stolen or mutilated is accepted, the taking of books for home reading is made as easy as possible for the borrower and all kinds of ingenious devices are employed to encourage the practice. The function of the public library is not to store up what is valuable and scholarly but to discover what the public wants and needs immediately and to see that it gets it.

Absolute frankness and disregard for conventions, particularly those that are literary, characterize Mr. Dana's utterances. His tendency is to put too much emphasis on the points he wishes to make, because he must drive them into the minds of conservative audiences which can make for themselves the reservations that he neglects. He undertakes to find out what it is that people read of the immense mass of printed matter that is issued yearly; his statement that for millions it is limited to newspapers, weekly periodicals and magazines and for a small proportion of them to an occasional book besides can hardly be controverted. He finds no fault with this but looks on it as a fact that must be dealt with. So in his talks about books he pays no regard to shelves of whatever dimensions of best books, but considers the fiction which the libraries should buy, not the best fiction by any means nor absolute trash, but the fiction the public wants to read and asks for, which he believes the library should supply. A dozen years ago he secured the cooperation of a good many libraries throughout the country in obtaining the names of the authors of fiction called for during three days. The list is curious and is full of surprises; it is headed by Marion Crawford, Rosa Nouchette Carey and Alexandre Dumas.

There is a lot of common sense about education in what Mr. Dana has to say about the plan of employing librarians' assistants to lecture to school children as to what they should read. He says that the persons who should guide the children are the parents, but he admits that that is out of the question, for he holds that the vast majority of parents do no reading themselves and that among those who do the proportion who pay any attention at all to the education of their children to go small as to be almost negligible. With his strictures on the way parents have dropped their ideas of duty and responsibility, trusting that the public schools will make up for home influences, and his criticisms of the many additions to the common school curriculum many thoughtful people will agree. His practical suggestion is that the librarians help the teachers in finding out what the children are likely to read, and the teachers, after they are freed from the perplexing duties heaped on them, should guide the children's taste in reading.

Through all these essays and addresses from the first to the last Mr. Dana stoutly upholds the one true standard for the choice of books a man should read and also should buy, expounding it in detail and in the plainest and most practical terms in the article on "Librariology," first published in the *Newarker*. That standard is that a man should choose the boks, whatever they are, which really appeal to him individually and which help him, regardless of the reputation of the author or the dictation of college presidents or men of science. Whether President Eliot or Sir John Lubbock, or the others who have kindly made out lists of books that should be read, themselves read all the classics they recommended or not may be doubted and is immaterial; it is not the books he ought to read but the books he really likes that a man should keep about him. When he wants more like them the librarians will help him to find them, if he does not know how to do it himself. With Mr. Dana's strong objections to "complete sets" and expensive editions we fully sympathize.

His article on book reviewing reveals the gratifying fact that librarians read the reviews and would like to profit by them; his cruel suggestion that they are the only persons that do read them is influenced by his desire that the needs of the librarian should be borne chiefly in mind by the reviewer, and that the quality of the paper and type, the appearance of the volume and its probable durability should be commented on, as well as the merits of the literary contents. We are glad, too, to have so experienced a librarian come out with expressions of alarm about the incubus of the card catalogue and other scientific forms of indexing. He is impressed by the burden not only of cost but of inefficiency which the system, carried to its present extreme, has put upon the libraries. He even thinks that the cards themselves, with all their present elaborateness, do not yield the information they should, and that the increase in their number means hopeless congestion. Another matter about which Mr. Dana expresses annoyance is the erection of library buildings, particularly the Carnegie libraries, for architectural effect, with little or no regard for the real requirements of the library. He is severe on the Boston Public Library and other monumental structures erected at the public expense, where the prime object was impressive external and internal architecture, and the business needs of the library were passed over. His strictures and his plea that the buildings be adapted to their purpose and to securing the greatest possible utility for the public applies to school houses as well as to libraries.

It must be clear that besides hard, practical sense, very interesting comments, that will make people think, about many subjects of general and immediate concern are to be found in these bright articles of the Newark librarian. Not the least interesting of these is his suggestion that what he calls the "dead" books be thrown out of the libraries and consigned to the rubbish heaps, an idea that crops up repeatedly in different forms, such as the implied condemnation of the orderly arrangement of books that give too required immediately in stacks. Mr. Dana is fighting to give the public the greatest possible use of the library, and in the smaller libraries it may be well to get rid of dead books. He takes it for granted that his librarian audiences know of another type of library, and probably admits its merits himself. No book is dead and probably no book has ever been printed that may not be needed some time by somebody for the good of mankind. Nothing can seem more useless than a last year's directory or a discarded school book, but when the directory is a hundred years old it yields valuable information to the historian, the lawyer and the student of social conditions, while the school book may be a "New England Primer." Mr. Dana himself has shown his appreciation of "The Old Farmer's Almanack." There must be in every civilized land some place where all the printed material of the past that can be obtained may be stored and kept accessible to students, places like the British Museum, which now does not know what to do with its store of newspapers, or the Bibliothèque Nationale or, in its more restricted range, the Library of Congress. There is a minority of the public, however small, that is educated and knows the books it needs, and turns to the library to supply its special requirement, a minority that derives and transmits to others more good from books than the vast majority for whom Mr. Dana has fought so steadfastly and for whose uses he would transform the public libraries. The minority is also a part of the public, and we fancy that if Mr. Dana seems to overlook it, it is because he believes its rights are already secured in the libraries. His articles make a notable, instructive and entertaining book. We add, as he suggests, that the paper, type and binding are good and durable and the general appearance of the volume is attractive.

Are New Yorkers American?

The most New Yorkish of ladies who, after an excessively brief, gay winter at home, habitually betook herself to the Riviera, to London, to Paris and to the usual spring, summer and autumn haunts of European elegance, was once asked by an intelligent and curious foreigner some question concerning the habits and customs of her compatriots. She paused, meditated prettily, says Harrison Rhodes in *Harper's Magazine*, and then made what, for the purposes of the present discussion of her native town, is a profoundly significant reply.

"I'm not sure," she said, "that I'm the best person to ask. You see I'm a New Yorker and I know so few Americans."

The Buddha's Poor Guess.

At the entrance of the lamasery are eight large monuments, which contain the ashes of eight Buddhas. Long years ago, at the beginning of the Ming dynasty, after hard fighting the Tibetans were driven back from Chinese territory, which they had overrun for hundreds of miles. When the victorious Chinese general reached Kumbum, says the *Christian Herald*, he sent for these eight Buddhas and said to them: "You can read the future; can you tell me when you are going to die?" One of them, shrewd enough to understand the general's mind, said: "To-morrow." "No," said the general, "it will be to-day." And it was.

POEMS WORTH READING.

The Pathway Through the Pines.

A little murmuring wind of dawn swept
by;
The moon, a fading feather of pale gold,
Went with it down the abysses of the sky;
And then there came
The sun, with its great flush of poppy
flame,
Above the impregnable ramparts of the
hills;
Night was no more
Than a spent wave upon a roof bound
shore.
It was as though a voice spake saying,
"Behold,
Here is a presence that your dream fulfils!"

"True, but not wholly true!" my spirit
cried:
"I hail the chrism of light,
Yet would not have my sight
Dazzled, though I would have it glorified!"
So I sought out the pathway through the
pines,
From too rapt radiance shielded by the
shade
Of arching stele and branching colonnade,
Where there was neither darkness nor
the day,
But wherein hope and healing hid
away
Within the dim confines.

We must survey the godhead through a
veil
Lest the supernal splendor blind our
eyes;
For what shall it avail
If we the blaze of glory apprehend?
Let us by gradual, not by sudden steps
ascend
The heights that we would scale!

So I sought out the pathway through the
pines—
A cloistered place, one dedicate to
prayer;
Silence was like a pale aurora there,
And there were fair innumerable shrines
For worship, since each heaven ascending
pole
Was like an invitation to the soul;
And there, it seemed to me,
I lost futility,
And found the eternal essence—fate one
The fusing of earth and moon and star
and sun!

CLIFTON SCOLLARD.

Sonnet: To Ralph Bisbolock.

Beneath the glowing mystery of the moon
Trembles fantastical a fairy scene,
Viewed dimly through a haze new blue,
now green,
As though a new strange nature were
a-swoon.
The shimmering magic seizes on us soon,
And as we gaze our minds drift through
the screen
To dim recesses, unsuspect, serene,
And fancy's thread unwinds as a cocoon.
Your genius, Bisbolock, made a magic
land
And then your spirit entered it awhile.
All ardent to explore. Now it ascends,
That you may grasp your brush, enchanted
wand,
To limn fresh wonders mankind to beguile,
And greet again the circle of your
friends.

MAURICE MORRIS.

A Rainy Night.

As though to recompense because
There is no rainbow in the night,
See how the wet and gleaming pave
Reflects the pools of golden light.

M. W.

Toy Soldiers.

"Good-by, my boy!" I said to him, for
he went down South to-day.
When he was a kid with soldier toys I
used to watch him play.
He wore a cap of martial cut and carried
a sword and drum.
"Just watch me, dad," he would cry to
me. "Attention! The foe has come!"
The little tin soldiers he mustered there
would tumble one by one;
And then whole gaps in the ranks he'd
make and the battle had begun;
He'd wink at me and nod his head and
sound the charge again;
And he'd pay the price of his blundering
with a regiment of men.

He'd bring his cavalry into line and place
his cannon there
And form his infantry battle front or into
a hollow square;
He'd laugh and chatter and move his men
and slaughter the foe in glee,
And when the victory had been won he'd
come and shake hands with me.

And now he's gone to the border. His
daddy is all a-one.
And it seems to me my love for him is
the only wealth I own;
I saw him off with his troopers, and they
are such splendid boys—
It can't be fair to let them do to them
what children do to toys!

EDWARD S. VAN ZILE.

The Choosers.

From the Spectator

Oh ye! Fragile and tremulous
Haunters of the deep glades!
Shall I see ye again,
Parting the leaves of beech and aspen
Ere ye slip through?

Men have said unto me:
"These are but flying lights and shadows,
Light on the beech boles, clouds shadowing the corn fields,
The wind in the flame of birches in autumn,
Wind shadowing the clear pools,
But ye cried laughing down the wind:
Men are but shadows, but a vain breath.

So here, cometh unto me
That cry from the rejoicing air:
Men are but shadows! And prone about
me
I see them hushed and sleeping in the hut
Made solemn and holy by the night,
In the dead light of the moon:
Shadows, swathed in their blankets,
Asleep in hewn sepulchral caves
Egypt's and Asia's kings.
While between them are the footsteps
Of a trembling presence, who say: Lo, one
To be a sword upon my thigh!
And the sleepers stir restlessly, murmuring,
As between them pass
The bright mailed choosers of the dead.

Shall I see ye again, oh, flying rout
Of the forest haunters, while I couch silent
In a wet brake of blossom,
Dark ivy wreathing your whiteness,
Ere I am torn from the scabbard?
(Lo, one
To be a sword upon my thigh!)

Knowing no longer that earth
Lieth in the dews, shining and sacred.

FREDERIC MANNING.

"Fishin' for Pick'rel."

From the Youth's Companion.

Breezes sleep, and the sun glares hot;
Locusts rasp in the pasture lot;
But by the pond, where the lilies float,
From the offshore end of the homemade
boat,
Dangling legs o'er the queer blunt bow—
Still for once in his life, I vow!—
Wielding the bamboo pole with care,
Fishin' for pick'rel, the king o''s there.

Little he recks how great his wealth:
Boyhood and time and sunburned health,
Sitting there on the old scow's seat,
Ripples kissing his dust brown feet;
The spattering splash of his luckless frog,
Lately caught on a nearby log,
The only sound in the noonday calm;
Fishin' for pick'rel—deathless charm!

Would that men from the busy street,
Worn of mind and with weary feet,
Longing for solace, only knew
Nature's tonic! I'm glad I do:
Open air 'neath a cloudless sky,
Pond, with weeds, where the "big ones"
lie,
Bamboo pole with a ten foot string
Fishin' for pick'rel—like the king!

HAROLD WILLARD GLEASON.

Shapes That Pass in the Light.

Many visions pass me by,
Gowned in filmy net,
Soft chiffons with laces vie;
Drape each fair coquette.

Standing in the friendly shade
There awaits a treat:
Maids transparently arrayed,
Floating down the street.

Still they come—the gods are good—
For the sporty sun
Flashed a wink at where I stood:
X-rayed every one.

DOROTHY HARPER O'NEILL.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

A says that Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, receives a salary of $10,000 yearly. B says he receives more. M. L.

Both are wrong. Mr. Gompers receives $7,500.

In what country and under whose dominion was the present King of Greece born? MAXCY ROBBINS.

King Constantine was born at Athens in 1868 under the sovereignty of his father, King George I., who was the second son of the King of Denmark.

Was the headline in THE SUN, "Fleet of German Airships on Their Way to London," incorrect? Should it have read, "Fleet of German Airships on Its Way to London"? SIDNEY BERNHEIMER.

No. Either is correct. "The fleet was on its way," or "The fleet were on their way," according to whether you are thinking of the fleet as a unit or a collection of separate ships.

Several correspondents furnish versions of the lines about the "Animal Fair," asked for by B. S. M. The consensus is that they ran as follows:

I went to the animal fair,
The birds and the beasts were there,
The old raccoon, by the light of the moon,
Sat combing his auburn hair,
The monkey he got drunk
And sat on the elephant's trunk,
The elephant sneezed and fell on his knees,
And what became of the monkey-monk-monk?

"Monkey-monk-monk" was chanted indefinitely until some one of the crowd started again from the beginning. Sometimes one singer, or rather, shouter, for there was little tune, continued to chant, "Monkey-monk-monk," while his comrades proceeded through the verses.

The "old raccoon" was occasionally a "little baboon," and one friend insists that instead of becoming intoxicated

The monkey fell out of his bunk
Right onto the elephant's trunk.

How did the name "Black Maria" come to be given to jail wagons? E. P. S.

Some years ago a writer in the English *Notes and Queries* quoted from a periodical, presumably English, named *The Million*, as follows:

"During the old Colonial days Maria Lee, a negress, kept a sailors' boarding house in Boston. She was a woman of gigantic size and prodigious strength, and was of great assistance to the authorities in keeping the peace, as the entire lawless element of that locality stood in awe of her. Whenever an unusually troublesome person was to be taken to the station house the services of Black Maria, as she was called, were likely to be required. It is said that she once took at one time and without assistance three riotous sailors to the lockup. So frequently was her help required that the expression 'Send for Black Maria' came to mean 'Take the disorderly person to jail.' It is easy to see how the name became fixed to the prison van."

A bets B that the island on which stands the Statue of Liberty was never called Bartholdi Island. B says that it was at one time so called. C. G. H.

We find no record that it was ever so called.

Please give me the addresses of the Sturgis & Walton Company and E. P. Dutton & Co. R. A. D., Indiana.

Sturgis & Walton Company, 31 East Twenty-seventh street, New York; E. P. Dutton & Co., 681 Fifth avenue, New York.

May I appeal to your readers for information as to when Lockwood, a bookseller, occupied the premises at 411 Broadway? I think it was some time in the early '60s. I am told that he removed from there about forty years ago. I want to go much further back than that. C. A. W.

Is the city of Baltimore a county? B. B. M.

Facts assembled in 1905 by the Baltimore *News* indicate that it is not. It was then shown that the State Constitution of 1864 referred to "the legislative district of Baltimore city" and that the county administration survived only in the offices of sheriff, coroner and elisor with largely changed duties. The condition was thought to be unique in this country.

What was the name of a play in which a character called *Barney the Baron* appeared and when and where was it produced? J. W. E.

"Fortune's Whims," produced at the National Theatre, New York, in September, 1850, with Barney Williams in the character of *Barney O'Toole*.

What is the Battle Monument at West Point? K. & S.

On the shaft appears the following inscription: "In memory of the officers and men of the Regular Army of the United States who fell in battle during the War of the Rebellion, this monument is erected by their surviving comrades."

On the pedestal appear the names of all the officers of the regular army who were killed in action in the civil war or who died as a result of wounds received in action. The names of all enlisted men who were killed in action or who died as a result of wounds appear on bronze girdles surrounding granite spheres which form a part of the base. The shaft is surmounted by a figure of Victory designed by Frederick Macmonnies.

How much, in money, is a "bit"? C. R.

Twelve and a half cents. A quarter dollar is two bits; half a dollar is four bits. The original coin called a bit was the Spanish real.

Where can I find rules for the composition of blank verse? C. C.

In the section on prosody in any school rhetoric, in Corson's "Primer of English Verse," in Abbott's "Shakespearian Grammar."

Who wrote "The Bivouac of the Dead," and when, and in commemoration of what? R. A. M.

The poem was written in August, 1847, by Theodore O'Hara, for the dedication of a monument to Kentucky soldiers who fell at Buena Vista in the Mexican war.

Please define "Sixteen to one" as applied to coinage. E. P. S.

The Free Silver party advocated the free and unlimited coinage of both silver and gold and the fixing by law of their relative values. Sixteen dollars silver was to be worth one dollar gold by their proposal.

HISTORIC MODEST MESSAGES.

Great Deeds Told in Despatches of Few Words.

Great soldiers are usually men of deeds more than men of words. Thus, after the capitulation of Prague, Suvaroff communicated the joyful news to his Empress in two words—"Hurrah! Prague!" to which Catherine, not to be outdone in brevity, answered, "Bravo, Field Marshal!"

That grim seadog Robert Blake, after gaining one of his famous victories over the French, sent the news in this concise and businesslike form:

"Met with the French fleet; beat, killed, sunk and burned, as per margin."

The Vicomte de Turenne, Marshal of France, was a man of equally few words, as he proved when, after his brilliant defeat of Condé at the Dunes in 1658, he announced his triumph in ten words:

"The enemy came; was beaten; I am tired; good night."

But the world's greatest generals, says the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, have always been models of brevity as of modesty since—and probably long before—the days of Cæsar, whose "I came, I saw, I conquered," sent to his friend Amintius after the glorious victory over Pharnaces at Zela, is the most famous "despatch" in the annals of war.

The Spartan soldiers, we know, were past masters of this laconic art of expression. The three words, "Athens is taken," recorded the conclusion of that titanic struggle, the Peloponnesian war. "Persia is taken" announced the triumphant issue of another great campaign. And on that historic occasion when Xerxes sent an imperious demand to Leonidas to give up his arms all the answer he received from the Spartan King was "Come and take them."

When Atticus once discovered a treasure of gold while digging under a house he sent news of the discovery to the Emperor Nerva, from whom he received the laconic reply, "Use it." And when in his diffidence he protested that it was too large a sum for his own personal use, the Emperor responded, "Then abuse it."

JAPAN'S NEW MILLIONAIRES.

Few of Them Have Inherited Fortunes—Men of Pluck and Push.

Mr. Momosuke Fukuzawa, himself a mill