SOME NEW BOOKS.

Nansen's Book.

It is a good many years since we have received so valuable a contribution to the history of polar exploration as is presented in the two sumptuous volumes collectively entitled *Farthest North*, by Dr. FRIDTJOF NANSEN (Harpers). This is, of course, a record of the voyage of the ship Fram in the years 1893-96, including the fifteen months' sleigh journey carried out by Dr. Nansen and Lieut. Johansen. There is an appendix by Otto Sverdrup, Captain of the Fram, and the book contains, besides a portrait of the explorer, numerous photogravures and four maps, about 120 full-page illustrations, and sixteen colored prints. In order to appreciate precisely what has been accomplished by this voyage, we should first review very briefly the annals of Arctic exploration and then append a concise summary of the results attained by Nansen, leaving the reader to follow for himself the details of the expedition in these interesting pages.

I.

It is well known that the first attempts to penetrate the Arctic region were made by the Northmen, and exclusively by sea. It goes without saying that ships were then ill adapted to confront the ice, and that all navigators, except the Northmen, were long loath to make the venture. The clinker-built pine and fir barks of the old Vikings were no better fitted for the purpose than were the small, clumsy caravels of the first English and Dutch explorers of the Arctic Ocean. Little by little, however, the Scandinavians learned to adapt their vessels to the conditions and with ever-increasing daring they forced them in among the dreaded floes. The uncivilized polar tribes, however, both those that inhabit the Siberian tundras and the Eskimo of North America, had discovered, long before polar expeditions had begun, another and a safer means of traversing the Arctic regions, to wit, the sledge usually drawn by dogs. It was in Siberia that this mode of locomotion was first applied to the service of polar exploration. As early as the seventeenth century the Russians undertook very extensive sledge journeys, and they gradually charted the whole of the Siberian coast, from the borders of Europe to Bering Strait. Moreover they did not merely travel along the coasts, but crossed the drift ice itself to the New Siberian Islands, and even went north of them. In America, too, the sledge was employed by Englishmen at an early day for the purpose of investigating the shores of the Arctic seas. Sometimes the toboggan, or Indian sledge, was used, sometimes that of the Eskimo. It was under the leadership of McClintock that sledge journeys attained their highest development. While the Russians had generally travelled with a large number of dogs and only a few men, the English employed many more men on their expeditions, and their sledges were entirely, or for the most part, drawn by the explorers themselves. Thus, in one of the most energetic attempts ever made to reach high latitudes, Albert Markham's march toward the north from the Alert's winter quarters, there were thirty-three men, who had to draw the sledges, though there were plenty of dogs on board the ship. The American traveller, Peary, adopted, on the other hand, a different method of travelling on the inland ice of Greenland, employing as few men and as many dogs as possible. Dr. Nansen tells us that the great usefulness of dogs for sledge journeys was clear to him before he undertook his Greenland expedition, and the reason he did not use them then was simply that he was unable to procure any serviceable animals. It remains to mention a third mode of travelling to which recourse has been made in the Arctic regions, namely, boats and sledges combined. A fact mentioned in the Sagas is recalled by Dr. Nansen that, for days on end, the old Northmen had to drag their boats over the ice in the Greenland Sea in order to reach land. The first in modern times to make use of this means of locomotion was Parry, who, in his effort to reach the Pole in 1827, abandoned his ship and made his way over the drift ice northward with boats which he dragged on sledges. He succeeded in attaining the highest latitude (82° 45') that had yet been reached; but here the current carried him to the south more swiftly than he could advance against it, and he was obliged to turn back. Of later years this method of travelling has not been often employed for the purpose of approaching the Pole. It is, however, to be noted that Markham took boats with him on his sledge journey. Many expeditions have, through sheer necessity, accomplished long distances over the drift ice in this way in order to reach home after having abandoned or lost their ships. Well known examples are the Austro-Hungarian Tegethoff expedition to Franz Josef Land and the ill-fated American Jeannette expedition.

II.

We pass to the various points of departure and intermediate objectives. The methods of advance have, for the most part, followed four routes, the Smith Sound route, the sea route between Greenland and Spitzbergen, the Franz Josef Land route, and the Bering Strait route. In later times the point from which the pole has been most frequently approached is Smith Sound, probably because American explorers had asserted that they had there descried an open polar sea extending indefinitely toward the north. Every attempt, however, by this route was stopped by immense masses of ice, which came drifting southward and piled themselves up against the coast. The most important expedition by the way of Smith Sound was the English one conducted by Nares in 1875-76, the equipment of which was exceptionally costly. Markham, the next in command to Nares, succeeded in reaching the latitude of 82° 20', but at the price of enormous exertion and loss, and Nares was of the opinion that the impossibility of reaching the pole by this route was fully demonstrated for all time to come. However, during the stay of the Greely expedition from 1881 to 1884 in this same region Lockwood attained a considerably higher record, namely, 83° 24', the most northerly point upon the globe that had been trodden by human feet previously to the expedition of which the present work treats. By way of the sea between Greenland and Spitzbergen several endeavors have been made to penetrate the secrets of the domain of ice. In 1607 Henry Hudson endeavored to reach the pole along the east coast of Greenland, where he was in hopes of finding an open basin and a waterway to the Pacific. His progress was, however, stayed at 73° north latitude, at a point of the coast which he named "Hold with Hope." The German expedition under Koldeway (1869-70), which visited the same waters, attained, by the aid of sledges, as far north as 77° north latitude. Dr. Nansen is convinced that, owing to the enormous masses of ice which the polar current sweeps southward along the Greenland coast, this is one of the most unfavorable routes for an Arctic expedition. In his judgment, a better route is that by Spitzbergen, which was essayed by Hudson when his progress was blocked off Greenland. Here he reached 80° 22' north latitude. Thanks to the warm current that runs by the west coast of Spitzbergen in a northerly direction, the sea is kept free from ice, and, therefore, the author of this book pronounces it beyond comparison the route by which one can the most safely and easily reach high latitudes in ice-free waters. It was north of Spitzbergen that Edward Parry made his above-mentioned attempt in 1827.

Further eastward the ice conditions are less propitious, and therefore few polar expeditions have directed their course to these regions. The original object of the Austro-Hungarian voyage under Weyprecht and Payer (1872-73) was to seek for the Northeast Passage; but at their first meeting with the ice they were set fast off the north point of Nova Zembla, drifted northward, and discovered Franz Josef Land, whence Payer strove to keep forward to the north with sledges, and reached 82° 5' north latitude on an island which he named Crown Prince Rudolf's Land. To the north of this he thought he could see an extensive tract of land running to about 83° north latitude, which he called Petermann's Land. Franz Josef Land was afterward twice visited by the English traveller Leigh Smith, in 1880 and 1881-82; and it is here that the English Jackson-Harmsworth expedition is at present established. The plan of the Danish expedition under Hovgaard was to push forward to the North Pole from Cape Cheliuskin along the east coast of an extensive tract of land which Hovgaard thought must lie to the east of Franz Josef Land. He got stuck fast in the ice, however, in the Kara Sea and spent the winter there, returning home in the following year. Only a few endeavors have been made to reach the Pole through Bering Strait. The first was Cook's, in 1776; the last was the Jeannette expedition (1879-81) under De Long, a Lieutenant in the American navy. Scarcely anywhere have polar travellers been so hopelessly blocked by ice in comparatively low latitudes. The last-named expedition, however, had a most important bearing upon that chronicled in these volumes. De Long himself considered that there were three routes to choose from—Smith Sound, the east coast of Greenland, and Bering Strait; but he put most faith in the last, and this was ultimately his selection. His main reason for this choice was his belief in a Japanese current running north through Bering Strait and onward along the east coast of Wrangel Land, which was supposed to extend far to the north. It was argued that the warm water of this current would open a way along that coast, possibly up to the Pole. The experience of whalers had shown them that, whenever their vessels were stuck fast in the ice here, they drifted northward; hence it was concluded that the current generally set in that direction. "This will help explorers," said De Long, "to reach high latitudes, but, at the same time, will make it more difficult for them to come back." The truth of these words he himself was to learn by bitter experience. The Jeannette stuck fast in the ice on Sept. 6, 1879, in 71° 35' north latitude and 175° 6' east longitude, southeast of Wrangel Land, which proved to be a small island; thence the vessel drifted with the ice in a west-northwesterly direction for two years, when it foundered June 12, 1881, north of the New Siberian Islands, in 77° 15' north latitude and 154° 59' east longitude.

III.

Everywhere, then, has the ice stopped the progress of mankind toward the north. In two cases only had ice-bound vessels drifted in a northerly direction, in the case namely of the Tegethoff and the Jeannette, while most of the others had been swept away from their goal by masses of ice drifting southward. Dr. Nansen says that, upon pondering the history of Arctic exploration, it early occurred to him that it would be very difficult to wrest their secrets from the unknown regions of ice by adopting the routes and the methods hitherto employed. But where did the proper route lie? Some time elapsed before he was able to hit upon an answer to this question. It was in the autumn of 1884 that the author of these volumes happened to see an article by Prof. Mohn in the Norwegian *Morgenblad* in which it was stated that sundry articles, which must have come from the Jeannette, had been found on the southwest coast of Greenland. He conjectured that they must have drifted on a floe straight across the polar sea. It immediately occurred to Dr. Nansen that here lay the route ready to hand. If a floe could drift right across the unknown region, that drift might also be enlisted in the service of exploration. Some years, however, elapsed before, in February, 1890, after his return from his Greenland expedition, he propounded the idea in an address before the Christiania Geographical Society. In this address, after giving a brief sketch of the different polar expeditions, Dr. Nansen acknowledged that the results of these numerous attempts seemed somewhat discouraging. They appeared to show plainly enough that it is impossible to *sail* to the Pole by any route whatever, for everywhere the ice has proved an impenetrable barrier. To drag boats over the uneven drift ice, which, moreover, is constantly moving under the influence of the current and the wind, is beset with equally great difficulties. The ice puts such obstacles in the way that those who have endeavored to traverse it do not hesitate to declare it well nigh impossible to advance in this manner with the requisite equipment and provisions. Had we been able, indeed, to advance over land, Dr. Nansen would, of course, consider this the most certain route; in that case, the Pole could have been reached in one summer by Norwegian snowshoe runners. In our author's opinion, however, there is every reason to doubt the existence of any such land. Greenland, in his judgment, does not extend further than the most northerly known point of its west coast. Neither did he deem it probable that Franz Josef Land reaches to the pole; from all we can learn, it forms a group of islands separated from each other by deep sounds, and it appears unlikely that any large continuous tract of land is to be found there. With regard to the notion that we shall be able one day to reach the Pole by a balloon, and that it is only a waste of time to seek to get there before that day comes, it is pointed out that this line of reasoning is untenable. Even if one could believe that, in the near or distant future, this dream of travelling to the pole in an airship would be realized, such an expedition, however interesting it might be from certain points of view, would be far from yielding the scientific results of adequately organized expeditions. Scientific results of importance in all branches of research can be attained only by persistent observations during a lengthened sojourn in the polar regions, while those attainable by a balloon expedition could not but be of a transitory nature. Proceeding, then, to answer the inquiry whether there were not other and more practicable routes than those which had been followed in vain, Dr. Nansen suggested that, if attention were paid to the actually existent forces of nature, with the aim of working with instead of against them, the safest and easiest method of reaching the Pole would be found. Previous expeditions having demonstrated the uselessness of working *against* the current, we should see if there is not a current we can work *with*. In Dr. Nansen's opinion the Jeannette expedition was the only one that started on the right track, though it may have been unwittingly and unwillingly. As we have previously reminded the reader, the Jeannette drifted for two years in the ice from Wrangel Land to the New Siberian Islands. Three years after she had foundered to the north of these islands there were found floating in the drift ice in the neighborhood of Julianehaab, on the southwest coast of Greenland, a number of articles, which appeared from sundry indubitable marks to proceed from the sunken vessel. These articles were first discovered by the Eskimo and were afterward collected by Mr. Lytzen, Colonial manager at Julianehaab, who published a list of them in the *Danish Geographical Journal* for 1885. It will be remembered that, in the United States, when it was reported that these articles had been found, people were very skeptical, and doubts of their genuineness were expressed in the newspapers. In Dr. Nansen's opinion, however, the alleged facts could scarcely be sheer inventions, and he deemed it safe to assume that an ice floe bearing these articles from the Jeannette had drifted from the place where it sank to Julianehaab. Now, by what route, asked the author of these volumes, did this ice floe reach the west coast of Greenland? He adopted the belief expressed by Prof. Mohn that it could have come by no other way than across the Pole. It could not possibly have come through Smith Sound, as the current there passes along the western side of Baffin's Bay, and it would thus have been conveyed to Baffin's Land, or Labrador, and not to the west coast of Greenland. Along the last-named coast the current flows in a northwest direction, and is simply a continuation of the Greenland polar current, which comes southward along the east coast of Greenland, takes a bend around Cape Farewell, and then passes upward along the west coast. By this current only could the floe have come.

IV.

The further question remains to be considered: What route did the floe take from the New Siberian Islands in order to reach the east coast of Greenland? Dr. Nansen acknowledged it to be conceivable that it might have drifted along the north coast of Siberia, south of Franz Josef Land, up through the sound between Franz Josef Land and Spitzbergen, or even to the south of Spitzbergen, and might after that have got into the polar current, which flows along Greenland. He opined, however, that if the directions of the current in those regions were studied, so far as they had been ascertained, such a course would be found extremely improbable, not to say impossible. Having proved this from the Tegethoff drift and many other circumstances, our author proceeded to point out that the distance from the New Siberian Islands to the 80th degree of latitude on the east coast of Greenland is 1,360 miles, and the distance from the last-named point to Julianehaab is 1,540 miles, making together a distance of 2,900 miles. This distance is known to have been traversed by the floe in 1,100 days, which gives a speed of 2.6 miles per day of 24 hours. The time during which the relics drifted after having reached the 80th degree of latitude till they arrived at Julianehaab can be calculated with tolerable precision, as the speed of the above named current along the east coast of Greenland is well known. Dr. Nansen deemed it fair to assume that the floe took at least 400 days to cover this distance; there remain, then, about 700 days, representing the longest possible time the articles from the Jeannette could have taken to drift from the New Siberian Islands to the 80th degree of latitude. Supposing that they took the shortest route, *i. e.*, across the Pole, this computation gave a speed of about two miles in 24 hours. On the other hand, supposing they went by the route south of Franz Josef Land and south of Spitzbergen, they must have drifted at much higher speed. Two miles in the 24 hours, however, coincides most remarkably with the rate at which the Jeannette drifted during the last months of her voyage, from Jan. 1 to June 12, 1881. In this time she drifted at an average rate of a little over two miles a day. Dr. Nansen pointed out many other evidences of a current flowing across the North Pole from Bering Sea on the one side to the Atlantic Ocean on the other, and he arrived at the conclusion that the plain thing for an Arctic explorer to do was to make his way into the current on that side of the Pole where it flows northward, and, by its help, to penetrate into those regions which all who have hitherto worked against that current have sought in vain to reach. Our author's plan, then, briefly was as follows: To have a ship built as small and as strong as possible, just big enough to contain a supply of coal and provisions for twelve men for five years. The vessel's engine was to be powerful enough to give a speed of six knots, but in addition it was also to be fully rigged for sailing. With such a ship Dr. Nansen purposed to take the short route through the Kara Sea and north to Cape Chelyuskin to the New Siberian Islands. Arrived there, his intention was, first, to ascertain the conditions as regarded currents and ice, and then to seize the most opportune moment to advance, as far as possible, to ice-free water. Next his plan was to choose a fitting place and moor the ship firmly to a suitable ice floe, and then let the ice screws lift together, the more closely the better. Henceforth the northward current would be the motive power, and the ship would have been transformed into a barrack. In this manner, so our author believed, the expedition would probably drift across the Pole, and onward to the sea between Greenland and Spitzbergen.

It is well known that Dr. Nansen did not actually reach the Pole, but that his plan was, in other respects, substantially carried out was handsomely conceded by Gen. A. W. Greely in *Harper's Weekly* for Sept. 19, 1896, though he deemed the otherwise fine record of the voyage marred by the abandonment of the Fram by Nansen, who quitted his comrades on the icebeset ship, hundreds of miles from any known land, with the intention of not returning, but of going to Spitzbergen, six hundred miles away, where he felt certain to find a vessel. In Gen. Greely's opinion, Nansen, by this act, deviated from the most sacred duty devolving on the commander of a naval expedition, and the safe return of Capt. Sverdrup with the Fram did not relieve the explorer from blame.

V.

Leaving the reader to follow the course of this remarkable voyage in the author's narrative, we sum up what are claimed by Dr. Nansen to have been the results of the expedition. As regards, indeed, the scientific observations brought back, these are so varied and voluminous that some time must yet elapse before they can be dealt with by specialists and before any general estimate of their significance can be formed. Those observations will be given to the world in separate scientific publications; it is only the more important features of them which can be now pointed out. In the first place, Dr. Nansen considers himself to have demonstrated that the sea in the immediate neighborhood of the Pole, and within which in his opinion the Pole itself, in all probability, lies, is a deep basin, not a shallow one containing many expanses of land and islands, as people were formerly inclined to assume. Our author does not hesitate to pronounce this circumpolar sea a continuation of the deep channel which extends from the Atlantic Ocean northward between Spitzbergen and Greenland. The superficial extent of this deep sea is a question which it is not, at present, easy to answer, but our author deems himself able to aver that it stretches a long way north of Franz Josef Land and eastward to the New Siberian Islands. His belief is that it stretches still further east, as, he thinks, may be inferred from the fact that the more the Jeannette explorers drifted north, the greater depth of sea did they find. For various reasons, Dr. Nansen is led to the opinion that, in a northerly direction also, this deep sea is of a considerable extent. Let us see what these reasons are. In the first place, nothing was observed either during the drift of the Fram or during the sledge expedition to the north that would point to the proximity of any considerable stretch of land; the ice seemed to drift unimpeded, particularly in a northerly direction. The way in which the drift set straight to the north as soon as there was a southerly wind was most striking. It was with the greatest difficulty that the wind could head the drift back toward the southeast. Had there been any considerable expanse of land within a reasonable distance to the north, it would have blocked the free movement of the ice in that direction. Besides, the large quantity of drift ice which drifts southward with great rapidity along the east coast of Greenland, all the way down to Cape Farewell and beyond it, seems to point to the same conclusion. Dr. Nansen was convinced that such extensive ice fields must come from a still larger breadth of sea than that through which he drifted. He has no doubt that had the Fram continued her drift instead of breaking loose to the north of Spitzbergen she would certainly have come down along the coast of Greenland. Yet he thinks that probably she would not have got close in to that coast, but would have had a certain quantity of ice between her and it, which ice, he thinks, must come from a sea lying north of the route followed by him. On the other hand, it is pronounced quite probable that land may exist to a considerable extent on the other side of the Pole, between the Pole and the North American Archipelago. It seems to the author of this book only reasonable to assume that this multitude of islands must extend further toward the north.

As one outcome of his expedition, Dr. Nansen thinks that we can now form a fairly clear idea of the way in which the drift ice is continually moving from one side of the polar basin north of Bering Strait and the coast of Siberia, and across the regions surrounding the Pole, and thence out toward the Atlantic Ocean. Where geographers at one time were disposed to locate a solid, immovable and massive ice mantle, covering the northern extremity of our globe, we now find a continually breaking and shifting expanse of drift ice. The evidence which, even before this expedition had been made, had induced our author to believe most strongly in this theory, was supplied by the Siberian driftwood that is continually being carried to Greenland, as well as by the mud found on the ice, which could scarcely be of other than Siberian origin. Dr. Nansen found several indications of this kind, even when he was as far north as 86°, furnishing valuable suggestions as to the movement of the ice. As to the force which set this ice in motion, this, we are assured, is certainly, for the most part, supplied by the wind; and, as in the sea north of Siberia, the prevailing winds are southeasterly or easterly, whereas, north of Spitzbergen, they are northeasterly, they must carry the ice in the direction in which our author found the drift. From the numerous observations made by him he established, however, the existence of a slow current in the water under the ice travelling in the same direction. It will be some time, nevertheless, before the results of these investigations can be calculated.

VI.

The hydrographic observations made during the voyage and sledge journey have furnished some surprising data. For instance, it used to be customary to look upon the polar basin as filled with cold water, the temperature of which stood somewhere about −1.5° Centigrade. Dr. Nansen's observations, on the other hand, show that, under the cold surface, there was warmer water, sometimes at a temperature as high as +1° Centigrade. Again, this subsurface water was more briny than the water of the polar basin has been assumed to be. In our author's opinion, the warmer and more strongly saline water must clearly originate from the warmer current of the Atlantic Ocean (the Gulf Stream) flowing in a northerly and northeasterly direction off Nova Zembla and along the west coast of Spitzbergen, and then diving under the colder but lighter and less briny water of the polar sea, and filling up the depths of the polar basin. As Dr. Nansen has stated in the course of his narrative, this more briny water was, as a rule, warmest at a depth of from 200 to 250 fathoms, beyond which it would decrease in temperature, though not uniformly, as the depth increased. Near the bottom the temperature rose again, though only slightly. These hydrographic observations seem to modify to a not inconsiderable extent the theories hitherto entertained as to the direction of the currents in the Northern Sea, but this, of course, is a difficult subject to deal with, inasmuch as there is a great mass of materials, and an exhaustive treatment of it will require both time and patience. Such a treatment is, therefore, relegated to later scientific publications. Still less does Dr. Nansen enter in the volumes before us upon a discussion of the numerous magnetic, astronomical, and meteorological observations made. He merely submits, at the end of the work, a table showing the mean temperature for each month during the drift of the Fram and the sledging expedition.

On the whole, our author thinks it may be said that, although his expedition has left many problems for the future to solve in connection with the polar area, it has nevertheless gone far to lift the veil of mystery which has hitherto shrouded the Arctic regions and has placed intelligent men in a position to form a tolerably clear idea of a portion of our globe that formerly lay in darkness, penetrable only by the imagination. Should we at no distant day obtain a birdseye view of the regions around the Pole, as seen from a balloon, all the most material features will be familiar to us. No doubt, however, there still remains a great deal to be investigated, and this can be done only by years of observation, to which end, in Dr. Nansen's judgment, a new drift like that of the Fram would be invaluable. Guided by our author's experience, explorers will be in a position to equip themselves still better; yet a more convenient *method* for the scientific examination of unknown regions cannot be easily imagined. On board a vessel of the kind employed in this instance explorers may settle themselves quite as comfortably as in a fixed scientific station. They can carry their laboratories with them, and the most delicate experiments of all kinds can be carried out. Dr. Nansen hopes that such an expedition may be undertaken ere long, and if it goes through Bering Strait and thence northward, or perhaps slightly to the northeast, he will be very much surprised, he tells us, if observations are not taken which will prove of far greater scope and importance than those made by himself. For such an expedition, however, patience will be required; the drift will be more protracted than was that of the Fram, and the explorers must be well equipped. There is yet one other lesson, which, in our author's opinion, his expedition has taught, namely, that a good deal can be achieved with small resources. Even if explorers have to live in Eskimo fashion, and content themselves with the barest necessaries, they may make good headway provided they are suitably equipped, and cover great distances in regions which have hitherto been regarded as almost inaccessible.

M. W. H.

Ik Marvel's Book.

It is now about forty years since "The Reveries of a Bachelor" was published, and at once gave Mr. DONALD G. MITCHELL rank in the very small group of American writers who were recognized on both sides of the Atlantic as masters of an English style. We have since heard from him but seldom, but a cordial welcome is assured for his new book, *American Lands and Letters* (Scribners'). As the author tells us in the preface, no American writer is here dwelt upon whose birthdate belongs in the present century. The restriction, however, permits him to discuss many contributors to American literature who were well known to many persons still living—for example, Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, William H. Prescott, Fitz-Greene Halleck, Joseph Rodman Drake, Richard Dana, and James Fenimore Cooper. In the earlier chapters, we read of the naturalist Audubon; of Brockden Brown, the novelist; of Joel Barlow, author of the Columbiad; of Thomas Paine and of Jonathan Edwards. Upon the principal works of all these writers Mr. Mitchell discourses briefly, but with characteristic insight and felicity. We shall review his references to the authors named in chronological order, reproducing such expressions of opinion as seem conspicuous for intrinsic value or for the distinctive point of view.

I.

The section devoted to Jonathan Edwards is embellished with an engraving of an admirable portrait. Touching this picture, Mr. Mitchell remarks: "What a great calm and placidity that would seem proof against all ruffling in the long, regular, benign, oval face which the cheapest engravings cannot distort from its serene likeness! Yet," adds the author, "if there was no boyish appetite for pranks, there was a rich feminine quality that put refining touches into his altitudes of reasoning and which set its graces among the severities of his logic. No grossness, no dealing with foul metaphors, even when he dealt out damnatory thunders; and his inexorable Calvinism was, with all its harshness, high savored; so that even the coals on which malefactors in Adam were put to the broil had the cool purities of heaven blowing over them." It is well known that Jonathan Edwards, after preaching for twenty-four years in the Church of Northampton, was dismissed as he was nearing 50, with a large family, and with poverty staring him in the face. To Mr. Mitchell, "there is something very pathetic in the notion of this great, fine mind, the most metaphysical, the searchingest of his day—the purest life, too—driven out into the backwoods region to bandy phrases with young barbarians and consult with Sir William Pepperell about turning the New England Primer into some Mohegan tongue." It will be remembered that his friends eventually procured for Edwards an appointment to a mission amongst the Indians about Stockbridge. Most of us now, looking back upon the hardships imposed on a great man, think that the people of Northampton deserve severe reprobation. Mr. Mitchell, however, shows himself able, as was Dr. Holmes, to appreciate their point of view. "I suppose," he says, "that those zealous church committee men under the shadow of Mount Holyoke regarded Jonathan Edwards as a sort of mild, religious abomination, very set in his ways (which was largely true). He was not affable either (when the heat of intense thinking was on him); dealing sparely in short sentences (and not many of them); not sparing the rod in his household; rigid with the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism on every Saturday evening; never allowing his boys out of doors after 9 o'clock at night; and if any suiter of his daughters tarried beyond that hour he was mildly but peremptorily informed that it was time to lock up the house." Among those suitors, we are reminded, was a Mr. Burr, who came to be President of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, and whose son, Aaron Burr, a grandson of Jonathan Edwards, had in later days a way of staying out after 9.

In regard to Thomas Paine our author speaks with nice discrimination. He is pronounced "wonderfully clever; with rare art in making old truths bristle; who poured out epigrams in showers and had a special gift of arguing." Elsewhere it is conceded that he did good work for American independence when his tractate "Common Sense" and his quiet, keen reasonings counted like an army, and that even his much maledicted "Age of Reason" contains memorable passages. Nevertheless, it is suggested that it would have been well for Paine if he had perished in the Reign of Terror, when he only escaped the guillotine by a long chalk mark on the door of his cell. "When," says Mr. Mitchell, "we consider the dignity, the elevation and the reasonableness of so much that he says in his arguments for the separation of the colonies from England, and the many passages even in the Age of Reason, one hardly knows how to account for the ribaldry which belongs to so many of his later writings; ribald about old friends and benefactors; ribald about religion; ribald about the public which had honored him. Jealous, morbid, crazed by his vanities; his clever mind, at intervals, blazing through the clouds and foulnesses which his own dissipations and selfish arrogance had created; dying, at last, after long stages of drunkenness, and, as many report, with a nose as bloated as Bardolph's."

II.

Joel Barlow, dimly remembered as the author of "The Hasty Pudding" and the epic "Columbiad," was not only a poet in his way, but also, as Mr. Mitchell recalls, an "ambitious and mammon-seeking" man, who, after eighteen years of residence on the other side of the Atlantic, returned to America very rich and very French, and built a beautiful country house, still standing on the banks of the Potomac, near Washington. He died an Ambassador to France. It is not generally known that, when a chaplain in the Continental army, he was employed by the Connecticut authorities to revamp and make musical the old Psalm book; some of his versions met with great favor, and, we are told, are still to be found in the accredited psalmodies. As for the ambitious and elaborate "Columbiad," fine print, and paper, and illustrations, and Paris elaboration still left it a stale and heavy book. "We are more proud," remarks Mr. Mitchell, "of a good many others of the Hartford coterie than of Barlow; yet I think he has been unduly abused. John Adams, in a letter to Washington (October, 1798), when alluding to a paper of Barlow's, is somewhat rash when he says: 'Tom Paine is not a more worthless fellow,' and continues: 'It is not often we meet with a composition which betrays so many and so unequivocal symptoms of blackness of heart.' But that was in the middle of a political campaign. No such excuse belongs to some modern historians who have put him into the glare of an abusive and damnatory rhetoric."

Discussing Charles Brockden Brown's ventures in fiction, the author of this book points out that the scene of the novel "Arthur Mervyn" is laid in the time (1807) when the yellow fever devastated Philadelphia and New York. Of the ravages of this scourge Brown had full personal knowledge. He had himself been subject to attack, and had watched over the fatal issue in the case of some of his dearest friends. Mr. Mitchell considers Brown's description of the street scenes in Philadelphia as wonderfully vivid; they almost take rank, he thinks, with Defoe's story of the London plague. There are certain chapters "whose details surpass in horrible truthfulness all the newest French expositions of realism." There is, however, no well-evolved story in "Arthur Mervyn;" it might stop a hundred pages before it ends, and the author says that he finished it with the same sense of relief and of fatigue with which we might get up from a long and disorderly game of chess, in which the knights had gone on crazy gallops and the bishops all moved awry, with only a stale mate at the end.

Some interesting pages are devoted to John James Audubon, the author of "The Birds of America," which cost $100,000 to publish and for each copy of which an original subscriber paid a thousand dollars. Unlike Alexander Wilson, who, although a native of Scotland, may be termed an American naturalist, Audubon had been reared in luxury. Born in Louisiana of a French father, who was in the French royal navy, and of a mother who was of Spanish blood, changes, adventures, perils, losses, and sufferings had belonged to him all his life. "As a boy, he had wandered under the tropic tangles of San Domingo; and, his mother losing her life there in a negro insurrection, he had gone to Paris and had been taught art there in the study of the great David; had gone thence to a country place of his father on the Schuylkill; had astonished the natives thereabouts with his French graces, his satin short clothes, his hyacinthine locks; had made conquest of the charming daughter of an English neighbor, Bakewell; had been counselled by his future father-in-law to lay the basis of an assured future by going into trade; had gone into trade and had miserably failed in it; had allowed a fortune left by his father to slip through his slippery, generous, and most impracticable fingers; had married; had kept alive all his naturalistic love begun in the tropics; had made his country house on the Schuylkill a museum of most beautiful, unsalable things; had tried a venture at milling, and failed; merchandising again, and failed; his partners all riddled him; his friends all loved him and the birds all sang to him." Mr. Mitchell goes on to observe that if Audubon yearned for money it was only to spend it; "to spend it on home luxuries and on the first interesting poor man he might encounter. He was full of endurance, capable of all manner of fatigue; could tramp through swamps or forests, or swim rivers in his bird-hunts. He had an ineffaceable love for the picturesque; would never set up a heron or a hawk (which he stuffed with consummate skill), save in the most picturesque of attitudes, and was as insistent upon the picturesque in his own hair, his hat, his small clothes, or his jerkins. But in those early days of our nationality it did not pay to be picturesque; 'tis doubtful if it does now. Finding his domestic livelihood imperilled, he taught drawing, took portraits, taught music, taught dancing even, and there are stories of his astonishing a great assemblage of young Mississippians (at Natchez, I think,) with his flamboyant graces in the ballroom, fiddle bow in hand, and his locks and toilet of last Parisian *chic*. His wife, a woman of most admirable prudence and sagacity, was always a governing balance-wheel; and it was largely through her wise savings and her urgence that he started for England to negotiate for the publication of those amazingly life-like bird pictures which had been growing in number year by year in his portfolio and which are now, and always will be, so honorably associated with the name of the great naturalist."

III.

The author recalls that between 1847 and 1850 he caught sight, on one or two occasions, of James Fenimore Cooper strolling along Broadway somewhere between Cortlandt and Chambers streets, "a heavy, stalwart man, with a little of the sailor's swing in his gait and an unmistakable air of consequence, as of one who had played his part, and a somewhat noisy and important part, in the game of life." Of Cooper's sea stories Mr. Mitchell says: "It's next to being on the ocean to read such descriptions of straits and tempests. And it is next to being one's self a party to a sea battle to watch Tom Coffin, begrimed with powder, plying his long gun and to see the white smoke and tongue of fire leap from the muzzle. Indeed, there is no stay, no prolixity, no dulness, when once Cooper has us fairly off shore. And his sailor's talk unfailingly brings to mind odors of tar and the uneasy swaying of ship's decks." It is not, in truth, under a bonnet or behind a fan that we must look for Cooper's best work, but in his sea tales and forest tales. Even some of the latter are wearisome in places; a good deal of the dulness of "The Pioneers" is attributed by Mr. Mitchell to the feminine figures we encounter in that story: "Cooper's women are never up to the level of his men; and his wildest men and unkempt ones are always better than his tame ones, who, by a fiction, are supposed to wear the graces of civilization. As for the women, young or old, those graces of civilization go to smother them sadly. They mean well; they have good figures; they talk with propriety; they think only proprieties; they are gentle; they have, he tells us, beautiful eyes, beautiful hands, may be, musical voices very likely; they are women we should unfailingly entertain a high regard for, women we should lift our hat to with a respect that would be unctuous in quality; virtuous and correct young women, fairly intelligent young women; but not vivacious, not piquant; young women with whom, if it came to a matter of talk and of entertaining or being entertained, we should be smitten with a desire to slip into the next room." In Mr. Mitchell's opinion, there is no American author, scarcely any popular author, who loses so little by translation as does Cooper. The charm that lies in light, graceful play of language about trifles is unknown to him.

After glancing at the pitiful story of Cooper's lawsuits, Mr. Mitchell observes that Cooper was not sustained in his hour of trouble by a multiplication of friendships: "Death had removed many of his old messmates; new ones were not attracted by a man who professed contempt for opinions. Of New Englandism, he had been always shy, affecting disdain for persons of New England antecedents; perhaps moved thereto by his miscarriage at Yale, or, more likely, by the aggressive churchmanship he always maintained, and which, in those times, held itself up against New England's Congregationalism very much as a blooded bull terrier confronts a stout, surly house dog of bigger shape but of shorter lineage." Our author adds that Cooper's residence in the country, which he loved, held him aloof from town festivities. His intimacies with prominent literary men were not pronounced or numerous.

IV.

Of Richard H. Dana, author of "The Buccaneers," who became an intimate friend of Bryant, and was himself a poet, though never of great popularity, Mr. Mitchell gives a sample, "as one might take down for show an old bit of pottery of a style gone by, but very graceful and exquisitely worked." He thinks the quality of the verses quoted—they are about a little beach-bird—will explain the intimacy of its author with the writer of the "Thanatopsis" and with the writer of "Lines to a Water Fowl." R. H. Dana, as we know, lived to a great age, dying in 1879, being then 92 years old; Mr. Mitchell says that he had a venerable aspect and the tremors of age before he was 60. The author of this book cannot understand "how this singularly philosophic mind, with its subtle reaches into the realms of poesy, should be almost out of sight now; certainly, his verse or prose are far less known than those vivid, Defoe-like sketches of 'Two Years Before the Mast,' which subsequently gave reputation to his son."

Fitz-Greene Halleck is depicted as a genial and sunny-faced poet, who, although born in 1790, used not many years since to stroll up and down the streets of Guilford, Conn., carrying with a blithe step the gayeties of youth under the weight of fourscore years. A clerk in a country store, he supplemented his common-school education with the reading of poetry, especially that of Campbell. Eventually he became an adept in the French language, and learned to pay a gracious compliment with an easy courtesy more Gallic than American. When, deserting his Connecticut village, he invaded New York, he continued, we are told, for a time "to fire off his little squibs anonymously in corners of newspapers; but not until he had formed a sort of literary copartnership with Drake, the author of that exquisite bit of fancy work, 'The Culprit Fay,' did Halleck make himself popularly known. These two, under the title of Croaker, Croaker, Jr., or Croaker & Co., contributed certain satirical verses to the old *Evening Post*, which were of a wholly new quality and were immensely admired. They were talked of by politicians no less than by society people, and, when the secret of authorship, for some time carefully concealed, was traced, Drake was famous and Halleck was famous." We are reminded that, in these Croaker papers, first appeared that flaming apostrophe to the American flag:

When Freedom from her mountain height
Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of Night
And set the stars of glory there.

Mr. Mitchell thinks that for Halleck's work "ebullient" is the word. "It bubbles from him; there's no air of strain, hardly any traces of revision or labor. The knowledge he had—and it was not small either in classic reading or in poetry—he caught on the wing, as we catch butterflies, and with the same airy grace, I doubt not, with which he whips it into service." Our author recalls from personal experience that "his conversation was of the same quality. Words of the aptest significance and of most musical balance slipped from his lips as a brook flows; sparkling with bright epithets, tingling with gay mockery. Old Mr. Astor, for whom he was for very many years confidential clerk, and who left him from his vast fortune a beggarly annuity of $200, was delighted to have him at his table; so, indeed, was every one else who loved bright, cheery, witty talk." It seems that "years after he had grown weary of social flattery and of social conquests, he might have been found of an afternoon in a corner of a little French café in Warren street, New York, delighting those fortunate enough to have his companionship. He never overwrote; the little he did he did wondrously well. It is only a small book we have from him, but its ring is its own, and its echoes will last."

V.

To Washington Irving, as is fitting, a comparatively large amount of space is devoted. He is among the few authors brought to our notice in this volume who were natives of the city of New York. There are, so Mr. Mitchell avers, elderly people still living who remember the peaked gables of the old house in William street, upon the west side, where the author of the "Sketch Book" was born, and there are many more who can recall vividly the twinkle of the eye with which the old gentleman in the later years of his life used to tell of his boyish escapades over this or that loft and through this or that window for a run to the near theatre in John street. Mr. Mitchell thinks that this mischievous propensity in the lad was not a little quickened by the severe discipline of the father, Deacon Irving, who held all playhouses in detestation, and looked with a frown upon all Sunday reading in his household beyond the Catechism and Bible stories, or, what was a delightful exception, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." For some cause Washington Irving did not have the innings at Columbia College which his elder brothers had enjoyed. Instead, he went into a law office, relieving the tedium of legal studies by writing newspaper squibs, under the pen name of "Jonathan Oldstyle," and relieving it still more by a memorable first trip up the Hudson, on a visit to some kinsfolk in what were then the wilds of northern New York. Mr. Mitchell recalls the interesting fact that, in 1818, when the mercantile house, in which Washington Irving was an ornamental partner, failed, his elder brother had secured for him a secretaryship in the United States Navy Department, with a salary of $2,500. Irving, however, declined absolutely the appointment, and set himself to the task of working his way upward by his pen. Subsequently, as it is well known, he accepted the secretaryship of the American Legation in London, and, in 1842, was appointed, at the instance of Daniel Webster, Minister to Spain. "We may safely," says the author of this volume, "count Washington Irving as the best beloved among American authors; his character was so clean, his language so full of grace, his sympathies so true and wide and his humor so genuine and abounding. His books all beam with a kindliness that should not, and will never be, forgotten." Recalling a visit which he made to Irving at Sunnyside, Mr. Mitchell notes that "no financial anxieties disturbed his later years; the revenue from his books was large; he could, and did, make his old generosities more lavish; his hospitalities were free and hearty; he loved the part of entertainer and graced it. His mode of living showed a quiet elegance, but was never ostentatious. At the head of his table, in his sunny, southwest room, cheered by the presence of old friends, his speech sparkled with young vivacities, and his arching brow and a whimsical light in his eye foretold and exalted every sally of his humor."

Especially worth reading, too, is what the author has to say about W. H. Prescott, the historian. No attempt, indeed, is made to criticise Prescott's books. It is conceded that "they fill a permanent place in our literature; but, for my own part, I cannot help wishing that he had put into them somewhat less of conventional historic dignity and pomp of language, less of sonorous Latinity, and more of sharp Saxonism; less of the starched buckram of great, 'fine' writers, and more of the fluent, easy graces which he pours over his journals and his letters. But he was always a stickler for etiquette from a swallow-tailed coat to the fingering of a wineglass." It is a fact not generally known, but here mentioned, that in a private letter written when engaged on his Spanish studies Prescott says: "Dr. Johnson declares, in his 'Life of Milton,' that no blind man can write a history." Mr. Mitchell suggests that this dogmatic utterance of the great lexicographer may have prompted an ambition to discredit and annul it on the part of the young historian. It is certain that Prescott's books are still well accredited, and no explorer in the regions he traversed with his crippled sight wanders thither without making them his companions and guides. The incident to which Prescott owed his loss of sight is recounted in this volume. It occurred during his junior year at Harvard. There was a students' frolic in the college commons, a battle of bread-throwing, in the course of which a hard chunk of crust struck Prescott full in the left eye and felled him to the ground. There was no apparent wound, but the sight in that eye was gone forever, and there were periods afterward when, through sympathy or rheumatism, the vision of his other eye was clouded and he was almost utterly blind.

VI.

The author of this book knew Bryant well, and the description of the latter's personal traits forms one of the most interesting features of this collection of studies and reminiscences. After pointing out that within three or four years after the poet's death his interest in the *Evening Post*, which he had virtually created, was sold for something over $400,000, it is suggested that the result seems to give proof of a shrewdness and farsightedness which we are not apt to attribute to poets. "Shrewd he unquestionably was, with a New Englander's quick eye to the 'main chance;' but back of this, and larger than this, there was in him an intrepidity, a persistence, a love of justice, a flood of humane sympathies which, more than any trading alertness, took him and his journal upon roads which led to permanent favor and to permanent fortune. He was under, rather than over, the average height, with a firmly knit figure, quick in his motions, capable of large fatigues; counted by most an austere man; certainly not given to easy and uncalled-for smiles; weighing well his words, except some swift current of vexation he could not conquer spoiled, for a moment, his habitual calmness; not making friends easily, and never going on a still-hunt for them; never hunting at all, indeed, in the usual sense, with either dog, or gun, or whipper-in; yet enjoying other and larger hunts through word-books and mythologies and Wordsworthian ranges of skies and of worlds beyond skies." Of Bryant Mr. Mitchell further tells us that "ceremony he abhorred with all its trappings, never seeking willingly the men or the occasions which involved it or demanded it. Hence he was, less than most men of his position and influence, in habits of social intimacy with officeholders or with those high placed or walled about with conventional paraphernalia of whatever sort. Refusing office himself, or chance of office, very much by reason of this shuddering dislike of ceremonial surroundings, or of any dignities that demanded them; almost Quakerish in his allegiance to the simple *meum* and *tuum* or yea and nay of personal intercourse. All eloquence and decorative exploitations of speech he kept for rare banquet speeches, or for the rhythmic utterances which lifted language out of the region of convention." Bryant was often acrid in his political writings; almost fierce; and he carried his impetuosity and strong prejudices persistently. His very kindnesses invited no unction of gratitude. There was no flattery in his speech or his approaches; he scorned the conciliatory, fondling ways of those who make themselves popular favorites. Nevertheless, Mr. Mitchell testifies that, "with all, he was gentle. Few of the world which encountered him day by day knew where the gentleness lay, or how and in what terms it declared itself. We do not lift that veil." Nevertheless, the opinion is expressed that Bryant wronged himself in this matter, and, unwittingly, made the ways of access to his inner and truest kindnesses unnecessarily rough ways for outsiders or for even old acquaintances to travel.

THE IRISH LANDLORDS.

The Consequences of the Land Acts Causing Them Much Alarm.

BELFAST, April 2.—The landlords of Ireland are at last awaking to the fact that the ground 's slipping from under their feet in more senses than one. Accordingly, they have resolved to hold a great meeting of landlords, mortgagees, and land agents in Dublin on April 30 for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear on the English Government to induce it to appoint a royal commission to inquire into the rights and wrongs of the Irish landholders. This step is the first it is proposed to take in response to the hint thrown out by Lord Salisbury a few weeks ago when, replying to a deputation of landlords, he said that if they wanted anything they must agitate.

It is dawning on them at last that the virtual result of the successive land acts is to turn them from substantial owners into uncertain rent receivers. This has been put to them rather crudely by one of their own chief organs, and has created a good deal of alarm by the disagreeable prospect it opens up. "The alarm is all the greater because it is the action of the present Government in England, which they worked energetically to put in power that is bringing on them the culminating disaster of being left solely dependent on rents difficult of collection and liable at any moment to be swept away by some economic cause or great political change.

The Belfast *News-Letter*, a through and through supporter of Lord Salisbury's Government, bluntly opens a recent leading article on the subject by telling the landlords that, "judging from the replies of the Chief Secretary to Sir J. Colomb and Mr. Carson, the Irish landlords may begin to prepare for eviction." The allusion is to questions asked by those two gentlemen of Mr. Gerald Balfour as to whether the Land Commission in fixing new rents had laid down any principle upon which they were granting reductions on rents previously fixed.

Mr. Balfour was understood to say that the commissioners were in no way required to lay down any principle, and when further pressed as to whether they were not bound to give some reason for their decisions, Mr. Balfour replied, "No, sir, not further than is laid down in the act," and that is, not at all. The *News-Letter*, commenting on the situation, says that the result of the proceedings of the Government is to condemn the landed proprietors to beggary, but it throws the blame of it on the landlords themselves, who cut the rod to beat their own backs when they gave a blind and unconditional support to Lord Salisbury at the last election. "Most of the proprietors," says the *News-Letter*, "have bought their estates under the sanction of acts of Parliament. What did they buy? Was it merely the right to become rent receivers? If they bought the soil and its inherent capacities, why are men called Land Commissioners appointed to cut and carve their properties without having any fixed principle of action? It is no argument to point to reductions of rent in England, because there the landlords have opportunities to make money that our poor landlords have not. Take, for example, the Marquis of Salisbury. He is a good landlord and has made large reductions in his rent roll, but think of the thousands of pounds sterling the State pays to him and members of his family for putting the Conservative party under a cloud, and labering to give us Rome rule instead of home rule. The policy as regards the landlords of Ireland is to get them down and keep them down."

For a Unionist paper, this is not [illegible] shows to what we are drifting. So far as any benefit to the landlords of Ireland from the agitation they are about starting is concerned, it comes too late. They cannot expect the English Parliament to go back to protection on agricultural products for their sakes, and the English people will never consent to be taxed to compensate them for the losses due to their own want of intelligence, and, as so many showed by the heartless evictions of their tenants, a want of the common feelings of humanity. The only chance there was left to them, that of making common cause with the Nationalists, has apparently passed away, for there are symptoms indicated by demonstrations provoked by the diamond jubilee of the Queen that the virulent feeling against England that has always been a marked feature of the Irish lower middle class is giving way to more moderate sentiments. They are feeling the benefit of the spoliation of the landlords and of the power of the ballot. In a way, what happened in Poland after the insurrection of 1863 has come to pass in Ireland. The imperial ukase that stripped the Polish nobles and turned the tenants into proprietors has had its counterpart in the successive land acts that are eliminating the old landlord class in Ireland and if the people of Ireland are not rendered effusively loyal by it, there is yet less inclination among them than there was a quarter of a century ago to resort to physical force for the redress of grievances.