

most pathetic: "Began to hope I had a little talent." Up to the time of his return from Italy, he secretly believed that painting was his true vocation. Besides two little known portraits of Goethe, the portfolio contains several sheets from the Schmeller Album. This was the collection of 150 crayon portraits which Goethe brought together by the flattering device of requiring his friends and eminent visitors to sit to his Weimar protégé, Joseph Schmeller. Here are the fine heads of Von Knebel and Wilhelm von Humboldt, a striking portrait of Bettina von Arnim, and finally the delicately moulded features of the greatest poet of a singularly gifted race, Adam Mickiewicz. There is also a reproduction, from a preliminary sketch, of the Arcadian picture of the Goethe family, painted by Seckatz in 1762, and now in the possession of Herman Grimm, which will remind the Goethe student of the amusing but kindly description of the odd old Darmstadt painter in 'Dichtung und Wahrheit.' Other portfolios are promised, to be, like this, under the editorial care of Dr. Carl Ruland, which will eventually give a fairly comprehensive idea of the rich collections of engravings, and other artistic memorabilia, around which the guests used to gather in the Juno room of the Goethe house three-quarters of a century ago.

—The fourth edition of Dr. George Bruce Halsted's translation of Bolyai's 'Absolute Science of Space' (The Neomon, 2407 Guadalupe Street, Austin, Texas), is enriched with many interesting particulars about the lives of the celebrated author of the Non-Euclidean Geometry, Bolyai János, and of his father, Bolyai Farkas. If we admit that there is any natural and important distinction between men's mental constitutions corresponding to the words genius and talent—if the man of genius is anything more than a man of high talent, plus a bold, adventurous spirit—then the father must be ranked high up on the list of men of talent; and not the smallest proof of this was his instant appreciation of that discovery of his son's which superseded his own principal life-work. The son, on the same system of parcelling, must be called a genius, though, being a man of one idea (for he survived his one revelation by thirty-seven years without any other remarkable achievement), he cannot be rated as an exalted genius. He inherited a valuable imaginative element from his mother. Lombroso sets him down as insane; but we find nothing in Dr. Halsted's present account to support that charge, unless it be the circumstance of his fighting thirteen duels the same day with as many cavalry officers, playing on the violin between every two successive duels, and getting cashed for the performance. Dr. Halsted surmises a psychological connection between the muscular precision of the man, as fencer and violinist, and his mathematical precision. Even in this day of hardy psychological classifications, such a guess startles us. It is stated quite in the Lombroso-Nordau style of assurance. Would the muscular strength exhibited in the thirteen duels be connected with his mathematical strength? There is a winningly enthusiastic letter from Bolyai János to his father, telling him of the great step. He says: "I have discovered such magnificent things that I am myself astonished at them. It would be damage eternal if they were lost. When you see them, my father, you will yourself acknowledge it. At present I cannot say more than that from nothing I have created a wholly new

world." Dr. Halsted announces a life of Bolyai from unused Magyar documents. Our countryman as little shrinks from the Magyar tongue as from the Russian, in the pursuit of his valuable researches.

—A true poet passed away when Paul Verlaine died on January 8. He found life so hard and so unkindly that those who might wish to say many things of him may feel a certain sense of restraint now, as if any words would only seem to stretch him out longer on the rack of the tough world that he has quitted. In France he is truly mourned. Nothing is more noticeable than the note of sincere grief that is heard in all that is said of him. The least sympathetic say: "He was an *enfant terrible*, but still always an *enfant*." Coppée, his earliest friend—for whom he called, as he was dying, "François! François!"—took up the same strain beside his grave: "He was a child, a child always, a child and a poet." He had no concealments. Shelley, even, shows us less of himself. Every emotion of his storm-swept soul was revealed in his verse, and in it, too, were reflected his brief hours of serenity and his higher moods of religious devotion. His influence was great. Every young poet in France looked to him as to a master and leader in his art. To him, more than to any other, the present and increasing freedom of French verse is due. He struck the hardest blow at classicism. He struck with all his might, too, at the artificiality and rhetoric which have been besetting sins of the French muse. Preaching in verse he flouted, and oratory, and even eloquence—that good thing which in poetry is the enemy of the best. "Take eloquence and wring its neck!" he said. Of his own achievement in poetry it is perhaps too early to speak. We cannot yet tell how great the next age will count him, but that he will not wholly die appears to be certain. His friends parted from him in the cemetery of Batignolles, and left him in possession of the blessing that he needed most, *requiem eternam*.

ORIGIN OF THE FRANCO GERMAN WAR.—I.

Die Begründung des Deutschen Reichs durch Wilhelm I. Von Heinrich von Sybel. Siebenter Band. Munich: R. Oldenbourg; New York: Westermann.

In the concluding volume of his 'Founding of the German Empire,' the great German historian who passed away in the summer of 1895 presented his view of the genesis of the Franco-German war. Soon after the appearance of this volume, an anonymous book was published entitled 'Aus dem Leben König Karls von Rumänien,' obviously consisting of extracts from the diary of Charles—at the time Prince, since 1881 King of Rumania—and containing letters from his father, Prince Antony. This book threw much new light on the candidacy of Charles's elder brother Leopold for the Spanish throne. It was largely on the strength of the information furnished by this book that Sybel's narrative of the events of 1869 and 1870 was promptly attacked, not in France only, but in Germany. Sybel responded to his critics in a pamphlet published in the early part of last summer, maintaining and defending the positions taken in his book. Simultaneously with this last publication of Sybel's, or but little later, there appeared the 'Souvenirs militaires' of Gen. Lebrun, with interesting and important revelations regarding the negotiations between France and Austria in 1870. In October, 1895, after Sybel's death, Delbrück,

the editor of the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, published in his magazine an elaborate criticism of Sybel's theory of the origin of the war—a criticism based mainly on the two books we have just mentioned. Delbrück also sets forth his own theory. Briefly stated, Sybel's explanation is that the war was due to the hostile temper of the French people, stirred by the politicians to an unreasoning and unreasonable jealousy of Prussia, and to the stubborn folly of the Duc de Gramont, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, supported (and himself urged on) by the popular passions he had awakened, dragged his colleagues and Napoleon into a needless war, in which, as Napoleon knew, France would have no foreign support. He maintains that the Emperor at no time wished for war; that it was Gramont's treatment of the Spanish candidacy that forced the war. Delbrück holds that it was really Napoleon's war; that the Spanish candidacy was a mere pretext—although a better pretext than Sybel is willing to admit; that Napoleon had good reason to believe that he would have the support of Austria and Italy if he needed it; and that he would have had it but for the unexpected rapidity with which the North German forces were thrown upon the Alsatian frontier.

The first half of Sybel's book is largely devoted to showing that there was nothing in the internal conditions of the two countries to necessitate war, and that France could not count upon either Austria or Italy as an ally against Prussia. The preceding volume brought the sketch of German affairs down to the year 1868. In the first and fourth chapters of the present volume Sybel describes the political struggles, from 1868 to 1870, in the Customs Parliament of all Germany, in the North-German Parliament, and in the Prussian Diet; and he shows that, in spite of constant friction and temporary setbacks, the Prussian Government secured, in one form or another, the acceptance of its most important projects. Irksome mediæval restrictions upon industry and commerce were swept away by federal legislation; a modern and humane criminal code was adopted; a compromise was reached upon the troublesome question of the military budget; the first steps were taken to develop a German navy; and the federal finances were placed upon a satisfactory basis. On the 26th of May, 1870, King William closed the last session of the first Federal Parliament with a recapitulation of these achievements and with warm words of appreciation and gratitude in behalf of the German people and the allied governments. These facts, the historian urges, dispose of the assertion made by a number of French writers that Bismarck kindled war with France "in order to escape from his internal difficulties and embarrassments."

In France the relation between the Crown and the people was much less satisfactory. The fear of anarchy, to which the Empire owed its establishment, had diminished, and the best and most intelligent portion of the French people were growing increasingly impatient of absolute government. The prestige derived from a vigorous and successful foreign policy, "which had suddenly placed France at the head of the European system of states," had been seriously impaired by the establishment of the kingdom of Italy, and was nearly destroyed by the unlucky Mexican expedition and the formation of the North German confederation. Two courses were open to the Emperor, each of which was urged upon him by influential advisers. He might make peace with his people by liberal reforms, by aban-

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