

virtue of the 'straight' negative; one, that is to say, which has been subject to no subsequent alterations, unless it be the local reducing or strengthening of certain parts by chemical applications. It remains, as it was at first, a direct result of the logic of chemical cause and effect, obtained by regulating the degree of intensity to which it is developed. This is not generally believed; yet it is a fact, so far as concerns the present work of all the leading photographers. And it is a very important fact, since it shows a reliance primarily upon the scientific qualities of the medium. To play all kinds of tricks with the plate, as used to be a not unusual habit over here, proved nothing but the ingenuity, oftentimes perverse, of the craftsman. It was at best an extraneous ingenuity, not based upon the chemical conditions or tending intrinsically to advance a knowledge and control of them. The need for it was frequently the result of the operator's lack of scientific knowledge in the handling of an instrument founded upon scientific principles."

The lead in the advocacy of the "straight" negative has been taken by Alfred Stieglitz, who is characterized by Mr. Caffin as "a thorough scientist and at the same time thoroughly artistic"; and it is very largely through his influence "that the development of pictorial photography in the United States has proceeded at every stage upon the firm basis of the actual chemical and mechanical possibilities of the camera process." "What charm of delicacy or richness, as the case may be, and of subtle effects of light and atmosphere, the beautiful medium of platinotype may be made to yield without other manipulation than that of skilful printing, aided by taste and feeling, has been demonstrated especially by Alfred Stieglitz, Holland F. Day, Clarence H. White, and Mrs. Gertrude Kasebier." The most successful manipulators of the gum-bichromate process are named as Alvin L. Coburn and Edward Steichen—the latter's prints representing "pretty nearly, if not quite, the best that photography has yet accomplished," tho their defect is that "their character is too conspicuously a painter's." They may be regarded, adds Mr. Caffin, as brilliant aberrations from the path which American photographers, whose ideal is to stand for the independence and integrity of photography, are treading.

THE FIRST CONGRESS OF ESPERANTISTS.

THE recent international Congress of Esperantists at Boulogne has called attention to the remarkable spread of Esperanto, an artificial language invented to supply a universal medium of international communication. Dr. Ludwig Zamenhof, a Russian Jewish physician in Warsaw, and inventor of the new language, published his manual of Esperanto in 1887. Now it is said that two hundred and fifty thousand persons speak the new tongue, and that the number is rapidly increasing. At the first Esperantist congress toasts were responded to in Esperanto by representatives of eighteen different nations. Already, we are told, there is the nucleus of an Esperantist literature, comprising translations of "Hamlet," La Fontaine's "Fables," "The Iliad," "The Æneid," Molière's "L'Avare," and other standard works. In this country, according to the New York *Independent*, the new language "has been used for the amusement of evening gatherings where all the guests are required to speak Esperanto under penalty of a fine of a cent for every English word spoken." To facilitate matters "a sheet containing the sixteen grammatical rules and a small vocabulary is sent out a day or two in advance with the invitation." In Paris last winter, states Mr. Emile Berr, who is quoted in the Boston *Transcript*, forty-five public courses in Esperanto were given, and it is taught in twenty French schools for boys and girls. Mr. Berr gives the following picture of Dr. Zamenhof:

"He is forty-six, a shy, gentle little man, seldom speaking, blushing when applauded, stuttering if suddenly accosted, and dismayed when people call him 'master.' He wears a close-fitting black frock coat. He is bald as an egg; his cheeks are bordered with a short gray beard; his strong, straight nose carries a pair of thick

round glasses, and the eyes that look through them are mild and a trifle wearied."

Asked by Mr. Berr for the story of his invention, Dr. Zamenhof answered:

"The original idea of it is almost as old as I am. From my childhood I was haunted with the feeling that it was a lamentable thing for men to be kept apart by barriers of language; and I thought that that was a deplorable source of misunderstandings, quarrels, and stupid hatreds. So I began to dream of creating a universal language which should not supersede any one tongue but be auxiliary to each.

"I first thought of Latin. And I set to work to make it over into a modern language by adding the necessary words and forms to adapt Latin to the requirements of science, business, and present-day ideas. Then I gave up that plan, and made up my mind it would be better to create an entirely new language out of the pieces got from languages already existing. But here again the immensity of the undertaking discouraged me. As fast as I invented words I forgot them! Then another idea occurred to me. Why not learn the principal languages in use to-day (I already knew Russian, German, Greek, and Latin); retain the essential elements, the forms common to the majority of them; and weld those elements and those forms into a simplified idiom, reconstructed along logical lines, and stripped of all the difficulties and all the oddities that make linguistic studies so slow and painful.

"The language thus created had therefore a double advantage: as regards grammar, it was extremely easy to learn; and as regards vocabulary, very easy to remember, since most of its words were patterned after French, German, English, Greek, and Latin words already familiar. That is why I am able to say that a man of average education knows three-quarters of the Esperanto vocabulary before beginning to learn the language."

Dr. Zamenhof's new language, it appears, has aroused enthusiastic opposition as well as zealous advocacy. Mr. G. S. Street, an English essayist, writing in the *London Outlook*, regards the Esperantists as "good-hearted idealists," but urges, nevertheless, that "the teaching and learning of Esperanto should be visited with thoroughly deterrent penalties and its 'literature' burnt by the common hangman." The whole affair, he adds, is evil. His argument is in part as follows:

"So far as language goes, governments understand each other already. A common tongue between individual people increases the chances of disagreement as well as those of agreement. The bitterest wars have been civil wars. Peace between nations does not depend on personal good-will, if that could be conciliated by a common language. For a long time Frenchmen have been popular in England and Germans unpopular; yet until the other day most Englishmen regarded France as a possible enemy at any moment and Germany as our best friend. These elementary facts induce me to believe the ulterior object of the Esperantists to be unattainable by the means they propose. But not for that reason is it to be pooh-poohed or scoffed at, nor should they be regarded as other than good-hearted idealists of whom the world has all too few.

"It is otherwise with their immediate object, the establishment of their common language. This is improbable, perhaps, but it is not impossible and stranger things have happened. It is the sort of idea which appeals to the thoughtlessly intelligent. Already two hundred and fifty thousand persons speak Esperanto, and tho it may never spread over the civilized world there is no reason why that quarter of a million should not be multiplied many times. The thing is increasing and should be promptly checked. . . .

"In the first place, the idea of an artificial language, concocted by some gifted professor, is an abomination. A language is not an arbitrary collection of symbols. It grows with the growth of the men who speak it. It is fragrant with memories and associations. It is intimate with the thought and feeling of laboring generations. A tongue from which all this is lacking is not a tongue for men. Of course the cultivated get more from a language than the uncultivated, and it is for this reason that I should deplore the abolition of Latin from our schools—or such efforts to teach it as are made in them—since without Latin the full significance, not only of the languages derived from it, but of English also can not be gained. But the illiterate, too, feel far more than the bare

meaning of the words when they speak their own tongue. When one learns a foreign language, at first it is an affair of bare symbols, to be sure, but with increasing knowledge comes increasing significance. To learn an artificial language is to learn bare symbols only."

Mr. J. Pollen, president of the British Esperanto Association, answers Mr. Street's objection to an "artificial" language with the assertion that "he might as well argue that men and women ought not to wear clothes, and that every triumph of man over nature is an abomination." Esperanto, he adds, "will make the learning of foreign languages more easy; . . . it will do for Europe what Hindustani, a language made in much the same way, has done and is doing for India."

HOLMES THE "AMERICAN STERNE."

THE keynote of an estimate of the personality of Oliver Wendell Holmes, contained in a volume called "Cambridge Sketches," by Frank Preston Stearns, is given in the phrase which names him "the American Sterne;" for like his prototype, who found a vehicle for his wit in the oddities and mishaps of English middle-class domestic life, the American is shown to have sought his "in the contrasts and incongruities of a Boston boarding-house." By way of general estimate the writer says:

"He was a bright man, and possessed a peculiar mental quality of his own; but as we think of him now we can hardly call him a genius. He would evidently have liked in his youth to have made a profession of literature; but his verse lacked the charm and universality which made Longfellow popular so readily; nor did he possess the daring spirit of innovation with which Emerson startled and convinced his contemporaries. He first tried the law, and as that did not suit his taste he fell into medicine, but evidently without any natural bent or inclination for the profession. He was fond of the university, and when, after a temporary professorship at Dartmouth he was appointed lecturer on anatomy at the Harvard Medical School, his friends realized that he had found his right position."

Dr. Holmes's lecturing manner is described as "incisive and sometimes pungent, like his conversation, but always good-humored and well calculated to make an impression even on the most lymphatic temperaments." His ready fund of wit was often drawn upon to revive the drooping spirits of his audience, "and many of his jests have become a kind of legendary lore at the medical school." His literary sponsor, it appears, was James Russell Lowell, and his entrance into the field where he is widest known was accomplished in the following manner:

"The doctor was forty-eight when *The Atlantic Monthly* appeared before the public, and according to his own confession he had long since given up hope of a literary life. We hardly know another instance like it; but so much the better for him. He had no immature efforts of early life to regret; and when the cask was once tapped, the old wine came forth with a fine bouquet. When Phillips and Sampson consulted Lowell in regard to the editorship of the *Atlantic*, he said at once, 'We must get something from Oliver Wendell Holmes.' He was Lowell's great discovery, and proved to be his best card—a clear, shining light, and not an *ignis fatuus*.

"When the 'Autocrat of the Breakfast-table' first appeared, few were in the secret of its authorship, and everybody asked, Who is this new luminary? It was exactly what the more intelligent public wanted, and Holmes jumped at once into the position in literature which he has held ever since. Readers were delighted with his wit, surprised at his originality, and impressed by his proverbial wisdom. It was the advent of a sound, healthy intelligence, not unlike that of President Lincoln, which could deal with commonplace subjects in a significant and characteristic manner. The landlady's daughter, the schoolmistress, little Boston, and the young man called John are as real and tangible as the *dramatis personæ* in one of Molière's plays. They seem more real to us than many of the distinguished men and women whom we read of in the newspapers. . . .

"The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table' is an irregular panorama of human life without either a definite beginning or end—un-

less the autocrat's offering himself to the schoolmistress (an incident which only took place on paper) can be considered so; but it is by no means a patchwork. He talks of horse-racing, the Millerites, elm-trees, Dr. Johnson, the composition of poetry, and much else; but these subjects are introduced and treated with an adroitness that amounts to consummate art. He is always at the boarding-house, and if his remarks sometimes shoot over the heads of his auditors, it is only because he intends that they should. The first ten or fifteen pages of the 'Autocrat' are written in such a cold, formal, and pedantic manner that the wonder is that Lowell should have published it. After that the style suddenly changes and the doctor becomes himself. It is like a conventional call which ends in a sympathetic conversation. Dr. Holmes's humor permeates every sentence that he wrote. Even in his most serious moods we meet with it in a peculiar phrase or the use of some exceptional word. Now and then his wit is very brilliant, lighting up its surroundings like the sudden appearance of a meteor."

The common view of the Cambridge school as a solidarity whose parts are cemented by the ties of personal friendship is not borne out by the account given of Dr. Holmes in his social relations. He lived, says the essayist, amid a comparatively narrow circle of friends and acquaintances. He attended the Saturday Club, but Lowell appears to have been the only member of it with whom he was on confidential terms. He was rarely seen or heard of in Longfellow's house. "He does not speak overmuch of Emerson in his letters, and does not mention Hawthorne, Thoreau, or Alcott, so far as we know, at all. They do not appear to have attracted his attention."

WAGNER'S IDEA OF ART.

RICHARD WAGNER is unique among men of genius, says Mr. Arthur Symons, inasmuch as in him "the musician, the poet, the playwright, the thinker, the administrator, all worked to a single end, built up a single structure." May we not admit, suggests Mr. Symons, that the typical art of the nineteenth century, the art for which it is most likely to be remembered, has been the art, musical and dramatic, of Richard Wagner? In *The Quarterly Review* (London) Mr. Symons reviews Wagner's theoretical writings, of which the main value, we are told, lies in the fact that they are "wholly the personal expression of an artist engaged in creative work, finding out theories by the way, as he comes upon obstacles or aids in the nature of things." It may be contended, says Mr. Symons, that only this kind of criticism, the criticism of a creative artist, is of any real value. In Wagner's "A Communication to My Friends," which is described as "an autobiography of ideas," we see the growth of a great artist, says the English critic, more clearly perhaps than we see it in any similar document. We read further:

"Wagner looked upon genius as an immense receptivity, a receptivity so immense that it filled and overflowed the being, thus forcing upon it the need to create. And he distinguished between the two kinds of artist, feminine and masculine; the feminine who absorbs only art, and the masculine who absorbs life itself, and from life derives the new material which he will turn into a new and living art. He shows us, in his own work, the gradual way in which imitation passed into production, the unconscious molding of the stuff of his art from within, as one need after another arose, the way in which every innovation in form came from a single cause: the necessity 'to convey to others as vividly and intelligibly as possible what his own mind's eye had seen.' . . . Nothing ever happens to him in vain; nothing that touches him goes by without his seizing it; he seizes nothing from which he does not wring out its secret, its secret for him. Thus his work and all his practical energies grow alike out of the very soil and substance of his life; thus they are vital, and promise continuance of vitality, as few other works and deeds of art in our time can be said to do."

Wagner's fundamental artistic ideas, says Mr. Symons, are formulated in two of the earliest of his prose writings, "The Art-work of the Future" (1849) and "Opera and Drama" (1851). Summarizing these ideas, Mr. Symons writes:

"In 'The Art-work of the Future' Wagner defines art as 'an