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is exceedingly unlikely that these passages furnish any but the most insignificant biographical data.

Professor Goebel, of Stanford, sent to the Western convention a paper on Heine's relation to Wolfgang Menzel, in which, with considerable intensity of feeling, he undertook to show that Heine had plundered Menzel and then reviled him. The assertions and arguments of the paper were severely handled by Professor Hatfield, of Northwestern, in a brief but pointed criticism. Professor Hatfield himself read a paper on the earliest poems of Wilhelm Müller, and invited the convention to examine a collection of 2500 volumes of early and rare editions of modern German writers, which the library of Northwestern has just acquired through the efforts of Professor Kohn. Professor Voss, of Wisconsin, called attention to the need of a more thorough study of the prose writings of Thomas Murner, which has hitherto been much retarded by the lack of suitable reprints. Of the papers touching on German literature that were read at Philadelphia, that of Professor Wood, of Ballimore, on the prototype of Leonore, attracted especial attention and aroused the acute criticism of Professor Thomas of Columbia.

The election of officers resulted in the selection of Professor Fortier, of Tulane University, as president of the national society; and of Professor C. A. Smith, also of Louisiana, as president of the Central Division. The next meeting of the national society will be at the University of Virginia; the place of meeting of the Central Division has not yet been determined upon.

ON A RECENT BOOK OF POEMS.

(To E. C. S.)

Once again the olden
Joyance blossoms fair;
Once again the golden
Accents thrill the air;
Once again we listen
To the mellow strain,
Gaze where song-waves glisten
On that music's main.

Clear as erst the message,
Voice as nobly true,
Sweet the wondrous presage
Of the dreams we knew,
Dreams that with the magic
Of that singing rise,
Sweeping every tragic
Cloud from off our skies.

Realms that light has builded
Song has ever known,
Seas that joy has gilded
Verse has ever shown,
And the gentler Muses
Here again have sent
What no heart refuses
Of hope's blandishment.

LOUIS J. BLOCK.

COMMUNICATIONS.

DIALECT, OR ENGLISH?

(To the Editor of THE DIAL.)

May I ask the opinion of your critical readers on a question of English? The growth and popularity of the dialect story has caused words unknown to polite literature to appear in conservative periodicals. That seems to be accepted as necessary. But how far can we permit this to go? Can we afford to admit these tramps in the world of words into the society of their betters on terms of equality? Can dialect and colloquial terms take the place of words which are acknowledged as standards in literature apart from the dialect story?

In an article in a recent number of "Scribner's Magazine" I find the word "tote" in the following sentence: "The sellers of the unsubstantial cakes called *barquillos*, 'little boats,' tote around their roulette machines which resemble fire-extinguishers."

What is the reader to understand from the sentence? Is it supposed to be humorous? or does the author, Mr. Bishop, so far forget his Connecticut birth and Yale training that he prefers a colloquial term to an orthodox English word?

The "Century," "International," and "Standard" dictionaries give "tote" as a word of unknown origin, a colloquial Southern United States word, in use especially among negroes. The "Century" adds that it is "in humorous use in the North and West." In an article on the Southern States, the occurrence of the local word might be justified by a desire for what is known as local color. But what justification can there be for using it in a description of a Spanish town?

Pursuing "tote" a little further, we find two instances of the use of the word cited in the "Century" dictionary. One is in "Science," Vol. XI., p. 242, in a query concerning human beings as pack-animals: "The first pack-animals were men and women . . . They toted (carried on the head) . . ." In this instance, "tote" has a definite meaning peculiarly its own, which the user feels bound, however, to explain. The other citation is the "Century Magazine," Vol. XI., p. 224, the passage being from a story by Miss Alice French (Octave Thanet); the scene is an Arkansas town, and the man in whose conversation the word occurs is an illiterate native, using the word in his own way. The two instances illustrate the legitimate use of the word, and leave Mr. Bishop to explain why he finds it needful to use it in writing of life in a place so remote from the home of the colloquialism which it certainly is.

MARION E. SPARKS.

Urbana, Ill., Jan. 8, 1898.

ANOTHER DISPUTED AMERICANISM.

(To the Editor of THE DIAL.)

In a notice of a report made by Hamilton in 1791, an English reviewer wrote as follows:

"We shall, at all times, with pleasure, receive from our transatlantic brethren real improvements of our common mother-tongue: but we shall hardly be induced to admit such phrases as that at page 93—'more lengthy,' for longer, or more diffuse. But, perhaps, it is an established Americanism."—"British Critic," Nov., 1793, Vol. II., p. 286.

Seldom has the danger of prophesying without knowledge been better illustrated than in this passage; for while, doubtless, during the early part of this century British writers looked askance at the word and frequently qualified its use by the phrase "as the Americans