

policy. It will be a judgment based on the degree to which that policy has attained its end. The members will conceive the state as entitled to ask from them the means to attain their endeavor. Further than this they will not go, and, throughout, they must, as a rule, be in sympathy with that endeavor. There are things a state will not demand, because it cannot. And when the members of the state find the proceedings of its directors uninteresting they turn aside from the study of or, participation in such pursuits. They become interested in other things—we say that "politics is dead." A "united Germany" only means that the vivid interest of that group's proceedings transcends for the time being the interest of all other groups.

A view of this kind runs directly counter to the German theories of the state—at any rate, to the dominant theories of that country. It is, I believe, the natural consequence of Gierke's realism, the recognition that personality is the result of collective action and the denial that such personality is the fictional derivative of the state. It gives no peculiar merit to that group; does not, for example, admit that its thirst for power is a moral aim superior to that of other groups. That question has a peculiar interest at the present time. The assertion that power is good involves the question, Good for what? I assume that the reply is that power is good, first, for personal security, and, secondly, to spread a cultural superiority. But to the first there is the question of extent: What power is needed for security? A state may, as Machiavelli said, "go to work against charity and faith and humanity and religion." How long, in that event, will it retain the affection of its citizens? And, as to the spread of its culture, it would have to prove that its dominance can only be maintained by force of arms. It would have to be shown that, in fact, the means adopted are likely to secure the end proposed. It would have to obtain and retain the faith of its members in that superiority. And, what is perhaps not the least important consideration, it would have to win.

The state, then, is a democratic federation. Its personality consists in the "idea" underlying its existence, its value in the good that "idea" can achieve. Men will cling to it so long as it strives honestly for their well-being, so long as it asks them for the sake of their fellows to serve freely and fully in gladness. Assuredly no observer who has any care for truth will deny that in a state where such opportunity is most largely given the attainment will be big and rich and splendid. Only in such wise can the life of the state be full. Its activities will be stimulated by the work of other groups co-extensive with or complementary to itself. It will issue no challenge, as it will claim no preëminence. What it is and what affection it secures it will be and obtain by virtue of its achievement. So only can it hope to hand on undimmed the torch of its conscious life.

Book Notes and Byways

THE "CROWNING" OF STATIUS.

By EDMUND KEMPER BROADUS.

The recent appearance of a compilation of lives of the poets-laureate* contributes another instance of the curious misconception which has prevailed time out of mind in regard to the "crowning" or laureation of the Roman poet, Statius. Says Mr. Gray (p. 2): "In ancient Greece the laurel was sacred to Apollo, and those who had courted the Muses most successfully were crowned with a wreath made from its leaves. Besides perpetuating this practice, the Romans invested the ceremony of laureation with more pomp and splendour. Domitian, for example, when he attended the Alban contests, himself placed a chaplet on the heads of those competitors who had won distinction in music or poetry. One of the last acts of this Emperor was to present the bays to his court poet Statius, as the prize of a 'music and gymnastic' contest."

It is, perhaps, a minor matter that the chaplets given as prizes in the late Roman poetical contests were not of laurel (as Mr. Gray implies), but of oak, ivy, or olive leaves; but the statement that "one of the last acts" of Domitian was "to present the bays to his court poet, Statius, as the prize of a 'music and gymnastic' contest," is a blunder of some importance, and one which could have been avoided by the most cursory investigation. The phrase "music and gymnastic" contest, which the writer borrows from Suetonius, identifies the contest as that of the Capitoline Games†; the phrase, "one of the last acts of this Emperor" points to the third *Agon Capitolinus* (the only one in which Statius took part), which occurred only a short time before the nearly concurrent deaths of the Emperor and his court poet.

So far, so good. But this third *Agon* is of historical interest, not because Domitian presented the bays to Statius, but precisely because Domitian grievously disappointed his court poet by conferring the coveted chaplet of oak leaves upon another competitor. In his youth Statius had won prizes (olive wreaths and golden crowns) in the Alban contests, and, now that he had finished his "Thebaid," had every expectation of winning the more notable reward upon the Capitoline. Embittered at his disappointment, he declares ("Silvæ," III, 5) his intention of leaving Rome forever, and of living henceforth in his birthplace, Naples. The poem takes the form of an address, half querulous, half pathetic, to his wife, Claudia, whom he seeks to comfort for her prospective exile from the metropolis.

"When my brow," he says, "was bright with the Alban wreath and Caesar's golden chaplet was on my head, it was you who clasped me to your heart, and showered breathless kisses on my laurels. It was you, when the Capitol disdained my lays, you who shared my defeat and fretted with me at the in-

gratitude and cruelty of love. You with wakeful ears snatch the first essays of my melodies and those nights of whispering; you who alone share the secret of my long, long toil, and with the years of your love my Thebaid has grown to full stature" ("The Silvæ of Statius," trans. D. A. Slater; Oxford, 1908).

It would hardly be worth while to point out an error of this sort in a perfunctory compilation such as Mr. Gray's "Poets Laureate of England," were it not that the blunder which he repeats has had a rather interesting history. The early biographers of the laureates (Austin and Ralph, London, 1853, and Walter Hamilton, London, 1879), from whom Gray borrows extensively in his chapter on the laureate tradition, both fall into the same error; and such careful scholars as Prof. James Harvey Robinson and Prof. Henry Winchester Rolfe, in their "Petrouch" (New York, 1898, p. 104), make the double mistake of assuming that Statius was "crowned" upon the Capitoline, and that he was "the first to gain that honour."

But these are only by the way. The mistake made by Robinson and Rolfe points the way to the *locus classicus* of the error—Petrouch's double blunder in supposing that Statius was one of a long succession of poets to be thus crowned upon the Capitoline, and that he was the last poet before Petrouch himself to be thus honored ("Recolo . . . in hoc ipso capitolio romano ubi nunc insistimus tot tantosque vates ad culmen preclari magisterii provectos emeritam lauream reportasse . . . post statium pampineum illustrem poetam qui domitiani temporibus floruit nullum legimus tali honore decoratum." Hortis, "Scritti Inediti," p. 316).

The Capitoline Games were established in 86 A. D. We learn from Martial that a certain Collinus was the first to win the coveted chaplet: "O Collinus, to whom it has been granted to obtain the crown of oak in the Capitol, and to surround thy deserving locks with its foliage first of all thy race, make the most, if thou art wise, of every day, and always imagine that thy last has come" ("Epigrams," IV, liv, Bohn Clas. Lib.). Statius, as we have seen, did not compete at this or at the second contest, and was an unsuccessful competitor at the third. The Capitoline Games were continued for a considerable period after Domitian's death, a twelve-year-old boy, for example, being "coronatus" in the year 106.

The explicit information concerning Statius's early successes and late disappointment, which may be derived from the "Silvæ," was, of course, inaccessible to Petrouch, the manuscript of that collection of occasional poems not having been discovered by Poggio until some time after Petrouch's death; and, in any event, vagueness as to the biographical side of pagan history was typical of the period. Dante, for example, through a confusion of identity, gives Statius's birthplace as Toulouse.

The importance which Petrouch attached to the precedent (as he supposed) of Statius's "coronation" was by no means accidental. The "Thebaid" is one of the few purely literary products of pagan Rome interest in which seems to have persisted throughout the Middle Ages. And this, apparently, not because of its literary merit, but because of the curious tradition that Statius was, in fact, a Christian poet. How explicit that tradition was is attested by Dante, who in the twenty-

*"The Poets Laureate of England," by W. Forbes Gray. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$2.50 net.

†"He (Domitian) likewise instituted in honour of Jupiter Capitolinus a solemn contest in music . . . and gymnastic exercises. . . . There was also a public performance in elocution, both Greek and Latin." (Suetonius, "Lives of the Cæsars," Domitian. Trans., Bohn Clas. Lib.)

second canto of the "Purgatorio" even essays to fix the time of Statius's baptism; and, thanks to that ceremony, releases Statius from Purgatory, while Virgil himself and the

Greeks who of old their brows with laurel decked are condemned to remain in Limbo. Dante believed that Statius had been decorated at Rome with the poet's crown, although the chaplet accorded to him is not of laurel, but of the lesser myrtle. Doubtless Dante conceived of this "concealed Christian"* as the first baptized follower of the new faith to win the ancient pagan honor, and Dante's own aspiration to win the laurel wreath, curiously blended as it is of Christian piety and reverence for pagan usage, seems to associate itself in a measure with Statius's example. "For its sake" (*i. e.*, for the sake of Dante's service to the faith), St. Peter had thrice crowned the poet; and the closing lines of the twenty-fourth canto of the "Paradiso" and the opening lines of the twenty-fifth, after describing that celestial ceremony, set forth Dante's longing for the terrestrial crown. But the earthly wreath must be a recognition of his services both to heaven and to the muses. The ceremony must be in his native city, that "fair sheep-fold" whence he had been expelled, but it must not be in court or public square. "If it ever happen that the sacred poem to which heaven and earth have so set hand, that it has made me lean for many years, should overcome the cruelty which bars me out of the fair sheep-fold, where a lamb I slept, foe to the wolves that give it war; then with other voice, with other fleece, a Poet will I return, and on the font of my baptism will I take the crown; because there I entered into the Faith which makes the souls known to God; and afterward Peter, for its sake, thus encircled my brow" ("Paradiso," Can. XXV, 1-12, trans. Norton).

Dante was not destined to receive the earthly honor which he craved; but when Petrarch achieved that goal of his high ambition (not, however, without scheming for it with true Italian diplomacy), he had, like Dante, the precedent of Statius in the very forefront of his consciousness. Petrarch, it is true, was too thoroughly imbued with the new spirit to emphasize, or perhaps even to think of, the Christianity of the ancient poet who had, as Petrarch supposed, won the chaplet upon the Capitoline; but, thanks to Dante, Statius had become a peculiarly significant figure, and it is Statius and no other whom Petrarch names as the illustrious precedent. And possibly Petrarch's own mistake as to Statius's "coronation" was due to a wrong inference from Dante's phrase in introducing that poet: "So sweet was the spirit of my voice," Dante makes Statius say, "that me of Toulouse† Rome drew to herself, where I earned the right to adorn my temples with myrtle" ("Purgatorio," XXI, 88-90, trans. Norton).

The point is, after all, perhaps, but a minor one. No doubt the Italian of the Renaissance, with his minute interest, not only in the literature, but also in the customs of ancient Rome, his academies "for promoting

*See the elaborate and ingenious, if not altogether convincing, study of Dante's conception of Statius's religious belief in A. W. Verrall's "To Follow the Fisherman" and "Dante and the Baptism of Statius." ("Essays," Cambridge, 1913, pp. 152 ff.)

†Chaucer, in "The Hous of Fame," retains this error as to the birthplace of Statius:

"The Tholosan that highte Stace."

the adoption of antique customs into modern life,"* and his feeling that in so doing he was renewing the golden age, would have appropriated this fine old pagan custom without the intervention of the Statian tradition. We know, in fact, that there were instances of laureation well before Dante's day; for St. Bonaventura (*Legenda S. Francisci, Opera*, VII, 280) tells us that one of the earliest converts which St. Francis made to his order was a certain inventor of secular songs (*sæcularium cantionum curiosus inventor*) who had been crowned by the Emperor (Frederic II, in his court at Naples), and was known as the King of Verse; but such instances were rare and spasmodic. The peculiar and factitious importance which Statius had to the mediæval reader, the new lease of life which Dante's emphasis in the "Divina Commedia" gave to him, and the explicit reference made by Petrarch on the occasion of his own "coronation," all contribute to make of Statius a sort of connecting link between the pagan custom and the efflorescence of laureation at the time of the Renaissance.

John Addington Symonds has written that "the ancient and the modern eras met together at the Capitol at Petrarch's coronation," and in no respect is this more curiously illustrated than in the part played by this traditionally Christian author of pagan epics in furnishing a precedent (albeit a mistaken one) for the renewal of the pagan ceremony of laureation.

Correspondence.

THE "NATION."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: As a reader of the *Nation* for more than thirty years, I congratulate you most heartily on the fine jubilee number. It is in every way worthy of the splendid traditions of the paper.

To-day, as in the days of Godkin, the *Nation's* editorials must rouse the civic consciousness of the college youth of America and stimulate them to independent thought and action in their relation to the pressing problems of these times.

May it continue for many generations to inspire and to guide those from whose ranks some of the future leaders of the country will surely come.

JULIAN W. MACK.

Chicago, July 10.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I wish to extend hearty congratulations concerning your semi-centennial number recently received.

I became a subscriber to the *Nation* in 1865, when I was seventeen years of age, and have been a continuous reader and subscriber from the first number to the present time. I treasure very much the complete file which I possess of this paper. It has taught me valuable lessons, and its reading has indeed been an education.

The cogent "King's English" of Mr. Godkin has never been surpassed in strength, virility, and beauty by any American journalist. To me he was an inspiration, especially for the cause of civil-service reform. My interest in

*Symonds, "Revival of Learning," p. 361.

this cause (witnessed by an active membership in the Executive Committee of the Civil Service Reform Association of Pennsylvania for over thirty years past) was largely due to the stirring appeals and vigorous battle waged by Mr. Godkin against the spoils system.

A fine photograph of this leader of men looks down upon me from my office wall, and is a constant reminder of a great spirit supremely dedicated to the cause of civic righteousness and administrative reform. And then, too, Mr. Garrison's thorough (in the fullest sense of that full word) conduct and management of the literary work and book reviews of the paper in my judgment has never been surpassed, and it is indeed very doubtful whether it ever will be. His work as shown in the files of the paper is his greatest monument.

I need not say that I read your semi-centennial number with absorbing, almost fascinated, interest. It certainly reminded me of the old days of the *Nation* to read the contributions from some of the first pillars of its early building.

May it long continue to be (as it always has been) a great force and influence in its chosen field.

JAMES G. FRANCIS.

Philadelphia, July 12.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I offer my felicitations to the *Nation* on its jubilee, and on its jubilee number.

These are bleak days for any kind of rejoicing; but the one thing left to cheer us is the tone of our best American newspapers and periodicals. Such an editorial as that on "German-American 'Misunderstandings,'" in the jubilee number of the *Nation*, should be enough to persuade the world that we are not the facile dupes that Germany pleases to think us.

AGNES REPPLIER.

Salem, Mass., July 13.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I thank you for my perusal of your impressive semi-centennial number.

It is hard to express one's sense of the peculiar human valuation of that fifty years' record of public service which hides its still ruddy virility, with a certain reticence, behind that staid black-and-white of the long-established format. Nothing of the futuristic here, yet much of the cherishable future in the justly cherished past—a future and a past which, to one who loves the destiny and history of his country, give to the present a kind of majestic assurance of the vitality and authenticity of American idealism.

There are, and will be, numerous tenets of faith, political, literary, artistic, upon which I, as an individual, differ with the *Nation*. What individual may not do so? The iris-hues of futurism which flaunt their bloom from many a more colorful journal have for me, on occasions, their fascinating shades and values. Yet, passing from occasional choices to a sense of continuity with that great living tradition of America, which has thrilled not once but again and again to the call of "Emancipation," the vast current of those fifty years, whose stormy sky and landscapes lie so quietly mirrored in the *Nation*, bears me on, I confess, with a kind of exultance in being a bubble on so cosmic a stream.

In several articles of your anniversary number, it is pertinently observed that the character of the *Nation* has been moulded by the characters of its successive editors. Its success has been that these characters have