

the fingers, and you will soon stop. To provide the new reading, Caxton was obliged to translate from Latin, French, and Flemish. The character of the man and the literary tastes of his times are shown by his works. His first translation, "Stories about the Trojan War," begun, reluctantly, at the order of the Duchess of Burgundy, and finished in 1471, was so sought for that he "lerned at my [his] grete charge and dispenche to ordeyne this sayd boke in prynte, after the manner and forme as ye may here see." The success of this book determined his future. Returning to England, he devoted his time, from 1477 to his death in 1491, to the translation and printing of books, of which he published fifty-six, in all about eighteen thousand pages, mostly in folio,—a great task for a man after he was fifty-five years old. One-half of these books are distinctly moral or religious, but of the most elementary form; the other half are histories, romances, poetry, and legend,—all translated, as Caxton assures us in one of his prefaces, "for the amendement of manners and the increase of vertuous lyving." Whatever critics may think of their literary merits they did a great deal for the making of England. No doubt Caxton builded better than he knew, for in providing good books that people would buy and read, he whetted a rapidly growing taste for books of a higher order. In a century English readers were ready to put away childish things, and were ready to read, and did read, Bacon and Shakspeare. How wisely English-speaking people have made use of the printing-press is not to be told in a paragraph. It is enough to say that with them printing is as practical now as it was in the beginning—that it does something more than keep the records of the past: it makes the present and molds the future.

"American Art Students Abroad."*

As will be seen by the following correspondence, we were not mistaken in supposing that Mr. Frelinghuysen would do what he could to lighten the burden upon American artists abroad who desire to send their works home. In his letter to us, Mr. C. M. Moore, Secretary of the American Artists' Club, Munich, stated that, "Virtually, the works of an American artist are free of duty; but they have always been subject to the payment of the small sum of fifty cents for consul's certificate. This last year, however, when the consular fees have been reduced on manufactured goods to a minimum, the same certificate for an American artist's work has been raised in value, so that the American artist must now pay two dollars and fifty cents (\$2.50) for consular certificate, and an additional two dollars and fifty cents (\$2.50) for the invoice. That, at least, has been the law practiced in Munich. From various consuls who have been questioned in regard to the matter, a diversity of opinions have been received in regard to the value of an invoice, or, in fact, whether an invoice is at all necessary."

By the following letters it will be seen that artists will not, hereafter, be mulcted in the unreasonable sum of five dollars. But we hope that the Government will yet see its way clear to throwing off the two dollars, letting the odd fifty cents, formerly an optional rate, stand as the legal rate.

* See page 459 THE CENTURY for July, 1882.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON,
August 9, 1882.

EDITOR OF THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, NEW YORK.

SIR: Mr. Adee showed me the letter, addressed to you on the 17th of April last by Mr. Moore, Secretary of the American Artists' Club of Munich, Bavaria, and which you had informally submitted to him for the purpose of obtaining an answer to the inquiries therein made touching the proper fee to be collected by the United States consuls abroad for the certification and invoicing of the original paintings of American artists shipped to the United States.

As the question so presented was one of considerable interest to a large class of American citizens abroad, and was one, moreover, for which the precedents found in this department afforded no certain solution, I referred Mr. Moore's letter to the Secretary of the Treasury. I have just received Mr. Folger's reply (a copy of which I inclose herewith), in which he decides that the ordinary certificate required upon all invoices, whether on the free list or not, may be combined with the special certificate that the article invoiced is the production of an American artist, and a single fee of two dollars and fifty cents charged therefor.

I am pleased to be able to communicate to you this decision, made in the interest of a meritorious class of our citizens abroad.

The letter addressed to you by Mr. Moore is herewith returned.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

FREDERICK T. FRELINGHUYSEN.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, August 4, 1882.

HON. F. T. FRELINGHUYSEN, SECRETARY OF STATE.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, submitting a copy of a letter from Mr. C. M. Moore, Secretary of the American Artists' Club, of Munich, addressed to the editor of THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, in regard to the exaction by United States consuls of a fee of two dollars and fifty cents for the declaration attached to the invoices of works of American artists (form 156, Consular Regulations), in addition to the usual fee of two dollars and fifty cents for certificate to invoice.

I concur with you in the opinion that American artists, in sending their productions to the United States, should not be subjected to the imposition of greater consular fees than those paid by shippers of dutiable merchandise, and would suggest that the certificate (form 156) may be properly consolidated with the ordinary certificate (form 149), and the fee of two dollars and fifty cents charged for the combined certificate. This modification is suggested for the reason that an invoice without the ordinary certificate would not be a certified invoice.

In regard to the suggestion of Mr. Moore that the consular invoice should be dispensed with, I would state that the rule is that such invoices shall be procured in all cases, whether the goods be dutiable or free, and the production of such invoices is advantageous, not only to the Government, but also to the artists, who frequently wish to have their works shipped to interior ports without examination at the original port of entry, which privilege could not be allowed in the absence of a regular consular invoice.

Very respectfully,

CHARLES J. FOLGER, Secretary.

Murder by Burial.

No scientific discoveries have been made in our generation of greater importance than those of M. Pasteur. As many of our readers are aware, they relate to the propagation of disease through living organ-

isms, those known as *bacilli* and *bacteria* being most frequently connected with the morbid processes of disease. M. Pasteur finds that these microscopic forms of life exist especially in dead bodies; that they work their way up through the soil to the surface, are taken into the intestines of grazing cattle or are distributed by the winds, and so, it would seem probable, propagate a whole school of diseases—such as small-pox, scarlatina, typhoid and typhus fevers, diphtheria, tubercular consumption, pneumonia, erysipelas, etc., etc., and perhaps yellow fever. M. Pasteur mentions the splenic fever which prevails in France and other countries of Europe, and which annually destroys thousands of cattle and sheep. In one such case he discovered that an epidemic of this disease was followed after some years by its fresh outbreak among cattle that had been grazing in the fields where, previously, victims of the same disease had been buried under the pastures. The little *bacteria* had worked their way from the buried carcasses to the surface, and were found in swarms in the intestines of earth-worms gathered there.

It ought to be the business of scientific people to show the relation of these facts—if they can be accepted as facts—to our present method of disposing of the dead. If the breezes that blow from Greenwood, Mt. Auburn, and Laurel Hill, are laden with germs which propagate the diseases that have already slain our kindred, then the most expensive feature of those cities of the dead is not their costly monuments. It is worth while to ask ourselves whether the disciples of cremation have not a truth on their side, and whether some amendment is not needed in the modes of burial which, in this country especially, seem designed to resist the operations of nature as long as possible, and so to make a dead body a source of indefinite evil.

Indeed, the whole matter of our burial customs is one which urgently needs revision. It is astonishing that, in connection with risks so many and various as are involved in our modes of burying our dead, there should have been, in modern times, so little care and forethought. The dwellers in proximity to grave-yards who have been poisoned by their drainage, include a vast multitude whose number has never been reckoned.

Concerning such dangers, however, there has been of late a considerable awakening and some measure of reform, but the direct and immediate exposures which our funerals bring with them are perils to which, as a rule, people seem strangely indifferent. There is a custom which obtains in some of our chief cities which requires the attendance of a physician (draped usually in such a way as unmistakably to identify him) at the funeral of his patient. A cynic noting this on one occasion, remarked grimly: "Do they lead him behind the corpse in order that he may bear witness to his own work? It is a somewhat cruel retribution, and expensive, too, for a funeral takes out of the time of a popular physician some of the most precious and

pecuniarily fruitful hours of his day." To which his listener replied: "True, but it is to be remembered that the doctor sees his account in the occasion. No imprudences are more profitable to the profession than those in connection with funerals." And this can easily be understood. People who are rendering the last offices to loved ones are indifferent to considerations by which at other times they would not hesitate to be governed. They would not choose to stand, for instance, in a draft, or with uncovered head on a cold winter's day, or on the wet ground, or in the snow, or linger among the death-disseminating vapors of a vault. But all these things kindred and friends will do, and are expected to do, in connection with funerals; and the withholding of the slightest mark of respect on such an occasion, whatever the rendering of it may cost, would be resented as an almost brutal indifference. Of course, there is something in such risks which must be accepted as inseparable from the occasion; but is there any reason why they should not be diminished, as far as possible, by those who have the official charge of such occasions? Does the undertaker need to make business brisk by the careful disregard with which he orders matters, so that relatives and friends shall jeopard their lives in honoring their dead? Who wants the ill-fitting and impracticable pair of gloves which the sexton tenders on such occasions, and which can usually neither be worn nor given away? But suppose this funereal personage should keep at hand a few skull-caps with which to cover the heads of those who take off their hats. Suppose it were demanded of cemetery companies, whose profits are usually in inverse ratio to their expenditures for their patrons, that, instead of requiring mourners and kindred to stand about a grave in the mud and slush, they should provide a decent temporary platform, and if need be a movable awning, which should shelter, for the time, those who come to the grave on their sad errand. Suppose that it were insisted that funeral processions in church porches should be arranged with a little less regard to scenic effect, and a little more consideration for the health and safety of the living. Suppose it were understood that no clergyman ought to be required to go down into a vault and read the Burial Service, while the undertaker and his assistants stand safe outside,—an experience which, not long ago, sent to his grave one of the foremost clergymen of our day. There is an especial sensitiveness, in the case of persons emotionally excited, which renders them preëminently liable to exposure or infection; and yet these are the very people who, ordinarily, in connection with death or infection, are most recklessly exposed.

It is time that the American people, the most patient, long-suffering, and all-enduring people on earth, should utter some explicit protest in regard to these matters; and anybody who shall institute a wholesome reform in this matter will make himself a benefactor of his generation.