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The West and her Vanishing Forests.

THE adjournment of Congress without passing Representative McRae's bill for the better preservation of the public forests, or even Senator Kyle's inadequate bill for the establishment of a national forest commission to study the subject and make recommendations, postpones for another year, at least, one of the most pressing reforms now before the people. The McRae bill,—an all too moderate measure of conservation,—after having been injuriously modified to meet the objections of Western members, and then having passed the House of Representatives by a large majority, was defeated in the upper chamber by the hostility of a Western senator. The result is to leave the national forests almost defenseless against the greed and carelessness of those who exist by plunder of the public domain, and to invite, through a weak policy toward offenders, a continuance of the depredations. During the last six years we have not omitted to call frequent attention to the local and national dangers involved in the neglect of this subject, and the collection of opinions of forestry experts which we printed in the February CENTURY affords abundant evidence that we have not exaggerated these dangers. It is disheartening to find that the chief opposition to a reform of such vital interest to the West comes from her own representatives.

We are much mistaken in our estimate of the public spirit of the West if her larger-minded men do not make an effective protest against this betrayal of their future. We shall particularly look for some restiveness on the part of that large body of practical idealists who are aiming at the reclamation of our arid domain through irrigation, for they have already formally recognized that the first and fundamental condition of water-supply is a thorough system of forest preservation. In the present CENTURY we give a hearing to one of their number, and we commend his suggestive paper to the thoughtful perusal of our readers. If we cannot share the enthusiasm of some of those who believe it practicable to readjust State and Territorial limits along the lines of watersheds, in order to obviate future disputes as to the control of the rainfall, it is not because that peril is either imaginary or remote. The question is already a bone of contention between Colorado on the one hand, and Kansas and Nebraska on the other, and the prosperity of these States is bound up with its practical settlement. It is time that the real voice of these commonwealths should cease to be drowned in the clamor of private corporations. But unless the destruction of the public forests is soon stayed there will before long be little water in the streams to contend for. Unless the National Irrigation Congress shall succeed in bringing Western senators and representatives into line for a scientific and honest forest policy, it may as well abandon its efforts to get national attention, for its cause will be a reform against nature. Meantime, it is a matter for congratulation that so large a number of influential men are devoting themselves to the study of a problem of such colossal proportions and such possible benefits to the race.

Remembering the accomplishments of American pioneers in the middle West, the imagination need not stagger even at the new civilization which we are promised in the heart of Arid America. There is a great deal of foolish and unpatriotic talk about the hostility of the East to the West. We believe that the East will not prove to be so indifferent to Western interests as may be suspected — certainly not so indifferent as the Western contingent in Congress has been in the forestry matter. Webster's words, in the reply to Hayne, are still true: "The Government has been no stepmother to the new States. She has not been careless of their interests, nor deaf to their requests." Let the West once be heard on this subject, and her appeal will not fail of recognition and sympathy. Forestry and irrigation are topics which may well enlist the attention of every newspaper, every educational institution, and every chamber of commerce west of the Mississippi. Moreover, as the social and commercial welfare of the East and that of the West are interdependent, the whole country is interested in the adoption of a far-sighted policy. More than one decadent civilization along the Mediterranean warn us that to be great as a people we must be not only just, but wise.

OPEN LETTERS.

Southern Dialect.

THE post-bellum prose literature of the South consists largely of dialect stories of negro and rural life, Richard Malcolm Johnston being the pioneer in the latter field, while Sherwood Bonner probably first wrote distinctive and characteristic negro sketches. And now in the track of these two marches a steadily increasing legion of Southern short-story writers, and so popular has the negro become — the negro of the minstrel stage, however, not the genuine article — that he furnishes the material for a large percentage of the comic drawings in the humorous publications of the whole country. These fantastic creations are usually accompanied by a few lines of dialogue, in which the author evidently thinks that by introducing a sufficient number of *obs* and *berys* he acquits himself in the dialectic arena with the dash and precision of a Harris or a Cable.

To be capable of correctly — that is, phonetically — writing any form of dialect, one must have acquired it by absorption, so to speak: the vivid impressions of early childhood and long-continued association having so familiarized it that it comes naturally to the tongue in conversation. But even some of our Southern authors, to the manner born, blunder repeatedly and persistently in their rendering of "cracker" and African speech.

Let us first consider *ob* and *bery*, those time-honored linguistic badges, the absence of which would render the recorded conversation of the darky unrecognizable to a majority of the reading public. No negro ever said *ob* for *of* from the emptying of the first barracoon on the Congo to the present day, and *I* have never heard *bery* used for *very*. The negroes, like all careless or illit-

erate people, slur and elide in speaking, and attain their vocal goal by the shortest and easiest route. It requires a distinct effort to say *ob*, even more than *of*, and so with all words where a *b* is commonly substituted for a *v*. The true pronunciation is *er* or *uv*, according, apparently, to the succeeding word, the former if followed by a consonant, the latter when a vowel comes after, though occasionally no method is discernible; *e. g.*, "A peck *er* peaches," "A peck *uv* onions."

The pronunciation of *it*, on the contrary, seems to be governed by the preceding word: when that ends in a vowel, no *h* is introduced, for it would interfere with the liquid coalescing of the two vowels; but when immediately following a consonant, or when placed at the beginning of a sentence, *it* is pronounced *hit*. The dropping of the *h* in the personal pronouns *him* and *her* is determined by similar considerations — "I see *'im*"; "I seen *him*."

The insertion of *d* for *th*, as *dat* and *dem* in lieu of *that* and *them*, is readily grasped, and, therefore, made to do yeoman and universal service. But, as a matter of fact, it is far from being a common practice, since it is confined chiefly to what may be termed the lower classes,—the ignorant plantation hands,—while many of the dwellers in cities and towns articulate the *th* distinctly. As far as that goes, however, the same criticism applies to almost every irregularity, there being all manner of grades in the degree of abuse meted out to Uncle Sam's English by the wards of the nation, just as there are with their Caucasian brethren.

Another striking error is encountered when we find *yo'* and *yo's* doing duty respectively for *you* and *your*. *You* should be left unmolested in the mouth of the darky. *Your* should be written *yo'*, and *yo's* only in place of *yours*, and that but rarely, for the negro and "poor white" alike are much more apt to say *your-all's* or *yourn*.

Then there are *massa* and *missy*, prefixed to proper names (as "*Massa* Tom," "*Missy* Sue"), and *sah*. *Massa* and *missy* by themselves, as "No, *massa*," "Yes, *missy*," may be occasionally used in all sections, and, even as first cited, by the half-civilized toilers in the rice-fields along the coast, but rarely, if ever, by the superior and cleaner-tongued negroes of the interior. *Marster*, *marse*, or *mas'*, are frequently heard, and the feminine title of respect — impartially applied to maid and matron — is simply *miss*. *Sah*, I think, is purely imaginary; *seh* would be preferable, but the point made in regard to *you* applies here also: the correct spelling, *sir*, is phonetic enough for all purposes, and has the merit of tending toward simplification.

Another favorite word on the lips of the comic-weekly and minstrel negro is *brack*, for *black*, a conception as unreal as the prevalent fallacy that the negro's lips are a brilliant red. Iconoclastic though the assertion be, the lips of a negro are not as red as those of a white man, and just so surely does he never say *brack* for *black*. The articulatory effort is in evidence here again, and wherever such is patent it is proof positive that the dialect is unnatural.

These constitute some of the most flagrant misdemeanors of which depicters of the negro life of the South are guilty. Of course there are many more eccentricities and subtleties of pronunciation and idiom that are too frequently overlooked or distorted, but a discussion of their intricacies would probably interest only a philologist.

Dialect stories dealing with the homely country folk of the Cotton States, the "crackers" of Georgia, the "Coveites" of Tennessee, etc.,— the "po' white trash" of the negro,— are seldom undertaken save by those who are conversant with the localities of which they write, and hence are less apt to offend a critical eye, though even in these mistakes are occasionally met. One of the ablest gleaners of this especial literary field, and the one who is perhaps best qualified for the work, constantly inserts a *w* in place of a *v* in the dialect of his Georgia crackers. An enthusiastic admirer of Dickens, it must be that his mind is so familiar with the conversational peculiarities of the master's cockney creations that his pen unconsciously ingrafts them upon Southern speech.

There is also a universal and marked propensity on the part of most writers of dialect to overdo it: to write "more natural than life," as a darky would say. Unique or droll substitutions suggest themselves, and truthfulness is sacrificed to effect. This is a most insidious proclivity, for the very reason that it is the natural tendency, and should, therefore, be carefully eschewed.

As I have said before, any unnecessary departure from established orthography should be avoided. A page of dialect, to those unaccustomed to it, is sufficiently hard reading under any circumstances, and the difficulty should not be increased merely through a desire, apparently, to give them their money's worth. What, for instance, is gained by using *skool* for *school*, *rite* for *write*, *way* for *weigh*, *bild* for *build*, *biskit* for *biscuit*, etc., when the sound conveyed by the abnormal spelling differs in no essential particular from that ordinarily accepted as the proper pronunciation of the word? Of course the primary object should be to give an exact idea of the sound, but when that end can be attained without indulging in alphabetical pyrotechnics, let us by all means adopt the less involved method of procedure.

The negro of ante-bellum days, with all of his picturesque characteristics, his merriment and misery, his patience and pathos, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Only a few, a very few, of the faithful old "maumers" and loyal house- and body-servants remain; the others have already drifted away into the shadows, leaving only a tender recollection in the memories of the grown-up children whom they cherished. Very soon there will be citizens of differing admixtures of African blood, but the negro, as a class, will have disappeared, while the rude, yet upright and manly, denizens of the country districts — from Major Jones to Mr. Bill Williams — will not long survive him. Future generations will know them solely through the pen-portraits of to-day. Hence a plea for conscientious and careful delineation should surely not be out of place.

In the mother country the various dialects of the shires are esteemed interesting and worthy of study, and even Lord Tennyson has not hesitated to clothe certain flights of his fancy in their rugged warp and woof.

Val. Starnes.

COMMENTS.

I HAVE read with interest Mr. Starnes's paper on "Southern Dialect," and if he intends to lay down only general rules, he is very nearly right, in my opinion. I

do not spell certain negro words after his fashion, but we may not hear alike; probably the words were not pronounced alike in our respective sections.

The common error of people who write upon this subject is to consider "dialect" as a language in itself, and not as the abuse of a language; their efforts to establish a standard are based upon this assumption, and they forget that the "negroes," so called, do not constitute a race, but are the descendants of many races. Their speech cannot be described as a "dialect"; "dialects" is better, and the mere statement removes many difficulties. There can be no rule laid down for correct mispronunciation. The English language has a standard pronunciation, yet the educated people of different sections do not agree, in daily use, upon any standard. Is it not absurd, then, to demand that the mispronunciations of the ignorant shall be consistent? Suppose we take a glance at the South: there are neighborhoods that preserve in a measure something of English, or Scotch, or Irish, or Moravian, or French, or Spanish, or New England, or Congo traditions, tendencies, and (faintly) ideas. Naturally these affect the ignorant directly — especially the remarkably imitative and dependent negro. What the evolutionists call the "environment" has determined or does determine the dialect in communities, in families, and lastly in individuals. Who can hope to bring this conglomeration of effects, springing from so many causes, under fixed rules?

The nearest we can approach to a rule in this matter is to adopt the phonetic principle. The muscles and vocal organs of the negro are always relaxed, his facial muscles lazy and immobile, and his tongue action is in speech reduced to a minimum. He has no incentive to speak accurately; the result is, he never pronounces a consonant he can avoid, and has an especial objection to *th* and *r*, one of which requires the tip of the tongue against the upper front teeth, the other its elevation to within a fraction of the palatal arch. So, for *this* and *that* he gives us, to be exact, "*tdis*" and "*tdat*," and for *war*, "*wah*" ("Befo' de wah"). But the phonetic rule is entirely suspended by the negro's mood and by his emphasis; for he knows how to pronounce the common, every-day words about as well as most people about him, and can succeed by a distinct and well-calculated effort. To illustrate, "Marster, yer goin' ter tek 'er ter town?" (referring to a mare). This is according to Mr. Starnes's rule, and is good dialect. Suppose, however, the negro is surprised. He would then say, "Marster, *you* goin' ter tek 'er ter town?" or, "Marster, yer goin' ter tek *her* ter town?" Why? Because he can't express himself in any other way. The rule is therefore subject to important qualifications, and there are individuals who represent the effects of odd extraneous influences, and cannot be included under any rule at all. These are the people who generally figure in song and story.

The safest way to write dialect is to write some particular person's dialect after indicating the environment. If this is impossible, don't write in dialect, for it will illustrate nothing. In the stories I have written, every person who speaks, speaks after the fashion of some real person selected for that purpose. And, after all, I do not think that the spelling of certain words is what affects one unpleasantly in reading the productions to which Mr. Starnes has reference. It is the words and thoughts that do not suit the characters.

If any one who is acquainted with the average Southern negro stops to analyze the unpleasant impressions which the burnt-cork minstrel and the humorous publications make upon him, he will probably find that it is *what* the negro is made to say and the *words* he is made to use, not the variations of spelling and pronunciation, that jar. Accepting this as true, the place for most negro verse would seem to be the "comic weekly," though occasionally some of it gets into high-class magazines.

The country negro in Georgia is nearly always voluble and indirect; he approaches his point as a turkey hen does her nest — after many manœuvers, and from the opposite side. This seems to be characteristic, and when the negro minstrel succeeds best, he does it by falling into this habit. The "comic weekly" generally fails because it is direct. I append an illustration showing how little the spelling and how much the style and thought have to do with dialect-writing in handling the negro. Let us imagine a negro hunter counting out wild ducks to a purchaser:

UP-COUNTRY NEGRO: Hyah one; hyah nuther; hyah nuther on top er de other; hyah nuther wid es foot tied togedder.

LOW-COUNTRY NEGRO: Dey wan; dey ner'r; dey ner'r 'n top er ter-r; dey ner'r wid 'e foot tie' terge'ar.

RICE-PLANTATION (ISLAND) NEGRO: Yarry wan; yarry narrer; yarry narrer 'pan tap er tarrer; yarry narrer widdy futt tie' tergarrer.

The spelling and pronunciation vary, and yet all three are negro and characteristic. A white man of any class would simply have said, "One, two, three," etc.

In touching upon the Georgia "cracker," Mr. Starnes unwittingly indorses while he criticizes one of our Southern writers who "constantly inserts a *w* in place of a *v*," when he attributes this habit to close reading of Dickens. It is true that the cracker of to-day has largely gotten over this variation; but even now, in the backwoods, it is still to be heard.

The Georgia cracker is the least Americanized Englishman we possess. The South Atlantic States received the cockney direct from London. Georgia had him by the ship-load from the slums, the work-houses, and the debtors' prison. He is here to-day in shiftlessness, in his exasperating *h*'s, and in his adherences to the peculiarities which mark Sam Weller's vocabulary. He says "rayly" for really, "keer" for care, "that 'ere" for that there, "ain't" for are not, "'ooman" for woman, "wimmens" for women, "yourn" for yours, "wos" for was, "kiver" for cover, "fetch" for bring, "wot" for what, "o'" for of, "ha'" for have, "missis" for mistress, "unbeknown" for unknown, "sitch" for such, "drowndin'" for drowning, "afeerd" for afraid, "gal" for girl, "arter" for after, "'u'd" for would, "Lor'" for Lord, "p'int" for point, "I never heerd the like o' that," and "ag'in" for again,— just as Mr. Weller and his friends did; and those who write about him, when they come to such words as "very," for instance, exercise the latitude that Sam allowed the judge in recording his name — they spell it with a *v* or a *w*, according to the taste

and fancy of the speller. The point is that, allowing for the environment and consequent change of ideas and similes, and allowing for the dulling of wits due to want of association, the Georgia cracker is the cockney; and the closer one follows Dickens's treatment of him, the closer he gets to the truth, in spelling at least. And that *v* and *w!* Draw the under lip against the lower teeth, and pronounce lazily simple words beginning with either — using just as little lip action as possible, and see how easily the sounds blend! It is just so that the cracker speaks; and by the cracker I do not mean our hard-working country folk, but him of the backwoods, whose cabin is between "wood and water," who has until recently never heard the shriek of a locomotive, nor beheld a brick chimney.

Harry Stillwell Edwards.

Judge Taney and the Dred Scott Decision.

MR. NOAH BROOKS, on page 735 of the March number of THE CENTURY, repeats the old story with regard to Chief Justice Taney in saying:

> Many years had passed since that time [*i. e.*, since the appointment of Mr. Taney as chief justice by President Jackson], and the incidents of Taney's earlier career were well-nigh forgotten, when he once more made his name conspicuous by his decision to the effect that "the negro has no rights that a white man is bound to respect."

To the few who are unacquainted with the facts of the case, and as to what *was* decided in the "Dred Scott case," it will hardly seem credible when I say, which I do emphatically, that Chief Justice Taney never decided anything of the kind, and that when he made use of some of the words in question he was speaking of a state of things existing long before the time at which he was speaking. The expression occurs in the opinion of the court, delivered by Chief Justice Taney, in the case of Scott *v.* Sanford (commonly known as the "Dred Scott case"), 19 Howard U. S. Rep., on page 407. Judge Taney there says, referring to the negro race (the italics being mine):

> It is difficult *at this day* to realize the state of public opinion, in relation to that unfortunate race, which prevailed in the civilized and enlightened portions of the world *at the time of the Declaration of Independence*, and *when the Constitution of the United States was framed and adopted*. But the public history of every European nation displays it in a manner too plain to be mistaken. They had *for more than a century before* been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as any ordinary article of merchandise and traffic whenever a profit could be made of it. This opinion *was at that time* fixed and universal in the civilized portion of the white race. It was regarded as an axiom, in morals as well as in politics, which no one thought of disputing, or supposed to be open to dispute; and men in every grade and position in society daily and habitually acted upon it in their private pursuits as well as in matters of public concern, without doubting for a moment the correctness of this opinion. And in no nation was this opinion more firmly fixed or more uniformly acted upon than by the English Government and the English people. They not only seized them on the coast of Africa and sold them or held them in slavery for their own use, but they took them as ordinary articles of merchandise to every country where they could make a profit upon them, and were far more extensively engaged in this commerce than any nation in the world. The opinion thus entertained and acted upon in England was naturally impressed upon the colonies they founded on this side of the Atlantic; and accordingly a negro of the African race was regarded by them [*i. e.*, the colonies] as an article of property, and held and bought and sold as such in every one of the thirteen colonies which united in the Declaration of Independence, and afterwards formed the Constitution of the United States.

This was Judge Taney's *language*. The decision of the court in the case was "that the plaintiff in error [Dred Scott] is not a citizen of Missouri in the sense in which that word is used in the Constitution; and that the Circuit Court of the United States, for that reason, has no jurisdiction in this case, and could give no judgment in it."

The decision, when made at the December term, 1856, of the Supreme Court of the United States, caused considerable comment. Many leading lawyers thought that the plea in abatement — that is, the plea denying the plaintiff's right to sue in the United States Court — was improperly brought before the court. But this objection was technical. The weight of legal opinion was in favor of the decision, as correctly defining the position of the "negro of the African race" at the common law.

Any attentive student of English history knows well that immediately after the revolution of 1688, by which English freedom was established on a firm basis,— that is, in the year 1690,— those great patriots Lord Chancellor Somers and Chief Justice Treby, on the question of settling the terms of the "assiento" with Spain on the subject of the slave-trade, formally decided that "negroes [not *slaves*, it will be noted, but *negroes*] are merchandise, and can no more be exported under the act [*i. e.*, the Navigation Act of 12 Charles II., chapter 18] than any *other goods*." On the question of the same "assiento" in 1689, those great jurists and patriots Lord Chief Justice Holt and the other judges appointed by William and Mary decided in so many words that "negroes are merchandise," holding that under the common law of England the natural state of the African negro was that of subjection and slavery, though from economic motives it was forbidden to bring these slaves to England.

And long after Lord Mansfield's fantastic dictum about the air of England, etc., Lord Stowell, in the case of the slave Grace (2 Haggard's Ecclesiastical Reports, page 94), held that a negro was property in England, the same as in the West Indies. And even as late as 1846, in the case of Buron *v.* Denman (2 Exchequer Reports), English judges held the same doctrine.

Daniel Defoe was one of the great patriot Whigs of 1688, and yet in "Robinson Crusoe" he speaks as coolly and as business-like about selling the Moresco Xury, who had aided him to escape from captivity, as about selling the lion's hide and the long-boat.

In the treaty of Utrecht, made in 1713, which put an end to the War of the Spanish Succession, this "assiento," or contract for a virtual monopoly in the English Government to carry on the trade in negroes, was carefully guarded and protected, as a matter of sufficient importance to be inserted in a treaty between all the great powers of Europe concerning the "balance of power," etc. This treaty was effected by a Tory administration in England; and although when the Whigs came into power, soon after, they denounced the treaty

as the sum of villainies, and pursued its authors with unrelenting bitterness, even to the extent of impeachment, yet no word of criticism was ever uttered against the "assiento," the slave-trade part of the treaty.

All this shows plainly not what *was* right, but what was universally *regarded* as right, up to a comparatively late date. It was Judge Taney's purpose to show how people thought a century or so before. Was not Judge Taney right in saying that from the earliest days of English and American history down to the Declaration of Independence and the formation of our Constitution, the negroes *had been regarded* "so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect"?

'T is true 't is pity;
And pity 't is 't is true.

James Buchanan once, in a speech on currency, casually remarked that money might be made so scarce and dear that ten cents a day would be good wages for a workingman; and we all remember the howl that was raised against the man "who wanted to starve the laboring man on ten cents a day."

E. H. Bristow.

Infancy in Art.

IN M. Hovelaque's article on the French sculptor Carriès, published in the March number of THE CENTURY, particular stress is laid upon his treatment of childish figures. I do not question the great charm or personality of the artist's work in this direction, but is it true that he thus showed himself a pioneer — that "through him infancy entered into art"?

Even those who are ignorant of Greek and Roman art must know that as soon as Christianity entered into art it necessitated the portrayal of infant forms. Had no child but the Christ-child been represented, we should still have an immense gallery of baby forms, treated with the widest diversity in conception, the most versatile charm and power in realization; and to the Christ-child were added the infant Baptist and those troops of little angels which are prominent in religious scenes of many kinds. Then, with the resuscitation of pagan ideals at the time of the Renaissance, came new troops of *putti;* and as naturalism gained the day over idealism, such simple realistic portrayals of babyhood as, for example, those which made the Della Robbia family famous.

But in addition to his general assertion that no one before Carriès had made infancy conspicuous in art, M. Hovelaque makes the direct and very misleading statement that "there are no children in Greek art." There are a great many of them in that minor branch of sculpture which is represented by what we call "Tanagra figurines." And in art of a more monumental sort they also had an important place. They frequently occur in those tombstone reliefs which reproduce domestic scenes. Pliny and Pausanias both speak of the great fame of two boyish figures by Lykios — one blowing embers, and another, holding a holy-water basin, which was prominent on the Athenian Acropolis; Pericles dedicated to Athena another statue of an ember-blowing child by Stypax; a boy pulling a thorn from his foot is preserved to us in two ancient copies; the children of Niobe and of Laocoön need hardly be called to mind, nor the *putti* which overrun the great figure of the Nile in the Vatican Gallery, nor the numerous representations of Eros as a child. And if it be said that some of these are half-grown children, there is the famous infant Hercules with the serpent, and the "Babe Struggling with a Goose" attributed to Boëthos. Moreover, the finest antique statue which we have in the original — the Hermes of Praxiteles at Olympia — bears the infant Bacchus on its arm. Here, indeed, the special characteristics of babyhood are not very well reproduced; but this was probably a work of Praxiteles's youth, and we have in the Louvre a copy of his "Silenus Tending the Infant Bacchus," where the baby is beautifully successful. Pliny and Pausanias speak of another "Hermes and Bacchus" wrought by Kephisodotos, the father of Praxiteles, and of a Tyche (or Goddess of Fortune) with the child Plutos on her arm, the work of Xenophon and Kallistonikos. And more famous still was the "Eirene with the Infant Plutos" of Kephisodotos. An old copy of this is now in the Munich Museum, and fragments of another have been found on the Acropolis, while the fact that it was reproduced on Athenian coins proves the high value its contemporaries set upon it.

This is but a hasty mention of those Greek portrayals of infancy which chance to be best known to us. When we remember how famous they were, and how scanty is our knowledge of the art that gave them birth, we may well believe that many more were executed. And, at all events, we can confidently say that there *were* children in Greek art, as well as at all periods in Roman and in Christian art, and that no one should claim "originality" for any modern man simply because he has portrayed them.

M. G. Van Rensselaer.

The Haskell Multicharge Gun.

THE CENTURY for February, 1895, contains an article on new American guns, by Victor Louis Mason, which contains some statements in relation to the Haskell multicharge gun that I wish to correct. Mr. Mason says:

> This gun, like the second one of similar design, is of 8-inch caliber. The second Haskell gun, made of steel, has a reduction in the number of its additional powder-chambers, and was constructed, as was also the first one, by direction of Congress.

This last statement is not correct. The first of the Haskell multicharge guns mentioned was constructed of cast-iron, but lined with steel. It was not of 8-inch caliber, and was not built by direction of Congress. It was of 6-inch bore, and was built at the expense of Mr. J. R. Haskell and his associates. The second Haskell multicharge gun was of 8-inch caliber, made of steel, and was constructed and paid for by the United States Government. Mr. Mason says, "The 8-inch Haskell gun weighs more than the 10-inch steel built-up gun." So it does weigh a little more, but it throws a projectile weighing considerably more, with a much heavier amount of powder. The Haskell multicharge guns of the same caliber as the single-charge guns throw a projectile weighing twice as much, with three times the weight of powder.