

THE FATE OF "NOTES AND QUERIES" still hangs in the balance. Suffering like many other periodicals from the withering blight now afflicting all the world, and Europe especially, this variously useful and curiously entertaining publication has found itself straitened so seriously as to render its continued existence a matter of doubt, though the latest tidings from its editor give hope of continuance, but perhaps under other and it may be less favorable auspices. That is, it may be forced to migrate from its familiar haunts at the Athenæum Press to new and less congenial surroundings. Of course it desires to remain where it is. "Whether this shall prove possible," writes its editor to the London "Times," "depends upon the amount of practical financial aid which can be brought together for the purpose. We can but commend the case to the literary men and general readers to whose service—as its title sets forth—'Notes and Queries' was originally dedicated." From the same authoritative source we learn that the periodical was started on the third day of November, 1849, by William John Thoms, who a few months before had written to "The Athenæum" a letter asking the editor to open his columns for the collecting of miscellaneous items of the sort now known as "folklore," a word invented by Mr. Thoms and there used for the first time. It was largely the cordial response to this suggestion that decided its author to launch his now famous publication upon the stormy sea that makes shipwreck of so many similar ventures. But this craft rode the waves triumphantly from the first; it engaged at once the interest and aid of some of the foremost scholars of the time, and for sixty-six years its good fortune has not deserted it.

Its plan and scope made it appeal to both the serious-minded and the frivolous, to the scholar interested in the genuineness of the signatures to Charles the First's death warrant, and to the casual inquirer into the origin of the term "pot-walloper." It has contributed notably to the making of "The English Dialect Dictionary," "The Dictionary of National Biography," and the still uncompleted "Oxford Historical Dictionary." With so honorable a record behind it, and so fair a field of usefulness before it, "Notes and Queries" should have all the support it now asks for in its time of distress.

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