on that basis you can meet him directly and on your own ground. If you have been through the world's mill to any purpose you may get more out of him, and be able to tell more about him, than even the most learned and cloistered commentator." A good play to select for this reading, and one that has not yet been read and "studied" to death, would be "Richard II.," by some critics pronounced superior to "Richard III.," which has tended to eclipse it; at any rate, it has merits enough of its own to fear no comparison with its fellows. . . .

THE READING WITH THE MOST RELISH is likely to be that which has been secured with effort and after long waiting. Lamb's ecstasies over an old and rare book, long coveted and at last obtained only after strict economy, are well known to readers of Elia. In the town of Swanton, Vermont, there has lately been finished a library building that owes its existence to no millionaire benefactor, nor even to any appropriation from the public funds. A writer in the "Bulletin of the Vermont Free Public Library Commission" announces with pride that "the peculiar distinction of the Swanton library resides in the fact that it is in the completest sense a community possession." King's Daughters, churches and schools, boys and girls, men and women, all have worked together to make the library, long a desirability, an actuality; and now they one and all feel a peculiar sense of proprietorship, which augurs well for the future usefulness of this work of their hands. The lot of land on which the building stands was originally granted by George III. "to his loving subjects of New Hampshire," and its subsequent changes of ownership, down to the benefactor who gave it to the town for its present use, have been traced. . . .

A MUTUAL INFORMATION SOCIETY is now in process of organization under the direction (in America, at least) of Mr. Eugene F. McPike. It is to be called the International Society for Intercommunication, and is to be "devoted to the promotion of ways and means to facilitate the interchange of useful information." An "official organ" will be published monthly and will be sent to all members, the members themselves to constitute the staff of contributors. With the magazine will go a list of members, with their addresses and an indication of their individual pursuits or chosen departments of study. Thus every member will be brought, if he wishes it, into ready communication with every other member interested in the same topics or researches as-

THE BEST WAY TO CELEBRATE THE SHAKESPEARE TERCENTENARY, or one of the best ways, is pointed out by Mr. Charles D. Stewart in the "Wisconsin Library Bulletin" for March, a Shakespeare number in certain of its features. Mr. Stewart's wise and practicable suggestion is that we observe this three-hundredth recurrence of Shakespeare's death-day (our word, not Mr. Stewart's) by reading one or two of his plays and trying to become really acquainted with him. "Take a play that has not been staled by everyday quotation and which has not been made tiresome by being 'studied' in school. Then, declaring your independence of all scholars and commentators, and throwing aside all help except an occasional reference to the glossary, sit down to get out of his work the one great thing that is in it — namely *human nature*. Aside from his wonderful power of expression, which will take care of itself, this is the thing which makes Shakespeare; and

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himself. "The American Committee," we learn from the prospectus, "will be composed of residents of the United States, Canada, and other portions of North America where the English language is used and understood." Passive membership, as well as active, will be permitted, and those simply desiring to forward the good cause in a material sense may pay their annual fee and remain anonymous on the list of members. But of course it is hoped that most participants in the enterprise will be information-seekers and information-givers, enlarging the bounds of human knowledge and diminishing the scope of human ignorance. The fee for membership is three dollars a year, or half that amount for six months, and is payable to Mr. Eugene F. McPike, Acting Secretary and Treasurer of the American Committee, 1200 Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

. . .

COÖPERATION BETWEEN LIBRARY AND POLICE has for some time been attempted in a novel way and apparently with good results in one of the cities of the state whose public-library system is the most nearly complete of any in America. Only one town in Massachusetts is without its public library, and this town (Newbury) enjoys the use of a neighboring library — for a proper consideration. But to return to our starting-point: in the city of Somerville, a suburb of Boston, boy offenders placed on probation by the police court are required to report at stated times to the probation officer at the library, not, as heretofore, at the police court. Every such youthful offender is made to draw from the library a book with a story bearing on the offence of which he is guilty and pointing a moral, and, what is more, the boy is subsequently called upon for proof that he has read the prescribed matter. Close coöperation between the court, the police, and the library is producing what seem to be encouraging results. Here, then, is one more to add to the increasing list of coöperative activities engaged in by the public library.

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MR. HOWELLS IN CHARACTERISTIC VEIN opens his story of "The Leatherwood God" in the current "Century." The Middle West, which he learned to know as boy and youth, is the scene of the tale, and its characters are Middle Westerners of unspoiled rusticity. In the very first chapter we make the acquaintance of four of these characters, with the ease and quickness that go with freedom from those conventions that more or less hamper urban society. For example, we meet with Sally Reverdy, or, in more respectful terms, Mrs. Abel Reverdy; we see her run "up the road with the cow-like gait which her swirling skirt gave her," and we find her more minutely depicted as "a young woman unkempt as to the pale hair which escaped from the knot at her neck and stuck out there and dangled about her face in spite of the attempts made to gather it under the control of the high horn comb holding its main strands together. The lankness of her long figure showed in the calico wrapper which seemed her sole garment; and her large features were respectively lank in their way, nose and chin and high cheek-bones; her eyes wabbled in their sockets with the sort of inquiring laughter that spread her wide, loose mouth. She was barefooted, like Reverdy, . . . " The unfolding of this tale and the development of these characters, Sally Reverdy not least of all, will be followed with eager attention by those who enjoy the unsparing realism of which a sample has here been displayed.

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THE CHAPIN LIBRARY AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE, the collection of rare books lately given to his alma mater by the Hon. Alfred C. Chapin, '69, a wealthy New York lawyer and bibliophile, will soon have a special building of its own, provided by the same generous hand that bestowed the books. At the time of Mr. Chapin's benefaction, last May, it was noted in these columns, and the inadequacy of the present college library building was pointed out. Now it is proposed to erect a structure that will both serve the needs of the fine Chapin collection and lend itself to incorporation with a larger general library building when the needed funds for such building shall be provided; and their provision ought to be and is likely to be hastened by the present action of Mr. Chapin, by no means his first addition to the group of college halls. He crowns his latest munificence by providing for the maintenance of what will doubtless commonly be known as the Chapin Library.

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