

A WORD FOR THE TRANSLATOR

Since the translator plays such an indispensable part in the carrying on of our export trade it is time his services were adequately recognized and remunerated. Up to the present it may safely be said that he is not properly appreciated, except by a very few of those who employ him, writes C. T. Mason, in "The World's Markets," published by R. G. Dun & Co.

One reason for this lack of appreciation—if not the chief reason—is that the majority of firms and individuals who have translations done for them, either directly or through some bureau, have no real understanding of the exacting nature of good translating work. Indeed, unless a person has studied a foreign language, it seems impossible for him to realize just what confronts the translator when making a translation from English into any foreign language. The average business man who has a document or a catalogue to be translated, let us say, into Spanish, apparently believes that all the translator has to do is to turn each word from English into Spanish; and since he expects the translator to know his own language and to be able to read English, he regards the work as offering no particular difficulty. To him it means simply a matter of transcribing words from one language into the other, and the man who does such work, he thinks, is entitled to no unusual consideration or remuneration. Such lack of information not only results in low pay for the good translators, but is responsible for much of the inferior work being turned out by translators who would not be entrusted with the task if translating were better understood by those who require it done for them.

A good translator, if we will pause to consider what is demanded of him, must of necessity be equipped with a vast amount of general information. Indeed, it may be questioned if any other calling demands so much versatility of one man. The capable translator, to be able to perform his work satisfactorily, must possess information on almost every conceivable subject—certainly those about which he may be called upon to write. If it be a catalogue on tools to be translated, he must know something about tools, and if of machinery or art or science, something about machinery, art and science. No matter what the

subject may be, from a pin to a dreadnought, he must know enough about such and all of them to understand what he is translating. The technical language employed in all manufacturers' catalogues, and which is not only unintelligible to the uninitiated, but often misleading, makes all this absolutely necessary, if glaring and costly blunders are to be avoided. Take as an example the term "lead screw" in a catalogue picked at random from a number before me: without an acquaintance with screws what would this nomenclature mean to the translator, let us say, into Spanish? Of course, with no description to guide him, the words would signify a screw made of lead, in Spanish, Tornillo de plomo. But a "lead screw" is really not a lead screw, and hence is not Tornillo de plomo; actually it is a "leading screw" and the metal lead, plomo, has nothing whatever to do with it! A translator having to translate these two simple English words, lead and screw, would have, therefore, to call upon his fund of general information in order to render an intelligent, and not a ridiculous, version of the original. It is certainly not so simple a matter as writing down the Spanish equivalent for lead and the Spanish equivalent for screw; it is rather a matter of brains unusually well trained, and such brain work is certainly entitled to more remunera-

tion, not to say appreciation, than the average good translator receives.

The example cited is not by any means an isolated one, as any person who has glanced through a manufacturers' catalogue cannot but admit. Every page, say every line, abounds with technical words that only the initiated know the meaning of. To the individual, including the translator, who has no description data to guide him, or who has never seen the article in question, such terms are apt to be as intelligible as the chattering of a monkey.

IN CHANCERY DIVISION.

In the Chancery Division of the Supreme Court, yesterday morning, before Sir Douglas Hazen, Chief Justice, argument in the case of Baird vs. Jones was resumed. An application made at the previous hearing on behalf of the plaintiff to have the defendant cross-examined on his affidavit was disposed of by His Honor in favor of the applicant. The case was then adjourned sine die or to a time when it would be possible to have the defendant before the court. D. Mullin, K. C., appeared for the plaintiff; J. B. M. Baxter, K. C., for the defendant.

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OBITUARY

Winnifred Owens. Special to The Standard. Fredericton, Jan. 29.—The death occurred at Ripples, yesterday afternoon, of Miss Winnifred B. Owens, after a lingering illness. Deceased was in the twentieth year of her age, and was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Owens, and, besides her parents, is survived by seven brothers, David, Thomas and Edward, of this city; Charles, Herbert, Samuel and Roland, of Ripples; and five sisters, Nellie, of St. John; Laura, Margaret, Gertrude and Marion, of Ripples.

NO CASES REPORTED.
 The secretary of the Board of Health yesterday said that no cases of influenza existed in the city so far as the Board was aware.