Cæna Recta

By

Joshua Heard

Author of
"The Jews: Their Position and Influence in the World's History,"
"The History of Marlborough."

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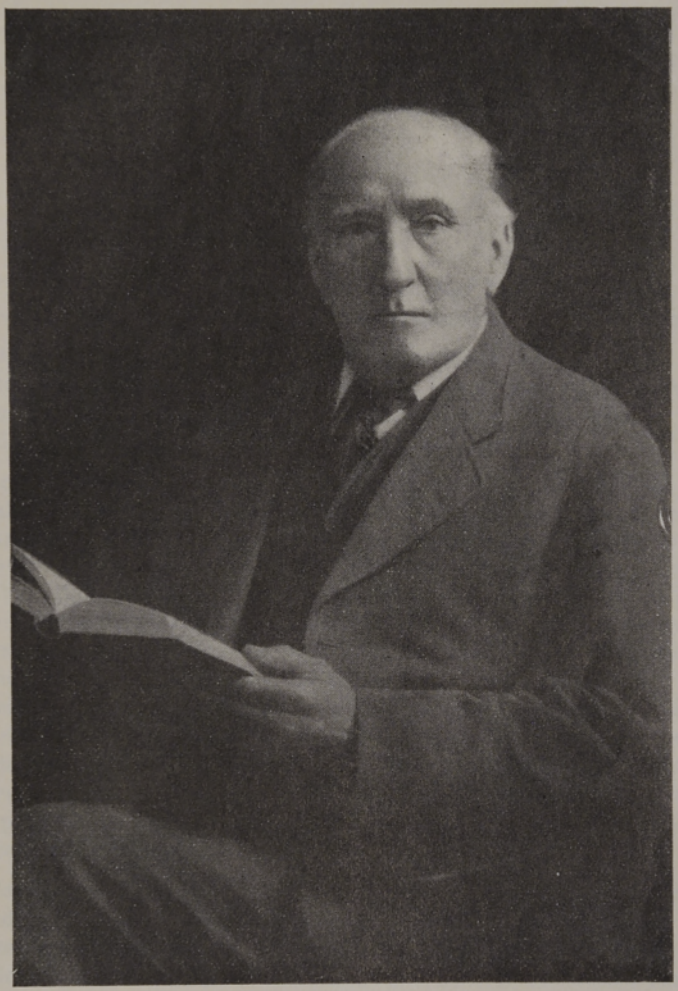

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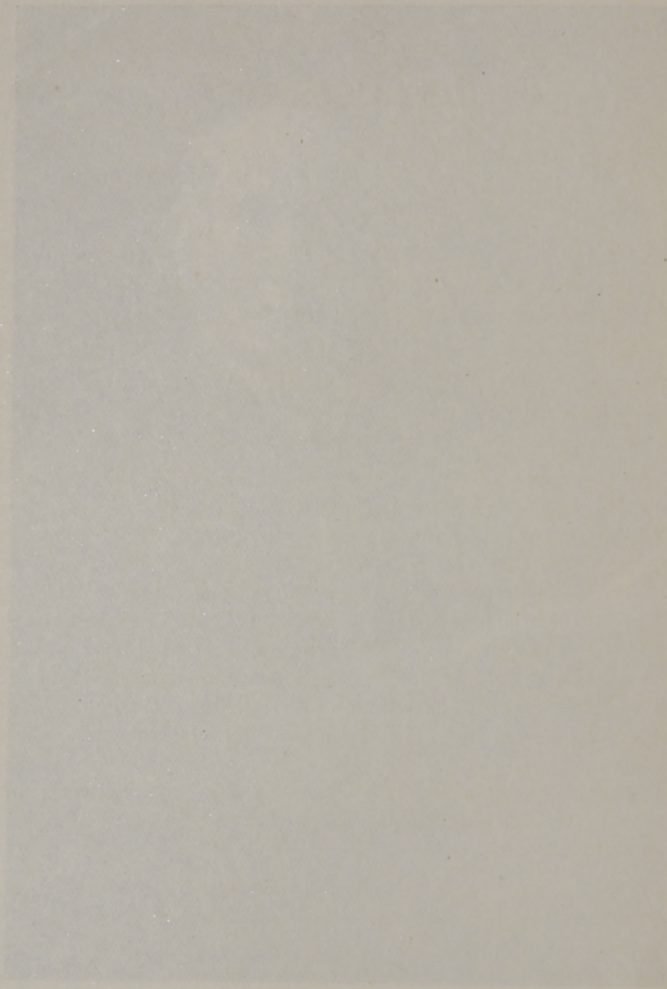


Introduction.

The aim of the author in this work has been to provide an interesting, pleasant, and instructive entertainment for a leisure hour.

On the subject of morality he has endeavoured to be correct in his deductions and impartial in his judgment. It may here be mentioned, parenthetically, that certain bigoted individuals strongly opposed his public advocacy of the great principle of morality.

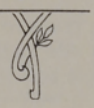
In regard, however, to his expressed views on the subject of morality, as well as on other subjects, he hopes not to be severely censured for any discrepancy that may be discovered. Conscious of his own incompetency he has not presumed to criticise the opinions of others except where it was necessary to combat falsehood or malice. He has not entirely abstained from discussing topics of a controversial nature nor of expressing his own opinions upon disputed questions as the expression of opinions on any subject or question is but an exercise of that common freedom which every one has a right to claim. He cherishes a hope that his indulgent readers will derive some benefit by a perusal of the following pages, and craves for this his present work a continuance of that favourable consideration which an appreciative and generous public so liberally bestowed upon his previous publications.

Caena recta was regarded by the ancient Romans as a social friendly repast, but when a very grand feast and a great variety of dishes were placed before the guests they were supposed to be so bewildered as not to know which to choose first, it was called caena dubia. When only one dish was presented the meal was named caena ambulatoria. That my readers may enjoy what this work contains is the sincere desire of

THE AUTHOR.

Wellington, New Zealand, February, 1923.

Preliminary Remarks.



One of the effects of the recent great war is the extensive alterations of the boundaries of some of the countries of Europe, and also of those of Africa. Vast tracts of land in the latter Continent have been wrested from the tyrannical kulter—the iron grasp of Germany, and happily placed under the genial sway of the sceptre of Great Britain.

I am led to make these remarks in consequence of certain chapters being inserted in this booklet which were written some years before the war commenced. The indulgent reader will, by an attentive perusal of the chapters referred to, see the difference between the possessions of some of the European nations prior to the war and their present possessions.

For many years past I have advocated through the press and by public lectures the teaching of morality in public schools, for which strangely enough I have been violently assailed by certain fanatical bigots, two of whom named themselves respectively Charles Murry and Sans dieu rien.* The first of these saucy scoffers proved himself to be more obscene and also more cowardly than his brother ribald. He adopted a false appellation, not a nom de plume, as his name was not Charles Murry.

In the following pages I shall reproduce some of my former writings, the object of which was to attack with success folly, bigotry and vice, and to inspire a love of the principles of virtue and truth.

It was not deemed necessary to make any special reference to the remaining subjects, as they simply speak for themselves.

J.H.

Wellington.

*A French phrase, the meaning of which is nothing without God.

CONTENTS

The Fight for a Continent.

THE WHITE RACES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A LAND OF LEARNING, WEALTH AND MYSTERY.

(Written in the year 1906.)

The recent and also present military operations of Germany and Britain in Africa show plainly that the white man is rapidly taking possession of the black man's soil; but the ultimate issue, whether for good or otherwise, remains to be seen. The vast area of the Dark

ERRATA.

Page 3, line 32—for "political" read "piratical."

Page 11, first line to read:—"My reply to a long letter by 'Sans Dieu Rien' is as follows:—"

Page 11, line 29—for "systems" read "system."

Page 12, line 41—for "metaphisic" read "metaphysic."

Page 16, line 23—for "tinker" read "thinker."

Page 23, line 43—for "patyrus" read "papyrus."

Page 34, second line from bottom of page—for "parity" read "purity."

Page 35, ninth line from bottom of page—for "cachinuation" read "cachinnation."

Page 36, ninth line from bottom of page—for "too" read "two."

Page 39, line 14—omit the word "to" after the word "come."

Page 40, line 36—for "hypostasis" read "hypostases."

Page 48, line 7—for "deed" read "deeds."

Page 50, line 18—for "Walter" read "Waller."

Page 54, line 17—for "enconium" read "encomium."

Page 56 line 24—for "Martins" read "Martin's."

the great continent may become not only the granary of Europe, but also her cornucopia, supplying her with inexhaustible stores of tropical and sub-tropical productions, and we may be allowed to suppose that extraordinary changes in trade and trade routes would ensue were European commerce with the east to a large extent transferred to Africa.

It may be said that to speculate in this way is but indulging in imaginary vision; but it should be remembered that all the resources of Africa have not yet been developed. We know that the busy and practical section of mankind have almost forgotten that the great

The Fight for a Continent.

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The recent and also present military operations of Germany and Britain in Africa show plainly that the white man is rapidly taking possession of the black man's soil; but the ultimate issue, whether for good or otherwise, remains to be seen. The vast area of the Dark Continent, which is estimated to be above 11,500,000 square miles, is to a considerable extent claimed by certain European Governments. A few years ago it was stated in England that less than a fourth part, 2,500,000 square miles, remained unallotted. From the north to the extreme south—from Cairo to the Cape—Africa is in the possession of European States. Seeing Britain's influence in Egypt and at the Cape, Germany and Italy have striven for a share, and for the first time in the history of those nations they have seized portions of African territory. During the last thirty years, France has become possessed of an area amounting to ten times the extent of that which she had previously held. These facts are not much noticed at present, and their full significance and ultimate effect upon European politics and trade cannot be estimated with any degree of accuracy.

Although the occupation of African lands by France, Germany, and Italy is at present limited, there being little more than the existence of a few stations by the respective powers, yet their possessions are protected by proclamations and merely partitioned off by the chartographer by latitudinal and longitudinal degrees. The divisional lines were arranged and adjusted during the administration of Lord Salisbury; but, prior to this dividing no international law was in force as regards the question of trespass. The position is different now, the law respecting trespass between the nations which are interested in Africa is acknowledged, although all the exact boundaries have not yet been defined. There are some matters of detail between Great Britain, Germany, France, Portugal, Italy, and Belgium which yet remain to be settled. It is impossible to predict what effect in the future Europe's vast African possessions may have upon her trade and policy. Northern Africa was the granary of Rome in her palmy days, and it seems to be not altogether improbable that the great continent may become not only the granary of Europe, but also her cornucopia, supplying her with inexhaustible stores of tropical and sub-tropical productions, and we may be allowed to suppose that extraordinary changes in trade and trade routes would ensue were European commerce with the east to a large extent transferred to Africa.

It may be said that to speculate in this way is but indulging in imaginary vision; but it should be remembered that all the resources of Africa have not yet been developed. We know that the busy and practical section of mankind have almost forgotten that the great

continent, in the far-off past, was not only the provider of nations, but was also a strange and powerful factor both for weal and woe in the affairs and politics of Europe. From Africa have emanated new phases of religion and of philosophy, which permeated European schools. On the African Island of Porto Santo, Columbus thought of land beyond the western main. It was in St. Helena that some of the arcana of the skies were revealed to the English astronomer, Edmund Halley. From this spot he watched the transit of Mercury across the sun's disc and determined the position of 350 stars, which procured him the name of "the southern Tycho." Beneath the clear skies of Africa, Sir W. Herschell and others prosecuted their studies, and Lacaille, the French astronomer, calculated an arc of the meridian. Recently, at the Cape astronomy, that ancient science has obtained the valuable aid of one of the most modern, viz., photography. From Africa, Europe has received literature, philosophy, science, and religion, though often in a weird form. The Dark Continent, like a huge, slumbering giant, has for centuries been prostrate beneath predominant Europe—only awakening at intervals to produce some mysterious influence, some unthought-of possibility, some subtle turn in philosophy or change of creed or religion.

Though assailed by hordes of Moslem fanatics and persecuted by Christian zealots, Africa has, as if by the power of magic, become the victor. Was it not in Africa that the impalpable and intellectual sun first rose from which Grecian glory was derived! It was Africa that taught Greece the arts, the letters and the lore of Cadmus. What was called Latin Christianity, Africa gave to Rome. To this day we have with us the persuasive oratory of St. Cyril, and the opinions of Athanasius the Alexandria creed maker, whose fanatical mystifying trash wages war with man's intelligence. It is needless to say that the church with great gusto records his supposed victory over the Arians at the Council of Nice; and though banished by Constantine he was recalled, reinstated and ultimately became the protege of Constantine, the Emperor of the East, after having almost provoked a religious revolution. Aurelius Augustine, from Tagaste, taught enlightened Rome and Milan his system of rhetoric and his religious tenets; and, though various changes have taken place in European scholastic institutions, politics and religion (the last named frequently degenerating into superstitious buffoonery) since his controversies with Pelagius, millions at the present day endorse his views. From Africa came Apuleius of "The Golden Ass," which has been translated into most European languages; Cyprian, whose eighty-one letters form an ecclesiastical history of his time and his "Gratia Dei."

I would willingly omit the following name were it not that I desire to be somewhat accurate in this short record of those who have figured in African history. The name to which I refer is that of Cyril Alexandria (not "the apostle of the slaves") who in A.D. 412 became Patriarch of that city. This intolerant, jealous and murderous prelate was the instigator of the assassination of Hypatia, a female philosopher of the eclectic sect, and the learned daughter of Theon, a celebrated mathematician and the Governor of the Platonic School of

Alexandria, and Hypsicles, an Alexandrian mathematician and author of a valuable treatise entitled "Anaphoricus," which, though written seventeen centuries ago, is still extant. What a depth of thought! What systems of philosophy and extraordinary phases of religion have emanated from the Dark Continent!

But not only in thought, philosophy and religion has Africa exerted a powerful influence over the nations of Europe, but also in arms. Some of the most momentous military events have occurred upon African soil. Witness the struggles of Alexander the Great, his conquest of Egypt and the founding of the city which is named after him; the exploits of Hannibal, of Constantine, the three Scipios, Pompy, Caesar, and Napoleon; the battles between the British and the Zulus, the Boer War, etc.

To turn to recent events, it is gratifying to find that a spirit of peace and amity prevailed during the negotiations and ultimate arrangements made between France and Morocco in which other European Powers felt greatly interested, otherwise it is likely that a European war would have been precipitated. African ideas differ from those of Europe, for, when questions of importance with Europe are concluded and the business settled, the great continent, like a sullen recluse, recedes from view and appears desirous of escaping form European policy and the activity of European life.

The mind of man is progressive, and when we have taken a retrospect of events which have long passed away, and also look at those of the present, we feel compelled to ask—What will be the future of Africa now that she is being brought somewhat under the influence of that spirit of activity which predominates in Britain, France and Germany? African territory to a vast extent has become European territory. Egypt has always been regarded as a strategic position, almost equally situated between east and west, and eminently suitable to form a base for military operations in either direction. As is well known, Algeria, of political notoriety, belongs to France, and forms part of her political system, as it is represented in the Chamber of Deputies. In addition to Algeria, France holds sway over Tunis and Tripoli, and has also possessed herself of other vast tracts to the extent of 2,300,000 square miles. A few years ago Italian ambition made what were subsequently proved to be unwelcome overtures to Abyssinia and the unhappy but ever aggressive Muscovite also made attempts (though futile) to extend his religion and his power to that country. These and other movements of a similar kind were made in consequence of Britain's foreign policy being successful in obtaining almost supreme power in the valley of the Nile.

Although France, Germany and other nations have vast tracts of country in Africa, yet Old Sea-girt Albion possesses interests infinitely greater; for, from Apes Hill (one of the Pillars of Hercules) to the Cape, she holds almost unlimited sway. This fact, "cum multis aliis," shows how necessary it is that she should be the mistress of the sea. In the fate of ancient Carthage, the great rival to and scourge of Rome, she may hear even now a warning note; for if Carthage had not lost the supremacy of the sea, the armies of Rome would have

suffered defeat, instead of those of Hannibal, at the decisive battles of Meaurrus. It is Britain's navy which assures her power and prestige. If her naval strength be diminished, she will soon become as effete as Spain is now.

Again taking a brief glance at the past, we see that when the Mohammedan fanatics overran the North of Africa, subjugated Spain, and pushed their way to the Pyrenees Mountains, it seemed that Europe was about to suffer a similar fate to that of North Africa, until Charles Martell (Duke of the Franks), at the great battle fought on the plain between Tours and Poitiers, turned the tide of conquest and drove back the Saracen hordes to what was to them the more cognate soil of North Africa. But Europe, though happily rescued from the vile domination of the Moslems, yet sank into a state of ignorance approaching that of the Goths. The Western man's intelligence was distracted, disgraced and insulted by a religion composed of idle fancies and absurdities, which was propounded and taught by ecclesiastics, some of whom could scarcely read or write. The Arab scholars meanwhile were extending and simplifying mathematics, enriching their literature with imaginative poetry and historical writings, improving their moral status by the aid of philosophy, excelling in medicine and other sciences, particularly in astronomy and geography, by which latter they were enabled to compute the degrees of longitude and latitude and to ascertain the circumference of the globe. The light of Arabian astronomy became transmitted to geographical science, and navigation as a sequence followed. Prince Henry of Portugal, the greatest geographer of his times, was taught by scientific Arabs, and having made the city of Sagres in Algarve his residence, built an observatory and a school for navigation. He sent vessels on voyages of discovery to the coasts of Barbary and Guinea, and soon the Islands of Porto, Santo and Madeira were discovered and colonised, followed by the discovery of the Azores. His successful endeavours produced and fostered in his nation a desire for discovery and opened to the world new channels of navigation.

Africa has ever been a donor, and, as already shown, she places her verdant solitudes at the feet of the Western Powers, and presents them with a domain, the vastness of which causes the extensive dominions of the Muscovite to appear insignificant. In 1890-2 the King and the people of Uganda (a country lying to the north-west of the Victoria Nyanza, from which and its affluents the Nile takes its source), sought British protection by sending petitions to the Government, which were favourably received--Ministers complying with the requests set forth and Parliament voting £20,000 towards surveying a route from Mombasa to the Victoria Lake as a preliminary step to the construction of a railway. About this time, crowded meetings were held in various parts of England, at which resolutions were passed for the purpose of urging the Government to proceed with the colonisation of Uganda. The press also strongly recommended its occupation and development. It would seem, indeed, that if wise and prudent counsels prevail in the development of and governance of

her African possessions, Britain may sooner or later occupy a position of almost independence as regards the productions of other countries, whatever tariff policies may be formulated.

There is, however, one stern condition which has to be complied with—Britain must possess the supremacy of the sea; Britannia must "rule the wave," or she will not long rule in Africa or in any other part of the world, but, with her superior sea power assured she will possess the products of almost unlimited fields hitherto uncultivated. The indigenous plants, frankincense, myrrh, cinnamon, and cassia, which flourish in the countries that lie to the north-east of the tropical belt; the coffee plant, the forests of timber trees, and mines at present unexplored—all this, and much more, appear to be waiting for Britain's acceptance; and her African possessions, if carefully conserved and fairly administered, will augment her strength, extend her exalted sway and assist her in continuing to hold that which she has so long held, viz., the foremost place among the nations.

Some Thoughts on Education.

The word education is frequently misunderstood. I refer to it in its extended form. If I apply to a teacher—one whose business it is to impart instruction—I find him little better than a slave to one system. He is bound down to a few technical rules, and his reply is, "I teach reading, writing and arithmetic." He does not dare to venture beyond the bounds of his very limited sphere of action. Such a person can hardly be called a teacher. He is certainly not an educator. Education possesses a wide range. It is not bounded by the narrow limits which some think circumscribe its existence. It soars above the inevitable desolation in which almost every other thing that we are connected with is involved. It triumphs over periods, ages, even time itself. "It sees this grand period rise and that decay." It transports us into regions which but for itself would remain ever unexplored. We often forget that we have intellects in which ought to be sown the seeds of virtue, of moral rectitude, of philosophy, of strong desire for their improvement and for the welfare of mankind in general. The person upon whose mental and moral powers the necessary cultivation has not been bestowed finds as a natural sequence that his mental resources soon fail and become exhausted; and when freed from the restraints which are inseparably connected with physical labour, he produces little else than frivolity and viciousness. That which constitutes real education is often not sufficiently defined or explained. What we require is the proper development of the faculties—the recollective, the reasoning and moral powers, so that we may be duly benefited by the researches and the experience of those who have gone before us, and by obtaining access to the rich stores of knowledge accumulated in the far-off past and happily bequeathed to us. Religious fanatics,

however, will not be content with full development of the faculties. They erroneously think that the mind cannot be correctly instructed and trained unless heavily freighted with the theories of modern Christianity, which has been aptly styled by a modern Churchman "a civilised heathenism." We must not tax the brain with theological theories, when all its strength and energy are required for the accumulation and the retention of secular knowledge and for the full development of our natural powers, as organisation, judgment, reasoning, imagination, etc. Instruction is almost the sole factor in education. Education gives tone to and assists the mental powers in the exercise of perception, conception, practical utility, etc., and imparts an increasing desire for continual improvement. The happy possessor of a cultured mind will be in great measure enabled to rise superior to sorrows and grievances, to disregard blandishments and allurements, to work his way through a sea of troubles; and though Syrens and Circes assail him, their sinister efforts will be attended with but little success, while with calm self-possession he will arrive at that haven of happiness which is his alone.

A Plea for Moral Training.

(Written 1899.)

"I wish to give you a few thoughts on practical education, in so far as it relates to the great doctrine of those duties of our existence which aim at excellence in human character, that system of ethics which increases human happiness—morality. It must be conceded that moral teaching is an absolute necessity, an indispensable factor in the training and education of youth. 'What I desire,' says Arnold, 'above all things to see, is moral thoughtfulness, the inquiring love of truth, going along with the devoted love of goodness.' Vice in almost every form is plainly manifested. Every day we see in our newspapers lists of the names of persons charged with and often proved to be guilty of various crimes. Yet we, as it were, stand idly by, callous and indifferent to the grim fact. Pope truly said:—

Vice is a monster of so frightful mein
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.'

"Moral training is of the greatest importance, and justifies us in using every exertion to implant it and extend its growth in the minds of all.

"The heinous sin of lying is innate in a large section of mankind. It is regarded by some religious people as the oldest of all sins. Philosophers of all nations from the earliest ages have inveighed against it. The exponents of creeds have continually attacked it. The denunciations of the Bible have been hurled at it. Yet we see it, like an invulnerable monster, still rampant, maintaining all its ancient

vigour, in spite of all that philosophers' creeds, both old and new, and the Bible itself, could do. It is so vicious in its tendency that it deforms the mind, debases and makes a coward of him who indulges in it. Plutarch might well characterise it as 'the vice of slaves.' It is said of Cyrus that a great part of his education was to speak the truth. Anyone will tell us that he prefers truth to falsehood, and yet the latter possesses by far the largest number of disciples. We must not, however, be dismayed at so formidable an array of vice, for, though it is more profitable to reap than to sow, yet it is possible to sow in tears and to reap in joy. We must not regard our task, if well performed, as one that will be productive of no good results; like that of Sisyphus, eternally rolling a huge stone up a mountain; but, on the other hand, let us urge upon those who have the educating of the young to endeavour strenuously to foster in their minds a love of the nobility of truth.

"The result of moral culture is to bring the faculties of our nature to that perfection of which they are capable. Moral training comprises within itself those directing and modifying powers by which the human character is best formed. It unfolds the faculties, and determines the character. By it man's intellectual, physical and moral forces are united into one system, and by this unity of forces he becomes fortified against the wiles of the cunning and the attacks of the powerful. He is enabled to withstand the rude jostles of the world, and is prepared for that sphere of action to which he may be destined. Every incentive should be held out to the young to be obedient in all lawful matters to their parents, guardians, and teachers. Filial affection is the first and greatest of all moral duties. We should exert out best efforts to elevate the moral character of our youth. Not only should we endeavour to store the mind with useful and intellectual knowledge, not only should we aim at fitting it (by the ordinary methods of education) for the various avocations of life; but what is of greater value, we must teach it to regard as a higher attainment the importance of morality. As each one of us, however insignificant, forms a part of one great whole, we ought to be fairly taught to perceive and to value the proper object of our lives, viz., the formation and the guidance of our actions—the good of all mankind."

(Written 1899.)

In a letter recently published the writer, in condemnation of our secular schools, says that if his ideas of religious instruction were carried out "the present system of education would then be lifted out of its Procrustean bed." The metaphor halts. Our system of education is not in any such position. Procrustes ("the stretcher"), according to the ancient Greeks, was a robber—a monster—who put his victims into his bed, and, if short in stature, stretched them out in length to fit it; if too tall, he would cut them shorter; in both cases they died. Theseus, a supposed King of Athens, slew this monster and other robbers that infested the road between Troegene and Athens. He also caught alive the wild Marathonian bull and killed the Minotaur. Our system of education is a flourishing one. One

chief reason is because it is not sectarian. It is absurd to talk in favour of religion being taught in our public schools. The present teachers would have to be dismissed, as they are not theologians, and theological teachers would have to be got. The difficulty would not end here, as the doctrine that would be taught and regarded as orthodox in one school would be looked upon as heresy by another. Religious feuds would become rampant, as there would be as many different schools, each opposed to another, as there are creeds and sects. A system of secular education which embraces moral instruction is decidedly the best where there are so many diverse opinions upon religion and religious teaching.

Religious versus Moral Instruction.

(Written 1899.)

It seems to me that, however conclusively some may be answered, they will continually insist upon dishing up the unsavoury and worn out stock arguments which have been over and over again advanced in favour of the Bible in schools. They are never tired of trying to show that the only panacea for immorality and crime is the reading and the expounding of the Scriptures. Many have read, but few understand really and truly what the Scriptures are. In former letters I have endeavoured to show that some of the efforts produced by moral instruction are purity of mind, abhorrence of crime, love of truth, and a desire to do good to those with whom we come in contact. Beyond this we need not proceed, for if we have the Scriptures read and expounded in our schools, a door is immediately opened for the introduction of all kinds of religious dogmas, disputes and phases of belief, which would seriously injure, if not altogether ruin, our present system of education. Let us say with the poet—

"For modes of faith let graceless bigots fight;
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

My object in writing is not to reiterate what I have already stated in former letters upon this subject, but rather to give some account of those Scriptures which are so constantly held up to us by some as the Alpha and Omega of human requirement. These Scriptures are supposed to have been written originally in the Greek and Hebrew languages. The Aramean language completely superseded the Hebrew. It was in the Aramean, or as it is sometimes called the Syriac, that Christ and His disciples conversed, and in which on the cross He quoted the words of David, "My God! My God!" etc., for the original Hebrew was not a spoken language by the Jews after about 600 B.C. The books of the Old Testament were, however, written in the ancient Hebrew, and could only be read by the learned. If we suppose the original copies (the copies made by the authors themselves) to be perfect and infallible, we cannot rely upon the copies made after them as being so. Now let us look minutely into this, and

I think we shall see that, as the originals or first copies were lost ages ago, we have to accept reproductions, the earlier ones by whom we know not. Even at the time the books were written each book could be held only by one person. Others would possess only transcripts, and scribes would have to be employed to make these transcripts. Scribes, like all other men, are fallible, and the work of fallible men cannot be infallible. Therefore the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures now in existence are no more infallible than the English translation is. There are no two alike, and it is impossible to decide which are correct (if any) and which are erroneous. All translations are in some particulars erroneous. No one could say with truth that there ever was an infallible translation or translator; so if all translations and translators are fallible, it is patent we have no infallible rule or guide. No one with these facts before him will venture to assert that the Scriptures as we have them form a true, correct, perfect and infallible guide. As there were persons among the ancient Jews and pagans whose object was to prevent the common people knowing the truth, and taught them what they knew to be false, so there are people of the same class now. It does not require much research to prove that the New Testament forbids things which the Old Testament commands, and that the Old Testament insists upon an enormous amount which the New Testament utterly condemns. Yet these books which have been and still are such a source of wealth to hireling priests, with all their mysteries, delusions and contradictions, are every day paraded before us as an indispensable adjunct to our secular education. What we really require is that the imagination, which is the supreme faculty of the young, be aroused, so that generous enthusiasm be kindled in the mind, virtuous sensibility be awakened, exalted sentiment created or developed, noble emulation excited, the love of excellence encouraged; a careful, true and correct directing of the intellectual and moral aspirations and of the moral sympathies, elevating the mind by promoting purity of thought, inspiring feelings noble and dignified, and establishing the moral character on the solid basis of truth, free from religious dogmas, ambiguous and contentious creeds, and doubtful records.

Religion and Education.

The following was written in 1906 in answer to an advocate for religious teaching and Bible reading in the public schools:—One of your correspondents, under the nom de plume of "A.B.C.," attacks the present educational system by endeavouring to show that "our social well-being," "moral and religious lives" are not up to the standard which he desires them to be. His letter is an attempt to resuscitate the old dispute re the Bible in schools. That real moral philosophy is not taught is indeed a regrettable fact. Our system of secular instruction falls short of what it should be. The minds of the

pupils are not sufficiently cultivated. There is a want of refinement. Some of the books are of a poor class. Doggerel poetry on Chinamen with chopsticks is not likely to improve and elevate the mind. Much might be said adversely to our system, but to suppose, because the Bible is not read and taught, that as a consequence vice and crime must inevitably follow is simply the creed of a bigot. Are there not enough churches, chapels, Sunday schools, parsons, priests, lay-readers and religious teachers to satisfy "A.B.C.," but that he must have the Bible—which after all is a book, or rather a collection of books, of doubtful authority—brought into the public schools. If "A.B.C." could have his way, many of the ordinary teachers would either have to give up their positions or study divinity under a professor, and be half their time writing theological exercises, and by so doing neglect their secular duties. He quotes a saying of "the wise King of Israel." If I ask him do you wish to see us treading in the precise steps of this "wise king," I think he would reply only in Utah. He alludes to the decay of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. I answer to what extent would our knowledge and learning reach now had it not been for the existence of those brilliant lights, those vast theatres of civility, refinement, learning and human glory. With all the boasted Gospel, we have to go to pagan Rome for the very laws under which we live. Your correspondent, however, would have us think that as long as we have the Bible and the priests we want but little else. There are very few who read the Bible, if they be conscientious, but will say that the Bible is a two-mouthed guide and a double-tongued director. The New Testament is continually contradicting the Old Testament, and the Old Testament the New, which I can prove by quotations from them. "A.B.C." tries to show that the teaching of Christianity would be a preventative of all crime. Now, let us look back into the past, and see with what it has been associated, and whether or not it has been a preventative of crime. With what was it connected a hundred years ago? I answer, with cruelties, tortures, murders, sighs and deaths. In Spain, South America, etc., is it not connected with intolerance, divisions and persecutions, with priestcraft, covetousness and profligacy, and some of the priests themselves—the advocates of Christianity—are the most covetous, oppressive and profligate of all. Has not Christianity in England been associated with Easter dues, church rates, valuable livings for the wealthy, Lord Bishops, holding the Bible in their hands, drawing princely incomes while thousands of priests and Bible expounders, ever vigilant to advance their respective creeds and theories, are living on the hard earnings of the poor, refusing to work for their own support, "devouring widows' houses, and for a pretence making long prayers." Although in the Bible much good philosophy is inculcated, yet it contains defects and blemishes. There are many passages which are totally unfit to be read by adult persons of either sex, and which should be rigidly kept from the eyes of children and youths, as their perusal of them would be productive of immoral feelings, sexual desires and licentious practices.

Moral versus Religious Instruction.

(Published in "N.Z. Times" April 12, 1899.)

In the course of a long letter in reply to "Sans Dieu Rien":— As a matter of fact I care naught whether it be "Christian morality" or any other, provided it be really morality. My critic says that I want to impose a "State morality." What is that? Further on in the same paragraph he uses the words the "State's children." Are we, then, to suppose by inference that there are any children who are not the State's? Next we have the words, "It is an excellent sign that secularists are beginning to see as Christians have told them all along," etc. Why, the whole civilised world saw, thousands of years before Christians could tell them anything, that knowledge without virtue negatively amounts to vice. He goes on to say, "selfishness is a great blot upon secularist morality." I answer is it not equally great upon all classes of society whether religious or otherwise? There is a proverb, "Saints love gold." Is not the blot he speaks of there? Did not Luther's brother monks break in upon the privacy of that studious man, saying, "Come, come, it is not by studying but by begging bread, corn, eggs, fish and meat, that a monk makes himself useful to the cloister." Was not this selfishness? Does not "Sans Dieu Rien" know that selfishness is innate in the mind of man? and does not moral instruction aim at developing the principle of unselfishness and self-abnegation? Are not its shafts levelled at selfishness as well as at all other vices? Does he foolishly imagine that those who advocate the teaching of morality wish to give this one vice in particular immunity to run riot? He says, "The secularist has taken our whole educational system into his own keeping." This is absolutely false and misleading; for out of all those who framed, voted for and conferred upon New Zealand the present educational system there were not three professed secularists. He proceeds, "Apparently he does not believe in it (the present systems) himself." I reply, I do not consider it to be perfect or I should not have advocated moral instruction. If morals were more generally taught, we should not have occasion to deplore so much the existence of depravity and crime. He says, "I want to tinker up the system with a morality which must not be Christian," when I advocate the teaching of that doctrine which creates a love of truth, abhorrence of evil in every form, and a desire to seek the welfare of others as well as that of our own. He cannot surely be so ignorant as not to know that Christians profess to do the same, but the methods they adopt are inimical to any secular system of education. He then asks "Secular moralists to show the worth of their moral teaching." I will inform him that the worth of any teaching is proved by its results. Its worth cannot be exhibited like an article for sale in a vendor's shop. I hope that "Sans Dieu Rien" will yet see the dire necessity that exists for the speedy introduction of a system of moral instruction in our public schools, uncontaminated by priestcraft, bigotry, doubtful religious dogmas and disputed creeds.

Religious versus Secular Instruction.

(Written in the year 1899.)

"Sans Dieu Rien" demonstrates his denominational and narrow-minded tendency in the extreme when he would not oppose "the children of moralist parents" attending "moralist schools" because he wishes to have separate religious schools to suit the views of every religious sect. The doctrine I advocate is not denominational, but opposed to his idea of our public schools being sectarian in character. I and others have pointed out the confusion that would inevitably follow if your correspondent's idea could be carried out. As already shown, each religious sect would insist upon having a public school exclusively its own. How anyone proposing such a chaotic system could "enjoy a strong position" it would be difficult to understand. He is evidently labouring under a strange delusion when he asserts that the "moralist I would thrust upon him" is anything but what he as "a churchman" could desire; for what is it else but what is in itself virtuous and good, as it influences the best dispositions and the best actions of mankind. "Sans Dieu Rien" foolishly imagines that the revelation which he prizes so highly is par excellence. I will, however, inform him that it does not contain all that is necessary to guide and pilot us through life. He speaks of morality as some "moralism" of my own manufacture, as if I were the creator of some special system of ethics. He is deplorably ignorant of its real meaning, force and character. The statement that "the stoic philosophers were able to perceive that morality had more protection from even a false religion than their own philosophy could give," is a solecism indeed; but conveys the idea that even "a false religion" would be more acceptable to "a churchman's" mind than morality. He still persists in calling the author of the Messiah by his pet phrase, the "deistical Pope," and says he is my own poet. Here again is another solecism. How can the poet be mine any more than his, when he is constantly quoting from him. I showed in a former letter that Pope was a sincere believer in the Roman Catholic faith, even to the taking the last solemn rites of his creed when upon his death bed. It seems strange that your correspondent's eyes should be so obstinately closed to actual facts as to be proof against all operation. As regards the construction which he places upon his quotation, I have already proved it to be incorrect, as not only religion but

> "Art after art goes out and all is night.
> Truth skulks to her old concern."
>
> * * * *
>
> "Philosophy that lean'd on Heaven before,
> Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
> Physics of Metaphisic begs defence,
> And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense.
> See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
> In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave and die."

Another quotation is given, this time about naturalism, but as it

is foreign to the subject, comment or reply is wholly unnecessary. That morality, however, which teaches us to investigate for ourselves, to ascertain the truth or falsehood of certain notions that are placed before us by the priest-ridden and bigoted enthusiast; that presents to our faculties all that kindles generous enthusiasm, awakens virtuous sensibility, cherishes exalted sentiments, excites noble emulation, encourages the love of excellence, captivates the heart by communicating a consciousness of possessing fidelity and truth, directing our aspirations, producing a consoling and stimulating power, which supports us as we journey through life, emparadises our minds with all that is chaste, innocent, pure and guileless; abhorring deceit, hating vice, no matter in what form it may be craftily presented to us, independent of the trammels of corrupted records, steeped in doubt, difficulty and ancient fraud, in which so many indulge with much "Zeal and little thought"

"While crowds unlearn'd with rude devotion warm
Around the tainted viands buzz and swarm;
The fly-blown text creates a crawling Brood,
And turns to maggots what was meant for food.
A thousand daily sects rise up and die
A thousand more the perish'd race supply."

Was Pope a Deist?

(Written in the year 1899.)

The letter which appeared from "Sans Dieu Rien," in your issue of the 11th inst., is chiefly directed against the poet, Alexander Pope. After cavilling with a simple couplet, he calls him the "deistical Pope." He is by no means unacquainted with his works, as his quotations prove. What then can we say of him when he reads the poem of the Messiah, and in that poem the author agrees with theologians in general among other things that the birth of Christ was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. These are his words to which I refer, words which I should think "Sans Dieu Rien" as a "churchman" would be pleased to read and would scorn the thought of calling the writer a deist—

O Thou my voice inspire
Who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire,
Rapt into future times the bard begun.
A Virgin shall conceive, a Virgin bear a Son.

And at the end of the poem we have

The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust and mountains melt away;
But fix'd His word, His saving power remains,
Thy realm for ever lasts, Thy own Messiah reigns!

I do not wish to be understood as indorsing the above, but I do wish to show that your correspondent is not justified in making the remarks

he did either by the accounts of Pope's life, which I hope was "in the right," or by his works. His parents were both of the Roman Catholic persuasion and the poet received instruction from priests of his own church. Throughout his life and to his last moments he professed Roman Catholicism, and to prove that it was well known he was a Roman Catholic he had, like all others of his church, to conform to the extreme measure adopted by the Government of that day which was that no Roman Catholic should appear within ten miles of London. This edict came into force towards the end of the poet's life. When his death was approaching he received from the hands of a priest of his own church the last solemn rites. A few mornings before he expired he was found very early in his library writing on the immortality of the soul. A writer on his life says:—"Pope was a sincere and disinterested Roman Catholic." It would be idle to think your correspondent does not know to what religious creed the poet belonged, and yet he has the temerity to call him the "deistical Pope." When it becomes necessary for a writer to bolster up his cause and creed by erroneous criticism, based upon false biography, he unwittingly shows to the world that both he and they are in a sorry plight.

Moralism versus Religion.

(Written in 1899.)

Kuster having accidentally taken up a philosophical treatise in a bookseller's shop, after perusing it for a moment threw it down with scorn, saying, "Non sic itur ad astra." "Sans Dieu Rien," with equal prejudice, despises everything that tends to improve and to exalt the mind, and to elevate the soul, unless it be based entirely upon those dogmas to which he is evidently a slave. He seems not to know that the greatest good exists where there is the least admixture of evil. The way to obtain the best knowledge is to travel by the light of our best reason on the shortest and the clearest path to truth. It is the consciousness of this which makes the poet exclaim—

"Teach my best reason, reason my best will,
Teach rectitude and fix my firm resolve,
Wisdom to wed."

"Sans Dieu Rien" says:—"Morality has no vitality apart from its true basis." This sophistical statement, were it possible for any man to receive it, would lead him to suppose that morality could exist "apart from its true basis," though possessing "no vitality." This proves that his acquaintance with the principles of morality is slight indeed, as morality is never apart or separated from its true basis, because truth is its true basis, that solid, immovable adamant against which the foul waves of vice, the crafty attacks of bigotry and superstition, and the storms of fanatical religionists, though exerting all their sinister powers, have had no effect. He says, "Raike's work is

imperishable." The same may with greater truth be said of the religions of the Chinese and other nations of the East, which have existed for thousands of years. But has Raike's work, and that of all religious creeds, with all the successes he speaks of, removed the viciousness, the immorality, the corruption, the blight from our national existence? There is but one answer: No. Vice is as rampant as it ever was and its myriads of votaries are still bowing down before its polluted shrine and drinking to the last dregs the cup of life-long misery and despair. In another part of his letter he makes the bold but false assertion that "morality without religion has no existence." He evidently forgets what he had previously said, viz., that morality has no vitality apart from its true basis, which I have already shown is truth. Then why say it can have no existence without religion? Here he stands self-contradicted. He makes an impotent attempt to place morality in a fix. It is a fine instance of "telum imbelle sine ictu." To say that the pulpit "is checked by the enforcement by the State of secular education without religious instruction" is indeed a rough and ready way of coming to a conclusion, but it is a false conclusion. We see by such statements as this that—

> While others toil, with philosophic force,
> Blind zeal and superstition run another course—
> Fling at your sense crude notions in a lump,
> And gain remote conclusions at a jump.

The decadence of the pulpit is due to two causes: First, its occupants are and have been for many hundreds of years, with few exceptions, hireling priests, who do what they do, or rather say what they say, for one thing, money, which they themselves call filthy lucre. It, however, was never found too filthy for them. Money must be raised; bazaars must be held, at which goods are sold at double their value, and refreshments dispensed at exhorbitant rates. "The vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh," are pandered to; even the vice of gambling is resorted to, to uphold their religion. The second cause is because men are now more anxious to think and judge for themselves, and to shake off the fetters of priestcraft. This fact was admitted by a late Bishop of Winchester. In his charge to the clergy of his diocese he says:—"A spirit is manifest amongst us producing an impatience of control, a reluctance to acknowledge superiority, and an eagerness to call in question the expediency of our established forms and customs." "Sans Dieu Rien," referring to my last communication says:—"Nearly all his last letter is a pretence that he has shown or proved certain things, whereas he has done nothing of the kind." This is grossly misleading, as there is not one single word or sentence in it that would justify such a statement, if we except one remark contradicting his false assertions respecting the author of the "Messiah," etc. He quotes my words in a former letter:—"I would not thrust upon him anything but what he as a churchman would desire; for what is it else but what is in itself virtuous and good, as it influences the best dispositions and the best actions of mankind." To this he is unable to reply, and to supply the place of an answer he trifles with it like a little child by quoting a

puny nursery rhyme. He shows us that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, for in one letter we have quotations from one of the great poems of our language, and in the next from "The Spider and the Fly." I am, however, sorry to find that he has accepted the invitation of that spider, the hireling priest, and walked into the parlour of bigotry and superstition. He says he objects to a moralist system of education. If he will look back into history and compare the fraud, the villainy, the general wickedness and the profligacy which then prevailed with the profligacy, the vice and crime that now exist, after his church has for hundreds of years been propagating her doctrines, he will see but too plainly that her teachings, so far from being a power for good or for the suppression of vice, are a total and absolute failure. Its seeds were sown in corruption, and like noxious weeds grow and multiply greatly, spreading their baneful influence over a vast continent, till both people and priests sank from a state of light, learning, civility and refinement into worse than Gothic darkness, ignorance and superstition, and so remained for near a thousand years. As regards his last sneering remark that I "know what is best for him," I will say that he evidently does not know what is best for himself, otherwise he would accept, with due humility, and with a thankful heart, that excellent system of ethics which I offer to him, that system which transforms the caviller into the quiet tinker, and the fool into the happy possessor of common sense and reason.

Japan.

THE COUNTRY: ITS HISTORY, PRODUCTS AND PROGRESS.

(Written 1905.)

As the recent military and naval achievements of Japan and her general policy are doing much towards bringing that far Eastern land into prominence with Britain, her colonies, the nations of Europe, and America, a brief sketch of Japan, of her people and institutions, may not be uninteresting to many readers. The native name of Japan is Dai Nipon, or Niphon, the meaning of which is Sunrise or East. Japan consists of about 3,850 islands, and is situated between latitude 24deg. to 47deg. north, and longitude 128deg. to 151deg. east, being about 26deg. of latitude and 23deg. of longitude off the north-east coast of Asia. The islands Niphon, Kiusiu, Sikok and Yesso, with the large Kurile islands, called Kunasiri and Hurup, and the Loo-choo islands, form the largest portion of the Empire. Its northern boundary is the Sea of Okhotsk; the eastern and southern the Pacific Ocean; the west and north-west the Strait of Corea, the Sea of Japan, and the Gulf of Tartary. The area of Japan is about 155,469 square miles. The largest island contains about 89,016; Kiusiu, 15,831;

Sikok, 6,970; the smaller islands, 2,678; Yesso, 34,605; Kunasiri and Iturup, 3,699; the Loo-Choo, 2,670.

The population is estimated at about 40,000,000. The largest island, Niphon, from which the whole Empire takes its name, is upwards of 700 miles long, and varies in width from 50 to 100 miles. The Kino Channel, which in one part is only two miles in width, separates Kiusiu from Niphon. Kiusiu is about 200 miles in length from north to south, and 120 in width. Sikok, which is on the east of Kiusiu, and separated from it by the Strait of Boungo, is about 140 miles long and 60 in width. Between Sikok and Niphon there are innumerable small islands. Yesso is triangular in form—its coast lines being 300, 260 and 200 miles on the respective sides. It is separated from Niphon on the south-east by the Strait of Tsugar or Matsmai. The valuable island called Sado is on the west of Niphon, and is about 45 miles long and 21 wide. There are in the large islands many bays and gulfs, which form splendid harbours. Throughout the whole length of Niphon there are high mountains, one of which is an extinct volcano, and rises to the height of 13,977 feet; it is called Fusiyama (Rich Scholar Peak). In Yesso some terrible eruptions have occurred. In 1783, 23 villages were destroyed. There are five active volcanoes in Kiusiu, one of which is named Wunzendake. Fifty-three thousand people are said to have perished in an eruption of this mountain in 1792.

Large quantities of plastic clay, marl and felspar are found in many parts of the islands; also immense deposits of porcelain earth. In several localities, gold, silver, copper, tin, lead and iron are obtained. It is said that Sado is remarkably rich in gold. There are deposits of sulphur and extensive coal fields in the islands. Most of the rivers are not navigable, being little more than rapid torrents, but many canals have been made. Japan possesses many lakes, the largest of which is in the southern part of Niphon; it is named Biwano-Oumi, and is 40 miles in length. The climate varies to a great extent, the north being extremely cold, while in the south it is said to be as warm as the south of France. In the north, particularly in Yesso, pine trees and oaks flourish, while in the southern parts the bamboo, banana, myrtle, bignonia, palm, maple, camphor, and varnish trees abound. The chief fruits are pomegranates, pears, oranges, apricots and peaches. Japan sent to the Exhibition of Paris in 1867 a beautiful kind of a paper, which was manufactured from the kadsi (paper tree). The sugar cane is successfully cultivated in the south, and two crops of rice are obtained. Cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, potatoes, soy and wheat are grown in large quantities. The plantations of pepper, ginger, tea, tobacco and cotton are on an extensive scale. Among the animals may be mentioned buffaloes and zebus—the latter a species of ox—both used as beasts of burden. There are no asses, mules, camels or elephants. Horses are numerous. In the northern part of Niphon there are hyaenas, bears, wild pigs, hares, deer and foxes. Cats are very numerous. A great sanctity is attached to dogs. Falcons are much esteemed. Ducks, geese, teal, storks, ravens, larks, pelicans, herons, cranes, pigeons, and pheasants are plentiful. The ourabami,

a large kind of snake, is frequently met with. Tortoises, scorpions, lizards and centipedes abound. There are several varieties of beautiful moths. Fish is plentiful, and being obtained in large quantities forms, with rice, the principal food of the people.

The Japanese are of the Mongol-Tartar race, and are socially divided into two classes—viz., the military and the civil. The moral characteristics of the people are skill, perseverance, courage and honesty. They are good-tempered, polite and courteous, frank and affable in manner; industrious, temperate and hospitable. Those of the highest rank wear two swords. Hats are worn only as a protection from storms and rain. The State religion is Buddhism, but there is also an ancient form of faith, called Sinto, or Sin-Syu, which means, literally, "faith in gods." The Mikado, with two Judges, priests and monks, form the ecclesiastical Court of Sin-Syuism. There are in all eight distinct sets of Buddhists. The language has forty-seven letters. There are two different denominations. One becomes intricate, in consequence of variations, and is called the Hiragana character. The other, the Katagana character, is free from variations and less complex. The literature of Japan embraces works both ancient and modern on every important subject—astronomy, geology, history, science, etc. The Japanese have a cycle like the Chinese of sixty years, which they form by combining two series of words. They calculate five elements, and use the names of them, adding the masculine and feminine endings, "je" and "to," thus making ten in all. They, like the aboriginal natives of Peru and Mexico, before their acquaintance with Europeans, reckon time with tolerable exactness. The Mexican cycle consisted of fifty-two years; and by adding twelve and thirteen days alternatively, their calculations become nearly correct. Three hundred and sixty-five days formed one year, which was divided into eighteen months of twenty days, and five added. The Japanese are well advanced in manufacturing and in scientific knowledge. Their manufactures in copper, iron, steel, silk, cotton, china, paper, and their cabinet work are of a high order. Their porcelain is said to be of the best quality, and is highly esteemed. The art of japanning as it is improperly called by us—lacquering being nearer correctness—is brought to great perfection. With the varnish which is obtained from the varnish tree, a brilliancy is produced which surpasses all ordinary kinds of varnish.

The Japanese Government, between 1854 and 1883, opened five ports to foreign shipping—viz., Hakodadi, Hiogo and Osaka (forming one port only), Kanagawa (Yokohama), Nagasaki and Nugata. Since 1870 the Japanese have struck a new coinage, consisting of 10, 5, and 2½ dollar pieces in gold, and in silver 50, 20 and 5 cent pieces, besides cent and half-cent in copper. Notes of different values are also in currency. The chief weights are the picul, which equals 133lb., and the kinn, 1 1-3lb. The measures of length are the shaku, which equals 10 inches; the sun, 11¾ inches; the ri, equal to 36 cho, being 2¾ English miles. The Government of Japan is despotic, the Mikado being an hereditary absolute monarch, but is regarded as being himself subject to the laws which are ancient, and cannot be easily repealed or

altered. In opposition, however, to this axiom, we find that in 1585 the Emperor's chief general, having seized the reins of Government, divided, though by no means equally, the power with his Royal master. The Shogun, as he was called, lived at Yeddo, and assumed the highest position in the secular administration. This state of affairs lasted for 283 years, but in 1868 a revolution ended the authority and office of the Shogun. There is an Executive Ministry, divided into eleven departments, which, in addition to other duties, assists the Mikado, in administrative matters. There is also a Sain, or Senate of thirty members, nominated by the Mikado. This body has power to advise and instruct the Ministry in all their departments. In 1875 a Parliament was created, consisting of two deliberative bodies. The first of these is called the Genroin. All the members are proposed by the Sain to the Mikado for nomination, but no one is ever proposed who has not held some good office in the State. The Genroin deliberates on all legislative questions, and receives petitions, but has no power to present propositions. The name of the other Chamber is the Chikuhokuaukuaigi. It consists of prefects or governors of provinces, and its deliberations are upon all affairs affecting the internal management of the nation. During the last thirty-five years all law proceedings, both civil and criminal, have been simplified, and are conducted in open Courts, being removed from all adjudication by the executive power. The Government joined the International Postal Union on the first of July, 1877.

Marco Polo, a Venetian traveller of the 13th century, was the first European to give us any account of Japan. He called it Zipangou. In 1542, the celebrated Portuguese traveller, Ferdinand Mendez-Pinto, after many vicisitudes, arrived at the Empire of the Far East, and soon after his visit his countrymen were permitted to form a settlement in Nagasaki, which is situated on a peninsula formed by the bay of Omoora, and opposite to the small island of Papenberg, one of the five Imperial towns. In 1549, Francis Xavier, a Jesuitical priest, a native of Navarre, with his followers, converted some of the Japanese. This gave dire offence to the Government, and in 1585 the Portuguese traders and priests were expelled from the country, the native converts returning to the faith of their ancestors. In 1600, the Dutch were permitted to trade in a restricted way, which, by exercising prudence, they were enabled to maintain. In 1854, the United States Government arranged with Japan for the ports of Simoda and Hakodate to be opened to American vessels, but only for effecting repairs and obtaining supplies of provisions and fresh water. About the same time British ships received a similar privilege, being allowed to enter the ports of Nagasaki and Hakodate, but a much more valuable concession was concluded in 1858, by which the five ports already mentioned were declared free to British vessels and British traders. This was effected by an agreement on the part of Britain to pay certain dues. America and other European countries obtained similar advantages on similar terms. In 1869, some European commercial houses for local trade only were established at Yeddo, the port of which is Yokohama. During the last few years the Japanese

have made hundreds of miles of railways. The first was from Yeddo to Yokohama, twenty miles long, and was opened in 1872. The Japanese have Embassies in America and all the chief European countries.

Though the Japanese have just concluded a terrible war with Russia, in which they have manifested the greatest military and naval prowess, they are nevertheless a peace-loving and philosophical people, whose chief aim is to extend their trade with other countries in every legitimate direction. They know that trade is a plant which takes root and flourishes wherever there is peace, and so continues as long as peace exists. The Japanese have conferred an inestimable benefit on millions of human beings by fighting for the great cause of liberty and civilisation versus barbarism. If, instead of being the victors, they had unhappily been the vanquished, the fabric of progressive civilisation in Japan would have tottered to its very base and anarchy, decay, and final ruin would have been the inevitable result. The development of their internal resources, the extension of their commercial system, the inauguration of a system to exterminate old abuses, justly inspire them with high expectations of greatness in the future.

The Japanese and Christianity.

A few years ago at a Methodist conference held at Invercargill, the retiring president in his annual address said that "the door was opening wider for Christianity in Japan." It were well if those who are so anxious to compass both sea and land to make proselytes, paused before attempting to interfere with the religious beliefs of the Japanese who, for many hundreds of years have had, like all other ancient nations, their own creeds and modes of faith. If the convert-makers will but look at the events which so seriously disturbed Japan in 1585 they will do wisely to wait till the Japanese door for Christianity opens very much wider than it is at present. For two years, Francis Xavier and his brother proselytisers forced their "gospel tidings" with such fanatical zeal into the ears of the native population, interfering with such persistence with their religious ideas, institutions, and social status, that the Government at length, becoming exasperated, expelled the missionaries from the country, the converts returning to their ancient faith. This, however, was not accomplished without bloodshed, indisputably proving that the visit of Xavier and his brethren did not bring peace but a sword.

The Japanese, thus warned by the subtle encroachments of Christian missionaries, and knowing by painful experience their baneful influence in producing internal broils and disaffection in the public mind, sturdily resist all the specious overtures and plausible attempts made by propagators of religious tenets. If the Primitive Methodist conference devoted its attention to the alleviation of the

distress of the thousands of starving people in England, instead of talking about "the door opening wider for Christianity in Japan," it would not only show to the world a spirit of true philanthropy, but would also earn the just gratitude of a large section of our countrymen who are stretching forth their hands for bread. Alas! that in the midst of their abundance, proselytising Christians should stand callously by, viewing a multitude sunk to the lowest depths of want, and thus seem to tacitly concur with one Bond, who, when giving evidence before an English Parliamentary Committee respecting the doings of a corporation yclept the "Charity Corporation," said—"Damn the poor. God hates the poor. Every man in want is either knave or fool." A heavenly-minded bishop, who also gave evidence, said—"I think, after all, gentlemen, we had better leave them (the poor) to the care of Providence." To this I may reply—"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" May not the word heathenism be regarded as a synonym for modern Christianity.

A Short History of Cuba.

(Written in 1897.)

In consequence of recent events, some account of the island of Cuba may not be uninteresting. It was discovered by Columbus on his first voyage in 1493, and in 1511 it became a Spanish settlement, and the Spaniards have held possession of the country up to the present. The chief port is Havana, which was taken by the English in 1762. It was, however, restored to Spain by the terms of the peace of 1763. The area of Cuba is about 40,000 square miles, and is the largest of the Columbian Archipelago. Its length is near 800 miles, but has a varied width of from 28 to 127 miles. A large portion of the coast, say fully two-thirds, is masses of reefs and rocks. That part of the country embracing the Cabo de Cruz, Cabo Maysi, and the town of Holguin is hilly and mountainous, and the mountains are called Sierra, or Montanos del Cobre, meaning Cobra or Serpent Mountains. Cuba has no large navigable rivers. The climate is considered temperate. There is no snow at any time of the year either on the Sierra del Cobre or on the Lomas de San Juan. Hurricanes do not often occur, seven or eight years will pass without any. Some of the other islands adjacent to Cuba are more frequently sufferers by these devastating visitations. The island, however, is subject to heavy north winds. The months of May, June and July may be regarded as the rainy season, although rain falls during every month of the year. The country is never long free from earthquakes. The aboriginal inhabitants were annihilated by the Spaniards 50 years after they formed their first settlement. Slavery has been carried on for hundreds of years. The population is located near the most fertile parts, but a

large portion of Cuba is very thinly inhabited. The greatest number of inhabitants is near the western extremity. The productions of Cuba are chiefly yams, bananas, mandioca, potatoes, maize, and sweet potatoes, which form the ordinary food of the coloured population. In addition to the above tobacco, cotton, sugar, coffee, and indigo are raised. There are large areas of pasture land for the breeding of cattle. Hides are largely exported. Near 3,000,000 of acres are under cultivation. There are large forests which yield good timber. The country is divided into three districts called intendencias—the Eastern, the Western, and the Central. The Eastern district or province contains the town of Santiago de Cuba, the ancient capital, and three harbours, named respectively Manzanillo, Baracoa, and Gibara. The Western division, in addition to the capital (Havana) contains the towns of Matanzas, Guanabacoa and the Isle de los Pinos. The Central district contains the towns of Santa Clara, Santo Espiritu, San Juan de los Remedios, Trinidad de Cuba, Fernandina de Xagua and Santa Maria de Puerto Principe. It is the most fertile part of Cuba. Trade and commerce have increased more rapidly in Cuba than in most countries. Sugar and coffee are the chief exports. It has been estimated that about 500,000 tons of sugar are exported annually. Havana is the chief port for foreign trade. The importations are mostly flour, rice, butter, cheese, candles, tallow, salted fish, brandy and wine. Cuba is not a manufacturing country. Cotton, woollen goods, linen and iron goods are also largely imported. England, Spain, and the United States are the chief importers from Cuba. It has been estimated that 5,000 small vessels are employed to bring produce from different parts of the island to Havana alone. The harbour is regarded as one of the best in the world. The entrance has two strong fortifications named El Morro and La Punta. The city is entered by three gates, and is fortified in every direction. The Cathedral, in which the remains of Columbus are deposited, they having been removed from San Domingo in 1795, ranks among the finest buildings. Beside the cathedral there are fourteen other churches, the grand citadel, the correo or post office, two hospitals, university, theatres, botanic gardens, the ecclesiastical college, circus buildings, and three splendid promenades—one in the city, one along the ramparts, and one outside the walls. The geographical position of Cuba gives it almost as great importance as its productions, and the possession of Cuba bestows a large control over the commerce between Europe and the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the United States.

Africa and Europe.

(Written August 5, 1901.)

The recent operations by the British in the Transvaal and Orange Colonies have done much to bring Southern Africa prominently before the eyes of the civilised world, and no one but the veriest tyro in the world's politics would suppose that Mr. Kruger's appeal to the

nations of Europe for mediation or intervention would meet with success. When we look at the Dark Continent, comprising within its seaboard and boundaries the enormous area of 11,900,000 square miles, over the greater part of which Great Britain, France, Italy, Portugal, Belgium and Germany have proclaimed their authority, it is by no means improbable that sooner or later diplomatic questions and transactions of the most important nature will take place and grave developments will inevitably follow. But whatever the future may bring forth, certain it is that no European Power would be willing to risk disturbing the equilibration which at present happily exists by any intervention or interference with the claims of another Power when such claims do not come into conflict with those of its own.

Up to the present time no rupture has happened between the nations which have partitioned off large tracts of the vast Continent. Africa is being merged in the European system. During the last twenty years France has enlarged her area in Africa to an extent eight times greater than that which she possessed before that period elapsed, and Britain has done and is doing very much more. The partition of Africa must be regarded as the greatest achievement of her colonising policy. Italy and Germany have for the first time in the history of those nations become possessed of a spirit of colonising enterprise in Africa. It would be difficult to imagine with any hope of being correct, and presumptuous to assert what effect all this may produce upon Europe in the future. It may be that trade and commerce as at present constituted will undergo an almost revolutionary change. New paths of ocean may be traversed and new trades and trade routes be opened up. It was North Africa that supplied the public granaries of old Rome, and who can say it is impossible that both north and south of the great Continent may not in the future serve modern Europe in the same capacity?

The resources of Africa are to us only partially developed. As known to us the chief productions are the date palm, wheat, maize and rice. There are groves of olive, orange and fig trees. The lotus, the castor oil and the dwarf palm also flourish. The ornamental trees are the arbutus, the pine, the myrtle, the cyprus, the oak, and the cork oak. The tropical parts produce the lemon, the custard-apple, tamarind, orange, the papaw and the banana. The mangrove, cabbage palm, shea butter tree, wax-palm and the cotton tree. Several of the above are indigenous in some parts of Nubia. The coffee plant flourishes to such an extent on the eastern coast that whole forests of it are found there. Cassia, myrrh, cinnamon and frankincense are in abundance towards the north-east. The swamps in the tropical parts abound with patyrus. The natives cultivate the ground nut, yam, pigeon-pea, cassava, from which they make a kind of bread.

It has been said that the moral influence of Asiatic nations has not been an actual benefit to Europeans. Northern Africa, however, not only on account of her geographical position, but also in consequence of her intellectual knowledge, produced at various times mysterious and extraordinary influences for good. Christopher Columbus thought of land beyond the Azores (America) from the little African island of

Porto Santo. Dr. Halley saw from St. Helena the transit of Mercury across the sun, and in consequence he added to our stock of astronomical knowledge. It was in Africa that Lacaille measured an arc of the meridian, and Sir William Herschell made some of his important discoveries. In Africa the Moslems gained their power, and the Mohammedans arrived at the height of their glory. She presented to Europe "the letters Cadmus gave," sixteen in number, which formed the early Greek alphabet.

Much might be said of the strange but powerful influence which the Dark Continent has exerted upon Europe; and now she places before us an almost interminable territory. With this in our possession, we can almost defy the world, provided we continue to hold the maritime power in our hand. This vast domain, extending as it does so far north and south of the equator, possessing every variety of climate, will, when its "sunny fountains" are appreciated, its fields cultivated, its forests opened and utilised, and its mineral wealth unearthed, be to Britain not only a vast storehouse from which she may with every facility draw supplies; not only an almost unlimited territory for future colonisation; not only a luxuriant garden, rivalling that of the ancient Hesperides, which Ladon, the hundred-headed dragon, guarded; but ipso facto she will gain a still higher position than that which even now she occupies in the eyes of the nations of Europe.

A Cage of Unclean Blackbirds.

An old ricketty almost worn-out cage with the word "Prohibition" stamped on it was recently deposited on a vacant section of the Te Aro reclamation, but was rudely flung aside by some workmen who came to prepare the ground for the erection of a new building intended for the sale of wines, spirits, etc. The occupants of the said cage, being much disturbed, cackled and quarrelled to an extent up to that time unknown in that not over happy family. The leader of the black feathers—a big bloated sneering pigeon-toed monster, whose windpipe seemed partly obstructed, was dubbed Lex Bob, with dirty beak and claws, and rigged out in a cast-off wig and gown bearing some old saws, proverbs, and texts, one of which was "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The other plumed rowdies (with the exception of one who was commonly called Lady Fragile, and who, by the way, took great interest in Lex Bob) wore dresses supposed to denote peculiar piety on the part of the wearers, and were named respectively Is-it Ell Hem and Latter Day Enoch. The first-named used to take great delight in cawing around Wesleyan Chapels in temperate zones, but has since flown to a dryer climate for the purpose of increasing his already inordinate desire for drinking water, at which employment he elevates his beak heavenward at every sip. When quietness was restored Lex Rob addressed the others at considerable length, standing on a decayed branch called the temeperance

perch, which every moment was expected to break down, when a stranger from the country presented himself, swooping down and alighting on the edge of a cask, which was labelled "Old Highland Whisky," being dressed also in pious costume, with the addition of a Scotch bonnet, and possessing a great love of all spiritual things, occasionally inserting his bill into a small hole bored in the top, and getting singularly unsteady on the feet, but withal funny and witty. Is-it Ell Hem objected, saying "Sinners stand in slippery places," whereon the stranger, whose name he said was Tam-o'-Shanter, quickly replied, "De'il if I can, mister." The wrath of Lex Bob was now kindled. He denounced Tam in violent terms, threatening law without gospel, heavy punishment, etc., stating among other things that Tam, though presented with a silver cup, did not require it, as he said spitefully he (Tam) could drink out of anything that contained liquor, whether it be the tap of a hogshead, the spike of a keg, the mouth of a pickle jar, or the bung of a barrel. Tam retorted with great spirit, saying something about supplying the street fountains with gin, and thus applying the money to a spiritual purpose. After which he sang the following ditty, to the tune of "We'll soon return to the country":—

Lex Bob, who takes the grist from the mill,
Lex Bob, who would rob every publican's till
Lex Bob, who pulls from his own wing a quill,
To question acts and assertions of mine
He never, no never, shall have his own will;
His perch I'll destroy and kill his bill,
And cut off his dirty claws.
No use for him then to try to stump,
An order he'll get on Saint Aldgate's pump,
With Is-it Ell Hem and Enoch.

After this effort Tam became exceedingly thirsty, and partook still further of the contents of the cask. A howl, or rather, a cackling of indignation followed from Lex Bob and Is-it Ell Hem, in which Lady Fragile, who, considering herself a sort of prima donna, joined, saying that she would never sit upon or help to hatch the addled eggs of any reception committee, while Latter Day Enoch quietly took leave of all, saying his name was Walker. Tam, whose temper was not yet cooled, pointing his beak in a defiant manner at Lex Bob, and now suffering from a wee drappie owre muckle o' the whisky, thought his enemy Lex Bob was dead, and confusedly recollecting a word from Swift, said if Satan were to die he (Tam) would gladly be the man who would preach his funeral sermon. He would then give the devil his due, the same as he had that day given one of his legal children. Then, calling upon Enoch to return, said that when one died four of the same-calling should carry the bier, he gave the following recitation, though, as events have proved, a trifle in advance:—

Come, friends all, and see the wonder,
One rogue above and four under,
To his warm home he's now on his journey,
The Devil is in Law and he wants an attorney.

At this time the cackling and cawing became such an intolerable nuisance to all around that a tame raven was soon on the spot, with one who *heard* it all. He was armed with a blunderbuss loaded with leaden pellets, on each of which was engraved a letter of the alphabet. The feathered rabble, seeing their danger, at once spread out wings and tails, and flew off to safer quarters, ready to fall foul on any edible that came in their way. The raven, after watching for a moment their rapid flight, and surveying the derelict "Prohibition" cage, recited in his usual clear voice Moore's appropriate lines, making, however, a slight alteration in the arrangement:—

See the cormorants hovering about
At the time their fish season sets in,
When these models of keen diners-out
Are preparing their beaks to begin.

See the rooks in legal and clerical dresses
Flock round when the harvest's in play,
And not minding the farmer's distresses
Like devils in grain peck away.

A Dance of Bishops.

As I am a strong supporter of bazaars for augmenting church funds, I propose that at the next one, which I have no doubt will soon be held, we have an episcopal ball to be composed entirely of bishops. What a pleasing and edifying spectacle would be presented to us if we could see them engaged in this way for the benefit of religion. It is really time they did something, when we consider the salaries they receive. What I propose, if carried out, would be a renewal of the good old times, and would make the poet's dream almost a reality when he saw, or thought he saw—

"Clerks, curates and rectors capering all
With a neat-legg'd Bishop to open the ball."

He continues:—

"For Britain and Erin clubb'd their Sees
To make it a dance of Dignities,
And I saw—oh, the brightest of church events!
A quadrille of the two Establishments—
Bishop to Bishop vis-a-vis,
Footing away prodigiously.

There was Bristol, capering up to Derry,
And Cork with London making merry,
While huge Llandaff, with a see, so, so,
Was to dear old Dublin pointing his toe."

I am sure that if this suggestion were acted upon the church coffers would be well replenished, as of course a special charge would be

made to see this "Episcopal Hop," and there are few indeed who would not attend.

> Oh! what a joyous sight it would afford,
> If our saints, like David, danced before the Lord.

Scaliger says "that the first bishops were proesules for no other reason than that they led off the dances." Let us hope that the New Zealand Bishops will give this question their favourable consideration,

> "Keeping always that excellent maxim in view,
> That in saving men's souls we must save money, too."

A Trio of Political Stage Players.

(Written in the year 1896.)

There is an old Latin adage—*Trio juncta in uno.* And the three political stage players who have been diverting the public of Wellington for the past few weeks are indeed a trinity of persons. This union has been effected by an accidental combination of fragmentary atoms. Two of the said trio have been busily engaged rehearsing their respective parts and posting up—educating and prompting—the third, who has proved himself a tolerably apt scholar. His chief virtue lay in his strict obedience. Whatever he was told to do he, although blundering, did with all his might. When told to cast aside his single tax doctrine he at once acknowledged his ignorance and meekly obeyed. When introduced to the public he took the character of Jem Crow which was tolerably played under tuition of his two brother performers who are themselves adepts at the peculiar turnings and twistings so essential to the correct performance of this character. But when the clear ring of the Bell was heard—a bright star "who shook the stage with thunders all his own—who could dash each vain pretender's hope"—there was a loud call from behind the scenes of "Hear it not, it is a knell! Thy knell." He stood with alarm, looked anxious and raised his left arm as a shield to his body, but, unfortunately, and through want of practice over-acted the gesture to such an extent in his too earnest desire to demonstrate the passion correctly, as to render it absolutely ludicrous, and thus unwittingly made of the passion a burlesque, and an involuntary buffoon of himself. His two brothers, however, came at once to the rescue and informed the audience that they wished to represent the great cause of civilisation and taxation versus barbarism, that if the people would but support their protege, their obedient and amiable disciple, they would flourish like green bay trees, become themselves the same colour, and for ever bask in the sunshine of prosperity. The political war which they wished to represent was the most "justifiable that was ever inaugurated beneath the smiling radiant dome of all the broad heavens," and said "seize the opportunity which we offer you of fighting for your liberties. If you do not take our advice you will

recede a century behind the age, and instead of having your *balance* preserved with the policy which taxes and drives away capital, you will have a state of things far worse." These pronounced ebullitions of their feelings, together with the singular writhing, like a tortured ghost of the new disciple, only produced ironical cheering and laughter. Seneca says, "The gods look with pleasure on great men falling with the temples and the divinities of their country." So did the audience, whose risible faculties seemed also to accord with Persius where he says—"Hoc ridere meum tam nil, nulla tibi vendo iliade." Finding themselves falling short of the success which they had expected to command, they put in as a make weight an ex-stationer, one who had a great horror of all kinds of spirits, particularly ardent spirits, and who positively refused to play even Hamlet's spirit, but could play Falstaff without stuffing. He, in his peculiar way, tried to throw oil on the troubled waters, smooth down the ruffled feathers, and restore equanimity of feeling, by saying that he believed that those who had been presented to the audience had done the best they could. The attempt, however, proved a failure, and was received with cat calls, cries of "Pygmalion didn't make you," and "You don't like beer," etc.; and the audience dispersed before even the National Anthem could be played. Thus ended the most ludicrous display of political mountebanks ever seen on a Wellington stage.

Ghostly Possibilities Foreshadowed

OWING TO A GENTLEMAN WHO WAS A SPIRITUALIST STANDING AS A CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT.

(Written in the year 1895.)

If Mr. —— be returned to Parliament a strange and dismal state of things is likely to obtain. I allude to the probability of ghosts, goblins, and spirits being produced during a session, as Mr. —— is as potent a power at raising spirits as the Witch of Endor. What, I ask, would happen if the spirits of some honourable members who have shaken off this "mortal coil" were to be brought up at a division, and marched in and out of the lobbies. As the spirits are very obedient to Mr. ——, Ministers could always depend upon a majority. The members in the flesh would have good cause to dread the thought! Even Mr. Speaker himself would not be safe, for he would not know one moment from another when the shade of Sir D. Monro or some quondam occupant of the chair might not rise and hover over or take its old seat, and thus the strange spectacle of two Speakers would be presented to the astonished gaze of members, who would be at their wits' end to know whether or not they ought to address one or the other, or both! The ruling could not possibly be depended on, as the one being under and subject to the will of Mr. ——, would be very likely to reverse the ruling of the other. Then, again, the shade

of a departed Minister might insist upon taking its erstwhile accustomed place and jostle the present Premier out of his seat, who unfortunately might lose his *balance*, and, fancying himself in opposition, would cross the floor of the House only to find the seat there occupied by one whom he least expected to see. It would be useless for the Speaker, or the two Speakers, to call upon the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove any of these interloping shades in consequence of their being to the touch no more than thin air. If. Mr. —— be in favour of female sufferage there would be nothing to hinder him raising some gentler spirits—spirits of the opposite sex who perhaps having been tapped by Cupid o'er the shoulder might choose to sit beside hon. members if in no nearer position and thus produce feelings most painful in the minds of the occupants of the ladies' gallery. Members finding such a state of affairs as I have endeavoured to describe would be justified in resigning their seats and would no doubt do so and New Zealand would no doubt be governed by Mr. —— and as many ghosts as he might think he required with perhaps one solitary Minister. I am informed that the ghosts will insist on receiving payment for their services. Such being the case Mr. —— will introduce a Bill entitled "The Parliamentary Ghosts' Honorarium Bill." It is devoutly to be wished that both hon. members in the flesh and the ghosts will oppose any attempt to pay to Mr. —— a lump sum as ghosts' salary as it would open the door to the sweating system and thus establish a bad precedent.

About Comets.

The following was written on the 12th of May, 1901, at which time a brilliant comet appeared in the Southern Hemisphere:—

Now when our western sky is nightly adorned by one whose appearance is different from that of all the other stars, and so much ignorance prevails among many persons respecting the heavenly visitants of like character, a few words re comets may not be unacceptable to readers. Comets have, until recent times, been regarded as precursors of national calamity. This idea was originated, fostered and taught by astrological and other priests and firmly believed in by the populace. Christian ministers during the last forty years have constantly referred to them as warning notes sent by God to the people.* The light of science, however, is now chasing away the darkness of this and such-like absurdities. The word comet is derived from

*It was predicted that the comet of 1712 would appear on Wednesday, the 14th of October, at five minutes past five o'clock a.m., and that the world would be destroyed by fire on the Friday following. The comet duly appeared, as predicted, the people gazing at it with terror-stricken countenances, believing that the latter part of the prediction would be as truly fulfilled as the first part was proved to be. It was said many went raving mad. Large numbers took shelter in barges and boats on the Thames, thinking that the water was the safest place, by no means agreeing with the poet in his description of the last day, when speaking of the seas and oceans, said, "Like oil their waters but augment the blaze." The captain of a Dutch ship threw his cargo of gunpowder with everything else that was inflammable into the

the Latin word "coma," which signifies a tuft of hair, and is applied to this class of star to distinguish it from all others. Comets are governed by the same laws as the planets, in so far as their orbits or tracts are considered, but there is a deviation greater than that of the planets—the orbits of comets being more eccentric. Thus, while they sometimes approach very near to us at one time, they recede much farther from us at another. Some comets move in a retrograde direction, that is, a direction contrary to that of the planets. This caused much difficulty in calculating when they would again reappear.

About one hundred and fifty years ago three excellent mathematicians, viz., Clairaut, D'Alembert, and Euler, projected the problem of the three bodies, the solution of which it was thought would determine the courses of three bodies projected from three given points in stated directions and with stated velocities, their gravitation being in accordance with their quantities. This is, of course, to ascertain the effects in motion which the planets that compose our solar system produce upon one another. The influence on comets, it was supposed, was identical with that on planets when within the influence of planetary force. The theory was confirmed by Clairaut and by that theory he calculated the disturbing effects of Jupiter and Saturn, which Dr. Halley had stated would influence the comet of 1682 respecting the time when it should re-appear, which he said would be in 1758. Clairaut's prediction was that the comet would be checked in its course by the influence of Saturn to the extent of 100 days, and by that of Jupiter to 518 days, in which case it would not reach its perihelion till the 13th April, 1759. By observations made, Clairaut's calculations were proved nearly accurate, as the comet came to its perihelion on the 13th March, only thirty days sooner than was predicted.

During the last few years many valuable additions have been made to our stock of astronomical knowledge, and it is now supposed to be proved that comets are groups of meteoric stones. There are times when meteors fall upon the earth. Bodies of meteors are said to encircle the sun—the earth in her annual rotation cutting through and receiving showers of them. In 1866 Schiaparelli observed that the orbit of the great comet of 1862 was exactly the same as the orbit of the belt of meteors. Professor Newton, of America, a man of great scientific research, found that from as early as the ninth century brilliant displays of meteors occurred every thirty-three years. This

river to save her from being blown up. The fall in South Sea and India stock was ruinous. Before noon hundreds of the clergy were on their way in boats to Lambeth Palace to get proper prayers prepared, as there were none in the church ritual suitable for this unexpected and dreadful emergency. The behaviour of the clerics on this occasion reminds us of a certain parson who, when on board a ship bound for China, was told that she was sinking, asked one of the crew whether or not the report was true, the man replied, "In half an hour, sir, I expect we shall be in heaven." To which the godly minister with terror distorting his features, exclaimed. "The Lord forbid." The people of London were the first to be informed that the last day was nigh, many of whom acted in an eccentric manner. There was an extraordinary run on the bank, as if money were an essential at the moment when the world and all its inhabitants were in the throes of death. The chief director, Sir G. Heathcot, issued orders to all the fire brigades in London to keep a sharp look out, and to guard with every possible care the Bank of England. This scare, injurious as it was, was but a trifle when compared with the many disastrous effects caused by religious bigotry and superstition.

he explains, is in the month of November, when the earth passes in her orbit through a dense belt of meteoric stones. The orbit of this star stream was found to be the same as the orbit of Temple's comet of 1866, not the famous one of November of that year. An extraordinary star shower took place in 1872, when Biela's comet attracted so much attention.

Comets shine partly, if not wholly, by their own light, while the tails are reflected sunlight. Meteors in the group or stream frequently collide with one another, producing gaseous vapour, which ignites. In 1881, no fewer than six, some say seven, comets were visible. The first was seen at Sydney on the 22nd May, but was not visible in Europe till the 23rd June. Before it retired from view another appeared in the north, presenting to view two comets at the same time. Then Encke's comet returned, as it is expected to do about every 3 1-3rd years. In September another was discovered by an American astronomer; again, on the fourth October, yet another, and on the 17th November the sixth, or as some have asserted, the seventh, was visible, and was supposed to resemble the comet of 1792. On the 17th September, 1882, a large comet passed its perihelion.

No doubt, like other stars, there are many that we do not see, perhaps from their smallness, and also because of their great distance from the earth. From the earliest ages to the present times the science of astronomy has always been one in which great interest has been taken, but though very ancient, the progress made appears, till within the last few years, to have been but slow; and although much has been discovered, much remains undiscovered. There are suns and systems far beyond our reach, as the poet observes—

Far away, unscann'd by mortal eye,
In widening spheres bright suns and systems lie,
In measureless infinity.

Coming of Summer.

"NATURE'S SWEET INFLUENCE."

(Published in "N.Z. Times, December 29th, 1920.)

Summer has come, but at the present her breath is not hot and sultry. It is not yet necessary to seek the refreshment of the cool shade, although in the deep woods and beneath the hedges in dell and dingle almost a twilight prevails even at noonday, yet her warmth is distinctly felt. To herbs, roots, and every kind of plant which a little while ago had the appearance of being dead she has, so to speak, resuscitated and given new life and clothed them with leaves and flowers, whether in view or concealed from the human eye. There the red and white foxgloves hang out their speckled bells, while high above the honeysuckle throws its trailing banners of floating green and pale and ruddy gold, so that we see indeed—

New life, new beauty, start from every spray.
Green earth rejoicing and her tenants gay.

By the streamlet we inhale the fragrance of the meadow—that mingled aroma of hawthorn buds and new-mown hay. Yes, such is the perfume of the foliage and of the fields with which this glorious queen (daphne) of the flowers, the fruits, and the general beauties of Nature adorns the scene and perfumes the passing zephyr. On the banks and in the hedges the beautiful bindweed climbs and gives forth its fragrance. In whatever direction our survey is cast we view flowers of every hue and every odour which cheer and delight our senses. It was the poet's admiration of Nature which caused him to say, when speaking of the power and goodness of the Creator:—

He decks the maiden spring with flowery pride,
He calls forth summer like a sparkling bride.
He joys the mother autumn's bed to crown,
And bids old winter lay his honours down.

Summer brings forth her flowers in boundless profusion. Sometimes we in New Zealand see the fertility of an almost tropical climate, which clothes every plant and herb that exists in a vesture of splendour. The rose is particularly prominent and flourishes in New Zealand as well as in any country in the world. It is England's national flower, but it also "blooms on Jordan's strand," and is a world-wide favourite. It has always been classed as the queen among flowers, and has been called the ornament of the earth—the blush of beauty and the breath of love. A modern poet extolling its beauties, says—

The rose has one powerful virtue to boast
Above all other flowers of the field,
When its leaves are all gone and fine colours are lost,
A sweet fragrant perfume it will yield.

And other sublime writers have created their most splendid imagery owing to their admiration of its beauties, one of whom tells us of the celestial roses which empurpled the sapphire pavement in Paradise.

It was customary with the ancient Romans after the burial of their dead for the survivors to strew flowers on the tombs. Friends and relatives placed purple flowers, violets and hyacinths, on the graves, but roses were more highly esteemed than any other flowers. It was usual for the Romans in their wills and sometimes with their last breath to direct that roses should be strewn on their graves.

Passeratius, in his Rosa, says:—

Manibus est imis grata rosa, et grata sepulchris,
Et rosa flos florum.

When surrounded by the magnificent works of Nature a thoughtful mind will, if in harmony with what it sees and feels, often become deeply impressed with the sweetest influences and the most divinely inspired emotions.

Thieving Firewood.

Several years ago, owing to some dishonest persons slyly possessing themselves of my firewood, I inserted in one of the daily prints the following as an advertisement:—

OH! SO GENTLY O'ER ME STEALING.

The ladies and gentlemen who have clandestinely appropriated my firewood may now have the axe on application, as I have no further use for it. I sincerely hope that their inordinate desire for heat may be speedily gratified, if not in this world certainly in the next.

As a matter of fact no one did apply for the axe.

Epitaph.

On a dog that was owned by my next neighbour and was poisoned in consequence, it was supposed, of his savage barking at the tradesmen who called at the house. He was buried in quick lime in a place called Cur's Corner.

All dogs that may this tomb pass by,
Bark and howl and whine and cry;
Such as you are so was I,
But dead like me you'll be by-and-by.
I was a happy, lively cur,
And barked at the grocer, the butcher, the baker,
But now grossly butchered and baked in lime,
As punishment for my barking crime.
Bark for me, dogs, bark loud and well,
Bark till you bark me out of this hell.
Bark, oh! bark till you fail to see,
Bark at the butcher who poisoned me.
And when you bark say bow wow wow,
Bark and howl, make a jolly good row;
Bark till the tongues in your mouths appear,
Bark at that butcher, his name is Gear.

Henry Lawson's Verses.

A few years ago an eminent writer on English literature said of Lawson, an Australian poet: "He is written out."

Well, yes. There may be a charm in some of his verses which pleases the mediocrity, and sometimes we have a strain that elicits a smile, but only those can find much delight in the perusal of his lines who have not drunk in the milk of the better time. After we have

studied Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Cowley, Addison, Pope, etc., whose inexhaustible stores of fancy, profusion of imagery, and richness and sweetness of poetical diction, place them in the highest niches of the temple of fame, and we are asked to drink of the muddy stream which flows from Lawson's Helicon, we feel regret that we did not previously indulge in a copious draught of the waters of Lethe. In Lawson we have coarse phrases and rude tautology substituted for sweetness of numbers, selected expression, and brilliant ornament. The spirit of English poetry has sadly degenerated if we have to accept as par excellence "The Bill of the Ages," etc. Writers of indifferent verse are as plentiful as blackberries, which made Shakespeare say,

"I had rather be a kitten, and cry—mew,
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers."

The true poet discovers in the blossom of spring a field for contemplation. "He calls forth summer like a sparkling bride," and hears music in every breeze. The scattered leaves of Autumn place before his vision images of mortality which never entirely fade from his sight. He shows gloomy winter in his natural state. He rouses the mind grown torpid through want of exercise to intelligence and thought. He strengthens, brightens, improves, and brushes away the dust from inert facutlies. He captivates the heart, and excites the moral sympathies so forcibly that they touch all the living springs of natural feeling. He kindles in the mind generous enthusiasm, awakens virtuous sensibility, and cherishes exalted sentiments. He excites noble emulation, encourages the desire for excellence, communicates a feeling of delight to existence, and presents us with bright visions of hope.

Woman's Record.

In the year 1906, under the nom de plume of "Omar," certain derogatory statements were made in the public press respecting the fair sex. The defence of the latter became the duty of the author, who replies to "Omar" thus:—

"Omar" has furnished us with many important particulars respecting the fair sex; but it is evident he does not place women on the same level as men so far as relates to their adaptability to occupy public positions, or positions until recently generally regarded as those which should be held exclusively by men. We find, however, that women have succeeded in public positions. They have made both war and peace between nations. Queens have executed judgment and meted out justice as impartially as kings. In literature both as poets and prose-writers they have not been far behind the sterner sex; there are few readers who have not been delighted by the perusal of many of their writings. In the works of Barbauld, More, Jameson, Cook, Price, etc., we find power and play of language, parity of sentiment, and beauty of scholarship which have largely contributed to please,

enlighten, and reform mankind. Catherine I., Empress of Russia, assisted Peter I. to perform his onerous duties, and after his death succeeded him to the government of the Empire. It has been said that even Adam before he was possessed of Eve, wandered through paradise surveying the blissful scenes with mournful looks. It has also been argued that:—

"If men would but follow what the sex advise,
All things would prosper, all the world grow wise.
'Twas by Rebecca's aid that Jacob won
His father's blessing from an elder son;
Abusive Nabal owed his forfeit life
To the wise conduct of a prudent wife;
Heroic Judith, as old Hebrews show,
Preserved the Jews and slew the Asyrian foe;
At Hester's suit the persecuting sword
Was sheathed and Israel lived to bless the Lord."

Ulysses escaped the death to which he was doomed by the blood-thirsty Polyphemus through the intervention of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. There was no want of civilisation in the nine daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne, Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, Thalia, and Urania, who, born on Mount Pierius, were mistresses of all the sciences, presidents of musicians and poets and governesses of the feasts of the gods. Notwithstanding the ingenuity of reasoning and the ambitious display of learning which characterise the productions of your correspondent, it is devoutly to be wished that he will not call in question the truth of these statements. Horace may discourse his philosophy from his Sabine villa, Demosthenes hurl his thundering orations from the Bema, but Venus, that goddess of love and beauty, smiles on every knight and speaks to our every passion in a voice sweeter than music.

Rules to be Observed in Conversation.

Do not appear to be impatient, though the person speaking may be prolix.

Do not interrupt another while speaking.

Do not manifest captiousness.

Do not indulge in cachinuation.

Do not indulge in cacophony.

Do not speak of your private affairs.

Do not appear to notice grammatical errors.

Do not, when speaking, say "you see," "you know," "you understand," etc.

Do not talk loudly. A clear, mild voice is more effective.

Do not be oblivious to what is being said.

Do not allude to any one's defects either of mind or body.

Do not whisper to a person when others are present.
Do not obtrude any extraneous subject.
Do not indulge in ociliads.
Do not say I am going to such and such a place to-morrow or next week, or next month, but I expect to go, or I intend to go, or I shall go, etc.

Various Religions.

(Written 1907.)

It is well known that in all ages of the world of which we have any knowledge, various systems of religion and worship existed, and were regarded, however much opposed to each other, as man's infallible guide of life and passport to ecstatic bliss hereafter. Man by sinking his intelligence could be brought to believe in anything as a power or divinity far above and superior to himself. In remote periods gods were soon made, extolled, worshipped, and pæans sung in their praise, days and even weeks being set apart for their special adoration and lauding the same idea of worshipping something still obtains,

"Man through all ages of revolving time
Unchanging man in every varying clime,"

regards his particular sect, or creed, or religion as the one thing needful, and denounces or discards all others, thus treading the paths which were trodden five thousand years ago; he is so vehement in the propagation of his tenets that for the purpose of converting others he resorts to the confiscation of property to torture in all its hideous forms, to bloodshed and even death. In the present day we have an ample choice of conflicting creeds, but no one of them shows us how to attain to knowledge devotion and science taken collectively; this combination, however, seems to be required. The iconoclasts and bigots tell us that they have broken down and removed what is bad, and have given us something that is good, but we have not an implicit belief in what they say. The theology of near two thousand years has been unsatisfactory, science in its march having left it far in the rear an impotent, hollow, solitary wreck. Orthodoxy is opposed to science because science exposes its fallacies. Orthodoxy has trodden under foot all that was man's conception of goodness in past ages. Intolerance and persecution are and always have been too active agents for orthodoxy. The Protestant Archbishop Sheldon, in a circular letter which he addressed to all his bishops and clergy, commanded them to take notice of all offenders against the Church and to aid in bringing them to punishment. The Protestant Bishop of Peterborough, Northampton, England, declared publicly that the Conventicle Act was righteous in itself. I give his own words: "It hath done its business against all fanatics except the Quakers, but when the Parliament sits again a stronger law will be made, not only

to take away their lands and goods, but also to sell them for bond-slaves." After this Christian announcement, and by way of a finishing stroke, he implored the Divine Power to preserve all in peace and unity.

Robert Southwell, the accomplished but unhappy author of St. Peter's Complaint, Mary Magdalane's Funeral Tears, and other works, was executed for being a Roman Catholic. He was hanged, bowelled and quartered at Tyburn after three years imprisonment and ten inflictions of the rack. To show how the adherents of the gentle Nazarene carry out his precepts, Cecil, who was at that time Chief Minister to the Crown and a devout Christian and true prophet, when told that the poet wished that his trial would take place, said, "If he (Southwell) is in so much haste to be hanged, he shall quickly have his desire." Instances as plentiful as blackberries could be given of the persecuting spirit of Christianity were they not too well known to need recounting. Let us hope, however, that the devotees of Christianity will even yet show some signs of improvement. It has been said that it is a long lane which has no turning. In respect of time Christianity's lane is long indeed, a turning in the direction of an open-hearted and charitable philosophy would be a great boon, and if it be not asking its leaders and partisans to make too great a sacrifice of their inordinate desire to occupy the ascendant if they must interfere in matters of conscience, to exercise that moderation to others which they are always so willing to receive. If they will but do this then, as we plod our weary way through the dull and dreary desert of dry theological dogmas, creeds, criticisms, sophisms and opinions we might perchance reach some congenial spot, some pleasing oasis and retreat beneath a Jonah's gourd or arborous shade, enjoying the vernal quiet, breathing a pure air and bathing our fevered senses in the undisturbed elysium, and while looking on the refulgent glories above and around would be likely to apostrophize in some such way as this, provided the bishop did not hear.

"So bright with such a wealth of glory stored,
'Twere sin in heathens not to have adored;
How great, how firm, how sacred all appears,
How worthy an immortal round of years."

Could this state be obtained there would be an end to gambling crusaders and church councils; church councillors and their compeers would then perforce join the ranks of the unemployed, and would it is devoutly hoped, through the agency of some barley-water bureau soon get better occupation with, of course, less pay. The work, though uncongenial with their tastes, would result in an advantage to others. One special branch of their present diabolical vocation is to first shackle men's intellects, after which to bind heavy burdens upon their shoulders (those carried by Constantinople porters are light in comparison), but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. It has, however, been affirmed that if too rapid a transition were effected great confusion might result, a circumstance greatly to be deplored, as order was Heaven's first law, and, instead of singing in concert the song of Moyses Tisithen, or Moses and a lamb,

they might, by a mistake, find themselves hymning a pæan in honour of Apollo, or Bacchus, or huge Olympus, with his splendid coronet of gods, or taking a trip to Ephesus, and searching among the ruins of the ancient city for Diana and the image that fell from Jupiter, causing the inhabitants (if any) to ask what new game is afloat now, and like the jacktar's jackdaw to ejaculate, "This is pretty good, what next?" We should not be surprised to hear that in their embarrassment they chanted in lamentable and dirge-like tones like Peter's curate—

Our creeds are all gone our dogmas are lost,
And we, like Ixion, on the wheel are tossed.

But on the other hand we might hear exultant voices sing or say—

Now we'll rejoice, our sorrows are all passed,
For creeds and dogmas are all destroyed at last.

Yet the exercise of prudence and caution is necessary in every step that is taken, it should be borne in mind that—

Though the immortal species never dies,
Yet every year new maggots make new flies.

If the world were but emancipated from the dominion of clerics and priests the troubles of the church militant would fade away. The first streak of the millennial dawn would appear, and, like the sun as he advances to the meridian, would gain in strength, chasing the unwholesome damps and shadows of superstitious bigotry off the face of the earth.

Orthodoxy and heterodoxy would then cast away their theological weapons, North and his Baptists. Jones and Gammel and their Unitarians, old Arius and Socinus Lollards and Shakers, ranters and Quakers, churchmen and Methodists, etc., would all for the first time in their existence, enjoy an armistice, leaving the gaitered Episcopalian to discourse unmolested with his old friend Athanasius, and rejoice in his prayer book—the sober Scot in his John Knox, Presbyterianism moderators and elders—the Catholic in his mass and missal; John Chinaman in his Fo and Josh; the Jap and Indian in their Budda and Vishnue; the Egyptian in his stork, ox and blowfly; the Persian to shoot his arrows at the sun, gaze on the glories of the golden Orient, and humiliate himself before his everlasting fire. The Tasmanian Tattersall with his lucky consultations and results; and last, but not least, the editors of the public press, to perform their arduous duties in peace, having a well-grounded hope that their sanctums are at last secure from the volleys of poisonous darts drawn from the quivers of malignant clerics by which their sacred precincts have hitherto been so often assailed.

The Athanasian Creed.

(Written 1899.)

It is well known that a vast number of church people in this nineteenth century are still bowing the knee at that ecclesiastical shrine of superstition yeleped the creed of Saint Athanasius, which was reared up and fostered by priestcraft and religious bigotry during a period of nearly 800 years—that period when ignorance, like a huge pall, hung over Europe, denominated the dark or Gothic ages. As is well known, most orthodox writers and teachers profess to believe in the Athanasian Creed; but it seems to me that it is impossible that they can really do so, for if ever there was a confused bundle of paradoxes and contradictions in any writing presented to mankind, it would be in the composition of this particular creed as it is called. Many have tried to unravel this tangled web, but all attempts to do so have failed. Nothing tangible can be made of it. The conclusions to which those have come to who have studied it are all different one from another; no two agree. Baxter says, speaking of the Trinity, which is the leading feature in this creed, that it is "principals," "essentialities," "primalities," and he asks what relation exists among the Divine three, and how the divine virtues differ between themselves; and to these questions he answers by giving all sorts of mysterious, opposite, discordant, blind and absurd sentences from schoolmen, fathers and divines, all of whom are regarded as orthodox. Some religious teachers refer to the early Christians as holding the Trinity dogma; but the writings to which they refer in support of this statement are regarded by many as doubtful and by others as forgeries. An ecclesiastic informed me to-day that, with some very small exceptions, all the Christian churches believe in the Trinity doctrine. I reply that because multitudes believe a thing it is no proof of its truth. Did not all Asia and all the world worship the great goddess Diana at Ephesus, the temple for whom, which was one of the seven wonders of the world, took 220 years to build, the cost being defrayed by several princes of Asia. This deity, like many others, was believed in, yet any one professing to believe in her now would be justly regarded as being under an extraordinary delusion—a delusion as extraordinary and absurd as that under which the disciples of that ignorant female fanatic and false prophetess, Johanna Southcott, sunk.

But though the doctrine of the Trinity be a dogma of the churches it is not believed in by many of those who are free from bigotry, and think for themselves. Those who profess to believe it are not unanimous. The Nicene Creed states that Christ was begotten before all the worlds; but Moses Stuart, Dr. Wardlaw and Adam Clark all disagree with it. The latter says it is eternal nonsense or a contradiction in terms. John Wesley rejected it as incorrect and mischievous. Dr. Sherlock says that the Trinity is three separate and distinct minds, and therefore three distinct persons—persons as distinct from each other as Peter, James and John. Dr. South sums up Sherlock's

arguments thus: In his discourses upon the Trinity he calls the three persons in the Godhead three minds, three spirits, three substances, essences and natures: and in his last book, three selfs, three is's, three singulars, three sames, three wholes, one absolute Divinity, with two internal processions."

Then we have Dr. Wallis, who opposed Sherlock and got him condemned. He tries to show that because David was at the same time the son of Jesse, the father of Solomon and the King of Israel, thus presenting three characters, so God may be three persons, as he holds three different offices, viz., Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Next we have Leibnitz, who says that three persons are three relations in the divine substance, and yet there are three actual substances, but not separate substances, as they are all together. Toellner says there are three different actions, with three different substrata; he says also there are three distinct energies, three distinct substances. Another Protestant author states that there is one God, one essence, two processions, three persons, four relations, five motions and the Circumincession, which the Greeks call Perichoresis; but Archbishop Whatley rejects this definition and adopts that of the three relations, similar to Wallis. Tillotsan explains the Trinity to be simply three differences; Burnett, three diversities; Secker, three substances; and Le Clere, three cogitations. Archbishop Tillotson declared to Bishop Burnett that the account given by him of the Athanasian Creed was in nowise satisfactory. He could have said the same of all other definitions. "I wish," he added, "we were well rid of it."

One of the reasons why this creed was written was because the pagan priests demanded a place in the Council of Nice, hoping to benefit their temples by dissensions among the Christians. Their demands were encouraged by the Arians, who thought they would obtain the assistance of the pagan rhetoricians in opposing the doctrine of the unity of the Son with the Father. The Nicene Council, however, decided that the unity of the divine essence was that of species rather than that of number. Ecclesiastical disputes about the Trinity have existed for hundreds of years. The Latins maintained that there is in God only one hypostasis but three persons; while the Greeks had it that there is only one essence but three hypostasis. The Athanasian Creed, however, by mixing all their ideas up, caused each disputant to be satisfied that he was in the right, no matter to what extent one was opposed to another. It was a trick played off to, if possible, stop dissensions. Jerome tells us that none of the Greeks knew the difference between "hypostasis" and "ousia." The Latins, however, could not enlighten them. It was then agreed that "persona" in Latin and "hypostasis" in Greek should be regarded as identical in signification; but what the signification is has never been determined.

It is supposed by many that the Jews believed in the doctrine of the Trinity in consequence of the word "eloim" (gods) being in the plural; but this is not the case, for an enthusiastic divine some years ago wrote to Rabbi Raphall, headmaster of the Hebrew National School, Birmingham, and an authority on Hebrew works, asking for information on certain words in Isaiah in Jonathan's Targum, sup-

posed to prove the Trinity. Mr. Raphall replied that the exact meaning of the words in English is "Holy in His Heaven on high, the exalted house of His presence; Holy on earth the work of His power; Holy for ever and ever." He adds, "No Rabbi ever held the doctrine of the Trinity or of three persons in the Godhead. This is a literal translation, for the accuracy of which I vouch." Surely, in the face of such reliable evidence as this we need not be surprised at the Rev. Dr. Robinson, of St. Margaret's, speaking as he did.

Matai Beer.

THE PROHIBITIONIST NONPLUSED.

The prohibitionist is now brought face to face with an insurmountable obstacle. The New Zealand bushmen positively state that the matai tree when tapped pours forth a splendid intoxicating beer on which he who imbibes gets extremely merry. The prohibitionist will now have to change his tactics and dispute with Dame Nature from whom he will obtain but little satisfaction. Even if he succeeds in stopping the importation of fermented and spiritous liquors he cannot prevent a man from having a glass of matai. A few days ago an enthusiastic disciple of Bacchus was heard to aver that he preferred matai beer to either Staples' or Speight's. Being unfermented the teetotaller would not, by his creed, be debarred from drinking it. If not an edifying spectacle it would at least be a novel one to see an abstainer in the hands of a policeman or in a police cell in consequence of over indulgence in unfermented matai.

Chapter.

The following chapter was written and published by the author towards the end of the year 1911 owing, at that time, to the contemptible stratagems of the prohibitionists.

The people of Wellington have recently been favoured with an account of the latest tricks of the reverend prohibitionists of how they organized bands of Bible class scholars as spies and informers to dog respectable citizens going in and out of the hotels on Saturday nights and to perform other religious duties of a similar kind. The reverend prohibitionists and those who support them vow that they believe the Bible to be a revelation of the mind of the Almighty to man (although not one-fifth of the population of the world has any knowledge of it), and that it is their rule of faith and practice yet ignore and even trample upon much that it contains, thus proving themselves to be traitors to their own creeds. This is verified by

the one word which is constantly on their lips, "Prohibition," for the merest tyro in Biblical lore knows that prohibition finds but little favour in the Bible.

Let us look at a few quotations from it:—"And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink."—Deut. c. 14, v 26. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel. Every bottle shall be filled with wine." —Jere. c 13, v 12. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel Drink ye."—Jere. c 25, v 27. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Ye shall certainly drink."—v 28. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart for God now accepteth thy works." —Eccles. c 9, v 7. "They shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof."—Amos, c 9, v 14. "God conversed with Noah and made a covenant with him after which Noah 'planted a vineyard and he drank of the wine and was drunken.' "—Gen. c 9, vv 20-21. "In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering. And their drink offerings shall be half an hin (five pints) of wine unto a bullock and the third part of an hin (a little more than three pints and one gill) unto a ram and a fourth part of an hin (two and a half pints) unto a lamb."— Num. c 28, vv 7-14. "Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man."—Judges c 9, v 13. Drunken Lot being the only righteous man in Sodom became one of the Almighty's special proteges "And they made their father drink wine."—Gen. c 19, v 33. "And he (David) dealt among all the people even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread and a good piece of flesh and a flagon of wine."— Second Sam. c 6, v 19. "And wine that maketh glad the heart of man."—Psalm 104, v 15. "The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord . . . . Go unto the house of the Rechabites and speak unto them and bring them into the house of the Lord into one of the chambers and give them wine to drink."—Jer. c 35, vv 1-2. "On the seventh day when the heart of the King was merry with wine."— Est. c 1, v 10. "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine and ye say he hath a devil. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking and ye say behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber a friend of publicans and sinners!"—Luke c 7, vv 33-34. Jesus Christ at the commencement of His ministry and also at the termination of it drank wine. "Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."— First Tim. c 5, v 23. And now ye reverend and lay prohibitionists and ye who are under the evil spell of spyphobia what have you to say? Will you, with these statements arrayed against you, which you aver are the words of Almighty God Himself, still push your abominable heterodox doctrine of prohibition. If we had no knowledge of the insatiable persecuting spirit with which your class has always been deeply imbued, we should expect to see you blush for shame as any honest-minded man would do who discovered that owing to a belief in corrupt dogmas he had been engaged in the detestable work of attempting to deprive his fellow men of their rights and liberties.

but as you have taken special pains particularly of late to convince us that you are wolves in sheep's clothing, and as we are well acquainted with the fact that mankind in the past has suffered severely under your tyranny, we know that with faces of brass you will still pursue your diabolical course and fight against even the word of God, the very Bible itself, to accomplish your purpose. If the Prohibitionists could but consummate their aim the revenue of the Dominion would be so seriously diminished that heavy extra duties would be immediately imposed on tea, sugar and all the necessaries of life—the working people being the greatest sufferers. The already overburdened taxpayers would have, by the lowest computation, one shilling in the pound added to their taxes. Thousands of wage-earners of both sexes would be thrown out of their various vocations to swell the ranks of the unemployed, while tens of thousands would see ruin staring them in the face. The modern Prohibitionists, like the ancient pharisees, "bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." Matt. c. 23, v. 4. To prevent terrible financial loss both public and private; to prevent thousands of the working class being cast penniless upon the world upon the benevolent institutions and the tender mercies of the law; to prevent the levying of heavy taxation; to prevent iniquitous dens and sly-grog shops crawling into existence like filthy reptiles, to poison our lives; to prevent our cities and the people of this fair land from being ruined, let all who have votes muster in strong force on the polling-day and with a fixed determination checkmate the vicious Prohibitionists with their bands of spies and informers by striking out the bottom lines on the ballot papers.

Clergy and People.

ADVICE TO THE COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES

In the fifteenth verse of the 4th chapter of 1st Epistle of Peter we find these words: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." If the Rev. J. J. North and his brother church councillors will but pay appropriate attention to the above words, he and they will not be so likely to manifest their folly to the world and hold themselves up to the scorn and derision of all right-minded people, as they have done recently. If the sacrifices of God be hypocrisy and persecution, the fidgety meddling quidnuncs referred to should be supremely happy. Their never-ceasing fight with Unitarians, Socinians, Arians and others would be to them a pleasing contest, and would contribute largely to their earthly bliss.

"Their hope of conquest
Would endear the fight
And danger serve, but to
Supply delight."

One would almost have thought, had he not known too well their natural propensities, that they would have been too busy about missions, both local and foreign, church extension, and particularly church revenues and stipends, to trouble about the publication of Tattersall's business; but, Oh no; like the enemy of Caesar they are "never at heart's ease," these miserable offenders profess to be our friends, but they have become altogether unprofitable except to themselves. They say their business is to win souls to Christ; but if quarrelling with the editors of the New Zealand newspapers for doing their duty is the way they win them, their method is nothing short of "reductio ad absurdum," and the souls won by such means would surely be of such a queer composition as to be neither use nor ornament, and not worth the trouble of winning. These clerics buzz about and swoop down, hawk-like upon every word which they think can be distorted to their own benefit. The sequence is that

"The fly-blown text
Creates a crawling brood,
And turns to maggots
What was meant for food."

It were well, if, instead of perpetuating the persecuting spirit which has been so closely allied with Christianity for near two thousand years, Church Councillors were possessed of that philosophy whose aim is to raise those that fall, to alleviate human suffering, to assist the distressed, and to work honestly for the general weal.

Nov. 29th, 1906.

Language.

However ignorant and barbarous men may have been at the beginning of their existence on the earth, it is evident that they soon acquired and possessed a spoken language. Written language would certainly follow in the course of time, the necessity for which would soon make itself felt. Men found that they required a medium by which they could communicate their thoughts, and the medium was writing.

The ancient Egyptians, however, as is well known, frequently used emblems or figures called hieroglyphics; these emblems or figures represented though in a crude manner birds and animals, by which words were implied. In most languages about twenty-six visible signs called characters or letters are employed to represent the sounds made by the human voice which, when taken collectively, are denominated an alphabet, but the alphabets of different languages are not always correct representatives of the vocal sounds uttered. The cause of this irregularity may be traced to the fact that one alphabet has been derived from another.

The modern alphabet of Europe is but a revival of the old Roman alphabet or, in other words, the Roman alphabet modernized. The

Roman alphabet was derived from the Greek, the Greek from the Phoenician alphabet, and the Phoenician from the ancient Hebrew. It would be difficult if not impossible to trace the existence of alphabetical signs to a period more remote than that of the ancient Hebrew. The art of writing may be regarded as the first step in literature.

All languages were spoken before they were conveyed to our sight by the use of alphabetical characters. The structures of languages are not so different one from another as some suppose. The occasional resemblances of languages far remote from each other go far to prove this. The language of the aborigines of New Zealand is, in one respect, similar to that of the Italians, for in both languages the nouns have mostly vowel terminations. The difference in the pronunciation of words often causes them to be unintelligible to those who hear them spoken. As an instance of this we find that in the seventeenth century the pronunciation of the Greek language in the University of Paris was very different from that of the College of the Jesuits, so different indeed that they failed to undertsand each other's quotations from Homer. The difference between the English and the French languages in the ninth and tenth centuries was very little—they both came from the Teutonic. The following lines were written at this time. The English translation will show the slight difference between the two languages:—

Nuh wil ih scriban unser heil
Now will I write our health
Evangelino deil
Of the gospel a deal
So ist nu hiar begunnun
So is it now here begun
In Frenigisga tungun
In the French tongue.

During the reign of Ethelbert, Pope Gregory sent Augustine with a number of monks from Rome to preach to the English. The monks brought with them a few Frenchmen to interpret. About the time that the Romans withdrew their troops from Britain, giving the Britons their freedom and independence, the Franks, who were a people from Germany, entered into France, which was then named Gaul. The language of the Franks was Teutonic, like that of the Saxons; the Teutonic coalesced with the rude Celtic or Gaulish tongue, which had become somewhat Latinized; this coalescence produced for a limited period an almost unintelligible jargon, as the following tale will exemplify:—A beggar, who pretended to be lame, applied at the Monastry of St. Gall for relief; it was ordered that he should first be put into a warm bath and then supplied with clean clothes. The mendicant, who was a Gaul, finding the water hot, cried out in his corrupt and mixed Latin, "Calt est! Calt est!" meaning "Calid est!" "It is hot!" But as "Calt" in Teutonic means cold, the sacristan, who was a German, thought that the fellow was complaining that the water was not hot, and said in reply, "Then I will put in more hot water," and at once poured in a boiling kettle-full.

The beggar howled still louder "Eya mi! Eya mi! Calt est! Calt

est!" "What, still cold," exclaimed the astonished Sacristan," with God's help I will make it hot enough," and at once poured into the bath a still larger kettle of boiling water. The almost scalded creature, forgetting in his anguish that he had the part of a lame man to perform, frantiely jumped out of the bath.

By the intermixture of the languages of the various nations that have inhabited Britain our present English has been constructed, thus making it a composite language. The ancient Britons were of Celtic origin, and possessed two dialects, namely, the Cymriac and the Gaelic. These dialects formed the national tongue.

In 60 B.C. Julius Caesar invaded Britain. The inhabitants fled from the southern and central parts of the country to the mountains of Wales and to the Highlands of Scotland, living in comparative security. Although near two thousand years have elapsed since the invasion of Britain by the Romans, during which period disastrous wars and vast changes have taken place, the descendants of these ancient people still speak their original dialects. The English, however, has not been much affected by the Celtic. The Romans held possession of Britain till A.D. 430. After their departure the Britons seemed to have had but little knowledge of their language, which was Latin. But though a large portion of our language is derived from the Latin, it was not obtained from the Romans; it is because our own authors and scientists have for hundreds of years been borrowing from it. It is well known that the immortal Shakespeare ingrafted Latin words upon our vernacular English with the greatest facility and correctness, and thousands have followed the example set by him. There were, however, importations from the Latin as early as the days of the venerable Bede, a priest of Northumberland. Bede tells us that the languages of Britain are the British, the Pictish, the Scottish, the Saxon, and some Latin. The first three of these are, however, only different dialects of the Celtic.

Scaliger says: "There are three different languages in France, which are not understood by each other, the Basque, the Breton and the Roman, which is divided into Laugue tortu and Laugue Francaise in the ancient customs of France. Subsequently it was divided into Laugue d'oc and Laugue d'ouy. Oc for yes is corrupted of Hoc. When it is asked est ne hoc? the reply is Oc for Hoc. Thus the Spaniards and Italians have made their si. When asked Est ne ita? they answer Si for Sic, cutting off the c. The Langue d'oc approaches the Latin more than the French, and a man who knows Latin will learn Gascon sooner than French. The Gascons call the French Francimans. Basle is not in Switzerland but in Germany, though it is included in the Swiss confederation. They hate the French, whom they call Welsh. The Basques are Cantabrians. Cantabria contained Navarre beyond the Pyrennees and the Basques on this side with part of Gascony. The Goths left no traces of their language either in Spain or Gaul. They spoke Gothic among themselves, but frequently Latin, and all their public acts were in Latin, until they were conquered, and even before this they ceased to speak Gothic, but they corrupted the Latin tongue so that it degenerated into Spanish." About thirty-nine

years after the Romans had withdrawn from Britain two kindred tribes, named respectively Angles and Saxons, under two leaders, whose names were Hengist and Horsa, landed on the island of Thanet, and soon took possession of Britain. These Angles and Saxons came with a view to make the country their own, and named it Angle-land or Engle-land. The language of these people was of the Gothic or Teutonic class. Though we have no knowledge of the pronunciation of their words, we are acquainted to no small extent with their literature. We know that the grammatical structure of their language was remarkably complex. It contained its inflections—variations of nouns and verbs, its cases, its numbers, its genders of nouns, the terminations being similar to those of the Latin and the Greek. During the tenth century a considerable degeneration of the Saxon language took place, which assisted in preparing the way for the introduction of that tongue which was so soon to follow, known as Norman-French. This Norman-French contained a large number of Latin words and phrases mixed with the Gaulish or Celtic. It may here be observed that the Normans or Northmen were of the same race as the Angles and Saxons. After the conquest of England by the Normans all classes of the population were subjected to almost a state of slavery, to escape from which thousands fled to Scotland. For more than forty years after the Norman conquest the vain and affected fops of the period regarded it as a derogation to their dignity to be Englishmen, and assumed the dress and speech of the Normans, so that it became a common saying, "Jack would be a gentleman if he could speak French." It was near a century after the conquest before the Teutonic form of speech of the Saxons coalesced with the Romanz of the Normans, but since that period the two rival languages gradually intermixed. Although there have been large importations of foreign words, yet the grammatical structure of the English remains the same, with the exception of the variations in the terminations of some nouns and verbs. The regulative power of the Anglo Saxon has prevented it from becoming Gallicized or Latinized. Although thousands of French and Latin words, as already stated, have for hundreds of years been grafted upon the original stock they have been made to conform to the grammatical English system. Some of our early authors intermixed the Anglo Saxon with French, Latin, and Italian words and phrases which, instead of improving and enriching it, as the Arabic enriched the old Spanish, it produced a parhelion-like dazzle. Fortunately, however, this heterogeneous intermixing of foreign words with those of our own language existed only for a limited period. The purity of the English was restored by the exercise of the critical acumen and accurate judgment of succeeding writers, who avoided the mischievous error into which some of their predecessors had unhappily fallen. Living languages are continually receiving words from foreign sources, but, as already shown, are not always improved thereby. The English is a happy combination of the Anglo Saxon and the Romanz. In modern writings the proportions of Anglo Saxon and Romanz vary considerably. In works on philosophy and science the Romanz element is strikingly prominent, but the Anglo Saxon predominates in

lighter literature such as simple poetry, biographical writings, and works of fiction. Some writers have supposed that certain languages are adapted to certain purposes. The Hebrew, it has been asserted, is the best for history and the fittest of all languages for simple narration. The Syriac for what is mournful and compassionate and for expressing sadness, sighs and groans. The Latin for expressing heroic and valiant sentiments and deed and military matters. The Greek for sweetness and elegance of diction, poetry, harmony and music.

Charles the Fifth described the different languages of Europe thus: The French, he said, is the best language to speak to one's friend. The Italian to one's mistress. The English to the people. The Spanish to God and the German to a horse.

The English has almost reached the summit of perfection. We believe that philologists will agree with us when we say that for richness, elegance, harmony, comprehensiveness, precision and strength it is not surpassed by any other language. The two grand elements the Anglo Saxon and the Romanz are now so happily blended as to leave apparently nothing wanting.

About Some Eminent British Poets and Their Poetry.

VIVIDA VIS ANIMI.

Many persons of education and taste feel that there is no department of literature which interests, delights and instructs the mind better than true poetry. We often find passages so arranged as to possess a peculiar beauty, charm and sublimity independent of the actual subject treated of. Poetry is in itself a vast power. It produces feelings of joy and sorrow, sympathy and love. It has a grandeur, a greatness, an awful sublimity peculiarly its own.

Gray, when writing on another great poet, says, in his "Progress of Poesy":

> Hark!—his hands the lyre explore!
> Bright-eyed fancy hovering o'er
> Scatters from her pictured urn
> Thoughts that breathe and words that burn.

Poetry teaches us lessons of courage, magnanimity and hope. A modern writer has made some very striking remarks on this subject. He says: "Poetry can make even the thought of death beautiful and the sadness of bereavement not without certain pleasure. Great poets have elicited from the sternest suffering a principle of enjoyment. Sublime faith and earnest love can conjure spirits the most lovely from the darkest abyss. By giving free scope to the eloquence of sorrow, by invoking the spirit of hope, the true poet often weaves in his poetic loom the picture of the rainbow arching the valley of tears.

The works of many of our great authors have enriched our language to an extent scarcely conceivable, and have, moreover, enlightened and delighted the world.

Spencer's "Faerie Queene" is considered to be one of the most splendid allegorical poems in our language. Thomson's "Castle of Indolence" may be regarded as a rival to the "Faerie Queene," for in that delightful work will be found far more equal power and far more pure poetry than in many poems on which have been pronounced glowing eulogiums. Dryden's favourite was the rhyming couplet, which, we may say, was brought to the summit of perfection by Pope, who has received from Sir Richard Phillips the title of The Prince of Poets. Pope selected for his models Spencer, Waller, and Dryden, but surpassed them in melody of versification, beauty of language, and brilliancy of wit. It was said truly of him—

Thy fault is only wit in its excess,
But wit like thine in any shape will please:

His essay on Man is the most remarkable metaphysical poem in the English language. Objections have been made to this work on philosophical grounds, but the commanding eloquence, the profound erudition, the ingenuity of reasoning, and the exquisite harmony of versification (many passages possessing every species of poetic ornament), cause it to be a universal favourite. Pope's poetical compositions embrace almost every species of verse. In allusion to this distinguished writer, Dr. Johnson observes that "it might have been said of Pope as of Pindar, that when he lay in his cradle 'the bees swarmed about his mouth.'" Blacket says of him in his "Bards of Britain":

Pope next I see the bard whose various fire
Attunes the hallow'd or the tender lyre,
Tears off the fraudful mask that screens the mind,
And awes the varying follies of mankind;
Instructs the serious and delights the gay,
Shows fame's proud fane and leads himself the way.

Nature made Pope what he was, a great poet. Before he was fourteen years of age he became the sole director of his own education. He says of himself:

As yet a child nor yet a fool to fame
I lisp'd in numbers for the numbers came,
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd;
The muse but serv'd to ease some friend not wife
To help me through this long disease my life.

Although Pope died one hundred and seventy-nine years ago, yet to the present time many of his lines are regarded as proverbial.

Every day we hear and see quoted, among many others, the following:—

To err is human, to forgive divine.
A little learning is a dangerous thing.
Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
Man never is but always to be blest.
An honest man's the noblest work of God.

Who looks through Nature up to Nature's God.
The feast of reason and the flow of soul.

His sentiments are pure, and breathe purity itself. What truth is expressed in the following couplet:—

That virtue only makes our bliss below,
And all our knowledge is ourselves to know.

And in "The Universal Prayer" depth of thought and fervent piety appear conspicuous, and seem as if happily blended. We quote two verses—

Father of all in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime adored
By saint, by savage and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord.

* * * *

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see,
That mercy I to others show
That mercy show to me.

Walter Dryden and Pope excelled in smoothness of versification. Waller, although belonging to the seventeenth century, has all the ease, polish, and chaste elegance of the best modern authors. Addison, speaking of his genius and in his praise, says:—

But now my muse a softer strain rehearse,
Turn every line with art and smoothe thy verse;
The courtly Waller next commands thy lays,
Muse tune thy verse with art to Waller's praise.

When this eminent author was nearly eighty years of age, he wrote several sacred poems, which exemplify the sincerity, the devotional fervour with which his mind was inspired. I quote the following lines which are from his pen:—

The soul's dark cottage, batter'ed and decay'd,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made,
Stronger by weakness wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home;
Leaving the old both worlds at once they view
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

When young, Waller rose at once to excellence, the exquisite smoothness of his versification placed him above all other poets of his time. It has been said that the first poem he wrote, at eighteen years of age, was as perfect in structure as the last, which he wrote at eighty.

I will now venture to offer a few remarks on the poetical works of Addison, the great author of the tragedy of Coto. "The Campaign," a poem celebrating the memorable victory of the Duke of Marlborough in the great battle fought at Blenheim on the 13th of August, 1704. Lord Halifax and Lord Godolphin and the great mass of English readers were delighted with the high order of poetical merit displayed in this unrivalled production. About the year 1715 Addison wrote a comedy entitled "The Drummer," which was greatly admired, and

added largely to his popularity. Shortly after "The Drummer" was written, his "Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning" appeared, and about the same time his poetical letter to Sir Godfrey Kneller was published. In the tragedy of Cato the author achieved a dramatic triumph over all his contemporaries. His vast powers of mind shine forth with greater lustre in this work than in any of his other compositions. It was performed without intermission for thirty-five nights. Viewing it from a political standpoint, it was strongly in favour of the principles of the Revolution. It produced an extraordinary effect. Party spirit ran high. The tragedy was not only the theme of conversation of the intelligent part of the community, but also of the Whigs and Tories, who applauded it. It was translated into French, Italian, and German, and was performed by the Jesuits at the College of St. Omers. There are many sublime passages in this inimitable production which create in the mind of the reader feelings of intense delight. Addison's fame as a poet and also as a writer in prose rests principally on his pure English eloquence and the moral excellence of his compositions. One writing on the poet says: We may justly apply to this excellent author what Plato, in his allegorical language, says of Aristophanes, that the Graces having searched all the world for a temple to dwell in settled at last in the breast of Addison.

And Pope says of him: "He set the passions on the side of truth, and formed each human virtue in the heart, and when speaking of Cato he observes: It was not so much the wonder of Rome in his days as he is of Britain in ours, and although all the foolish industry possible had been used to make it thought a party play, yet what the author once said of another may the most properly in the world be applied to him on this occasion."

Envy itself is dumb in wonder lost,
And factions strive who shall applaud him most.

The noblest and most affecting tribute to the memory of Addison is from Tickell. His Elegy is in every respect all that the warmest admirers of the poet could desire. It is as follows:—

That awful form which so ye heavens decree
Must still be lov'd and still deplor'd by me,
In nightly visions seldom fails to rise,
Or rous'd by fancy meets my waking eyes.
If business calls or crowded courts invite,
The unblemished statesmen seems to strike my sight,
If on the stage I seek to soothe my care,
I meet his soul, which breathes in Cato there;
If pensive to the rural shades I rove,
His shape o'ertakes me in the lonely grove.
'Twas there of just and good he reason'd strong,
Clear'd some great truth or rais'd some serious song;
There patient show'd us the wise course to steer,
A candid censor and a friend sincere;
There taught us how to live, and oh! too high,
The price of knowledge taught us how to die.

By way of drawing to a close this imperfect sketch of a few of our eminent authors and their chief works. Owing to untoward circumstances I have not (as the reader will notice) attempted to give even a faint outline of any of the other poets whose writings have adorned our literature, yet I would recommend an attentive perusal of the works of Marlow, Middleton, Rowley, Marston, Chapman, Decker, Ford, and Webster, which will furnish the reader with a considerable amount of valuable information respecting the rise and progress of our poetical literature. The writings also of Otway, Lee, Wycherly, Vanburg, Congreve, Farquhar, Cibber, Murphy, Cumberland and other eminent authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may be regarded as finished productions, the study of which will afford perpetual delight. The poetic literature of Britain seems to have passed its meridian. In the time of Chaucer poesy was in its dawn; in Spencer the bright morn appears; in Shakespeare summer's noon-tide blaze; while Milton appears as the setting sun descending and ushering in the close of that great literary period. It has been said that the poetry of Queen Anne's time was to that of Elizabeth and James as moonshine to warm sunlight. By way of illustrating the remarks on the authors quoted, I append a few of the statements made upon them. To read what one says of another is an interesting literary exercise. Campbell says of Chaucer, who has been felicitously designated The Father of English Poetry—

Chaucer! our Helicon's first fountain-stream,
  Our morning star of song that led the way
To welcome the long-after coming beam
  Of Spenser's lights and Shakespeare's perfect day.
Old England's fathers live in Chaucer's lay
  As if they ne'er had died; he group'd and drew
Their likeness with a spirit of life so gay
  That still they live and breathe in fancy's view,
  Fresh beings fraught with truth's imperishable hue.

Southey, in his adoration of Spenser, thus speaks of him:—

My Master dear arose to mind,
  He on whose song while yet I was a boy
My spirit fed attracted to its kind,
  And still insatiate of the growing joy
He on whose tomb these eyes were wont to dwell
With inward yearnings which I may not tell.

He whose green bays shall bloom for ever young,
  And whose dear name whenever I repeat,
Reverence and love are trembling on my tongue.
  Sweet Spenser—sweetest bard, yet not more sweet
Than pure was he, and not more pure than wise,
  High priest of all the Muses' mysteries.

Ben Jonson, who was one of Shakespeare's contemporaries, eulogizes his memory in the following eloquent lines:—

The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage,
My Shakespeare, rise, I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further off to make thee room;
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read and praise to give.

* * * *

Sweet swan of Avon! What a sight it were
To see thee in our water yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James.
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere,
Advanced and made a constellation there.
Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage
Or influence chide or cheer the drooping stage,
Which since thy flight from hence hath mourned like night,
And despairs day but for thy volume's light.

And Dryden makes the immortal Bard of Avon to say:—

Untaught, unpractised, in a barbarous age,
I found not but created first the stage,
And if I drained no Greek or Latin store,
'Twas that my own abundance gave me more.

Milton also contributes his meed to the great dramatist in the form of an epitaph, which has been and is still greatly admired for its sublimity and melody of versification. It is said to have been Milton's first printed poem:—

What needs my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones—
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Under a starry pointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live-long monument;
Thou so sepulchered in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

In what is called the great church of Stratford a monument stands against the wall which represents the poet under an arch in a sitting posture with a pen in his right hand and his left leaning on a scroll. Under this a Latin couplet is engraved:

Judicio Pylium genio Socratem, arte Marouem,
Terra tegit, populus moeret, Olympus habet.

There is an error in quantity in the antepenult of Socratem (Socrates) which causes one to suppose that Sophocles was meant. Underneath the Latin inscription we read the following sublime epitaph:—

Stay, passenger, why dost thou go so fast?
Read, if thou canst, what envious death hath plac'd
Within this monument? Shakespeare with whom
Quick nature died; whose name doth deck the tomb
Far more than cost; since all that he hath writ
Leaves living art but page unto his wit.

In 1741 a monument was erected to the memory of the immortal Bard in Westminster Abbey by the Earl of Burlington, Pope and Dr. Meade.

Among the dramatists who were the contemporaries of Shakespeare, Ben Johnson, Beaumont, Fletcher and Massinger occupy the foremost rank, and have been felicitiously designated—

Those shining stars that run
Their glorious course round Shakespeare's golden sun.

Herrick's epitaph on Ben Johnson is, like almost all his smaller poems, terse and pithy. It is with justice that he bestows on the great dramatist the enconium which he does.

From Herrick's writings many selections could be made that would delight the reader. His poems are distinguished for their beauty and sparkling vivacity. The smoothness of his versification brings a charm to the mind.

His epitaph is as follows:—

Here lies Johnson with the rest
Of the poets, but the best
Reader would'st thou more have known;
Ask his story, not the stone,
That will speak what this can't tell
Of his glory, so farewell.

The brief inscription of—

O! rare Ben Jonson is to be seen on several small square stones in the floor at the north-west end of Westminster Abbey, under one of which he was buried in a perpendicular position.

Of Milton the immortal author of "Paradise Lost," Gray, in his "Progress of Poetry," speaks in an eloquent strain, and makes a feeling reference to the poet's blindness. He says:—

Nor second He who rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of ecstasy,
The secret of the abyss to spy;
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time
The living throne, the sapphire's blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze;
He saw but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.

And Wordsworth, in glowing phraseology, thus celebrates his praise and also refers to his loss of sight:—

Rise, hallowed Milton! rise and say
How at thy gloomy close of day,
How, when depress'd by age, beset with wrongs,

When fallen on evil days and evil tongues,
When darkness brooding on thy sight,
Exiled the sovereign lamp of light;
Say what could then one cheering hope diffuse,
What friends were thine save memory and the muse;
Hence the rich spoils thy studious youth
Caught from the stores of ancient truth
Hence all thy classic wanderings could explore,
When rapture led thee to the Latin shore.
Each scene that Tiber's bank supplied,
Each grace that play'd on Arno's side,
The tepid gales through Tuscan's glades that fly.
The blue serene that spreads Hesperia's sky,
Were still thy own; thy ample mind
Each charm received, retain'd, combined.

We have read Gray's beautiful lines on Milton, and now let us peruse, if only for a moment, a few of the encomiastical lines which others have written on him. Lady Manners contributes an eloquent verse strictly characteristic of the bard. She says: —

Where the moon with glimmering ray,
Lights the churchyard's lonely way,
By pale contemplation led,
Moral Gray delights to tread.

And Blacket speaks of him in the following pleasing strain:—

Oft shall his numbers wait me to repose;
Oft shall my bosom own their magic power;
His moral lay the hallow'd truth disclose,
And oft beguile the solitary hour.

Gray's merit as a poet is plainly seen in his lyrical odes. Those "On Spring," "On a distant Prospect of Eton College," "To Adversity," "The Progress of Poetry," and "The Bard" are the most admired. But his "Elegy," written in a country churchyard, immortalizes his name. It has been said that it is one of the most classical productions ever penned by a refined and studious mind moralizing on human life.

Slight reference has already been made in relation to the decadence of English literature. Crabbe, in the following eloquent lines, portrays in lively colours the decadence and its effects prior to and during the period in which he wrote:

When summer's tribe her rosy tribe are fled,
And drooping beauty mourns her blossoms shed,
Some humbler sweet may cheer the pensive swain,
And simpler beauties deck the withering plain;
And thus, when verse her wint'ry prospect weeps,
When Pope is gone and mighty Milton sleeps,
When Gray in lofty lines has ceased to soar,
And gentle Goldsmith charms the town no more,
An humbler Bard the widow'd muse invites

Who, led by hope and inclination writes
With half their art he tries the soul to move,
And swell the softer strain with themes of love.*

It has been said that Cowper may be fancifully looked on as a morning star which heralded another sunrise, in the dim evening of which new day we now meditate on the past and hope for the future.

A Merry Epicedium.

To Gisborne's fair town a carpenter came,
And said he was called Franky S——d by name;
The Devil was driving along in a van,
And took Franky with him to be a dead man.
Said the Devil, "I'll stop your psalm-singing capers,
And drive you straight off to my two old grave-makers."
Then stuck his sharp pitchfork through Franky's fat waist,
And drove off to the graveyard in jolly good haste.
A hole was soon dug, S——t made the coffin,
And Franky was plumped in with laughter and joking.
Said the Devil, "I've paid rather dear for this sport,
But he'll never again take Walter C——n to court";
Then pitch'd a dead dog straight into the hole,
Saying, "Bark loudly at Franky's hypocritical soul."
Then, turning to Asmodeus, his friend,
Said, "Our business now has come to an end.
We'll go down to Joe Martins† for a pint of good beer,
And leave this d——d scoundrel to rot away here."

*Mr. Joe Martin, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel, Gisborne.

A Valuable Recipe for Smokers and Non-Smokers.

If you smoke the tobacco of rectitude in the pipe of a peaceful conscience you will remove all virus from your mental faculties, deprive the scaly alligators of remorse and despair of their viscosity, and thus prevent them from adhering to your internal viscera, and also preserve your virility from vitious vitiation.

*Lord Byron said of Crabbe: Nature's sternest painter yet the best.

†Mr. Joe Martin, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel, Gisborne.

A Sketch of Jamaica.

In the year 1494 the island of Jamaica was discovered by Christopher Columbus, a native of Genoa, who named it Santiago. It has, however, retained its original Indian name, though anglicized from Xaymaca to Jamaica. It has suffered terrible disasters. Earthquakes, hurricanes and fire have at various times ruined different parts of the island. In 1655 the Spaniards were driven out of Jamaica by the English, but English supremacy was not fully established for some years after this event. It was unfortunate for the aborigines, who were called Arawaks, that the expulsion of the Spaniards did not take place at an earlier period, for when the English took possession of the island they found that the entire native population had been put to death; within the space of a few years sixty thousand were butchered. The Spaniards at this period were a strictly religious nation, and followed to no small extent in the footsteps of the ancient Israelites, styled "God's chosen people," who, we are told, when on their murdering excursions, came by stealth upon whole nations of people who had done them no wrong, had given them no offence and put them all to the sword; that they spared neither age nor infancy; that they utterly destroyed men, women and children; that they left not a soul to breathe. In 1692 Port Royal, said at that time to be the best town in the West Indies, was sunk by an earthquake to the bottom of the sea, in a similar manner, it would seem, to the beautiful marble pier at Lisbon, during the earthquake there. Before its destruction Port Royal was the principal port of the pirates, who infested the whole of the Spanish Main. Owing to its destruction, another site was selected at the base of the Blue Mountains, on which the new town was built. The name was, however, changed to Kingston. Kingston is the capital of Jamaica, and was in 1703 declared by the Assembly to be "the chief seat of trade and head port of entry" of the entire country. Soon after British rule was established, Sir Edward Morgan was appointed Deputy-Governor of Jamaica; his successor was Sir Thomas Moddiford, under whose wise administration the country reached the acme of prosperity; the population had now increased to about 17,300. With a view to harass the Spanish fleets, the Governor issued letters of marque to the pirates, who at the time were in strong force on the sea. The first of these was a Portuguese named Bortholomew, who committed many depredations, which were regarded as brilliant successes. He was followed by Brafiliano, a Dutchman, who did good service to the English by greatly annoying the Spaniards. But the most prominent and the most successful of all the buccaneers was Henry Morgan, the son of a Welsh farmer. Morgan was sold as a slave to a planter in Barbados. He commenced his atrocious career by obtaining a license from the Governor. This gave an air of lawfulness to his villainous enterprises and formed a cover to his cruelties and rapine. Conspicuous among his other exploits was in 1670 his successful attack on Panama, the treasures of which excited his cupidity. He had 1,200 men and several

ships under his command. After sacking and destroying the town, he decamped with immense booty. The amount he allotted to himself was 125,000 dollars, while to his "army and navy" he awarded the balance. A mutiny now occurred, the men being dissatisfied with the amount which they received. The wily Morgan, knowing the ruffians with whom he would have to treat if he remained on the isthmus, and thinking prudence the better part of valour, escaped unobserved back to Jamaica. A strange position in State affairs now obtained. Sir Thomas Modiford was arrested and ordered back to England to answer for his illegal act of commissioning Morgan to do as he did without having received the necessary authority from the Crown, while at the same time the King was so well pleased with Morgan on account of his destruction of Panama that he conferred upon him the honour of knighthood. The quandum slave and pirate, Sir Henry Morgan, now became the avowed enemy of pirates, and about 1677 was appointed Deputy-Governor of Jamaica. Sir Henry's successor was Lord Vaughan, a determined foe to piracy, which he endeavoured to stamp out of existence by hanging the bucaneers as fast as they were caught. As already stated, Port Royal, the largest and wealthiest town in the West Indies, was in 1692 destroyed by an earthquake, causing the death of 3,000 persons. Attempts were made to rebuild the town, and many returned to the old site. But in 1703 a fire occurred in a warehouse which contained a quantity of gunpowder, and soon the old town was ablaze. Yet even this second destruction did not deter many from again attempting its restoration. Houses were built, business was again resumed, and trade again flourished, but, as if destruction continued to brood and spread her sable plumes over the devoted place, in 1722 a terrific hurricane swept most of the houses into the sea, and, as on previous visitations, many persons perished. Forty-four ships that were lying in the harbour were destroyed. Four warships and two merchantmen alone escaped. As if determined to rise superior to earthquake, fire and storm, as if to combat the decrees of fate the inhabitants for the third time rebuilt the town, and soon became engaged in profitable commercial pursuits. Port Royal was, however, destined to enjoy but for a limited period the benefits of peaceful trade. In 1816 a fire occurred which ruined the town. The destitute condition of the people rendered assistance necessary; a subscription was raised for their relief, and a substantial sum obtained. Since this last recorded calamity Port Royal has become a place of but little importance. In 1780 Kingston suffered from a fire which destroyed a large portion of the town; the damage was estimated at 150,000 dollars. The damage, however, was soon repaired, and Kingston became a prosperous town. In 1802 it obtained permission to form a corporation, the members of which were the Mayor and aldermen. The Court of Common Council was now established and received a seal and also a legal status which, however, was somewhat restricted. On the obverse of the seal were the words Sigi Commune Civit, and on the reverse Hosfovet hos curat servatque Britannia Mater. In 1843 the town, or city, as it was then denominated, was again partly destroyed by fire, the sufferers from

which obtained considerable relief by subscriptions raised and also by the House of Assembly, which voted for them a substantial sum. In 1882 another disastrous fire broke out, which laid waste a large part of the city, 589 houses being wholly or partially consumed, the estimated value of which was 1,000,000 dollars. On January the 14th, 1907, a terrible earthquake occurred, almost entirely destroying the city of Kingston. Many who survived the dread catastrophe were severely injured; these were conveyed to the Naval Hospital at Port Royal. In less than three months after the earthquake Sir A. Swettenham, the then Governor of Jamaica, resigned, and Sir Sydney Olivier was appointed his successor. He was the Acting-Governor of the country some time previous to his appointment as Governor. We have briefly traced the fortunes of Jamaica from the date of its discovery by Columbus to the year 1907. The history of Jamaica is a sad history. It is little else than a record of floods and fires, hurricanes and earthquakes; but let us hope that Jamaica's worst calamities have passed away, and that for the hitherto afflicted land a brighter day is dawning.

A Ghost Story.

Our immortal Shakespeare informs us that in his day a popular superstition obtained regarding the reverence paid to Christmas-time, for he tells us that:

"It faded on the crowing of the cock,
Some say that ever, 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated
This bird of dawning singeth all night long,
And then they say no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm,
So hollow'd (hallow'd) and so gracious is the time."

But in direct opposition to the popular tradition as stated by the poet it is gravely averred that some years ago on a Christmas night a ghost, whether real or unreal has not been proved, did appear, not however like Hamlet in armour, nor like a witch in Macbeth; no, nor yet as a sooty imp from his Satannic majesty's dominions, whose soil we are told is burning marle, whose roof is one vast concave of hottest flame, and whose oceans are floods of tossing fire, but as a tall old man whose cheeks were strangely hollow, whose eyes were as dull as those of a vulture sunk deep in their sockets, and possessing a grim, nay ghastly, aspect. His grizzled locks of hair hung over his forehead and down on to his face in such horrible form as to cause the beholder to associate him with the furies who we are informed:

"Sink upon their iron beds
While snakes uncurled hang listening round their heads."

Now this unearthly looking creature came by some stealthy, unreal,

unsubstantial means into a room of an old mansion which at one time belonged to and had been tenanted by a wealthy nobleman who had since departed this life. The persons into whose hands the ancestral abode had fallen appointed a custodian named Jessup; this worthy while taking his accustomed walk through the halls and rooms before retiring to rest, for it was near midnight and the lights were dimly burning, was suddenly startled and awed at espying this dread unwelcome guest. After staring at him with strained eyes just long enough to note his awful appearance every nerve in his body became unstrung, a profuse perspiration broke out upon him, he trembled from head to foot, while each particular hair of his head stood on end "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." At length Jessup, who all the while kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on the spectre, said in a quivering, husky voice: "Who are you? What is your name? Why are you here? How did you get in?" By way of reply to these interrogatories the spectre said in horribly hollow tone, "I have returned to this house," a statement which the unhappy custodian knew was only too true. "I will remain for a brief period and then retire, but will come again." "You come uninvited," said Jessup. "I visit a friend here," said the spectre, "but by certain incantations I can behold him in the dead of the night—in the air—in the wind—and in the fire. Twenty years before I died," continued the spectre, "I became blind, I had a sister who took care of me and helped me out of many a difficulty. I led a precarious existence; sometimes I did writing for stage managers and other persons, occasionally translating Latin poems into English, for which I received a miserable pittance." The custodian now became deeply interested, and asked the spectre for particulars respecting his literary work. The latter replied, "I can only give you a faint idea of what I did when in the flesh, one of my productions runs thus:

Come and commiserate one who was blind,
Helpless and desolate void of a mind;
Though living in
Still disbelieving the world I was in,
King Ptolemy's Caesar's, and Tiglathpileser's birthdays are shown
Wise men astronomers all are acknowledgers mine is unknown;
I ne'er had a father, a mother, or rather if I had either
Then they were neither alive at my birth.
Lodged in a palace, hunted by malice,
I did not inherit by lineage or merit a spot on the earth.
Nursed among pagans no one baptized me,
A sponsor I had who ne'er catechised me.
She gave me the place to her heart that was nearest,
She gave me the place to her bosom was dearest;
But one look of kindness she cast on me never,
A voice in my blindness—I heard from her ever.
I lived not, I died not, but tell you I must
That ages have passed since I turned into dust.
What is this squalor, this splendour,

Was I a fool or a silly pretender?
Fathom the mystery deep in my history,
Was I a man, an angel supernal,
Or a demon infernal?
Solve it who can.

Some of the Latin in which I indulged was to me—Melodia in aura jubilum in corde.*

I will give you a sentence from that sweetest of Latin poets, Tibullus:—

Ego composito securus acervo
Despiciam dites despiciamque famen.**

It is now time for me to depart, but I shall come again." "When will you come," replied the custodian, but the ghost had vanished. Jessup's mind was now absorbed in thought, wondering at what he had seen and heard and whether it presaged aught of good or evil. He felt that a cloud of mysticism hung over him which was utterly out of his power to remove or dispel. What could it all mean? Was he under a spell? Would the spectre return? Was his late visitor a real ghost or was it the iniquitous machination of some designing scoundred who had cruelly played a hoax upon him. After indulging for some hours in these and similar cogitations and reveries and feeling utterly exhausted he laid down to rest, but sleep fled his eyes, proving the truth of the poet's words when speaking of sleep said:—

"The wretched he forsakes swift on his downy pinion
Flies from woe and lights on lids unsullied with a tear."

On the following morning a friend of the custodian, a Mr. Bates, called upon him and was entertained by the former with an account of his strange experiences on the previous night. He showed his friend the room and the exact spot where the ghost sat and also where he himself stood. Bates regarded the whole matter as a delusion or as a joke which had been played on his friend, and as a palliative and in order to brace his shattered nerves related the following story:—

About two years ago, at the witching hour of night, I was sitting silent and solitary in dreamy mood thinking of the past and hoping for the future. Indeed I often meditate on the pleasures of hope. Everyone knows that though disappointment sinks the heart of man the renewal of hope gives consolation. Hope is the balm of life which goes far to heal our woes and is a cordial for our fears. It is also like a lamp to our feet, a bright light to our path. It dispels the darkness which often obscures our minds. It seems that in all ages it was regarded as such. We are told that the box which Jupiter gave to Pandora, who was endowed with gifts by all the deities, though containing all kinds of evils, war, famine, pestilence, and an unnumbered throng of ills, yet there remained hope at the bottom. But, said Bates, you will pardon this digression, and I will proceed

*Music in the ear, jubilee in the heart.
**I am satisfied with my little hoard.
I can despise wealth and fear not hunger.

with my story. Suddenly I heard wild inharmonious musical sounds with abrupt stoppages. For two or three minutes a dead silence prevailed, then the weird strains which mocked all tune recommenced with redoubled vigour. I soon perceived that the player was no disciple of Amphion or Orpheus or Zetus, expert musicians, the last two quoted being sons of Jupiter. I waited and watched, thinking some one had crept into the house unobserved. I listened, but could hear no human footstep. Becoming desperate and determined to solve the mystery, I called my next neighbour to my assistance, who in a moment was at my side. There, said I, listen to that unearthly musical noise. Seeing that I was in a state of violent trepidation he hastily replied, "I will go with you and we will soon ascertain the cause of this." We went together to the room whence came the musical sounds and opened the door only to find that some one had carelessly left the piano unclosed and the cat, which was shut in the room, had been walking and running about on the keys. Whether or not Mr. Bates' story had the effect which he desired it to have we know not, but certain it is that the custodian recovered the use of his nerves. The equilibrium of his mind became restored as he was often seen long after his encounter with the spectre in perfect health and vigour. Although out of dread curiosity Jessup frequently inspected the haunted room, as he designated it, he saw nothing unusual or amiss. As to the ghost, he never kept his promise to return, or at least never manifested himself again to human eyes in the old mansion.