

that and every other question of prime importance. Three years hence we shall perhaps be re-electing Mr. Cleveland to the Presidency on the unfruitful issue of his being, personally, a good man, but the party to which he nominally belongs will have done nothing to justify its installation to power, and many of its members now in Congress will be thrown out, as the majority of them richly deserve. In sober fact, there has been no Democratic Party for this past seven or eight years, except on the single question of ousting the so-called Republicans from the spoils of Government; and now that they have got into power, and find the spoils in large part inaccessible, the party is rapidly going to pieces, which is the one redeeming feature of the situation. The Republican Party will hold together a while longer, because it is better disciplined and has more intelligence, and its leaders are able to join hands about the question of regaining such of the public plunder as it lost by the election of Mr. Cleveland.

Since the institution of the present Union, the United States have rarely been without great political issues to engage the attention of the people, and to afford opportunity for able men to come to the front and lead the masses to a definite settlement of them. But all this time the science and art of administration have been neglected, and now that good administration has become so essential to the well-being of our complex social organization, we find not only a lack of experience and training for its application, but a divergence between our constitutional and party systems of government that threatens to keep our administrative faculties paralyzed for an indefinite time ahead. B.

THE BRITISH ELECTIONS.

Our English correspondent writes respecting the influences which turned the scales in the elections:—

The boroughs declared with no uncertain voice against disestablishment of the Church, against a wavering foreign, or rather against a wavering Egyptian, policy, and last, but not least, against commercial depression. But in the counties, where Hodge now reigns supreme, other influences were evidently at work. Let us enquire what these influences were. I happened during the period of the elections to pass some days in Wiltshire, and as it is in this county that squirearchy, landlordism, and all that is understood by the "big houses" influence received the severest blow, I took some little pains to find out what was passing in the minds of the "sons of the soil." The conviction I arrived at was this, that Wiltshire Hodge has little love for his landlord, less for his parson, and least of all for his immediate suzerain, the farmer. Did he not, therefore, display an eminently human, if not a very Christian, instinct in voting diametrically opposite to the expressed wishes and predilections of squire, parson, and farmer? It is the fashion to say that Hodge really believed in the Liberal promise of three acres and a cow, and it is even alleged that one voter brought a halter with him to the polling booth.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 1886.

How the whistling wind drives sleet and snow
O'er each eave and each ledge, o'er each fence and each bough;
O'er tracks on earth's surface, o'er man's footsteps of sin,
The angel of God scatters purity in,
Reminding proud Mammon through each cycle of time
How the Heavens are pure and the Earth full of crime;
How his carvings and workings in iron and clay
Are hidden and covered by God in a day:
Where Man rears his mounds for the proud or the just
They are levelled and equalled by Nature's white dust.
It falls upon king and pauper alike,
Regardless of station, of wealth, or of might;
The white cloaks of courtiers it contrasts to shame;
To the blush of the cheek it adds freshness and flame;
To the festive in age or the sportive in youth
Earth's wintery garlands are atoms of mirth.
Then, welcome the snow, though heavy the fall,
God's emblem of purity, power o'er all.

Toronto.

CHARLES SHEARD, M.D.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications intended for the Editor must be addressed: EDITOR OF THE WEEK
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Contributors who desire their MS. returned, if not accepted, must enclose stamp for that purpose.

CHRISTIANITY AND TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—“A.” presents one view of “Christianity and Total Abstinence.” You will kindly allow me to present another in a few words, mostly quotations from an undoubted authority on both sides.

Our Saviour, who made wine from water at the marriage feast in Cana, said on another occasion: “It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe to him through whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.” On the principle of avoiding giving offence to “little ones,” or those who are weak in any respect, the Apostle Paul says: “All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man

who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” And again: “Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”

Application.—Would He who denounced with such woes the laying of stumbling blocks in the path of those who are mentally, morally, or physically weak, Himself provide, in large quantities, to a convivial gathering of people who had already “well drunk” (“drunk freely,” R. V.), a wine which is causing thousands of our *strongest* men to stumble every year? Is our generation weaker than that in the days of our Saviour, or is our wine stronger? Could He, whose example was always safe to the weakest, leading all upward only, and who, instead of causing offence by selfish indulgence, denied Himself to death in order to save others—could He possibly furnish, in our day, a marriage party with fifteen “firkins” of our wine, when the party had already drunk “to the full”? And would this manifest forth His glory? I fear that the man who would furnish even “blue ribbon beer” in such circumstances would bring rather more shame on his head than glory; but what of One from whom so much more would be expected than of any mere man?

But let the wine be what it may, “circumstances alter cases.” *Meat* is both harmless and wholesome in ordinary circumstances, argues the Apostle Paul; but there were circumstances in which it would be a stumbling block to weak brethren; and in such circumstances, the Apostle would be a total abstainer from it if he should live as long as the world would stand. Would “A.’s” example in drinking our mildest wine be as safe to his children as his example of abstinence? Of course, he must bear his own burden of responsibility; but it is neither wise nor kind of any one to stigmatize as “clerical purists” those whom, certainly, neither the Master nor His Apostle would condemn for their self-denial in either meat or drink, “lest they should make their brother to offend.” B.

JAPAN.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—I am glad to see in your “Topics” of January 14 some references to Japanese matters in refreshing contrast to a great deal that appears in Western papers about that interesting country, the most of which is very misleading; and yet, amid the general accuracy of the articles in THE WEEK, a few errors have crept in that you will allow me to correct:

1. Instead of Japan having “long recognized the desirability of a closer alliance with England,” she has become more firmly convinced that her safety lies in not allying herself more than absolutely necessary with any Western power. She is not likely to desire any alliance with England or any other Western power until they treat her fairly, and remove the incubus which they hold upon her development, and in consequence of which she is compelled to forego the advantages of opening up her territory to foreign intercourse.

2. Compulsory education is not one of “their latest steps in the path of civilization.” That has been a fact in Japan for a number of years. The chief change of late has been to enforce a fee in certain circumstances where formerly education was free.

3. In the matter of introducing Roman letters in place of Chinese ideographs and Japanese *Kana*, it was not members of the Kana Society who inaugurated the campaign in favour of the more radical change, but the professors and most prominent officials in connection with the Imperial Tokio University. Nor was the method of writing in Roman letters a discovery of this later movement, for the committee appointed to fix on an authoritative system of transliteration—of which I was a member—simply took and slightly modified a system already in use for over twenty years: that introduced by Dr. Hepburn, a medical missionary from the United States, and in which his great dictionary is published. Foreigners had already published quite a large amount of transliterated literature before the Japanese themselves took it up, and it has yet to fight its way to recognition and success. The society now numbers 6,079 members, of whom 314 are foreigners.

4. English is not yet taught in the primary schools throughout the country by decree of State; it is *permitted* and encouraged—but the lack of teachers confines the actual teaching to a comparatively small number. In spite of that, however, it is true that an immense and increasing impetus has been given to the spread of the English language and the influence of English literature.

5. I think it hardly fair to leave the impression that Christian missionaries spend their strength to any great extent in combating Confucianism, Buddhism, or Shinto—“slaying the slain.” They are engaged a hundredfold more largely in lifting up the Christ of the Gospels, and meeting every phase of unbelief as it appears in living reality. As you say, “Western philosophy is indeed largely destructive.” Japan is finding that it is not only destructive of old fogyism but of all moral sanctions as well, and the Christian missionary is trying to replace the destroyed moral sanctions of the past with the better and more enduring ones of Jesus Christ. Allow me the honour of handing you a book of lectures and a pamphlet or two, which will indicate some of the lines along which we move. Yours truly,

C. S. EBY (Nine years missionary in Japan).

Cobourg, Ont., January 15, 1886.