

gentle and kind, and whose habits and circumstances are favourable to tranquillity and contentment, there are many who easily submit to the inevitable, and, without apparent expectation of a future life, give up one by one the activities of life, with more of pleasant memory than painful regret. No one, indeed, can tell what thoughts and hopes of another life may be silently cherished by those who express nothing of them to others. But there are, we believe, many Comtists and modern English Buddhists to whom the cessation of all personal existence at death is not an unpleasant creed, and who are willing to sleep a long, endless sleep from which there is no awakening, without the sad sense which the Greek poet confesses even if they do not revel in the thought of annihilation, as one of Comte's enthusiastic disciples has assured us that she did. A tree will put out leaves for a time after it has been cut down; and so, perhaps, something of the old Christian belief in a resurrection may linger in the hearts and affect the thoughts of those whose life has been severed from that faith, but who still maintain that strange life-in-death, the worship of the Goddess Humanity, on the basis of a scientifically-ascertained annihilation of the individual. If in our earlier days the joys of earth taught us to forget the "Imperial palace whence we came," memories of that palace—tokens of its real, if far-off, existence—come back upon us as old age takes away those earthly joys one by one. As the bodily frame tends perceptibly to inevitable decay, the human spirit finds in itself a growing conviction that is not sharing in that decay, but ever rising more and more above it. As the stone walls and iron bars of time and space close over more narrowly upon us, the spirit becomes more and more conscious that these make no prison for it, but that it is getting ready for a freer action that was ever possible in any earlier and more favourable condition of its former life. Even as regards the material universe, the starry heavens, and the mountains, and green fields, as the bodily eye grows dim to these we become more fully aware that this eye at its best could see but a very small part of them, and that we have in us a capacity for infinitely wider and deeper sight of all these things, if only the needful conditions were given us. The ideals of literature, of art, or of action, which we have been striving through our lives to realize, and the realizing of which we have now to give up as a thing of the past—these ideals, which once seemed to us so lofty and so satisfying, we now perceive to be in themselves, and not merely in their possible realization, most inadequate and imperfect. In this world we might be able to do nothing better, if we could begin the past work of our lives over again; but the vision of far nobler—of infinite, not finite—ideals rises before us, for the realization of which there must be fitting conditions possible. If these intimations of immortality from the experiences of old age find their fullest and most assured existence when combined with the Christian faith, this is not because they are not the proper experiences of the human heart, and convictions of the human reason; but because the Christian is the highest and truest form of human life and thought. To the philosopher who declares that all these things, being incapable of verification, must be held to have no objective reality, but to be the projected forms of our imaginations, we grant that no such verification is, from the very nature of the case, possible. If faith is not the highest and truest act of the reason, if there is no substance in hopes until they are realized, and no evidence except that of sight, then we grant the philosopher's conclusions. But we refuse to admit his premises, and content ourselves with saying, "That which is, is." We turn to Cicero again, and from Cicero to Tennyson, and repeat with the latter, that

through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.
—*London Quarterly Review*.

REVELS OF SUPERSTITION.

There has been an extraordinary outbreak of superstition and fanaticism in the Georgia Midlands. A white man suddenly proclaimed himself to be the Messiah reappearing on earth to establish his kingdom, and a profound impression was left upon the minds of a group of ignorant negro followers, who listened with awe to his incoherent preaching. When he was lodged in jail at Milledgeville, a black Messiah, as mad as the traditional March hare, took up his parable and affirmed his own divinity in blasphemous outbursts, to which a motley throng of awe-struck negroes responded with many a frenzied "Glory to God!" The second Messiah had been justice of the peace, and possessed considerable authority over men of his own colour, although he was known to be a lunatic. He was arrested while encouraging his disciples to offer human sacrifices on a deserted plantation, and was carried off to the Hinesville jail. The negroes in their cabins surrounding the grass-grown ruins of the stately Walthour mansion burned during the civil war were by this time in a state of hysterical excitement. They gathered about the live-oak trees singing hymns, drinking whiskey, and awaiting with superstitious dread the advent of the next claimant for divine honours. When Shadrack Walthour, once a slave on the plantation, declared himself to be King Solomon, armed with a divine commission to release all the prisoners confined in Hinesville on charges of lunacy, his subjects knelt before him in ecstatic reverence. His fame rapidly was noised abroad, and hundreds of negroes from the surrounding country congregated at Walthour to pay homage to their new sovereign. By daylight his majesty was on exhibition in front, often, it is to be feared, royally drunk. At night

wood fires were lighted in the open air, and about the crackling blaze Solomon's loyal subjects sang, prayed, danced, and slept. The king's short reign closed with a mad rush for the Hinesville jail, where the lunatics were to be liberated. He had promised to attest his divinely-appointed commission by many miraculous signs and wonderful works, and had called for fifteen volunteers to attend him in his triumphal progress. With pomp and revelry the king and his retinue swept out of camp and took up the march for Hinesville. Sixteen swarthy warriors started with him; but in the course of the journey of ten miles ten fell out. The king, with his faithful guard of six, appeared before the prison and sought to perform a miracle, but no mighty work could he do. The marshal arrested the seven negroes and clapped them all into jail, lodging Solomon in all his glory in the cell adjoining that in which the black Messiah was swearing like a Hessian trooper of revolutionary days. The direful news was carried back to his court by the stragglers who had prudently halted by the wayside; and a candidate for the vacant throne instantly appeared. This time it was the Queen of Sheba, with two dusky attendants wielding palmetto fans and adjusting the folds of her raiment, which consisted of a soiled cotton sheet and a new pair of men's socks. She assumed no responsibility for miracles, was less aggressive in her idea of sovereignty, and passed the time in prolonged trances, during which she visited heaven and communed with spiritual powers. Scriptural characters multiplied after her reign began, two Nebuchadnezzars being found eating grass in the fields, a King David arising for judgment, and Satan himself coiling himself up in the branches of a live-oak. Indeed, so contagious was this spirit of Biblical impersonation that all the leading rôles in the drama of Israel were in a fair way to be enacted when a sheriff's posse appeared upon the scene to break up the encampment.—*New York Tribune*.

DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS.

Nearly two thousand years ago Pliny and Columella denounced the folly of destroying the highland forests that shelter the sources of fertilizing brooks and the nests of insect-destroying birds. "Sacred groves" were not limited to the land of the Phœnicians. The Celtic and German Druids protected the forests of their native lands; and even the barbarous Huns seem dimly to have recognized the climatic influence of arboreal vegetation, since we read of their chiefs enacting laws for the protection of the mountain-woods in the lower valley of the Danube. The mediæval region of Antinaturalism, however, inaugurated that reckless destruction of forest-trees which by its consequences has turned many of the most fruitful regions of ancient Europe into almost irreclaimable deserts. When the highlands of the Mediterranean peninsula had been deprived of their woods, the general falling of springs turned rivers into shallow brooks and brook valleys into arid ravines, which at last ceased to supply the irrigation canals by which the starving farmers hoped to relieve their distress. Vast tracts of once fertile lands had to be entirely abandoned. And while the summer droughts became more severe, winter floods became more frequent and destructive. The steep mountain-slopes, denuded of their vegetable mould, sent down torrents of snow water, turning rivers into rushing seas and inundating their valleys in spite of protecting dikes. Hillsides which once furnished pastures for thousands of herds were torn up by ever-deepening ravines and reduced to a state of desolation as complete as that of a volcanic cinder-field. Harbours once offering safe anchorage for the fleets of an empire became inaccessible from the accumulating deposits of the diluvium which had been swept down from the torrent rent mountain slopes, while a detritus of coarse sand and gravel covered the fields of the intermediate valleys. On the shores of the Adriatic alone 250,000,000 cubic yards of highland soil are thus yearly deposited in the form of pestilential mud-banks. A million square miles of uplands in Southern Europe and Western Asia have become almost as arid as the mountains of the moon. The Rhone, the Loire, the Ebro, the Guadalquivir, the Euphrates, and the Orontes have completely depopulated many districts exposed to the devastations of their yearly floods. In America the same cause has begun to produce the same effect. Not in Mexico alone, but within the boundaries of our own Republic, the progress of reckless forest-destruction has made inundations an annual calamity, and has so impoverished the soil of the denuded area that extensive tracts in the terrace-lands of the southern Alleghanies now resemble the *despoblados* of worn-out Spain. The loss resulting from the consequences of that improvidence far exceeds the benefit of labour saving machinery—so much so, indeed, that the waste of vegetable mould, in our Eastern cotton States alone, more than outweighs the profit derived from the improvement of all agricultural implements used on this continent.—*Dr. Felix L. Oswald, in Popular Science Monthly*.

THE Rev. Donald MacCallum, of Tiree, was inducted to the parish of Lochs, Lewis, lately. This noted friend of the crofters is an alumnus of Glasgow, where he carried off several first prizes. From his eminence in the Hebrew class he was known among the Highland students as "Rabbi MacCallum."

A LADY at Denny, seconded by a score of friends in that town, has started a series of Saturday evening drawing room entertainments for the 500 to 700 navvies employed there at present in the construction of the Falkirk and local water works. The experiment has been crowned with remarkable success, and will be continued through the coming winter.

British and Foreign.

It is said there is not a stroke of Dante's handwriting in the world.

THE first Mohammedan mosque in England has been built at Woking, in Surrey.

QUITE recently fourteen different languages were spoken by the inmates of Dr. Barnardo's orphan homes.

DR. STEWART, of Nether-Lochar, is moving for an Act of Presbytery to prevent the extinction of the lark.

MR. FERGUSON, of Linlithgow, has for the fifth time been presented with a cheque for \$500 by his parishioners.

PROVOST HODGE, of Falkirk, a member and formerly an elder in the Free Church, has died in his seventieth year.

SOME thirty Jesuit priests and nuns have sailed in two Portuguese steamers for the regions of the Upper Congo.

ONE of the very worst boys ever admitted to Dr. Barnardo's homes was not long ago ordained a clergyman.

TEMPERANCE advocates will have to set themselves seriously to battle with the increasing use of drugs as intoxicants.

A MISSIONARY on the Congo writes that famine is raging through the land, and that two-thirds of the population are dying for want of food.

THE Seven Stars public house in Withy Grove, Manchester, has been a hostelry for more than 500 years, and is probably the oldest "public" in Great Britain.

A TICKET-OF-LEAVE man, George Robert Lee, has been discovered carrying on a bogus mission to cabmen and officiating as an Anglican clergyman in Guernsey.

MR. WILLIAM STURROCK, the first man in Forfar to join the Good Templar Order, has died in his ninety ninth year; strict teetotalism characterized his whole life.

ON a recent evening the service in Marylebone Presbyterian Church was conducted by an Anglican clergyman who desires to join the Presbyterians.

THE Rev. C. A. Salmond, of Rothesay, to the great satisfaction of his flock, has intimated his intention of declining the call from South Morningside.

MR. MACDONALD, of Kilmuir, has been acting as deputy to the Highland fisherman at Wick and he reports that all the time he was there he hardly saw a single case of drunkenness.

DR. W. M. TAYLOR, of New York, while sojourning at Deanston House as the guest of Mr. John Muir, preached to a large congregation in the church at Doune.

COLONEL ADAMS, of the Salvation Army, has been holding farewell services in Scotland previous to his departure for Canada where he is to be at the head of 400 corps and 1,200 officers.

A HUMOROUS Glasgow publication, *Quiz*, accounts for the floods in Australia and the fine season they have been having in Scotland by the absence at the antipodes of Principal Rainy.

THE Rev. J. G. Cunningham, of St. Luke's, Edinburgh, opened a bazaar at Stranraer in aid of the Agra Medical Missionary Training Institute. The wares consisted exclusively of Indian work.

AYR PRESBYTERY met recently to consider the Kirkoswald case. The protest in behalf of Mr. Benson has been signed by 400 members and adherents, while the call to Mr. Muir has received only 300 signatures.

MR. W. H. WHITEHEAD, of Manchester, is about to start for a twelve-months' evangelistic tour in the United States and the colonies. His mission opens in Brooklyn under Dr. Cayler's auspices.

LORD SALISBURY, writing to the Duke of Westminster, expresses a hope that the impending international conference on African affairs will take steps to stop the demoralization of the natives by the liquor traffic.

QUEEN ESTHER is to be the next of Mr. Rider Haggard's victims. He is going off presently to Assyria for the "local colour." A press syndicate have given him a commission for the work.

DR. PENTECOST'S closing service, at the foot of the slopes of Arthur's Seat, on the afternoon of a recent Sunday, were attended by at least 12,000 people. From John v. 23 he preached a remarkably powerful discourse on the way of life.

THE Syrian mission in 1827 had only secured twenty converts; to-day its church roll exceeds 1,500. The mission in Egypt reports an addition last year to the membership of 365—one for each day of the year.

MR. JOHN TOD, an elder in Buccleuch Street Church, Edinburgh, who took a most active part in all Sabbath school and mission work, has died in his seventy-sixth year. His widow is a daughter of the late Rev. John Law, of Innerleithen.

PRINCIPAL RAINY had a large congregation in St. Andrew's Church, Hobart, when his sermon from Luke xii. 35-40, was an exhortation to apply the principles of Christianity to the ordinary affairs of everyday life. He received a public welcome on the following day.

FATHER PERRY, of Stonyhurst Jesuit College, England, who is being sent to Cayenne by the Royal Astronomical Society to watch the great solar eclipse which takes place just before Christmas, has been elected president of the Liverpool Astronomical Society.

SIR HENRY PARKES, Premier of New South Wales, has boldly declared himself in favour of woman having the suffrage, and promises to give effect to this opinion in his new Electoral Bill. He believes it will have a decidedly elevating tendency.

LORD BUTE is about to build a monastery near Whithorn in connection with which there will be a model farm and an orphanage. Three fathers and a lay-brother from the Sussex monastery have arrived from Wigtown, where they will conduct their mission work until the monastery is built.

THE late Mr. Alex. Lockie, cabinet-maker, Peterhead, has bequeathed the residue of his estate, after the death of his wife and the payment of legacies to relatives, for the providing of thirty sittings for poor people in the chapel of ease about to be erected in Peterhead and towards the maintenance of its minister.