

HOURS OF IDLENESS.

MR. HENRY BLACKWELL, Secretary of the Eisteddfod of this city, sends me the following:—"There is in Carnarvonshire, Wales, a little, quaint, old-fashioned hotel called the Pen-y-Gwyrd. Standing at the foot of Snowdon and at the top of the Pass of Llanberris, it commands the grandest scenery in North Wales. The nearest house is a mile away, and the nearest church four miles; a walk of six miles takes you to the nearest railway and telegraph station, but to reach a town you have to ride or walk eleven. Charles Kingsley, in 'Two Years Ago' (Eversley Edition, Vol. II., p. 228), gives a good account of this famous hostelry. Like other hotels, the Pen-y-Gwyrd has a visitors' book, and it contains the names of many Englishmen of note. Some twenty-five years ago, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Hughes, and 'Tom' Taylor, the dramatist, afterwards editor of *Punch*, visited this hotel, and getting possession of the visitors' book, each in turn scribbled four-line verses in it, on such themes as the hotel, the weather, the tap, the scenery, the table, and the host and hostess. They wound up their poetic work with a stanza in Latin. A tourist visiting the hotel in 1864 was struck with the idea that some of the poetry written in the book would not look bad in print; so he copied what he thought was the best, and issued it, *privately*, in a pamphlet. I have a copy of this little volume containing the verses of Kingsley, Hughes, and Taylor. It is the only one I have seen in an experience of seven years as a collector of books in the English language relating to Wales and the Welsh."

The pamphlet that accompanies Mr. Blackwell's letter is a diminutive volume, bound in blue paper, and bearing the title "Offerings at the Foot of Snowdon, or Breathings of Indolence at Pen-y-Gwyrd." It was printed at Woburn, "by J. Sergeant," in 1864. The verses of the Canon, the Queen's Counsel, and the playwright, hold the place of honour in its pages. The authorship of each stanza is shown by the initials printed above it. The first three run thus:

T. T.

I came to Pen-y-Gwyrd with colours armed and pencils,
But found no use whatever for any such utensils;
So in default of them I took to using knives and forks,
And made successful drawings—of Mrs. Owen's corks!

C. K.

I came to Pen-y-Gwyrd in frantic hopes of slaying
Grilse, Salmon, 3 lb. red-fleshed Trout, and what else there's no saying;
But bitter cold and lashing rain, and black nor'-eastern skies, sir,
Drove me to fish and botany, a sadder man and wiser.

T. H.

I came to Pen-y-Gwyrd a-larking with my betters,
A mad wag and a mad poet, both of them men of letters;
Which two ungrateful parties, after all the care I've took
Of them, make me write verses in Henry Owen's book.

I have copied out three others of the English stanzas, irrespective of their position in this string of doggerel, and will conclude with the Latin lines which were the result of the trio's united efforts:

C. K.

And I too have another debt to pay another way
For kindness shown by these good souls to one who's far away,
Even to this old colly dog who tracked the mountains o'er
For one who seeks strange birds and flowers on far Australia's shore.

T. H.

Oh, my dear namesake's breeches, you never see the like,
He bust them all so shameful a-crossing of a dyke;
But Mrs. Owen patch'd them, as careful as a mother,
With flannel of three colours—she hadn't got no other.

T. T.

Pen-y-Gwyrd, when wet and worn, has kept a warm fireside for us;
Socks, boots, and never-mention-ems Mrs. Owen still has dried for us;
With host and hostess, fare and bill, so pleased we are that, going,
We feel for all their kindness 'tis we, not they, are Owen!

T. H.

T. T.

C. K.

Nos tres in uno juncti hos fecimus versiculos;
Tomas piscator pisces qui non cepi sed pisciculos,
Tomas sciagraphus, sketches qui non feci nisi ridiculos,
Herbarius Carolus montes qui lustravi perpendicularos.

—New York Critic.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

WEAPONS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE BRONZE AGE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND.

THE evidence that is before us, incomplete and imperfect as it is, is undoubtedly evidence, not of an extreme scarcity, but of an abundance of gold ornaments greatly in excess of what we might have anticipated. To the questions of how this supply of gold was obtained and whence it was derived, there is no direct answer obtainable by any method known to me. But of this we may be certain, that from whatever source the Bronze Age people of Scotland obtained their supply of the precious metal, it could not have been obtained without its relative equivalent in labour or produce. Whether they procured it from its native sources within their own territory, and by their own industry and skill, or whether they imported it in exchange for other productions, the significance of its possession with regard to their conditions of life remains the same. In like manner, it does not affect the significance of their possession of bronze that they may not have procured the copper and tin of which it is composed from their own territories. If they imported these metals also, the fact that a traffic so complex and costly was maintained and provided for, implies the exis-

tence of conditions of culture and systems of social, commercial, and even political organisation, which cannot be held to indicate a low state of civilisation. The weapons and tools of the bronze age have this characteristic in common, that they are always well made, substantial, and purpose-like. In addition to these serviceable qualities, they possess the high merit of being well designed, graceful in outline, and finely proportioned, exhibiting, even in the commonest articles, a play of fancy in the subtle variations of their distinctive forms that is specially remarkable. . . . I venture to say that nothing finer than the workmanship of these bronze shields has ever been produced by the hammer. The people who supplied themselves with implements and weapons in this capable and cultured way, also used gold occasionally in the mounting of their weapons, and most lavishly in personal adornment. Although we know nothing whatever of their household arrangements, or the manners and customs of their domestic life, seeing that not a trace of a dwelling or site of a settlement of the Bronze Age has been discovered in Scotland, yet we are not without evidence of an indirect nature to indicate that they could not have been wholly destitute of the comforts and conveniences of life; and not the least striking of all the characteristics of their culture is exemplified in the fact that we know them chiefly, not from the circumstances in which they maintained themselves in life, but from circumstances which are the direct result of their attitude of mind towards their dead. If life with them was a struggle for existence, we look in vain for its memorials; but there is no wide district of country in which the memorials of their dead are not prominent, picturesque, and familiar features.—*Scotland in Pagan Times.* By Joseph Anderson, LL.D.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN TORIES AND WHIGS.

HISTORICALLY, the two parties are sufficiently distinct. Though they have changed, modified, and even, as some aver, exchanged their principles, the distinction has throughout been roughly defined. In former times, they differed mainly in this: that to the Tory the Constitution was an end in itself beyond which he seldom looked; whereas the Whig deemed all forms of government subordinate to the public good, and, therefore, liable to change when they should cease to promote that object. "The Whig," says Hallam, "had a natural tendency to political improvement, the Tory an aversion to it. The one loved to descant on liberty and the rights of mankind, the other on the mischiefs of sedition and the rights of Kings." In later times, the Tory was an ardent supporter of the Church, and intolerant alike of Romanism and Dissent; the Whig treated Nonconformists with moderation, if not with favour. Historically, therefore, there is an intelligible foundation for the two parties. Is there also a natural history of parties? Mr. Lecky has ably endeavoured to show that there is. "The division of parties," he says, "corresponds roughly to certain broad distinctions of mind and character which can never be effaced." And it cannot be denied that the division is to some extent analogous with that between content and hope, between caution and confidence, between the mind which reveres the past and the mind which looks forward to the future, between the mind which sees most clearly the defects of existing institutions and the mind which is most alive to the dangers of change. Each side, he says, claims for itself a natural affinity with some of the highest qualities of mind and character. Each also arrays on its own side *those who, from infirmity of mind, are induced to accept half-truths as indestructible principles.* Those who are blindly wedded to routine, and incapable of appreciating new ideas or the exigencies of changed circumstances, and who have no very great desire to leave the world better than they found it, naturally gravitate towards Conservatism; while those who have no real appreciation of the infinite complexity and inter-dependence of political problems, and of the many remote and indirect consequences of every change—those who hate every privilege which they do not share, and those who are prepared "with a light heart and reckless head to recast the whole framework of the Constitution in the interests of speculation or experiment"—are naturally found in the ranks of the Liberals.—*Party and Patriotism.* By Sidney E. Williams.

THE FUTURE LIFE.

STRANGE reminiscence! At the end of the Terrace La Treille, on the eastern side, as I looked down the slope, it seemed to me that I saw once more, in imagination, a little path which existed there when I was a child, and ran through the bushy underwood, which was thicker then than it is now. It is at least forty years since this impression disappeared from my mind. The revival of an image, so dead and so forgotten, set me thinking. Consciousness seems to be like a book, in which the leaves turned by life successively cover and hide each other in spite of their semi-transparency; but although the book may be open at the page of the present, the wind, for a few seconds, may blow back the first pages into view. And at death will these leaves cease to hide each other, and shall we see all our past at once? Is death the passage from the successive to the simultaneous—that is to say, from time to eternity? Shall we then understand, in its unity, the poem or mysterious episode of our existence, which till then we have spelled out phrase by phrase? And is this the secret of that glory which so often enwraps the brow and countenance of those who are nearly dead? If so, death would be like the arrival of a traveller at the top of a great mountain, whence he sees spread out before him the whole configuration of the country, of which, till then, he had had but passing glimpses. To be able to overlook one's own history, to divine its meaning in the general concert and in the divine plan, would be the beginning of eternal felicity. Till then we had sacrificed ourselves to the universal