

Even by mortals loathed  
This prodigy of horror. There of Night  
Obscure the dismal dwellings rise, with mists  
Of darkness overspread. There Night  
And Day, near passing, mutual greetings still  
Exchange, alternate as they glide athwart  
The brazen threshold vast. This enters, that  
Forth issues; nor the two can one abide  
At once constrain. The sons of gloomy Night  
There hold their habitation—Death and Sleep—  
Dread dwellers; nor them the shining Sun  
E'er with his beams contemplates, when he climbs  
The cope of heaven, nor when from heaven descends.

How are we to account for these striking resemblances between Hesiod and Milton, without charging the latter with plagiarism, in not acknowledging his indebtedness to the Grecian poet? The author of the "Paradise Lost" is known to have been familiar with ancient classical literature; he was, therefore, doubtless, acquainted with the poems of Hesiod. If he was, the problem is solved; the ideas of the Aescæan bard would involuntarily suggest them to his mind; and the topics being similar, the very language which had previously been used, would be reproduced with later work. This, I believe, is the true, and a perfectly adequate explanation, of the curious and interesting phenomenon which we have been contemplating.

PHILO-CLASSICUS.

Wolfville, Nov. 25, 1885.

### RANDOM ARROWS.

It is impossible that any conceivable social system or state of things could more completely and conspicuously condemn itself than political partizanship has done in the case of Riel. Principle is slung to the winds with a shamelessness which is only less astonishing than the facility with which shame has, in these days, come to be condoned. Fifteen years ago none clamored so loudly for justice on the miscreant who has just paid the penalty of his wickedness, as the Grits. They were right then in so doing, and they would have been justified in continuing to make political capital out of the criminal's immunity, had not their own government, when in power, been as guilty as Sir John's.

One of the worst features of the contention is the setting up of the baleful principle that crimes should not be capitally punished if only they can be designated political. This means nothing more, nor less, than that a community is to be plunged into bloodshed, rapine, and military expenditure, whenever any scoundrel to whom an evil notoriety is the breath of life, may happen to possess brains enough to make him dangerous. The character of the lower French element, with the Indian material to work upon, lays the Dominion peculiarly open to this risk—a risk which the courage of the Government in determining to carry out the well-deserved sentence, will be found to have minimised. Wherever the Government may have lost respect, their action in this matter should go very far to restore it, and those who have had grave fears how far the worst sort of French influence might have prevailed to frustrate the ends of justice, will have had their confidence reassured.

There are many who have come to regard the offrontery and mendacity of political newspaper discussion with disgust, and to pass it by with contempt, but this question has been followed with an exceptional interest, and the unscrupulousness with which the utterance of some Conservative papers on the subject have been distorted and misrepresented, has been so flagrant as, I should imagine, entirely to defeat its end.

The malignance of American journalism might of course be counted on; but that a portion of the Canadian press should seek to make capital out of the righteous firmness of the Government in this conjuncture is nothing short of a disgrace.

Two notable deaths were published last week, that of the young King of Spain, and of the Vice President of the United States. The late King was a sovereign of much good promise, and his early demise can scarcely be other than disadvantageous to his country. No doubt we shall hear of Don Carlos again, and it is only to be hoped that the regency will be in firm and able hands.

The decease of the Vice-President presents itself in a different light. Mr. Hendricks was unfortunately a politician of the baser sort, and there was no saying how vexatious an obstacle he might have proved to Mr. Cleveland's reforming policy; while, if by evil fortune, the President himself should have been removed, the accession of Mr. Hendricks could not have been regarded as other than a misfortune.

The death of the young Prince Imperial, tho' sad enough in itself, was perhaps fortunate for France, at least in extinguishing another line of the Napoleonicæ.

I have well nigh given up all idea of contending with Belial. His peculiar malapropism in genius is too strong for me, and I suppose it is vain to hint, as Count Chûcks says: "in the most delicate manner," that he might possibly deign to discriminate between "deprecate" and "depreciate," and "direct" and "direct." Perhaps he who writes an abominable hand, has no right to hint at the possibility of rendering a doubtful-looking word right by the sense of the context. Yet one thing puzzles one; some printers have risen to eminence, very many to a high level of attainment. Has the distinction between the ruck and those who have left it behind been in any way due to the tact and quickness which can discriminate and determine by context? But perhaps I am writing of that which I know very little about. At all events I mean no offence.

Mr. John C. Goodridge writes in the *Scientific American*, (Oct. 31), on the subject of closing the Straits of Bello Ielo, and speculates on the possible diversion of the Gulf Stream which might attend such a work. The idea was treated of at some length by General Sir Selby Smyth, in his Militia Report for (I think) 1880, of which fact Mr. Goodridge is probably unaware.

Among the possibilities which might ensue is an alteration of the climate of the British Islands to a temperature correspondent to their latitude. Mr. Goodridge regards the question, of course from the point of view of the amelioration of the climate of the Atlantic coast, and is a little playful about "a climate like Labrador making many changes in the tight little island," and "the Queen leaving her frozen subjects in England to take the throne as Empress of India."

A few years ago Mr. Bradlaugh published a pamphlet entitled, "A few words about the Devil." Some paper (I think the *Spectator*) noticing it, observed that "no doubt Mr. Bradlaugh had a perfect right to say a few words about the Devil, but that, at no very distant time, the Devil might very likely have a few words to say to Mr. Bradlaugh, and would in all probability, have the best of the argument."

A change of the natural conditions of a country by human agency would be a serious international question; such an one is cleverly illustrated in "By and By," a story of five hundred years hence, which is far superior to Bulwer's "Coming Race." In it Maitland supposes Abyssinia, urged by hereditary hatred to Egypt, diverting the course of the Nile, and being compelled by the council of great powers to restore it.

If, therefore, this project should ever approach the stage of action, it is not improbable that, the Straits being in British Territory, the Queen might also—should Canada still recognize her allegiance to England—have "a few words" to say in the matter.

FRANC-TIREUR.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

### THE QUESTION OF HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORT.

Some weeks ago, a discussion took place in the City Council, on the advisability of maintaining, at the public expense, any institutions such as High Schools, whose sphere of action is in advance of the all-sufficient "Three R's." A theory of public instruction has been promulgated, and has found only too much favor among the ultra-economical, which is not by any means new, but which does not yet seem to have been relegated to its proper place among the curiosities of attempted reform. That it still finds, even in the neighboring Republic, an occasional advocate among newspapers and men whose highest aim is to gain popularity, may be gathered from an article in the *Boston Journal of Education*, beginning with this sentence:

"The greatest hindrance to general progress in public school affairs, in every part of the country, is found in a considerable class of obstinate men of wealth, sometimes of education and high respectability, who are impressed with the crotchet that the American common school, like the old-time free school of the South and the English government schools of to-day, should be a sort of cheap John arrangement for teaching the three R's and the unskilled industries to the masses, roofed in with a firmament of brass to prevent the common herd from rising above its sphere in life."

I refer to this agitation, not because I think it likely to take any definite shape. I have too much faith in the good sense of the public, too much reliance upon its liberality, upon its desire for the advancement of the youth of the city in high education, upon its public spirit, to expect any such narrow and illiberal theories to receive a general support. When one glances at the state of secondary education abroad, both in the most enlightened nation of Europe and in the thriving American Republic, he cannot fail to be struck with the boldness, while he is alarmed at the folly of any proposition to lessen the support at present extended to popular education. In Germany, whose inhabitants are in the van of the artistic, literary, and scientific world, the whole system of education, including Primary Schools, Burgher Schools, the Realschule, the Gymnasium, and the University, are supported by the public. The Realschule, occupying the middle of the series, corresponds to our High Schools, the course consisting of French, German, English, Latin, Mathematics, Geography, History, Natural History, Physics, Chemistry, Drawing, etc. The same system of popular education, which has been looked upon as the most perfect in existence, prevails in its general features in the other German States, as well as in France, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, and to some extent in England. With the experience and enlightenment of the civilized world ranging themselves on the side of free secondary education, we have *prima facie* evidence enough to make us consider well before abolishing it.

High Schools are necessary, in order to keep up the supply of teachers for the lower departments; they furnish a stimulus to the activity of these departments; they form the connecting link between the Primary Schools and the University, thus enabling poor, but clever and energetic boys, to rise to positions of influence and power, to the great good of the community. But as already said, there is little danger of any hasty legislation on this subject; only, the very raising of the question, and the raising of doubts as to the necessity of High Schools, spreads abroad among the people ideas which in themselves militate against the efficiency of these institutions. The Halifax High School, or Academy, has, from the day of its foundation, met with a blind, unquestioning opposition which has hitherto rendered it very difficult to keep up a respectable attendance. Now that this difficulty is removed, in the name of justice let the public judge of the institution, and grant or withhold its sympathy according to the work done in it.