

lions murmur, under any trial or affliction, contains within it a denial of the existence of a God;" and those who doubt the doctrine of a particular Providence may find in these papers some suggestions worth considering. "By Providence," says the author, "we mean a controlling, modifying, helping Power, strong to do us good. If we deny such a Providence, we might as well believe that matter is God, that our life is but a magnetic current, and that gravitation is the only Providence, since that takes care that every atom in the universe tends to a common centre, and thus prevents every form of sentient and unsentient order, beauty and use, from being dissolved into an infinity of invisible dust, if indeed we should not say with Shakespeare—

'And leave not a wrack behind.'

The papers on "the Combat of Good and Evil," "Poverty and Oppression," and "The Rich and the Poor," are well worthy of the study of business men as well as of political economists. The author exposes, we think, the true root of the class evils which distract society, and must continue to do so till the problem is solved in the way he indicates. The manner in which he analyses two current maxims, "Every man has a right to do the best he can for himself," and "Self-preservation is the first law of nature," may startle some employers and merchants who "profess and call themselves Christians." Of the first the author says, indignantly, "This infernal maxim lies deep in the heart at the root of all the miseries which man inflicts on man. It is the source of poverty and the spring of want. It goes forth decked in the artificial laurels of a heartless philosophy—falsehood reduced to a science—and, blasting all the freshness of life, charges creative power with barrenness amid the boundless profusion of its treasures. Rich and poor *alike* have drunk of the poison." "If the law of the strongest is the law of hell, and earth most resembles hell when that law is recognised and enforced, then, too, the separate inhabitants of earth who most recognize and enforce it are most like the separate inhabitants of hell, in whom it reigns and rules as the absorbing principle of conscious life; but what do we call the separate inhabitants of hell? Where is the difference between them? *Actually* there is none; but there is a *possibility* in favour of man."

One of the most interesting of the papers, particularly in the light of the discussions of the day, is the one on "The Philosophy and Theology of Sleep," in which several interesting veins of thought are suggestively struck. The paper on "Widowhood and its Hopes" will, to many, have a special interest. That on "Old Times" is one of the liveliest in its strain, and will interest both parties to the perpetual

debate, whether the world grows better or worse as it grows older. No one, at least, can deny the assertion that "modern changes have gone far to equalize and to spread what I may call *nervous* cares broadcast over the whole community;" and the Montreal merchant's remark as to the effects of telegraph and cable in "taking peace from the earth," will find an echo in many a care-oppressed heart.

There are a few literary blemishes in the work, such as the occurrence of the inaccuracy "different to," and an unauthorised use of the preposition "without." These might easily be removed in another edition, as they are doubtless simple inadvertences. The author's very high tribute to his wife, embodied in his dedication, is worth the attention of wives in general. Mr. Hancock was formerly a practising barrister in Berlin and also in Toronto; though he now dates his preface from the vicinity of Liverpool. We are glad to give this work the most satisfactory commendation a reviewer can bestow; that of cordially recommending to others a book which one has read oneself, not only with much pleasure, but with much profit.

ST. ELMO. A Novel. By Augusta J. Evans Wilson. Toronto: Belford Bros.

"Blasé, cynical, scoffing, and hopeless, he had stranded his life, and was recklessly striding to his grave, trampling upon the feelings of all with whom he associated." Such is the author's description of her hero, and her other characters are pitched in as positive and exaggerated a key. Edna Earl, the typical woman and wife, is every whit as pure and holy as St. Elmo is vicious and degraded. Only one point of similarity exists between them, their surprising and supernatural learning, and the readiness with which they quote long extracts from forgotten authors, or bespatter each other and one another's friends with sarcasm, repartee, and abuse, couched in every living and dead language, and barbed with allusions to classic authors, nay, to the Talmud, the Koran, the Targums, and the pictured bricks of Babylon. At the age of seventeen, and having had no education at all until she entered her teens, this heroine had mastered Latin and Greek, and plunged into the mysteries of Hebrew and Chaldee. Four months' tuition in this last, and a little private study of her own, enables her (at p. 97) to turn up a disputed passage in an ancient Chaldee MS. in double quick time, so we must not feel surprised to find her, at "sweet seventeen," embarking on an original work of her own, in which that trio of "ologies"—mythology, ethnology, and philology—should march abreast, and trace, through all the supposed similarities of religious thought, the fancied thread that should