

Washington, *Public Opinion* says:—"Dr. West, a collector of curios at Antigonish, Nova Scotia, has shipped to the Columbian Exposition the first exhibit from a foreign country. The goods consist of useful and ornamental articles purchased from the Antigonish Mountain Indians." We know of no Mountain Indians in Nova Scotia, the only tribe now existing being the Micmac, but we are glad to see exhibits from this country being prepared for the World's Fair, even if they be a "little previous."

Dr. Andrew Wilson, in referring to the recent "boom" in Theosophy, the cult of which Madame Blavatsky was the priestess, and whose mantle has fallen upon Mrs. Besant, says that the prevailing attitude of Theosophy, as regards science, shuts it out of scientific consideration altogether. The marvels alleged to have occurred in the shape of letters and messages from the dead are difficult of credence, and unless we can have scientific investigation there is an end of the matter. Other things as wonderful have really been done, witness the telephone, phonograph, etc., but about these there is no mystery, and we know, more or less, according to our study of the subject, the way in which the results are accomplished. Dr. Wilson pertinently says:—"It is a clever idea, but an ancient one, to keep your oracle hidden from the vulgar gaze," and this is what the Theosophists are doing, with the result that no really earnest seekers after truth can have anything to do with it.

Scholars are wont to lament the gradual decadence of the Greek language, and the change of ideas regarding its value in institutions of learning. Andrew Lang, writing on "Greek Magazine Poetry" in the *Illustrated London News*, pays the following tributes to the capabilities of the angelic sex. "We who still remember a little Greek," he says, "feel now like the last of the Picts—in possession of a secret that will shortly be lost by succeeding generations. Sometimes one fancies that if ladies would take to Greek the tongue might have a better chance of surviving; for it is women who preserve old customs, old ideas, magic and rustic dance-measures, ballads and fairy tales. But so many young ladies put off learning Greek till they are thirty-seven (about the age when Cato acquired it) that perhaps they will never really master it; but merely bestow on it a desultory attention, as if it were like the art of burning decorative patterns on wood, or like Japanese work, or some domestic craft of that kind."

The Methodist Ecumenical Congress which met in Washington, D. C., on October 7th, has been the subject of much press comment, and has attracted a good deal of attention, not only in the religious world, but among all thinking people. This is the second Congress of the kind that Methodism has held since Wesley founded the church one hundred and fifty years ago. It is remarkable what a difference exists between the subjects discussed at the London Congress and those under consideration at Washington. At the first, Methodism formed the principal topic, and at the Congress this month we find social questions, education, temperance, the disputes between labor and capital, the relation of religion to scientific thought and similar themes occupying the attention of this distinguished body. The Congress numbers about five hundred delegates, two hundred coming from Great Britain and Ireland, France, Australia, Africa and the West Indies, and three hundred from the United States and Canada. For the benefit of those whose erudition has not conquered the word Ecumenical, we may say that it means belonging to the whole inhabited world. It is the opinion of the members of this Congress that Methodism will probably represent one fourth of the English-speaking people of the world before long.

We have on our table a pamphlet entitled "The Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit," by Victoria C. Woodhull Martin, who, it will be remembered, was an ardent reformer in the United States, and ran for the Presidency in 1875—that is she did so when she was Mrs. Victoria Woodhull, Martin being added by a later marriage in England. In his pamphlet Mrs. Martin depicts the state of affairs in the matter of the increase of the unfit as alarming, and shows plainly the cause of the undesirable additions to Society in general. We always had a lurking belief in the survival of the luckiest rather than the fittest, and we quite agree with Mrs. Martin that the chances are all in favor of the rich and unscrupulous. It is a lamentable feature of the lecture, however, that the authoress does not propose any radical remedy or prevention for this state of affairs. She says that if superior people are desired they must be bred; and if imbeciles, criminals, paupers, and otherwise unfit are undesirable citizens, they must not be bred. While we acknowledge this to be correct, we must perforce leave it at that point. Anything radical in the way of reform would be likely to raise a row in these modern times when the freedom of the individual is too sacred to be tampered with, and it would take many years to accomplish anything by teaching our girls and boys the sacredness of the life-giving principle. "The upper million and the lower ten" is a desirable consummation, but we do not hope to see that glorious era dawn. "The true interests of humanity" are most frequently lost sight of by individuals, and it is useless to hope that it will be otherwise.

In many respects the present condition of Russia is very similar to that of France before the outbreak of the Great Revolution there in 1791. The famine prevailing in Russia, so recent reports state, is terrible. "There are persons who have already gone for two and three weeks without bread, and have barely managed to keep themselves alive on grass and leaves of trees." Do not these words recall the descriptions given of the famine which prevailed in France before the revolutionary outbreak? Again, Nihilism flourishes in Russia, yet every attempt to secure greater freedom only ends

by sending a batch of exiles to Siberia. So it was in France at the time referred to, only lifelong imprisonment instead of exile awaited those who dared to criticise the doings of the Government. And might not the revocation of the Edict of Nantes be aptly compared to the Czar's expulsion decree levelled against the Jews? The lavish expenditure at the Russian Court, and the great intercourse and friendly feeling promoted with Republican France, have their counterpart in the gaieties of Versailles and the intercourse with the United States. "Like causes produce like effects" is a well-known axiom. There cannot be the least doubt that the inflammable materials for revolution are now already to hand. Many of the educated classes have long since risked all for responsible government, and many more are ready to risk all, but they have not hitherto been supported by the ignorant and poorer classes. Famine is now coming to their aid. The clamor of a starving populace no power on earth can silence, unless with the death-dealing bullets of the soldier. Should an outbreak actually take place, its success or non-success would mainly depend on how the army stood affected. That would be the crucial point. It was so during the French Revolution; it would probably be the same in Russia. When the French soldiers refused to fire on the people, preferring to fraternise with them, the power of the king was virtually at an end. We know of no person capable of taking the leadership of a revolutionary movement in Russia; it would be wonderful if we did, as all things must of necessity be done in secret in that land of spies, but doubtless with the hour would come the man. At the commencement of the French Revolution no one had heard of the young artillery officer Napoleon Bonaparte.

It is rather a difficult matter to decide what is good form in these days when every small-souled meddling society correspondent undertakes to become an oracle on the subject, and teach well-bred people how they ought to conduct themselves. These same peddlers of small talk and gossip, who oftentimes abuse the "freedom of the press" by airing their petty spites and jealousies in their weekly contributions, appear blissfully unconscious of the fact that they are committing the most unpardonable breach of social etiquette possible by making uncalled-for comments upon the dress, manners, deportment and conversation of many estimable people, who are so much higher in the scale of being than themselves that they would scorn to lend their pens to such contemptible ends as do those who undertake to criticise them. The matter that fills many columns of the so-called society papers is nothing more nor less than insolence, and it is a pity some means cannot be taken to put a stopper on the vessels that contain so much obnoxious gas. Of late the intrusiveness of those Paul Prys has been remarked upon very generally by the society of Halifax. One lady complains that she cannot have a friend to dinner, or go for a walk or drive, or pay a visit, without having the fact trumpeted forth for the benefit of the *cannals*, as she wrathfully terms the readers of this class of "literature." It is "hard lines" for the best of our people, whose fathers and mothers, and grandparents, back to the first who set foot on Nova Scotian soil, were gentlefolks, and even for those whose claim to gentility rests on a more recent rise, but whose instincts are right, for their every movement to be written up in the crazy patchwork collections called society notes. A lady cannot now wear the same dress twice without having it noticed, and if for any reason she be obliged to wear a gown not as fresh as she would wish, she is likely to be informed by her friend, the society correspondent, that it was *passé*. How pleased the correspondent must feel when he or she (it is generally she) inflicts pain on the unfortunate subjects of comment! The beauty or plainness of ladies, their dress, their behaviour, marriage engagements, expected, actual or broken off, and many other personal matters, appear to be the happy hunting grounds of these crafty persons. Nothing is too personal for them to touch upon unless they fear endangering their lives by "giving themselves away" in alluding pointedly to anything they know people will associate them with. One of the great troubles connected with this modern method of accomplishing the discomfiture of so many people, is the anonymity of the blows struck. The writers are sheltered behind *noms de plume* and take precious good care to let no one know their true identity. If they were known vengeance would be speedily wreaked on their heads. There are a few cases where contributions of an innocent and unoffending character are furnished, but they have the damning fault of being tawny, and do not suit the palates of the class of readers who desire society gossip. We therefore would not sweepingly condemn all who write thus, but it is the system we object to. We fancy if the sterner sex were as liberally, or illiberally, criticised as their fair sisters there would soon be an end to the matter. Why cannot we be told how often Mr. So and So has appeared in the same dress suit, and if his necktie was cambric or silk or satin? The preposterous absurdity of the thing would then appear, and the long-suffering ladies would be relieved of the fear of hearing their personal affairs discussed. References are frequently made to affairs that are purely one's own business, which every one in a small place can easily fit the names to, making it very uncomfortable for those who know that item is levelled at them. It is bad enough when the truth is told, but only too frequently a large proportion of error creeps in. We are forced to the conclusion that the women (or men) who thus parade other people's most private and sacred affairs before the eyes of an unsympathetic public are not respectable. This must be a correct conclusion, for we know that many people would not dream of admitting the anonymous society correspondents to their homes if they could prevent it. These latter are then being admitted under false pretences, and ought to feel such a deep sense of shame as would obviate any necessity of rouge, except that they probably have "power of face," otherwise "brass," enough for anything."

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