

ous verdict which is oftenest at fault. A high authority has pronounced this requirement, in cases involving, perhaps, merely the ownership of a few dollars' worth of property, absurd. Why not make a three-fourths or five-sixths majority sufficient, thus putting it out of the power of a single interested or obstinately prejudiced jurymen to override the clear judgments of his eleven associates and defeat the ends of justice? The States of California and Louisiana, across the border, have already adopted the majority system with satisfactory results, and the Constitutional Convention of Idaho now propose to adopt it. Some of the greatest legal authorities commend it. Hallam regarded the requirement of unanimity as "a preposterous relic of barbarism." There is probably a valid distinction, in this regard, between civil and criminal cases. In the latter it is generally conceded to be better that many guilty persons should escape punishment than that one innocent one should suffer, especially when the penalty is death. But in the former it is better that the property should be given to him who is probably its rightful owner than that it should remain in the hands of one to whom it does not, probably, belong, and *vice versa*. We fancy that on mature deliberation the people of Manitoba will be more likely to adopt the majority plan than to voluntarily deprive themselves of the right and safeguard of trial by jury.

REPLYING to a question in the Commons, Sir James Ferguson said that the statement of the Berlin *National Zeitung* to the effect that the British policy is identical with that of the Triple Alliance was mere conjecture, and that England had entered into no engagements which would fetter her liberty of action. This must, of course, be accepted as true in the letter; but it will not be easy to convince those who have noted recent occurrences, such as the visit of the German Emperor—itsself we believe an unprecedented event—his reception in England, his evident desire to conciliate English opinion and feeling, and the changed tone of those German journals which are supposed to reflect most nearly the sentiments of the Imperial Court, that there is not a little more in all this than meets the eye. It is only a few days since the North German Gazette, which is regarded as Prince Bismarck's organ, almost went out of its way to caution the members of the German Colonial Company against saying anything unfriendly to England at their approaching meeting, assuring them that England's friendship is of more value to Germany than all the expedition could obtain on the Upper Nile. These and other straws show pretty clearly how the wind is at present blowing, in Germany at least. Nor can it be denied that a good understanding between these two great nations, based on just principles and aims, would be a grand thing for Europe and the world. The two countries are natural allies. Their people are sprung from the same stock, they have many of the same characteristics, and apart from the blighting effects of Germany's strained relations with France, and her strong tendencies towards absolutism and militarism—things which bear to each other the relation of cause and effect—there seems to be no good reason why the two nations should not work together cordially and mightily for the peace of Europe and the spread of civilization.

WHAT manner of man is this Shah of Persia who has been visiting England? We confess that our curiosity has become somewhat piqued. When his visit was first foreshadowed, and even after his arrival was announced, we were conscious of none but the most languid interest in the matter. But since that time the accounts and descriptions have been so marvellously discrepant that we should really like to know how to picture him. Is he the filthy, ill-bred, self-absorbed and prodigiously boorish barbarian that has been pictured for us in so many newspaper paragraphs? Or is he the embodiment of Oriental dignity and grace, the paragon of kingly condescension and unfailing courtesy, so glowingly depicted by another set of writers? The historian of a future century who shall undertake to prepare from files of English and American newspapers of the year 1889 a description of the person, manners, and characteristics of this honoured guest of England, will have a sorry task, and should be excused if he gives it up in despair. One thing is, however, made clear with refreshing, we had almost said painful, frankness, by the English papers, since the Shah's departure, and that is the large part played by self-interest in the exceptional attentions showered upon him in England. Englishmen of every grade but the lowest were conscious that it was to their interest to cause him to think well of them and their

country. "We wish," said a leading journal, "to convince the Shah that it is to his interest to cultivate the friendship of this country, and that one of the modes in which such friendship may be shown is that Persia should enter upon the path of commercial development." The motive may not be a high one, but it is healthful in its operation, and will, there is little doubt, be productive of good results, for the Shah, during the last fortnight of his stay, was not backward in announcing his determination to extend Persian trade with Great Britain by every means in his power.

THE elections in France, which are now but a few weeks distant, will, it may be assumed, either finally dispose of Boulanger and his pretensions, and give to the Republic a new lease of life, or will make the case more complicated and dangerous than ever by practically inviting him to come home and attempt a *coup d'état*. The latter contingency seems now so improbable that it may almost be dismissed from the reckoning. The man who ignominiously fled from his country to escape trial for treason, even before a hostile tribunal, and who now stands convicted of embezzlement and conspiracy against the commonwealth, is hardly the man to fire the French imagination to the heat-mark of revolution. It is true that the court which tried him in his absence was rather a junto of personal enemies than a bench of impartial judges, nevertheless the evidence seems to have been pretty damaging, and the denial lacks in dignity and convincingness. It is very unlikely that any request for extradition will be made, and still more unlikely that such request would be granted. All British traditions, and all British precedents, with the single exception, if that can be called an exception, of Napoleon, are against it. In all probability little more will be heard of the matter until the elections, and these will, if we may judge from the results of his trial of strength in the late local contests, give the *coup de grace* to Boulanger's ambitious projects.

PROFESSOR BLACKIE, OF EDINBURGH.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE is one of the most picturesque sights in a city of picturesque sights. Few visitors from this side of the Atlantic care to leave Edinburgh without catching a glimpse of the celebrated Professor. It is not difficult to see him, for he is often to be found walking along Princes Street. His appearance singles him out even in a crowd. The little figure covered with a plaid artistically draped; the strikingly intellectual face, crowned with long, silver hair, which falls loosely on the shoulders; the buoyant youthfulness of manner, so seldom seen in an octogenarian, and the stout staff, carried easily if not jauntily in the right hand, go to make a picture which cannot fail to call attention. In spite of his eighty years, the Professor is in full enjoyment of physical and mental vigour. With all his eccentricities, Edinburgh loves and is proud of him. She has cause to be, for he is one of the few literary giants London has not been able to steal from her.

The story of eighty years of mental development and literary activity cannot be told in this article, but enough of it may be told to show why Professor Blackie is a prominent figure in Scottish life. He is first and foremost a Scotchman. His affection for and loyalty to "the land of heather and flood" has never faltered for one moment. Age seems to brighten instead of chill the fire of patriotism in his breast. Born in Glasgow in 1809, he received his education at the famous University of St. Andrews. While in his teens he gave proof of scholarship. Theology was his first love, and he went through part of the ordinary curriculum with the view of becoming a preacher. But the tendency to leave beaten paths which characterizes the man led the boy to adopt views considered heterodox then. He had to give up the pulpit and turn his thoughts to another sphere of activity. All the same he was born to be a preacher, and a preacher he has ever been, though he humorously calls himself a "stickit minister." His study of the Bible, which was so thorough that before he was fifteen years old he had made a complete digest of the New Testament in the original Greek, left an abiding impression on his mind, and shaped the current of his energies. He himself has declared, "I was not more than fifteen years old when I was moved to adopt the ideal ethics of the Gospel as my test of sentiment and my standard of conduct; and to this I adhered steadily thenceforward, just as a young seaman would stick to his compass and to his chart, and a young pedestrian to his map of an unknown country." The influence of the Bible was changed and coloured by residence in Germany, where the young student came under the spell of Goethe and Schiller. These writers led him into a new world of thought. "Faust" had a special charm for him. His first literary labour was a translation of that wonderful poem, in which much of the weird and fascinating power of the original is preserved. Devotion to poetry did not banish severer study. He rapidly made a name for himself in scholastic circles. At the early age of thirty-two he was appointed to the chair of Latin in Aberdeen. There he laboured with considerable success until 1852, when he was transferred to the more important and congenial work of Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh.

Blackie's aim as a teacher was to vivify the study of a dead language. To help him to accomplish this he travelled in Greece until he could talk fluently with the natives. On his return home he strove to change the pronunciation of Greek from the ancient to the modern form. But the conservative college dons of Oxford were stronger than the radical professor of Edinburgh. His methods were not adopted outside his own class-room. That did not, however, dampen his enthusiasm. He drew up conversational dialogues for his students, and so trained them to use tongue and ears as well as eyes in reading Greek; and he often read from the desk extracts from a newspaper published in Athens. The great argument he used in pleading the teaching of Greek as a living and not as a dead language was the saving of time it would effect. He offered to prove publicly before any assembly of scholars in Oxford or Cambridge that the change could be worked out on English ground "without the slightest prejudice to that minute accuracy and refined classical tone of which English Hellenism has always been proud to make her boast;" but so far as the writer knows, the challenge was never seriously taken up.

The teacher's enthusiasm laid hold of a small number of students annually, but the majority cared for little more than knowledge enough to carry them through the examinations. They loved the racy remarks and humorous asides with which the lectures were interspersed far more than ancient or modern Greek. Of jokes and quips there was abundance. Blackie fairly bubbled over with fun on some days. His class-room rang with laughter in a way that made grim-faced janitors tremble for the dignity of the institution under their care. It was hard to get the students back to order when they slipped the leash. Discipline was occasionally loose enough to justify the name of "Blackie's bear-garden," which was applied by severe-minded students to the Greek class-room. But even they acknowledged the merits of the man, though they might find fault with the methods, or rather lack of method, in the teacher. His sunny nature, healthy counsels, and sympathy with that which lifts up in life and nature won for him the love of his pupils. He had their respect, too, although that respect was not always shown. They said and did things in his presence they would not dare to say or do in the presence of any other professor. Few Edinburgh graduates of the last thirty years meet without having some story to tell of Blackie. One of the best of these brings into light the cleverness and good-humour of the Professor. A written notice on the door of the class-room informed all who came that "Professor Blackie regrets that he cannot meet his *classes* to-day." A wag rubbed out the "c" from "classes" and made it read that the Professor could not meet his "lasses" that day. Long and loud was the laughter caused by this feat. But the laugh was turned when the Professor read, in passing down the quadrangle, his emended notice, smiled roguishly, and daintily erased the letter "l" from the word which had already suffered the loss of one letter. The "asses" met with their master on that occasion, and showed their appreciation of his neat way of turning the tables on them by a hearty round of applause.

Professor Blackie has now given up teaching Greek, and taken to teaching things in general. He cannot be idle, and he cannot be silent. He has something to say on every civil, ecclesiastical, and religious question. The way in which he has his say is characteristic of the man. If he wishes to correct what he thinks is wrong, or to enlighten the darkness of popular ignorance, he writes a letter to one of the morning dailies; or, if the subject requires more comprehensive treatment, he pens an article for one of the monthly magazines. If he has a tribute of admiration to pay to a person or a cause, he does so in a glowing sonnet. Occasionally he puts the sonnet to a new use—he makes it the medium of an apology. For instance, some years ago he wrote a merciless attack on the communion customs of the Highland churches, and sent it to the *Saturday Review*. Later and fuller knowledge showed to him that he had caricatured and misrepresented Highland religion. Thereupon he wrote a eulogistic sonnet, praising what he had formerly condemned, and—still better sign of his repentance—he sent the six guineas he had received for the article to the wife of a Highland minister, to be used for charitable purposes.

Blackie has written many books—too many to have written what will last long. His enthusiasm for whatever subject seizes him seeks expression; so he has treatises on things classical, poetical, philosophical, and theological. He puts so much of himself into what he writes that he is always interesting to read. If none of his books will perpetuate his memory, the Gaelic chair in the University of Edinburgh will. It was founded by him. He collected \$60,000 for its endowment. The preservation of the Celtic language and literature is one of his special hobbies. Reforming the degenerate taste of those in Scotland who prefer English and German music to their own is another. He is never weary of extolling the merits of Scotch songs, and does not hesitate to sing them on the public platform. But it seems as hard work to bring cultured Edinburgh back to singing Scotch songs as it was to convince the Oxford dons that the modern way of pronouncing Greek is better than the old. Reformers are persecuted in various ways. The particular form Blackie's persecution takes is, being laughed at. There are people who think it is easier to go to the stake than to be laughed at, but the irrepressible Professor is far from being discouraged. He is busy sowing his seed, and, as he intends to live to be a hundred years old, he may yet reap a harvest.

D. SUTHERLAND.