

devoid of poetry, and hardly gets clear of the grotesque. Some of the old Buddhist temples, however, from the descriptions of them, must be really fine treatments of the theme of Eternal Repose. A love and a sense of beauty, decorative perhaps rather than æsthetic, are evidently the common heritage of the people of Japan, showing themselves even in the furniture and utensils of the poor; and these can hardly exist without a certain happiness of soul which again implies a considerable measure of well-being. There is much gaiety, and popular festivals are many. "Life," says Lord Elgin, "seems an affair of enjoyment in Japan." The manners of the people are singularly mild, courteous, and kindly; a proof that their state has long been industrial, not military. Their domestic affections also appear to be strong. Miss Bird is of opinion that the women are virtuous, but that there is great immorality among the men. In personal filthiness, general uncleanness, and want of decency, the inhabitants of some districts visited by Miss Bird are evidently on a level with savages. The criminal code was, like that of China, atrociously inhuman, till in this as in other departments the example of the Christian nations introduced reform. Christian missionaries are at work, with what result remains to be seen. They will have to encounter not merely the ignorant prejudices of ordinary heathenism, but a thoughtful and philosophic scepticism which is fully equipped with all the current arguments against Christianity, and which we may expect to see aided by the counter-missionary efforts of Positivists, who will hardly sit still while a Positivist nation is being seduced from the allegiance of social science and inveigled into that of theology. Mr. Akamatz, nominally a Buddhist hierarch, but really a philosopher, after speaking to Miss Bird a great deal about the demerits of Christianity, descanted on the superior influence of the philosophy of Mill, Huxley, and Spencer, which, he said, was stimulating inquiries which Christianity could not answer. He was also quite aware of the progress of scepticism in England, where, he said, belief in God and immortality was rapidly disappearing. The Japanese utterly recoil from all inquiries about the Future State, declar-