

fied town of Vohemar, on the north coast of Madagascar, on Nov. 8, without giving any previous notice. Five British subjects were killed, and much property belonging to neutrals destroyed or plundered.

The British steamer Nisero, from Sourabaya, was recently stranded on the coast of Acheen. The Dutch authorities were powerless to assist the steamer because a hostile rajah threatened to kill the crew if the ship was touched. A British gunboat has been ordered to the scene.

The report that the False Prophet had annihilated the Egyptian army led by Hicks Pasha is fully confirmed. There is great fear of a general Mohammedan uprising. The withdrawal of British troops from Egypt has been stopped.

Delegates from the Australian Legislatures have all arrived at Sydney, the conference to consider measures looking to the annexation of New Guinea, and the federation of the English Australian Colonies.

Three thousand Chinese troops attacked Haiduong on the 17th inst. The French garrison, supported by a gunboat, held out from 9 o'clock in the morning till 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when the Chinese retreated. The loss of the French land force was twelve killed and wounded. The French gunboat had its hull penetrated by the enemy's shot in several places, and eight of the crew were wounded.

War has virtually been declared between France and China, and hostilities will probably begin at once. England is seeking to prevent the outbreak and mediate between the two nations. She is also taking steps to protect her own interests and subjects in China.

News has just been received that the schooner Bush was lost at sea on her voyage to Guayamas, Mex. Four of her crew and twelve passengers were drowned.

There has been a crisis and a change in the Ministry at Lima. New appointments have given general satisfaction.

Tales and Sketches.

A WASTED LIFE.

Mr. Archibald Forbes, the celebrated war correspondent, in the *Sydney Morning Herald* tells the following sad story of his brother's life:—"Up among the heather hills of Northern Scotland two brothers were reared together in a Presbyterian manse. They went to the parish school together, and thence to the University. Both had rebellious, forward blood in their veins. The younger, and by far the more brilliant brother, remained at the University until 'sent down' for a madcap piece of youthful folly. In shame for his mishap, he must needs run off to sea, and sailed all over the world, till at length, some twenty years ago, he stranded somehow on the coast of Queensland. Since then, but vague and piecemeal tidings of him reached his relatives—for ten years past none at all. It has happened now to the elder brother—the war correspondent lecturing brother—to pay a visit to Queensland; and he naturally betook himself to search out the career of the errant son of his father. The story of that career came in scraps. Now the scapegrace was on a cattle station 'up north'; now shepherding on the Burnett; now reefing on the Morlish goldfield, itself all but a memory ere now; again in sugar at Mackay; later, roadmaking about Roma, and then another spell at shepherding at Mount Abundance; still later in the washpool about Toowoomba; and last of all in the graveyard of that place, after a long illness in its hospital. The old, familiar, sad story of a wrecked life and a premature death! Yet no voice anywhere to utter aught save kind and loving words of the brilliant, reckless waif, always cheery, always a true friend—to all, save himself, alas; strewing his vagrant path with blythe humour with yet remembered scraps of verse, here humorous, there tenderly pathetic. To the searching brother came men from afar off, just to testify the love they bore to 'poor old Alick,' rugged miners from Charter's Towers, bush hands from the Downs, station managers who had 'bossed' him, and had been chaffed or praised in his ever-ready verses; and the hospital warder, too, in Toowoomba, who had closed his eyes (his own somewhat dim as he told the sad, simple story); and the good old Presbyterian minister, also, to whom as the sands were running out the son of the manse turned with the rekindled instinct of his boyhood. There were vague stores of a little book of poems that had been published somewhere; but that trail was faint, until a Rockhampton man, who had known and loved him whose name among his fellows was 'Alick the poet,' brought to the brother the little green volume, whose title-page bore 'Voices from the bush,' by Alexander Forbes."

To this a correspondent of the Auckland *Evening Star* adds the following particulars of this sad and wasted life:—"His poems excited my attention while in press at the *Northern Argus* office, Rockhampton, and it may be safely asserted that for vigour and pathos a few of his compositions are excelled only by earth's greatest poets. In youthful Queensland a single man like Mr. Forbes might have saved an independence, cultivated his genius, and shone o'er all Australasia like an electric light; instead he has left but a flickering light, and subsided into eternal darkness. We are apt to smile when science assures us that alcohol is a narcotic poison, but

when the smiles of incredulity, the stormy blasts of ridicule, exhausted, pass away, the facts remain, and like the 'still small voice,' assert themselves with irresistible power. Keen, observing scientists have long since learned to divide drunkards into two great classes: the first, with its subdivisions, embracing all kinds of 'filthy drunkards'—men who drink to intoxication merely for the love of transient pleasure, and the second class, embracing all affected with nervous diseases called 'dipsomania,' 'mania a potu,' &c., brought on by constant use of that beautiful limpid liquid, alcohol. These diseases drag men imperceptibly from position and refinement to the depths of ruin and shame. Then we have the statesman staggering in rags, the clergyman blaspheming God, and the honourable banker a thief and liar. Unlike the first great class, they cannot forsake the drink at will, but have to struggle fiercely for months with an almost overwhelming force. Having the usual cares of life to battle with, in fits of depression they again in many instances resort to that fatal stimulant, from which they formerly so often derived temporary relief, to but sink deeper into ruin, with lessened hope and energy for another effort, until—

"Forsaken by his friends, he pines alone,
Then drops into his grave unpitted and unknown."

"While everything which teaches us self-respect, such as education, etc., acts as a safe-guard against us falling into the first great class of filthy drunkards, everything conceivable has signally failed to save moderate drinkers from the diseases which silently transfer from honour to disgrace; and will continue to fail until we can alter the constituent properties of alcohol."

"That Mr. Alexander Forbes belonged to a division of the latter much-to-be-pitied class, there can be little doubt; and it is sad to reflect on his most lamentable fate:

"Yet there within the sparkling glass
He knew the cause to lie;
This all men own from zone to zone—
Yet millions drink and die."

—*Australian Paper.*

"BRANDY IS DEAD."

"Brandy is dead!"

So the men said, so the women said, and so the children called to each other as a piece of news.

A drunken good-for-nothing. A so-called man whose brain had become dissolved in liquor, whose mind was enfeebled, and who had disappointed everybody by not dying in the gutter, instead of having the roof of a tenement house over his head.

Why should any one grieve when such a vagabond passed away? The world may owe him room for his bones to rest, but nothing further. So in "Brandy's" case men said that he was well out of the way, and women clattered their dishes in the rooms below, and cared not for the presence of the dead.

When the undertaker came to bear the body away a dozen people crowded into the room, and among them was a bootblack. Some said that "Brandy" looked well in a coffin; others spoke lightly about his face having at last lost its ruby color, and the dead pauper was no more than a dog in their minds, and why should he have been? One can be a man or he can be a vagabond. If he becomes a vagabond let him lose the respect of men. All had a heartless remark except the bootblack. He stood at the head of the coffin and looked from face to face and said:

"Brandy was low-down, and he died like a beast, and you are all sneering at him! Did any one among you ever give him a chance? Did he have a home when he was a boy? Did men try to encourage him and guide him aright? Is there a man in this room who ever took him by the hand and spoke one kind word? Didn't everybody look upon him as a dog?"

There was no answer.

"Aye! Brandy was low down!" whispered the boy as he laid his hand on the coffin. "He was ragged and hungry, and poor and homeless, and without one single friend. What man among you could have stood out against it any better? Poor old man! They know all about it in Heaven? Let me help to carry him down."

And when the dead had been driven away, and the boy had disappeared, more than one man said:—

"After all, we might have made it easier for the poor old man. I wonder that some of us never sought to make a man of him, instead of helping him down."—*Detroit Free Press.*

PROHIBITION NEEDED.

It is absurd to think that this question of liquor traffic can be settled by moral suasion, and does not require a prohibitory enactment. To the accursed traffic we owe pauperism, lunacy and a general laxity of morals. A man will go through rain and tempest to get rum, but not for bread. The thirst cannot be controlled with the temptation at hand, therefore the traffic must be abolished. That a prohibitory enactment could only be enforced with difficulty because of the vicious elements in the country, is one of the strongest reasons in favor of a prohibitory law.—*Tribune.*