

EDITORS' TABLE

On the 6th of May, 1863, Mr. Edward Taylor Fletcher, P.L.S., read before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec a paper of considerable interest on "The Lost Island of Atlantis." The author therein tells the story of Atlantis, as narrated by Plato in the *Timæus* and *Critias*, with reference to later writers, such as Strabo, Diodorus Siculus and Ammianus Marcellinus, as well as to the Islands of the Blessed of the earlier Pindar. Having summarized the results of modern research and discussion bearing directly or indirectly on the same subject dwelling, by the way, on certain inferences drawn from the Basques and their language, so isolated in the midst of Aryan nations and forms of speech—he asks: "Are there physical grounds to corroborate Strabo's opinion that the Island of Atlantis had an actual existence, and that the narrative of Plato is not all a dream?" He then considers certain indications, suggested by the fossil flora and amber fauna of Central Europe, indications which gave rise to a hypothesis—said to be remarkably confirmed by the discoveries of Dr. Maury as to the configuration of the Atlantic bed—that at a remote period there was terrestrial connection between America and Europe. If that hypothesis be correct, "it may be," he says, "that when, in the oscillations of the earth's crust, the Island of Atlantis, covered with its subsequent deposits, again rises to the surface, some future geologist may lay bare the secrets of that last convulsion, may gaze with reverence on the firstborn of our race, and again expose to air and sunshine the reveller with his rose-wreath, the hierarch with his staff, and the mailed monarch with his sceptre and his crown." Since the date when those words were penned, a good deal has been written about Atlantis, and the theory of its former reality has still some able adherents. Prof. Winchell, author of "Preadamites," looks upon the Canaries as the only inhabited remnants of the great island-continent. Mr. Horatio Hale pleads strongly for an affinity between the Iberian ancestors of the Basques and the forefathers of the aborigines of the American wilderness. Sir Daniel Wilson, on the other hand, is inclined to believe that Plato's story embodied a vague tradition of knowledge, once current in Europe, of a trans-Atlantic country and people. It is not, however, with archaeology, or mythology or history, that we have now to deal, but with a poem of singular beauty of style and no common wealth of imagination, bearing the title of "The lost Island." The manuscript was sent all the way across the continent, having first traversed the fiath that separates the Island of Vancouver from the mainland of British Columbia, to be printed at Ottawa, under the supervision of Mr. G. W. Wicksteed, Q.C., the author's kinsman. In a note, Mr. Fletcher, after referring to the paper from which we quoted and given an extract from an article by M. Leon de Rosny, the distinguished ethnologist, writes thus of the poem: "For the rest, where all is mist and uncertainty, these lines being merely an excursus into the realms of fancy, I have not hesitated to shape the island and its adjuncts rather in accordance with the more sober narrative of Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus than with the large proportions and magnificent 'encadrement' of the Platonic legend." We are not kept long in suspense as to the quality of Mr. Fletcher's muse. Here are the opening verses:

Silent and lonely, in the summer-night,
Lay the great city. Through the marble streets
No footsteps moved: the palaces, the seats
Of wealth and power, the domes of malachite,
Where sculptured dragons, monsters carved in stone,
Alternated with statues, clear and white,
Of ancient warrior-kings, that stood in rows
Along the Cyclopean porticoes,
Were hushed; and over all the moonlight shone.

Along the beach, beneath the massy wall,
The great sea rippled drowsily: afar
The headland glistened, like a misty star,
Wearing a cloud wreath for a coronal;
And all the air was filled with tremulous sighs
Borne from the waste of waters, musical,
Yet dreamy soft, as some old Orphic hymn,
That floated up, what time the day grew dim,
From Dorian groves, and forest privacies.

Yet, in the voiceless silence of the hour,
An awful presence moved, unseen unheard;
It glided onward on its way, and stirred
The sleepers' hearts with dreams of gloomy power,
Visions of fear, and throbbings of despair.
The plague was here. There was no house or bower
Safe from his darts: from every door had gone
Some friend or father, some beloved one,
Borne to his grave by the red torches' glare.

And, as a lovely flower, that seems to fade
In summer's heat, and bows its golden head,
Turning from those fierce heavens overspread,
To muse, in sadness, on some dewy glade,
So many a maiden perished, white and still,
And many a soft angelic face, that made
The sunshine of its home, grown cold and gray
Beneath the coming shadow, passed away:
So warm of late, now passionless and chill.

Alas! the little children:—where was now
Their laughter, many voiced?—their sportive wiles,
Their bounding feet, and witchery of smiles,
With floating hair, and faces all aglow?
Silence and tear into their play had come,
Dulling each pulse and shadowing each brow:
And so they wept and wondered. Side by side,
Lay young and old, the bridegroom and his bride,
The child and sage, all summoned to one tomb.

The plague still rages; the once happy island is filled with sounds of sorrow; day and night and day go by and still

there is no pause in Death's terrible work. The island queen, Evanoë, "a figure of heroic mien," passes at earliest dawn through the "sculptured valves" of the palace, and goes, "all unattended, save by one stout thrall," to visit "her aged nurse, now breathing slow her life away."

The sinking soul, that seemed forever gone,
Woke at the sudden footstep, and a thrill
Of recognition o'er the features passed.

Then, having blessed her children, she was gone. In the following stanza Mr. Fletcher describes the utter indifference of nature to all human emotion:

So all was done. Still shone the sun abroad:
And bird and insect, butterfly and flower,
Basked in the glorious splendour of the hour:
Still, through the air, like footsteps of a god,
Murmured the low soft wind, and all was bright:
No shadow fell on these, nor were they awed,
When, through their midst, a naked human soul
Passed, like an exhalation, to its goal:
A bubble rising to the Infinite.

Evanoë is once more alone in her palace chamber.

She sat alone. It was an antique room,
Lofty, not large; the cornice pearl-inlaid:
The floor mosaic; and the wall arrayed
With tapestry, whose softly shaded glow
Was lit with life-like figures, passing fair,
The product of some long forgotten loom.
White marble forms, hunters and kings of old,
Stood in quaint nooks, and vases of wrought gold
Held richest flowers, whose perfume filled the air.

She thought of many a legendary rhyme
Told by her nurse, in the long vanished days
When she, a child, sat listening, with fixed gaze,
To those delightful stories of old time.
Here sat she, patient, on her lowly stool,
And heard how, first, when struck the fated chime,
Out of the deep, like a fair lotus-flower,
ATLANTIS rose, and, warmed by sun and shower,
Expanded, bearing all things beautiful.

Thereon the gods came down, and dwelt with men:
Through the dim avenues of giant trees
They walked conversing, or on peaceful seas
Sublimely trod, nor shrank from human ken.
The air was musical with song and mirth
Of vigorous, lusty life; from glade and glen
Soft clouds of incense rose: the passing hours
Seemed garlanded with amarantine flowers;
Nor yet was pain or sorrow known on earth.

Why should not what had been in distant ages be once more?
Why should not "Some god, some mighty one" now visit Atlantis and

"Sweep, as with a conqueror's brand,
This pestilence from out the heavy air,
And bring back health and joy and all things fair!"

And, musing having passed into wishing, Evanoë adds:

"Him should I honour: he should share my throne."

The reader has now the key to the plot.

Scarce had the wish been framed, when came a sound
Of sudden thunder.

The deliverer appears; the plague is stayed,

And they were happy through long sunny years,
The island-queen and Sanadon.

* * * * *

Joyous as summer-birds, they wandered oft
Through regions wild and full of loveliness,
Through lonely places, where the hum and stress
Of cities came not, and the air was soft
With balmy odors of sweet-scented pines:
Where, in the clear blue, the white clouds sailed aloft,
And streams flowed on through plains, or leaped in falls
From rock to rock, in broken intervals,
Bordered with lotus-blooms, and leafy vines.

Sometimes they went inland, and visited
The mountain solitudes and privacies,
Wherein the island waters had their rise:
And taking, thus, some river at its head,
They drifted downwards on its placid stream,
Passing by caverns dark, and full of dread,
By headlands frowning vast, and flowery ward,
By golden sands, and beds of odorous nard,
And banyan groves, all wondrous as a dream.

Then, borne aloft in his aerial car,
The Marut brought them over sea and land
Towards the rising sun, beyond the strand
Of far Iberia. * * * * *

In their wanderings they saw Prometheus, Ulysses and others of the demi-gods and heroes of the world's prime. At last they reached their island home, only to hear strange notes of warning. Sanadon learns of the doom that awaits Atlantis. He could have escaped it, but prefers to give his life for the preservation of his people, the destined

Forefathers of the mighty ones of earth,
Founders of world-wide realms now vanished long.

But Atlantis was not forgotten. To them and their descendants it

It was always sacred, and its memory
Still lived unfading, as the years rolled by,
A germ of legend, and a theme for song.

Those who would know the truth about Manitoba, its soil, products, towns and municipalities, its Government Land Offices and homestead regulations, its railways and topography, should consult "Brownlee's Indexed Railway and Guide Map of Manitoba." About 27x16 inches in dimensions—the scale being 12 miles to the inch—this map, arranged on the same plan as Rand and McNally's series, making it possible to find the smallest place without the least delay, is encyclopedic in its information. A complete list of the towns, villages, etc., alphabetically arranged, with references to their location on the map, is printed as to indicate whether they are grain centres or railway stations. Various signs also make it known at a glance whether any place mentioned on the map has elevators or warehouses, grist mills, schools, post offices, etc. Altogether this "indexed map" will be found extremely valuable to all who have occasion to make inquiries concerning Manitoba. The publisher is Mr. J. H. Brownlee, P.L.S., of Brandon, Man., from whom it may be ordered, or it may be obtained through any bookseller.

MRS. CARLYLE.

In a volume, just published, in which Mr. A. S. Arnold tells "The Story of Thomas Carlyle," he gives the following picture of Thomas Carlyle's wife:

She was slightly built, airy and graceful. Her eyes were large and brilliant, black in colour, as was her hair. But it was the vivacity and intellectual beauty of her countenance that was her crowning charm. Unfortunately, she had her faults, like every other weak mortal, the worst of which were a fiery temper and a tongue that cut like a sword. . . . [Her] schoolmaster called her, Scotch fashion, a "leetle deevil." And in our opinion, she, in a certain sense, retained her character through life. . . . She had no idea of love in a cottage; in fact, she imagined she had done with love. She was naturally an impatient, excitable creature. . . . Try as he might he could never make her other than she was—stoical, all-enduring, stern, sarcastic, brilliant, impulsive. . . . She was no pliant clay to be moulded this way or that. . . . She was pre-eminently brave. For that alone her husband might have loved and admired her, as well as for her many other noble qualities. . . . Her letters prove that the first twenty years of her married life she was indisputably as happy and contented with her lot as a previously-disappointed woman could possibly be; that her home was cheerful and bright; that Carlyle was invariably tender and kind in manner; that he appreciated every little labour of love on his behalf; and that the small amount of occasional drudgery circumstances forced upon her neither impaired her health nor damped her spirits. . . . She was a born coquette, by which term we mean that she loved admiration and delighted in pleasing the sterner sex; no more. She never pretended what she did not feel, as flirts do. . . . What Mrs. Carlyle most appreciated was recognition of her own intellectual gifts. . . . Like most intelligent women, Jane Carlyle preferred the society of gentlemen to ladies as a rule. . . . Jane was singularly intellectual. She was superior to small talk; she detested stupidity, dullness, conventionalism; she was no blue-stocking, no female pedant, but gifted, enthusiastic, intelligent, straightforward, without an ounce of affectation. . . . She only moped when society was not attainable. . . . She wrote down what she would have been ashamed to say. . . . Celebrity had been her ambition; but to make herself appear a martyr, and her gifted husband a perfect tyrant, through whom alone she was entitled to more celebrity than many another equally gifted woman, was not to her credit. . . . She knew perfectly well how to take care of herself. She was not a martyr to Carlyle at all. She knew when she required change, and took it, and where to find enjoyment. . . . But Jane, whatever her virtues, was not considerate or magnanimous. . . . Jane had no veneration for sacred things—had no reverence for goodness. . . . She scoffed at all religion. . . . All the worship of which she was capable she bestowed upon brain power, to her the one thing needful. . . . For the poor she cared not a jot, was never for a moment impressed with an enthusiasm for humanity. . . . There was no opinion he valued more highly than hers on his literary productions. She invariably told him her candid opinion, without any addiction to flattery. . . . She was never, even as his wife, what Mrs. Taylor was to John Stuart Mill, as friend only. She criticised, but never inspired or shared Carlyle's work.

Mr. Arnold's description is scarcely flattering, but its vigour is undeniable, and, although somewhat more might have been said of the "many other noble qualities," which, as we have seen, he attributes to Mrs. Carlyle, it unquestionably places in a strong light the really salient features of her character.

A memorial to Alexander Humboldt was recently erected in the so-called Humboldt field, one of the new parks of Berlin. As a statue of the great naturalist already stood in the centre of the town, the new monument was given a very different form. From all parts of the province of Brandenburg the largest possible erratic stones (glacial boulders) were brought together and arranged in imitation of a terminal moraine. In their vicinity curious stones of many other sorts are grouped, and one bears a simple inscription telling that the monument was erected in Humboldt's honour by the city of Berlin.