

that most nearly resembles the earth, all forms of terrestrial life would quickly perish on its surface. If we accept this view, we have, at least, no reason to fear that the phenomena that are now puzzling astronomers will prove disastrous to sentient and reasoning beings like ourselves.

Civilization may well be indignant at the perverse policy that the Germans are pursuing in East Africa. It may be recalled that the first result of the Anglo-German Agreement, as it affected England, was the proclamation by the Sultan of Zanzibar of an edict prohibiting the slave traffic within his dominions. It was issued on the 1st of August, and, of course, was an unwelcome surprise to all those who were directly or indirectly concerned in the slave trade, whether Arab or European. The friends of Africa, on the other hand, were delighted at the prospect which the new dispensation opened out for the cause of emancipation. They hoped that the generous policy of the Sultan would serve as an example for minor Arab rulers in the interior. The last thing that they apprehended was that a European power, which had taken a prominent part in the Anti-Slavery Conference, and had assented to its decisions, should be the first to go directly counter to the Sultan's humane reform, thus actually supplying the slave-traders with the sanction which the Sultan denied them. The immediate consequences of the Bagamoyo decree were such as to confirm the worst fears of those who protested against it. The slave-dealers, expelled from Zanzibar, found there every opportunity of continuing their nefarious traffic in security, and it was reported from the coast that a thriving business in slave-dealing was already carried on. For a time some contradiction or countermand was expected from the Berlin Government, but the expectation was not fulfilled. On the contrary, it was announced in the official press that the Zanzibar edict had no authority in German territory and that it was not the Government's purpose to abolish the slave-trade save by gradual processes and with due regard to the existing order of things. It is thus made quite clear that Germany's African movement is purely speculative and commercial, and not in the interest of the natives. The condemnation of the Bagamoyo decree by the Liberal press shows, however, that all Germany does not approve of the company's selfish and inhuman action. The adverse agitation which the latter has aroused in Europe and on this continent may, notwithstanding, eventually bring Bagamoyo into line with Zanzibar.

The organization of the Massawippi Junction Railway is an event that is full of promise for a large and important section of this province. It is now several years since the enterprise was first conceived, and although, from various causes, effect was not given to the idea till a couple of weeks ago, it was never entirely lost sight of by the public-spirited men who have it at heart and in hand. The meeting held at Coaticook on the 17th inst., mainly under the direction of Judge S. W. Foster, was attended by some of the most influential residents in the district and was a gratifying success. The initial steps were taken with an enthusiasm that leaves no doubt of ultimate triumph. Not the least interesting part of the proceedings was the record presented by Judge Foster of the early railroad movement in that part of the province. He recalled the gathering that took place in Magog in the winter of 1843-44 to agitate for the trunk line then projected through the Townships, *via* Magog and Stanstead Plains, to the international boundary line. The line was carried by Sherbrooke and Coaticook mainly through the influence of Sir Alexander Galt. In 1851 the project was again taken up, and the late Hon. H. B. Terrill succeeded in securing part of what they aimed at, and their object now was to resume the unfinished work and to give the line the destination originally intended by the charter. Judge Foster trusted that before the close of another season they would have the proud satisfaction of connecting Montreal with the Atlantic

seaboard over the line of the Massawippi Junction Railway. The scheme was one that merited the active support of the Eastern Townships, the representatives of which in the Commons and in the Local Assembly had their hearts in it, and he knew they could rely on the influential aid of the Hon. Mr. Colby. In his retrospect Judge Foster mentioned the names of those who were interested as petitioners, incorporators and directors in the original project, and said that of all who took part in the proceedings nearly half a century ago only seven survived, of the speakers Judge Doherty alone being left in the land of the living. Both his retrospect and his forecast were listened to with deep attention.

### PERSONAL AND ANONYMOUS JOURNALISM.

Some of our daily contemporaries have been discussing the comparative merits of personal and anonymous journalism. The subject has frequently been dealt with, and each side of it has had its able advocates. It cannot be denied that the personal element has its value in certain circumstances. A great name signed to an article or a criticism will enhance its worth in the eyes of the public, altogether apart from its intrinsic importance. The late Allen Thorndike Rice, gave a fresh impulse to the popularity of the *North American Review* by a judicious use of distinguished names. He sought the co-operation of celebrities of every type, statesmen, soldiers, diplomats, millionaires. He opened his columns to persons of every race and creed, profession and business. Some of these contributors, thus pressed into his service, were famous writers; some of them were novices in the use of the pen. Generally they were asked to write on topics in which they were experts or in which they were intimately concerned. If the theme was fast sailing, he secured a consensus of steamship captains. If the Chinese Exclusion Bill was under consideration, an educated Mongolian was appealed to. If some point in military tactics required elucidation, Lord Wolseley or General Sherman was asked to throw light on it. If the wrongs of Japan at the hands of the treaty powers were to be exposed, who could discharge the task with more knowledge than a subject of the Mikado? If the tariff problem was to be solved, the views of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Blaine were brought into requisition. Sometimes a single noteworthy writer was deemed sufficient to clear up the matter in controversy, at others the plan of the dialogue or symposium was adopted. But the great desideratum was to make use of famous names. Published on their merits, some of these articles might or might not be read with profit. Their authorship was sure to attract attention to them. We have mentioned Mr. Rice, not because he was the only publisher who in this way availed himself of the popular *penchant*, but because he was the first who reduced it to a system. To some extent the usage has prevailed since printing began—the dedication in older generations giving to an ordinary essay or poem the prestige of a great name. So in our own country we see it announced that some of our former governors or other persons of rank will lend their sanction or their assistance to some new literary undertaking. These courteous noblemen, who may not be without literary ability, know perfectly well why their names are sought, and if the petitioner is not actually disreputable they are not likely to refuse the favour. Even if (as sometimes happens) the name is really all that the celebrity has time to give—the rest being the work of skilful secretaries—the public is just as wise and is none the less pleased. If we believe all we hear, indeed, it is not the public alone that is thus led astray by appearances. The influence of names—of the personal element—rules in many an editor's sanctum.

Even in professedly anonymous journalism there is generally an individuality associated with all authoritative utterances. Some person must be responsible for the statements and comments of a newspaper. The business of the world cannot be conducted anonymously. What some of our con-

temporaries have been discussing is whether the public have the right to know in every instance who is addressing them, and whether the article which they read with dissent or acquiescence was written in good faith or is simply a way of putting things—the writer being just as ready, on occasion, to present a different view. That is, or rather implies, an ethical question of undoubted significance—a question which was debated long before there was any press in existence, long before Christianity was preached. The consensus of the moralists of all ages is against such double dealing. The man who can be all things to all men in a sense that the Apostle certainly never contemplated, who would champion one cause to-day and another to-morrow, and betray them both the day after if it were made worth his while to do so, would have been condemned in Athens or Rome, in India or China, thousands of years ago, and if he is tolerated to-day he certainly is not approved. Nevertheless, there have always been free lances in letters and in diplomacy as well as in arms, and such persons there always will be so long as their service commands its price. The newspaper press is as free from men of this stamp as any other department of intellectual industry, and when a more than usually glaring instance of unscrupulousness occurs, the press itself, after its manner, is the first to give it publicity and to condemn it.

Some of our contemporaries maintain that the only way to purge the craft from this dishonesty is to adopt the plan of signed editorials. Readers will then, it is urged, associate a writer with his opinions, and the opinion of a paper with the individual writer. But to introduce such a change in the press of the English-speaking world would be impracticable, even if it were desirable. The most influential newspaper in the British Empire—in the world, perhaps—has for a hundred years been edited by men of whom the mass of readers knew nothing—men like Sterling, Barnes, Delane, Chenery, Buckle. When Mr. Chenery, who was a rare scholar as well as an able writer, died a few years ago, thousands to whom he had been speaking for years, heard his name for the first time. Many of the correspondents, dead and living, of the *Times* and the other great London dailies—Russell, Sala, Henty, Beatty-Kingston, McGahan, Williams, Forbes—won world-wide reputations, but the writers of even the most brilliant articles are unknown beyond a narrow circle to this day. The system admits, it is true, of signed contributions as well, but we doubt if the power of a great journal—the *Thunderer* or any of its compeers in metropolis or province—would be as great as it is if the continental method were in vogue and more prominence given to the individual. In the course of time a newspaper acquires an individuality of its own, on the nature of which its influence depends and which attaches to its utterances an authority almost wholly unaffected by changes of personnel. It becomes in an almost literal sense an organ of public opinion, and we read its comments on questions of the day, using our judgment as to their pertinence and sufficiency, undistracted by any thought of their source.

### "False Witness."

Comes a demon in the darkness  
Cries, why struggle, fight and fail—  
When to dust thy dust is driven  
What will struggle then avail?  
Man was very meanly given  
Three score years beset with pain,  
Wherefore fill them then with searching  
For a truth that is but vain.  
Take the hour, and turn its measure  
To your use, nor think of those  
Who may follow; yours the moment,  
What to you men's after woes?

Comes an angel in the morning,  
Bids me still be true and strong,  
Whispers to me, pain and passion  
Passes, it is not for long  
That we suffer here in silence;  
That each hardly conquered fight,  
Is a step upon that pathway  
Leading us to lasting light.