

ed? Will the crown of Drusken be the reward of his treachery? Soldiers, forward to the onslaught, and down with the horse of Northumbria!"

Osbeth's troops were winding with hurried march through a deep narrow glen o'erhung with beetling cliff and dark pine, when a flight of arrows made his vanguard recoil and fall back on the main body, which they had scarce reached when rugged masses of rock, thick as hail, and with a noise like thunder, careering from the heights above, carried death and destruction through his thickest ranks. "Onward, Saxons!" shouted the chief, and again his warriors rushed onward. "Remember Varno!" was shouted in reply, and Pictish battle-axes instantly flashed death on the disordered Saxons. Osbeth escaped; but the best of his bowmen were left in that narrow glen.

The sun of Pictavia was now setting. She had put forth all her strength at Scone; but as the tempest overturns the oak of a thousand winters, and strews its honors to the gale, so sank she beneath the fury of her implacable foes.

Varno hastened to the capital, there to make a last stand for the honor of his fatherland, if not for its salvation; and there too hastened the vengeful Kenneth. Varno found the city deserted by all but the aged and feeble, and the ramparts too extended for his little band of patriots to make even a show of resistance; but resolving to brave the tempest to the last, he stationed his devoted followers behind the western gate of the city. The day faded into darkness; but well could he perceive the onward march of the Scot by the flames of burning castles and cottages. At length the venerable seat of Pictish power and regal splendour shook with the war-yell of the enemy. Wildly did it ring from tower to turret; but no warlike response flung back defiance. Now and then might be heard the screams of women as they pressed in frenzied despair their infants to their bosom; or the stifled lamentations of old men as they felt the weakness of their arms and thought of the strength of their youth; but no sound to stir the spirit to mighty deeds resounded through the deserted streets and silent palaces. Her pride had passed away; her strength had withered beneath the dreaded claymore; the cup of her destiny was filled to the brim, and another day's sun would behold her one blackened mass of smouldering ruins.

Kenneth had anticipated but slight opposition. He knew that Drusken had thrown his entire resources on one chance, and that chance had operated to the complete destruction of his kingdom; but when he approached the gate and saw it open, and no warrior to dispute the entrance, he shrunk back, awed by such a dark picture of extreme helplessness. He listened; but the hum of multitudes had given place to the deep voiceless silence of the wilderness. The faint distant whistle of a plover among the hills was heard above the murmuring of the city, and everything around betokened the lifelessness of the grave.

"Advance, Scotchmen! the saucy Picts are ashamed of

their visitors!" was the half-solemn, half-elated command of Kenneth. His foremost ranks rushed within the gate with a faint straggling cheer, that was instantly drowned in the unexpected counter-shout of "Pictavia! Pictavia!" Silence fled, and the cry and horrid clang of deadly conflict rent the air. "Forward! forward!" cried Kenneth, and the Scots pressed on; but the battle-axe of Varno waved like a thunder-bolt, and his trusty followers, aiding his energies with kindred courage, hewed down rank after rank of the pressing foe. But onward still rushed the Scot, and faint and fewer waxed their rival blades. Kenneth pressed forward to the conflict. By the fire-flash of steel he perceived his last antagonist. "Alpin!" he exclaimed, and hurled his spear. A groan, a rush, a shout, a sparkling-shivering-rattling of swords forced the Picts backward until resistance ceased. "Alpin! Alpin!" again shook the skies, and in a few hours Abernethy made the clouds lurid by her burning palaces.

The spear of Kenneth had pierced the heart of Varno. His few remaining vassals bore away the body of their lord. Ere morning light his body was laid near the brae that bounds the burn, and for many a century it rested there in peace.

"And does it not rest there still?" I asked. "O no," replied my companion. "Twelve months ago the place of his repose was profaned for the purpose of making improvements. A rude coffin composed of a number of flat stones was then formed, and many came long distances to view the bones it contained."

"And where now are the relicts of the chief?"

"Ask the winds where are the clouds of yesternight."

THE END.

## IS MOMENTARY PLEASURE THE END OF LIFE?

WHEN doubt is cast upon a man's traditional beliefs he is apt to feel as if he had been cut loose from his moorings, and were drifting helplessly into an unknown sea. Hence to the conservative Greek the Sophists seemed to have torn up society from its roots. Still their philosophical doubt was necessary, because the law of human progress is first construction, second destruction, and third reconstruction. We may even say that the Sophists were not sceptical enough. They ought to have carried their scepticism to the point of doubting the stability of a society held together solely by the principle of private interest. The Cyrenaics had the "courage of their opinions," and expressed in a precise doctrine the ideas which the Sophists held as vague and ill-defined convictions. Aristippus of Cyrene, the founder of the Cyrenaic school, was superior to his predecessors in three things. (1) He was not content to regard conduct as governed by a number of *special* rules, but he held that all conduct is directed to a *single* end, viz., pleasure. Why should a man be pious, or just, or patriotic, if not because piety and justice and patriotism, as he believes,