

our exceeding great wisdom that knowledge was rather dilatory in coming to enlighten the world, but had it been otherwise, what would have become of our intellectual museum of moral curiosities, which is always such a treasure to the painstaking historian?

The wisdom of the age in which Joan lived was quite unequal to the task of comprehending how a mere female, without being in league with the prince of darkness, could outwit Englishmen under the warlike Salisbury, and snatch victory from the very jaws of defeat. But for that matter the good people of Massachusetts, at a later period, were not any wiser when they burned an inoffensive woman who was too audibly pious, on the ground that she made such beautiful prayers that the foul fiend must have lent her his particular assistance. The evolutions of belief have brought us to times of greater enlightenment and mental sobriety, when we can judge more justly, even if we feel more coldly in presence of issues of far-reaching significance.

All countries and creeds have had their times of ignorance and cruelty, and the room for stone-throwing, should any one desire to indulge in it, is narrower than some of us suppose. The Roman Church in France, a few centuries ago, burned men for eating meat on Friday, and hanged them as a concession to mercy, if they repented, which reminds us very much of bluff King Hal's tender mercy to Sir Thomas More. More was sentenced in the ordinary form with all the frightful accompaniments that went with the punishment for treason; but the sentence was commuted to death on the scaffold as a special instance of royal clemency. "God forbid," said Sir Thomas, "that the King should show any more such mercy to any of my friends, and God bless all my posterity from such pardons." Staunch Presbyterian Scotland, with her dear love of liberty and invincible hatred of tyranny by the State, was not free from the vice of intolerance, as, for instance, when she anxiously endeavoured to procure a law by which any one who taught anything contrary to the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation should be punished with death, and all who taught Armenian, Antinomian, Baptist, Popish or Quaker doctrine should be imprisoned for life. We must admit that this was a thoroughly comprehensive and impartial way of snuffing out sects that happened to be obnoxious to the dominant creed. Calvinism was, beyond doubt, the strong meat which nurtured a brave people into independence and national power, but we confess it had some grim phases which make us content to be free from its paternal oversight in the nineteenth century.

John Wesley and the Associated Presbytery of 1736 were equally horrified at the movement for the repeal of the laws against witchcraft, although they had little even in common on other questions. The Presbytery, however, went even farther and entered their solemn protest against the use of "fanners in winnowing grain," such impious machines being wicked inventions of mere men to raise an artificial breeze in defiance of the Almighty, "who maketh the winds to blow as He listeth." English savants of the same period were no wiser. Dodwell, a Professor of History, at Oxford, was advanced enough to defend the use of instrumental music in public worship, but his defence was curiously enough based upon the theory that the notes of the organ had power to counteract the influence of demons upon the spinal marrow of human beings. It was his sage opinion that the spinal marrow, when decomposed, was liable to become a serpent, and the music of the organ was supposed to be the proper antidote to such a catastrophe. Music is indeed mighty, and hath wrought miracles ever since the day that David, fresh from the sheep folds, touched his harp with skill in the presence of Saul, and charmed the evil spirit of melancholy from the heart of the King, but Dodwell's theory was much more comprehensive and definite than the Bible story. The age was earnest—whatever else it was not—demons, witchcraft and intolerance notwithstanding. Indeed, these crudities rather witness to its zeal. The fragments of pulpit manners that have come down to us go to show that the Scotch clergy, at any rate, wept and perspired as fluently as they preached (and there were no read sermons in those days). Sometimes a preacher required as many as three or four pocket handkerchiefs during one sermon, and one or more changes of underclothing in a day, according to the number and fervour of his pulpit efforts. Present day preachers may be equally earnest, but they are much more composed. The etiquette of public speaking now requires composure and dignity, and in the utmost "whirlwind" of religious zeal the preacher is expected to "acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness." If our great preachers took to profuse weeping in the pulpit we would be profoundly shocked, perhaps we would be profoundly impressed when we came to think about it, but at first we would certainly be as much taken aback as though a statesman wept abundantly before a Legislative Assembly in bringing in a measure. It is the stage that melts us to tears, not the pulpit; it is the work of fiction, not the New Testament—not historical nor any other phase of Christianity. We have out-grown emotional religion, and we think we have grown wiser, touching the higher problems of life here and hereafter. We are wiser than in the past, and have contrived for the most part to add to our faith some common sense and common charity.

Great were his fate who on the earth should linger,
Sleep for an age and stir himself again,
Watching God's terrible and fiery finger
Shriveled the falsehood from the souls of men.

D. KINMOUNT ROY.

ANACREON'S PICTURE OF HIS MISTRESS.

To my aid, thou best of painters!
Paint her for me, best of painters,
Master of the Rhodian art!
Bring my mistress back before me,
As I speak her, thou shalt limn her.
Paint me first her flowing tresses,
Black and yielding make her tresses,
And, if wax can give the picture,
Show the fragrance breathing from them.
Paint her brow like ivory,
Shapely, firm the cheeks beneath it,
Locks dark-gleaming resting o'er it.
Then the eyebrows touch so deftly,
Scarce they meet and scarce are sever'd;
Paint them black, the arching eyebrows
Imperceptibly commingling.
To her eyes ('tis here thou failest)
Eyes as bright as are Athene's,
Melting eyes like Aphrodite's,
Fire alone can give their glances.
Paint her nose and cheeks like roses,
Milk-dipped roses, white, yet blushing,
And upon her lips persuasion
Challenging the kiss of lovers;
'Neath her dainty chin the graces
Round a neck of Parian whiteness,
See! they hover, none is wanting.
Violet-hued the garb that veils her,
Half-revealing, half-concealing
Lustrous flesh that, peering through it,
Tells the tale of hidden beauty.
'Tis enough: she stands before me;
Wax ere long will learn her language!

Montreal.

X.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MODERN MYSTIC AND MR. DAVIN, M.P.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—As several who know me here identify me with "The Modern Mystic," as described in your columns by our friend, Nicholas Flood Davin, it is only fair to myself to explain that his account is all pure fiction.

In his second article in THE WEEK (11th July) there is little or nothing to indicate myself, except that the name "McKnom" is Monk spelt backwards, and I may be, also, in some respects like "Socrates," as I may differ from other people generally in being an "earnest preacher of righteousness."

"Mr. George Helpsam," who is "well known to literary men as a thinker and a brilliant writer," is doubtless our friend N. F. D. himself (at least we may so interpret the name, until it is proved that "the cap fits" some one else better among our acquaintances here), I myself being the labourer "Sam," seemingly "doing nothing" (according to the well-known story), while our friend N. F. D. contrives to "help Sam" in that rather tiresome occupation, by drawing some attention to myself, and my seemingly fruitless efforts.

As for "Plato and Socrates," they were doubtless very superior men, centuries in advance of the time in which they lived; but nevertheless thousands of years behind the possibilities of our greatly advanced age. We, who may now know with absolute certainty what is at present known in reference to the great facts of astronomy, geology, and chemistry, etc., need scarcely refer to what Plato or Socrates may have merely thought or imagined in the comparative youth or infancy of the human race.

HENRY WENTWORTH MONK.

Ottawa, July 14, 1890.

THE GRAND PURPOSE OF THE UNIVERSE.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—Though modern inventions, such as the telescope and the spectroscope, etc., have enlarged our view and comprehension of the universe enormously, nevertheless the one grand purpose of the whole universe does not yet appear to be clearly perceived by scientists and educated men generally.

When we find a fruit tree (such as the apple tree or the fig tree) producing very excellent and important fruit, we may reasonably conclude that the one grand purpose of that tree is to produce just such fruit. In like manner, when we find a world (such as our earth) producing human beings possessing creative mind and progressive intellect, we may also reasonably conclude that the one grand purpose of the world is to produce just such human beings, possessing creative mind, etc.

When we discover also that the other worlds in our universe are generally more or less like our earth, we may reasonably conclude also that the other worlds generally produce also beings, more or less like ourselves, possessing creative mind and progressive intellect; and that consequently such beings, together with ourselves, are the natural fruit of the universe (as it were), and therefore the one grand purpose for which the universe exists.

The fruit of a tree generally contains the germ essential to the reproduction of that tree; so human beings (and doubtless the other beings also, more or less like ourselves, who are produced from worlds more or less like our earth)

contain the germ, or the creative mind and progressive intellect essential to the reproduction of a universe, similar to the existing universe; whenever the present universe, after the lapse of countless ages, shall have become utterly worn out and dissolved into its original condition, whatever that may have been. Thus the great problem of all existence (whether of the universe itself or of the creative mind of the universe) is solved at once, and proves to be about as simple (and as easy to be understood) as is the fact that the oak-tree produces acorns, and the acorn (or rather the germ within the acorn) becomes a great oak-tree like its parent *ad infinitum*. For the universe produces human beings, or beings more or less like ourselves, each possessing the germ of creative mind and progressive intellect, which by continual development during countless ages, ultimately becomes competent to renew the universe whenever occasion may so require.

Why shouldn't the infinitely small *ultimately* become infinitely great? It certainly must do so *eventually*; for given *continually progressive intellect* (such as the human mind certainly manifests already) and *eternal or endless existence* (such as the human mind instinctively anticipates); there can be no limit whatever to the ultimate greatness of our comprehension and ability any more than there is a limit to infinite space or to endless duration. The above may perhaps serve to convey a general idea of what a thorough understanding and recognition of "world-life" involves.

Ottawa, July 14, 1890. HENRY WENTWORTH MONK.

GLADSTONE AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.—III.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—In my letter appearing in THE WEEK for July 11, I proposed to show the injury that would have been done to Canada, as well as to Great Britain, had Gladstone been Premier in 1862, instead of his being subordinate to a man like Palmerston. Also the light his action at that time throws upon his attempt practically to do for the United Kingdom in 1886 that which he openly sought to do in 1862 for the United States, namely, to break up a union hallowed by many memories.

The Power wielded by a British Premier.

Take the case of Pitt in 1792. Notwithstanding the open and published threats of French Ministers against England and their known attempts to stir up sedition and risings (a million of francs having been devoted to those objects) and notwithstanding, also, the two actual attacks upon British ships of war in time of peace—not even apologized for—yet Pitt kept England at peace. But in Feb., 1793, the French Jacobins, eager to commence a wolf-and-lamb quarrel with feeble and wealthy Holland, without a dissenting vote in the Convention, at one and the same instant wantonly declared war against that half-defenceless and rich country, and against its treaty-ally and bulwark, Great Britain. When France thrust at England, England was compelled to parry and to thrust back. Nothing but the power of Pitt as Premier had kept peace so long. At this peace-loving era, would Great Britain (or any other great Power) submit to have her ships or war fired upon without apology, and emissaries sent to stir up rebellion?

Then, again, in 1829, Wellington as the Premier carried the Catholic Emancipation Act through the House of Lords. Had he not been Premier he could not have won over the hostile majority.

So with Peel in 1846. In 1841 the country had been appealed to on the Free Trade question, and it had returned Peel as a Protectionist with a majority of 91. Five years later, having come to the conclusion that Free Trade was right and Protection wrong, disregarding the strongly expressed anger of his political friends, he, with rare moral courage, did what he believed to be right, and brought in the Bill to repeal the Corn Laws. He brought over 112 of his own party in the House of Commons, and in the House of Lords changed a hopeless minority into a majority of 46. Had he been only a subordinate he could not have effected this vast change.

Then, in the case of Disraeli's Reform Bill. Previous to that the electors did not exceed six per cent. of the population. Some have thought that he set the example followed up by Gladstone of unwisely watering the standard of voting intelligence. It was only the moral pressure of a Conservative Premier that carried it through.

Again, in 1881 it was simply the influence of Gladstone as Premier that carried the partial confiscation of the property of those who had, a few years earlier, bought land from the government with a government title. Yet people wonder that British capital shuns Ireland; forgetful of the old proverb: "A burnt child dreads the fire."

Then with Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in 1886. That life-long Radical, John Bright, repeatedly declared that, except the Irish-Parnellite members, there were not twenty men in the House of Commons who were genuinely in favour of the measure. Yet the Premier's influence was so great that about 210 British Liberals voted for a measure which, eight months previously, they were opposed to. This is not counting Bright's twenty, who had, as he believed, been favourable to some such measure. And these 210 voted for a Bill to carry out that to which Gladstone himself had a year before been openly antagonistic.

These facts prove the great power wielded by the Premier of the United Kingdom for the time being.