

ALBERT THE GOOD.

(Extract from an unpublished poem, "The Prophecy of Merlin.")

BY JOHN READ.

In deeds of war,—

The rage of battle and the clamorous charge
Of mailed knights, and flash of hostile swords,
And flying spears, and din of meeting shields,
And all the use of man-ennobling might,
For Christ and for His Cross, to wrest the land
From heathen foes,—did Arthur win his fame.
For this by marvels was he born and bred,
For this by marvels was he chosen king;
For this he sent his heralds to all parts
Of the divided realm, to summon forth
All bravest, truest knights of Christendom
From rude and selfish war to Camelot.
That they might be one heart around himself
To send new life-blood through the sickly land,
And purge it of the sin of heathenness.

And, had not the foul falsehood of his house
Broken athwart the true aim of his life
And set the Table Round against itself,
Ere now the heathen dragon had been crushed,
Never again to raise its hideous head
O'er the fair land that Christ's apostle blessed.
This was the purpose that his soul had formed,
Alas! how unaccomplished! And he hoped
That gentle peace would be the mead of war,
That 'neath the laurel, far and wide, would bloom
The flowers of wisdom, charity and truth;
That holy men and sages, ladies fair
And famous knights, and those that from earth's lap
Gather God's bounties, and the men whose hands
Have skillful touch, and those who tell or sing
Of nature and her marvels, or who fill
The scroll with records of the misty past,
And others of all arts and all degrees,
Should work, each in the place that he had found,
With one pure impulse in the heart of all—
That Britain should be called of all the world
A blameless people round a blameless king.

This purpose Albert in the aftertime
(So shall the Prince be named of whom I spake)
Shall take from the dim shrine where it has lain,
Scarce touched by dreamy reverence many an age,
And hold it in the daylight of his life.

But not alone. She whom his heart has won
With loving aid shall ever at his side
(Till death them part) sustain him in his thought,
And these two, nobly mated, each to each
The sweet and ripe completion, shall be named
With loyal love and tenderest respect
By knight and lady, poet, sage and priest,
In mart and camp, in palace and in cot,
By babbling graybeard, and by lisping child,
Wherever Britain's banner is unfurled.

So shall the land grow strong with bonds of peace,
Till men believe that wars have ceased to drench
The earth with bloody rain. And Art shall smile
On myriad shapes of beauty and of use;
And Wisdom shall have freer scope, and push
The boulders of old folly from her hell;
And men shall walk with larger minds across
The limits of the superstitious past,
And cull the gold out of the dross of things,
Flinging the dross aside. And there shall be
New hopes of better changes yet to be,
When harmony shall reign in all the world,
And interchange of good for common weal
Be only law.

But when the fiery wave of war has washed
The world, as gold from which the dross is burned,
The nations shall rise purer, and men's hearts
Shall fear the touch of wrong; the slave, ashamed
And angry once to see the pitiless sun
Smile on his chains, will leap and sing for joy.
Free thought shall take the ancient shield of Truth,
And make it bright, shewing the artist's work,
Long hid by stains and rust from longing eyes;
And hoary ill shall die, and o'er their graves
Shall bloom fair flowers, and trees of costly fruit
Shall gladden and make strong the heart of man.

But though his voice lie silent, in men's hearts
Shall sink the fruitful memory of his life
And take deep root and grow to glorious act.

And she will write the story of his life
Who loved him; and though tears may blot the page,
Even as they fall, the rainbow hues of hope
Shall bless them with Christ's promise of the time
When they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

And of the good Queen and the blameless Prince
One son shall be named ARTHUR. Like the King
For whom thy heart is sad, Sir Bedivere,
He shall be true, and brave, and generous
In speech and act to all of all degrees,
And win the unsought guerdon of men's love
In a far land beneath the setting sun.
Now and long hence undreamed of, save by me
Who, with my soul's eye, see the great round world
Whirled by the lightning touches of the sun
Through time and space.

THE CHINESE.

Much has been said and written concerning the Chinese immigrants who of late years have flocked into California, and are spreading over the plains and towards the north, wherever their labour is wanted. Trades Unions have protested against their employment, newspapers have predicted the direst confusion from the admission of this new "element" in the population, contending that the European immigrants in the North and West, and the negro in the south—not to speak of the Indian, whose extermination appears to be a foregone conclusion—were quite enough for the Americans to manage and compete with. The Chinese are not without their champions however; they form a safe and tempting field for the labours of the Home Missionary; they work at a rate of wages so low as to delight the heart of the capitalist; and they are reputed to make excellent and reliable house servants. But these attractive features are not altogether complimentary to the Chinese; to be treated as heathens by those whom they regard as outside barbarians, is not very flattering to their pride; to throw away their labour at a lower rate than ordinarily prevails in the same market, is a reflection on their commercial intelligence; while the capacity to be excellent domestics, in every way commendable in itself, is no proof that in all the walks of life where skill, ingenuity, and commercial enterprise command success, they are fitted to outstrip every other race and nationality. Yet the New York *Tribune* describes them as paragons of social, moral, and intellectual perfection;

as models of industry, ingenuity, and commercial enterprise, at whose feet the whole world might profitably sit down for instruction. The *Tribune* has always been remarkable for its ethnological tastes; and perhaps the following panegyric on China and the Chinese may be due to this peculiarity. But how in the name of wonder and protection to native industry can Mr. Horace Greeley support the free importation of this commodity, capable, as it seems to be, of rooting out or supplanting every "native" industry in the country? Since American labour cannot compete with Chinese, must not the American labourer be idle and starve before the Chinaman?

The following is the *Tribune's* very flowery account of the virtues, the accomplishments, and the capabilities of the denizens of the Flowery Kingdom—in which it will be noticed that the innocent little habit of drowning infants, when their parents do not feel disposed to maintain them, is altogether overlooked; but perhaps the *Tribune* did not like to mention it, as with respect to the means of checking overproduction of the human race the Americans are certainly far ahead of the Chinese, however much they may be behind them in other matters. Says the *Tribune*:—

"Among the Chinese alone, of all peoples on the earth, has the principle which forms the basis of democracy in America—the equality of men—existed through all history.

The axiom that "the will of the people is the will of heaven," and must be observed by the Emperor, has, during thousands of years, been the fundamental principle of Chinese political science. Continued disregard to this has invariably led to revolution and the popular overthrow of the aggressive dynasty.

The people are completely represented in the Chinese Government. For, though the principal offices are filled by the Emperor's appointment, the appointees are the successful candidates at the popular competitive examinations. The principles on which the whole social and political fabric of the Chinese empire is founded are paternal duty, filial duty, and individual responsibility for the public welfare.

There are no distinctions of classes in China, excepting the few privileges conceded to the descendants of the Philosopher Confucius. Whenever a citizen renders the State a signal service, he is ennobled, receiving certain titles and privileges, which, however, cease at his death. His descendants have no interest in them. Theirs is the honour of being his offspring. The Chinese are the only people on earth that have been smart enough to create an aristocracy that runs backward to the dead and not forward to the living.

All being equal in China, competition for office is open to all. Education in China being universal, proficiency in scholarship is the basis of competition.

These competitive examinations for public appointment are an institution over a thousand years old. Through them, persons from the humblest conditions of life may surely rise to the highest places of honour in the empire.

Only four classes of persons, and their posterity for three generations, are excluded from the examinations; the children of prostitutes, executioners, play-actors, and the inferior servants of mandarins and jailers. It is thought in China that the immediate descendants of these four classes would lack the moral qualifications of good rulers.

Chinese labourers don't strike, don't get drunk, don't attend political meetings, don't march in procession, don't "slog," never stop work to talk or tell stories. They obey orders unquestionably, keep quiet, and labour steadily. They would not take an eight-hour law if it were given to them.

In the school-rooms, shops, and private residences of China, and frequently by the road-side, baskets or boxes are conspicuously placed, bearing the inscription, "Respect printed paper!" In these are gathered all scraps and fragments, printed and written. Persons are hired to go about and collect them. 'Tis the expression of the national veneration for writing as the basis of learning. The people will rescue the written and printed letters of their language from the dishonour of being trampled on, or put to base domestic uses. They give them the honour of incineration, and then give the ashes to the rivers.

Raphael Pumpelly states an immense fact when he says that in travelling 5,000 miles in China (which contains 460,000,000 people,) he did not see one Chinaman drunk.

The Chinese are the most industrious people on earth. One-third of the human race in numbers, it is well ascertained that they perform from six-tenths to seven-tenths of the manual labour of the world.

Free day-schools exist all over China, commonly instituted and supported by the benefactions of rich families or individuals.

In not a temple in China can a nude figure or a nude picture of a divinity be found, except the infant held in the arms of the Goddess of Mercy.

China alone, of all countries, has a society for the suppression of immoral books and pictures. The Government gives it sanction and civil support. By law, this society can compel the makers, vendors, and possessors of immoral works to bring them to its head-quarters, together with the stereotype blocks from which they have been printed, and there receive a partial equivalent for them in money, and then see the abomination publicly committed to the flames.

Schools are universal in China, and the proportion of people there who can read, write, and cipher, is greater than in any other country in the world.

The benevolent societies, now thousands of years old, among the Chinese, put to shame the social or civil benefactions of any country included within Christendom. Every city, and nearly every village, has orphan asylums, which, in advance of ours, receive and care for the children of poor parents yet living, who are unable to support their offspring. The gratuitous distributions of medicines by associations is common throughout China. Asylums for old men exist, in which, in addition to immense dining-rooms, kitchens, and dormitories, are convenient shops for the prosecution of various handicraft labour, to the occupation, amusement, or profit of the veterans. Societies for affording pecuniary aid to widows are active all over China. They are founded on the national sentiment of the disreputableness of second marriages by women. Burial Societies are a sort of joint-stock speculation in England, or at best an outcome of co-operation. One of the most popular of the Chinese benevolent institutions is that which creates a fund to provide coffins for the poor, to carry coffins left for

any reason by the way to suitable places of interment, and to collect and re-bury human remains exposed by the weather or by violence. Charitable associations provide tea for travellers by the highways, and pay the expenses of poor scholars going to stand their examinations. Public-spirited people combine to keep the highways and bridges in repair, and to preserve the national monuments. So fitted for every kind of labour and of business, and so temperate, industrious, and economical are the Chinese, that, in competition with them, the Jews, Europeans, Parsees, and Americans cannot maintain their foothold. Oppressed as they are by the Dutch in the island of Java, with taxes, fines, and disabilities, they have obtained almost a monopoly of the products of the island, and are the life and soul of the commerce, manufactures, agriculture, finance, and administration of the country. They are the farmers of the public revenue. The large coffee and sugar plantations are theirs. In their hands are the potteries, the distilleries, and the manufactories of metal, cloth and wool. What the Jews have been all over the world in Banking, the Chinese inevitably and easily become in general commerce and in mechanical and agricultural industry, wherever they are allowed to settle and are let alone. They get rich off gold diggings that Americans starve on. The world can't show such woollen work as the Chinese-made blankets of California and Oregon. The overseers of the Central Pacific Railroad across the Sierra Nevadas have declared that Chinese can, in a given time, drill more rock and move more dirt than any equal number of other people, European or American. At the same time the men, as well as the women, are matchless as nurses for babies, as washers and ironers, cooks and gardeners. English machinists, acknowledged to be at the head of their art, have to give place to this people in a fair competition. The British owners of the large machine shop at Singapore have gradually removed their English workmen, and replaced them with Chinese, because these were more docile, sober and enduring, and were equally skillful.

THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

Canada may well be proud of her Parliament Buildings, for in point of architectural beauty, commodiousness and situation, they compare favourably with those of any nation in the world. The erection of the buildings commenced in 1860, when Ottawa having been selected as the capital of the Dominion, a sum of \$75,000 was voted by the Legislative Assembly for the erection of suitable Government Buildings. A premium of \$1000 was at the same time offered for a design within the Government vote, and Messrs. Fuller and Jones were the successful architects. The spot selected as the site for the future Parliament House was that formerly known as Barrick Hill. Excavations were commenced on an immense scale, but it was found that the solid rock, of which the ground is composed, offered a serious obstacle to the progress of the works; and the Government finding no provision for this work in the grant, and fearing it would cost a large portion of the original sum granted, stopped operations, and for some considerable time there was no progress. A commission of inquiry was appointed, fresh contracts were signed, and the whole of the works were placed under the superintendence of Mr. Fuller, under whose management the present structure was completed. The corner stone was laid with great solemnity by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in September, 1860, and the buildings were finally opened for occupation on the 8th June 1866. On this occasion, the Commons, after withdrawing from the Senate Chamber, retired to their own House and passed the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act—the only case, we believe, on record in the Parliamentary history of the country where the Commons passed a measure on the day of the opening of the Legislature.

The site of these buildings has been very happily selected in the most elevated part of the city. They stand on a high plateau of some thirty acres in area, facing the city, and overlooking most of the houses. In the rear the rock descends almost perpendicularly to the river Ottawa; and from here the view of the broad river and the background of forest and hill is magnificent.

The Buildings form three sides of a large square; and are widely detached; the Parliament or main building facing Wellington Street, and the Departmental buildings facing inwards to the square, of which they form two opposite sides. The style of architecture is Gothic of the 12th and 13th centuries, with modifications to suit the climate of Canada. The ornamental work and the dressing round the windows are of Ohio sandstone. The plain surface is faced with a cream-coloured sandstone of the Potsdam formation, obtained from Napuan, a few miles from Ottawa. The spandrels of the arches and the spaces between window arches and the sills of the upper windows are filled up with a quaint description of stone-work, composed of stones of irregular size, shape, and colour, very neatly set together. These with the Potsdam red sandstone employed in forming the arches over the windows, afford a pleasant variety of colour and effect, and contrast with the general masses of light-coloured sandstone, of which the body of the structure is composed.

The Building, seen from Wellington Street (as represented in our illustration) present a very imposing appearance. The central of the seven towers, which is very rich in design, projects its width from the front of the building; its elevation is about 180 feet. The body of the building in front is 49 feet high, above which rise the slanting roofs of slate, surmounted by lines of ornamental iron casting. The building is 472 feet long; and the depth from the front of the main tower to the rear of the library is 570 feet, covering an area of 82,886 superficial feet. It stands at a distance of 600 feet from Wellington Street, so that the quadrangle formed on three sides by the buildings and on the fourth by the street, is 700 feet from east to west, and 600 from north to south.

The following instance of the goodness of heart and kindly feeling so often manifested by Her Majesty to those in her employ will be read with the greatest interest. For some time past the wife of one of the employees at Osborne has been ill, and confined to her bed. This coming to Her Majesty's knowledge, she walked from Osborne to her residence, nearly a mile each way, accompanied by one of her ladies only, and sat by her bedside and expressed her sympathy with her during her illness. Such womanly acts tend, if anything can do so, to endear Her Majesty to all her subjects, more especially to those who know that this is only one out of hundreds of instances of Her Majesty's thoughtfulness and kindly feeling.