

At Street Corners.

WHENCE arises the undoubted satisfaction with which so many people talk about great villains? Are most people so tainted with pharisaism that they eagerly seize on an opportunity of feeling that they are "not as other men are?" Or is it that a great number of people are so convinced in their secret hearts that their moral worth is not very great, that they are really glad to find that there are people like Holmes the murderer respecting whom they can honestly and truly say "I am better than they?"

Experts in physiognomy and criminology are telling us in some of the American newspapers that they can see the undoubted marks of the murderer on the person of Holmes. But I am always doubtful about these things. I have known many good men who looked like murderers and, on the contrary, bad men who looked like saints and apostles. The conventional aspect of goodness and greatness does not always portray the character as those know who have had to do with artists' models. "I sits fer the 'eds of hall 'is 'oly men" is a speech attributed to one of Holman Hunt's models. The remark fell from him in a London pot-house where he had gone to get a pint of "arf and 'arf" in one of the intervals of posing.

I am told by one of the competitors in a contest engineered by the Youth's Companion, of Boston, as to who should write the best short story, that seven thousand two hundred manuscripts were sent in. Eight or ten prizes were given, varying from \$500 to \$100, and although there were entries from all parts of the English-speaking world, they were all carried off by American writers. The circumstances are instructive as showing in a forcible way how crowded are the avenues of literary work, and how hopeless is the task set before would-be beginners in that line of business.

I hear that "Kit," of the Mail and Empire, has gone to New York to witness the abnormal Marlborough-Vanderbilt nuptials. She will, no doubt, write a bright and pleasing report of a wedding with regard to which determined effort is being given to make it historical and epochal in the world of fashion. It seems a pity that such nice young people as the Duke and Miss Vanderbilt are, should have such a burden of wealth and its accompaniments to carry. What have they done that they should be thus encumbered, whereas in a less gilded setting they would shine for their virtues and graces, as ordinary people have the pleasure of doing?

Hall Caine seems to have won the hearts of the people of Canada in an exceptional way, and he probably knows more about them than some Old Country people who have been here for a quarter of a century. It was odd for a born poetic artist such as he undoubtedly is, to come here on a business question. I am glad he is going to write his impressions of our country in the London Times. I am hopeful that it will do us a great deal of good. It was the copyright problem, mainly, in pursuit of the solution of which Sir John Thompson went to England and died. The sentiment that his tragic death awakened did more to make the people of England and Canada mutually acquainted than we shall ever know. Consequently Hall Caine will cast his seed into a prepared soil. May the harvest be a rich one!

A good many people besides the civic authorities are on the *qui vive* for the coming of Mr. Mansergh, the great (and expensive) hydraulic engineer who is going to tell us how to get pure water into our houses. If this experiment be successful; if the City Council have the wisdom and the strength to follow out his instructions and settle this everlasting water question for good and all, I should suggest that we next get out the best expert on civic government and ask him to report on our present condition from a financial and administrative point of view. The municipal government of this city is in the condition of an individual who feels sick and "all-overish," but scarcely can tell what is the matter with him. The men in the city who know most about municipal affairs have at present nothing to do with them.

DIOGENES.

Parisian Affairs.

WHAT IS FRANCE TO DO WITH MADAGASCAR?—OPINIONS DIFFER—THE TREATY OF ZANZIBAR—ITS CONDITIONS RESPECTING MADAGASCAR AND ENGLAND—FRANCE IN NEED OF A LOAN TO FREE HERSELF FROM THE FLOATING DEBT—TWO MILLIARDS REQUIRED—THE AGE OF BLOATED ARMAMENTS—IS THE ARMENIAN QUESTION SETTLED?—THE BEST OF DIPLOMATISTS—RUSSIA AND THE SON OF HEAVEN—ROCHEFORT'S MEMOIRS.

WERE Miss Betsey Trotwood to ask Mr. Dick, "What is the best thing for France to do with Madagascar," that privy councillor would reply, "Send colonists there." Were Deputy de Mahy, the leader of the Chauvinists consulted, he would prescribe—as he has done, "adopt the best arrangement to keep out every foreigner and boycott the English." "Convert the take into a Protectorate," say the prudent; "Annex it pure and simple," reply the "whole hog or none" party; divide it into departments, governing each by a local big wig, under the dry nursing of some played out home politician," suggest the geometricians. "Parcel the territory"—the size of France—"between the soldiery who conquered it and the families of the sons, that the climate and mismanaged expedition killed for it"—suggests Henri Rochefort. There is variety, at least, if there be no wisdom in this multitude of councillors.

There is one point overlooked in the discussion: that if the peace treaty be torn up the war will recommence. Have a "protectorate" *ad interim* say some—in political combinations miracles will never cease; make no treaty binding France to recognize any hybrid protectorate, and having utilized the native administrations, to establish law and order—therein comprised French possession; knock it over in due course and declare it to be an integral part of the Third Republic. That fixity of tenure might not suit the Malagasy. The treaty of Zanzibar stipulates conditions respecting Madagascar and England; Germany and America have commercial treaties with the Hovas, but these, it appears, cannot be trotted out till France notifies the powers and principalities, after the vote of the Chambers, at what decision she has arrived. It would be a terrible deception, if, after all the sufferings and the rejoicings, the war broke out afresh, necessitating, as in Tonkin, fighting constantly over the possession. A humorous skit represents the marriage of the Queen of Madagascar with Premier Ribot, and President Faure, as registrar, reading the civil ceremony. One writer recommends the system of administration adopted by "Sir Brooke," the Rajah of Sarawak; only France has no man of Sir Brooke's colonial calibre and she would never adopt his policy, throwing open the trade of the country to the whole world—even France not excepted. France first aims to lock every foreigner out of her possessions, and only admitting him in case he pays exorbitant dues—to pay off her terribly crushing national debt.

A loan must inevitably be resorted to—as usual—so as to enable France to free herself from her accumulated floating debt; two milliards ought to be solicited—in for a penny, in for a pound. The interest on that additional hillock—France has no sinking fund—added to her mammoth national debt will necessitate 60 million frs. annually, to be provided out of current revenue. She intends to devote an independent milliard to the augmentation of her navy—which, of course, will be responded to by England expending double that sum for fresh greyhound cruisers. The milliard will be divided over twelve years. What will be the face of Europe in six years, or perhaps in one? The age of bloated armaments is not past; it flourishes like the bay tree.

It is to be hoped that the Armenian question is settled, and it is also to be hoped that that best of diplomatists—the British fleet—will remain off Lemnos till the working, or rather the execution, of the reforms be witnessed. If the Osmanli be as slow in applying, as they have been in accepting them, the British fleet may become a fixture at the Dardanelles. That caving in of the Sultan to the Hobson's choice is the application of the notice to quit to the Sick Man. Turkey must go. Already one can hear the beating of Azrael's wings. But it is on the far, not the near Eastern, question that eyes are fixed and judgments given. The chief point quidnuncs desire more light upon is: how far are the negotiations advanced between England and Germany, not to play second fiddles to Russia, in her go-carting of the Son of Heaven. They must display strength