

perance and wretchedness that were prevalent in England about 1735:—"The populace of London were sunk into the most brutal degeneracy by drinking to excess the pernicious spirit called gin, which was sold so cheap that the lowest class of the people could afford to indulge themselves in one continued state of intoxication, to the destruction of all morals and order. Such a shameful degree of profligacy prevailed that the retailers of this poisonous compound set up painted boards in public, inviting people to be drunk for the small expense of one penny; assuring them that they might be dead drunk for two-pence, and have straw for nothing. They accordingly provided cellars and places strewn with straw, to which they conveyed those wretches who were overwhelmed with intoxication. In these dismal caverns they lay until they recovered some use of their faculties, and then they had recourse to the same mischievous potion; thus consuming their health and ruining their families, in hideous receptacles of vice, resounding with riot and execration."

The following paragraph, referring to medieval homage to women, is from a contribution to *Harper's Magazine* by James Parton:—"The ill-opinion entertained of women by men during those ages of darkness and superstition found expression in laws as well as in literature. The age of chivalry! Investigators who have studied that vaunted period in the court records and law-books tell us that respect for women is a thing of which those records show no trace. In the age of chivalry the widow and fatherless were regarded by lords, knights, and "parsons" as legitimate objects of plunder, and woe to the widow who prosecuted the murderers of her husband or the ravagers of her estate! The homage which the law paid to women consisted in burning them alive for offences which brought upon men the painless death of hanging. We moderns read with puzzled incredulity such a story as that of Godiva, doubtful if so vast an outrage could have ever been committed in a community not entirely savage. Let the reader immerse himself for only a few months in the material of which the history of the Middle Ages must be composed, if it shall ever be truly written, and the tale of Godiva will seem credible and natural. She was her lord's chattel; and probably the people of her day who heard the story commended him for lightening the burdens of Coventry on such easy terms, and saw no great bardship in the task assigned to her. People read with surprise of Thomas Jefferson's antipathy to the poems and novels of Sir Walter Scott. He objected to them because they gave a view of the past ages utterly at variance with the truth as revealed in the authentic records, which he had studied from his youth up."

Here is an extract of a letter from a friend who went to the Black Hills: "Had you been with me you could have learned how to get rich where there is no money—rich in experience and washed gravel. You might have added to your stock of information that which at some future time would be of inestimable value. You might have added to your geographical lore by becoming practically acquainted with a great country that no geographer who has any regard for his reputation will hereafter dare place upon his atlas. You might have realized—what you and I have always regarded as fiction—the truth of Milton's description of the 'little unpleasantness' that once occurred between Satan and Michael wherein they hurled mountains at each other, &c. Some of those black sombre hills dropped into Dacotah and God didn't deem them of sufficient value to have them replaced. Deadwood, that gorgeous metropolis of the hills, with its broad streets (about 10 feet wide) paved with gold, you would readily have recognized as being the veritable New Jerusalem spoken of by "old uncle St. John" the Revelator, whom we always believed a crazy, old coot. You would have encountered a style of high-toned living in the hills, the luxuriant exuberance of which would have startled you. The daily diet—ambrosia and nectar—of the Olympian dieties was mere hash compared with the precious freight usually conveyed through the almighty canal of the average Black Hills' boarder. That classic Greek dish mentioned so often by Homer in his *Odyssey*, is the chief table staple of the hills; and its consumers

are not all Greeks either. I think the dish is called 'sow-belly.' The hygienic qualities of the country are of a superior order, consisting chiefly of wholesome gulch water filtered through admirably arranged carcasses, forty-rod whiskey, cyprian loveliness, diarrhoea and pistol practice."

COMTE'S POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY.

A Digest.

BY R. B. BUTLAND.

From Comte, John Stuart Mill, H. G. Lewes, Harriet Martineau, M. Cazelles, Spencer, and others.

By discarding from his philosophy every pre-judgment that is not scientific, by banishing across the frontiers the problems of substance and cause which human intelligence is incapable of solving; by basing on experience the whole doctrine of the general science which unites the special sciences, and, above all, by co-ordinating positive knowledge according to a law of evolution into a series, the gaps whereof are skillfully covered by hypotheses that reason may accept, and that reason does not contradict; by all these features, and by the last especially, Spencer presents to us one of the most complete types of the philosophical spirit of the nineteenth century.

To authors who maintain this class of doctrines, or at least such of them as are considered fundamental, it has been the custom for some years past to give the name of positivists, and they have been regarded as the disciples of Auguste Comte.

The public, from the midst of which this powerful mind had gathered with difficulty a small circle of followers, had allowed him to live, think and die, without giving to his work the attention it deserved, and without cherishing toward him personally any feelings but those of utter indifference.

A few years after Comte's death the opinion kept gaining ground in the scientific and philosophical world that Comte's Positive Philosophy would entirely supersede and replace Christianity and the old beliefs of mankind.

Afterward, and without very close consideration, Comte received credit for the grand movement of contemporaneous thought which he did not create, and which appeared to pursue another route than that he would have wished it to follow.

This term "positivists" is admirable, it applies well to that general group of thinkers, savants, and even mere amateurs, who base their general ideas on the positive sciences as a whole, and regard as insoluble the problems that the positive sciences can do nothing to explain.

Still it cannot be said that these savants and thinkers belong to Comte's school. A school supposes a master who has founded it, and disciples whose chief care is to reproduce faithfully the master's ideas of processes, allowing themselves more or less liberty in details.

Here we have certainly bold lines, fundamental doctrines, but points of divergence cannot be called details. Besides, the grand lines on which there is agreement were traced out already before Comte.

If, then, it was well to give the name of positivists to all those who adopt those essential principles, it was wrong to connect them with Comte, as if they were his disciples: and he was their master. A confusion would arise from such thoughtlessness that would misrepresent their respective attitudes.

In spite of the resemblances, and analogies and agreement on essential points between the ideas of Comte and the writings of divers contemporary authorities who adhere to Spencer's synthetic, experimental, evolution philosophy, there exists a profound disagreement on points that are especially characteristic of the philosophy of Comte.

Hence the protests that have appeared from all quarters, especially from John Stuart Mill, who writes with a good nature, growing out of an acceptance of many of Comte's views, from Herbert Spencer, whose impatience is mingled with a profound respect for the illustrious thinker he differs from, and from Huxley, whose assaults go to the extent of injustice.

What Comte meditated was a systematic classification of our knowledge, that might serve in the interpretation of classes of phenomena that have not been studied in a scientific manner; a lofty idea worthy of all praise.

Comte revived the conception of Bacon (so astonishing at an epoch when knowledge was so little advanced), it contemplated nothing less than an organization of the sciences in a vast system, in which social science should appear as a branch of the tree of nature.

In the place of a vague, indefinite conception Comte has given a definite, carefully studied conception of the world. He has displayed a reach, a fertility and an originality of mind truly great, as well as a rare power of generalization.

Comte's Positive Philosophy was an immense progress; it marks an epoch in the evolution of human intelligence.

They who reject Comte's peculiar doctrines, and adhere to positivism as it was before Comte, possess in common with him opinions that the great has bequeathed to the present; but this adherence should not be reckoned in favor of the doctrines peculiar to Comte. Such is the position of Spencer, and of the main body of the scientific philosophers of to-day.

Comte himself always taught that the positive method in philosophy had