

It is devoutly to be wished that in their alliance the Russians will catch all the liberties, equalities and fraternities the French practise, plus what they profess. The Menus-Plaisirs at Cronstadt may yet turn out to be the States-General for "overground" Russia, which is not all devoted to Pobiedonostzeffism. The visit of the French fleet to Portsmouth will partly repay the gracious amenities of the French towards Queen Victoria when doing her rest cures; it will prove that England means to be free to welcome Montagues or Capulets; to be friends with imperialists, royalists, and republicans, and to allow the jolly tars of both nations to indulge for a few days in an exchange of "shiver my timbers." A grip of the hand may be as material a proof of brotherly love as the kisses of jaws or the rubbing of noses as in Africa.

The life of a deputy after the prorogation of Parliament is not enviable. I met one of the Solons, a friend of long standing, and expressed my surprise at his being still in Paris and not enjoying his vacation. He replied that his vacation, his rest, was to remain as long as possible doing committee work at the Chamber. That excused him from running down to visit his constituents—a trip synonymous with martyrdom. Every elector is expected to be called upon and honoured with a "How do you do?"; you have to listen to their family histories; pat or kiss the children; admire the cattle, the workshop, or the factory; answer to the whispered demands for decorations; hear the complaints of officials against one another, or against their superiors; inaugurate concert halls; lay the foundation stone of a church or a school; speak in favour of a charity; sign marriage contracts; become sponsor for children; attend Masonic balls, agricultural clubs, district councils, and farm show dinners; undergo a series of "hecklings" by crotchety voters or patriots on the mad; explain the augmentation of the budget; execute a few grinds about the new tariff; indulge in a hosanna for Russia, and condemn the Government for not alleviating local taxation, and executing local public works. After lightening his purse by subscriptions to all good undertakings, by giving dejeuners and dinners, and promising day after day to join his family at the sea side, he finds that he has not a moment to lose to regain Paris for the opening of the new session, where, if he arrives late, his constituency will meet and pass a vote of blame on him for neglect of duty, and all that for 25 frs. a day!

Pending that M. Flammarion established a telegraphic communication with the planet Mars by an electric current, that all the dynamo-magnetic machines in the world would not be able to generate, M. Jansen is more soberly occupied at Chamouni, taking soundings to ascertain if the ice be sufficiently solid on which to erect an observatory. There would thus be a structure in altitude nearly equal to sixteen Eiffel Towers on top of one another. A year ago M. Jansen demonstrated the existence by spectrum, etc., of oxygen in the atmosphere embraced by the sun. He wants to apply the same test to analyze if the solar atmospheres of the other planets, that resemble our earth in so many respects, contain also oxygen in their atmospheres. If they possess that gas so indispensable to life, there can be no doubt the sunlight ought to produce creatures analogous to those surrounding us, and be inhabited by beings at least as perfect, as virtuous, and as ingenious as ourselves.

M. Jansen will also utilize the latest marvellous discovery of Edison, the microphone—that telescope of acoustics—to register the voice of the heavens. There will be nothing of civilization to trouble the glacial echoes on the summit of Mount Blanc, the repercussions of the sounds of the firmaments. We may yet be able to hear the prodigious emissions of the sun, that are only visible during total eclipses of that star. If these solar vibrations be too distant to be transmitted, at least we may expect to hear the noise our own earth makes on turning daily on its axis with a rapidity twenty times greater than a gigantic cannon ball. At the least we might hear the grinding of the nearer moon's revolutions, the whifflings of shooting stars, and the last sighs of expiring worlds, whose debris often fall into our atmosphere to be pulverized. Certainly we should be able to listen to the rustling of the aurora, as balloonists in the Polar regions have—that Memnon melody to the rising sun.

In the troubled commercial and social period which France is now passing through, the following extract from an authoritative lecture by M. de Flaix, delivered a few years ago, will be in season: "All the trials through which France has passed are directly traceable to wars, disorder, despotism, or restriction on the liberty of exchange; while, on the other hand, she owes the whole of her success and prosperity to the influence of peace, respect for the rights of all free institutions, but, above all, to commercial liberty."

The six children of Henri II. had 170 servants to wait upon them; two laundry maids did all the washing for the united household.

The new proprietor of the celebrated vineyard, Clos-Vougeot, before which every regiment that passes by halts and presents arms, has been able to save the vines by an application of sulphuret of carbon and petroleum from the attacks of the phylloxera. The attacked vines have not only been perfectly restored, but the bug destroyed. The antidote is applied in autumn and in July and August. The ingredients are mixed in equal proportions, and, following the nature of the soil, applied at a depth varying from four to twelve inches. Crowds of vineyard proprietors make a profitable pilgrimage to see the miracle.

The sardine fishery, which extends along the coast from the north-west to the south-west of France, is a complete failure this season, which means black misery for 25,000 families. Ordinarily, the sardines arrive in shoals at the end of May—from Newfoundland, it is said. The fishermen, to entice the sardines to stay and feed, throw into the sea the salted roe of cod from the banks, called *rouge*, from its colour. This season nothing tempts the fish in their old haunts; it is said they keep more out into the depths of the Atlantic, where the frail barks cannot follow them. A boat ought to net on an average 10,000 sardines in a haul, which represents 200 frs.; the nets do not now bring up 100 fish. The nets are always cast at sunrise and hauled three hours later, so that the sardines, in order to preserve their delicate flavour, can be in the curing factories before noon. Steam tugs are occasionally employed to run into port with the catch of a sardine fleet.

Z.

TO ONE AT HOME.

THE day is gone, the night comes on apace
And myriad stars are twinkling in the sky—
In dreamland's happy hours I see thy face;
In dreamland oft I fondly deem thee nigh.

The night is come and sound of vesper bell
From o'er the hills is wafted on the breeze,
And homeward flying bears with gentlest knell,
Greetings to thee, loved one o'er distant seas.

E. C. MACKENZIE.

Lausanne, Lake of Geneva, Switzerland.

THE EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY COAT.

PILGRIMS, the cable reports say, are pouring into Treves at the rate of twenty excursion trains a day to view the celebrated relic known as the Holy Coat, which is preserved within the Cathedral there, and which is exposed for the veneration of the faithful but once in a generation. The Treves treasure is one of the Church's all but inexhaustible store of sacred relics. At Rome there is the true Cross, the crib of Bethlehem, and the chair of St. Peter; portions of the crown of thorns are kept in the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris; the winding sheet is shown at Turin; at Monza the iron crown is formed out of a nail of the cross, and another nail is claimed for the Duomo of Milan; but the Coat at Treves, so far as we know, is the only relic the veneration of which has been raised to the dignity of a distinct cult. Whatever it is or is not, tradition, at any rate, asserts of this Coat at Treves that it is the seamless garment of the Saviour, and that it was woven by the Blessed Virgin's own hands for her Divine Son. "The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Him, took His garments, and also His coat," or thus reads the Gospel narrative: "Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it whose it shall be." (St. John xix. 23, 24.)

The beginnings of the testimony which attribute to this relic so sacred an association are at this day, it need scarcely be said, somewhat dim in character. The Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, is credited with having discovered it along with other relics of the Passion, about 300 years after the crucifixion, and with having carried it to Treves from the Holy Land; in fact, there is an ivory in the treasury of Treves Cathedral representing the Empress seated at the Cathedral door awaiting a procession that bears a precious relic in a chest, over which is depicted the face of Christ. This ivory is attributed by experts to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. Other ancient documents refer to the gift, and a chronicle of the first half of the twelfth century records that the relic was presented by the Empress during the episcopate of Agritius, who held the see from 314 to 334. The translation of the relic from the choir to the high altar, where it has since reposed, is recorded in 1196. In 1512 it was publicly exposed for veneration, and several times subsequently during that century. During the wars of the two succeeding centuries it was removed, for safety, to Augsburg, and in 1810 it was reinstated in the Cathedral at Treves—"with the permission of Napoleon." In 1844 there was a great exposition of the relic, attended by more than a million of the faithful. Amid the thanksgivings and rejoicings of the time, one or two discordant notes were struck, however; and in the end so serious grew the dissensions that a number of once orthodox believers, among them two ecclesiastics, who could not distinguish between the authenticity of the Church and the authenticity of the relic, rejected the first because they could not accept the second. The revenue that accrued to the Cathedral corporation of Treves from offerings and the proceeds of the sale of devotional articles, amounted, on the occasion of the former exposition, to many hundred thousand dollars. The city was crowded to overflowing, as doubtless it will again be this year, lay enterprise, unstayed by any nice considerations of the reverential, supplementing the religious exhibition with a variety of counter attractions in the shape of side-shows, theatres, museums and menageries.

While many thousands of sincere Christians devoutly believe in the genuineness of the claims asserted with respect of the Treves relic, he need be no sceptic who acutely feels the tremendous difficulty involved in the belief that the seamless garment worn by the Saviour should be preserved through the vicissitudes of so many

centuries. The mere question of its preservation, for example, is encased in what many people will be compelled to adjudge hopeless uncertainty and doubt. A little less than forty years after the crucifixion, Jerusalem was destroyed, the walls levelled, the dwellings demolished, the temple burned, Mount Moriah plowed over and the Jews dispersed. That either the tunic of the Saviour or the true Cross, which is also said to have been discovered by the Empress Helena, could have been preserved through all the disasters of this period, is within the bounds of possibility, doubtless, but it may be questioned if any testimony, however obtained or however circumstantial and connected, could place the matter at this day beyond chance and conjecture. Very little that belonged to Shakespeare has been preserved to the world, through comparatively peaceful times and the space of a few centuries.

There is no obligation, it should be said, binding Roman Catholics to believe that the Holy Coat at Treves is the veritable garment that the Saviour wore. It may be believed, or not believed, at discretion, the question being not one "of faith" but a voluntary or popular belief belonging rather to the body of what the theologians term "pious opinions." The late Cardinal Newman in a well-known passage in one of his works, in which he avows his belief in the credibility of relics and in their efficacy as miracle working agents, was content to answer negatively and guardedly respecting the authenticity of the Treves treasure. "I do not see why," he said "the Holy Coat at Treves may not have been what it professes to be." The same remark might perhaps with equal fairness, looking at the question from the point of view of possibility, be said of the rival tunic displayed in the Church at Argenteuil in France, and which disputes with that at Treves the right to be regarded as the seamless garment of the Saviour. The ecclesiastical authorities at Argenteuil contend that the Holy Coat was deposited there and not at Treves, and as this claim is pending in the courts of the Sacred Congregation, it is obvious that there must be a mistake or an imposture somewhere. It is indeed a sufficient, and withal an ironical, comment upon the reports that the cable daily brings from Treves concerning the exposition of the relic which began there last week, with every sign of public interest and of religious ceremony, that at the very time it is being viewed by thousands of pious pilgrims with genuine and evident devotion, and while multitudes of sick people are gathered there waiting to be permitted to touch the garment in the hope of being miraculously healed, the Bishop of Treves and the Archbishop of Versailles have concluded an agreement to submit a dispute of very long standing to arbitration. The Sovereign Pontiff is to be the umpire, and the question at issue, we learn from French and English clerical papers of high authority, is none other than whether the seamless garment at Treves or the one at the Church of Argenteuil has the greater claims to genuineness. The Argenteuil relic is of camel's hair, is hand woven and has faint traces of purple. It was given by the Empress Irene to Charlemagne in the year 800.

Meanwhile the exposition of the Holy Coat continues at Treves. The event is in its nature a survival of those medieval eras which have come to be spoken of as the ages of faith, but during which the mass of mankind had no clear conception of the boundaries between faith and superstition, and lived in dense ignorance of man's relations to the physical world around him. As a ceremony in which multitudes of sincere Christians will participate with reverent and simple faith, the veneration of the Treves relic is not to be wantonly scoffed at or derided, even though, as to thoughtful observers must appear plain, it be out of place with modern ideals and aspirations, a lingering evidence, merely, of an age which dead and gone has given place to a higher civilization, and of a credulous and uninquiring faith which has been succeeded by truer and more rational conceptions of Christianity.

ADRIAN.

Toronto.

THE RAMBLER.

SPECIAL pleaders may have been charmed by the three papers accepted as Prize Essays by *Public Opinion* on the subject of the Trade Relations between Canada and the United States. I have read them carefully: the first by Mr. Frank Wells, of Toronto; the second by Mr. Macomber (not Micawber), of Buffalo; and the third by Mr. Claude, of Annapolis, Maryland. The latter writer is not in favour of a commercial and social union at present. From a United States point of view any extension or development of trade between the United States and Canada is not desirable, he asserts, and he further suggests that Canada become a free and independent nation first, after which the problem can be more easily solved. But Mr. Claude's remarks as to population are not odifying. He states that while that of the United States is actually and steadily increasing, the population of Canada is decreasing all the time by immigration across the frontier. I should be glad to know if this be really the case, and not having recourse to blue books would be gratified to receive statistics bearing on this matter. Mr. George Johnson could doubtless tell us—is the total population of our Dominion on the decrease as affirmed by the essayist in *Public Opinion*? I have no wish to stir up animosity, nor to provoke those writers who are fond of pointing to the Lower Province and showing how large the Annual Exodus of French Canadians is to the New England States