

They are all in the far west. Their industries are largely farming and stock-raising. They have no great manufacturing interests to protect. These considerations, as well as their situation in relation to Canada, will almost surely incline them to favour tariff reduction generally, and the reciprocity movement which seems to be making considerable headway in the Republic, in particular. Several innovations have been made in the constitutions adopted by the new States, one, for instance, having incorporated a prohibition clause and another a clause forbidding the formation of combinations to fix the price or limit the production of any commodity. The outcome of these experiments in constitution-making will be watched with a good deal of interest by the older States, which are now struggling with the evils it is sought thus summarily to dispose of.

AS was confidently anticipated, and in fact rendered sure by the result of the first ballot, the second balloting in France on Sunday last has resulted in giving the Government a strong working majority. Though the prediction that this will mark, practically, the end of opposition to the Republic is probably quite too sanguine, the victory can hardly fail to have the effect of securing for it a period of comparative rest. Such a period, if utilized by the Government with a moderate amount of discretion, cannot fail to improve greatly the prospects of making the present form of Government permanent. Certainly if one is safe in predicting any sequence of causes and conditions in that country, it may be said that Boulangism has now received its *coup de grace*. The fact that so powerful a journal as *Figaro*, hitherto so uncompromising in its opposition, should have frankly accepted the situation, and declared that France has chosen the Republic as its form of Government, is one whose significance cannot be gainsaid, or easily overestimated. What effect a period of domestic quiet in France will have upon European politics and its relation to them, remains to be seen. Its attitude during the coming months will be a matter of intense interest to all concerned. The present state of equilibrium, dependent, as it is, upon the distribution and movements of so many forces, either of which is liable at any moment to disturb the whole adjustment, will be rendered still more uncertain by the change which sets France once more free to play her part in the plotting and counterplotting. If, as is generally believed, Russia is really the quarter from which the breach of the peace is likely to come, if it comes at all, France may be said to have control of the situation, for Russia will never be so insane as to rush single-handed to an encounter with the overwhelming strength of the triple, possibly quadruple, alliance, and France seems now to be her only possible ally.

CHINA is just now voluntarily undertaking an enterprise which bids fair to have a more important influence upon her destiny than did the compulsory opening of her ports to British commerce nearly half a century ago. After years of hesitation and agitation a decree has at last been issued by the Emperor authorizing the construction of a railroad from Peking to Hankow, a distance of about 700 miles. Hankow is on the Yang-tse-Kiang, some hundreds of miles from its mouth. The avowed motive of this concession, so contrary to the ordinary course of Chinese conservatism, is warlike rather than commercial. The road is to be constructed as a part of the great military system which the empire is now busily engaged in developing and perfecting. Nevertheless, it is hardly probable that when the road is constructed and equipped its operations can be confined to military purposes. The beginning of railroad building into the interior of a country like China is like the letting out of water from a great reservoir. The end, it may with some confidence be predicted, will be, sooner or later, and probably not very far off at latest, the opening up of that vast country to foreign travel and commerce. Whether with almost revolutionary suddenness, as in the case of Japan, or by slow degrees, as in that of China, the great nations of the East are being aroused from the torpor of centuries, and emulating the activity and turmoil of Western life. It is not unlikely that the next decade may prove to be a turning-point in Chinese history. The possible results to civilization and commerce of the opening up by railroads of a country which contains within its own borders a fourth or a third of the total population of the world, furnishes room and material for unlimited conjecture. Nor, amongst other possibilities to be taken into the account, can those of war and conquest be overlooked. There are already some predictions and perhaps some indications that the new military policy of the

empire may bring it into conflict with western nations. A recent writer on Asiatic affairs goes so far as to hint that the nineteenth century may yet, before its close, see the Chinese Empire divided between Russia and Great Britain, the former taking the northern the latter the southern moiety. The improbability of such an event arises, it must be confessed, not from the strength or prowess of the Chinese themselves or from the lack of aggressiveness on the part of Russia, but solely from the peaceful tendencies of the British people of this generation.

IN the current number of the *Atlantic Monthly* Agnes Repplier devotes nine or ten pages to a lively denunciation of the ethical element in modern fiction. Her condemnation rests not simply upon "goody-goody" books of the kind supposed to be adapted for Sunday-schools, nor even upon novels written for the exposure of some crying abuse, or the advancement of some great reform, such as a "Bleak House" or an "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Tried by her criterion, such creations as those of George Eliot and Charles Reade fall equally short of the true ideal of a work of art. Her theory is very simple. "It is not the office of a novelist to show us how to behave ourselves; it is not the business of fiction to teach us anything. . . . His (the novelist's) task is simply to give us pleasure, and his duty is to give it within the not very Puritanical lines prescribed by our modern notions of decency." Consistently enough she is no less severe upon those literary critics—and unfortunately for her peace of mind they are in the majority—who persist in regarding it as a part of their professional duty to look at works of fiction from the ethical point of view. In fact, the word "ethics," used in connection with a novel, seems sufficient to throw Agnes Repplier into a literary rage. She tells us that she once counted "the obnoxious word" six times repeated in the opening paragraph of one review of George Eliot's writings, and could, in consequence, proceed no further with it. Most thoughtful readers will probably at once put the theory advanced in this semi-brilliant yet shallow critique into that large class of half-truths which are so much more plausible and mischievous than any unadulterated error can possibly be. Regarding the novel as a work of art, pure and simple—though we see no good reason why fiction should be monopolized for artistic purposes when it is so well adapted for other uses as well—we may at once concede that it is not consistent with that purpose to teach ethical theories, or any other kind of theories. Grant that its one aim is to be true to nature; to paint human life, or some particular phase of it, as it exists. Does it follow that it will be, or can be, without ethical tinge and import? Far from it. The moral element is the fundamental, the formative, the transcendent element in character and conduct. A novelist who studies human nature, if he goes a hair's breadth below the surface, can no more depict his characters without making their moral features prominent than he can give us dialogue without thought, or conduct without motive. That is a shallow view, we venture to affirm, of George Eliot which attributes the presence of the ethical characteristics, which are so marked in her creations, to a distinct purpose on her part to teach some great moral lesson. That quality of her writing is quite compatible with a purely artistic purpose. The constant activity of low or lofty motive, the interplay of impulses derived from consciences more or less sensitive, or from peculiar phases of religious faith, are ever present in the people of her imagination because they are ever present in such of the men and women of every-day life as have enough of character to give them any claim to reproduction in the writings of a thinker like George Eliot. The main difference between the artistic work of such a writer and that of one after Agnes Repplier's own heart, will, we opine, be simply the reflex of the difference in the mental and moral natures of the two writers. A great novel destitute of all ethical colouring would be for all its more thoughtful readers about as attractive as the play of the "Prince of Denmark" with the Hamlet left out.

#### WALLACE'S DARWINISM.\*

PARENTS of naughty boys may take comfort from the fact that Charles Darwin, like Clive, belonged to this much abused class. He was naughty as a child and lazy as a boy. After seven years' study or rather idleness at Shrewsbury School, he left little wiser than when he entered, and was placed in charge of Dr. Broder, with the view of studying medicine. He could not, however, from some constitutional timidity, endure the sight of blood.

\* "Darwinism: an exposition of the theory of natural selection, with some of its applications." By Alfred Russel Wallace, LL.D., F.R.S. London and New York: MacMillan and Co.; Toronto: Williamson and Co.

There was then no promise of his future devotion to science.

At Cambridge he led a dissipated life. He was one of a fast set, more given to gambling than to study. He was either fond of music or affected to be, and used to pay the choir boys to sing in his rooms. This seems rather remarkable, as he had a defective ear and could not detect a dissonance or hum a tune correctly.

When he had once settled down to the actual work of life, he followed the course of investigation he had chosen, with much steady application, and so much to the exclusion of all other thought, that those functions of the brain which discern the æsthetic and spiritual phases of the universe became seriously impaired by disuse. He took cognizance of nothing but hard facts. The consequence was that the beauty of tropical forests, which delighted his youth, had no charm for his old age. He was looking for something else.

Mark Twain tells an amusing story against himself in connection with Darwin's infirmity. He says that a friend, returned from England, told him he had paid a visit to the great scientist. He received him kindly, showed him his library and dissecting room, and, pointing to a table on which stood a lamp and an open book, said, "You must be careful not to disturb that. That book is the 'Innocents Abroad.' I keep it open on the table, and always read myself to sleep at night, and read myself awake in the morning." Mark was much flattered by this tribute to his humour, and, when Darwin's Biography was published, procured a copy to see what might be said about himself. He searched it through in vain. The only possible allusion to himself was the statement that, in his later years, Darwin suffered from atrophy of the brain, and could not read any decent literature.

Our first dip into Darwinism was about twenty-five years ago, in the pages of the *Cornhill*. The writer of the article imagined himself in the Zoological Gardens, before the monkey house, and in a very easy and pleasant reverie, initiated us into the principle of Evolution. His own conclusion was that, while the theory might not be absolutely true, it was at least entitled to respectful consideration. Since then it has received every kind of consideration, respectful and otherwise. No theory ever presented to the world has been more ridiculed. None has won its way more rapidly into favour. Now it is the fashion. It is applied to everything. Fashionable however as it is, it remains only a probable theory. It comes under the Scotch verdict, "not proven." It may, indeed, never be proved, or, after infinite research, may be found only a step towards a brighter and nobler truth. Darwin, after the labour of a lifetime, leaves it unproved. Wallace, his ardent disciple, adds much to the store of facts accumulated by his master, but is obliged to confess that the theory is still only a probable one.

We are generally apt to regard scientific works as dull. The volume before us is one of the most interesting we ever read. The author has a charming style. His facts are well marshalled, and his statements clear. There is an absence of all dogmatism, and he seems perfectly fair to those who differ from him.

Those who wish to see what Darwinism really is should lose no time in possessing themselves of this latest contribution to the great scientific problem. If they read two or three chapters, we are much mistaken if they do not continue the perusal of so entertaining a work, even to the exclusion of lighter literature.

Mr. Wallace first insists upon a right definition of "species," as absolutely necessary to a clear understanding of the doctrine of evolution, and adopts that of the celebrated botanist, De Candolle, as most satisfactory. De Candolle says that "a species is a collection of all the individuals which resemble each other more than they resemble anything else, which can by mutual fecundation produce fertile individuals, and which reproduce themselves by generation in such a manner that we may from analogy suppose them all to have sprung from one single individual." Starting with this definition he next gives us a formal statement of the Darwinian theory: "The theory of natural selection rests on two main classes of facts, which apply to all organized beings without exception. The first is the power of rapid multiplication in a geometrical progression; the second is that the offspring always vary slightly from the parents, though generally closely resembling them."

Owing to the multiplication of plants and animals in a geometrical ratio there takes place a fierce struggle for existence. This is a necessity; for it stands to reason that the greater number of those that are born, year by year, must die premature deaths. Suppose, for instance, a partridge had a brood of twelve this year, that they all lived, that half of them were hens, and each brought forth a brood of twelve next year, and so on for a few years, what would be the result? Any schoolboy who has worked out the old problem of the blacksmith who was to be paid for shoeing a horse, a cent for the first nail, two for the second, four for the third, etc., can form a pretty good estimate of the consequences of such rapid multiplication. In a few years the forests would be swarming with partridges, and, in a few years more, there would not be continents to contain them. It is the same for other animals and plants. But, as a matter of fact, there is no perceptible increase. We have no reason to suppose that the number now is greater than it was a thousand years ago. There is an awful destruction going on that ordinary observers are quite unconscious of. It is only the materialist who has made the subject a special study, who can reveal the fullness of the truth declared so long ago by an inspired