

less advanced than western Europe in the chief elements of civilization, we can scarcely evade the question: "What has arrested their progress?" nor avoid the suggestive answer which the contrasting Christianity of the freest and most civilized states of the Old and New World present, when compared with the degraded worship of this otherwise enlightened people. On this subject the following brief compendium is suggestive:—

"Whatever may be the moral character of the inhabitants of Simoda, it might be supposed, from the great number of places of worship, that they are a highly devotional people. Though the peculiar religions of the Japanese seemed to be sustained in a flourishing condition, the people are rather remarkable for their toleration of all kinds of worship, except that of the Christian, for which, in consequence of the political intrigues of the Roman Priesthood, centuries ago, they have an intense hatred, carefully inculcated by those in authority, who keep alive the traditional enmity engendered at an epoch when the Portuguese were expelled from the Empire. The Buddhist and Sintoo worships are those most prevalent in Japan, and the lower classes are strict but formal devotees, while it is suspected that the higher and better educated, are indifferent to all religions, and entertain various speculative opinions, or seek refuge in a broad scepticism."

The description of the Japanese "Praying Machine" may not inappropriately complete this subject.

"There was a curious contrivance found in one of the burial places at Simoda, consisting of a tall post, placed upright, and being square, it presented four surfaces on each of which was one or two inscriptions or prayers. The post was nearly eight feet in length, and near the centre, at a convenient height to be reached by the hand, was affixed vertically a wheel, moved readily on an axle that passed through the post. Two small iron rings were strung upon each of the three spokes of the large wheel. Every person who twisted this instrument in passing was supposed to obtain credit in Heaven for one or more prayers on the post, the number being graduated according to the vigor of the performer's devotion, and the number of revolutions effected. The jingle of the small iron rings was believed to secure the attention of the Deity to the invocation of the devotional, and the greater the noise, the more certain its being listened to. This praying by wheel and axle would seem to be the very perfection of a ceremonious religion, as it reduces it to a system of mechanical laws, which, provided the apparatus is kept in order,—a result easily obtained by a little oil, moderate use, and occasional repairs,—can be readily executed with the least possible expenditure of human labor, and with all that economy of time and thought which seems the great purpose of our material and mechanical age. Huc, in his interesting account of his travels in Thibet, speaks of an improvement on the machine, where the apparatus was turned by water-power, and very appropriately styles it a Prayer Mill. In the course of the progress of the Japanese in the mechanical arts, this, with their usual readiness for adopting new improvements, will no doubt be introduced, or perhaps the more effective power of steam will be applied to their Praying Machines, and with the introduction of Steam boats and Railroads, may commence an era of locomotive devotion!"

We have not attempted in this brief notice any comprehensive an-