

farmer than of the big one. In this war of tariffs, which even New South Wales has at last joined, there is little chance for federation. It is, however, being considered in our Upper House, and I only hope that we may learn by the experience of the United States and of your Dominion, and lay our foundations safely and justly for an Australian commonwealth. The franchise differs as well as the tariff in the different colonies. In Queensland the demand for "one man one vote" will be imperfectly answered if the bill now before the Legislature becomes law, for there are so many difficulties put in the way of registration that it is called by the labour party a bill to prevent the workingman from having a vote. Personal knowledge by a Justice of Peace is not usual among the large cases of nomad shearers and station hands who seek the franchise as the best security for their rights as citizens. Another bill is before the Queensland Parliament, which I think is dangerous and retrograde. Money being dear and hard to borrow, and railways being needed both for development and to satisfy the unemployed, it is proposed to have land-grant lines-land to double the value of the cost of construction being given, and powers to resume possession of the line by Government to be reserved, whether after fifty years or sooner. The railway shareholders would almost all be absentees, and the experience of America proves that the holding of such monopolies as railways and vast tracts of land by great corporations is a perpetual menace to liberty.

National railways may not always pay interest on their construction as well as working expenses in money, but in the case of Victoria, the furthest behind at the present time, the advantage of opening up a territory of the best land with the best climate on the island continent would recoup this. But the ease with which money could be borrowed, and the manner in which it was poured out like water for city industries and city investments has attracted nearly half of the population to the metropolis. The very railways built for development of the producing-country classes, had the effect of centralizing population and business, for every one who had money sent to town for what he wanted, and local trade was done almost entirely on credit.

We are in the midst of a very serious mining strike, not characterized by the violence and bloodshed which we hear of among Carnegie's workmen or in the mining regions of the territory of Idaho. The few instances of lawlessness at Broken Hill were made the most of by the newspapers which take side against the miners. There are five thousand miners on the great Proprietary silver mine, who conceive that the directors have broken faith with them. On the settlement of the last trade dispute two years ago, it was agreed that that the work should be on days' wages, and that if any change was proposed the matter should go to arbitration. The directors, as soon as copious rain had saved the Barrier country from the water-famine, made the mine as safe as they knew how, and then gave a month's notice that they would do the underground work—the stoping—by contract. The miners did not wait the month; they demanded a conference, and when that was refused, they at once struck, and set pickets round the mine to keep blacklegs away. This has lasted five weeks and there is no sign of either party giving way. There are 10,000 shareholders more or less dependent on the dividends, and the railway which takes goods up and brings ore and silver down through South Australia, loses £1,000 every day in traffic returns.

The miners say the mine is not safe, and the directors will be forced to yield; the directors assure the shareholders that it is safe, and that the best of the miners prefer contract work, so that they will not hold out. One side says, "Remove the pickets and we will confer." The other side says, "Agree to confer and we will remove the pickets." There is a feeling among the labour party that the directors and large original shareholders who unloaded on the general public at high rates, seek in the present panic to buy back at a quarter of the money. Twenty months ago the share value of the Barrier silver mines which were being worked was over twenty millions sterling, now they have fallen to four millions and a-half. I think the Proprietary cannot afford to lose £20,000 a week in product, for a chance in saving £500 a week in wages. The dividends used to be at the rate of 2s monthly on 960,000 shares, half of these held in South Australia and our ports being the natural outlet for all traffic.

It is in New Zealand and in South Australia, too, that there has been any effort in the direction of making democratic government real by means of equal or proportionate representation, or what I call "effective voting." Mr. Hislop's Bill was lost in New Zealand because he began at the wrong end. Legislative bodies are not likely to uproot the system under which they have been elected, and the methods with which they are familiar. It is the public which must be aroused to the justice and the simplicity of the single transferable vote applied to large constituencies, and through the people we shall command the Parliament. I believe I mentioned in my last letter to THE WEEK that I was lecturing on this subject, and following up each lecture by making the audience vote for six men out of twelve in the order of his preference. The vote is only used for one, and in two cases out of three the first vote is utilised, but to make the vote of each man effective, if the favourite candidate does not get enough to make a quota of the votes polled, the second man is credited with it, and if the vote is given for a man who has enough without it,

the second is taken unless he does not need it—or cannot use it. The public counting and allocating show that the thing is as simple as it is just. This is the crisis in which success is probable, for our two parties, labour and capital, are organizing for battle, and to pit themselves against each other as enemies in every constituency in Australia would only hinder the reconciliation of their interests, which are really common and not antagonistic. There has also been a change of ministry here, in which personal recrimination and undignified squabbling made the public feel that the present electoral system did not secure the best men.

I have hitherto only addressed city and suburban audiences, but I have received so many intelligent letters of enquiry from people living in the country that I begin this day a series of lectures in country townships. There is a new general election next March, and I hope to make this great measure of electoral reform the most prominent one for every candidate in every constituency. Woman's Suffrage is also coming to the front. Hare, Stuart Mill and Henry Fawcett made the two things go together. Friends of the cause are watching eagerly for the result in South Australia from England and America, and wherever party is dominant and corrupt this radical change should be advocated as the pivotal one which would moralize politics and cut the ground from below the feet of the wire-puller and the briber. Corruption is a party weapon, and depends for its success on the fringe of votes that may be purchased or cajoled to change a minority into a majority. When it is laid down as an axiom and embodied in electoral machinery that a sixth of the constituency must return one of six members, two-sixths, two, and so on, better men will fill our Legislatures, and the elector will be educated up to the height of his responsibilities.

C. H. S.

Adelaide, South Australia, August 4, 1892.

Mem.—In THE WEEK of May 27 containing my letter, the Rambler asks who wrote "The Modern Minister," of which he read only the beginning. If he had read to the end he would have cared less to know. It was a man (I do not know his name) who died lately, whose name is only heard of in connection with that book, and "Saul Weir," a still more improbable story, and of another, the scene laid in Galilee, and Jesus Christ one of the *dramatis personæ*. They were called the Cheney novels, and I have heard them attributed to Lord Rosebery. "Miss Brown" was an early work of Vernon Lee's (Violet Fane). She has bloomed out into a great art critic, and her "Eupheria" is one of the most suggestive books I know. "Miss Brown" was powerful and painful. I think, but am not sure, the "Boudoir Cabal" was by Greville Murray, whose Parisian sketches were so clever, and "The Member for Paris" a splendid novel, but whose "Young Brown," published in the Cornhill over twenty years ago, was a repulsive and not a clever book.

C. H. S.

A BACCHANALIAN.

LAUGHING, giddy, merry boy,
Infant god of mirth and joy,
Come unto our feast to-night,
Make the festive bowl gleam bright,
With thy beams of wit and song
Speed the midnight hours along.

Let the jovial laugh resound,
Let the purple wine flow round,
And let Mirth and Love employ
All their arts to crown our joy,
But let not a sober face
At our festive board find place.

A. MELBOURNE THOMPSON.

A LIFE WELL SPENT.

"THE Record of a Happy Life" is the title of a recently published book; and "The Record of a Successful Life" might well be the heading of a biography of George William Curtis. He began life as an ardent reformer, who took part in one of the most high-souled of the many idealistic attempts to better human society this world has seen, and when that attempt failed he was not scared back into sluggish acceptance of Things as They Are. He through all his life had some measure of practical reform engrossing his attention, and he lived to win nearly all his battles. Boldly and fearlessly he fought on the anti-slavery side, and now slavery is no more. With almost equal boldness he stood for Civil Service reform, and he rescued that cause from the obloquy heaped upon it by "practical politicians." To pass to his literary career, he entered a stage upon which numberless efforts at magazines had failed disastrously, and he, after his connection with the brilliant though short-lived "Putnam's," assisted in the work of making *Harper's Magazine* and *Harper's Weekly* the successful journals they are. He has left this life a man of sixty-eight, who has laboured long and strenuously for his fellowmen, and whose efforts have been crowned with a success that this life rarely bestows upon the reformer.

What was he? Was he an author, was he a journalist, was he an orator, was he a politician? A young man of twenty-seven and twenty-eight, he published the dreamy, delicate travel pictures, "The Nile Notes of a Howadji,"

"The Howadji in Syria," and "Lotus Eating." Later on the "Potiphar Papers" showed his skill in social satire, and "Prue and I" was an excursion into the domain of the literature of sentiment. "Trumps" was a novel, not unsuccessful. But when we compare these achievements with the work of the man who for many years has at once composed the telling editorials of *Harper's Weekly*, and from the "easy chair" issued his light yet skilful contemporary criticism, we must conclude that the journalist was greater than the author. But what of the orator, who sometimes as a lecturer spoke one hundred nights in a season, and who took by storm the Republican convention at Chicago in 1860, carrying a resolution, the adoption of which pledged the party to the course which culminated in the Emancipation Proclamation? We now can hardly appreciate the influence wielded thirty or forty years ago in the United States by the peripatetic lecturer, but the battle of Emancipation was largely fought by the band of orators who by word of mouth in city after city protested against the foul blot of human slavery; and among those effective speakers was George William Curtis. Once again, the politician, who was so important a source of strength to the Republican party in the sixties, who engaged in the duel against civic service corruption, who refused political honours and emoluments, and who rose superior to party considerations, was no unimportant figure in his time. From all these standpoints must our estimate of the man be formed.

The biographical details of his life are soon given. Born in 1824, he in 1842 was of just the proper age to escape from a counting-house and rush to Brook Farm, there to join Hawthorne and the other enthusiasts in the endeavour to reconstruct society on simpler and truer lines. Two years of Brook Farm, two years more of study and farming, and in 1846 the young American departed upon a European tour. It was a leisurely tour, for it was 1850 before he returned, and he had journeyed slowly through Italy, Switzerland, Egypt, Syria and England. He returned to plunge into journalism, with characteristic success finding himself at once editorial writer upon the *Tribune*. His books of travel came out at this time, and he was associated with *Putnam's Monthly* and *Harper's*. It was the crash of 1857, which ruined the former periodical, which aroused him to his greatest exertions. Journalism became more than ever his vocation, and yet he plunged into a course of lecturing. He was in honour, though not in law, bound to discharge the indebtedness of the publishers of the defunct magazine, and for years nearly all his earnings went to satisfy the creditors. Politics much interested him; he shared in the Republican struggles prior to the Civil War, and in 1865 eagerly seconded the Hon. Thomas A. Jenckes, of Rhode Island, in his assault upon Civil Service corruption. For years he waged that war; Reform Leagues were formed, speeches were made, the pages of *Harper's* were used, and when the last annual meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League was held, 36,000 national offices had been placed upon a satisfactory footing. Such is the record of his life work.

Has he done good work in his day? Certainly he has. Perfect honour, thorough fearlessness and determination, great public spirit and disinterestedness have been marked characteristics of his career. It is not likely that he will live as an author, graceful as were his early books. The triumphs of the orator are evanescent under the best of circumstances, and Mr. Curtis' efforts were nearly all cast in the somewhat prosaic mould of the lecture. Journalism is a thing of to-day, and his work in that will soon be practically unread, though of great value alike in the history of journalism, and as throwing a strong light on most of the important movements of the day. And finally, his work as a politician who repeatedly refused high political prizes, and who preferred the less prominent working places, can hardly leave the permanent impress of his personality upon the people, great as has been the good he has conferred upon them. His will not be a showy figure in history; but it will be a solid figure, and the future historian will recognize him as one of the most honourable and useful statesmen with whom the United States has been blessed.

It has been, to reiterate the opening remark of this article, a successful life. The concreteness and definiteness of his aims contributed to his success; he saw clearly what he wanted, he worked unceasingly, he attained his purpose. His country owes to him an immense weight of gratitude, for several specific reforms of great moment, and for an unceasing vigilance extended over many years and ever exercised on the side of right and truth. Perhaps the very definiteness of his aims and accomplishments may deprive him of some of the attention from future ages that he deserves. But he will live as a man who did his duty, who did what his right hand found to do, and who reaped the too rarely granted reward of seeing his aims realized around him ere he passed away.

CHARLES FREDERICK HAMILTON.

A DESPATCH from Singapore says that the Sultan of Johore, one of the most prosperous states in the East, situated in the western part of the Malay peninsula, is causing to be prepared for the World's Columbian Exposition a model Malay village, in which the trades and industries peculiar to the Malays will be carried on by natives. It is highly probable, the despatch adds, that the Sultan himself will visit Chicago during the Exposition.