

The life of the Benedictines of Clairvaux did not differ from that of other "monks of the West." They were artisans and agriculturists: they had to pray hard and to work hard. In its day, Clairvaux had as many as 900 monks, representatives of royal, as well as of plebeian families. In 1789, the number of monks was only 27, and the revenue of the monastery was 554,000 frs. Of the four anniversaries kept at Clairvaux, one was in honour of Richard Coeur de Lion. England was also remembered in the person of her king Henry II., who, for having given the necessary funds to cover the nave of one of the churches with lead, was presented with a finger of St. Bernard, as a relic.

Until the political atmosphere becomes calmer, the Duc d'Orleans need not count upon a free pardon. In the meantime his dynastic friends would do well to observe silence, and his fiancée and her mother, to continue to visit him daily, as they are to reside close to the prison, and so win involuntary public sympathy.

In making up her mind to go the Berlin Labour Conference, France has decided wisely. Opinion has made up its mind, too, that the proceedings of the Conference cannot be other than academic; and so long as the collectivist is not likely to replace the individualist basis of social organization, property has no reason to become alarmed. In labour legislation, Germany is far behind England, and not a little behind France. Now these two powers may be able to inoculate the idea-minds of Germany with the labour reforms they have long ago effected. To give a needful help to Emperor William in this respect, and to encourage his desire for the betterment of the wage-earning classes in Fatherland, are ends worthy of England and France.

M. Edouard Drumont has brought out his third and concluding volume, "La France Juive." No trumpets will be blown in Zion in its honour. It is a cry of war to the knife against the Israelites—not the old clo' brigade—but against the sections that possess millions, the "Rothschild clique." Nothing is denounced concerning Gentile money bags, though it is difficult to see the like wealth an abomination in the case of Jew, and a natural circumstance in the case of Christian. Neither one nor other gives the example of throwing their cash-boxes to the dogs. Those only who are not millionaires, condemn those who are. M. Drumont is about forty-six years of age, and the most perfect type of pure Semiticism; many who occupy the highest seats in the synagogues have a less Hebrew look. Apart from his mania against only the wealthy Israelites, he is a very powerful pamphleteer. But after all, he proposes no plan to prevent the Jews from making more money than the Christians; nor does he show that the latter are debarred from money making by any privileges accorded to the seed of Abraham.

M. Drumont is sincere in his Peter the Hermitism: he has had to defend his accusations at the sword's point, and has been nearly killed in a duel. He sees the Jew everywhere, as others profess to see the Jesuit, the Prussian spy, or the red spectre of anarchism. For M. Drumont the exhibition of 1889 was not the centennial of 1789, but the apotheosis of Semiticism. He attacks General Boulanger's father as being a life-long swindler, which explains that characteristic being the appanage of his son. So long as it was understood that Boulanger would, if made Dictator, order the massacre of the Jews, and the seizure of their savings for the "have-nots," M. Drumont patronized the "brav' gen'ral," but the latter had to disavow any contemplated rupture of the decalogue for the benefit of the Gentiles, hence the excommunication now pronounced against his "awful dad."

M. Jules Simon has adopted an idea which is likely to be imitated by other public men. Instead of founding a newspaper for himself, he has arranged with the *Temps* Journal to afford him half a column, in which he will daily ventilate his experienced opinions on passing events, totally independent of the journal. Hitherto he was a collaborator of a journal, which had a leading article once a week, from a representative of the seven political parties in the country—Communists included. To have the seven opinions daily must be the ideal of the French newspapers of the future.

Aix-les-Bains, where Queen Victoria is erecting a spring palace, is a thermal station farmed by the State. The annual expenses of the establishment—doctor's salaries included—amount to 105,000frs. The patients' fees are 228,571frs., and the total profit to the state 125,571frs.

Dr. Olavide of Madrid, in his brochure on leprosy, states that there are six to eight cases of leprosy permanently in the San Juan de Dios hospital of that capital; that never has the disease been communicated to any patients in the vicinity of the afflicted. He has treated five hundred cases of leprosy, where often a husband or a wife only were the sufferers, and never did they catch the malady from one another. He traced the contagion invariably to persons who had resided in Cuba, the Philippine and the Canary Islands: hence the *bacillus* or germ of leprosy, must have been contracted either in the food or the soil of these countries.

In a recent pamphlet on petroleum-fields, Mr. Charles Marvin states that the oil-fields of Canada cover upward of a hundred thousand square miles. There are also extensive oil-fields, comparatively undeveloped, in South Africa, New Zealand, South Australia and Burmah. As the South African oil-fields underlie the diamond and gold mining districts, it would seem to be assured of a speedy development, fuel costing nearly a hundred dollars a ton there.

THE MURDER MICROBE.

THE rapidly increasing frequency of crimes against the person and life—more especially of the crime of murder—among what we are accustomed to call the "better classes," has been, of late, rather startling, and cannot but suggest some grave considerations. In those unsophisticated years, in which humanity was, to our youthful minds, roughly divided into two classes of "good people" and "bad people," we can all remember how the word "murdered," at once called up the image of some abnormal looking villain, after the pattern of the two typical "ruffians" who carried off the "babes in the wood" to die and be buried by the tender-hearted robins. This "villain" was brigand-like and ferocious in aspect—possibly with a masked or blackened visage—one of the branded wild beasts of humanity who could be recognized as such at a glance. Of course there was also the class of deep-designing and often polished and courtly villains, who stabbed in the dark, or dealt out death secretly with poison or stiletto. But these were chiefly historical personages who lived in what were called "very wicked times" and "dark ages." A murderer was, in any case, a creature standing by himself.

But now—under the prevalence of what we are beginning to regard, with all allowance for the more vivid impressions of the present, a sort of "epidemic" of murder—all this is changed. The "murderer" is no longer a conventional villain, a type by himself. The man who, at some unexpected moment, may cut short the thread of your life, may be quietly walking beside you, on terms of easy comradeship, chatting on the most indifferent subjects, without any grudge or cause of ill-will that you know of. An apparently agreeable and amiable woman, a professed friend, may be buying poison in order to put you quietly out of the way. An ostensibly harmless and inoffensive youth may break into your house, masked, in the dead of night, and try to rob and shoot you, while another who seems equally harmless, if a trifle eccentric, may be dispatching by mail, packages as deadly as any poisoned missive of fable or history. As there seems positively no limit to this sort of thing, the outlook is sufficiently alarming and calls for serious consideration, the more so since the motive, in so many cases, seems almost absurdly disproportionate to the atrocity of the crime. How is it that such heinous crimes should be on the increase in an age which seems especially favoured as to intellectual, social, moral and religious light; and that the taking of human life, the crime of crimes against society, seems to be generally accompanied by a reckless callousness worthy of the most savage barbarism?

When a physical epidemic sweeps over the world physicists eagerly study its origin and promoting causes, so that, if possible, these may be met by counteracting causes. May we not, in like manner, ascertain some of the promoting causes of this moral epidemic with a view to at least checking its fatal effects? The murder "microbe" to begin with, we may, without much error, set down as selfishness, combined with the determination to gratify it at all hazards, whether in the direction of acquisitiveness, self-indulgence, or passion, and without any regard to the welfare of others. This microbe takes different forms of development. In mild types it comes out in cheating, knavery, slander, assault, or crops out in a "combine," for the purpose of amassing riches at the expense of the privations of others. Or it assumes the more flagrantly malignant form of crimes against the person and life, becoming, in the end, the absolute triumph of a blind, brutal egoism over the altruism which has been slowly cooling through ages of immoral growth, and which is indispensable to the life of a community peaceful and prosperous.

And it is apparent to every candid and thoughtful observer that this malignant "nidus," to borrow a scientific phrase, is the shallow materialistic philosophy which runs through so much of the popular thinking and writing of our day,—the philosophy which refuses to take account of man's higher nature, but considers him simply as a bit of highly developed protoplasm, developed, in this view, only to act a brief role on the stage of life, and then to vanish as utterly as the shadow of a dream. This view is certainly not conducive to the nobler virtues,—to self-control, self-restraint, self-sacrifice for others. Why, indeed, on the supposition that man's moral sense is only a cumulative sense of expediency, and that he is under no responsibility for the future consequences of his actions, why should he sacrifice his own clearly seen good, as he regards it, to the much less clearly perceived good of another, when he does not see any expediency in so doing? Why, also, should he sacrifice his own individual sense of expediency to the collective sense of the race, which presses much less hardly on him? Is it not the natural result of this wretched and perverted view of man's position and destiny, that those at least in whom inherited and traditional high principles are not strongly predominant, should grow more unscrupulous in their selfishness, as well as more utterly regardless of what we have been accustomed to consider the sacredness of life, more utterly brutal, in short, in sweeping out of the way everything that opposes the gratification of their own selfish ends?

One of the fathers of the theory of evolution, Alfred Russel Wallace, has thus expressed the effect of the shallow materialistic theory referred to, on minds like his own. He has spoken of it as "the crushing mental burden imposed upon those who, maintaining that we, in common with the rest of nature, are but products of the blind eternal forces of the universe, and believing, also, that the time

must come when the sun will lose his heat, and all life on the earth cease, have to contemplate a not very far distant future, in which all the glorious earth, which, for untold millions of years has been slowly developing forms of life and beauty, to culminate at last in man, shall be as if it had never existed; who are compelled to suppose that all the slow growth of our race struggling towards a higher life—all the agony of martyrs, all the groans of victims, all the evil and misery and undeserved suffering of the ages, all the struggles for freedom, all the efforts towards justice, all the aspirations for virtue and the well-being of humanity, shall absolutely vanish, and 'like the baseless fabric of a vision leave not a wrack behind.' As contrasted with this hopeless and deadening belief, we, who accept the existence of a spiritual world, can look upon the universe as a grand consistent whole, adapted in all its parts to the development of spiritual beings, capable of indefinite life and perfect ability. Beings thus trained and strengthened by their surroundings, and possessing latent faculties capable of such noble developments, are surely destined for a higher and more permanent existence, and we may confidently believe, with our greatest living poet,—

That life is not as idle ore.

But the worst symptom of the results of this "gospel of despair" is, that to many it is not felt as a "crushing mental burden" at all! On the contrary, they seem very well pleased to accept it with its corollary, "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die!" And if the rights or lives of others seem to interpose any obstacles to the fulfilment of this simple plan, there is small scruple, in many cases, about disposing of these. It is the natural result of that great looseness of moral responsibility caused by the utilitarian school of philosophy of which Mr. Herbert Spencer is the leader, and which has so many jaunty and light-hearted popular exponents to sow it broadcast, in novels and magazines, among the thoughtless and unprincipled, with whom it surely works its deadly way.

Having such a favourable "nidus," may we not further say that the "murder microbe" finds most favourable and multiplying influences in the wide and detailed publicity now given to every particular of every crime, as well as to the most trivial items of the criminal's appearance and conduct. We all know that there is in human nature a strongly sympathetic or imitative principle which tends to make impulses for good or evil contagious. There is always, moreover, a large number of the unstable, only half reasonable natures out of which criminals are easily made, on whom the vivid recital of a crime will often act as a stimulus and temptation to "go and do likewise." We know how the proverbial "dime novel" and "penny dreadful" act in frequently producing juvenile crime. How, then, must these unstable, immoral minds be affected by having their attention rivetted for weeks on the sayings and doings and crimes, real and suspected, of such a morbid outgrowth of perverted humanity as the callous and heartless, but none the less unhappy young man now awaiting trial in Woodstock? It is not well to pronounce any one guilty till he has been fairly tried; but, surely, in the light of all that is known about him, it is painfully significant that letters of "sympathy"—even, it is said, from ladies—have already reached that prisoner? It might also be considered significant that, since the public attention has been focussed on this tragic murder, and on the wretched man who seems to figure as a sort of newspaper hero—his lightest sayings and doings chronicled for public edification—there have been some half dozen murderous assaults in Toronto and elsewhere. In case of a physical epidemic this coincidence would not be overlooked. Why, in a matter so grave, should we overlook the moral coincidence? In the interests of society, of life and property, it is certainly worth considering.

The remedy it is not so easy to discover. So long as a morbid taste demands morbid details, so long, it is to be feared, will newspapers supply them. The White Cross Society might take the matter up and see if it might not be possible to bring about a newspaper combine, which should restrict the publication of details about criminals to the barest outline. Lynch law is bad enough, but, at least, its rude demand for justice betokens a healthier morality, than does the morbid sympathy which would make a hero of the criminal, and which in turn breeds an excess of crime. Years ago, Mr. Goldwin Smith predicted a *mauvais quart d'heure* for society as the result of certain teachings and tendencies. Has it not already begun? And what can we do to check its progress?

FIDELIS.

ARSENIC AND SULPHUR.*

WE are all too well aware of the direful results on amalgamation caused by the presence in the ore operated on of arsenic and more especially sulphur, as their capacities for neutralizing the mercury, and thus rendering it useless to hold the gold or silver that pass over it, are very great. These troublesome elements are got rid of at the present time by roasting, but this causes expense, and metallurgists even hint at a loss of the precious metals by this treatment. I differ with them, inasmuch as to say, that if there is any loss, which there may be, that the same is so minute that we are not sensitive of it, so that practically there is none.

* "Arsenic and Sulphur as Metallurgical Agents in the Treatment of Canadian Auriferous and Argentiferous Ores." Read before the Geological and Mining Section of the Canadian Institute, by Mr. R. Dewar, Chemist and Metallurgist, March 13th, 1890.