

While the models are in fashion, the *vers de société* people, the erotic sonnetiers, the Swinburnian sun and dawn-worshippers, the sentimental ballad-mongers may continue to flourish. But may there not arrive a day when to the critical eye of a hundred years hence these self-named poets are relegated to limbo as obscure as that which now shrouds Barlow and Dwight, and Francis Jeffrey's noble two hundred and fifty? Between the *vivat* and *percat* of public opinion, said that great critic, out about Wordsworth, but *in* about a good many other things, is there a great gulf fixed. S.

THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE.

AMONG the eminent men of science in Great Britain, who give their general adhesion to the theory of evolution, there are three who deny that it can account for the appearance of man. On divergent grounds they maintain that self-consciousness, the moral and religious feelings render it impossible that man can have descended from the beasts which perish. Chief of these objectors is Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, who shares with Darwin the honour of discovering and stating the law of natural selection. Next comes Mr. St. George Mivart, a keen observer and acute controversialist, who finds no incompatibility between the doctrines of the Roman Church and the facts of nature. He declares indeed that development has been taught by the Church from of old. Third in the trio of those who deny Darwin's theory of human descent is Professor Max Müller, the philologist. While he avers that nowhere within the range of observation is there more telling proof of evolution than that which language supplies, yet that by his faculty of articulate speech man is divided from beast as absolutely as heaven from earth, or matter from spirit. In his "Science of Thought," published in 1887, he holds that this gift of speech cannot have come by development, and so high does he place the power of articulate utterance that he says without it there can be no thought whatever.

With the great majority of evolutionists it is enough to reply that as the difference between an Australian bushman and a Newton or Shakespeare is greater than the difference between the bushman and his dog, therefore natural agencies which account for the derivation of the anthropoid from the same tree of life as that which branches out in the fish, are quite equal to explaining how the anthropoid at last came to have human intellect and conscience. All the physical resemblances favour the conclusion, and why when all other fences of demarcation have been taken down, should this one—even granting it to be the highest—be left standing? All evolutionists are not however of the easy-going pattern to rest content with assumptions of this kind. Of works intended to suggest how the evolution of articulate speech came about, with all that that faculty meant in laying the foundation of abstract thought and moral sense, much the ablest and most philosophical is Mr. George J. Romanes' "Origin of Human Faculty." Mr. Romanes, by the way, is a native of Kingston, Ontario; he has resided in England nearly all his life, and privileged by discipleship has had free access to Mr. Darwin's library and notes in preparing his several volumes.

Mr. Romanes contends that all animals have powers of expression, and that while articulate speech is immensely more valuable a means of communication than any other, students have hitherto neglected to observe the scope and variety of expression among animals. A common barnyard fowl has no fewer than twelve cries, each carrying its own significance of fear, menace, invitation, exultation, and so on. Ants communicating—by touch most probably—are able to make known very complex orders of ideas. They arrange co-operative groups of miners and carriers, much as contractors organize their gangs of navvies. They can give one another the alarm, and tell one another where new stores of food have been discovered. Elephants, which in many respects nearest approach man in sagacity, appoint sentinels, and obey their signals with military precision. As investigation proceeds, more and more wonderful is the intelligence of the brute creation found to be. Professor Langley, the astronomer, secretary to the Smithsonian Institution, has seen a small spider lift a fly twenty times its own weight by a series of manœuvres that would do credit to an engineer. In Scotland it is common for shepherds to despatch a collie to a special field or grove to do a special task; all by word of mouth, without the slightest aid from gesture. Monkeys as well as dogs understand words. Just here Mr. Romanes rests one of his strongest pleas. He says that since the higher animals know what words mean, words which they have not the power to utter, man's supremacy in animated nature is due not simply to his intelligence but to the anatomical structure which made articulate speech possible to him. Birds, comparatively low in the rank of life, share this capacity of speech with mankind, and had it appeared in the dog for example, canine intelligence would have risen extremely high. So priceless to man was the worth of speech in its rudest beginnings that it at once gave the beings who enjoyed it a decisive advantage in the battle of life. As in a series of permutations a new factor multiplies the possibilities of variation by the whole number of elements, so the dawn of speech at once enhanced the value of every other faculty our ancestors possessed, and in the voice of man nature heard the voice of her king.

Because gestures still make up so much of the communication of savages, Mr. Romanes holds that gestures

originally eked out the rudimentary language of men. In this part of his discussion he draws largely upon the researches of General Garrick Mallory of the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, who will be remembered as presiding over the Anthropological Section of the American Association's meeting in Toronto last September. Mr. Romanes agrees with the philological authorities in holding that the sentence preceded the word; that general names arose from particular ones. Next, he takes it, that the advance to abstract terms was made, and then followed all the expressions by which self-consciousness is manifested. Thought and language mutually assisting each other developed together in a variety of lines which Mr. Romanes suggests in detail. He gives a very full analysis of how children learn to speak, and remarks upon the significance of the steps of the process. He has some acute observations on the sign-language of deaf-mutes, and carefully compares the languages of savages, with the effect of bringing out their evident development. In originality, breadth and boldness of treatment Mr. Romanes' book is certainly the strongest contribution to evolutionary literature since Herbert Spencer laid down the pen.

GEORGE ILES.

LITERATURE OF MODERN GREECE.

TO the student and the poet, Greece has ever been a hallowed land. Its language has been the study of ages—it has been the medium of the noblest thoughts. The world's great teachers spoke it as their mother tongue; even St. Paul could find the diction of no other language so appropriate for pouring out the fiery volume of his own Hebrew inspiration. Poetry seems to have been the earliest form of composition among the Greeks, as, indeed, it must of necessity be in all nations, for facility of recollection; hence memory is called the mother of the muses. The greatest poem of ancient times that has come down to us is the "Iliad" of Homer; the remarkable popularity of the Homeric poems produced a host of imitations; and hence we find that a great many poets endeavoured to rival the fame of the "blind old man" by narrating in verse the after-fate and vicissitudes of the heroes who took part in the war of Troy. Greek literature reached its highest perfection in the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The writers who endeavoured to follow in the track of these great masters were of far inferior merit, and with them tragedy degenerated to the effeminacy of lyrical songs, and rhetorical bombast. Comedy, like tragedy, took its origin from the worship of Bacchus; but history did not engage the attention of the Greeks till a comparatively late period.

Many seem to think that the language of ancient Greece ceased to exist when the barbarian trod classic ground. The very reverse was the case. The Romans, though they conquered Greece, owned the supremacy of the Grecian intellect and tongue. Horace and Tacitus are singularly marked with Grecisms. The Goths and Huns were equally impotent, so far as the Greek's tongue was concerned. The language in which Socrates conversed, in which Homer sung, and Paul preached, still remained victorious. The Slavonians were in a few ages forced to follow the example of their more cultivated predecessors the Romans. They received the Christian religion, and whatever literary culture Byzantium could boast, from the Greek language. They acknowledged, also, the superior administrative powers—the relic of old Roman strength—that lay in the strong iconoclastic Emperors, and bowed beneath the military severity of the Basilian family. Though superior in numbers at first, they were by degrees swallowed up by the greater mental and moral strength of the Greeks; the brute force of blind matter yielded, as it always does, in a protracted contest before the marshalled battalions of mind. The Slavonian element was altogether absorbed in the Greek, and so long as the Byzantine Empire remained, the language of ancient Greece was the language of every-day life. The Turks took the vacant empire; but in spite of them the language lived on still. Had the Turks been of a superior intellectual culture to the Greeks—had their religious opinions sympathized with those of the conquered, a new language might have been created; but in reality a development the reverse of all this took place; even Christian Venice failed to extirpate the language of Homer, while the revolution of 1821 revived the language and rendered it next to impossible that the time will ever come when it shall cease to be spoken amongst men. The successful political movement which shook off the Turkish yoke awoke in the Grecian mind all the desire for intellectual fame which had been the glory and ornament of their nation in times gone by; hence a desire for education was as common as a desire for freedom. But a desire for education in Greece means a desire for a purified Greek language; hence the Greek has devoted himself exclusively to this task. Great attention is paid to education of all kinds, which, from the humblest school to the university is free to all, and a large educational machinery is necessary to supply the demand for knowledge.

The press of Athens is equally active; small as the city is, it supports some first-class journals. The language of the country—Romain-Greek, or Neo-Hellenic—bears a very close resemblance to the Hellenic, or classical Greek—in fact, does not differ more, if so much, from the Doric. Great efforts have been made in recent years to purge the Neo-Hellenic of barbarisms and foreign terms, and it is now written with such purity, that good scholars

in ancient Greece will have little difficulty in understanding Tricoupis' history, or an Athenian newspaper.

The modern literature of Greece abounds with historical and biographical works, and especially with popular and patriotic ballads. If the works of such men as Professors Rangabe, Asopius and Papargopoulous are not better known, it arises partly from the extremely conceited superciliousness with which scholars in general are accustomed to look on every product of Greek literature not within a certain artificially circumscribed domain called classical. The brothers Panagiotis and Alexander Soutsos, and Alexander Ypsilante, the ill-starred and crude originator of the first movement of the Greek revolution in Moldavia, have written dramas, love-songs, novels and lyrics of great merit. Among dramatic writers, Neroulos, Rangavis, and Charmougis hold a foremost place. But of all the Neo-Hellenic works yet published, the history of the "Greek Revolution," by Tricoupis, is the most valuable—valuable not only for its statements and facts, but also for the purity and elegance of its style.

In reality there is very little difference between ancient Greek and modern Greek, and every day that difference becomes less. The modern language, with its inflections correctly written, might easily be mistaken for a colloquial dialect of some ancient Greek colony. Greek and Arabic seem to be the two spoken languages that have suffered the smallest change in the lapse of ages, and it is earnestly to be hoped that Greece will assume that position in the world of letters which the great prestige of her name entitles her to anticipate. M.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. REID'S NEW PICTURE.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—Mr. G. A. Reid's beautiful studio in the Arcade was, last Saturday, visited by many of our artistic citizens. I desire to say, sir, that Mr. Reid's work is of the very highest kind, and should appeal to all lovers of painting. The last picture from his brush is to go to Paris, where it is hoped it will find itself "on the line," at the Salon, during 1890. Hoping, sir, that by these few lines I may be able to direct general attention to this rising artist, I am, yours very truly,

CIVITAS.

MUSIC IN CANADA.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—In a recent issue of your valuable paper I noticed an allusion, under heading of "Music and the Drama," to "Toronto, which practically means Canada." Now, I am far from detracting from the very excellent performances given at all times by local and visiting organizations in our fair city, of which I am an ardent and loyal admirer, but I deprecate *in toto* the idea that Toronto is such a centre of all artistic life and accomplishment that, by comparison, Montreal, for example, is out of the running. Good music, chamber music, classical music have all been heard in Montreal and other cities of the Dominion as well as in Toronto. To underrate or overlook what has been done in musical directions in Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa and London, is uncharitable and unpatriotic. As a matter of fact, the selections referred to had, to my knowledge, been performed in Ottawa and Montreal some years ago. I am, sir, yours respectfully,

QUARTETTE CLUB.

Two more instances of the omnipresent danger due to the present system of electrical distribution have been afforded during the last few days in New York. On the night of November 30th, two clerks were engaged in carrying a metal frame showcase from the sidewalk into a store on Eighth Avenue. One of them stepped upon an iron grating, and as he did so the metal frame of the showcase came in contact with an arc lamp hanging over their heads. Suddenly the unfortunate man dropped his end and fell insensible. He never recovered from the shock. A new name is to be added to the long list of the killed. On the night of December 3rd, the passengers in a Third Avenue Elevated Railroad train were startled by hearing a noise like hail emanating from the roof of the car. It proved to be due to electricity. The car had come in contact with a low hanging wire, and had probably drawn it along until it crossed a live wire. It is said that two of the passengers in the car received shocks.

THE WESTERN CANADA LOAN AND SAVINGS COMPANY. —The report of the annual general meeting of this Company exhibits several gratifying features. Two half-yearly dividends at the rate of ten per cent. per annum have been paid; the continuous increase in the demand for the Company's debentures led the directors to make a call of five per cent. of the subscribed capital, which was promptly paid, raising the total amount of the paid-up capital to \$1,500,000, and the sum of \$50,000 was added to the Reserve Fund. Of the debentures which matured during the year a large proportion were re-issued at a lower rate—four per cent.—making, with the new debentures issued at this rate, a total at the end of the year of \$3,132,610. The amount repaid by borrowers was somewhat in excess of the amount loaned on mortgage during the year; and the profits, after deducting all charges and paying the dividends above mentioned, left a balance of \$33,276.66 carried to the contingent account.