

consisted of three tents; the land beyond, stretching across the isthmus, was a treeless open country, clothed with a sombre covering of brown fern. Onehunga was unoccupied save by the small remnant of a neighbouring native tribe, and the Bay of Manukau was a lone expanse of unfrequented water. In those days of "the streets before they were made"—as Swainson calls them after the old distich—when the infant capital was built of reeds and rushes, when drays were abandoned for weeks together in the principal street, buried axle-deep in mire and clay, and when a native whare did duty for a police court six days in the week, and for a place of worship on the seventh, locomotion by night was difficult, and in the winter season decidedly uncomfortable along these streets which existed only on paper. But then, as now, dancing was enjoyed with great zest, and though to attend a ball on a dark, wet night was, indeed, the pursuit of dancing under difficulties, yet, in the worst weather, its votaries were never daunted—the ladies gallantly wading through mire and water—their "twinkling feet" and "light fantastic toes," as the old chronicler we have before us gallantly terms them, encased in men's jack boots; their would-be partners—for life or for the dance—being carried high and dry on the back of some friendly Maori. From the very earliest period of the settlement lovers of dancing had an opportunity of gratifying their taste at a ball given by the Queen's representative on the occasion of Her Majesty's Birthday. In these, the dark ages of the colony, a piano played by the gracious hostess, the wife of the Governor, with a violoncello accompaniment, vamped with all due gravity by the Queen's Attorney-General, formed the modest orchestra at Government House, reminding us of its days of simplicity recorded in Gray's "Long Story," when

My grave Lord-keeper led the brawls,
The seal and maces danced before him.

Yet the balls in those olden days of the colony were said to have been probably as enjoyable, and certainly as much enjoyed, as the Gubernatorial Birthday Ball of to-day with all its state and ceremony.

All the heartburnings and jealousies which came into play in the early days of the colonization of New Zealand have passed away, even to their very memory, except in the minds of some of our earliest settlers. Europeans and natives, laymen and missionaries, Government immigrants and Company's settlers, now work together as one harmonious whole, all equally having the interests of the colony at heart, and equally priding themselves on the glorious progress it has made.

Looking back through the vista of years to the year 1840 (fifty years ago), but little will be found with which the Government of the colony, whether under Imperial regime or as a self-governing colony, has to reproach itself, and never was a colony established in which the interests of the aboriginal race have been considered and cared for as they have been in New Zealand.

It is far too general an opinion that the advent of the colonists has proved fatal to the native race, and that they are slowly dwindling away owing to their contact with Europeans. We venture to express in the most emphatic manner a contrary opinion, viz., that the colonization of the colony has arrested the destruction of the Maori race. Their losses in wars waged with the colonists were as nothing compared to the wholesale destruction that had been raging among themselves for generations, and which was finally put an end to on their subjugation by a stronger race. The true state of the case is, we think, put forth in the following words of an old chief, as related by Mr. Barstow in a lecture which he delivered some years ago in the Auckland Institute. Mr. Barstow put the question: "Suppose the white people had never come here?" The aged warrior paused, and then apostrophised: "I see an old man standing on the look-out post of lofty Te Ranga's pa. He strains his eyes, peering in every direction; no sign of human being, no uprising smoke meets his gaze, and then he cries to himself: 'Nobody, nobody; alas, not one! Days have passed since last I tasted the sweetness of human flesh. Is it all finished? One thing at least—no one survives to consign my body to the *hangi* (cooking oven).'"

Standing on the summit of Maungawhao, the old frowning fortress of the man-eaters—now Mount Eden, the centre of smiling gardens and handsome villas—looking down upon the great city which lies spread at our feet, with its crowded thoroughfares, its bustle of commerce, and its wealth of shipping; while to the horizon extend fair home-steads, trim fields, and lowing herds; when we turn to the country we are reminded of Shelley's lines—

Where the startled wilderness beheld,
A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood.

While shouts and howlings through the desert rang,
Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sunrise smiles.

While the evidence before us of the greatness of England's colonising power, and of its enormous expansion in trade, in commerce, in all that constitutes national greatness during the last fifty years, shows that the dictum of Cowley still holds true, and that still more so than when he wrote it—

All the liquid world is one extended Thames.

The best poetical description of a Maori war-canoe race is that given in the following verses by Mr. Alfred Domett in his "Ranolf and Amohia":—

Then rose the single voice in prouder strain,
Just as the lightning flashed again:

Had you died the death of glory
On the field of battle gory—
Died the death a chief would choose,
Not this death so sad and gloomy—
Then with tuft and tassel plummy,
Down of gannet—Sea-king's feather—
Gaily-waving, snowy-flecking,
Every deep-red gunwale decking—
Then a hundred brave canoes,
With elated
Warriors freighted,
Like one man their war-chant chiming,
Fierce deep cries the paddles timing,
While the paddles' serried rows,
Like broad birds' wings, spread and close—
Though the whit'ning
Waves like lightning

Had been starting altogether,
Forward through the foam together,
All in quest of vengeful slaughter,
Tearing through the tortured water.
And from dusky figures seated round,
With savage satisfaction in the sound—
A stern deep pride with sadness shadowed o'er
Like volleys fired above a soldier's grave,
Rang out the chorused thundering groans once more:—
Ha! A hundred brave canoes—
Crowding, crashing,
Darting, dashing,
Darting, dashing through the wave!
Forward—forward all together,
All in quest of foemen's slaughter!
They had cleft the foaming water,
Seeking vengeance for the brave—
For the brave—the brave—the brave!

We give four native chants of different kinds:—

No. I.

One voice: My children, here's strength.
Chorus: Ha! ha!
One voice: My children, here's firmness.
Chorus: Ha! ha!
One voice: Behold a proof of unflinching strength,
The head of Te Kawai-ta-taki,
Which I grasp in my hand,
Chorus: Ha! ha!

No. II.

Ah, see ye not there are signs in the heavens?
And know ye not there are thoughts in the heart?
Hew them in pieces! hew them in pieces!
Pounce, pounce upon them,
Pounce upon them now!

No. III.

Son of the potent? Son of the brave!
Mighty in battle on land and the wave.
Great is the soul where true valour reigns,
Noble the blood that swells in your veins;
Crest of the Kawanu yield to your foe.
Chiefs of the warriors! ye are laid low!

No. IV.

Kumara, one, two, three;
Kumara, two, three, four;
Now carry out your plan.
Pounce, pounce upon them.
Rehearse your incantations,
So ye may be strengthened in the strife;
Oh, let your plots
Ripen into action.
Say, are we not the descendants
Of Puhikuku and Puhikaka?
Pounce upon them; pounce upon them.
When will your valour begin to rage?
When will your valour be strong?
Ah! when the tide murmurs.
Ah! when the tide roars.
Bid farewell to your children,
For what else can you do?
You see how the brave,
Like the lofty exulting peaks of the mountains,
Are coming on.
They yield! they yield! O fame!

THE RAMBLER.

I SUPPOSE for every wrong there is a right—somewhere. The literary lions of the past ten years have been visionary Russians, prurient Frenchmen, shallow English women. At length we appear to have turned the corner. Recently we witnessed a Wordsworth Wave in Boston. Now Coleridge and Southey, Charlotte Brontë and Jane Austen, even Mrs. Gaskell and Thomas Love Peacock, all are receiving that meed of attention which has been perhaps somewhat tardily displayed by the growing generation. De Quincey is another eminent name undergoing revival. A leading English paper styles him "the greatest essayist the century has seen." Coventry Patmore, too, comes once more before the public in a powerful though uncharacteristic volume, "The Unknown Eros."

Coventry Patmore, linked—it seems—to a defunct generation, and yet, Mr. Patmore, alive, and with something—a great deal—to say. I think no praise of mine could be strong enough for the following virile if occasionally harsh poem which is Mr. Patmore's conception of the Romish Church:

ARBOR VITÆ.

With honeysuckle, over-sweet, festoon'd;
With bitter ivy bound;
Terraced with funguses unsound;
Deform'd with many a boss
And closed scar, o'er-cushioned deep with moss;
Bunch'd all about with pagan mistletoe;
And thick with nests of the hoarse bird
That talks, but understands not his own word;
Stands, and so stood a thousand years ago,
A single tree.
Thunder has done its worst among its twigs,
Where the great crest yet blackened, never pruned,
But in its heart away
Ready to push new verdurous boughs, when'er
The rotting saplings near it fall and leave it air,
Is all antiquity and no decay.
Rich, though rejected by the forest-pigs,
Its fruit, beneath whose rough, concealing rind
They that will break it find
Heart-succouring savour of each several meat,
And kernell'd drink of brain-renewing power,
With bitter condiment and sour,
And sweet economy of sweet,
And odours that remind

Of haunts of childhood and a different day.
Beside this tree,
Praising no Gods nor blaming, sans a wish,
Sits, Tartar-like, the Time's civility,
And eats its dead-dog off a golden dish.

There is here a relic of the strong, half-mad music of Maud, and more than a trace of the scientific spirit which animates so many of the Laureate's great descriptive passages. That Tennyson is his master—Coventry Patmore's—is even more evident from the following extract, embodying the political mistakes of 1867:

In the year of the great crime,
When the false English Nobles and their Jew,
By God demented, slew
The Trust they stood twice pledged to keep from wrong
One said, Take up thy Song,
That breathes the mild and almost mythic time
Of England's prime!
But I, Ah, me,
The freedom of the few
That, in our free Land, were indeed the free,
Can song renew?
Ill singing 'tis with blotting prison-bars,
How high so'er, betwixt us and the stars;
Ill singing 'tis when there are none to hear;
And days are near
When England shall forget
The fading glow which, for a little while,
Illumes her yet,
The lovely smile
That grows so faint and wan,
Her people shouting in her dying ear,
Are not two daws worth two of any swan!

Coventry Patmore is, of course, chiefly known to us through "The Angel in the House," a remarkable and highly original poem. You remember that the Country Parson called him "pre-eminently the Bard of Love," and I think he was right. "Vaughan" is indeed a creation. I recommend "The Unknown Eros," despite its misleading and incongruous title, to all students of English literature.

A very interesting volume recently issued by John C. Nimmo is "The Heimskringla, or the Sagas of the Norse Kings." It is a translation by an Englishman, unknown except to a few in this country, Mr. Samuel Laing, who, after having served a while in the army, occupied himself almost altogether with the study of Scandinavian literature. This course resulted in the publication of a work now further remodelled and furnished with notes by Dr. Rasmus Anderson, U.S. Minister to Denmark. In the present volume the fatalism and love of butchery, belonging to the old Norsemen who helped to colonize Britain, are well illustrated.

No one in these early days prizes his own life or that of others. It is given or taken with unconcern. When Thorer, seized by King Magnus, is led to the gallows, he sings, "We were four companions gay, let one by the helm stay." Treachery is rife. Nowhere is life safe; even at a man's own hearth he may be stabbed, or he may be murdered as he feasts with a friend. Earl Thorfin, is entertained by Thorkel, the forester. Thorkel discovers by his spies that an ambush is laid for him when he leaves home. He puts off going with his guests. At last the Earl, growing impatient, asks, "Art thou ready at last, Thorkel?" Thorkel answers, "Now I am ready," and straightway struck the Earl upon the head, so that he fell, sore wounded, on the floor near the fire. Then said grimly an attendant, "I never saw people so foolish as not to drag the Earl out of the fire," and with a stick propped the dying man upright. The Earl's men rushed in to find their master stark dead. The Norsemen prized above all things prowess in battle. But they esteemed scarcely less manly beauty. Vague and indefinite in their descriptions of the maidens whom they wooed, they expatiate upon the excellence of their heroes. Snorra does not fail to tell us of the hair of Ragnvald, son of Earl Bruse, "long and yellow as silk." The heathen Arneiot Gelline, who has never heard of "the white Christ," meets King Olaf, and the poet waxes enthusiastic; "very handsome he was in countenance, and had beautiful fair hair. He was well armoured, had a fine helmet and ring armour; a red shield, a superb sword in his belt, and in his hand a gold-mounted spear." King Olaf is depicted as well grown in limbs; "his hair was yellow as silk, and became him well; his skin was white and fine all over his body; his eye beautiful and his limbs well proportioned." King Magnus wears a brilliant red cloak, and the chronicler does not omit to note that his bright yellow hair, like silk, fell over his shoulders.

With all their savagery they love poetry and venerate poets. Even their heroes are not completely accomplished without the gift of verse. Sigvat, the Skald, caps their every saying with verse. Poetry oozes out of him; he cannot stir a step without breaking out into song. And the poet is, as of old, somewhat akin to a prophet, and is honoured as one who sees deep into the future. He is a privileged personage who may speak freely even to kings. Skald Sigvat upbraids King Magnus in plain words for all his shortcomings, asking him such searching questions as these:

"Who is egging thee, King, to go back from the oath thou hast sworn? A worthy king should be true to his word. It can never beseege thee, my lord, to break thine oath. Who is egging thee, Prince, to slaughter the cattle of thy thanes? It is tyranny for a king to do such deeds in his own land. No one has ever before advised a young king so. This open robbery is most hateful to thy henchmen, I know. The people are angered, O King!"

There has been considerable disturbance in the Church of Scotland over the matter of "circumtabular oligarchy";