

come the slaves of the gambling passion and are ruined for all the honest and useful work of life. The evil work is greatly fostered by too many newspapers—some we are sorry to say even in Canada—which publish glowing accounts of the alleged winning of immense prizes by individuals, who are thus lifted at once from poverty to affluence. It is questionable whether such articles, which are the most seductive kind of advertisements, whether paid for or not, should not be made illegal as well as advertisements in the regular form. It seems singular that Congress should not be able, through its control of the mails, to put a stop to the operations of such concerns, even though legalized by States. Two or three Bills with that end in view are now before Congress.

RECENT revelations made before a Special Committee of Investigation appointed by the New York State Senate, show that municipal corruption in the metropolis did not perish utterly with the Tweed régime. Some of the facts brought to light are astounding by reason of the magnitude of the scale on which iniquities have been perpetrated, as well as the length of time they have been permitted to go on. While Mr. Grant, now Mayor of the city, was Sheriff, no record whatever of receipts was kept, though they amounted to \$100,000 a year. Lawyers having business to do with the Sheriff's office were invariably forced to pay "extra compensation," or have their business delayed. Under Sheriff Flack, the present incumbent, Ludlow Street Jail was used as an instrument of extortion. One inmate testified that during his confinement he had paid the keeper for privileges and special accommodations no less than \$10,000, though said keeper was forbidden by law to accept a single dollar. These are but samples of what has been going on in municipal affairs. This same Sheriff Flack, during whose administration such extortion was practised, has now been tried and convicted before a criminal court on a charge of conspiracy with others to procure a fraudulent divorce that he might marry his paramour. The circumstances were peculiarly discreditable, and the crime is said to have involved two members of the bar, and to have left "more than a shadow on the reputation of a judge." It seems to be characteristic of the American people, that, while corruption and crime, even in such gross forms, may long flourish with impunity, when once public indignation is aroused and the machinery of purification set at work they are content with no half measures, but probe the matter to the bottom. The charge of Judge Barrett, who conducted the criminal part of this investigation, is described as "a model of decision, acuteness and plain speaking." As usual one or more new trials will probably be had, but there is little doubt that in the end substantial justice will be done. But there must be something seriously wrong with the system, if not with the whole state of society, under which such things can occur, and such men be placed in the most responsible offices.

LONDON LETTER.

"IN most of us there is the ghost of a Poet who has died young," says Sainte-Beuve. In many of us there is also the ghost of an Adventurer, one of those ancestors whose haunting existence has caused Wendell Holmes to liken us to omnibuses filled with the wraiths of our forbears. The presence of the Adventurer is sufficient to explain the interest taken in volumes of travel and romance, and the reason why such books as Cook's Voyages or Robinson Crusoe are still favourites with the majority of us. He who has never set out for the Spanish Main or the South Pacific Ocean under the guidance of some famous navigator, and for company a sailor or may be buccaneering ancestor, has lost an immense pleasure. There are no libraries worthy of the name that do not contain stories of the great sea or land heroes illustrated by those dear, delightful, outlandish cuts and charts we know so well. There are no readers worthy of the name who have not explored the world with Mandeville, or Drake, or Cook, a score of times, and become learned on the subject of pack ice, or enthusiastic over the strange birds and beasts and flowering shrubs of the tropics. Open the dingy, brown covers, and, presto, one is with Magellan a-sailing from Seville, while Holbein is busy at Windsor with the portraits of Henry VIII and his lords and ladies; or with Carteret in the *Swallow* on the search for certain islands, while Junius, Orsini-like, is making ready his masked batteries; or with James Cook, son of a stonemason, captain of one of His Majesty's ships, as for the last time he writes up his log in the cabin of the *Resolution*.

Everything that has been written of the old voyagers one has read and read until one knows the words almost by heart; so when Mr. Besant's sketch of the gallant York-shireman came into my hands I felt more than half inclined to put the volume aside. There could be no fresh material;—to that one made up one's mind in one's ignorance—but

after all Mr. Besant is always cheery and good-humoured, ("So genial and friendly," says Mr. Stevenson) and that is something; perfectly sincere and unpretentious, which is something more; always ready to talk over things in the simple, direct fashion best understood by the people; never weary of the world or at odds with his fellows. Then the soft, spring wind ruffled the pages of the little, red book, and I began to read, here and there, how James Cook, apprenticed to Mr. Sanderson of The Staithes, ran away, stealing from the house at daybreak, and, tramping over the purple moors and across the grassy fields, reached Whitby by the steep hill, down which, near half a century later, Mrs. Gaskell's "Sylvia" went at a quick pace with her load of butter and eggs—how he bound himself for a term of seven years to the Walkers, two Quaker merchants, in whose service he began as ship's boy on board a collier trading up and down the coast, and ended as mate. How he volunteered at the time of the American Rebellion, and was entered as an able seaman on board the *Eagle*, sixty guns, Captain John Hamer. How by degrees he became master, lieutenant, and, finally, captain in His Majesty's navy. . . . One hears again Dr. Hawkesworth's pompous tones as he swamps the First Journals with his lengthy periods. (You will recollect a dinner at Dilly's in the Poultry where Dr. Johnson insisted that knowledge was not materially increased by the discoveries of Captain Cook. "They have found very little," he said, speaking of the 1769 expedition, "only one animal, I think." Boswell, "But many insects, sir." Johnson, "Why, sir, as to insects, Ray reckons of British insects twenty thousand species. They might have stayed at home and discovered enough in that way.") Step by step one keeps up with the gallant crew; now watching the Transit of Venus from Otaheite; now tacking among mountains of ice in the vain endeavour to find the North-West Passage; anon basking, after incredible hardships, in the sunshine and plenty of the South Pacific Islands. It's an old story, this, I thought, and is it worth the retelling without the aid of the queer pictures which do so much for the early editions, without the help of the wonderful charts which are a necessity at all events to the home-keepers who remember next to nothing of that branch of learning one used to call "maps?" The 1781 or second edition has illustrations of the death of Captain Cook, of Omai's entry into York Island—that same Omai with whom one has dined at Streatham—of a painted Indian, a portrait resembling a signboard, and exactly the countryman's notion of a savage. If it were undesirable to reproduce these treasures for Mr. Besant's small book, at least we might have had a chart. But as you turn the leaves, suddenly, as Mr. Rider Haggard says, a strange thing happens; and you find the *raison d'être* for this new, unadorned sketch.

For, among the familiar voices repeating the familiar story there chimes in one voice, perfectly new, with fresh details of some of the events: perfectly new, and the expedition, disastrous as far as the two captains were concerned, came to an end over a century ago! As one listens to the vigorous tones of Mr. George Gilbert, midshipman on board the *Discovery*, one feels how much of interest his words have added to a history of which we thought we had heard all that there was to tell, and, deep in the admirable account, full of dramatic little touches, of the murder on the shore of O-why-hee, one pauses to wonder why, all this long time, no one has published this diary before, considering the fact that it has always been in the possession of literary folk.

The Journal is written by a cousin of that Rotherham classical tutor who, falling in love with Ann Taylor—one of those sisters to whose poems Mr. Ansley has drawn attention in *Punch*—in consequence of an absorbing admiration for the young lady's printed work, wrote, though a stranger, to beg permission to pay her his addresses. (Can you fancy anything more indiscreet when you consider how perversely disappointing authors can be personally?) After many vicissitudes—and for the diverting history of the courtship read in Mr. Gilbert's memoirs—Ann Taylor and the ardent if imprudent suitor were married. Though with a taste for letters she never seems to have thought of publishing her connection's diary. After a time it came into the possession of Dr. Doran, whose wife was a connection of Mr. Gilbert, and still, though the editor of *Notes and Queries* was never without a pen in his hand, the journal remained unprinted. At last Dr. Doran's son, having heard that Mr. Besant was about to write a "Life of Cook," bethought him of his great-uncle's log and of the use it might be to Mr. Besant. So at last Lieutenant George Gilbert, dead of smallpox the year he was promoted, has found his voice, and speaking with liveliness and discretion tells us the story of the expedition from his own point of view.

And what an interesting vivid little story he has to tell! His old sailor father out on both the previous voyages must have read the journal over many a time. There are new details of the murder at O-why-hee that one can never forget: there are many homely delightful little touches: one catches a glimpse occasionally of the stern harsh temper of the Captain of the *Resolution*. (Don't you recollect Miss Burney's little chirp of horror when the tragic end of the expedition became the talk of the town? Her brother James, father of Lamb's friend Martin Burney of the white soul, was Lieutenant on board Cook's ship.) Clearly, carefully, Mr. Gilbert has written his notes, which he evidently meant were to be edited and used by Dr. Douglas with the rest of the materials for the three volumes quarto. Did Mr. Gilbert conceal his diary, intending to use it himself to his own

profit: or, possibly, was it overlooked among the quantity of "journals, charts, drawings and observations of all kinds taken on the voyages" which, handed over to the Admiralty, were given to Dr. Douglas to arrange? That learned editor may have discovered little literary merit in Mr. Gilbert. After all it matters nothing that so long a time should have elapsed before the log was printed. So much the better for Mr. Besant: and all the greater surprise and pleasure for the readers of Mr. Besant's little book.

Not far from the original of Dickens' Titbull's Alms-houses stands Captain Cook's house in the Mile End Road, under the shadow of the People's Palace, for the existence of which one is eternally grateful to Mr. Besant. The good Captain's house has been turned into a shop. Was it here, I wonder, or in Greenwich Hospital (where hangs, by the way, Webber's portrait of Cook, engraved for this new edition) that Mrs. Cook heard of her terrible loss? The tragic fate of the children of the marriage is sad indeed, providing the poor, lonely widow with four days of solemn fasting, during which, says Mr. Besant, she came not out of her room; "they were the days of her bereavements, the days when she lost her husband and her three boys." She died, this handsome, old lady, with her white rolled hair and satin gown, with her husband's ring on her finger and her husband's Bible by her side, as late as 1836, aged ninety-three, and was buried at St. Andrew's, Cambridge, by the side of two of her sons. And Canon Bennett, who remembers her very well, has told Mr. Besant of her three o'clock Thursday dinner-parties at Clapham where she and her cousin, Admiral Isaac Smith, kept house; of her old furniture of the style called Louis Quinze; of the country rooms crowded with relics, and curiosities, and drawings, and maps, and collections brought home from the voyages; of the manner in which she always spoke of her husband, whom she would call "Mr." Cook and never Captain.

For the sake of Mr. Gilbert's voice, heard for the first times, for the sake, too, of Mrs. Cook's face, seen for the first time, this little history, the red covers of which one closes reluctantly, should have something of a success. To everyone is by no means given a love for books; indeed, I believe, far fewer people possess it than we have any idea of. But this volume being small, and the work therein quite excellent, it cannot fail, I submit, to entertain and even to edify the most hasty and superficial of Mr. Besant's many readers.

WALTER POWELL.

THE HEAVY HEART.

As one who leaves his northern home
To seek 'neath Californian skies
The health his ruder clime denies,
Staking what little strength remains,
As gamblers their last gold, and strains
His hope to banish leaden gloom;

Who feels upon his fading cheek
The breeze that ever breathes of May,
And graceful forms, and colours gay
His eyes solicit everywhere,
But voiceless all of pleasure there,
"So far from home!" they sadly speak.

So thou, beloved, whom a word
Hath banished further far from me
Than Erie from Pacific sea,
If joy draw near with shining face,
It shows too clear thine empty place:
"Lost! lost!" sighs every chord that's stirred.

Chatham.

KATHERINE B. COUTTS.

NOTES FROM VICTORIA, B.C.

[The following letter was addressed to a gentleman at Ottawa, who has kindly placed it at our disposal. Mr. Fletcher is the author of "The Lost Island" (Atlantis), a poem which, when it appeared in our columns some time ago, attracted not a little attention.—ED. THE WEEK.]

KNOWING your scientific proclivities, and especially your partiality for meteorological studies, I enclose you herewith Mr. Livock's schedule (just issued) of the temperature and rainfall here for the past year, and also Captain Peele's New Westminster observations for the period same.

In these schedules I do not find that the dew-point is anywhere noted. I regret this, as I have heard it stated that, although the rainfall at Westminster is much greater than here, the climate there is drier; the atmosphere here being, in general, almost saturated with moisture. This damp air is carried over to the mainland, and the moisture is there precipitated; the intervals of precipitation being comparatively dry. Certainly the dampness here is quite perceptible. In summer, sitting outside after sunset is almost an impossibility. The air, even in midsummer, becomes, of a sudden, chilly and damp. The climate appears to me quite unfavorable for all who suffer from affections of the throat or lungs. On the mainland the contrast of the seasons is more marked. The winters are colder, and the summers warmer and drier. I suppose it is the immense evaporation from the Pacific, together with the warmth of the Japan current, that gives our Victoria climate its peculiarly damp and equable character.

We are now scarce past the middle of March, and the temperature is already in the forties. This morning at 8, it was 41, and the day has been pleasant and sunny. The