

ting for victory, and that the people, when they go to put in their ballots, never realize the responsible act they are performing. Some vote because the man is a good fellow; some because he has done or is likely to do them some personal service; some because he has prescribed for their children's ailments; some because they are bribed in the coarsest and directest manner; many, very many, whether they believe in the man or not, because he is of their party; a few, I grant you, because, they have faith in the man. But there is no evidence that the mass are equal to the high function of choosing who shall make their laws—who should govern them. They cannot distinguish spurious and superficial gifts from real powers of mind. When they are convinced rightly or wrongly that they have found a great man, they make an idol of him, and fancy that nature exhausted herself in producing him. They flatter themselves that they discovered him, whereas it took years before they believed in him; and once believed in there is no discrimination, it is an absolute surrender of judgment. Protestants laugh at Roman Catholics for having a director. Have they all not their directors in politics? So that in an election men are moved like pawns on a board through their passions; mind has nothing to do with it; justice nothing to do with it. In Athens things were worse, for the virus had invaded the courts of justice, and the pleas put forward, and the speeches made there would shock our public, happily accustomed to such judges as we have long enjoyed. The slanders uttered by a licentious press against the innocent, the utter unscrupulousness of misrepresentation—similar evil devices existed at Athens. The political timidity, which grows like a luxuriant weed under the shadow of the maple, had its counterpart in the City of the Violet Crown. Now you can imagine no condition more degraded—no condition more immoral than that in which men take up opinions without thinking them out, and abstain, out of ignoble and sometimes avaricious fear, from uttering such convictions as they have. Men may go to church, sing hymns, be decorous, pious, affectionate, but when they thus enslave the mind, and strangle conscience, they are lost souls. Such men can be of no real use to the country—they have destroyed the spring whence streams of healing flow. They have lost the power of moral vision. Even one true man, properly equipped, as Plato saw, can save a state. But where shall we find him to day? Sir John Macdonald, quoting Grattan, said he had watched over the cradle of Canada—or rather of Confederation. Canada is to-day grown to womanhood and she waits for wooer—the great man, the surpassing spirit that shall lead her to yet higher destinies and make her a mighty mother of free men. Shall she wait till silver shine amid the gold of her hair, and beauty's ensign fade from lip and cheek? The heart forbids it, and though hope flickers and faints at times within her breast, and gloom gathers like silent shadows of fear around her, the day will come when a nation's rapture will smile triumphantly down on dead Mistrust. The great man will appear in due time. Yet is it hard to chase away all dread, for there are hours when it seems to me as if there was a complete divorcement between ethics and politics, and the worst vice that Aristotle attributes to the single tyrant is the crying blot on our politics."

Rectus: "What is that?"

McKnom: "You must find it out for yourself. There are at least two politicians round this table and it would be rude should I chance to be personal."

"Why, Mr. McKnom," asked one of the young ladies, "do you dislike Pericles so much? Was Athens ever as great before or after him, as during his splendid rule over that fierce democracy?"

"My dear young lady," answered McKnom with a smile, "you have touched the sorest spot in his rule. Let me ask you was France ever as great before or afterwards as during the time of Louis XIV.? Yet as everybody knows the seeds of her ruin were sown during Louis' reign. Neither nations, nor dynasties, nor individuals can with impunity contravene, or seek to contravene the laws of God."

"But," said Helpsam, "you are not going to compare Pericles with Louis XIV. either intellectually or in his personal habits."

"No," he replied, "but I suspect Plato would have placed them on the same shelf. They were both egotists—self-worshippers—and both understood how to impose on the imaginations of the people. Both loved splendour and both were at one in this, their love of power overshadowed everything else—as it has done in the case of many great men. Cecil was so fond of power that he would not let an able man come near him, and when he died, James I. was without a strong man, nor did that dynasty ever again have a strong man as counsellor, whose wisdom and whose will might have saved it from destruction. The same weakness sent Walpole, after ruling England for twenty years, to the House of Lords, without a friend, without a follower to hide his impotence in a coronet, and Pericles had no successor."

"Demosthenes?" cried the sweet girl graduate.

"Demosthenes!" exclaimed McKnom, "Demosthenes was as great an orator as Pericles, considered merely as an orator, and, in many respects, he was as great a man. But, when Demosthenes rose, luxury had begun its work. Demosthenes himself was no Sybarite. He was a water-drinker. In fact the severity of his private life may have injured him as a politician, making him seem cold, for the people at all times think their leading public men should have contradictory virtues; should be convivial, yet abstemious; should work night and day and yet have nerves of iron;

should be dignified and familiar; jocose yet severe; in fact in a democracy a leader should be made up of a half-dozen men; he ought to be an orator, a lawyer, a statesman, a wit, a society man, able to dine and dance; he should be like Talkative in the "Pilgrim's Progress," able to talk upon things celestial and things terrestrial, things sacred and things profane, and upon all equally well. He should have at once the gifts of the superficial and the profound."

"Alas!" sighed Dr. Facile, "who is sufficient for all this?"

"I could never dance," said Rectus, "my education was sorely neglected. But I have on occasions managed to dine. You have not mentioned the vice of tyrants to which Pericles was addicted."

McKnom: "That I must not tell you yet."

"I protest," said Madame Lalage as she rose, "we have had no disquisition after all on political virtue. Well we must have it in the drawing-room, unless Mr. McKnom means to subject us to the torture of unfulfilled hope."

"Oh," said one of the young ladies clasping her hands, "I am dying to hear all about political virtue."

"Politicians' virtue," said Glaucus as they crossed the hall, "is the naked truth."

"The naked truth!" cried Madame Lalage.

"If truth it need not blush," said Rectus.

"Oh no," answered Glaucus, "it has all the innocence of Paradise—it is naked and not ashamed."

We were now seated in that beautiful drawing-room, the admiration of Ottawa and the index and expression of the good taste of the lady who presides there, when McKnom began, "Political virtue—"

But what McKnom said together with the reply of Glaucus, the comments of Helpsam, the practical knowledge of Rectus, the confession of faith of Dr. Facile, the flashes of intuition of Madame Lalage and the exclamations of the young ladies, must be left for another chapter.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

IDEAL.

ROUNDEL.

THE song unsung more sweet shall ring
Than any note that yet has rung;
More sweet than any earthly thing,
The song unsung!

There lies a harp, untouched, unstrung,
As yet by man, but Time shall bring
A player, by whose art and tongue

This song shall sound to God the King;
The world shall cling as ne'er it clung
To God and Heav'n, and all shall sing
The song unsung.

Montreal.

HUGH COCHRANE.

THE RAMBLER.

WITH regard to Charles Kingsley, I am glad to see his powerful and kindly face looking out at us from the shop-windows, upon the covers of that excellent uniform edition published by Macmillan's, and selling at twenty cents. As a master of what we may style quasi-scientific description of English scenery, he has not yet seen his equal. Meredith may recall him here and there. I think he does. But when Kingsley's clear and piercing note was first heard, there were few competitors in the field who could at all touch him in his own style. Hardy and Blackmore, Meredith and Jefferies were unknown. Take a few passages from "Yeast." "A silent, dim, distanceless, steaming, rotting day in March. The last brown oak-leaf, which had stood out the winter's frost, span and quivered plump down, and then lay, as if ashamed to have broken for a moment the ghastly stillness, like an awkward guest at a great dumb dinner-party. A cold suck of wind just proved its existence by toothaches on the north side of all faces. . . . The steam crawled out of the dank turf, and reeked off the flanks and nostrils of the shivering horses and clung with clammy paws to frosted hats and dripping boughs. A soulless, skyless, catarrhal day. . . ."

There is no padding in this. Descriptions so true and terse are the result of the highest literary art. Where among contemporaneous writers shall you find anything finer than this? "All his thoughts, all his sympathies, were drowned in the rush and whirl of the water. He forgot everything else in the mere animal enjoyment of fight and sound. He tried to think, but the river would not let him. It thundered and spouted out behind him from the hatches, and leapt madly past him, and caught his eyes in spite of him, and swept them away down its dancing waves, and let them go again only to sweep them down again and again, till his brain felt a delicious dizziness from the everlasting rush and the everlasting roar. And then below, how it spread, and writhed and whirled into transparent fans, hissing and twining snakes, polished glass-wreaths, huge crystal bells, which boiled up from the bottom, and dived again beneath long threads of creamy foam, and swung round posts and roots, and rushed blackening under dark weed-fringed boughs and gnawed at the marly banks, and shook the ever-restless bulrushes till it was swept away and down over the white pebbles and olive weeds, in one broad rippling sheet of molten silver towards the distant sea."

Well, an occasional glimpse of some such writing as

this is good for us. If we have such at our fingers' ends, we shall not be likely to make mistakes and commit errors of judgment and taste with regard to new writers. But how rare and delightful to meet with a writer about whom there can be no mistake. Rudyard Kipling is indeed one of these.

"Plain Tales from the Hills" and "Soldiers Three" are now upon all our desks and tables. Their author has certainly shot up the ladder with an astonishing celerity, and he fully deserves his success. The conditions—picturesque, dangerous, complex—upon which the problem of Anglo-Indian life rests, are all set forth by this candid and reckless artist in colours which will not easily fade. He has had a superb opportunity and has made good use of it. The style is, perhaps, a little after the style of Grenville Murray, and its peculiar incisiveness may be just a trifle French, but the matter is the matter of Rudyard Kipling, and his alone are the wonderful creations strung upon a glittering military thread—Mulaney, Strickland, Mrs. Hawksbee, Ortheris and Learoyd. More than a trace of exaggeration is there at times, something too of coarseness over what is necessary. But for epigrammatic and dramatic vigour, characterization, pathos, and overwhelming humour, the newly-discovered lion is already famous. He will go further than Rider Haggard, although he may not produce so many sustained novels.

The coast of Maine (*pace* Hindostan for a time) appears to be given up entirely to Canadians. At least the transient population registers as such. The hotels are full of Montrealers especially. These lines are "penned" (the favourite lady correspondent's word) upon the most satisfactory stretch of beach in the State. Here we are quiet, and yet not too many miles from a lemon. But I must record the fact that Maine is not what it was in days gone by, the resort of the rich, the eccentric, the distinguished, and the fast Americans. No. Orchard Beach in particular is most disappointing. We strolled along there the other day, having read the *Boston Home Journal* and other inspired periodicals, hoping to see some "star actresses," a New York "sport" or two, and other members of the Bohemian world. We were not so fortunate. A more ordinary, quiet, altogether staid and uninteresting crowd was never gathered together than the one we encountered on the sands about four p.m. Happily, at ten o'clock the same evening, the scene was a little more vivid. Any toilets worth scanning were certainly worn by Canadians, and Premier Mercier and Prof. Chapman brought the characteristics of two provinces into friendly play upon a foreign beach. But the Americans were strangely familiar. Wrinkled worried dames, vacant over-dressed demoiselles, precocious children, harassed brokers—strangely, strangely familiar. I soon solved the problem. These were the people of Mr. W. D. Howells' novels. Dozens of Bartley Hubbards lounged about hotel verandahs, dozens of Marcias trundled baby-carriages or sat listlessly at windows. But independent as ever of my surroundings, I have bathed and plunged and botanized and collected and fished and rowed and eat and drank to perfect health and happiness. It is refreshing to see grown people playing with their toes in the sand like a parcel of infants.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LUX MUNDI.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—Professor Huxley is no doubt the greatest of special pleaders, and he writes under the influence of a powerful animus and preoccupation. In his late *Nineteenth Century* article he combats the possibility of a flood, known as Noah's flood, affecting the then population of the earth. Of this flood we have the general traditions among nearly all the established races of mankind. How does he account for this fact? He avers that the waters of such a flood would have swept suddenly down the Persian Gulf, but I believe he will find a chain of mountains to the south of the Caspian Sea which would interfere with any such rapid subsidence. Whenever he wishes to account for shells on mountain-tops he assumes great depressions of the surface, and subsequent elevations, just as he requires them, but he has not a word of comment on the remarkable statement that the "fountains of the great deep were broken up."

The Christian Faith, which has proved, with its forerunner the Jewish Economy, the mainstay of Human Society from earliest recorded time, rests upon a spiritual economy of reward and punishment, and a God, in fatherhood, redemption and sanctification, and the sum of the investigations in things material now going on cannot overturn this economy, though the material philosophers may be unable to apprehend its force and scope. It is needful for the continued existence of civilized society and to save it from another cataclysm comparable only to the fall of the Roman Empire and the first French Revolution. Under such teachings as those of Oscar Wilde in the same number of the review, if there were the least danger that they could be generally accepted, the entire fabric of modern life and society would crumble and be destroyed with all that would involve for the human beings whom God has placed upon His earth. Professor Huxley may exclaim, "Let the Heavens fall!" But it is *argument* and *likelihood* that we wish, as questions, that he should entertain.

X.