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Topics of the Day.

THE cholera begins to figure in the weekly bills of mortality. For the week ending Saturday, the 16th instant, six deaths by that disease are reported. For the week ending Saturday, the 23d, the number will probably be greater. One new case is said to have occurred within the city on Monday, two on Tuesday, and on Wednesday there were four. There is no panic, however, and the butchers in particular are not dismayed by the worst prospect which may be before us. Having heard that the Board of Health had made up its mind to abate the slaughter-house nuisance, and make them ply their vocation away from the crowded quarters of New York and Brooklyn, they held a meeting to express their disgust at such an outrage, and to declare that they will not budge. There was no reason, one speaker asserted, why the slaughter-houses should be moved. The board appeared to think that "a butcher was not fit to live in a civilized community." But this butcher spoke a little bit too long, for by and by he enquired if the board thought the people of Harlem and other country places ought to be compelled to endure the slaughter-houses. He proposed that the board should banish all the butchers to a desolate island, and erect a monument in the middle of the butchers' settlement with this inscription upon it: "Here, by special permission of the Board of Health, live the butchers of New York, a proscribed race." To avert such a fate the assemblage voted to fight the board in the courts, and pledged themselves to raise $10,000 for that purpose.

THE bill establishing a Bureau of Education has passed the House, and it may or may not pass the Senate in these last days of the session. It is not contemplated to set up a central power which shall have any authority to supervise, or in any way interfere with, the local educational institutions of the States. It will be the business of the head of the department and his three clerks to collect statistics and disseminate information, with a view of showing and of encouraging the progress of education among the people of the United States. A report is to be made annually to Congress, and therefore we suppose the $9,400, which is to be expended in salaries, may be tolerably well earned.

IN the debate on the appropriation for the Paris Exhibition, on Wednesday, Mr. Banks did excellent service in opposing several foolish attempts to get rid of it. Mr. Washburn, for instance, wanted to add a proviso that the bill should not take effect until the French troops had been withdrawn from Mexico—a mode of punishing the French for their interference about on a par with Mr. Ancona's proposition to punish the British by repealing the neutrality laws for the benefit of the Fenians. As Mr. Banks very properly observed, a great country owes it to its own dignity to do things in a straightforward way. If we desire the French to leave Mexico we ought to say so, and if we are in earnest, ought to force them to leave it with the army and navy of the United States. The plan of bringing foreign enemies to reason by not sending goods to their exhibitions, or letting bands of brigands go over the border to harry them, is very like following an enemy in private life with a syringe, and squirting a little water on him now and then, which would be a very annoying process to the enemy, no doubt, but what should we think of the squirter? There are some men in Congress who never can see in international difficulties anything more imposing than a squabble at a corner grocery of a Western village.

THE tariff bill as reported by the Senate Committee exhibits a pretty general tendency to lower taxes and raise salaries. The latter we consider as laudable, and almost as desirable as the former. The low rate at which United States officials are paid is one of the most potent causes of corruption and inefficiency, and nobody who is of much value for business purposes fails in this country to find his place at high wages in the business world; so that the Government is in the main apt to get for its subordinate officers only the dregs of the labor market. Even the dregs of the labor market, however, have to eat, drink, and be clothed, or if you underpay them, will filch, steal, or idle.

IF Judge Busteed, of Mobile, can get a grand jury of his own mind trials for treason need never fail in the United States Circuit Court for the Southern District of Alabama. In his charge at the opening of the session the judge defined treason, specified the sort of evidence required to prove it, and showed that, under the Constitution, words alone could not constitute the crime. But, he went on to say, if a man has committed treason once and obtained a pardon therefor, and taken the necessary oath, and then, like an ingrate, breaks his oath, he is remitted to his original state of guilt and is a malefactor deserving the punishment of treason, perjury, and ingratitude. And does a man, the judge asks, keep his oath to faithfully support the Constitution of the United States, and the Union of the States thereunder, whose every word concerning either is one of abuse and detraction? The grand jury are requested to take notice of the speech of these oath-takers, and to remember their own oaths. These are good sentiments, but we rather doubt its being good law, and certainly it will not be in force during the present sitting of the grand jury in Mobile.

THERE is considerable calm amongst the Fenians, and it is said a new plan of operations has been drawn up, in which secrecy is to play a prominent part. The enemy and the police are not to know everything in future. This is not by any means a bad idea, but we doubt very much whether, if carried out, it will not cause a considerable falling off in the receipts. Under the old plan the contributors saw, in

him to see to it that the last vestige of contradiction between its principles and its practice was removed, and to proclaim to the world that the national recognition of the equality of men which the actors in the first revolution had put on paper, the actors in this revolution had embodied in their law. He let the golden moment slip away; took to mumbling before his old idols the old incantations; saw the zeal which had accomplished so much, and stood ready to accomplish so much more, cool down before his eyes; saw the economists and calculators and money-changers go back to their books, and came down from his eminence to devote himself to the construction of "his policy," the exact nature of which, probably, nobody will be able in ten years to remember, and which will leave about as much trace on the history of the country as the Saturday speeches in the House of Representatives.

UNDERWOOD, FULLERTON, AND STEEDMAN.

The Mussulman, to avert the influences of the evil eye, sets himself against the wind and, spitting, spits in his own face. It is not a dignified performance; in doing it he does some little violence to his natural self-respect, but then he propitiates a higher power. So long as the report of General Fullerton conciliates the regard of the superior who sent him on his mission, the general probably cares but little that he disgraces himself in making it, that he shows most clearly that the unadorned truth, nothing set down in malice and nothing extenuated, was by no means what he sought and by no means what he found. This is harsh language, but there is justification for it, as we propose to show very fully in very few words. Falsehood goes many leagues, over a State or two, for instance, in two or three days, while truth is getting ready to travel; but the plain tale, when it comes, is very conclusive.

Mr. F. H. Underwood leases a plantation on Wadmelaw Island, South Carolina. The President's investigating agents paid it a flying visit in the end of May, and this is what they say they found there. Briefly, they found "the Underwood oppressions." It was a man "from Boston, Mass.," who cultivated and rented the farm and who also kept a store on the place. His freedmen he worked by the task, "which is precisely the manner in which their former owners worked them." The wages offered were fair enough, but when the time of payment came the laborers received not money or its equivalent, but tickets good for so much provisions at Underwood's counter. But there the storekeeper sold corn at the extortionate price of three dollars a bushel. Mr. Towles, a neighbor, was willing to sell the people corn at two dollars a bushel and take Underwood's tickets in payment; but Underwood procured a special order from the Bureau, and Towles was compelled to desist. There was no meat in Underwood's store, and the involuntary customers were compelled to take what the storekeeper chose to give them. They gathered round General Steedman and General Fullerton and "complained bitterly, stating that with the wages paid them they were unable to earn enough to buy, at the prices charged, their necessary subsistence."

One reads the report as it appeared in the New York *Herald* correspondence, or afterwards as it appeared officially, and naturally he says to himself that the honorable commissioners have come across another wolf in sheep's clothing; another of those detestable New Englanders who have all his life long disgusted the soul of Jefferson Davis, as Dr. Craven reports him; one of those men "from Boston, Mass.," like Benjamin Franklin, the ex-president's aversion, "a true type, or incarnation of the New England character—hard, calculating, angular, unable to conceive any higher object than the accumulation of money." This is the inference which the report makes easy for us to draw. But the correspondent's version of the visit caught the eye of Mr. Underwood's agent, and his enlightened self-interest at once saw that when his character was calumniated and stolen away; when he was branded a swindler and thief, a tyrant equally oppressive as "the former owners" of slaves, his darling object—the accumulation of money—would be more difficult of attainment. Actuated, therefore, by sordid, money-grubbing motives, he immediately demanded an official inspection of his plantation. This was granted, and from a copy of the official report of the inspecting officer we take the following facts, which effectually dispose of the report made by the correspondent, as well as the somewhat scantier report of the two generals.

Mr. Underwood's laborers were working under a written contract, of which he had one and they another copy, while a third copy was on file in the office of the Freedmen's Bureau.

When the contract was made the people were starving, ragged, shelterless, and nearly all sick of the small-pox, or just recovering from it. Mr. Underwood has since built houses for them, free of charge; they are now well clothed and well fed, and a school has been established where instruction is given gratuitously.

The laborers receive fifty cents a "task," or quarter of an acre, for hoeing, hauling, and otherwise handling the cotton crop. It is their immemorial manner of working, and the one which naturally they much prefer to any other. The accounts of the plantation and the statements of the hands show that the able-bodied laborers have averaged three "tasks" a day, and it is notorious that the day's work is very often done on that as on other plantations before one o'clock in the afternoon. After that hour they work on the land set apart for their own use, of which there are 120 acres, 90 acres being in cotton and 30 acres in breadstuffs.

The store is kept on the plantation, because the nearest point at which food can be purchased is Charleston, forty-five miles distant, and to make this journey as often as necessary and carry on the plantation would have been an impossibility. Subsistence has been sold at less than cost, and there is no cheating going on.

The inspecting officer and his superior, Major Cornelius, pronounce the plantation government excellent, and the reports to the contrary are denounced as false. It is emphatically denied by the agent that corn was ever sold in the store or on the plantation, or to any of his laborers or resident negroes, or to any negro whatever, at the rate of three dollars a bushel, and he asserts that one day's faithful labor under the contract would furnish the laborer "with provisions from the plantation store, at the highest rates ever charged, sufficient to maintain him two weeks."

The case of Mr. Towles we do not find touched upon in the reply to the *Herald* and the two generals, but it is not an omission which need affect our opinion of Mr. Underwood. The commissioners very signally fail to ruin his reputation as an honest man and a just employer, and he will derive more than a private gratification from knowing that, in easily vindicating his own character, he has done something to rescue a public institution from reckless aspersions.

A NEW RELIGION.

In the last chapter of "Les Apôtres," M. Renan, in support of his assertion that the readiness to endure martyrdom for conscience' sake is not confined to any age or sect, cites the terrible tragedy which took place in Teheran in 1852, when the visible remnant of the "Babist" sect was slaughtered to the last child. Probably few of his readers in this country have ever heard of this sect before, or know more of it than can be gathered from his brief mention of it. But its history is curious and instructive.

An extended account of the origin and career of the new religion, and an exposition of its doctrines, derived from a volume by the Count de Gobineau, entitled "The Religions and Philosophies of Central Asia," has been given in a recent number of the "Revue Moderne." It possesses great historical and psychological interest.

About the year 1843 there lived at Shiraz, in Persia, a youth hardly nineteen years old named Mirza Ali Mohammed. From his childhood he had shown himself passionately addicted to religious thought and novel ideas. He was acquainted with the Christian Gospels, frequented the society of the Jews, sought out the Guebers, the ancient fire-worshippers of Persia, and read with interest the books which treated of occult sciences and the theory of numbers. A visit to Mecca, instead of bringing him back to Moslem ideas, had an exactly opposite effect, and it is believed that it was at the very foot of the Cauba that he resolved upon the destruction of Islam.

On his return to Shiraz he commenced to read his first writings to the companions of his pilgrimage. The new prophet joined to physical beauty great simplicity of manners and sweetness of character.

The spell of his speech and his personal appearance is established by the unanimous testimony of all those who have known him. The appearance of the new prophet made an immense impression at Shiraz. Crowds flocked around him to hear him. In the day he preached in the mosques and the schools; in the evening, in the retirement of his own room, he initiated chosen members of his followers into the secrets of the new doctrine. He adopted the name of the *Bab;* that is, the gate through which alone truth is to be reached. In his first discourses his attacks were directed principally at the vices of the Moullas, the Moslem clergy. The popularity which he gained by these attacks; the victories which he gained in public discussions with the Moullas; the apparent fear of the royal government to engage in a contest with him, and the increasing number and enthusiasm of his disciples, soon led him to take a still greater step. Instead of the *Bab*, he now declared that he was the *Point;* that is, not merely the gate but the very creator of truth, no longer a simple prophet but a living manifestation of divinity. The title of the Bab was now conferred upon a priest of the Khorassan, Moulla Housseïn Bousrhewich, who now became the active chief and soon the warrior apostle of Babism. Moulla Housseïn was sent by his spiritual chief on a missionary tour into Irak and Khorassan, taking with him the writings of his master. He went first to Ispahan. There, and at Kashan and Teheran and throughout the Khorassan, he made a great sensation by his preaching. Another missionary apostle in the meantime met with great success in the Mezenderan. A third missionary was a woman, one of the most striking apparitions that have shed lustre upon Babism. She possessed at the same time extraordinary beauty and, in the midst of all the adventures of her public apostleship, unquestioned purity of manners. Her eloquence is said to have equalled her beauty. She had abandoned everything—parents, husband, home—to devote her body and soul to the propagation of Babism. She had cast aside the veil which custom and religion impose upon women in Persia, and preached the abolition of veiling and of polygamy. The remembrance of the enthusiam she inspired is perpetuated in her popular name of Gourret-Oul-Ayn, the Consolation of Eyes.

In the Khorassan, Moulla Housseïn got into a mêlée with the royal soldiers. After some slight affrays he withdrew with his followers to the district of the Mezenderan. Here, about the year 1848, he was joined by the other missionaries and their followers, and at a place called Sheik Tebersi the Babists built, as a centre of operations and a place of retreat, a huge tower of wood and stone, and provided it with everything needed for a protracted siege. And now, fired with ambitious hopes, they mingled with their religious preaching political predictions, in which the advent of the Bab as universal sovereign was announced as near at hand. Proclamations scattered among the crowds that had gathered around the fortress declared that it would take only one year to decide the struggle, and after that period the entire world would belong to the Bab. They were led to believe that those who died fighting for the new faith would rise again in the flesh to become kings and princes of some of the countries over which the Bab would continually extend his sway. By such excitement the credulous multitude were wrought up to the very highest pitch of zeal. Two large armies which marched out, confidently expecting to crush the hated Babists out of existence, were surprised by midnight attacks and utterly routed. A third expedition, though it succeeded in withstanding the nocturnal sortie of the Babists, and in mortally wounding the Babist chief, Moulla Housseïn, retired without waiting for a second attack. Reinforced, the royal army again advanced to the Babist fortress, and commenced to build a wall of investment, and to raise towers to overtop the walls of the Babists. The Babists tried another rally, but were repulsed. For four months they held out without any sign of wavering and discouragement, in spite of the most tremendous odds against them, constantly replacing with new works the battered-down fortifications. At last famine reigned. To such extremity were they reduced that the body of the sacred horse of their dead leader, which they had buried with respectful obsequies, was disinterred, and the remnants cooked with the marrow of its bones. Finally they tried to break out and force their way through the enemy's lines. But they were overpowered with numbers, and when they at length surrendered only 214 were living. The survivors were at first treated kindly. But the next day the Mohammedan chiefs invited the principal Babists to a breakfast, then had them seized and put to death by ripping open their bowels. The other Babists, women, children, and even those who had thought they would save their lives by renouncing their heresy, were all put to death, to the great glory of Mahomet and Islam.

But this victory did not succeed in crushing out the Babist heresy. In Khamseh, by another insurrection, the Babists gained possession of Zendjan, a city of immense riches, and again the royal power succeeded in reducing the place only by the greatest efforts. The fanatical enthusiasm and the headstrong courage that was shown at Sheik Tebersi was again exhibited at Zendjan, and Babism was again baptized in a sea of blood. One of the strange relations connected with this period is that of the three Babists who were condemned at Teheran, by the cruel Emir Nizam, to see him open their veins, and who predicted to him that he would one day die by the same death, which did, in fact, happen four years afterwards.

Meanwhile Ali Mohammed, the founder and spiritual head of Babism, had been living in semi-concealment in his house at Shiraz, buried in his religious meditations and compositions, and like a stranger to these external developments of his doctrines. After the insurrection of Mezenderan he was arrested and brought before a court of royal commissioners and the principal Mohammedan priests. In the examination and discussion which took place, according to the admissions of the Mohammedans themselves, the Bab, as he was still popularly called, gained the advantage. Seeing this, the discussion was abruptly broken off, and the Bab, with two of his disciples, was condemned to death, which was inflicted the next day, with the accompaniment of every kind of indignity, and one strange incident that came near giving a new turn altogether to affairs. After his death, his body was trailed round the streets for several days, and then thrown into a sewer. Everything now seemed to be finished. But nothing was finished. The new Bab, Mirza Iaia, whom the seal of a divine mark had pointed out at the age of fifteen as the predestined successor to the office, established himself at Bagdad, where he lived in safety, and kept up permanent communication with his followers, through the pilgrims to the shrines there. The Babists were now forbidden from making any more attempts at insurrection until the Bab should decide that the hour had come and should give them the signal.

In 1852, soon after this, an attempt was made to assassinate the King, but failed. The attempted assassins were recognized as Babists. They obstinately denied, on examination, that they had accomplices. Yet a plot was suspected. A secret meeting of the principal Babists was discovered. Forty were arrested, among them the feminine apostle, Gourret-Oul-Ayn, the Consolation of Eyes. No other capture could be made. No symptom of insurrection was revealed. Nevertheless, the deepest anxiety reigned at the court of Niaveran. The air was full of suspicions. There was vaguely felt the existence of a vast plot, whose ramifications immeshed everything, and the clew to which had broken in the hand the moment it had been seized. The prisoners were examined, but all, women and children no less than the men, showed the same inflexible firmness in keeping the secret. The kalenter, Mahmoud Khan, to whom Consolation of Eyes had been given to guard, charmed with the beauty of his prisoner, tried to persuade her to save her life by a pretended abjuration. But she would not buy life with a lie. Already she thirsted for martyrdom. She told the kalenter that to-morrow he would set fire to her funeral pile, and she would give by her death a striking testimony to God and the founder of her faith; but that his master would not recompense him for his zeal, but would soon put him also to a cruel death. The next day she publicly confessed her Babism, was burnt at the stake with insult and indignity, and her ashes were scattered to the wind. The prediction which she made to the kalenter, a prediction as unhesitatingly credited by her opponents as her followers, was soon fulfilled. The rest of the prisoners were distributed each to a courtier as his especial victim. Then was seen at Teheran a sight never to be forgotten. Through the streets, between the lines of executioners, marched men, women, and children with burning splinters flaming in their wounds. The victims sing: "In truth we come from God and we return to Him." A sufferer falls in the road; he is raised by lashes and bayonet thrusts. On his legs again, he peals

forth again his song. The children expire in the way. The executioners fling their bodies under the feet of their fathers and mothers, who walk over them without scarcely a glance. Thus they arrive at the place of execution, and, in the midst of the profound silence of the crowd, the bloody drama is finished. Nothing had shaken the firmness of the condemned. Not an apostate had been found among them.

And now let us turn from the history of Babism to take a view of the character of the religion that has called forth such devotion and such martyrs, which has shaken Persia to its very centre and has threatened, perhaps may yet supplant, Shiite Mohammedanism in that country.

Babism, like Mohammedanism, asserts the absolute unity of God; but the eternal unity, far from shutting himself up in himself, is on the contrary an ever expanding principle of life. It is ceaselessly moving, acting, creating. God has created the world by means of seven words, Force, Power, Will, Action, Condescension, Glory, and Revelation, which words embrace the active plenitude of the virtues which they respectively represent. God possesses other virtues, to be sure, even to infinity, but he manifests only these. The creature who emanates from God is distinguished from him by the privation of all emanatory action; but he is not altogether separated from him, and at the last day of judgment he will be confounded anew with him in the eternal unity. The Babist doctrine of revelation is distinguished by the fact that it does not claim that the Bab has revealed the complete truth, but only as his predecessors, the prophets before him, have done, that portion of truth necessary for the age. The Bab is declared superior to Mahomet as Mahomet was to Jesus, and another revelation, which will complete the Bab's, is announced as coming in the future.

Numbers play a great part in Babism, especially the number nineteen. This is a sacred number, which the Bab declares ought to preside over everything. He would subject all measures of space and time to divisions and groupings by nineteen. He introduces the same principle into jurisprudence and commerce, and founds upon it his sacerdotal organization. Originally, he says, the Unity was composed of nineteen persons, among whom the highest rank belongs to the Bab. All the prophets who have appeared are, like the world, manifestations of God; divine words; not God, but beings who come from God more really than common men. By them, an uninterrupted relation is maintained between the Creator and the creature. At the death of a prophet or a saint, his soul does not quit the earth, but joins itself to some soul still in the flesh, who then completes the work which was carried on during his life by the prophet who has just disappeared.

Babism enjoins few prayers, and only upon fixed occasions, and neither prescribes nor defends ablutions, so common in the religious rites of Mohammedanism. Divine service is to be celebrated with great pomp, with music and singing, but only rarely. All the faithful ought to wear amulets and put entire confidence in them. Mendicancy, so much in honor among the Mussulman people, is forbidden, and the wearing of rich clothes and precious jewels recommended. One of the best features of Babism is its regard for women. They are ordered to discard veils. Husbands are commanded to be prodigal of everything which can add beauty to their wives' appearance. It is enjoined that women share in the intercourse of social life, from which Persian usage unfortunately excludes them. The tenderness which the Bab shows for children in his writings also shows that he aims, by the reorganization of the family, to fill up the great void in Asiatic life.

As a social theory, Babism would establish a theocracy in which the sacerdotal power should control everything, and by spiritual government create material well-being—would realize, in its own Oriental way, some of the dreams of European socialism. The re-birth in this system of the mystical fancies and many of the puerile superstitions of Oriental antiquity, in combination with some of the most modern and most advanced ideas of the Western mind, is a very curious spectacle. What will be the future of Babism it is difficult to tell. Since 1852 it has changed its character to a secret doctrine, which recruits its disciples in silence. The same Babists who before suffered martyrdom so courageously rather than deny their religion, now, obedient to the new order of their chief, conceal their faith with Oriental dissimulation, and deny it, if need be, without hesitation. Babism is much more in harmony with the subtle and imaginative genius of the Persian people than the Shiite Mohammedanism. The growing spirit of nationality makes their present religion and the present dynasty, both of which were established among them by foreign conquest, less and less acceptable every year. The hour when the Bab shall send word from Bagdad that the time has come for the Babists to take up arms again will be a very critical one for the present dynasty of Persia and for Shiite Mohammedanism.

A RETROSPECT.

[FROM THE "PATAGONIAN TIMES," JUNE 8.]

NOT the least singular feature in that remarkable submerged city, whose discovery and identification with the former metropolis of the United States was described in a recent issue, must have been the spectacle presented by a New York belle of the year 1866, as we find her portrayed in such fashion-plates and comic periodicals as have escaped the destroying action of the waves. Let our fair Patagonians picture her advancing along that Broadway whose remains after so many years of submergence, and imperfectly seen as they are even from the best of our diving bells, still attest its magnificence,—picture her, I say, advancing with measured march to the click of her little boot-heels, head slightly bent, elbows stiffly out, shoulders held high and square, and eyes fixed on vacancy, as was then the mode. From her waist depended a light, tilting framework of fine steel springs, and shaped like a bell, supposing the bell to commence about the hips, and the lower part, a little above the ankles, to have attained the enormous circumference of four or five yards. This was barely covered by a garment of white or striped stuff, elaborately embroidered, flounced and ruffled on the edge, corresponding to the plainer article known in Patagonia as the petticoat. Over the petticoat was festooned high a second skirt of the costly materials then in vogue; and as, at the distance of a few paces, the feet and ankles of the wearer became distinctly visible under this huge tilting cage to all whom they might concern, there were worn high kid boots, daintily fitting and coquettishly scalloped and tasselled, a method of meeting the difficulty possibly more satisfactory to the New York than the Patagonian mind. For difficulties occurring at a few paces further, or supposing the lady on an eminence—but there are cases that are not supposable, as where ladies incautiously leaned against doors, windows, or counters, or entered one of the narrow public vehicles known among them as "omnibuses," squeezed their way into a pew, or up the aisle of a railroad car, or were caught in a jam, or at the top of the long flights of steps common to their city, the light steel frame, under pressure, instantly resolving itself, for the benefit of an awe-struck sidewalk, into a huge triumphal arch, front, rear, or lateral, as the case might be—facts of which our countrywomen may easily convince themselves by a few personal experiments with such of the best preserved specimens as we have forwarded to the Patagonian Museum. As crowds, narrow passages, flights of steps, and rising grounds occurred in this as in every other city, the stately march of the Broadway belles must have been a series of triumphal arches: a poem of rounded contours, arched insteps, dainty fitness, and snowy Balbriggans very gratifying to any one but the father, husband, brother, or lover.

Above these incautious skirts there was worn about the shoulders a garment, short or long, loose or closely fitting, the shape being left to the caprice of the wearer, the fashion of the day exacting only due observance of its fundamental principle—beads—for which this people displayed a barbarous fondness, and which their ladies wore on their skirts, cloaks, ribbons, veils, fans, parasols, and even about their necks and heads. Fancy, then, on the back of the cloak or mantle, a knot and ends of ribbon, bead-besprinkled, and streaming almost to the feet; add chains, clasps, and cameos, wherever a Patagonian lady would consider it impossible to wear them; suppose one of those heads which, after her feet, the New York belle most delighted to adorn and display, and take your choice, for incredible were the number of coiffures, that changed faster than the moon! The hair was drawn away from forehead and temples, it was combed over cushions, it was raised in tiers of rolls, it was piled high in crinkled waves, blonde or black, though blonde was most affected. Little curls fell over smooth white foreheads, long curls nestled behind the ear, short curls lay audaciously and impossibly on the tops of lovely heads, or drooped over hair massed in a knot at the back, and held in a curious little silken net that could not always escape the inevitable bead, as our ladies will observe in the specimens that we find, together with some of the false hair so extensively worn, and the chains, cameos, gold bands, stars, arrows, butterflies, and embroidered ribbons with which these heads were heavily adorned.

Let the coiffure, then, be in crinkle or curl, as you will, only taking care

that it stand well up from the forehead, and exhibit at the back a knot like an overgrown door-knob; surmount it with anything you like for a bonnet—any of the round hats then worn indiscriminately by men and women: an inverted vegetable dish, soup-plate, or colander, of chip or rice straw; a bit of lace, resting between front and back hair, like a saddle between the humps of a dromedary; or a bunch of flowers tied on the head by wide ribbons—all being worn by the ladies of 1866, and exhibiting, if we may be forgiven the heresy, in spite of grotesqueness, a grace not so apparent in the more solid Patagonian structure. Place a baby's parasol in the hands of the lady so attired, and you have, complete, a belle of that day, as we find her continually reproduced in its current literature.

Indeed, men seemed able to talk and write of but little else. If they set gravely out for some scientific end they paused at the very beginning to administer a warning admonitory fillip to those aspiring women who might follow too closely on their track. From whatever altitude they started, we are tolerably sure to find them tripping over a satin train, or gravely discussing a *chignon* before the end. Alternately they praise and scoff, admire and revile, and, looking at them from the higher point of these later days, we discern causes for this masculine unrest and vague alarm, which they felt rather than comprehended, and find in them a warning for ourselves, for, as straws show the current, so might the first hesitating attempts of feminity on the masculine wardrobe have indicated to this doomed race the future bent of their feminine world. Mark well the art of the fair destroyers! They ventured upon the boots and were not repulsed. They took unto themselves the collar without opposition. They adopted the shirt-bosom, and no man lifted a dissentient voice. They helped themselves to a modified form of hat, and men only stared. Growing bolder, they seized on the sack-coats, flimsily disguising the offence with pretences of galloons and buttons; and, finding man still tame, still passive and stupidly admiring, they possessed themselves of the cravat, the pockets, the coat-tail, and all the other hats, in rapid succession, till it was no longer easy, at first blush, to discern a man's head from that of a woman. Here and there a far-sighted man might lift up a warning voice—on paper—talk of imports and exports, dissect all this current beauty, tell where it was bought and what it cost—but still on paper; for confront the saddest, wisest, and grimmest of these susceptible Manhattanese with the lovely consumer of imports and devourer of gold, and though her gown rustled perfumed defiance at his statistics, and his senses assured him that curls could not crop out from her head where he saw them, though he tumbled over her train in the drawing-room, and started aghast on the street at the skirts that made such a failure of covering her legs, at the bonnet that was no excuse for the strings under her chin, at a bow in the only place where it could not possibly tie anything, and a veil that hung anywhere except over her face—spite of these things, we say, would his growl be lost in his throat, his scowl relax to a simper, and he himself stand before her dazzled, confounded, and conquered.

It is supposed that women finally gained entire predominance, and that when men seriously mooted the question of resistance, that resistance was already too late. Little is known, however, of the latter days of this ill-fated island. Some asserted that the race perished to a man in the attempt to supply their women with pin-money, the women dispersing with grim satisfaction to overrun other hapless races; but this version makes no mention of the submersion of the island, for which others account by a Manhattanese superstition known as "up-town," gravely asserting that as this people, firmly believing in the superiority of their city to the rest of the globe, each and all refused to emigrate, and as every woman of fortune or fashion likewise stoutly insisted on living in the small but consecrated section known by this name of "up-town," the frightful and ever-increasing preponderance of humanity on this favored end of the island finally tilted it over in its own bay. More reasonable and better accredited accounts assure us that for many years previous to the catastrophe, the gradual lowering and wearing away of their island had been observed with uneasiness by the Manhattanese, who appointed a committee of investigation; but, unluckily, the committee being paid for each sitting, met every night for fifteen or twenty years without arriving at any definite conclusions, and were still in process of investigation when the island went under—a catastrophe, due, as we need not remind our logical countrywomen, to the bands, crescents, false curls, ribbons, steel frames, and other feminine extravagances now on exhibition in our museum; since, could the Manhattanese have taken time from the making of pin-money, they would have overlooked the committee of investigation, appointed an acting board, built breakwaters and levees, and possibly saved the island, of which now only so much is left as will make a warning hardly needed, we are proud to say, by our more favored land in these our more enlightened days.

DOES ANY ONE TELL THE TRUTH?

[The subjoined article has been furnished us by a valued contributor, but we hesitated for some time about publishing it, fearing that it might cheer and assist that innumerable company who are engaged in justifying either to themselves or the public the practice of daily lying to which they are addicted. We do not, however, feel warranted, whatever the consequence may be, in withholding a contribution to the philosophy of any subject whatever, even that of mendacity.—Ed. Nation.]

It is a striking and suggestive fact that the first great moral code promulgated to the world contains no prohibition of lying. It forbids in the most sweeping manner idolatry, profanity, murder, theft, adultery, and other sins; but it does not say to man in general terms that he shall not lie, but only that he shall not bear false witness against his neighbor. A special form of deception is the only one that falls under the interdict of the code proclaimed amid the thunders of Sinai.

Various profound and highly philosophical explanations have been given of this fact. The chief difficulty with them all is that they are not true. For this element of truth, however unimportant in other philosophical investigations, is important in this particular one as being the very matter under discussion.

Yet the explanation lies on the surface. Moses was too wise a law-giver to attempt impossibilities. He did not prohibit lying for the same reason that he did not prohibit slavery; for the same reason that nowhere in the Bible is polygamy directly prohibited. A sweeping law against any of these would have been the veriest dead letter. For in each case it would have been so far in advance of the moral sentiment of the people expected to obey it, that it not only would never have been looked upon in the light of an obligation, but would not even have served as a protest of the higher nature against a custom and practice it deplored but could not prevent.

The case is by no means peculiar. There are myriad forms of cheating and robbery even now tolerated among us, unprohibited by statute, simply because the moral sentiment of man is not yet highly enough cultivated to treat that as illegal which is generally regarded as dishonorable. Yet the latter feeling is a proof of that steady growth of the moral sentiment of mankind which has been going on since the creation. It is everywhere apparent. The habits and customs of one age are looked upon with disfavor in another, and become objects of legal prohibition in still another. It is hard to tell, in consequence, how much our view of the morality or immorality of actions and institutions is due to education and how much to nature. That the former can lead men living at the same period, and equally cultivated and equally conscientious, to entirely contrary conclusions has been clearly manifested in our own history. It is within the memory of all that slavery was regarded by good men at the North as the sum of all villainies; by good men at the South as the consummate flower of modern civilization. Right and wrong may be always the same; but our ideas in regard to them change constantly. There is nothing to show that Cain had any of that horror at the murder of his brother which we feel for him. Human life was no more sacred in his eyes than it is now in the eyes of a South-sea islander or a railway director. Doubtless many a tender-hearted boy now feels more compunctions of conscience for drowning a kitten than the first murderer did for spilling the blood of his brother. Remorse was a feeling very probably unknown to the antediluvians.

All kinds of deception are practised without scruple in rude and barbarous states of society. Centuries pass by, even under the best religious training, before men learn to put faith in one another. And it was, unquestionably, on account of the low moral development of the Israelites that Moses made no prohibition of lying, except so far as it affected the property or reputation of others.

Four thousand years have gone by since his time, and is the world yet prepared for such a prohibition? Most men will say yes; for absolute truthfulness is a duty positively enjoined in all philosophical treatises upon the morals, and many good, though unreflecting, persons labor under the delusion that they have quite or almost attained to it.

Never was there a greater mistake. In the present state of mankind a man absolutely truthful is not only an impossibility, but, were he not only a possibility but also a reality, he would be a moral monstrosity—worse than that, a bore, a breeder of quarrels, a general nuisance which society would feel called upon to abate for the sake of its own safety. Few appreciate how much we owe to falsehood, how much our daily life stands in need of it. Without the lubricating oil of deception, the friction of the social wh would soon bring on a general social conflagration.

These are grave statements. Are they true?

What is the essential idea of a lie? Is it anything else than an intentional effort to produce a false impression of a given fact in the mind of another? It makes no difference whether the deception be caused by an unblushingly untrue statement, by a certain course of action, by equivocation, by evasion, by the use of ambiguous words and phrases. Nor does the goodness or badness of the end aimed at come into the question. If deception was produced, and produced intentionally, it was produced by nothing more and nothing less than a lie, however praiseworthy the motive, however innocent in themselves may have been the words used or the deeds done.

Will morality accept any lower standard? Yet tried by it, who does not lie?

The ordinary rules of politeness require us constantly not only to hide our real sentiments from those around us, which may be strictly consonant with absolute truth, but also to convey to others in many cases an entirely false impression of those sentiments, and that, too, in matters in which they are concerned. It is a law of society which, like the air around us, presses so generally and so equally that we do not heed it. We live and move, indeed, in an atmosphere of deception so thick, so heavy as not only to hide us from our neighbors, but frequently to hide us from ourselves; so that from constantly striving to persuade others that we think and feel differently from what we do think and feel, we sometimes succeed in convincing ourselves that we are what we endeavor to seem to be. We receive with courtesy those whom we heartily dislike, and treat with respect those for whom we feel profound contempt. It is right that we should do so; it is wrong not to do so. But so far as our acts and words are intended to give, as they necessarily are constantly intended to give, our neighbors an entirely wrong impression of our feelings towards them, so far those words and acts cannot be brought into accord with the rule of absolute truthfulness.

Every one has doubtless met occasionally people who pride themselves on always speaking the truth, especially truth that is disagreeable; who boast that they always strive to be frank, but forget that they generally succeed in being also brutal. Society ostracizes, as far as possible, such persons, and very properly; for it knows instinctively that perfect and universal sincerity, in the present moral state of mankind, would bring us back to a condition as deplorable as that barbarous one of universal lying, out of which we have slowly raised ourselves. It is regarded, indeed, not only as a proof of high breeding, but as a kind of triumph of Christian politeness and cultivation, to remove unpleasant impressions produced upon the minds of others by the awkwardness or carelessness of some blundering truth-teller—in short, to substitute falsehood for fact. The proverb that the truth should not be spoken at all times is simply an expression of that instinctive popular appreciation of the necessity of deception which all men feel, though in it few dare avow their belief.

And yet our modern philosophers, with these facts of every-day life staring them in the face, hold out before us absolute truthfulness not as a standard of ideal right, to be aimed at though incapable of realization, but as a duty possible in attainment and obligatory in practice. But when they come to test their general propositions by particular illustrations, they unconsciously betray the weakness of their position. For example, take a question much mooted in casuistry, and of especial interest to men of letters, as involving their right to deny the authorship of publications which have appeared anonymously.

Dr. Johnson once said that he did not believe Burke wrote the Letters of Junius, because the latter, of his own accord, had told him that he did not. But Johnson went on to say that had he himself asked the question in the first place, and met with a denial, he would have still been unsatisfied; as he would have regarded it as the right of a person interrogated on such a point to return a negative answer, whatever might be the actual facts in the case.

This seems the common-sense view, and is certainly the common practice. But the right of an anonymous author thus to keep his own secret is absolutely denied by our modern moral philosophers. Here is the very manner in which the case is treated of by one of the ablest of their number, who admits that a refusal to answer would, in many cases, be the same as an answer in the affirmative. "The author has no moral right," says Dr. Whewell, "to remain concealed at the expense of telling a lie; that is, it is not right in him thus to protect himself. But, on the other hand, he is not bound to answer. Nor need he directly refuse to do so. He may evade the question or turn off the subject. There is nothing to prevent his saying, 'How can you ask such a question?' or anything of the like kind that may remove the expectation of an answer." Whewell then goes on to say that if these means fail, either through the persistence of the questioner or the unskilfulness of the questioned, the latter is bound to confess the fact rather than deny it directly. And this is the generally accepted view.

It is not enough that this monstrous doctrine denies the right of secrecy, which is just as much a natural right as the right to know the truth; and that the same principle, carried out in all the matters of life, would place every man at the mercy of any impudent questioner whose social standing forces the questioned to answer with the tongue what can be only answered properly with the boot. All this is not enough. For the advocates of this doctrine, shrinking from the logical results of their conclusions, teach a direct violation of truth, while pretending to assert its claims.

For Dr. Whewell, like others, while gainsaying the right of an author to make a direct denial, in this case admits that he may ward off the attack upon his secrecy in the best manner he can; he may parry the question, he may turn the conversation, he may make a non-committal answer, yet it is perfectly plain that if any of these evasions succeed, they succeed because the questioner is deceived. He fancies that he has been answered in the negative, when he has not been answered at all. It is perfectly plain that all the effect of the most barefaced lie has been produced, and has been produced intentionally. But it is not so plain that evasion for the purpose of deception is morally any better than an unblushingly false statement for the same purpose. If there is any choice in the matter, the latter would seem the manlier sin of the two.

There seems to be, in fact, no escape from the conclusion that in the present moral condition of the race, perfect truthfulness is not attainable, and if attainable, not desirable; that the difference between one man and another in the matter of veracity is a difference in degree and not in kind; that truth-telling is a relative, never an absolute characteristic of any man, and that consequently we are all more or less liars. Yet the race steadily, though slowly, approximates to the ideal of absolute right, and though no one can tell all the truth, or tell the truth at all times, though no one is morally bound to do so, yet every one can speak, and is morally bound to speak, the truth, so far as its laws are recognized as obligatory by the men of his age. But let not philosophy torture him, if he is both conscientious and thoughtful, by holding out rules of duty to which he feels he cannot conform his life; or deceive him, if he is conscientious and thoughtless, by leading him to believe he has attained a height which it is not possible, and never will be possible, for him to reach. For, as in mathematics, the line called the asymptote may eternally approach the curve of the hyperbola, and yet never meet it, so in his history man may for ever approach the ideal of abstract truth and yet never realize it. He who never lies belongs not to the present time, but to that good time coming of which we hear so much but see so little. Now, he would be as much out of place as he who never says anything but what he thinks, or he who never preaches what he does not practise. L.

Correspondence.

THE AMERICAN LECTURESHIP AT CAMBRIDGE.

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I wish to offer a few remarks on Mr. Goldwin Smith's letter, which appeared in The Nation of May 18. From November, 1860, to June, 1861, I was a fellow commoner at Trinity College, Cambridge, and enjoyed every opportunity of studying English college life among both dons and undergraduates, at a time when the eyes of the civilized world were anxiously fixed upon this country. As one of the three American students in the university, I was constantly questioned as to American affairs by both Union and rebel sympathizers, nearly all of whom displayed gross ignorance and not a little dogmatism while discussing the questions at issue.

I feel very confident that an American professor at Cambridge could do a great deal of good. He could, by associating with the younger and more liberal-minded dons and the older and more mature undergraduates, excite an interest about our national and individual life, in all its varied aspects, that would soon bring large and attentive audiences to his lecture-room. In addition to other gifts, he should possess decided social talent, and the salary attached to his office should be sufficient to enable him to entertain in thoroughly good style. Cultivated Americans travelling abroad would enjoy in his *salons* the society of scholarly Englishmen, they themselves bringing a quota of young ideas fresh from the young country. To such a professor students would come to borrow books and gain information who would never take the trouble to search through an immense collection of miscellaneous works in a public library. Students cannot be expected to learn much about America or on any other subject without teachers as well as books.

Considering the close connection between the university and the church, it would be almost essential that the American professor should hold religious views not opposed to the teachings of the Church of England, and, if any collegiate corporation in this country participated in his nomination, would be highly expedient that it should be an "orthodox" body.

E. C. P.

NEW YORK, June 15, 1866.

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