

as the Scotch term is for the thing smaller than a village or hamlet—just half a dozen scattered houses and an old wooden church. The country people were standing at their doors, and for once the "man with the hoe" lifted his head to apprehend something of the nature mystery about him. An old woman with a hard face seemed transfigured as she stood gazing upward at the sun—reclaiming her birth-right.

To the unskilled observer, peering through smoked glass, the first sign of the unusual phenomenon appeared in the sun's upper right-hand corner, if the term is allowable in reference to a circle. Here the perfect circle of the sun's disc seemed to have been eaten into as if by some celestial caterpillar. After this process had gone on for some 40 minutes there was an appreciable change in the daylight. There was a softness, and even now a certain strangeness in the quality of it—presage of the weird darkness to follow.

Now the sun appears like a crescent, with horns sharp and clear. Presently, as the eclipse proceeds, the horns are blunted. Finally they disappear till only an exclamation mark of light is left.

Now the birds seek the trees with apprehensive twitterings, shadows fall and the morning night is upon us—a Goetterdaemmerung, a twilight of the gods indeed. Suddenly by some majestic legerdemain the sun is the sun no longer—blotted out! But to the north and south of the inky disc feathery streamers of light, most beautiful to behold.

Not far from the sun shone one bright star, and in other parts of the firmament others came out, glinting red and blue and gold. Away on the northern horizon gleams of yellow light like early dawn. Over all a mysterious stillness and a chill as of night air.

Once more, suddenly and far too soon, the sunbeams danced over the green grass and through the leaves; not indeed making the customary "little suns," but dearest "little crescents." One smiled as he saw them. They were the humorous fanciful side of the affair—God's playthings!

And humanity, what happened to it? All were touched, and for brief seconds men and women were themselves, while the children gave up to joy quite naturally as they always do when they are pleased. Of the "grown-ups" some were merry and some were grave; but that the marvelous beauty of the spectacle had opened eyes that see not there could be no question.

And now it is day once more. Earth "has resumed her reign." But the memory of the event will be deeply graven on many souls.

W. L. TORRANCE.

Plum Branch, S. C.

THE FARCE OF DEMOCRACY.

For The Public.

Fletcher, of Saltoun, a celebrated Scotchman, once said that if he only had the ballads of a nation, he did not care who made the laws. For ballads in those days led to insurrections, and insurrections overcame laws, so that whoever could command the political spell that stirred the national feeling, held the key of the situation. We, however, live in duller times. Either we are not to be moved by ballads, or there are no ballads to move us with. Stand, therefore, the laws where they did. But it will be found that almost all insurrections and wars, when stripped of the heroic glamour with which enthusiastic partisanship has invested them, had, for object and result, the transfer of real estate from one set of hands to another. That was the material fact that underlay the clash of opposing sentiments. The field belonged to those who won it, and the cessation of warfare left their descendants in undisputed possession. The modern version of old Fletcher's saying should, therefore, read: "Give us the land, and let who will make the laws."

Property implies exclusion, except as regards the individual who owns it. The idea of property shuts out the law itself. The more things are private property, the more contracted is the sphere of the law. To say, therefore, that in a particular country the people make the laws is not to give any definite idea of the real power of the people, unless we know how much of all that goes to make up rational comfort and happiness is excluded from the operation of these laws. Now if we apply this test to the case of the United States we shall find that private ownership covers not only the land of the country, but nearly all the industries which minister to human convenience and comfort, that, in fact, as regards the supply of nearly all the necessities of life, it is not law or public opinion that rules, but the humors and caprices of a small number of individual men. It is for such men as J. W. Gates and Andrew Carnegie to say in what quantities, at what times, and at what prices the American people shall have the necessities of life, for can they not do what they like with their own? If this be so—if so much of American life

be reserved for the sway of capitalist despotism, how much of it remains over for democracy to control? And when the answer to that question has been obtained, we must still make a large allowance for the extent to which the votes of senators and instruments of government are, equally with land, coal and petroleum, the property of organized capitalists.

If we look all those facts squarely in the face, is it not time to ask to what end should the people of the United States go periodically through the ordeal of electing men to send to Washington? The real owners of the United States have already determined, according to their commercial code, in what degree of comfort the people shall live, and how much they shall pay, and the only questions left over for congress to adjust are in what kind of currency the tribute shall be paid, what shall be the design and color of its instruments, and matters of like importance. Is it worth while that the nation should every few years work itself into a fit of fury to determine what particular individuals shall be sent to perform these minor offices and formal acts of government—to pick up, so to speak, the few crumbs of legislation which remain after capitalism has dined? It is no doubt pleasant and self-satisfying to think that we are legislating, when we are being legislated for, just as it is pleasant to feel that we are swimming, when we are only drifting, and that we are leading the horse, when we are only dragging the halter. It is pleasant to see a president act as a conjurer, pouring out of the same bottle wine for the Americans, water for the Porto Ricans and vinegar for the Filipinos. All this is very interesting, no doubt. But it is not government by the people, for the people. It is plutocracy, thinly disguised with democratic varnish.

T. SCANLON.

Liverpool, Eng.

HOW FIGURES LIE.

"I do not believe in theories; I believe in facts and figures," says the practical man. Here is an individual who can be made to believe anything. Suppose he should say: "I do not believe in logical processes that lead to conclusions, but I do believe in facts that may be misrepresented and figures that can be juggled," you would say: "The man is a fool." And he is.

Let this individual open part three of the census of 1890. He will find that there are 79,032 more married males in the United States than married females! As the widowed are separately

tabulated and as the women of Utah would incline the balance the other way, the numbers, making deductions for Utah, should exactly correspond.

A few months ago the Rochester Herald took the annual report of the New York state board of charities, where it is stated that the inmates and other beneficiaries of state institutions number more than 2,500,000, and said that "two and a half million people in a population of 7,000,000 receiving charity may well create a surprise in the foremost state in the union." Indeed it may, but it is not nearly so surprising as the Rochester Herald's failure to see how such figures are obtained. Obviously there are a number of individuals who figure more than once.

That very curious conclusions can be made to follow from statistics may be illustrated in those which deal with pauperism. England has the greatest number of paupers in the world (28 in each 1,000), and Italy very nearly the lowest (ten in each 1,000). This ought to prove to your devotee at the feet of the statistical Buddha that Italy is more prosperous than England! All it does prove is that organized poor relief in England is more systematic and thorough. In the United States paupers will not number more than two or three in each thousand, but this would not be a measure of our prosperity over England, for we certainly are not four times as prosperous as England. Sig. Lombroso not long ago stated that "wealth leads to crime," and this is the way he proved it: Rhode Island, the richest state in the union (with an estimated wealth of \$200 to each inhabitant), shows a high percentage of crime, while Dakota and Alabama (the first having \$30, the second \$20 to each inhabitant), show the very lowest percentage of criminality!

Another wonderful fact which the statistician has discovered is that so few great men have great sons, and this, in common understanding at least, has been established as one of the laws of heredity. But look at it. If great men had great sons there would soon be an overplus of great men, or, to have great men at all, the level of greatness would have to be raised much higher. If a large proportion of the sons of great men were idiots, that would be an important fact, but as most of them are, like most of the rest of us, men neither greatly above the average in ability, nor greatly below it, the equilibrium which nature strives to preserve is not seriously imperiled. If we consider the proportion of great

men to the rest of us, the number of those who have had offspring greatly endowed is not small.

It used to be thought that the sons of clergymen were apt to be worthless "ne'er-do-weels," and there were statistics for that. But De Candale, the distinguished French savant, says that the sons of ministers have contributed to science more eminent men than has any other class. He might have added, too, that they have also swelled the ranks of the poets, theologians, and not a few of the military heroes of the past.

On statistical absurdities such as these great reputations are built. Belief in them is a world-wide superstition; Germany is probably most profoundly deluded by them, but England and America are not far behind. I do not say that statistics have not their use; the contention I advance is that everywhere they are made to supply the place of pure reasoning, and that to multitudes of minds they stand for conclusions almost always irrational, and not infrequently immoral.—Joseph Dana Miller, in Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post.

RECONSTRUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Extract from a leaflet with the above title, by F. C. Selous, the South African explorer; issued as No. 17 of the publications of the South Africa conciliation committee, Talbot house, Arundel street, Strand, London.

The whole of the Dutch population of South Africa looks upon the war now being waged in that country as the result of an unjust and iniquitous conspiracy to subvert the independence of the Transvaal, and should it be carried on until the vast resources of the British empire have worn down the resistance of the Boers, and the two republics lie at England's mercy, there will, in my opinion, be no permanent peace in South Africa, should their independence be taken away from them; for there will still be 400,000 Dutch Afrianders in South Africa—the majority of the total white population of the country—who will have lost all faith in the justice of England and England's rulers. This disaffected population, dour and stubborn as the lowland Scotch, rooted to the land, ever increasing in numbers, and constantly brooding in their lonely farmsteads over what they consider injustice and bitter wrong, will have to be kept in subjection by an enormous army of occupation, which will be a considerable drain on the resources of this country. On the other hand, if when the Boers have been driven back

into their own territories—a point in the campaign which will not be reached until further terrible bloodshed has taken place, but which, having been reached, would make it plain that Great Britain was capable of wearing down any further opposition that might be offered—I believe that it would be not only just but politic to give the republics the chance of making peace on terms which would allow them to retain their independence and their flags in return for the granting of reforms which would secure good government and fair treatment for all foreigners within their borders. . . .

Should it, however, be determined to erase the Boer republics from the map of Africa, and to carry on the war to the point of practically exterminating the able-bodied male population of these two sparsely-peopled states, let it not be thought that the surviving women will bring up their children to become loyal British subjects. Let Englishmen remember that the men who prophesied that within a short time after the war was over the Boers would become reconciled to the British, whom they would then have learnt to respect, are the same people who also told us that the war would be a very short and simple campaign, as the Boers were a degenerate, cowardly race, who could no longer shoot at all well, and who would be sure to disperse to their homes after the first battle, if only a hundred of them were killed. These were the sort of predictions which were very commonly heard in this country a few months ago before the war commenced, and they were the utterances of men wholly ignorant of the Boer character. . . .

In 1848 Sir Harry Smith defeated at the battle of Boomplaats the full strength of the emigrant Boers who left the Cape Colony in 1836, with a force of 800 British soldiers and a regiment of Hottentots. Only 52 years have gone by since then, but to-day we find the descendants of these same emigrant Boers forming the main strength of an army which is holding at bay over 100,000 British troops. In view of this most significant piece of history, and the fact that the majority of her majesty's subjects in the Cape Colony are not British, but people of the same hardy and prolific race as the Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, I cannot but believe that if in the settlement of South African affairs at the conclusion of the present unhappy war a policy should be pursued which, whilst despising Dutch Afriander sentiment, hopes to retain British paramountcy forever in South