China and Japan.

The pretense that China, as titular Suzerain of Korea, possesses any more solid rights in the country than in Thibet or Siam, where she claims the same, must be incontinently dismissed. Again and again China has left to Korea the faculty and function of making treaties for herself, and in what is called the Li-Ito Concordat, the Middle Kingdom distinctly, and once for all, recognized the equal rights of Japan in the peninsula. Why, then, should the Japanese Empire maintain these rights and insist on exercising them? The answer is, because she has a far larger commerce than any other nation with Korea; because a considerable number of her subjects are settled there in trade; but, above all, because the occupation of the peninsula by China, or by Russia, would be a drawn sword perpetually held at her heart. For thirteen years Japan has patiently striven to square this matter with China, and the time was—Li Hung Chang and Count Ito being at that epoch great friends—when the son of the former held his father's authority to promise a full and happy accord in the business. But, since then, difficulties were created, and menaces have passed from the Viceroy's lips which had behind them, as certain persons know, a new and secret understanding with Russia, most dangerous to any lingering hope that the independence of Korea would be safe if it were left to the Power which has called itself Suzerain. And next, what happened? So far as China could latterly control Korea, she has done so always to the ruination of the little kingdom. She fostered there her own corrupt system of farming the offices of state, which may suit China, but has turned Korea into a den of official thieves. Travellers like Mr. Henry Savage-Landor say that their first impression, on seeing samples of the Korean population at Chemulpo or Seoul, was of their extremely depressed and woebegone look. The fact is, that all life, and joy, and hope are squeezed out of them by the domestic and civil arrangements lazily fostered from Pekin. The consequence has been—since even worms will turn—that rising after rising has occurred of the common people.

War has supervened at last, not as a political alternative, nor for the reason that Japan considered her military and naval forces complete, but because the crisis had come when Japan must act, or see Korea abandoned in disorder, first, to Chinese mandarins and eunuchs, next and finally, to Russian intrigue, made all-commanding by occult arrangements with Pekin and by the completion of the trans-Siberian railway. The first increase of Chinese troops in and near Seoul, the government of Tokio was bound to strengthen its own forces there; and when China demanded their withdrawal was equally bound absolutely to refuse, until a plan for united action had been agreed upon between the two protecting powers. She was thus constrained by considerations, as has been said, of national safety; and besides being so obliged, she was diplomatically and internationally justified. Equal rights with China in Korea had practically existed since the time of the Shogun Hideyoshi, whose successful invasion in 1595 proved that Korea and Japan must continue to have interwoven destinies. Nationally, then, because nothing can separate those destinies of Korea and Japan which geography has indissolubly united; internationally, because diplomatic evidence is abundant to prove that the rights of Japan in Korea were at least equal to those of China; and morally, because Japan alone was earnest in the desire to establish order and good government in the peninsula and to preserve, if possible, its integrity—Japan has acted as England would have acted. On all these three grounds the government of the Mikado stands before the world, *la tete haute*, and within its good rights. In the existing conflict, indeed, Japan truly represents civilization, and acts strictly in its interest. The war is so popular with the nation that the court has been besieged with offers of boundless volunteer service, and of copious funds.

Count Ito—still young, vigorous and indefatigable—is a statesman to rank, not merely with Oriental diplomatists of the heaviest caliber, like Madhava Rao, Nubar Pasha, and Li Hung Chang, but with the very best and most accomplished governing men of Europe. He has seen his world, and knows it well. He who is today the Bismarck of Japan—rich, powerful and popular—has stood in our streets of London with a half-crown only in his pocket. In the tumultuous times of the Satsuma rebellion his life was saved only by the heroism and devotion of his wife.—*Sir Edwin Arnold, in the New Review, London.*

The Religion of Nature.

To declare one's self such an atheist requires a great deal of courage or of ignorance. Either one is a fool, as the Scriptures say, to declare there is no God anywhere, or, having discovered some philosophy of negation, has the courage of his convictions to privately and publicly proclaim it. If there is no God, what is this place in which we live, what are the beings you call man and beast, what are the heavens and the earth, the seas and all that they contain? What is this great coliseum on whose base we tread, and whose dome towers into infinite space? What is all this grand, wonderful scenery and mechanism? What are these actors that make their entrances, play their parts and make their exits? What is this grand theater we call the universe, this panorama we denominate the world, this solidity we call earth, the fluid we name sea, the vapor we term air, the expanse we denote the heavens? What are these laws we call gravitation conservation and evolution? What these forces we know by the words light, heat, magnetism, chemical affinity? What do we mean by molecules and atoms? What are thought, reason, love, hate? Who will tell us what we mean by music, art, literature, harmony and discord, peace and war? What are destiny and free will? What sin and salvation? What religion and science? In fact, what are we, and what is all this that goes on about us? Is it all a dream? Are we realities? Whence came all, why is all, whither goeth all?

The philosopher of negation smiles serenely at these questions, and blandly answers: "Why, all that is Nature, and we know no more." Whence came Nature?—"I know not;" Who governs Nature—"I know not;" What is the object of Nature?—"I know not;" What is the nature of Nature?—"I know not," answers the atheist and agnostic. Could there be a better exhibition of intention to evade the issues? Could there, then, be a stronger proof of the unsound basis of all atheism and agnosticism? I am willing to accept the definition of Nature as the atheist gives it. Nature is the sum total of the natural phenomena which are preceptible by the human senses. The heaven and earth, the seas and air, the mountains and valleys and rivers, with all its woods, forests, fields and gardens, with man and beast and winged creature and creeping things; the sum total of this universal panorama, with all its constellations and planets, its elements, compounds, with its coming and going, its never-ending motion and constant action and reaction; all this, the complex and simple, the lofty and lowly, the formidable and weak, the solid and vapor, from the ends to the ends of the universe, is Nature.

There is, however, a great difference between mine and the skeptic's conception of that word Nature and of the thing it represents. To the skeptic, Nature is not only result, but cause—stands for creation and Creator. All matter is self-sufficient, operates of itself, without purpose, without design, without harmony and unity. And in the very next breath the same skeptic will speak of the forces of nature of chemical affinity, gravitation, of life and death, generation and reproduction, of reason, memory, and love and free will and destiny.

It requires but a little thought to see how utterly absurd the skeptic's position is. His very nature, in which he exults, in which he believes, by which he lives and has his being, that very nature by which he is entranced, and which he parades as the essence of his philosophy of negation, destroys the very basis on which he stands, and presents us with the stronger proofs of God. That Nature which is so eloquently described, does it not reveal beauty sublime, unity and harmony? Does it not reveal intelligence and wisdom? Does not all nature reveal a consistent evolution from lower to higher forms? Does it not, while manifesting matter, reveal an underlying or controlling spirit? Or what is that energy by which all things move? What is the law of gravitation but the action of an infinite Will? What is evolution but the process of a creative mind? What is nature but God's handiwork?

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament tells of the work of his hands." Nature is not dead matter. The entire knowable universe is an immense unit animated throughout all its parts by a single principle of life—by a soul which is God. That God is a reality, call him what you may. But it is folly to say that the universe is only Nature. The universe is Nature plus God. The more we understand Nature, the more we will love. We cannot escape the religion of Nature. The book of Nature is a great universal bible. All may read therein and find untold revelation. The revelation on Sinai did not tell us all that God knows. There are more revelations in store for us. We must learn the alphabet of the book of Nature before we can read what God has written. All the physical laws of which the scientist speaks so knowingly are but the laws of God.—*Rev. Dr. Joseph Silverman, in the Menorah for October.*

Good Days in Ireland.

I have been making a tour of South and West Ireland. The harvest all around is the best for a decade. Rececent legislation has done a great deal toward securing the benefits of this to the people who have done the work. The altered tone of the relations between the constabulary and the people is very noticeable, and, with here and there an evil exception like the Marquis of Sligo, there is less friction of the agrarian sort than I have known in Ireland before since 1884.—*London Cor. to New York Times.*

The Truth of It.

Teacher—"Johnny, can you define for us the difference between 'caution' and 'cowardice'?"

Johnny—"Yessum. When you're scart to go out on a boat an' stay home for fear it'll sink, and the boat comes in all right, it's 'cowardice.'"

Teacher—"Well?"

Johnny—"And if you're scart and stay home, and the boat does sink, then it's 'caution.'"

Here and There.

It is in the blunt hand and dead heart, in the diseased habit, in the hardened conscience, that men become vulgar; they are forever vulgar, precisely in proportion as they are incapable of sympathy.—Ruskin.

"Maria," he said, plaintively, "you are going to join the woman suffrage movement?" "I am," was the resolute reply. "And make speeches and carry on?" "Very likely." "Well, if that's the case, I've got just one thing to say," and his jaws shut hard. "What's that?" "After this you'll have to get up in the middle of the night and help chase burglars."

Here is a story of a schoolmaster who promised a crown to any boy who should propound a riddle that he could not answer. One and another tried, and at last a boy asked: "Why am I like the Prince of Wales?" The master puzzled his wits in vain and finally was compelled to admit that he did not know. "Why," said the boy, "it's because I am waiting for the crown."—Tit-Bits.

A schoolboy thus defines eternity: "When our ships all come in: when the sea gives up her dead; when Father Time hangs up his scythe; when the heavens are rolled up like a scroll; when Gabriel blows the ram's horn; when the solar system collapses; when we find the lost Charlie Ross and the man who struck Billy Patterson; when Johnny gets his gun; when society becomes pure, and 'after the ball is over'—then will be eternity." He appears to have overlooked the Keely motor in his summing up.—Albany Argus.

A boy was once brought before "Old Steady" Baker, the mayor of Folkestone, for stealing gooseberries. Baker turned over Burn's "Justice," but not being able to find the article he wanted in the book, which is alphabetically arranged, he lifted up his spectacles and addressed the culprit thus: "My lad, it's very lucky for you that, instead of stealing gooseberries, you were not brought here for stealing a goose. There is a statute against stealing geese, but I can't find anything about gooseberries in all Burn, so let the prisoner be discharged, for it is no offense."—San Francisco Argonaut.

Mr. Wolcott, chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Arbitration and Conciliation, was recently asked if he favored a compulsory arbitration law. He replied: "No, I do not. It is a contradiction in terms in the first place. Arbitration means a peaceful settlement of difficulties without appeal to force. Compulsion means force, the use of which arbitration is intended to prevent. You might as well try to compel two men to be friends. Unless you can induce the parties to a controversy to enter willingly and cheerfully upon arbitration you can effect very little."

It is a man's duty to live his own life worthily, not to be continually pawing the lives of his neighbors. Depend upon it, the man who is always tasting other lives instead of living his own will make a bad business of life. The life-taster's way of looking at the world is, in its essence, vicious and insane. Life is far more like a camp than a cafe, and the private's business is to see that he discharges his duties properly, and makes himself efficient at his particular arm, not to try first what cavalry service is like, then to go through the experiences of the gunner, next to sample the engineer's work, then to try the army service corps, and not to rest till he has also seen how things look from the point of view of the camp follower.—London Spectator.

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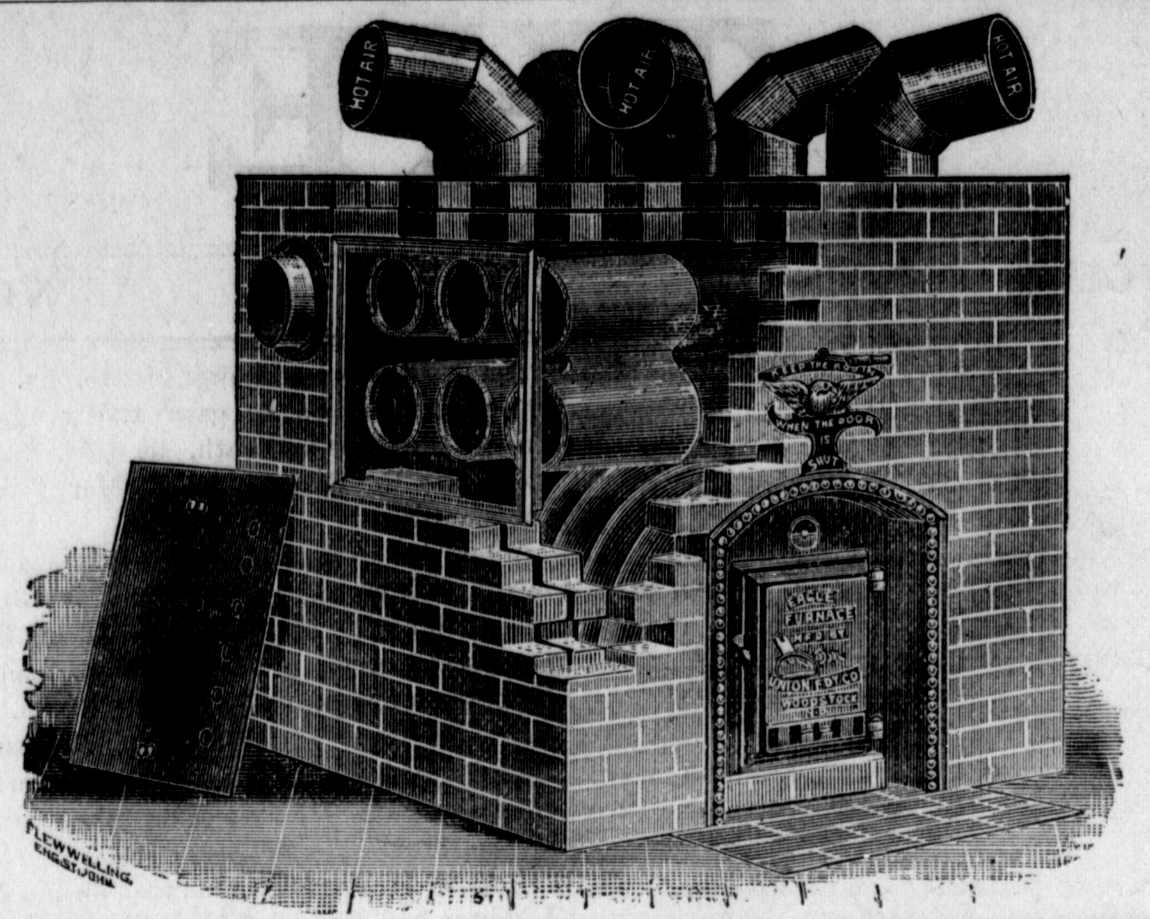

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