

From the London People's Journal.

THE ADVANCE OF LAND UPON THE SEA.

BY J. L. KINSILLA.

It was wisely said by some ancient sage, "Where to-day bloom flowers, to-morrow rolls an ocean." Annihilation and creation, or, to speak more philosophically, dissolution and combination, are everlastingly taking place. Day by day the ocean advances upon the land, and day by day, as we shall endeavor to prove, the land advances upon the sea. The history of the earth informs us of lands that have sprung up from the deeps, and of mountains that have gradually sunk, as though they were melted under the waters.

Some years ago an interesting paper was read before a meeting of the Historical Society. Its purpose was to show that the waters of the Persian Gulf formerly extended much farther to the northward, and that the low lands at the head of that gulf have been gradually formed by the encroachment of the alluvial soil brought down and deposited by the Euphrates and the Tigris. If this conjecture be well founded, it is not difficult to account for the uncertainty that shadows much of the Scripture narrative with respect to the migrations of the Israelites and their different settlements; for new lands arising, and, in the course of time, adapting its inhabitants to its nature, new names also came into use, and created the confusion.

It is not unfrequently observed by those whose dwellings are by the sea-side, that the sea has made rapid advances in the space of a life-time. The author of this paper had occasion to remark, in the space of three years, while he resided in a little village in the county of Wexford, which is bordered by the sea, that the tide advanced considerably, even to the foot of the banks that bordered it. In other localities the tide has retreated in a like proportion, so that there is now a hard and level sand where formerly the waves sported with the fragments of a wreck.

The city of Babylon, of which Nebuchadnezzar was king, was situated at Hillah, on the Euphrates, about 200 miles in a direct line from its junction with the Tigris, and rather more than 200 miles from the point where the united rivers empty themselves into the Persian Gulf. These rivers sometimes overflow their banks, and inundate the neighboring country. At Felugiah, twelve leagues from Bagdad, on the banks of the Euphrates, by breaking down a dyke which confines its waters within their proper channel, they overflow the country, and extend nearly to the banks of the Tigris, with depth sufficient to render it navigable for rafts and flat-bottomed boats. In modern times, that is, within the historic era, we find two rivers in Asia—the Ganges and Burrampooter—which before were distant from each other, and flowed in separate channels, uniting, and yearly increasing the length of their common bed. The Euphrates and Tigris now flow for the space of three hundred miles in one common course, whereas Ptolemy tells us that "between these two rivers, where they fall into the sea, were counted in old times twenty five miles, or as some would have it, but seven." But this took place, says an eminent geologist, Mr Lyall, "in one of the modern geographical changes of the earth," that is, before the world, as we know it now, was complete, and before historic evidence began.

He who reads the history of the earth attentively, will not fail to notice how favorable great rivers are to the formation of new lands. The force with which they pass through the land, carrying with them from the mountains the tributes of a storm—trees, rocks, buildings, and whole herds, besides the imposition which they lay upon the lands through which they must flow, necessarily accumulates an immense quantity of misplaced matter. This accumulation seeks a settlement beyond the action of the water: it is cast forth, and it sinks, particle after particle, until, upon the opposite shore, it shows its top above the water, gradually rising, until it spreads itself to the extent of miles. Nature, all provident, brings it forth, consisting of heights and vales, whereon the rain falls, and through which its collected mass flows back to the ocean whence it originated, freshening the atmosphere, and renovating the vigor of the productive plain. Thus, these new-formed rivers contain within themselves the same means of scattering the land through which they flow, and forming new islands, or additions to new continents.

But once the "whole earth dwelt in the plain of Shinar." This was the commencement of Nimrod's kingdom—Nimrod, that mighty hunter, that kingdom whose site has recently been explored, and from which the depositories of a nation's wealth, of a people's greatness, of their manners, the records of their creeds and philosophy, have been extracted. As it was then so is it now; there were creeping slaves, who heaped up gold, and honest men who despised its accumulation; men who worshipped power as their only God, and made themselves its instruments to do evil; braided men who waited on these despots, gentlemen who built houses with ill-gotten gold; and "so the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth, and they left off building the city." New lands are eternally being formed, and it is not improbable to suppose, that when the "whole earth" dwelt in the plain of Shinar, the lands which the waters had "begotten" were few. Nor is it heterodox to believe, that the flood which depopulated the world was one resulting in the operation of nature.

GUTTA PERCHA.

Most of our readers are no doubt aware that to Dr. Montgomerie is due the honor of having first drawn public attention to the useful properties of Gutta Percha. The discovery, like so many others of the kind, was accidental, the attention of Dr. Montgomerie having been drawn to the handle of a "parang" in use by a Malay woodsman, which was made of this material. Subsequent inquiries satisfied him of its singular applicability to mechanical purposes. Gutta Percha is a gum which exudes from a tree. Illness prevented Dr. M. at that period from visiting the forest where the tree grows. He, however, ascertained from the natives that the percha is one of their largest trees, attaining a diameter of three or four feet; that its wood is of no use as timber, but that a concrete and edible oil, used by the natives with their food, is obtainable from the fruit. In many parts of the island of Singapore, and in the forests of Johore, at the extremity of the Malayan peninsula, the tree is found; it is also said to grow in Cotti, on the south-eastern extremity of Borneo; and Dr. M. accordingly addressed his inquiries to the celebrated Mr. Brooke, resident at Sarawak, and was assured by that gentleman that it commonly inhabits the woods there also, and is called Niatto by the people, who are not, however, acquainted with the properties of the sap. The tree is often six feet in diameter at Sarawak, and is believed by Mr. Brooke to be plentiful all over Borneo. Its frequency is proved by the circumstance that several hundred tons of the Gutta Percha have been annually exported from Singapore since 1842, when the substance first came into notice here.

To account for that extraordinary range of applicability for which Gutta Percha is remarkable, it is necessary to understand its properties. They are thus described:—

"It is highly combustible, yet it inflames only at a very high degree of heat, and is not injuriously affected by atmospheric heat. It is soluble in essential oils, but to a great extent resists the action of grease and unctuous oils. It mixes readily with paints and most coloring matters. It is repellent of, and completely unaffected by cold water or damp. It may be softened by dipping in hot water, and then is capable of being moulded or rolled out, or pressed into any desired shape, and to almost any extent of thinness. It is, when heated, of a strongly adhesive or agglutinating nature, yet when dry is quite free from the stickiness found in caoutchouc or india rubber. In its solid state it is flexible, and to a slight degree elastic. The last, though by far not the least important property, is its being little injured by use. Nay, more, after it has been employed in a manufactured state, it may be recovered or renovated, and manufactured again."

This summary of the chief properties of Gutta Percha certainly presents an union of qualities so opposite yet so useful, as naturally lead to the supposition that the material would be applicable to a variety of purposes; but we certainly were not prepared to find the range of those purposes so extensive as a classified list in one of the Gutta Percha Company's little publications shows them to be. Here is the list:—

Domestic purposes. Soles for boots and shoes, lining for cisterns, &c., picture frames, looking-glass frames, ornamental mouldings, bowls, drinking cups, jara, dishes, ornamental inkstands, vases, noiseless curtain rings; card, fruit, pin, and pen trays; tooth brush trays, shaving brush trays, window blind cord, clothes' lines, nursing aprons, colored material for amateur modelling, ornamental flower stand and pots, sheet for damp walls and floors, conveyance of water, gas, &c., drain and soil pipes, tubing in lieu of bells, tubing for watering gardens, washing windows, &c.; lining for bonnets, &c.; jar covers, sponge bags, watch stands, shells, foot baths, lighter stands.—Manufacturing: Mill bands, pump buckets, valves, clacks, &c.; felt edging for paper makers, bosses for woollen manufacturers, flax holders, shuttle beds for looms, washers, bowls for goldsmiths, bobbins, covers for rollers, round bands and cord, breasts for water wheels.—Surgical: Splints, thin sheets for bandages, stethoscopes, ear trumpets, basins for cuts, bed straps, thread, bedpans for invalids.—Electrical, &c.: Covering for electrical telegraph wire, insulating stools, battery cells, handles for discharging rods, &c., electrolytic moulds.—Chemical: Carboys, vessels for acids, &c., siphons, tubing for conveying oils, acids, alkalies, &c., flasks, bottles, lining for tanks, funnels.—Uses on ship-board, &c.: Sou'-wester hats, life buoys (which are more buoyant than cork); buckets, pump buckets, hand speaking trumpets, powder flasks, fishing net floats, sheathing for ships, waterproof canvas, airtight life-boat cells, tubes for pumping water from the hold to the deck, round and twisted cords (these cords do not sink in the water like the hempen ones), lining for boxes, speaking tubes for communicating between the man on the look out and the helmsman. Ornamental applications: Medallions, brackets, cornices, console tables, an endless variety of mouldings, in imitation of carved oak, rosewood, &c., for the decoration of rooms, cabinet work, &c., picture frames.—Agricultural purposes: Tubing for conveying liquid manure, lining for manure tanks, driving bands for thrashing machines, traces, whips.—For offices, &c.: Inkstands, ink cups, in lieu of glass, pen trays, cash bowls, washing basins, &c. (which cannot be broken), tubes for conveying messages, canvases for covering books, &c., architects' and surveyors' plan cases. Miscellaneous: Section pipes for fire-engines, fire and stable buckets, lining for coffins, sounding-boards for pulpits, top ferules, communion trays, tubing for ventilation, hearing apparatus in churches and chapels for deaf persons, cricket balls,

bouncing balls, portmanteaus, police staves, life preservers, embossed book backs, embossed globes and maps for the blind, railway conversation tubes, miners' caps, beds for paper cutting machine knives."

The very fact of such a mass of heterogeneous objects being heaped together is the simplest proof of the extraordinary capabilities of this material. Some of the foregoing are worthy of special notice.

From Fraser's Magazine.

PORTRAIT OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENT.

The pale reflective look of Prince Louis is well known to all those who have frequented London within the last five or six years. The seven years which he passed in prison did much toward the formation of his character.

"No giant frame sets forth his common height," is quite true; but it is equally true,

"That they who pause to look again, See more than marks the crowd of vulgar men."

His countenance expresses a great deal of character and decision; and, but for a certain vacuity of expression, might be termed highly intellectual by his partisans. He is neither easily excited nor easily depressed; he has passed the age when men's passions are most easily roused, and attained that when practical ambition and the material advantages of life are most prized; but when, among men of reflection, ambition turns toward the result of great actions, rather than toward the mere objects of personal aggrandisement. In his conduct he is remarkably simple, unaffected, and unelated; courteous, and at all times desirous of pleasing; accessible, frank, and open hearted. His character is one which, however opposed they may be in politics, all men must admire for its single-heartedness. He has read much, steadily, and to a good purpose; has a retentive memory, and does justice to the information that he possesses; he is as much superior to the general opinion entertained of him, prior to his attainment to power, as he is inferior to that vast mind to which some of his flatterers have the audacity to compare him—Napoleon the Great. The Prince Louis possesses at least one quality which is invaluable in these days when it is most rare (for the material life which is the characteristic of the times is not the best calculated to develop it), courage—not merely physical courage, the power of endurance and of performing deeds of daring, which is the result of a bodily accident—but that strong mental courage more rarely found, and more rarely still, found associated with physical courage. He has also that quality, precious in all men, most rare and precious in a prince—the faculty of silence. It is a quality which, in general, proves a man to have great confidence in him; for whereas they who mistrust their own opinions, and the fixedness of their own resolutions, are invariably speaking of what great things they will do, the man who really feels himself capable of high resolves and noble purposes rarely alludes to them. It is quite undeniable that the Prince President possesses more enterprising qualities than the Duke of Bordeaux; he is capable of taking a far more active part in the public service, if circumstances should compel him to do so; he possesses a greater knowledge of the world, both of books and men; a readier faculty of adaptation into whatever society he may be thrown. In fact, he is a man who exemplifies the wisdom of Shakespeare, when he tells us that the uses of adversity are sweet. In solitude he learned to correct all those faults of character which in early life led him into so much folly and error, and which were the origin of all those mis-trusts by which he was surrounded.

From Southey's Correspondence.

POETS' VANITY.

There are examples of the very meekest and humblest rhymesters, who nevertheless felt themselves raised above their companions, because they could rhyme. I have been acquainted with poets in every intermediate degree between Jones and Wordsworth; and their conceit has almost uniformly been precisely in an inverse proportion to their capacity. When this conceit acts upon low and vulgar ignorance, it produces direct craziness, as in the instances of which I have been speaking. In the lower ranks of middle life I have seen it, without amounting to insanity, assume a form of such extravagant vanity that the examples which have occurred within my own observation would be deemed incredible if brought forward in a farce. Of these in due time. There is another more curious manifestation of the same folly, which I do not remember ever to have seen noticed; but which is well worthy of critical observation, because it shows in its full extent, and therefore in *purs naturalibus*, a fault which is found in by much the greater part of modern poetry—the use of words which have no signification where they are used, or which, if they mean any thing, mean nonsense—the substitution of sound for sense. I could show you passage after passage in contemporary writers—the most popular writers, and some of them, the most popular passages in their works,—which, when critically, that is to say, strictly but justly, examined, are as absolutely nonsensical as the description of a moonlight night in Pope's Homer. Pope himself intended that for a fine description, and did not perceive that it was as absurd as his own "Song by a Person of Quality." Now, there have been writers who have possessed the talent of stringing together couplet after couplet of sonorous verse, with-

out any connection and without any meaning, or anything like a meaning; and yet they have had all the enjoyment of writing poetry, have supposed that this actually was poetry, and published it as such. I know a man who has done this, who made me a present of his poem; yet he is very far from being a fool; on the contrary, he is a lively, pleasant companion, and his talents in conversation are considerably above par. The most perfect specimen I ever saw of such verses was a poem called "The Shepherd's Farewell," printed in quarto, some five-and-thirty years ago. Coleridge once had an imperfect copy of it. I forget the author's name; but when I was first at Lisbon I found out that he was a schoolmaster, and that poor Paul Berthou had been one of his pupils. Men of very inferior power may imitate the manner of good writers with great success; as, for example, the two Smiths have done; but I do not believe that any imitative talent could produce genuine nonsense verses, like those of "The Shepherd's Farewell." The intention of writing nonsensically would appear, and betray the purport of the writer. Pure, involuntary, unconscious nonsense, is inimitable by any effort of sense. Such writers as these, if they were cross-examined, would be found to imagine that they composed under the real influence of poetical inspiration; and were Taylor the Pagan to ask about heathenizing one of them, I am persuaded that he would not find it difficult to make him believe in the Muses. In fact, when this soul of conceit is in action, the man is fairly beside himself. An innate self-produced inebrity possesses him; he abandons himself to it, and while the fit lasts, is as mad as a March hare. The madness is not permanent; because such inspiration, according to received opinion, only comes on when the rhymester is engaged in his vocation.

VICTORY AND WAR.

Never was a victory obtained which did not require previous efforts of preparation to accomplish it.

A battle is won; but the steps necessary to gain it were all taken beforehand. The weapons were forged—the plans were devised—the soldiers were trained—and the general who commanded them had previously become disciplined in tactics and fortified by experience. Or, if these things were not done, there was displayed in the moment of conflict that undaunted and invincible resolution, that greatness and intrepidity of soul which bear down all opposition, and put to flight and dismay the feeble impulses in the breasts of cowards; for "intrepid courage," says Plutarch, "is the commencement of victory." But even this kind of manly bravery and heroic spirit exacted some initiation, and a strict adherence to those high principles of action which distinguish the noble and valiant from the mean and base, the honorable and high-minded from the corrupt and degraded. How lamentable is the reflection, that such talents should be so employed.

From the Dublin University Magazine.

CHINESE IVORY CARVING.

I took some trouble and pains to obtain a view of the instruments with which the artists worked, but regret to say I was unsuccessful. The ivory balls so elaborately carved, and the ingenuity with which they are constructed, have long excited admiration and surprise at the artistic skill and means by which so many concentric balls can be carved one within the other. I know not whether any one else has made the discovery; but the truth is that each ball is constructed of two pieces. The edges of which are so finely scraped down, that the edge of one hemisphere is made to overlap its counterpart with the greatest nicety. Thus one ball is easily enclosed within another. The joinings are then united by a peculiarly strong cement, aided by the employment of steam and pressure. Any one who wishes to make the expensive trial, will soon ascertain the fact by applying a powerful heat to one of these balls, which will open at the joints in due time.

RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH THE HAPPINESS OF ALL.

It is an era in life when first the conviction strikes home to our hearts that our actions tell on the happiness not only of ourselves, but of our fellow creatures. Life has frequently been likened to a theatre, in which "the men and women are only the players; but when we come to consider this illustration carefully, when we perceive that in the drama of life, as in that of the sage, every one has some part to act, and that in both the good or bad performances of even the most insignificant actor tells in a degree on all the rest, it is startling indeed.

Is it impossible to impress this even on the minds of children? Is it impossible to lead them in early youth to reflect upon the great the awful truth, that all are placed in this world as actors, not as spectators; that the little and great, the rich and poor, the young and old, in that one point are in the same position; and, further than this, that we are not only actors, but also that every human creature is accountable to his Almighty Father for the due performance of the part assigned to him, and likewise for the proper use of the influence which he is permitted to exercise over others? If there be a doubt in a child's mind as to the effect producible by the conduct of one person on the happiness of many, let him be taught to observe how a cross look, an angry word may destroy the peace of his own domestic circle, or great part of an evening; and then let him reflect how any