

race are evidently, from their habits and customs, descended from the same original stock that have occupied a portion of the same countries as the Malays, but are regarded by the latter as too abject in the scale of humanity to treat them otherwise than servants or a conquered people. These degraded people are found in greatest numbers in the insular lands of New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Espiritu Santo, and adjoining groups, the Solomon Island, Louisiades, and are identified as the *Hara-fouras* and *Papuans* of New Guinea."

The New Zealanders are styled barbarians; it is, therefore, not a little humiliating to consider how many of their weaknesses are shared in by the bulk of our own community. They have superstitions without number—so have we. They have quacks and weather almanacks—and so have we. Any flashy impostor, tickling the ears of his ignorant and credulous auditory in New Zealand, has a good chance of gaining ascendancy: here, such a one is sure of success. The New Zealanders, it is said, are fond of eating one another; and many among us have an odd fancy for lingering over descriptions of such orgies, as if they felt some cannibal instinct awakened within them, and their mouths watering thereat. Mr. Polack omits no opportunity of describing those feasts, and frowns at the doubting self-denial of us critics. He observes—

"It has become a fashion, among a certain portion of readers, to decry narratives of a similar nature to the above anecdote; to such readers, who would solely oppose personal prejudice to assured facts, the writer does not address himself. His principal aim is to relate truths, not to sacrifice them to a fastidious taste, and to administer subjects for thought to the inquiring mind. To the reviewers attached to the leading literary and public journals, the writer is deeply indebted for the highly favourable, not to say flattering testimony, afforded by them on a former work, in his favour; but some of those intelligent and highly intellectual gentlemen have not failed to add their scepticism on the details given on cannibalism."

We are the sceptics aimed at, and yet we confess our inability to discover a single fact in Mr. Polack's volume calculated to change our opinion, which is, that cannibalism, though often the result of famine, or of that phrenzy to which barbarians in the hour of triumph, and actuated by feelings of revenge, can work themselves up, is not, never was, and cannot be familiar and usual, even among the most savage of the human race. So long as a man shudders at the idea of being devoured, he must also, unless hunger or a paroxysm of passion change his nature, revolt at the thought of eating his fellow-man. In fact, we do not altogether deny the existence of cannibalism, but we do most positively assert, that there is no topic on which the vulgar propensity towards exciting description has given rise to more gross and disgusting exaggerations. The morbid prurience with which some people hang in contemplation over the horrible, affects all their faculties, and disables them from seeing the truth. Our author says, with much gravity,—

"We purpose omitting the horrible deeds of cannibalism that have (during nearly a seven years' residence) come to our knowledge. Such atrocities are too revolting. It is decidedly a practice of most ancient date. At the famine in the days of Elisha, the women even devoured their children. * * For the most horrid details to which even Sir John Barrow himself must become a convert, we refer the reader to the Evidence of the Church and Wesleyan Missionaries."

Now, the reader will be gratified to learn, that we were present when the sceptical veteran named in the preceding paragraph pressed Mr. Polack to state distinctly whether he had ever had ocular testimony of the fact of cannibalism; and the latter, protesting his deep conviction of the existence of the usage, was, nevertheless, compelled to acknowledge, that he never saw a human being killed and eaten; that he could say

nothing as to the existence of cannibal rites from his own knowledge; and that his belief rested altogether on hearsay evidence and presumptions.

On the Dangerous Classes of the Population in Large Towns, and the Measures for their Amelioration—[*Des Classes Dangereuses, &c.*] By H. A. Frégier.

[Second Notice.]

THE history of society, in all ages, is but an accumulation of evidence that the evils of which these volumes furnish so fearful a list, are neither accidental nor transitory in their nature, but have, to a great extent, their origin in the constitution of society itself. Laws of repression then, which can only operate upon individual cases, are manifestly unequal to the exigencies of the question which it is the object of the work before us to solve; and the only efficient remedies for ills which the social institutions either engender or promote, must be applied to the cure and improvement of the institutions themselves. The town dweller has to struggle against two classes of temptations—those to which he is subject in his ante-social state (the natural objects of contest between his passions and his reason), and those new ones which are created by his relations as the member of a community,—the objects of the further contest between those same passions and the restrictions which, for the common good, the community imposes. It must also be further observed that, in addition to the new offences which the law itself creates, the first class of temptations are greatly strengthened, in large communities, by the thousand points at which they present themselves, and the multiplied facilities which the passions have for their gratification. The two classes of remedies then by which these evils are to be met, are—that which educates the reason of man, and prepares him for this contest with his natural passions, and subordination of them to the laws—and that which adapts those institutions to the necessities of society, and fits them to bear the examination of the reason so educated, and the sympathy and respect of the passions so chastened and restrained. Laws merely repressive, whose only arguments are penalties, besides being, as we have said, capable of overt action only against individuals, are only partial in their operation even against them. They keep down the vicious eruption in one direction, but to determine it to another. When did enactments against drunkenness, or swearing, or sabbath-breaking, or any other of the particular modes of issue by which a low morality proclaims itself, ever effect even the limited object which they had in view? With that portion, therefore, of our author's volumes which treats of penal measures, and concerns the legislator more than the moralist, we will not meddle; but confine ourselves to that description of remedies which go to the root of the matter, by adapting society as nearly as possible to fulfil the ends of its institution (which are likewise the conditions of its secure and prosperous existence), and raising up the national intelligence to a liberal appreciation of the subject and a sense of the difficulties by which it is beset. Through all those difficulties human wisdom, even when its intentions shall be the purest, cannot see its way; nor, so long as man has passions to be acted upon by the hot atmosphere of towns, can any applications which may be devised be more than approximative in their effect to that which should, nevertheless, be their invariable object. The following remarks of our author are full of melancholy truth:—

When, in carrying our inquiries into the past, our attention becomes fixed on the two last centuries, we are struck with the efforts which have been made

by religion and philosophy to correct the vices of the nation. The seventeenth century in particular challenges the admiration of posterity, by the sacred alliance of religious morality with high intelligence which it directed against the march of vice. The efforts of that century, as compared with those of the ages which preceded and followed it, have a character really heroic and majestic; and yet, that age, so grave and disciplined, could effect no more than to restrain—to diminish the spread of vice. If, then, that century in which civilization of manners was always in advance of that of knowledge, in which genius and virtue worked such miracles, was unable to cicatrize the social sore from which we are yet suffering, the evil must be presumed to be incurable. The history of all times and places teaches us that the wound in question has resisted every remedy that could be applied; that the nations most moral and wise have been those which, perceiving their inability to root out the mischief entirely, have opposed effective barriers to its progress, and succeeded in narrowing the field of its baleful action. It is under this purely practical point of view that we have determined to treat the question of the moral amelioration of the vicious, depraved and dangerous classes. To augment the numbers of the good, by diminution of those of the bad, as the object to which the efforts of the statesman, as well as those of the moralist, should be earnestly directed.

It is obvious that the particular forms of the remedies to be applied to the diseases of society must vary with, and be adapted to, the institutions and circumstances of the particular society for which they are designed; but the principles of the application, and the elements of which those remedies must be compounded, must be in all cases the same. Without going, therefore, into the crowd of particular suggestions which our author discusses, and which embrace all the mooted questions of political economy, we shall confine ourselves to his general views—with such particular applications as are necessary to illustrate them, and referable to our own social condition, as well as that of France. In this broad sense, the whole matter seems reducible to a few general propositions. On the part of governments, to preserve the labouring classes from misery by finding them employment, and from corruption, by moral and intellectual instruction,—and on the part of individuals, to cultivate that general sympathy by which all the parts of society should be held together, seem the true principles of cure, and adequate to the end. It is only in the application of these principles that the difficulty begins. Perhaps there is no country under the sun where the separation between the upper and lower classes of society is more strongly marked than England; and few where, in a high state of civilization, it is less so than France. That utter want of sympathy and mutual dependence, which, day by day, amongst ourselves, is operating to cast loose the lower links of the social chain, and let them fall from us as if they were parts of a distinct system, is unknown amongst our neighbours. The subject is of infinite importance; we believe it to lie at the root of the whole matter. In his natural condition, man is born into the world individually subject by the law of his necessities, and fitted by his organization, to earn his subsistence by the sweat of his brow,—to wring his nourishment from the earth which is his joint and common inheritance. The subsequent accumulation, however, of the fruits of this labour in particular hands in the form of capital, and the consequent immunities of some, have been so uniformly a part of every modification which society has undergone, that they may be said to be the result of a law as positive as that of the original equality of distribution. The hardship and apparent injustice are, that men, with equal rights, by the primal law of nature, should be born into the unequal conditions created by this secondary law—that they