THE PAST WEEK has brought to our table three more of those clearedaway Press of the same name," called Christmas Books. These, like all their tribe, are rather the subjects of praise than of criticism; they have more to do with notes of admiration than of derision. The first is "A Book of Favourite Modern Ballads," published by W. Kent and Co. It contains sixty well-known ballads, in which, selecting the ablest, the best, and the most interesting, the editor has been successful in preserving any unity of sentiment, as may be imagined when we say that Rogers's "Dear is my native vale" is found next to Macaulay's "Glasgow Arms," and—by hook or by crook—that strictly to be called a ballad—and "The Miller of the Dee" comes immediately after "The Incaspe Rock." As a scrap-book of well-known and very popular ballads, however, the volume is full of merit; and when we class it as one of the most beautiful edições de luxe which the season has been producing, we are awarding it to no undue meed of praise. Its appearance is a great delight, and every page is ornamented with a gold border, with vignettes and tall-pieces printed in gold. There are, moreover, forty-episode engravings by Mr. Edward Evans, and other designs by Robert Foster, Percival Skelton, J. C. Horsley, A. B. E. Duncan, G. H. Thomas, E. H. Corrall, S. Palmer, C. H. Cope, A. R. M., W. G. Croston, Helen Wilson, G. E. H. de Lisle, Harrison Weir, W. Harvey, D. H. Prichard, and A. Solomon. The last-named gentleman has only contributed one design to the work, that being to Mr. Kinglake's "Three Fathers," which for originality and power is second to none in the volume. The second Christmas offering is a splendid edition of the "Poetical Works of Hogg," published by the same firm. As with, the other, nothing is to be desired; that fine paper, beautiful type, skilful printing, artistic illustration, and tasteful binding could not make it the most acceptable of all the books which are fine designs by George H. Thomas, engraved on wood by W. Thomas and H. Harbey. They are twenty-four in number, and do the greatest credit to both designer and engravers. As a beautiful and appropriate present to an admirer of the American poet, this volume may be unreservedly recommended. The third Christmas offering is a splendid volume entitled "Counselling Illustrations" (Paul Jerrard and Son). The "Old to the Wild West Wind" and "The Question" are here made the excuse for a number of excellently beautiful pieces of floral illustration, printed in gold. It is scarcely possible to do full justice to the artistic taste with which the embellishments have been selected and arranged, and the extraordinary skill manifested in their execution.

AT THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL ACADEMICS on Wednesday, the 16th inst., the vacant chairs were filled by Mr. Jones Phillips (not Mr. D. J. Phillips)—whenever he may be— as stated by the "Atheneum," and Mr. Sidney Smirke, an architect. The former cannot but give unqualified satisfaction, for it is undeniable that Mr. Phillips has fairly won his way to the first rank in his art, and his presence in the Royal Academy of England is but the natural consequence of his position before the world as an artist. Mr. Smirke is known as an architect of no common merit. The Carlton Club House is, perhaps, the best known of his works. This, however, would scarcely have earned for him his chair in Trafalgar-square, if there had not been direct and unquestionable evidence that when Sir Robert Smirke resigned his seat it was to be conferred upon his son. Even when the Academicians were filling up the vacancies in their number, and two days after yet another place in their body was left empty. At the age of ninety-one James Ward, R.A., was, indeed, a patriarch among artists, and his whole life was not more celebrated than his son-in-law, Jackson; his son an eminent engraver; his nephew, William, another eminent engraver; and his granddaughter, Miss E. M. Ward, the wife of an Academician, and herself a very charming artist. James Ward himself was originally an engineer, and in that department of art attained quite as great a reputation as that which he has since won as a painter. In the latter branch he was, perhaps, principally indebted for his great animadversion, for his frequent sketching expeditions, to the "Vestiges of Creation." With respect to that work itself, as the secret of its success, it is not unlikely that in spite of many serious errors, it is by discovering the law of the difference of species is caused by the law of change, that the most simple and complicated organisms have descended, or rather ascended, out of the simplest and most imperfect. In laying this down, that it is the "Vestiges of Creation," left unnoticed until the most important. In point of fact he proved nothing. He put his theory in a broad general way, expressed it in a bold and eloquent style, presents a number of analogies which were all inaccurate, and committed a variety of mistakes in dealing with almost every department of science (mistakes
which drew upon the book the reprobation of experts in each separate branch, and succeeded in producing a very deep impression upon the public, and upon the scientific men. Both these results were unfortunate; both were undeserved by the book. Judged fairly and by its merits, "The Vestiges" deserves neither so much credit as is ascribed to it by the unscientific, nor so little as profoundly scientific men are disposed to concede to it.

Mr. Darwin is one of those explorers whose lot it is to pursue the trackless wilds of nature. That he follows that work is really only a chronological coincidence; for it appears that he was working out this conclusion before the appearance of "The Vestiges", and that his views were sufficiently advanced to be submitted to Mr. Huxley and Sir Charles Lyell in 1844.

The theory of Mr. Darwin is infinitely more perfect than that of "The Vestiges". He has been enabled to support it by the advance of science, and by the aid of a law, but the other only supposes a change for which it can give no explanation. The author of "The Vestiges of Creation" (says Mr. Darwin) would, I presume, have postulated, as I have given birth to a woodpecker, and some plant to the misseltoe, and that these had been produced perfect as we now see them; but this assumption is irrelevant to the case, for it leaves the case of the co-adaptation of organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life untouched and unexplained.

The theory (if it deserve the name) of "The Vestiges" is that a certain plant very like the Misseltoe, but not quite like, went on producing its like and multiplying itself until, suddenly, for no apparent reason, the law changed and a Misseltoe was the result. Whatever may be done by Babble's calculating machine, it may be gravely doubted whether this is a subject to such enormities; but certainly we ought to require good evidence before accusing the laws of nature of such vagaries. Now Mr. Darwin refers the change to what he terms a "natural selection", by which he means that a pair of certain species may, under certain favourable circumstances, produce offspring slightly differing from themselves, and that these differences, by the laws of nature in respect to the principle of selection as "That which enables the agriculturist not only to modify the character of his flock, but to produce a breed, whose products he may assume into life whatever form and mould he will please." Lord Somerville, speaking of what breeder's done for sheep, says: "It would seem as if they had driven out upon a wall a form perfect in itself, and then had given it existence." That must skillful breeders, Sir John Schreiber, used to say, with respect to pigeons, that "he who would produce any given feather in three years, but it would take him six years to obtain head and beak." In Saxon the instinct is not in the principle of selection to regard man is so fully recognized, that man follow it as a trade: the sheep are placed on a table and are studied, like a picture by a connoisseur; this is the natural selection, and the principle of selection is the origin of the semen, and the semen is each time turned and mixed, so that the very best may ultimately be selected for breeding.

Everybody knows that the same process is constantly carried on with regard to plants; rose-growners and tulip-growers being in the habit of transplanting at any moment at will: and the process of selection is in some cases as cleverly done as the best fancier of pigeons. We need hardly point to the extraordinary varieties produced from the common rock pigeon (Columba livia) and the wild rabbite, by the fanciers of these animals.

It is the change in the conditions which take place in natural species under domestication Mr. Darwin proceeds to mention the variations which occur under natural conditions, that is to say, when the changes that take place without the slightest assistance from man. Of course every naturalist is aware that these are very numerous; and it is almost certain, especially in the botanical kingdom, that varieties once exceptional have come within the memory of man to be constant. And what is a constant variety but a new species? A specimen can no longer be reckoned a hybrid when its recurrence is constant. Thus Mr. Darwin instances the Primula, of which in times past botanists reckoned two varieties veris and clusius, the cowslip and the oxlip. Now these are accounted by many to be distinct species, and rightly so. Suppose again that in a certain district the herb Paris (Paris quadrifolius) were always to be found with five or six leaves; would not its present name become a misnomer? Would they not be a new species, instead of a variety? The struggle for existence, caused by the bountiful reproduction of all living organisms, is referred to by Mr. Darwin as a main influence in the struggle for life. In man, the lowest breeding of animals, with the single exception of the elephant, the consequence of the over-supply is that the weakly and unhandsome become, the able and strong, the fortunate with the misfortunes, the race to the fittest. Was it not in this constant struggle, the world would become so full of animal life that it would be uninhabitable. Sad, therefore, as it may be in a sense, but not to be a subject of the ever-widening and never-ending struggle for existence which is going on between God's creatures, the philosopher must reconcile himself to it as an absolute necessity."

It was says Mr. Darwin, "the face of nature bright with gladness; we often see superabundance of food; we do not see, or we forget, that the birds that are joyously singing round as mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life; or we forget how largely these songsters, or their eggs, or their nestlings, are destroyed by birds and beasts of prey." This destruction of the many to make room for the best is, as Mr. Darwin very happily expresses it, "the doctrine of Malthus applied with minor force to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms. As the consequence of how this natural element of destruction governs the physical circumstances of a country, the author relates how it came to pass that when certain land in Surrey was inclosed by high banks, trees grew up spontaneously, although before that period only a few Scots firs were on the hill-tops.

When I ascended that the young trees had not been sown or planted. I was much surprised at their numbers at my children's points of view, to which I could examine hundreds of acres of the same heath and found I could not see a single Scotch fir, except old planted clumps. But on looking closely between the stems of the heath, I found a multitude of seedlings and seedling trees, which had been perpetually shooting up, although for one single yard, at a point some hundred yards distant from one of the old clumps, I counted thirty-two little trees; and one of them, judging from the rings of growth, had during twenty-six years tried to raise its head above the stems of the heath, and had failed. Yet it was Cecily tickled, it became thickly clothed with vigorously-growing young sprouts. Yet the heath was so extremely barren and so extensive, that no one would ever have thought it would have been able to support the heath and evergreen ferns, and to a great extent the heather, to which the heath is so well adapted, and which is not only a splendid ornament of the hill-tops, but is also one of the most efficacious food for cattle. Here we see that cattle absolutely determine the existence of the Scotch fir.

Mr. Darwin then goes on to argue that just as man, in his desire to produce a certain bird or animal by careful breeding, selects the specimens with which to work, so similarly those examples and species best adapted to circumstances. In the manner of working, it is not wonderful that nature for surpasses the greatest labour of her imitator:

As man can produce and certainly has produced a great result by his mechanical and unconscious means of selection, what may not nature effect? Man can act only on external and visible characters, and these alone; nature acts on the unseen and unseen causes, except in so far as they may be useful to any being. She can act on every internal organ, on every shade of constitutional difference, on the machinery of life. Man selects only the efficient for his work; and the being which he tends. Every selected character is fully exercised by her, and the being is placed under well-sustained conditions, so that she may become one with nature and economy in the same way and to the same extent.

Under the natural difference of structure or constitution may exist, and does exist, all its productions. He often begins his selection by some half-mysterious form; or at least by some modification prominent enough to strike him at first view; and he may extend the process during each varying season, as he may choose, and his productions, every modification, produce different results. Man does not always select the best, but he does often enough select the best, and so does nature. When the best results have been obtained, nature in its turn goes on, and the principle of selection is carried farther.

Into this law of natural selection sexual feelings necessarily enter, and the wager of battle which gives the best females to the best males.

The most vigorous makes descends from the highest to the lowest grades in creation. Some curious speculations arise in the case of plants and the manner in which they are crossed and selected by insects. In treating of the reproduction of plants, Mr. Darwin coincides with the views of Andrew Knight, that two individuals unite to reproduce, even when both sexes are found in the same plant.

A leading principle in the operation of the struggle for existence, as laid down by Mr. Darwin, is that by the effort of nature to adapt her creatures to the circumstances amid which they are placed, the exceptional individuals in whom these variations stand the best chance of being preserved. They become better adapted. In a series of generations, the rate, and the old form grows more and more exceptional, until it finally dies out. The effect produced by the one sex and the other sex is the extinction of the variety and extinction is the result which Mr. Darwin at a length which their importance deserves.

The great difficulty in the way of the change theory is obviously the absence, or at least not in the extreme rarity, of transitional examples. Mr. Darwin meets this by expressing his belief that "new varieties are very swiftly formed, and very slowly lost, and the selection can do nothing until favourable circumstances chance to occur, and until a place in the natural policy of the country can be better filled by some modification of one or other of the new species, instead of a variety?"

The change may take place and yet we not see it. The hour hand of the clock, and the dial, which it will watchmaking, making, we know, its show progresses almost in twelve hours, and yet what eye can detect its motion? Nature takes her time in perfecting her work, and indeed it may be said that the "great stone book" contains proofs showing that the mighty changes there recorded have required periods of time scarcely appreciable to our finite understandings.

It would be impossible for us to follow out all the stages of this great argument within the limits of a brief article; we turn therefore to the concluding chapters in which Mr. Darwin passes in review the theories in his chapter of reasoning. He lays down a science of "phlogiston that gravity has the perfection of any organ or instinct, which we may con-
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them the slightest of his sophistries, and dreams that they are thus annihilated. Who can he believe him, when he seeks to make dupes? Who the credulous, except him that takes for granted a boundless credulity? Are we not sufficiently acquainted with the doings of the extremes? We have seen their passions and their follies. We know that, if high intellectual gifts are not seen because the mantle of the saint has such magnanimous amplitude? Are his subjects a discontented set of disposable relics, or is he not one of the tenderness of French bayonets? Are people ever revolutionists from the mere love of revolution? Or rather, to crush the whole thing into its intensest and most physical nature at the pleasure and for the pleasure of an Italian priest! We cannot refute the Count de Montalembert, for the same reason that we could not vanquish a London fog with cannon balls. Then, the vapour is there and steam; and we are obliged to content ourselves with testifying to the presence of the vapour and the steam. We rush from the ephemeral gloom and abatement into the glorious sunlight. Our first ecstatic bound on the first radiant hill is the only reply which we do conjure Ultramontanism to engulf. The time we devote to warring with chimeras is always better spent in ascertaining divine primordial principles.

Ever since the Roman Catholic Church and Feudalism ceased to be independent, the Papacy has been sedulously condemned age after age. The attempt to revive the Papacy is as vain as was the endeavour of Julius to revive polytheism. How long the Roman Catholic Church may continue to exist, or whether the spiritual empire would be the most victorious the more it was divorced from every earthly element. Might not some mock, since Christian who is also a Roman Catholic system, we should strenuously insist on the spiritual empire, it would be his only care. Were there not long years when the Popedom was exclusively an ecclesiastical entity? It was exclusively as an ecclesiastical entity that it was subjected to mere number and mystery over mankind. What can it lose by being limited, as before, to its ecclesiastical functions?

We suspect that very little real love or real reverence for the Pope glows in the heart of Charles de Montalembert. In the sincerity of a De Maistre or a Lamennais it was easy to believe; in Montalembert's sincerity it is impossible to have faith. French propaganda and the newer form of Jesuitism have entered into alliance, and Montalembert is the preacher and apologist of the bond. France is to conquer through Jesuitism: Jesuitism is to conquer through France. This league of infamy has nothing unnatural. Jesuitism will accept any one for an accomplice; and the act of so avowing the Count de Montalembert is as criminal as a crime; it is monstrous and a creed. For three or four centuries the Papacy has been an obstruction; yet we are to forget this—we are to believe that the Papacy is the moral force which every hand should defend, and of which every pious heart should render homage. The fallacies which Montalembert devotes to the championship of the Papacy are worthy of it. A creed which can exist in a nation for a noble and natural life has, amid torture and tears, breathed and enjoyed its voice: we are, however, to be dealt to the wall of that nation's misery; we are to mock for hunger and salvation, that the Pope may continue to be enthroned in the Vatican.

France as the eldest daughter of the Church did her duty promptly; it seems, when sending her licentious soldiery in 1849 to snatch the Papacy from ruin; but because this same holy France is in 1859 not quite so sedulous in the same cause, Montalembert's sympathies are there. According to his own rhetoric, the only thought burning in the bosom of a hundred millions of Catholics is how Fais IX. may be enabled to perpetuate a horrible misgovernment is to its infinitely great, and the present multitude of human knowledge being too small, for dogmatism. One thing seems certain, that this is the most remarkable work, and that its author has a strong sympathy with those who regard the development or change of anything to be the humbleness of the human race. We are as we are. Moreover, it is not possible, it is not even possible, that the Pope, in its insipidity and tendency to build itself up in other than that which regulates the brute creation? To do it appears more than possible.

COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT'S PAMPHLET.

PLUS THE NINTH AND THEIR FRANCE, IN 1849 AND 1859. BY THE COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT. TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH. LONDON: J. JEFFREY.

THE COUNTER THIS PAMPHLET has the rhetorical claim and vivacity which distinguish all Montalembert's writings, it is nevertheless a very flimsy and foolish production. The opinion is tendered to general in England by the Count de Montalembert is as humbug, and in that opinion we most definitely concur. The whole political action of Europe, of the world, should be made to consist in the Papacy, in its imperial form as a creed; it is monstrous and a creed. For three or four centuries the Papacy has been an obstruction; yet we are to forget this—we are to believe that the Papacy is the moral force which every hand should defend, and of which every pious heart should render homage. The fallacies which Montalembert devotes to the championship of the Papacy are worthy of it. A creed which can exist in a nation for a noble and natural life has, amid torture and tears, breathed and enjoyed its voice: we are, however, to be dealt to the wall of that nation's misery; we are to mock for hunger and salvation, that the Pope may continue to be enthroned in the Vatican.

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