

it is characteristic of his life, and in keeping with it, that it was he who had, by his earnest intercession, obtained the freedom of his murderer. Has he not well wiped out in his blood the defilement, which he believed to have irredeemably blackened his being?

He lies in the far off territory of Dakotah, mourned over by many who are separated from his grave by wide expanses of land and sea, by us likewise who write this brief memorial of him, and none the less deeply that we recognise in his story another proof of the impotence of a false creed to supply the soul with nourishment, or give peace to the heart.

CONVERT.

RANDOM THOUGHTS.

ONE rough night lately on board a steamer the conversation of several chance acquaintances happened to turn upon their past lives. As the company consisted of men of different nationalities and of various walks of life the talk was full of interest. The stories of their lives varied widely one from another, yet each one, without exception, ended his history with a wish, ardently expressed, that life could be commenced over again, and what a different course would then be steered. The rich man, travelling for pleasure, talked of chances in life allowed to slip by, which, if grasped, would have made him still wealthier. The youth, fresh from the University, lamented the time wasted in idleness and dissipation which might have been turned to so much better account; and an American who had been an officer in the confederate army expressed as the dearest wish of his heart that the war could only commence over again, for he knew now to a certainty how Ulysses S. Grant, and I forget how many thousands of men, might have been annihilated in one of that general's celebrated marches. These reasons for a renewal of life were expressed openly and without reserve; but one can easily fancy that there must have been a few amongst these half-dozen men who desired to call back a portion of their lives from other and far different motives. Motives too sacred to be talked of there and to be exposed to public gaze. But when the company had broken up and each one had betaken himself to his berth, and whilst the groaning and plunging of the steamer banished sleep—no doubt the conversation just ended must have brought back to the memory of these the remembrance of some loved object (now no more) on whose heart a pang had too often been inflicted by a cruel word or thoughtless action on the part of the man who would give worlds to recall them, but which could never be atoned for on this side of the grave. Such words, lightly spoken by the utterer, but cutting deep into the heart of the object addressed, are like a two-edged sword, returning at such moments as these with terrible force on the memory, and carrying with them bitter grief and remorse. The man who regrets chances gone or time misspent can take hope and comfort in the thought that he will make, in some measure, the future compensate for the past—that though twenty chances may have, in the course of his previous life, fallen in his way, the next one he will use wisely and make it lead on to fortune. But the remembrance of unkindness to a being who had no thought but his welfare and to whom in this world he can never make amends is the bitterest of all pangs.

But is it true that if we could live our lives over again we would avoid all the shoals and quicksands in our paths, and seize upon all the advantages presented to us? In the conversation that gives rise to these remarks the wish on each one's part was sadly but confidently uttered, and in a tone that implied no shadow of a doubt that could the wish be fulfilled the new life would be a very different one. The youth of twenty thought if he were only ten again, he would know how to secure a sure path to fortune, and the man of forty thought the youth unreasonable, and that if he himself could only be put back to twenty there would be no difficulty in achieving any object under the sun. And here we see at once that if we could, as Hamlet says, "like a crab go backward," and take off the desired number of years to make a fresh start in life, the course run anew would, it is to be feared, fall very much in the old tracks. For if the youth at twenty wishes he were ten again under the idea that he would lead those ten previous years in a different way, why is it that when he reaches thirty you hear him then desiring to be twenty? And again, when he reaches forty, he thinks if he were only thirty again how different he would make everything. But if he is so firmly persuaded that, could he live part of his life over again, he would render his previous experience of such use to himself, why does he not, seeing that he cannot live the same years again, bring that experience to bear on future years? Is not the fact that mankind as a rule do not do so proof that if our wishes could possibly be gratified, and we could recall a portion of our past existence, in the hope of giving it a different direction, in the majority of cases our second lives would lead us to the identical positions where we found ourselves at the end of our first lives? All our previous experience would, for most of us, go for naught. We fancy that our past lives would teach us to do this and avoid that, forgetting, as Coleridge so well expresses it, that "the light which experience gives is a lantern on the stern which shines only on the waves behind us." It is in vain, however, wishing to be young again. We will grow old notwithstanding the recipes of those kind-hearted individuals who offer, for the payment of a small fee, to make us young and beautiful for ever. Dr. Faust had a short spell of life over again, and a pretty course he ran—a model young gentleman he turned out. It is to be hoped, for the sake of his friends and neighbors who lived round about him during his first career, that his second life was not better than his first one. If it was they must have had, as "A. Ward" would say, "a rough old time of it."

To all those wishing to grow young again, I would recommend a careful perusal of this gentleman's short but eventful career, with particular directions to take note of its very brilliant ending, and to remember that in these degenerate days the only way to grow young again with a view of profiting by past experience is to place that experience as a light on the bows of your vessel and not on its stern.

X. X. Z.

A POLITICAL PICTURE.

THE following vivid description of the New Zealand Government is taken from the 'Auckland Herald,' the most respectable, independent, and outspoken of any of our colonial newspapers. Probably it is independent for more reasons than one, and for this among other reasons that, like the TABLET, it can afford to be so. Its only client is the people, and it cares no more for Sir George Grey than for Sir Julius Vogel, when either appears to go against justice. For five years, from 1870 to 1875, says the 'Herald,' "The Ministry could simply do anything they chose, and, indeed, they became so accustomed to the exercise of unchecked power that they in many cases of great importance omitted to go through the ceremony of consulting the House at all. During these years mentioned, the representatives of the people, with a very few exceptions, were mere hangers-on to the Ministry, trying to get jobs for themselves or their relations, or at the best suing for favors to be shown to their constituents. It was actually painful to sit in the House and see how business was conducted, and how the members actually fawned upon Ministers. Ministers, as Mr. Andrew has said, sported and played with the House at their will, and Sir Julius Vogel, in his trips to Europe, not only had his own expenses paid, but the passages of his family, and presumed so much upon the servility of the House, that he drew to the amount of thousands of pounds without authority. The salaries of the Ministers were greatly increased, and the country went to enormous expense to provide them with palatial residences. It is a remarkable fact, too, that during the last seven years, six Ministers of the Crown have received permanent appointments, with hardly a protest from the Assembly. No sooner had the members of the Assembly been corrupted by the first borrowing than they called out that the pace proposed was too slow, that more money must be borrowed, and more rapidly, and that the spending must be profuse. Thus the Public Works scheme became a mere scramble, in the midst of which a large proportion of the money borrowed has been wasted. Members only sold themselves to the Ministry, who had favored men, and favored districts, and favored interests of their own. In the important department of legislation for native lands, Ministers were simply omnipotent, and could deal with the estate of the country as if it were their own. No House ever voted public funds in such a way as the last one. The money was put into the hands of Ministers. Millions were voted for railways, any one of which Ministers could make or leave unmade, while hundreds of thousands were voted for the purchase of native lands, of the details of the expenditure of which no account has been given. In very many ways, the Ministry showed how independent they felt of the Assembly. Arrangements with respect to the San Francisco service were made while the House was sitting, but without communicating with the representatives of the people." What a deplorable and humiliating picture we have here of parliamentary or popular servility on the one hand, and ministerial corruption or political depravity and impudence on the other.

Talk of the corruption and dishonesty of "Popish" Governments under Continental "despots" after that. This is "progress" with a vengeance; not, however, towards improvement, but towards rascality, bare-faced, audacious villany in the infant state of New Zealand—the youngest offshoot of pure and mighty England. What a spectacle for other nations to witness. What a burlesque on Parliamentary Governments. "Members openly sold themselves to the Ministry. No sooner had the members of the Assembly been corrupted by the first borrowing, than they called out that the pace was too slow, that more money must be borrowed, and the spending more rapid and profuse. The Public Works system became a mere scramble, in the midst of which a large proportion of the borrowed money has been wasted." Mark that, ye pure patriots and honest men—ye admirers of Parliamentary rule throughout the world. Could anything be worse, more shameful or scandalous. But men may say New Zealand, after all, is only a chip of the old block—England. If the people of New Zealand thus meekly submit to be fleeced by a corrupt Government, the people of England have many a time and oft been victimised in the same way. The people are enamoured with self-rule, and self-rule they are getting, though hardly to their "heart's content." The 'Herald' hopes that the "Opposition" party will introduce honesty into the Government of New Zealand. Vain hope. Selfishness not justice or honesty is the essence of popular rule on a small scale or on a large scale. As the people have made their bed so they must lie on it. Amidst much real and more seeming justice, the Parliamentary Government of England is one of the most selfish in the world. Yet, in spite of corrupt and dishonest Governments, the people prosper, at least, in a material sense, both here and in England. The Irish are bent on securing "Home Rule" or local self-government, for much the same reasons that Sir George Grey and Mr. Macandrew plied for Local Parliaments here. Yet I will venture to say, if these gentlemen were members of the Imperial Parliament, they would vote against the Irish Home Rule party, and oppose them tooth and nail. If the Irish don't get Home Rule or something equivalent to that ere long, it will be a wonder. It is not nearly so hopeless a cause as Catholic Emancipation was once. *Magna est Justicia*. Who can measure the power of justice or arrest it in its course?

It would appear that the most "popular" Governments are ever the most corrupt and dishonest and disreputable. The 'Otago Times' or 'Guardian,' I forget which, hinted the other day that the Government of America was so disreputable, that no honest and competent man would have anything to say to it if he could avoid it, and the Government of New Zealand was in a fair way of becoming equally bad if it did not soon mend. In the midst of all this political dishonesty, injustice, and corruption, the Catholic Church, by her faithful children, should exert a wholesome and restraining power. She is notably doing so. The Catholic party in the British