

Facts such as those we quote on another page, relating to the starvation and disease which are at this moment ravaging a great part of Europe, call for no comment—or perhaps we should rather say that no comment can be made which is adequate to the facts. But they should at least prove that what we have written about the prospects of European civilisation is in no way an exaggeration. The aftermath of war is even worse than war itself. We cannot therefore understand the apparent equanimity with which so many people talk and write of the prospect of future wars. Many people still write and speak as if war were not only a necessary evil, but so trifling an evil that its effects, like those of some periodical epidemic, could be anticipated and controlled. The race of man is indeed long suffering, but its powers of endurance and recuperation have their limits. The time has come when we may safely say that war is one of the diseases from which there is no recovery. The only hope lies in prevention. In plain words, the human race cannot afford to take the risk of another war. If it comes, it will hurl victors and vanquished alike into the abyss of barbarism. There is a terrible passage in Carlyle's "Past and Present" relating how an Irish widow in Edinburgh, being afflicted with typhus, and unable to obtain succour, died and infected her lane with the disease, so that seventeen other persons died also. "She proves her sisterhood," says Carlyle, in words of Swift-like brutality, "her typhus-fever kills them: they were actually her brothers though denying it! Had human creature ever to go lower for a proof?" Carlyle's parable, with its moral, is very applicable to-day. The brotherhood of man, the unity of civilisation—these are not phrases, but facts. But, like the inhabitants of Edinburgh, the peoples of the world have a choice of two ways in which the fact may be encountered. That we shall "prove our brotherhood" and realise our unity there is no doubt. But it will be a brotherhood either of mutual service or of mutual destruction, a unity either of hope or of despair. Every act or word which neglects to take account of this reality should be branded as treason against the human race.

### THE GOOSE.

My solemn feet along the grass  
That flanks the weedy water-hole,  
Provoke the township urchin's laugh,  
His flying stone has me for goal.

The master even has a smile  
When I my heirloom dignity  
Display along the water's edge:  
They are ridiculous to me.

Ingrates, forsooth, who teach and learn,  
And still forget my high renown,  
I, bright on history's human page,  
Whose cackle saved their ancient town!

—Mary E. Fullerton.

### AUSTRALIA'S TRANSFORMATION.

In the last few years a change has come over Australia that has had striking effects on art, politics, social institutions. Some would say Australia had become more highly industrialised, and might add that it was part of a universal and inevitable process, consequent upon the evolution of—; but everyone knows the usual jargon. It seems a pedantic way to describe the addition of a handful of boot-factories and a couple of iron-works to our national economy. And it is not even exact in its data. We have not ceased to depend on wool, wheat and such things for our national income, and it would not mean an absolute disaster to us if the handful of factories were swept away to-morrow. Our existence is based on the raw products of the land, and will be for the next hundred years at least. That is a fundamental fact that we have to take into account.

But there is no doubt about the change. The cities have conquered for the time being, and that vast tract we call the Bush has been pushed into the background. Such civilisation as we have has become urban. Melbourne and Sydney stand for Australia nowadays. They provide the politicians and their policies, the artistic and literary ideals, the Utopias, and the national characteristics; and because they have no roots it is natural that all their products should have a second-hand flavour. Melbourne suburbs, after all, are very like those of Birmingham. Sydney tends to model itself on San Francisco. What is there in modern industry to give any character to the towns it creates? Picture theatres, gramophones, motor cars and villas are universal, and with them you can build a modern suburb in a week,—one that, like the mule, is without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity.

Thirty years ago life in Australia was not moulded by our coastal cities. It took its character from the Bush. The lean, bronzed man from the station, the selection, or the small township was the accepted national type. Not a bad type, after all! His father, perhaps, had first tasted independence as an alluvial miner and had grafted the love of it into him. With this personal aspiration went several valuable social qualities: hospitality, freedom of intercourse, and readiness to help a neighbour. It used to be a recognised convention on all the great roads that a swagman had a right to his ration of tea, flour and sugar, and the giving of it had no more flavour of charity than the Irish habit of putting out bread and milk to feed the fairies. But the ways of that old life of the Bush are not easily definable. It is enough to say that they bred a certain type of character with positive traits, native and individual. Outsiders like Francis Adams recognised it even in the eighties, and said that in the inland life of the continent lay Australia's sole hope for the future.

Our immediate past, then, was determined by the Bush. Most of our weekly journals—the "Boomerang" and the early "Bulletin," for instance—were written for it entirely, and generally by men whose minds it had coloured. If their work was raw it was at least quite fresh. The same might be said of all the products of that time, from political ideas to poetry. They were the

tumbling expressions of a genuinely creative spirit, and there was a vigorous life in them. If Australia had developed from that base, its body would be healthier to-day and its mind more coherent. But the expanding towns began to assert their sway and to control the national life, acting through the accidents of centralised government and the power of numbers. To-day villadom and proletariat combine to fix the national life or cross swords in the struggle for economic power. "The Man from Snowy River" is deposed to make room for a sentimental "bloke" from the slums, and the life of the continent is held up by a quarrel between two classes of people on the sea-board.

These are only typical features of the change. It extends to most phases of the national life. If you read the heirs of the "Boomerang" and the early "Bulletin" you will find that they are almost entirely written for the big cities, for a population that goes to cinemas or airs itself on the "Block." The Federal Parliament seems to exist merely for the entertainment of Melbourne. Its leaders have most distinctly degenerated. Sir Edmund Barton, Mr. Deakin, and Mr. Watson had, after all, some flavour of national character about them, but what can be said of rootless proletarians like Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook?

Strange to say, most people appear to regard these changes as being for the good. They think that the days when the Bush took the lead were a bucolic stage through which we have happily passed. In sophisticated villadom there is an open dislike for the Bush, for its traditions and habits. In proletariat there is the same contempt for it that imperialists feel for the backward countries. The men on the soil have not kept pace with the world's progress by changing their catchwords. And so we are in danger of splitting up into two separate peoples that do not understand each other.

For the Bush, of course, still exists, in spite of being relegated to the background. It continues to supply the raw materials of our daily life and would go on cheerfully to-morrow with its sheep-shearing and scrub-felling if the big ports were flooded by a tidal-wave. It is mere pride of ignorance that makes us talk of industry as if it meant the supply of boots and chocolate to the suburbs; or of public opinion as if it meant the comments of business men going to their warehouses in Flinders Lane.

I believe that the dominance of villadom and of its shadow is not a good thing. In many obvious ways it can be shown that the crowding of people in a few big cities is bad, but every argument that is used against it in other countries has triple force in Australia. The older cities have a native art and culture that prevent them from being overwhelmed by the cinema, the jazz dance, the cheap scientific reprint, and the megaphones of the publicity agents; we have nothing. Our life would be richer and more stable if there was a closer connection between the coast and the centre of the continent. Politics, literature and social institutions would take on more reality.

—Vance Palmer.

## CLEANINGS.

We passed over the fields of Carlowitz, where the last great victory was obtained by Prince Eugene over the Turks. I could not look without horror on such numbers of mangled human bodies, and reflect on the injustice of war, that makes murder not only necessary, but meritorious. Nothing seems to me a plainer proof of the irrationality of mankind (whatever fine claims we pretend to reason) than the rage with which we contest for a small spot of ground, when such vast parts of fruitful ground lie quite uninhabited. It is true custom has now made it unavoidable, but can there be a greater demonstration of want of reason than a custom being firmly established, so plainly contrary to the interest of man in general?

Mahometism is divided up into as many sects as Christianity. There are very few amongst them so absurd as to set up for wits by declaring they believe no God at all.

Achmet Bey made no scruple of deviating from some part of Mahomet's law, by drinking wine with the same freedom we did. When I asked him how he came to allow himself that liberty, he made answer, all the creatures of God were good, and designed for the use of man; however, that the prohibition of wine was a very wise maxim and meant for the common people, being the source of all disorders among them; but that the prophet never designed to confine those that knew how to use it with moderation. However, scandal ought to be avoided, and that he never drank it in public.

Of all the religions I have seen, the Arnaout seem to me the most particular. They are natives of the Ancient Macedonia. These people, living between Christians and Mahometans, and not being skilled in controversy, declare that they are utterly unable to judge which religion is best; but to be certain of not entirely rejecting the truth, they very prudently follow both, and go to the mosques on Fridays and the church on Sundays, saying for their excuse that at the day of judgment they are sure of protection from the true prophet; but which that is, they are not able to determine in this world. I believe there is no other race of mankind have so modest an opinion of their own capacity.

I find tar-water succeeded to Ward's drop. 'Tis possible, by this time, that some other quackery has taken place of that; the English are easier than any other nation infatuated by the prospect of universal medicines, nor is there any country in the world where the doctors raise such immense fortunes. I attribute it to the fund of credulity which is in all mankind. We have no longer faith in miracles and relics, and therefore, with the same fury run after recipes and physicians. The same money which three hundred years ago was given for the health of the soul is now given for the health of the body, and by the same sort of people—women and half-witted men. In the countries where they have shrines and images, quacks are despised.

—From the Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague (1689-1762).