

she moves him at her pleasure, so 't is freely said. An ill woman to quarrel with."

"An ill woman to be friends with; say that, my Lady. And as for holding Kelderby at any one's pleasure, I trust you know better than that. There is One that orders both kings and women. I would n't be put about for nothing. And it is ill luck to speak of ill. My mother used to say to me, 'Jael, my lass, say no ill of the year till the year be past.'"

"Well, well! Put down the blind, Jael, and let me sleep, and so forget for a little that I live. Surely we shut our bedroom door and rehearse death every night."

"I know not, my Lady. Sleep has its own life. Will dead folks dream?"

She was pulling down the blind as she spoke, and she paused in the act, and, looking upward, said softly, "There 's a fine new moon, God bless her!"

(To be continued.)

Amelia E. Barr.

GUILIELMUS REX.

THE folk who lived in Shakspeare's day
And saw that gentle figure pass
By London Bridge,—his frequent way,—
They little knew what man he was!

The pointed beard, the courteous mien,
The equal port to high and low,
All this they saw or might have seen—
But not the light behind the brow!

The doublet's modest gray or brown,
The slender sword-hilt's plain device,
What sign had these for prince or clown?
Few turned, or none, to scan him twice.

Yet 't was the king of England's kings!
The rest with all their pomps and trains
Are moldered, half-remembered things—
'T is he alone that lives and reigns!

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

The Distaste for Solitude.

EACH census emphasizes the disproportionate growth of the population of cities and towns in the United States as compared with that of the country at large. Every decade marks a stronger tendency on the part of those born in thinly settled rural districts to seek homes in places where there are large numbers of people.

There has been a prolonged discussion as to the causes of this phenomenon. Much stress has been laid upon the changes which were inevitable under the development of immense manufacturing and business enterprises in a nation which at the start was engaged almost exclusively in agricultural pursuits. Undoubtedly economic influences of this sort have had great effect, but, no one can give any thought to the problem without seeing that they do not suffice to solve it. It seems only reasonable to conclude that a motive power may be discovered in the operation of some law of human nature. Is not one explanation to

be found in a distaste for solitude which has been growing during the past generation?

Farm life necessarily involves to a large extent the separation of the farmer from the community. In any agricultural region it is inevitable that a large proportion of the families must live isolated lives. The village is usually a considerable distance from the farm, and the nearest neighbor is often a mile away. The highway which passes the house is not likely to be much traveled; indeed, the house may be on a neighborhood road which accommodates only a few families, or at the end of a private way. Father, mother, and children go to the village church on Sunday, and perhaps two or three times a week some member drives in for the mail or to buy something at the store. But during the warmer months the pressure of work leaves no leisure for social intercourse, while in the winter season the severity of the cold or the bad condition of the roads often keeps the family from seeing any outsider for days at a time.

Such has been the mode of life among the farming

population of New England, and of the Northern States generally, as the tide of population flowed westward from the Atlantic. It was a régime which made solitude the rule, and association of any sort with one's fellow-men the exception. It threw people upon their own resources, and tested their capacity to find in themselves enough to occupy and amuse their minds. It was a test which generation after generation stood well. For a long time there were few large cities in the whole land, and in the days of the stage-coach the nearest of those few was far remote from the average farm. The weekly journal contained little that was calculated to arouse discontent with the simple life of the country, for life in the cities was comparatively simple, and, even had it been otherwise, the newspapers had not yet learned the trick of making "spicy reports." The farmer accepted a large measure of isolation as the common lot, and brought up his boys and girls to consider such a mode of life as the natural one.

The railroad dealt the first blow at the old régime. It rendered it easy to get away from the farm and to the cities, which in turn the railroad made constantly larger and more numerous. The real attractions of the city grew rapidly, and, what was still more important, the popular conception that the city was full of attractions grew ten times as rapidly. The adventurous youth who had deserted the parental farm to try his fortune on a larger field returned on a visit to the old homestead richer than any man in the town, and the newspapers were constantly telling still more wonderful tales of successes achieved by poor country boys in the city. The whistle of the engine, coming perhaps faintly over miles of meadow and cornfield, was suggestive of wealth, or, if not of wealth, at least of crowds and distractions, in the city towards which it sped. The great world had been before so remote from the farm that it seemed inaccessible; it was brought now almost within hailing distance. Solitude had appeared almost as natural as it was inevitable; but now that it could be escaped, it began to grow intolerable.

One need not carry his investigations far to discover that the desire to escape the solitude of the farm is often the most potent motive in drawing people to the city. The hope of bettering one's fortunes actuates many, but not a few will frankly confess that they have no such hope. The man who abandoned a farm up the Hudson, which had been in the family for generations, and came to New York without having any particular vocation in view, and who was found by an old neighbor some time afterward serving as conductor on a horse-car, was a type of a large class. Apparently it had never occurred to him that the position he occupied as the employee of a corporation which might turn him off any day without a moment's notice was far inferior to that of the independent farmer. What impressed and satisfied him was the fact that he had become a part of the rushing life of the great city.

In like manner it is often the dread of solitude which keeps in the city those born and bred in its poorer quarters who might better their condition immensely by going into the country. "I could n't stand the quiet," "I should be so lonesome": such are the protests which one hears, over and over again, when

offering opportunities of higher wages and greater comfort; hears, moreover, from those who have no strong ties of family or friendship to bind them to the city, but who are held only by the subtle attractions of the crowds, the street scenes, the petty incidents which must always diversify the course of events where there is a great aggregation of people. It is the simple truth that thousands of men and women would prefer scanty food and poor lodgings in a large city to abundant fare and good quarters in a small village, or, worse still, in some comfortable but isolated farm-house two or three miles from a village. A philanthropic New Yorker, interested in a tenement-house family which was always more or less dependent upon charity, secured them a farm in New Jersey rent free and established them upon it. They made a living, and were, as he supposed, enjoying their independence, when, not a year later, he discovered that they had abandoned the farm and returned to their wretched existence in the city. Finding the mother, he asked why they had not remained where they were so well off. "Well, there was n't much company there." This was the sole reason she had to give.

Nor is this phenomenon confined to the United States. The same disproportionate growth of the cities and towns, at the expense of the rural districts, is observable in England and on the Continent, and may be traced to the same causes there as here. People flock from the country into London and Paris as they do into New York, not merely because they are badly off in the country and hope to better themselves in the city, but also because they "can't stand the quiet" of a monotonous existence, and are willing to risk the loss of present comfort in order to secure change of scene.

Has the whole world, then, wearied of solitude, grown intolerant of quiet, become enamored of crowds and noise? That would, indeed, be a melancholy conclusion. Happily there is another side to the picture. The most noteworthy development of the vacation season during recent summers has been the growing disposition of city people to seek privacy when they go into the country. Great hotels at seaside resorts and in mountain retreats there still are, and of course always must be, but the proportion of all the summer visitors which they secure grows less year by year. There is an increasing class of people who long for retirement, and who find in the great summer hotel too many reminders of the city noise and confusion from which they fled. If the charms of nature or the pleasures of association draw them to the neighborhood of such a caravansary, they seek in preference a cottage. But best of all they like a spot where the crowd never has come and never is likely to come — some one of the thousands upon thousands of such retreats which possess not only the beauty of nature, but also the charm of quiet. Often it is the old homestead to which the mind recurs as the most attractive of all places because it insures the very solitude, now longed for, which once seemed so hard to bear.

These are welcome signs that the pendulum is beginning to swing back, and that human nature is recovering its equilibrium. The reaction which has set in from the city affects the country in turn. The summer visitor comes to feel an interest in the future of the village where he spends the pleasantest months of

the year, and wishes to make it a more desirable place of residence for those who inhabit it all the months. He helps in the starting of a library, he aids in reviving an academy, he encourages the formation of a village improvement association. Perhaps he puts up in his birthplace a library building or some other edifice which both serves a utilitarian purpose and elevates the taste of the community. In one way or another he displays his appreciation of the village, and in turn the villagers themselves come to appreciate its charms. If it is so beautiful a spot that it draws people from the city early in the season and holds them late, it cannot be so dreary as it had once seemed. And it is not; for the dreariness too often had come chiefly from the decline of public spirit, and the consequent dying out of the higher life that is always possible to a rural community. Revive this higher life, and the village may again have its attractions, as it once did, for those who were born in it. The city may thus repair some of the harm which its own growth has done the country, and sounder ideas of society and of solitude may come to pervade both.

The New School of Explorers.

It was a suggestive coincidence that the project for celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America should have been under discussion when the great African explorer was again returning to civilization from his latest plunge into the Dark Continent. That the names of Christopher Columbus and Henry M. Stanley should thus be on people's lips together seems both natural and proper, for the American of the nineteenth century belongs to the same type of the world's great men as the Genoese of the fifteenth. But the striking feature of the collocation is the fact that Stanley is really the last representative of this type. In other words, the explorer has now had his day in the history of the world, and passes from the stage.

It is but a little while since the earth was a mystery to its inhabitants. Vast spaces upon the map were frankly confessed by the geographer to be utterly unknown to him. The immense island of Australia, so large as almost to demand the title of continent, which some bestow, had not been visited by civilized man. Vast tracts of Asia were hardly distinguished by name. Africa was virtually a sealed book. Even our own country scarcely more than a generation ago still offered opportunities for the explorer; and people in middle life recall the strange impression made upon the childish mind by the expression, "The Great American Desert," which covered so large an area west of the Mississippi. In short, when men and women who do not call themselves old were young, the earth still remained full of unknown lands.

We have changed all that, along with so many other things. The map of the United States no longer contains any vast unknown waste, and the Great American Desert has shrunk away before the advance of civilization. The Old World has yielded up one after another of its mysteries. Last of all, a flood of light has been thrown upon the Dark Continent itself. With Africa opened up, the globe, for the first time in the history of the human race, ceases to have its dark corners. Man finally knows what sort of place the earth is, and henceforth the explorer's rôle on an heroic scale

is impossible. There remain, to be sure, many regions about which we know comparatively little, but there are few regions in any part of the world about which we know nothing — if we except the poles; and even there the approach has been so near that what remains is rather the glory of achievement than the satisfaction of a baffled curiosity. This is not to say that there is nothing left for the information and entertainment of the public in the fuller knowledge that we shall constantly gain of remote regions, for there is here a great field which will richly reward careful cultivation; but what remains must be the prolonged work of many, rather than the brilliant dash of one or another great spirit. Stanley is the last of the school of explorers to which Columbus belonged.

It must be admitted that the world has lost something by its gains. The charm of mystery and the zest of adventure are gone when there are no longer trackless seas to sail or pathless continents to thread. It is a somewhat prosaic reflection that we have done away with the mystery of unknown regions, so that the map-maker need no longer use any of those vague terms for large areas which once piqued curiosity and fired the imagination. Indeed, one may almost feel a grudge against the explorers when he realizes how much of poetry they have banished by substituting knowledge for the unknown; and may envy those more fortunate generations who lived and died enjoying the pleasures of speculation about parts of the earth which were practically almost as remote and puzzling as the moon. Fortunately the loss is not irreparable. A world which man knew all about would indeed be a tiresome sort of world. But the explorers, who have shown us what the geography of the globe is, have, after all, only scratched the surface. The realm of mystery, so far from dwindling into nothingness, has really widened. The field for the imagination's play has grown immeasurably. The range of possible discovery has spread from the globe to the universe.

The new school of explorers is glad not to be obliged to waste energy in what is at best the essentially commonplace business of finding out "the lay of the land" or the bounds of the sea. Its field of study is those forces of nature which the old explorer, however clear-sighted, never saw, or, seeing, comprehended not. It analyzes the elements; it searches out motive power; it makes electricity its servant. The earth, the sea, the air, all invite its investigation, and one discovery only serves to stimulate the search for others. It sets no bounds to its ambition, and the imagination has a boundless play in contemplating the possibilities of its achievements. The telephone, the phonograph, the electric motor — these are hints, but only hints, of its future work. Thus it happens that, as the old explorer disappears, a new appears upon the scene, and the type of which Henry M. Stanley is the last representative is succeeded by the one personified in Thomas A. Edison. We should name with men like Edison and Thomson and Bell also the psychologists and philosophers — those who are prying into the mysteries of the human spirit: a slow and laborious and baffling quest, but surely not the least interesting, or, to the possessors of souls, the least important. Latitude and longitude circumscribed the scope of the old explorer, but the time can never come when the new will have sounded all the depths of the universe.