

notice; they will come to realise that the Society exists not only to keep curious pets in beautiful gardens, but to procure the advancement of scientific knowledge.

The presence of the library at the Gardens will be of direct service to those zoologists who wish to consult the literature about an animal immediately before or after seeing it, and may induce many Fellows who are not professional zoologists to pass beyond interest in animals to knowledge of them. It is intended, moreover, to revert to an old custom and to arrange for short lectures, less than an hour in duration, to be given weekly on Saturday afternoons. The new lecture hall will provide suitable accommodation for these, and the expositions are to be varied, sometimes dealing with new arrivals at the Gardens, sometimes on a group that happens to be well represented (at this moment, for instance, every living species and several varieties of equine animals are represented at the Gardens), sometimes an untechnical account of some anatomical or pathological subject. It is also announced that an effort is to be made to develop the educational possibilities of the Gardens. The closer fusion of the scientific and popular sides should lead to a greatly improved system of descriptive labels, a feature in much need of proper attention. At the present time elementary school children are admitted to the Gardens at the rate of a penny each, on week-day mornings. They are in charge of their teachers and such visits are permitted by the education code to be counted as school attendance. It is proposed to arrange courses of lectures and demonstrations for the teachers to provide them with material by which they may turn the visits of the children into something more than the gratification of curiosity. A similar arrangement has been carried out most successfully in the case of the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

An important function of the Society is the publication of memoirs containing the results of zoological research. In accordance with a venerable and respectable tradition such memoirs are issued in volumes entitled the "Scientific Proceedings" and "Transactions" of the Society, and supposed to be a record of what takes place at the evening scientific meetings. But the reading of such memoirs is for the most part an unreal convention. Many are taken only in title, and for others a brief abstract suffices. The subsequent discussion varies almost inversely as the permanent value of the memoirs presented, for those who are expert in a difficult matter will say little until they have had the opportunity of studying in detail the new contribution laid before the meeting. The unreality of the convention of reading is still greater because now it is an accepted principle that priority and the right of the author to his own work dates not from the reading of his memoir but from its publication. It is when specimens can be exhibited or when topics relating to living animals are raised that discussion is most possible and the meetings most valuable, and it is to be expected that the removal of the library and the meetings to the Gardens, whilst not affecting the publication of specialised technical work, will stimulate interest in the much neglected bionomic aspects of zoology.

The transference of the library to the Gardens has an important bearing on another side of the Society's scientific activity. Statistics of deaths in the menagerie show that a considerable proportion of the losses occur within a few weeks after arrival, and there can be little doubt that newcomers not infrequently introduce diseases. Early last year a new principle was introduced. Two large reception houses were built in such a fashion as to be suitable for all except very large animals, and in these, so far as possible, animals are placed on their arrival and retained in quarantine until the authorities are satisfied as to their health. This year another new building is being erected to serve as an infirmary. Hitherto there has been no special accommodation for animals that required medical or surgical treatment or seclusion and special attention. Under the new system arrivals will be filtered through the reception houses, whilst from these and from the general collection all those that are ailing will be removed to the infirmary. Apart from the direct advan-

tage to health, it is hoped that the new arrangement will provide a valuable opportunity for the clinical study of the diseases of animals, a branch of investigation almost untouched except in the case of domesticated animals. The Zoological Society for many years has made use of the anatomical material at its disposal, but until recently there has been very little clinical or pathological investigation. A new post-mortem room with the requisite ancillary offices has been built, whilst large and well-equipped laboratories for anatomical and pathological work have been provided. There are now the material, the arrangements and the equipment for such work, and under the capable direction of the Society's prosector and pathologist, and with the advantage of immediate access to the magnificent library, the Gardens ought to become an active centre of research.

The indications are plain that the new developments of the Zoological Society are to make for increased activity on all sides of its work. The problem of convenient access, however, remains to be solved, and will become still more acute when the work is concentrated at the Gardens and the improvements tend to attract more visitors. The actual distance from such a central point as Oxford Circus is not great, and for those who drive there is no difficulty. For such special occasions as evening meetings it will be simple to provide a private service of motor-omnibuses, but the Society cannot have the prosperity adequate to the work it is doing and to its appetite for more work until there is a direct and easy route to the Gardens. A glance at the map shows how such a route should run. The Broad Walk of Regent's Park continues the line of Portland Place to the eastern boundary of the Gardens. It should be transformed into a stately avenue, like Unter den Linden in Berlin, the present avenue being retained as a central footpath, with on either side a roadway for wheeled traffic, and under it, starting from the Regent's Park Tube Station, a sub-way with electric cars. The new avenue should be driven south through the floral garden on the north of the Marylebone Road and the crescentic private garden at the foot of Portland Place, whilst the central walk with its line of trees might well be continued to the Langham Hotel along the middle of the broadest street in London. Northwards the avenue should be continued across the canal, skirting Primrose Hill to emerge at Chalk Farm. It would then serve as a much-needed exit northwards from central London, relieving the congested traffic of Albany Street and Park Road. Perhaps if the results of the new motor taxation are really applied to improve road communication the Zoological Society may profit incidentally.

THE BELLMAN.

THIRTY years ago or more, when "The Hunting of the Snark" was a new book, an ingenious friend was fond of declaring that it was a profound allegory. None knew better than he that the author had no such intention, had only written it to promote innocent mirth, to "giggle and make giggle". He professed, however, to find in it a hidden meaning, and could, had he wished to do so, have defended himself by the example of "the ingenious of our age, as well as those who lived when Rabelais wrote". They discovered that Gargantua was Francis I., and that the Bishop of Valence sat for Panurge: why should not a modern sage make a key to "The Snark"?

The Bellman therefore was a "Leader of Thought", one of the class that by repeating a remark often enough ("What I tell you three times is true") had collected a following of disciples, promising to show them Truth. Our friend would triumphantly point to the fact that the Bellman supported each man "on the top of the tide, by a finger entwined in his hair". What does this mean, he would say, except that no great discovery is ever made till the world is prepared for it? You must wait for "the top of the tide", and then personal influence will do the rest.

But the Bellman was an agnostic, which, according to

our Interpreter, caused the failures of his voyage. He had made a clean sweep of charts :

“ Other maps are such shapes, with their Islands and Capes.

But we have our good captain to thank,

So the crew would protest, ‘ that he’s bought us the best—

A perfect and absolute blank ’.”

This, he would say, is precisely the objection of the agnostic to creeds. They are “ such shapes ”. As the crew objected that Italy wasn’t like a boot, when you got there, nor England like Mother Goose, so the agnostic finds one article of one creed impossible, another of another, and makes away with them. But

“ Soon they found out

That the captain they trusted so well

Had only one notion of crossing the ocean,

And that was—to tinkle his bell ”.

The bell is ringing loudly in our ears to-day. Almost everyone seems to have a hand on the rope, tolling the knell of the passing day of Prosperity. And, unfortunately, very few bellmen suggest a remedy. A few do. It is perfectly right and praiseworthy to show how calamity is to be avoided—for a Lord Charles Beresford to say “ You must have so many Dreadnoughts and so many destroyers, or you’ll go to the demnition how-wows ”. He is on his own ground, and he tells you what, in his opinion, you ought to do. But what service is rendered by a threat of impending calamity unless it be accompanied by suggestion? Jeremiah did not save the Jews, nor Cassandra the Trojans. They had to dree their weird. And is such “ a clamor and a clangor of the bells ” as “ The City of Brass ” likely to be of any help in saving England?

“ They can only shriek, shriek,

Out of tune,

In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire.”

Unfortunately we can all understand that Mr. Kipling should think we are in a bad way and sorrow as one who has no hope. A great many of us feel that way, but recognise that it is no use to say so, and that it may be hurtful. It was amusing the other day to see “ The City of Brass ” called “ magnificently fearless ”. What has a man to fear who expresses the common feeling of his auditors? If the expression of pessimism be a mark of magnificent courage, we need not at least be afraid that in that quality we have degenerated. For, from every street, from every country village, the recruiting sergeant could raise a battalion of die-hards who feared no foe in shining airship.

Mr. Kipling is not by any means our only bellman, and has only been selected here as a modern and conspicuous instance. The others also howl—in herds, like baying wolves—and, for the most part, are quite as bare of comfort or advice as he is. This is partly owing to the quaint belief which seems to possess most of our public men that it is not their business to make suggestions until they are in a position to carry them out. Almost daily, in the debates, we have a harried Minister asking “ How would you do it then? ” and the indignant answer, “ That’s our business. When we are in power we will tell you ”. Even when they have a plan it is too often sketchy, approximating to the Bellman’s best chart, “ a perfect and absolute blank ”. A friend who lives in the country says that the Tariff Reformers who come down converting the rustics (and say that they want it—badly) cannot or will not answer the simple question, “ What will be the first cost of Tariff Reform? ” He, who is himself a Tariff Reformer, asserts that by this they damage their cause. They admit that a certain sacrifice will have to be made, but when asked “ What sacrifice? ” ride off on side issues as to the immediate return the sacrifice will bring in, increased prosperity etc. etc., none of which he is at all inclined to deny. But for an answer he looks in vain on their chart. It is “ a perfect and absolute blank ”. Their method, in fact, is that of Dingdong, the “ canting sheep-seller ” of Rabelais, who, to

Panurge’s patient “ How much? ” answers only with reiterated praise of the virtues of his sheep.

Let us admit, soberly and sadly, that all is not well with us, and let us give ear to him who can suggest what we can do to be, in a mundane sense, saved. But for maniac shrieks the world has no use. If they have any effect on it they will make it give up in despair. Nor is there on earth a man who cannot evolve as much pessimism as is good for him out of his own inner consciousness.

ANTINOMIAN DRAMA.

By MAX BEERBOHM.

AGAIN and again, in the course of the sittings of the Censorship Commission, “ the young girl ” has been trotted out and pondered on with the customary solicitude. Her twin brother, as usual, has been passed over. Yet, really, is he not just as important as she? If ignorance of the facts of life be a necessary basis for innocence in her, and if it be more-over the best means of preparing her for life, let us keep her blindfold, by all means. But we surely ought, at the same time, to keep an eye on the twin brother. “ The boy—what will he become? ” A great and good man, let us hope; bating that, a steady, harmless citizen. His character is not yet formed; it is still elastic, malleable. Let us not shirk our responsibility. Let us be careful that this boy be, so far as in us lies, exposed to none but wholesome influences. We need not, I think, withhold from him the knowledge that evil exists in the world. We may as well tell him quite frankly that he has the choice of being wicked or good when he grows up. But, since it is not in human nature to choose virtue for its own sake, we must guard him from the suspicion that wrong-doing is not always unattractive and unsuccessful and despised, and virtue not always triumphant and delicious and revered. “ Dear young friend, what is it that weighs on your mind? Come, out with it! We have told you always to bring your little troubles to us. You are not sure whether you want to be a policeman or a burglar when you grow up? Well, you must choose for yourself. We don’t want to bring any irksome pressure to bear on you. Only remember that whereas the policeman is the idol of the community, and spends his old age peacefully in receipt of a huge annual pension, and then goes to heaven, the burglar invariably comes to a bad and miserable end. Indeed, his whole life is a series of such ends: he is always being caught by the policeman, and cast into prison, amidst the hoots of an outraged populace eager to tear him limb from limb, poor fellow! We merely mention these facts in passing. Far be it from us to dictate to you in the choice of a career. What is that you say? Will we give you half-a-crown so that you may go to a theatre to-night? Certainly, dear child, certainly. What play do you want to see? ‘ Arsène Lupin ’? H’m. From the French, we suppose. Still, there can be no harm in it; otherwise it would never have been licensed. Go, dear child, and have a pleasant evening.”

If there were no licenser of plays, the public (it is argued) would straightway develop a sense of responsibility, and would vocally condemn as assaults on morality many plays of a kind which now they accept as harmless on the strength of Mr. Redford’s imprimatur. “ Arsène Lupin ”, let us hope, would be banned promptly. Its power for mischief is incalculable. The hero (save the mark!) is a man who started life with all the advantages of health, strength, genius. To what use has he applied them? To burglary. For ten years he has been cracking cribs with the utmost neatness and despatch, and so cunningly that he has never come within the arm of the law. Nor, alas, is he in the least ashamed. On the contrary, he is very well pleased with himself. And one notes with distress that the authors, MM. Francis de Croisset and Maurice Leblanc, seem to be very well pleased with him. They present him not as a man whose character has been ruined by sin, but as an instance of the powerlessness