

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

DID NOT JESUS CHRIST PREACH IN HEBREW?

The Rev. Alexander Roberts in a work he published several years ago, on the revision of the Old Testament, asserts that Jesus Christ must have taught the people in the Greek tongue, and as a reason for his conclusion says that for a long time preceding the coming of Christ, the Greek tongue pervaded in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. Only the learned men of that age, says he, could read the law and the Prophets, as the old Hebrew which Moses, Isaiah and the rest of the Prophets spoke and wrote had long before the time of our Lord become a dead language. He says that the pure Hebrew race that inhabited Palestine at that period, wrote in Aramaic, a language entirely different from the ancient Hebrew.

Dr. Roberts argues that one of the surest proofs of this is that at least some of the epistles which the Apostles wrote to the Hebrew Christians were written in Greek, which they would not have done if the common people had not understood the Greek tongue. Why, asks he, would Peter, who was a Hebrew himself, write his epistles in Greek, except because the Hebrews, to whom the epistles were written, understood Greek, many of whom, perhaps, could neither read nor write? Was not the epistle which Paul wrote to the Hebrews, written in Greek for the same reason? He further sets forth that even though both Aramaic and Greek were written and spoken at that time, the Greek was the language of civilization; hence, where the people understood both, Christ doubtless spoke in Greek. J. THORGEIRSON.

The language of Palestine at the time of our Savior is known as Syriac. This was a branch of the Aramaean language spoken in Chaldaea and Babylon. It consisted of a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaean, originating undoubtedly during the time of the captivity in Babylon. Greek at that time was the language of the educated classes in Palestine, as are French and German of wide circulation were necessarily near at the present time. Books intended written in that tongue, but sermons to the people in the synagogues or other public places were probably delivered in the Syriac dialect.

NEPTUNE'S DESTRUCTIVENESS.

The statement which had its origin among seafaring people and obtained wide recognition among all classes, that a person's life of late years was safer on the sea than on the land, will at last have to pass into temporary if not permanent desuetude. At the time it obtained its widest currency we had been passing through a dreary and painfully monotonous period of railway casualties, a common headline in the papers being "The daily accident." At such time the chapter of horrors seemed to be exclusively an inland story, shipwrecks and marine disasters generally being only occasional and some distance apart. The expression spoken of thus became natural and its acceptance a matter of course.

All this is changed now. For a year or more Neptune has been in his ugliest, most destructive mood, while the "reaper on rails" has been taking something of a vacation, his destructive work occurring quite infrequently as compared with the time previously referred to. The awful disaster to the

Bourgoigne last summer, which relates to the sea because of having been on rather than by it, was as horror-provoking as anything of the kind in modern times. Shortly after came one nearly as bad in the British Channel, off the coast of Cornwall, when of a large crew and passenger list of the steamer Mohecan but thirty-four were saved. The oncoming of wintry weather with its attendant roughness of the waves has just inaugurated and is carrying on a series of awful occurrences off the New England coast, the latest being the total wreck of the Portland off High Head, near Provincetown, Mass., on Sunday last, and all on board, estimated at 120, went down. A number of bodies were washed ashore and these will doubtless be the only recoveries.

This last disaster was a peculiar one. It was not a collision, nor plunging into an iceberg or against a rock, nor yet the springing of an unmanageable leak that caused the destruction. It seems from all accounts that the vessel was caught in the trough of the sea and overwhelmed with the mountainous billows—such an event as happens very rarely. A contemplation of all these things leads to the conclusion that a seafaring life or even a voyage is far from being unconnected with serious risks, especially in bad weather. Undoubtedly the advance of science has done something in mitigation of the terrors of the mighty deep, but these relate more to speed than to additional safeguards or the maintenance of any sort of control over the unruly element. A trip across the Atlantic is now made in six or seven days, whereas the sailing craft of former days were four times as long making it, sometimes a great deal more. This means that nowadays one is in the place of danger only one-fourth of the time and therefore has a three-fourths better chance of escape; it does not mean that he is less subject to harm, but that the period within which harm can overtake him has been so greatly reduced that the danger is correspondingly curtailed.

ANGLO-SAXON SUPREMACY.

The passing of the Philippine Islands into the domain of the United States gives special interest to a contribution to McClure's Magazine for December by George W. Waldron, in which the author illustrates by figures and diagrams the growth of the Anglo-Saxon race for the last five hundred years. At the beginning of that period the various dominant races commenced a policy of expansion made possible by the discoveries in the Western hemisphere, and the Latins, represented by the French, Spanish, Italians and Portuguese soon were dominant. During the first two hundred years nearly all of America and the East Indies were held by France, Spain and Portugal. England had little more than the New England and Virginia colonies. Holland alone of the Germanic nations showed any disposition to expand. Russia had just launched on her career under the firm hand of Peter the Great. In 1700 the Latins were ahead with 8,050,000 square miles and 41,000,000 people. Then came the Slavs with 5,960,000 square miles and 14,000,000 inhabitants. The Germans had 1,100,000 square miles and 28,000,000 inhabitants. The Anglo-Saxons came last with only 650,000 square miles and 9,000,000 people.

Now the Anglo-Saxons are in the

lead with 475,000,000 people, or nearly one-third of the entire population of the world. They control over 15,000,000 square miles, while the Latin races hold 14,950,000 square miles with 255,000,000 inhabitants; the Slavs 9,050,000 square miles with a population of 140,000,000, and the Germans 2,350,000 square miles with 135,000,000 people. That is, in 500 years a race once the smallest in numbers now leads, while the formerly leading race is fast disappearing from the world's stage. In another century the Anglo-Saxons may control the Americas, Australia, Southern Asia and nearly all of Africa.

There are many causes for this victorious progress of the Anglo-Saxon race, and the chief of them is, perhaps, that their institutions, founded as they are upon the principles of individual liberty, are best calculated to elevate the human race in every respect. History teaches that Providence selects nations, as individuals, to carry out the divine purposes, and that those best fit for a mission are charged with its accomplishment. The Anglo-Saxons undoubtedly have such a mission at present—one which no other race is qualified to take, and although its details may not yet be perfectly clear, in a general way it is to prepare the world by degrees for the universal reign of the Son of God. The people of the United States and Great Britain would do well never to lose this ultimate object out of view. They have become in a sense the guardians of the oracles of the Almighty, as were once the Jews and then the Romans. They are supposed to know something of the divine purposes and plans therein revealed and should shape their policy accordingly.

MUNICIPAL REFORM MOVEMENT.

At the national conference on city government that met yesterday, Nov. 30, at Indianapolis, a report will be made by a committee that has outlined a plan for the government of American cities. This document, which has been prepared by Horace E. Deming, Esq., of New York; Charles Richardson, of Philadelphia; Albert Shaw and Prof. F. J. Goodnow, of New York; Hon. Clinton Rogers Woodruff and Dr. Leo S. Rowe, of Philadelphia, and Prof. E. J. James, of Chicago, embodies the reforms believed to be necessary in municipal government. Its provisions are classified under the following four heads: Relation of the municipality to the state; powers of the municipality; procedure in the exercise of municipal functions and the electoral franchise and the application of the merit principle of the administrative service.

Under the first head the committee says:

"The inadequacy of the constitutional provisions usually adopted to provide against special legislation has been an experience common to most of our American states. In the opinion of the committee the two main causes of such failure are:

"1.—The absence of a definition of special legislation in the Constitution itself, the result of which is to permit such minute classification as to open the way to special legislation under the guise of general laws.

"2. The narrow power granted to cities which necessitates constant application to the legislature for further powers and thus systematically develops the habit of legislative interference. The committee has therefore attempted to define special legislation as legislation which is not made applicable to all the cities of the states or all the habitants thereof. The system proposed requires for such measures the action of an overwhelming majority of