

hundred millions we say, but that is about as near as we get to it, or are likely to be for some time to come. Before we can establish anything like a universal census we must know a little more about the retired districts of Africa, the inner recesses of South America, and the wilderness of interior Australia. After all, it is but a very small portion of the world that we know anything about, and the beaten path is but as a trail on a mountain.

We of the United States do not even know our own country, and there are a dozen States and Territories which contain regions that have never been visited by man, or at least by the white man. The interior of Newfoundland is a *terra incognita*; Manitoba is a comparatively untrodden waste; there are islands in the Pacific of which we know nothing more than that they exist; China and Tibet are largely closed volumes, and about many other portions of the world there is as much guess work as there was in the days of Marco Polo.

Not only are we ignorant of the population of the world, but we even do not know its shape. It is generally believed that this planet is a globe somewhat flattened at the poles, but what the extent of the depression is we can only conjecture, since no one has ever visited either of the poles. For all we can say, Symmes may be perfectly correct, and the world may be a cylinder. We know that the world rotates on its axis, though why that axis is not perpendicular, and why it occasionally changes in the line of its inclination, are problems that we cannot understand. Neither do we know what the north pole is, nor why the compass should point to it, nor what the magnetic current is.

In fact, our understanding of nature's laws is largely limited to their acceptance. We cannot tell why of two exactly similar bulbs put into precisely similar soil one should bloom out as a tulip and the other come up as an onion. We do not know how the flowers receive their color or perfume, nor why it is that while we can catch the shadow in the camera we cannot go and imprison the color. There are many things, too, for which we have not been able to frame laws. We cannot agree as to the cause of earthquakes, the origin of volcanic fires, or the birth-throes of the whirlwind. We do not know at all for sure the density of the earth, and we do not know at all what lies beneath the crust. Nor do we know anything of our neighbors in space. We call them planets and moons and suns and fixed stars. We indulge in long calculations as to their weight, distance, and orbits, but the wisest astronomer that ever lived cannot say for what purpose these systems and satellites were created, whether they were made for our benefit or whether there are astral races who are born and wonder and die as we do.

We do not even know, for certain, our own origin, and the thinking world is divided between evolution and creation. The cradle of the world may have been first rocked

in any of the quarters of the globe, so far as we know, or it may have been rocked in all the quarters at the same time. There have been theories and clever arguments by the hundred, but not one that has convinced mankind. We do not know even the normal color of man—whether we are bleached from the dark original, or whether the dark races are sun-burnt editions of the early whites. Was the flood local or universal? Did Atlas exist? Were there giants in those days? These are a few of the many questions that might be asked and remain unanswered.

But not only is there the impenetrable mist of darkness about the prehistoric past—we cannot even settle the question of more recent times; and were it not for the light which the Book of Mormon sheds upon the question, we would not know how this great continent of ours was peopled. We prate of a civilization that ante-dated ours, and groping backward we come to the Toltecs streaming from the northward into Mexico, and behind them—nothing. Like the gypsies, they are evolved from one knows not what. It is not only in walking backward that we get into the sloughs of nescience. We do not yet know what the electric force is capable of, or the exact place it has in the economy of nature. We do not know why there should be a Karnac in Egypt, another in Brittany and a third in Cornwall. We do not know positively whether the sea serpent is a myth or an actuality. Our surgeons have become digitally expert, but they cannot cure cancer or repair destroyed tissue. Consumption baffles the cleverest medicos and pyæmia is still fatal. The panacea has not been discovered, the vale of eternal youth is still unvisited. Sanitaria are matters of fashion and not of fact, experiments are still conducted and graveyards are still filled that would not be if the learned attendant "had only known." Indeed, it seems as though it would be a briefer task to write of what we do know than of what we do not. Even that which it was supposed we knew is slipping away from us. It would seem that the Patagonians are not giants, that the Terra del Fuegians are not hideous monsters, that some negroes are actually white, and some of the copper-colored race as black as ink. We have our doubts whether the 25th day of December is Christmas day at all, whether William Tell ever lived, and as to who wrote the "Arabian Nights." There is a grave suspicion that Columbus was not the discoverer of America, and Shakespeare's statue has recently been quaking in the niche.

Our greatest ignorance of all, though, is concerning the mystery of our being. We know no more exactly of our beginning and end, of what preceded the one and will round off the other than King Alfred did. "Our life," said he to his nobles one evening as they were sitting beside the great fireplace, "is something that is bounded by impenetrable obscurity. A little bird

flies from the darkness of the outside night into the brightness of this room, flutters a minute or two in the warmth and light, and then flies through the opposite window into night once more." Nearly two thousand years have gone by since Alfred delivered himself of this fable, but the centuries have brought us no new wisdom.

DR. ED. ISAACSON.  
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### OUR CHICAGO LETTER.

The Cronin case abates nothing in interest. On the contrary, it develops new sensations as it progresses. It throws all local and even national sensations in the shade, and on its account, it is feared, the man-Americans who are now here will not receive the attention due to such important personages. The developments during the past week were such that people are anxiously asking what comes next? It was reported today that an attempt at rescuing the prisoners was contemplated. The court-room is guarded as rigidly as it was during the exciting times of the Anarchist trials a few years ago.

The Cronin case has outstretched the limits of an ordinary murder. It is now a fight between law and anarchy, between order and organized rapacity, between decent citizens and bandit outlaws. The attempted jury bribing business helps to denigrate the quiet of the men now in custody. It also shows that there is some power behind the scenes, and that desperate efforts are being made to save the prisoners. On the whole it is a bad business, as one paper says: "It is a form of base intrigue such as shattered kingdoms of old and brought crowned heads to the block."

It is nonsense to call the Cronin case a mere Irish affair. Already are involved in it the police, the bar, and nearly every branch of social, commercial, industrial and political life. Native Irishmen figure so insignificantly that it looks like a joke to call it an Irish conspiracy. Within the last few days seven persons have been indicted for attempts to corrupt the jury or to procure a corrupt jury. Only one of these was a native-born Irishman, and his political sponsors are such that he might well be classed as an American. The seven indicted are two court bailiffs, Alexander Hanks and Mark Salamon, John Graham, a notorious lawyer's factotum, Fred Smith, a shady business man, Tom Kavanagh, politician, Joseph O'Donnell, ditto, and a commission merchant named Kouen.

John Graham is a native of Toronto, Canada, where he was employed as Professor in an educational institution. Though not a full-fledged lawyer, he knows more than half the lawyers of Chicago. In addition to his legal knowledge he is a most accomplished detective. Give him a shoestring or a collar button and he will find the wearer of either. He is a pronounced anti-Irishman, and several times during the past months has volunteered to