

Ridicule is a weapon often mightier than argument; and satire has achieved results that the profoundest logic could not reach. In a rhetorical assault, a stream of laughter is more formidable than a battery of denunciation. There is no surer way to reform evils that have ridiculous aspects than to show those aspects in the strongest light. People will quickly drop their follies when they find themselves in danger of appearing foolish. It is doubtful if the solidest arguments that have appeared against the evils of our civil service system can have on the popular mind the force of the satire in the clever little volume, "The Miseries of Fo Hi," just published by Jansen, McClurg & Co. The work is from the French of F. Sarcy; and while it has no small share of the keenness and wit that mark the satirical writings of the best French school, it has no lack of points of application to our own country, upon whose system of management of the public business its satire is as direct and irresistible as it is neat and delicate. Perhaps the finest quality of the work is its overflowing humor. There are few pages from first to last but will provoke a hearty laugh at some unexpected bit of sarcasm or fine touch of drollery. The public service of China, as herein portrayed, affords a rich field for a study of many peculiarities of the system of public plunder; and the "miseries" of poor Fo Hi, a "functionary" whose chief misfortune is the possession of certain fixed notions of fidelity and honor in his official position, is a fine illustration of the workings of that delightful system, whether in the Celestial Empire or elsewhere. It would be a happy thing if a few of our "working" politicians and "practical" statesmen would read this little book; or, if too much engrossed with public affairs, they might at least peruse the "Story of the Shabby Old Man," and study the aphorisms by which Fo Hi records his successive advances in political experience. This class will find in the work food for reflection, as all readers less personally concerned will find food for laughter and delight.

MR. WILLIAM WILBERFORCE NEWTON, the author of the anonymous novel styled "The Priest and the Man," chose an enkindling theme for his fancy to work upon, in the romantic lives of Abelard and Eloise. The seven centuries since these unhappy lovers fulfilled their sorrowful destiny have not lessened the world's interest in their singular gifts and accomplishments, in their mutual sin and suffering, their long and painful atonement, and their final union after death in the tomb at Paraclete, afterward transferred to Pere La Chaise. In all these ages, imagination has taken pleasure in depicting the brilliant and persuasive scholar and the beautiful woman in a noble and pathetic form. But they lived in a misty and visionary age, which it is hard for any but the most ardent invention to re-create. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the representation by Mr. Newton paler and weaker than could be desired. His conceptions of Abelard and Eloise do not come up to the lofty ideal cherished of them, nor does the setting in which they are placed seem to be real. He fails to make us feel that it is life and truth he is reproducing, and hence we are unmoved by scenes which should influence us strongly. A historical novel which makes the dead past a breathing throbbing present, is a great achievement. But few who have attempted it have been equal to its exacting requirements. The publishers of Mr. Newton's book (Cupples, Upham & Co., Boston) have issued it in neat style, using for illustrations the engravings from one of the early editions of the famous "Letters of Abelard and Heloise."