TO-DAY.

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Art under Plutocracy.*

YOU may well think I am not here to criticise any special school of art or artists, or to plead for any special style, or to give you any instructions, however general, as to the practice of the arts. Rather, I want to take counsel with you as to what hindrances may lie in the way towards making art what it should be, a help and solace to the daily life of all men.

Some of you here may think that the hindrances in the way are none, or few, and easy to be swept aside. You will say that there is on many sides much knowledge of the history of art, plenty of taste for it, at least among the cultivated classes; that many men of talent, and some few of genius, practise it with no mean success; that within the last fifty years there has been something almost like a fresh renaissance of art, even in directions where such a change was least to be hoped for.

All this is true as far as it goes; and I can well understand this state of things being a cause of gratulation amongst those who do not know what the scope of art really is, and how closely it is bound up with the general condition of society, and especially with the lives of those who live by manual labour, and whom we call the working classes.

* Delivered in the Hall of University College, Oxford, Nov. 14th, 1883.

For my part, I cannot help noting that under the apparent satisfaction with the progress of art of late years there lies in the minds of most thinking people a feeling of mere despair as to the prospects of art in the future; a despair which seems to me fully justified if we look at the present condition of art without considering the causes which have led to it, or the hopes which may exist for a change in those causes.

For, without beating about the bush, let us consider what the real state of art is:

And, first, I must ask you to extend the word art beyond those matters which are consciously works of art, to take in not only painting, and sculpture, and architecture, but the shapes and colours of all household goods, nay even the arrangement of the fields for tillage and pasture, the management of towns and of our highways of all kinds; in a word, to extend it to the aspect of all the externals of our life. For I must ask you to believe that every one of the things that goes to make up the surroundings among which we live must be either beautiful or ugly, either elevating or degrading to us, either a torment and burden to the maker of it to make, or a pleasure and a solace to him.

How does it fare therefore with our external surroundings in these days? What kind of an account shall we be able to give to those who come after us of our dealings with the earth, which our forefathers handed down to us still beautiful in spite of all the thousands of years of strife, and carelessness, and selfishness?

Surely this is no light question to ask ourselves; nor am I afraid that you will think it a mere rhetorical flourish if I say that it is a question that may well seem a solemn one when it is asked here, in Oxford, amidst sights and memories which we older men at least regard with nothing short of love. He must be indeed a man of narrow incomplete mind who, amidst the buildings raised by the hope of our forefathers, amidst the country which they make so lovely, would venture to say that the beauty of the earth was a matter of little moment.

And yet, I say, how have we of these latter days treated the beauty of the earth, or that which we call art?

Perhaps I had best begin by stating what will scarcely be new to you, that art must be broadly divided into two kinds, of which we may call the first Intellectual, and the second Decorative Art, using the words as mere forms of convenience. The first kind addresses itself wholly to our mental needs; the things made by it serve no other purpose but to feed the mind, and, as far as material needs go, might be done without altogether. The second, though so much of it as is art does also appeal to the mind, is always but a part of things which are intended primarily for the service of the body. I must further say that there have been nations and periods which lacked the purely Intellectual art, but positively none which lacked the Decorative (or at least some pretence of it); and, furthermore, that in all times when the arts were in a healthy condition, there was an intimate connection between the two kinds of art, a connection so close, that in the times when art flourished most, the higher and lower kinds were divided by no hard and fast lines. The highest intellectual art was meant to please the eye, as the phrase goes, as well as to excite the emotions and train the intellect. It appealed to all men, and to all the faculties of a man. On the other hand, the humblest of the ornamental art shared in the meaning and emotion of the intellectual; one melted into the other by scarce perceptible gradations; in short, the best artist was a workman still, the humblest workman was an artist.

That is not the case now, nor has been for two or three centuries in civilised countries. Intellectual art is separated from Decorative by the sharpest lines of demarcation, not only as to the kind of work produced under those names, but even in the social position of the producers; those who follow the Intellectual arts being all professional men or gentlemen by virtue of their calling, while those who follow

the Decorative are workmen earning weekly wages: non-gentlemen in short.

Now, as I have already said, many men of talent and some few of genius are engaged at present in producing works of Intellectual art, paintings and sculpture chiefly. It is nowise my business here or elsewhere to criticise their works; but my subject compels me to say that those who follow the intellectual arts must be divided into two sections, the first composed of men who would in any age of the world have held a high place in their craft; the second of men who hold their position of gentleman-artist either by the accident of their birth, or by their possessing industry, business habits, or such like qualities, out of all proportion to their artistic gifts.

The work which these latter produce seems to me of little value to the world (though there is a thriving market for it,) and their position is neither dignified nor wholesome; yet they are mostly not to be blamed for it personally, since often they have gifts for art, though not great ones, and would probably not have succeeded in any other career. They are, in fact, good decorative workmen spoiled by a system which compels them into ambitious individualist effort by cutting off from them any opportunity for co-operation with others of greater or less capacity for the production of popular art.

As to the first section of artists, who worthily fill their places and make the world wealthier by their work, it must be said of them that they are very few. These men have won their mastery over their craft by dint of incredible toil, pains, and anxiety, by qualities of mind and strength of will, which are bound to produce something of value. Nevertheless, they are injured also by the system which insists on individualism and forbids co-operation. For first they are cut off from tradition, that wonderful (almost miraculous) accumulation of the skill of ages, which men find themselves partakers in without effort on their part; the knowledge of the past and the sympathy with it which the artists of to-day

have, they have acquired, on the contrary, by their own most strenuous individual effort; and as that tradition no longer exists to help them in their practice of the art, and they are heavily weighted in the race by having to learn everything from the beginning, each man for himself; so also, and that is worse, the lack of it deprives them of a sympathetic and appreciative audience. Apart from the artists themselves and a few persons who would be also artists but for want of opportunity, and insufficient gifts of hand and eye, there is in the public of to-day no real knowledge of art, and little love for it. Nothing, save at the best certain vague pre-possessions, which are but the phantom of that tradition which once bound artist and public together.

Therefore the artists are obliged to express themselves, as it were, in a language "not understanded of the people." Nor is this their fault. If they were to try, as some think they should, to meet the public half-way and work in such a manner as to satisfy at any cost those vague prepossessions of men ignorant of art, they would be casting aside their special gifts; they would be traitors to the cause of art, which it is their duty and glory to serve; they have no choice save to do their own personal individual work, unhelped by the present, stimulated by the past, but shamed by it, and even in a way hampered by it; they must stand apart as possessors of some sacred mystery, which, whatever happens, they must at least do their best to guard. It is not to be doubted that both their own lives and their works are injured by this isolation. But the loss of the people—how are we to measure that? That they should have great men living and working amongst them and be ignorant of the very existence of their work, and incapable of knowing what it means if they could see it.

In the times when art was abundant and healthy, all men were more or less artists—that is to say, the instinct for beauty which is inborn in every complete man had such force that the whole body of craftsmen habitually and without con-

scious effort made beautiful things, and the audience for the authors of intellectual art was nothing short of the whole people, and so they had each an assured hope of gaining that genuine praise and sympathy which all men who exercise their imagination in expression most certainly and naturally crave, and the lack of which does certainly injure them in some way; makes them shy, over-sensitive, and narrow; or else cynical and mocking, and in that case well-nigh useless.

But in these days, I have said and repeat, the whole people is careless and ignorant of art; the inborn instinct for beauty is checked and thwarted at every turn; and the result on the less intellectual or decorative art is that as a spontaneous and popular expression of the instinct for beauty it does not exist at all. It is a matter of course that everything made by man's hand is now obviously ugly, unless it is made beautiful by conscious effort; nor does it mend the matter that men have not lost the habit, deduced from the times of art, of professing to ornament household goods and the like; for this sham ornament, which has no least intention of giving any one pleasure, is so base and foolish that the words *upholstery* and *upholsterer* have come to have a kind of secondary meaning indicative of the profound contempt which all sensible men have for such twaddle.

This, so far, is what decorative art has come to, and I must break off a while here and ask you to consider what it once was, lest you think over hastily that its degradation is a matter of little moment. Think, I beg you, to go no further back in history, of the stately and careful beauty of St. Sophia at Constantinople, of the golden twilight of St. Mark's at Venice, of the sculptured cliffs of the great French cathedrals, of the quaint and familiar beauty of our own minsters: nay, go through Oxford streets and ponder on what is left us there unscathed by the fury of the thriving shop and the progressive college; or wander some day through some of the out-of-the-way villages and little towns that lie scattered about

the country-side within twenty miles west of Oxford;—and you will surely see that the loss of decorative art is a grievous loss to the world.

Thus, then, in considering the state of art among us I have been driven to the conclusion that in its co-operative form it is extinct, and only exists in the conscious efforts of men of genius and talent, who themselves are injured, and thwarted, and deprived of due sympathy by the lack of co-operative art.

But, furthermore, the repression of the instinct for beauty which has destroyed the Decorative and injured the Intellectual arts, has not stopped there in the injury it has done us. I can myself sympathise with a feeling which I suppose is still not rare, a craving to escape sometimes to mere nature, not only from ugliness and squalor, not only from a condition of superabundance of art, but even from a condition of art severe and well ordered, even, say, from such surroundings as the lovely simplicity of Periclean Athens. I can deeply sympathise with a weary man finding his account in interest in mere life and communion with external nature—the face of the country, the wind and weather, and the course of the day, and the lives of animals, wild and domestic; and man's daily dealings with all this for his daily bread, and rest, and innocent beast-like pleasure. But the interest in the mere animal life of man has become impossible to be indulged in in its fulness by most civilised people. Yet civilization, it seems to me, owes us some compensation for the loss of this romance, which now only hangs like a dream about the country life of busy lands. To keep the air pure and the rivers clean, to take some pains to keep the meadows and tillage as pleasant as reasonable use will allow them to be; to allow peaceable citizens freedom to wander where they will, so they do no hurt to garden or cornfield; nay, even to leave here and there some piece of waste or mountain sacredly free from fence or tillage as a memory of man's ruder struggles

with nature in his earlier days—is it too much to ask civilization to be so far thoughtful of man's pleasure and rest, and to help so far as this her children to whom she has most often set such heavy tasks of grinding labour?

Surely not an unreasonable asking. But not a whit of it shall we get under the present system of society. That loss of the instinct for beauty which has involved us in the loss of popular art is also busy in depriving us of the only compensation possible for that loss, in surely and not slowly destroying the beauty of the very face of the earth. Not only are London and our other great commercial cities mere masses of sordidness, filth, and squalor, embroidered with patches of pompous and vulgar hideousness, no less revolting to the eye and the mind when one knows what it means: not only have whole counties of England, and the heavens that hang over them, disappeared beneath a crust of unutterable grime, but the disease, which, to a visitor coming from the times of art, reason, and order, would seem to be a love of dirt and ugliness for its own sake, spreads all over the country, and every little market town seizes the opportunity to imitate, as far as it can, the majesty of the hell of London and Manchester.

Need I speak to *you* of the wretched suburbs that sprawl all round our fairest and most ancient cities. *Must* I speak to you of the degradation that has so speedily befallen this city, still the most beautiful of them all; a city which, with its surroundings, would, if we had had a grain of common sense, have been treated like a most precious jewel, whose beauty was to be preserved at any cost. I say at any cost, for it was a possession which did not belong to us, but which we were trustees of for all posterity. I am old enough to know how we have treated that jewel—as if it were any common stone kicking about on the highway, good enough to throw at a dog. When I remember the contrast between the Oxford of to-day and the Oxford which I first saw thirty years ago, I wonder I can face the misery (there is no other

word for it) of visiting it, even to have the honour of addressing you to-night.

But, furthermore, not only are the cities a disgrace to us, and the smaller towns a laughing-stock, not only are the dwellings of man grown inexpressibly base and ugly, but the very cowsheds and cart-stables, nay the merest piece of necessary farm engineering, are tarred with the same stick; even if a tree is cut down or blown down, a worse one, if any, is planted in its stead, and, in short, our civilization is passing like a blight, daily growing heavier and more poisonous, over the whole face of the country, so that every change is sure to be a change for the worse in its outward aspect.

So then it comes to this, that not only are the minds of great artists narrowed and their sympathies frozen by their isolation, not only has co-operative art come to a standstill, but the very food on which both the greater and the lesser art subsists is being destroyed; the well of art is poisoned at its spring.

Now I do not wonder that those who think that these evils are from henceforth for ever necessary to the progress of civilization should try to make the best of things, should shut their eyes to all they can, and praise the galvanized life of the art of the present day; but, for my part, I believe that they are not necessary to civilization, but only accompaniments to one phase of it, which will change and pass into something else, like all prior phases have done. I believe also that the essential characteristic of the present state of society is that which has so ruined art, or the pleasure of life, and that this having died out, the inborn love of man for beauty and the desire for expressing it will no longer be repressed, and art will be free.

At the same time I not only admit, but declare, and think it most important to declare, that so long as the system of competition in the production and exchange of the means of life goes on, the degradation of the arts will go on, and if

that system is to last for ever, then art is doomed, and will surely die; that is to say, civilisation will die.

I know it is at present the received opinion that the competitive, or "Devil take the hindmost" system is the last system of economy which the world will see, perfection, and therefore finality having been reached in it; and it is doubtless a bold thing to fly in the face of this opinion, which I am told is held even by the most learned men: but though I am not learned, I have been taught that the patriarchal system died out into that of the citizen and chattel slave, which in its turn gave place to that of the feudal lord and the serf, which, passing through a modified form, in which the burgher, the gild-craftsmen, and his journeyman played their parts, was supplanted by the system of so-called free contract now existing:—that all things since the beginning of the world have been tending to the development of this system I willingly admit—since it exists; that all the events of history have taken place for the purpose of making it eternal, the very evolution of those events forbids me to believe.

For I am 'one of the people called Socialists,' therefore I am certain that evolution in the economical conditions of life will go on, whatever shadowy barriers may be drawn across its path by men whose apparent self-interest binds them, consciously or unconsciously, to the present, and who are therefore hopeless for the future.

I hold that the condition of competition between man and man is bestial only, and that of association human: I think that the change from the undeveloped competition of the Middle Ages, trammelled as it was by the personal relations of feudality, and the attempts at association of the guild-craftsmen into the full-blown laissez-faire competition of the 19th century is bringing to birth out of its own anarchy, and by the very means by which it seeks to perpetuate that anarchy, a spirit of association founded on that antagonism which has produced all former changes in the condition of men, and which will one day abolish all classes and take definite and practical form, and substitute Socialisn for competition in all

that relates to the production and exchange of the means of life. I further believe that as that change will be beneficent in many ways, so especially will it give an opportunity for the new birth of art, which is now being crushed to death by the money-bags of competitive commerce.

My reason for this hope for art is founded on what I feel quite sure is a truth, and an important one, namely, that all art, even the highest, is influenced by the conditions of labour of the mass of mankind, and that any pretensions which may be made for even the highest intellectual art to be independent of these general conditions are futile and vain; that is to say, that any art which professes to be founded on the special education or refinement of a limited body or class, must of necessity be unreal and short-lived.

"Art is man's expression of his joy in labour." If those are not Professor Ruskin's words they embody at least his teaching on this subject. Nor has any truth more important ever been stated; for if pleasure in labour be generally possible, what a strange folly it must be for men to consent to labour without pleasure, and what a hideous injustice it must be for society to compel most men to labour without pleasure! For since all men not dishonest must labour, it becomes a question either of forcing them to lead unhappy lives or allowing them to live happily.

Now the chief accusation I have to bring against the modern state of society is that it is founded on the art-lacking or unhappy labour of the greater part of men, and all that external degradation of the face of the country of which I have spoken is hateful to me not only because it is a cause of unhappiness to some few of us who still love art, but also and chiefly because it is a token of the unhappy life forced on the great mass of the population by the system of competitive commerce.

The pleasure which ought to go with the making of every piece of handicraft has for its basis the keen interest which every healthy man takes in healthy life, and is compounded,

it seems to me, chiefly of three elements—variety, hope of creation, and the self-respect which comes of a sense of usefulness, to which must be added that mysterious bodily pleasure which goes with the deft exercise of the bodily powers. I do not think I need spend many words in trying to prove that these things, if they really and fully accompanied labour, would do much to make it pleasant. As to the pleasures of variety, any of you who have ever made anything—I don't care what—will well remember the pleasure that went with the turning out of the first specimen. What would have become of that pleasure if you had been compelled to go on making it exactly the same for ever?

As to the hope of creation, the hope of producing some worthy or even excellent work, which, without you, the craftsman, would not have existed at all, a thing which needs you and can have no substitute for you in the making of it, can we any of us fail to understand the pleasure of this?

No less easy, surely, to see how much the self-respect born of the consciousness of usefulness must sweeten labour. To feel that you have to do a thing not to satisfy the whim of a fool or a set of fools, but because it is really good in itself, that is useful, would surely be a good help to getting through the day's work.

As to the unreasoning, sensuous pleasure in handiwork, I believe in good sooth that it has more power of getting rough and strenuous work out of men, even as things go, than most people imagine. At any rate it lies at the bottom of the production of all art, which cannot exist without it even in its feeblest and rudest form.

Now this compound pleasure in handiwork I claim as the birthright of all workmen. I say that if they lack any part of it they will be so far degraded, but that if they lack it altogether they are, so far as their work goes, I will not say slaves, the word would not be strong enough, but machines more or less conscious of their own unhappiness.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be concluded in our next.)

Misapplied Darwinism.

A GENERATION ago the biologist was as little consulted as the astronomer in social questions. A knowledge of natural history would have been considered as little pertinent to the study of society as an acquaintance with lunar geography. "Nous avous changé tout cela." The biological key is now held competent to unlock every social problem. Darwinism is the sheet-anchor of the individualist; the final argument of the doctrine of *laissez-faire*. It is the old story repeated of a new truth, at first scouted and despised, then hailed as the last and dominant revelation of the universe, rounding and perfecting all human knowledge. We are apt to forget that other generalizations, no less important, may yet remain to be discovered; that other facts may modify our conceptions, both of the latest doctrine and of its applications.

It is undoubtedly comforting to the souls of an educated *bourgeoisie* to believe that superior capacity and a higher moral tone have raised them from the ruck, that the fittest survive, and the devil takes the hindmost as his natural due. It encourages the self-complacency of the well-to-do, and justifies the current practice of those that have of the goods of this world in taking the fruits of their labour from those that have not, always provided it be done in the beaten path of brotherly kindness, in that "cheapest market" which political economists not wholly of the past would have to be a universal provider and unmixed state benefit. Spoliation is glorified under the name of competitive commerce, while the

"dismal science" supported by a false Darwinism shouts pæans to modern progress.

> "The good old rule
> Sufficeth them; the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

Now a very slight examination of the doctrine of natural selection will show that existing social conditions are constantly operating against, and not for, the survival of the best men. A rigid application of the Darwinian theory to our social state deals a cruel blow to those opportunists who rely on a crude biological support. For, while undoubtedly, speaking broadly, the *fittest* organisms survive under their conditions, the question still arises whether the conditions are fitted to the survival of the *best*. Even among animals natural selection has not unrestricted power, as is proved by the possession of harmful ornaments which serve the purpose of sexual adornment, while highly-organized animals may become parasitic and actually degenerate by reason of the struggle for existence itself under conditions favouring a low type. But man is not merely an animal, nor even merely gregarious. He is social; and if society means anything it implies an organization capable of modifying the environment of its members, and, indeed, society exists to that end. Now man, of all animals, is the most modifiable by his surroundings, and at the same time differs from all other animals in that he conditions in no small measure the very conditions of his own existence. It is here that the principle of *laissez-faire* signally breaks down. For, if it be to the advantage of society that the most vigorous men in mind, in body, and in character should survive and transmit their virtues to a numerous progeny, then is it clearly the duty of society so to condition itself that capacity shall have every opportunity of success. The problem should be first to determine what kind of man is of most value to the State, and then how to secure him. How far are our Darwinistic Candides from

solving this! Are the conditions of life such that there is a fair field and no favour even? Do the best men survive, or chiefly those who, under the veil of commercial morality, are the most unscrupulous, the most self-assertive, the least moral, the least social, the least conscious of that high function of band-work to which men are called?

But this is not all. For since man is in the highest degree modifiable by his surroundings; since it is patent to all that vice and incapacity are ordinarily the result of conditions unfavourable to the evolution of their opposites; since we see every day how even those born physically delicate regain the normal vigour of manhood under healthy conditions, it may well be doubted whether, apart from higher and more humane considerations, it may not—to put it on the lowest ground—be actually an economy in society to strengthen the possibilities of weaker brethren, by seeing to it that their condition is favourable to their physical, moral, and intellectual health. Now even under present conditions the working classes have given good evidence by their trades' unions and their great benefit societies that they are even more disposed to providence than the luxurious class, who having less occasion to practise it, teach thrift to be first of the virtues. Yet it would not be difficult to show that the condition of the lower order is such as to magnify every acquirement, and especially such a one as thrift, into a herculean effort. For the man who has worn out his strength in a dingy and dirty workshop over the joyless labour of making the tenth part of a pin, or a pen, or a nail, comes from his work to a single, ill-ventilated, ill-constructed room, for which he is rack-rented at a third or fourth of his weekly income, which he calls home, and which possesses the complete attractions of that sweetest of English words in that it is at once the wash-house, kitchen, sitting room, bedroom, and nursery of the family. The red herring is cooking before the fire, the dirty clothes are hung up to dry, the children are squalling under the tired mother's heavy hand; all the

senses are disgusted, and the man goes to the only place where there is a little light and comfort and social rest—the public house. What wonder! And under these conditions we call on the working man to be a good citizen. We expect him to prove the converse of Becky Sharp's proposition, and show us how easy it is to be virtuous on 20s. a week, subject to the deduction of rack rent. We steal from him every chance of his rising to the full stature of manhood and then we call upon him to excel in all the virtues. We have placed him in such a condition of abject poverty that, while free to change his master, he knows that he will have to stand in the market to be bated as a commodity and bought on the cheapest possible terms. In the days of old the master had a personal interest in the well-being of his slave and his slave's children: it was to his own advantage to keep them well clothed and housed and fed. Now, alas for the sacred name of Freedom, there is substituted the political franchise, and by an unholy license of contract, which even good men allow, there is enforced a worse slavery than that of the middle ages. The labourer has become the serf, not of a man with at least a human heart beating in his breast, but of a rigid, immutable social law. Our civilization mocks us like the monster of Frankenstein. Our freedom is spurious while the labourer remains a prey to competitive commerce.

If each man received a just equivalent for his labour; if one class did not reap most of the fruits while another class does most of the work, then indeed might there be a struggle for existence in which the fittest would have a chance of success. Now, unhappily, more than half the human family is fearfully handicapped in the race of life. Under the conditions of proletarian life what possibilities remain to the parents, what hope for the children? Contrast the poor with the rich. Buoyed by the life-saving apparatus of protected wealth, how many unworthy, unsocial, and unscrupulous natures are preserved from sinking into that abyss which

by the survival of the fittest should be their natural meed. "There's something rotten in the state" which social conditions have brought about and which social effort alone is competent to remedy.

I am aware that it has been urged that, in the century of vigorous commercial prosperity which has given our country her wealth and her power, men have been placed pretty much where their courage, their ability, and their character have determined them. If this were so two propositions would at once present themselves.

First. That the more successful and therefore improved classes ought to leave the greater number of progeny.

Second. That the less capable members of society should descend and the more valuable members ascend in the social scale.

Now with regard to the first proposition prudence materially restricts the multiplication of the higher and middle ranks. They marry late or not at all, or use preventive means; consequently by so much decrease the number of their descendants. But nothing is so conducive to recklessness as poverty. The poor have little to conserve and little to hope for. In spite of that manifest tendency to thrift of which I have spoken above the proletariat is, as the term denotes, the most prolific of all classes, save perhaps the unbeneficed clergy. It is true that the labourer loses a greater proportional number of his offspring in early childhood through an improper and insufficient dietary, but he actually leaves a far more numerous progeny than the classes above him; and therefore if he is in reality a human being of inferior type, he tends to oust a superior breed. For cheap labour is always successful in the market. But surely society ought to be an organization in which superior organisms should survive. It may be replied that this fecundity of the poor is due to the existence of charity, to which I would answer that charity is mainly the proof of a survival of conscience in that organized rapacity which has crowded

poverty into the fever dens of the East End, and accommodated wealth in the palaces of Kensington and Mayfair. We can dispense with charity when we get equity.

With regard to the second proposition it is undoubtedly true that trade and the professions are constantly recruited by the younger sons of the upper class. There remain to them the same instincts and the same possibilities of intelligent life. But the gulf between culture and labour is practically impassable. The superior classes prefer the "racial suicide" of celibacy to so degraded a condition. Nor will anyone contend that the path from the dens of Whitechapel to the Athenæum Club is other than a steep and thorny road.

Thus the sweet reliance on the solution of social problems by a natural process of unaided evolution emphatically breaks down. The simple truth is that the social form is apt to survive the social necessities that originated it, and our existing social form is fitted neither to our needs nor to our moral sense. Manners, customs, traditions, and laws are apt to play the part of survivals. The carapace which was once a defence may become a cruel prison stunting the growing organism, and to be discarded at all hazards.

We want to substitute justice for charity; the lovingkindness that will forego the benefits of an unjust distribution for the pitying contemptuousness of the almsgiver. Capital stretches its tentacles over the broad earth, and abstracts the fair fruits of his labour from the producer. In a natural struggle for existence men should reap that they sow. A just reward should be a stimulus to further labour, and what greater stimulus can man have than simple justice—the equivalent to his work—an incentive alike to brotherhood and to work.

The time is ripe. Religious belief is no longer vital. For good or for ill the belief in a future life has become of little power over the minds of men. Once the serf was content with his lot, believing that his patience would reap a heavenly

reward. He bore the penalties of poverty with meekness, for he was rich in eternal possibilities. The rich man accepted with equanimity so remote a chance of future equality in the angelic life. But the modern spirit is in the vein of the old logic, "De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio." To all men social problems are important. To those who have no hope of a future existence they are of transcendent moment. If there is no expectation of a heavenly, there is the more reason for the securing of an earthly paradise. How shall it come?

Let us not fear to strike the key-note high. If we have a clear idea of what we want, there is sufficient force in the human intellect and will to acquire it. Failure lies in fear. Let us strengthen our sense of brotherhood and mutual help and interdependence and we shall succeed.

Our times are in many respects like those of the Roman Empire. Social regeneration on the lines of justice is now, as Christianity was then, the great vivifying influence of the age. It is a religion to be preached. It must first reach the hearts of men; the formal organization will follow. All the great forces that dominate mankind and keep the family and the State together are spiritual forces: law may enforce, it neither creates nor sustains them. The sense of the brotherhood of man is the great spiritual force of the future; the purest and most powerful of all religious systems.

But what can we do? This, at least, the feeblest among us can do. We can oppose in season and out of season the doctrine of those economical optimists who hold that the present social condition is the result of natural laws beyond human control, and is a system that must necessarily persist. We can refuse to follow those moralists who hold that it is always virtuous to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. We can refuse to accept as inevitable an organization in which wealth and comfort are purchased by the suffering and degradation and ignominy of our brother man.

WILLIAM BOULTING, L.R.C.P. Lond.

Was Thun?

A Nihilist's Novel.

A GERMAN translation has lately appeared of the novel, for writing which its author, Tschernyschewskij, was sentenced to hard labour for fourteen years and to life-long banishment to Siberia. It has not yet been translated into English, but some account of the book which has been so disastrous to its author can hardly fail to interest English readers. The author himself was despatched to Siberia in 1864, and for nearly twenty years has languished in the most distant regions of that land of woe, far from his wife, his children, and his friends, without books, without companions, cut off completely from all intellectual pursuits. Plots, by which his friends at first attempted to contrive his escape, resulted only in his closer confinement, though now at last the Emperor, of his great clemency, has released him from the living death in which he has lost what should have been the best years of his intellect. For he was little more than thirty when he wrote the book which, besides qualifying him for Siberia, entitles him to a place among the best authors of his time. The novel is a work of art in itself, and is delightful reading independently of the additional interest with which the cruel treatment of its author has invested it. And yet the connection between his book and his banishment remains for some time difficult for the diligent reader to discover, until, as he gets on with the story he perceives that its hero Lopuchow entertains grave doubts of the necessity for the perpetua

presence of the poor in society's midst, holding rather that society itself is deeply responsible for the very existence of such a class, and that the time will surely come when we shall have them no more with us. An expressed opinion of such a dangerous tendency is, of course, enough to stamp a man as a Socialist of the worst type, and when we also ascertain that he holds heterodox ideas as to the social position of women, and is unable to perceive the justice of keeping them in practical slavery to men, we can no longer wonder that the late Emperor considered Siberia a more fitting residence for him than St. Petersburg. Indeed there is no possible reason for surprise, since the Russian Government is only true to its most cherished principles when it thinks to dispose of the danger of a new idea by banishing its author, and banning his book. We can only hope that the banished Tschernyschewskij has been able to find pleasure in the beauty of nature even in that drear winter of the North, and the following quotation from his novel may give us some ground for the hope;—

"The environs of St. Petersburg, although millions have been expended upon them, remain barren and unattractive; but so deeply do men love nature that even in the melancholy environs of St. Petersburg are they able to find delight."

Such words as these are very touching, when we know that the lover of nature who wrote them has been for twenty years precluded from finding delight in any other feature of her beauty save that of the far more melancholy Siberian waste.

But we must give some account of the plot of the book. The first chapter opens in a startling and sensational manner with the sudden and very mysterious disappearance of a traveller to whom the reader is not introduced, and whose acquaintance he has no time to make. A clue to the mystery is supplied by the three following circumstances:—A note is discovered in the traveller's bedroom in which he announces that he will make himself heard on the bridge at two o'clock in the night; a pistol shot has been heard on the bridge pre-

cisely at the specified time ; and a cap has been found there with an ominous hole in it, apparently not intended for mere ventilation. The orthodox interpretation of these signs is that a madman has shot himself on the bridge, fallen into the river, and been carried away by the stream. This gloomy incident casts its shadow over the first two volumes, for no sooner have we read it than we are frankly told by the author that he has put it into the first chapter merely to catch our attention, and that its proper place will be reached by the reader in due course of time. Thus, throughout delightful descriptions of the most halcyon events the reader is painfully aware that he is only leading up to the dreadful mystery with which he has already been startled in the first chapter. Nevertheless our author is confident of success, and justifies his confidence by putting into the mouth of one of his fair readers the following criticism of his book before she has read it. "Subject of the story—love ; chief character—a woman ; then the novel is good, however badly it may be written." Indeed, throughout the book the author is continually taking the reader into his confidence by means of "asides" in the style of Thackeray, and in which he treats him with a humorous irony that is very amusing. For instance, after the arrival of a mysterious and anonymous letter the following piece of by-play is thrown in :

"'I know——'

"Who speaks there—a well-known voice? I turn me round—sure enough, 'tis he, the sharp-sighted reader, whom I only just now made an end of for his gross ignorance of the essence of the rules of art. He is back again already with his penetrating sharp-sight ; he knows something more already.

"'I know who wrote——'

"I snatch hastily up the first available weapon ; it is a napkin—I had sat down to breakfast after copying the letter—and with that I stop his mouth. You know it? Then keep it to yourself. Ought one, then, to hang everything one knows on the clapper of the big bell?"

Take another specimen a little later on.

"Yes, these ordinary people are a most amusing, a most ludicrous kind of folk. To return to the letters. I, who am well acquainted with such men and women as the writers, am used to their ideas; but what impression must they make upon a naive and uncorrupted mind—for instance, on the sharp-sighted reader?"

The sharp-sighted reader, who has succeeded in delivering his mouth from the napkin, shakes his head and pronounces simply, "immoral."

"Right. Well done," I exclaim. "Favour us with a little more of your wisdom."

"The author too is an immoral person; a reader can only be astounded at the things he sanctions."

"No, my dearly beloved, there you are wrong. There is much that I do not approve of; in fact, if the truth must be told, I condemn it nearly all. The wording of it all is much too circumstantial and solemn; real life is far more slipshod."

"'In that case you must be much more immoral?'" asks the sharp-sighted reader, his eyes starting with astonishment at the depth of moral corruption to which humanity in any person has sunk.

"'Certainly, much more immoral,' I reply, leaving the sharp-sighted reader in doubt whether I am really in earnest or whether I only said it to make game of him."

This is really excellent fooling, and it would have been worth a good deal to see the perplexed censors of the Russian press engaged in perusing it. Unfortunately they took it upon themselves to resent this light and ironical way of treating their dignified despotism, and the results of the unwarranted liberty were lamentable to the author.

But to return to the story. Its details are woven round the lives of the two central figures Lopuchow and Wjera; the former a man of strong and earnest purpose, who looks forward to a better state of society in the future, but being a firm believer in the doctrine of necessity, has nothing but

pity for those who ignorantly oppose its advent; the latter a girl of great nobility of soul living in the basest possible environment, and perpetually thwarted and persecuted by a mother who, with the worst of motives, does her best to encourage the addresses paid to her daughter by a rich and profligate admirer. This mother has been accidentally led to place complete confidence in Lopuchow, as a man whose advice would entirely concur with her own, and he is consequently allowed full freedom of intercourse with Wjera. For she has overheard him expounding his favourite doctrine of necessity, and declaring that self-interest is the basis of all human action, and that no one could justly blame Wjera if she accepted the hand of her detested lover, since it would be impossible to deny that she had done the best that it was possible for her to do. This view of the case, in so far as she is able to grasp its meaning, entirely commends itself to the mother, Maria Alexjewna, and secures for so excellent and trustworthy an adviser the highest possible place in her esteem. The consequence of this is that she encourages his intercourse with her daughter, who lends a willing ear to his teachings as a propagandist, and they are soon driven to the natural conclusion that the only escape for Wjera from the degrading persecution of her shameless mother lies in her leaving her own home for that of Lopuchow. This she accordingly does, and the scene of the story shifts and moves among higher characters and in happier times. Wjera is eager to take her part in the propaganda, and establishes a co-operative needle-work factory in order to widen her sphere of influence. And the time is favourable.

"Formerly," says our author, "people of worth (tüchtige Menschen) were sown too thin; from one stalk to another one might wander the long day through; and so they remained isolated and lost among the many, or gradually repented of their own Tüchtigkeit, and became like unto the rest of mankind. But nowadays luckier chances come in crowds; people of worth meet one another. How, indeed,

should it hap otherwise, when the tale of their numbers ever grows from year to year? Yea, yet a little time, and such happy chance shall be an ordinary event; and yet a little more, and it will be universal, weil alle Menschen tüchtig sein werden."

When we read words like these, we may wonder no more that the wrath of the White Czar was kindled against their author.

The stages in the gradual unfolding of Wjera's life-and-love story are successively marked by three mysterious dreams, which visit her and reveal her more fully to herself. The first finds her still in the prison-house of the tyranny of her mother. She dreams that she is suddenly forced from prison and placed im freien Felde. But her limbs are lamed, and she can hardly move. Then there appears before her eyes the mystical bride of Lopuchow, of whom he has so often spoken with love and awe, and her lameness is taken away by the touch of her hand. Penetrated with the passion which the beautiful vision inspires, Wjera beseeches to be told her name. She replies, "I have many and different names. What name each man may call me, that name I share with him. Do thou call me Menschenliebe, that is my real name. There are not many who name me thus, but that is the name by which I will be known to thee." And Wjera wanders in her dream through the streets of a tyrant's town, and prison bars are broken and dungeon gates opened at her approach, and within them lie maidens lamed as she once was herself, but at her touch they rise up healed, and strong, and free, and rejoice with her in their new life.

All this is plain, straightforward, and encouraging, but Wjera's second dream is full of perplexity and vexed with delicate questions of difficult philosophy. The mother appears to her when she is discussing high subjects with thoughtful and earnest men, and scornfully taunts her with her origin, suggesting such discomfortable thoughts that even the vision of the beautiful Menschenliebe can hardly avail to

comfort and reassure her. For the mother asks her daughter with what right she can upbraid her with her low immoral life, when the very fact that the daughter can afford to be virtuous arises solely from that other fact that the mother was without scruple or shame in her ways and means of providing for her education and support. She shows her as in a picture the inevitable results to her beautiful daughter of a life of honest poverty struggled through by herself,—the squalor, the misery, the temptation, and the sin. Wjera shudders and is silent.

"Will you hold your tongue for ever?" asks the mother. "What makes you pull so long a face? Listen, foolish girl. You are educated, because I stole the money to have you taught. You can distinguish good from evil—but if I had not been evil, would you have even so much as guessed what good is? Do you understand? It all comes from me. You are my daughter indeed. I am your mother."

Wjerotschka weeps, trembles, shudders. "Mother, what do you want with me? I cannot love you."

"Have I ever asked you to love me?"

"I would at least respect you, but I cannot even do that."

"I do not want your respect."

"What is it then that you want of me, mother? Why do you come and torture me with your terrible words? What must I do?"

"You must recognise me, thankless girl; then you need neither love nor respect me. I am evil; what need you to love me? I am vile; do I deserve your respect? But at least you must recognise that if I had been other than I am, you could never have become what you are. You are honourable, because I was dishonourable; you are good, because I was evil. Do you at last understand me, foolish one? Be thankful."

The vision of the mother vanishes, and the divine form of Menschenliebe again appears, and declares to Wjera that for the present she knows how to use even the evil for her own

good ends, and that for a season this must be ; but that the time is now drawing very near when this necessity will cease, when the evil will find their advantage in becoming good, and the good will finally prevail over all.

Though this second dream is full of painful thoughts and sad recollections, its gloom passes away with the dawn, and leaves no shadow over Wjera's waking hours ; but the third is of another sort, and although it still only reflects her own innermost thoughts and reveals her to herself, the revelation is of a much more troublous character to her peace of mind. For the truth is that as time goes on we discover, before she discovers it herself, that Wjera has never passionately loved Lopuchow. She has deceived herself into the idea that an infinite respect for his moral character and mental powers, coupled with the deepest gratitude for all that she owes to the man who has delivered her from the slavery of her girlhood, is one and the same thing with "the new strong wine of love." And now, either without her own knowledge or against her will, this new strong wine is being poured out for her by the fates, and resist as she may, she cannot deny to drink of it. For a new character has come upon the stage in the person of Alexander Kirsanow ? a new thread is woven into her life's history. Lopuchow is the first to perceive the charm that his conversation exerts over Wjera, and, true to his principles, allows no motives of jealousy to interfere with the friendly intercourse between the three. It is the mysterious dream that troubles Wjera's peace of mind.

For she becomes aware of a strange presence about her bed, and of an unknown voice bidding her turn over the pages of her diary and read its contents aloud. It is in vain that she pleads that she has never kept a diary, for a hand is at once stretched out to present it to her, and she is compelled by the evidence of her eyes to acknowledge her own handwriting. Page by page she is forced to read the proof that respect would better describe her feeling for Lopuchow than love, and when this is not made clear by the words that are

written, the mysterious hand is thrust through the bed-curtains and laid upon the book, when an invisible writing starts suddenly into sight, and her innermost thoughts are instantly revealed.

"How good he was when he spoke of us poor women. Every woman must love such a man. How clever, how noble, how kind he is."

"Turn back to the last page."

"I have read it already."

"No, that was not the last. Turn the leaf over."

"This page is blank."

"Not so. See; it is filled with writing." And the magic hand again evokes the invisible words.

Wjera shudders; "I will not, I cannot read."

"You will not? Good; then I will read it to you. Listen: He is a noble man; he is my deliverer. To nobility of soul are respect and trust and friendship due; to a deliverer are given thanks and devotion. His character is perhaps more fiery than mine. When he is once moved, how glowing are his caresses. But there is a different desire, the desire for a quiet, sustained tenderness; the longing to sleep soft on the pillow of tender love. Does he know this need? Are our characters, are our tastes of the same sort? He would die for me, as I for him; but does he also live only in the thought of me? Am I inspired with the thought of him alone? Do I love him with a love such as that of which I feel the want? There was a time when I did not know the longing after that calm, peaceful tenderness—no, what I feel for him is not—"

"I will hear no more." And Wjera hurls the book away. "Foul and evil intruder! What do you here? I have never summoned you. Depart."

But the stranger proceeds, ever with a friendly smile, "No, you do not love him; here it stands, in your own handwriting."

Wjera utters a cry of anguish, and is wakened by the cry. Before she knows that it has been only a dream, she springs from the bed and rushes to her husband.

"My love, embrace me, shelter me! I have had a fearful dream." She holds him fast. "My love, cherish me, be tender with me, protect me."

"Wjertoschka, what is it?" He embraces her. "You are trembling; what has frightened you so?" He kisses her. "I see tears on your cheeks, your brow is cold, and you have run over the chilly floor with bare feet. My darling, let me warm your little feet with kisses."

"Yes, fondle me, save me! I have had a hideous dream; I dreamed that I did not love you."

"What, my darling, whom should you love if not me? What a foolish, ridiculous dream!"

"Yes, I love you—fondle me, kiss me—I love you; I will love no one but you."

Alas, it is easy to make promises about love, but it is not always possible to keep them. It becomes evident to Lopuchow as time goes on that the dream has represented the real state of the case, and that, although Wjera herself will not for a moment admit it, he has no right to claim her as his own. Accordingly he takes the most effective means to disembarrass her, and the result is the reported suicide of a madman on the bridge, which was mentioned in the first chapter. Lopuchow disappears, but Wjera and Alexander divine the true cause of his disappearance, and following the course which they believe him to wish, become united to one another.

The general drift of the novel is interesting as an exemplification of the truth of the assertion which we find in "Underground Russia," that the two main objects which the Nihilists of twenty years ago had in view were the preaching of materialism and women's rights The doctrine of evolution and necessity is expounded at length and preached with emphasis, while the greatest possible stress is laid on the evils arising in society from the present enslaved position of women, and on the justice of their claim to equal rights with men. Beyond these two definite points of social re-organisa-

tion there is a certain haziness of treatment and sketchiness of outline in our author's scheme. Half-measures like partial and voluntary co-operation are not distinctly denounced as inadequate, and Socialism, although foreshadowed in numerous sentences from which it is the only logical deduction, is rather hinted at than taught, rather implied than explained.

Space prevents me from tracing at length the further details of the story. I can only recommend all those who are interested in the personality of the author to read the novel for themselves. It is regrettable that it has not been Englished. The German translation is excellent; the French I have not seen.

I had written thus far, when my attention was drawn to an article in the *Daily News*, headed "A Russian Political Prisoner." The correspondent of that journal has interviewed Tschernyschewskij in Astrachan, whither he has been sent by the Government on account of his failing health, and where he is at last allowed to enjoy the society of his wife after their long separation. The author himself attributes his exile and imprisonment not so much to his novel as to a series of articles on political and economical subjects published in Nekrassov's review, amongst them being his famous criticism of John Stuart Mill's work on political economy. At the same time there can be little doubt that the novel was the last straw which turned the balance against him.

It is interesting though painful, to hear from an eye-witness as to the present state of health, opinions, and circumstances of Tschernyschewskij. I will quote from the correspondent who visited him. "Restless in his manner to an unusual degree, I saw clearly enough that he was suffering from chronic nervous prostration." He appears to be living in Astrachan "under police surveillance of the strictest kind," but to be allowed a certain freedom of movement there. The intentions of the Government with regard to him are at present unknown, and it is uncertain how long he will remain in Astrachan. "But to me," says the correspondent, "who have

remarked the absence of even the faintest indications of rancour in his allusions to the Government, and have heard his warm appreciation of the act of clemency (*sic*) which has transferred him from Asia to Europe, it seems that the time is near when the quinquagenarian who wrote crude Socialism in his youth will be no longer regarded as dangerous to the internal quiet of the Russian empire, and when a few newspaper articles produced more than two decades ago will be deemed amply atoned for by nearly twenty years of banishment, from which Tschernyschewskij emerges to-day, not a confirmed agitator or demagogue, but a man of broken health and shattered nerves, desirous only, if he still retain any desires, of passing the remainder of his days in peace."

Truly the "clemency" of an Emperor is a fearful and wonderful attribute for any man to possess. But I greatly fear that the naive hope of the *Daily News* correspondent that twenty years of banishment, inclusive of repentance and amendment of life, will be sufficient penalty in the Emperor's eyes to atone amply for the crime of "writing crude Socialism in youth" will prove altogether illusory. The treatment of political prisoners in St. Petersburg, as we learn from a letter in the *Times* written by one of them with his own blood in a fortress to which no one is committed except by the Emperor's special order, allow very scanty grounds for the belief that the "Emperor's clemency" is anything more than an ironical expression.

J. L. Joynes.

The Crisis in Norway.

I AM asked to give a concise account, suited for English readers, of the present constitutional crisis in Norway. There could not be a pleasanter task, for there is no more stirring and cheering contest in the European politics of the day, and none in which the principles at stake are so easy of comprehension.

Norway, I need scarcely say, was in the early middle ages a very potent factor in European history. With her conquests and colonisations we have nothing to do. What we have to note is that a little more than a thousand years ago all the petty kings who ruled the districts between fiord and fiord, were reduced under the single sway of Harald Haarfager, the first king of all Norway. For five centuries this national unity and independence was maintained, the king ruling, often with no small difficulty, by the support and with the counsel of his "Jarls" and of the peasantry. The latter formed a free and powerful class. Many of them were wealthy, and scarcely to be distinguished either in power or estimation from the king's earls, who indeed were gradually absorbed into their ranks as the power of the monarchy declined. In the fourteenth century Norway fell into the hands of Denmark. In the little commercial towns along the coast a trading class arose, with large foreign intermixtures and subjected to the foreign influence of the Danish governors. The peasantry, however, remained the backbone of the country. Their udal laws and their ancient customs remained to them. Each farmer lived with his family upon his own land, tilled it, consumed the fruits of

it, and handed it down to sons as hardy and thrifty as himself. It was a hard enough life, for the valleys were narrow and the winters cruelly long. The race became silent, sombre, and slow, but self-reliant, provident, and honourable.

At last, in 1814, in one of the dealings which succeeded the Napoleonic shuffle of the European cards, Norway was handed over from Denmark to Sweden. She at once awoke from her political sleep. Delegates from all parts of the country assembled at Eidsvold, and on the 17th of May, 1814, a Constitution was drawn up and adopted by acclamation. Before the Norwegians would accept the Swedish King Karl Johan (Bernadotte), they obtained from him a pledge that he would preserve their Constitution intact; and in the first Storthing (Great Council or National Assembly) Norway was declared "a free, independent, and indivisible kingdom united with Sweden under one king." The king forms the only bond of union between the countries. There is not even the imperial relation between them which subsists between England and her colonies. History, constitution, laws, language, all are different. The Norwegian written language (a few localisms excepted) is the same as Danish, though the pronunciation differs greatly. The peasants, again, speak beautiful and expressive Old-Norse dialects, which some enthusiasts have attempted, without much hope of success, to weld into a national language.

So matters have stood for seventy years. From the very first Norway proved herself fully ripe for the democratic institutions she had won for herself. Bernadotte tried in vain to induce the Storthing to grant him an absolute veto on measures passed by it. A suspensive veto was allowed him by the Constitution, and with this he had to content himself. A bill passed in unaltered form by three successive triennial Storthings became law with or without his consent, and by this means, in 1821, all titles of nobility were abolished.

With renewed political life came commercial prosperity

and intellectual creativeness. The early struggles, political, social, and literary, of the re-awakened nation produced two great poets in the persons of Henrik Arnold Wergeland and his bitter opponent Johan Sebastian Welhaven. Wergeland's genius was comparable with that of Robert Burns, but was too national and lyrical to gain him European fame. That was reserved for three great writers of our own day—Ibsen, Björnson, and Kielland. That one poor and scanty people should produce three such poets in one generation is of itself a wonder, yet they are only the most prominent figures of an intensely active, productive, progressive life in literature, art, and science, such as the greatest of European nations can scarcely surpass except in mere quantity. When we think of her small population and stinted material resources, the intellectual and artistic activity of Norway seems phenomenal and almost miraculous.

And now an absorbing political struggle is stimulating her energies yet further. By a strange oversight or error of judgment, the Constitution of 1814, while placing the whole legislative and financial power in the hands of the Storthing, neglected to give it any practical hold over the Executive. The ministry is appointed by and is solely dependent upon the king, has no seats in the National Assembly, and is in no way responsible to it. Such an arrangement could not but lead to a deadlock, and bring about a struggle between the people and the crown. The wonder is—and I think it speaks volumes for the prudence and moderation of the Norwegian people—that the struggle has been so long in coming.

Until about the middle of the century the commercial and official class—the capitalists, the clergymen, and the lawyers—formed the majority in the Storthing. The peasant-proprietors were not yet fully alive to their political rights and duties. Between 1840 and 1850 things began to change. Ueland, a peasant-politician of great ability and the loftiest character, did much for the political education of his fellows, and since then the Liberal majority in the Storthing has been

steadily increasing, while it has found an able leader, in Johan Sverdrup, now President of the Storthing. Björnstjerne Björnson, a great orator as well as a great poet, has never entered the Storthing, but is the most active and powerful promoter of the Liberal cause, outside its walls.

In 1872 a bill was brought in providing that the Ministers of State should have seats in the Storthing, and was carried by 80 votes to 29. The king vetoed it. The Storthing passed a vote of censure on the ministry which had counselled this course, but it produced no effect. A compromise suggested by the king in 1874 was unanimously rejected by Conservatives as well as Liberals. A new Storthing passed the bill with a slight modification, and again the king refused his sanction. A third and fourth Storthing passed it, in the last case by a majority of 93 to 20; and now, it was thought, the struggle must be at an end. By no means! The king by the advice of his ministers, declared that his right to an absolute veto *on matters affecting the Constitution* was "above all doubt," and a third time vetoed the bill. Immediately the Storthing passed a resolution (9th June, 1880) to the effect that the Act had become law without the king's sanction. The king refused to recognise the resolution, and the battle began in earnest.

The ground had now shifted from the question of detail to the question of principle. The ministry threw away the scabbard by advising the king to claim an absolute veto on measures of supply as well as on those affecting the Constitution. Driven to extremity, the Liberals adopted the last constitutional course open to them, and decided to impeach the ministry before the Rigsret or Supreme Court of the Realm. The legitimacy of this course is undisputed. The Rigsret is composed of the Lagthing—a sort of inner committee elected by the Storthing from its own number, and performing in some degree the functions of an upper house—and the judges of the High Court of Justice. Its office is to try, without appeal, all offences against the State. The elections

of the winter of 1882 returned 83 Liberals to the Storthing against 31 Conservatives, and steps were at once taken for the impeachment of the ministry. The Rigsret was constituted, the 29 members of the Lagthing, all Liberals, being pitted against the 9 Conservative judges of the High Court. According to the Constitution the accused have a right of throwing out one-third of the total number of their judges, so that the Liberal majority was speedily reduced to 17, at which number it now stands. The main preliminaries were got through last autumn, and before these lines are in the hands of the public the Court will have reassembled in Christiania for the despatch of business. By the middle or end of February some result may be expected, which it may perhaps fall to my lot to chronicle in these pages.

Meanwhile, it is scarcely necessary that, in writing for English readers, I should further enlarge upon the merits of the question. They lie in a nutshell. The Constitution of 1814, admirable in many respects, was clearly unpractical, if not impracticable, in the relation, or absence of relation, which it established between the Storthing and the ministry. The attempt to rectify this error revealed an ambiguity in the Constitution on the matter of the veto. In calling it an ambiguity I am making a large concession to the ministerial side of the case. The Liberals maintain that there is no ambiguity whatever, that an absolute veto is nowhere mentioned, and that it does not exist except in the royal imagination of Oscar II. The Juridical Faculty of the University of Christiania, on the other hand, to whom the matter was submitted, declare, with one dissentient, that though the Constitution is silent as to the absolute veto, it takes it for granted as being "inherent in the nature of monarchy." How far this is true, we, in England, can tell. The fact is that Norwegian Conservatism or Royalism is not merely stationary but reactionary. It shrinks from the legitimate consequences of the principle of democracy—a principle which the Constitution of 1814, whatever may be its ambiguities, very unam-

biguously *intended* to establish. The claim to an absolute veto, even if confined to "matters affecting the Constitution" —and, as we have seen, King Oscar's claim is not confined to these,—strikes at the very root of this principle. Whatever interpretation legal ingenuity may be able to place upon the words of the Constitution, it is clear that those who support the king's reading of it, and would make of the Constitution a law of the Medes and Persians, are shrinking from the principle that Norway is governed by and for its people, through an Executive of which the king is merely the official head. The will of the people has been repeatedly expressed, and with ever-increasing distinctness, in favour of a maintenance, say the Liberals, a change, say the Conservatives, of the Constitution. Maintenance or change...what does it matter? A majority consisting of nearly three-fourths of the nation have steadily, calmly, constitutionally demanded it, and until it is carried out Norway is not a democracy, but a nondescript and anomaly in the world of politics.

Norwegian Conservatism openly or tacitly admits all this. The bureaucratic and capitalist classes are afraid of "Bondeherredömme," of peasant government, so they freely confess. An irresponsible ministry, and a king at whose veto an objectionable measure shall vanish into thin air, these are the towers of strength behind which the "respectable" minority is striving to entrench itself. To be governed by "respectable people" is the sole end of the Norwegian Conservatives; and the term "respectable" is if possible more perverted in Norway than in England. Subsidiary motives no doubt enter into the case. The struggle has been embittered by personal antipathies and the attribution of interested designs. The Conservatives, moreover, are backed by an inert mass of mere unreasoning snobbishness, especially among the female members of the town communities, manifesting itself in all the well-known ineptitudes of king-worship. But, in the last resort, Norwegian Conservatism is simply a reaction against popular government, and an

attempt to escape from the legitimate consequences of the principles of 1814.

The position of the Conservatives is pathetic in the highest degree. Their newspapers alternate between wails of lamentation and howls of abuse. The cogency of their logic may be conceived when I state what is, for the time being, one of their favourite trump-cards of argument, played out again and again in newspaper, pamphlet and sermon with a virtuous indignation which is truly impressive. The Liberals, they say, determined in one Storthing to impeach the ministry, but did not proceed with the impeachment until after the next general election, when they were surer of securing a majority in the Rigsret. Can anything, they ask, be more unprincipled, more revolutionary, more impious, in short more radical? To anyone outside the circle of the "respectable" minority, it must seem scarcely necessary to refute such an argument. The general election surely gave the Conservatives a chance as well as the Liberals. Had they succeeded in securing a majority or even a more respectable minority (in another sense of the term) the Liberals would not have shrieked "Treason!" They took the voice of the country on a great question which had entered on a new phase since the last election, and the voice of the country spoke more decisively than ever in their favour. What is there dishonourable in this? The Conservative outcry may be interpreted in plain English somewhat as follows: "You're a great, big, cowardly majority! Come down out of that, and pretend to be a minority, and then we'll show you what's what! If you won't, it's not fair, and we won't play!"

Another matter on which the Conservatives are wildly enraged is the alleged use by the Liberals of "faggot-votes" in the last election. As to this they are possibly in the right; but the sting is taken from their invectives by some recently published statistics which prove that they themselves manufactured more faggot-votes than the Liberals.

Where is it likely to end? the reader will naturally ask.

The answer to that question lies in the inner consciousness of His Majesty King Oscar II. If he yields in time, he and his house may hold the throne of Norway indefinitely. The *Saturday Review*, in gross ignorance of the who.e subject, and misled by an article in an English Conservative magazine, has recently spoken of the majority in the Storthing as "83 Republicans." In this the *Times*, in a better-informed but still misleading article (January 24th), has unfortunately followed the *Saturday's* example. As a matter of fact, a few, a mere handful, of the Liberal members are known to hold Republican opinions; but had any of them stood for election on a Republican platform he would certainly have been rejected. The redoubtable Radical peasant-proprietors are at heart Conservative. If they find that the king refuses to give effect to the deliberately-expressed will of the nation, they may accept a Republic since there is no other king handy; but theoretical Republicanism can scarcely be said to exist. As for the possibility of a *coup d'état*, at which the Conservative press does not hesitate openly to hint, I hope I am right in regarding it as a moral and material *im*possibility. In the first place King Oscar is a man of brains, if not of insight. I believe that he is actually, as Charles I. was nominally, misled by his advisers, and that his common sense will save him from that final fatal blunder. In the second place a *coup d'état* demands physical force, and it is hard to see where that is to come from. I trust that civil war in Norway is at an *im*measurable distance.

R. GILBERT.

Claudian: or Melo-dramatic Theology.

A curious essay might be written on the theology of melo-drama, with illustrations from recent productions at the Princess's Theatre. One does not, indeed, look for great clearness of thought in this branch of art. Melodrama may be defined as illogical tragedy, in which causes and effects are systematically disproportionate, and the hero is the plaything of special providences. Still there are degrees of illogicality, and providences, like the editions of an evening newspaper, may be either special or extra-special. At the Princess's they are extra-special. The theology of the playwrights who supply this popular stage is characterised by what may be called a cheerful pessimism, or, in other words, a naive stoicism. They say with Edgar:—

> "Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither;
> Effect is all."

The hero of "The Silver King," on reading that the train in which he is supposed to have been escaping from the detectives, has come into collision with some trucks containing petroleum, in which its passengers have been slowly calcined, at once falls on his knees in the middle of the stage, with the cry of "Thank God!" and proceeds to utter a fervent apostrophe of gratitude. Neither he, the author, nor the audience, bestow a single thought on the carbonized passengers, slowly roasted in order to aid the escape of a drunkard who has by the merest chance missed becoming a murderer. One is reminded of a passage in Ibsen's "Peer Gynt," where a remarkable special providence is treated in a similar spirit. The hero, with a party of friends, has landed

from a steam-yacht on the coast of Barbary. His companions learn that he has on board the yacht a cargo of arms which he intends to sell to the Turks, to aid them in putting down a Christian rising. Against this their sense of humanity rebels; and when their host has retired for an after-dinner sleep in a palm-grove, they row off to the yacht and take possession of it. Peer Gynt awakes to find his yacht steaming gaily away in the offing, and himself left beggared upon the desert coast. He bursts out into a storm of reproaches against providence; when suddenly an explosion is heard and he sees the yacht blown into a thousand fragments. His friends' treachery is now clearly a special interposition on his behalf, and recognising it in that light, he breaks off his torrent of imprecations with the reflection :—

> "God's well-disposed towards me after all—
> But economical?—no, that he isn't!"

In the same way one may say of the melodramatist's providence, it always proves itself in the end well disposed towards the hero, but economical of the life and happiness of others it certainly is not. Even the hero has often to be thankful for small mercies. When Wilfrid Denver, at the end of "The Silver King," turned up his eyes and thanked the Power whose "lovingkindness had been around him all the days of his life," one could not help reflecting that the whole Denver family had been having an extremely unpleasant time of it for the past three years, and that, if a text was necessary at all, something after the fashion of "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," would have been much more to the point.

"Claudian," the new drama by Messrs. Wills and Herman, reduces this tendency to an absurdity. It is the old tragedy of the Wandering Jew or of the Flying Dutchman, turned into melodrama; robbed, that is to say, of its logical and poetical consistoncy. Ahasuerus, in the mediæval legend, insults the Saviour and is cursed with restless, everlasting life. There is only one interposition of supernatural power,

and the punishment falls on the guilty and on him alone. So is it with Vanderdecken. His crew are indeed involved in his fate, but they may be presumed to have shared his impiety as well. In the modern version, which Wagner borrowed from Heine, and Heine, perhaps, from Fitzball, his salvation is made to depend upon a woman's faith; and it death is his only true salvation, and he takes her with him to his rest, her fate is yet nobly self-determined, and therefore truly tragic. Even in the common sea-legends, which make of the Flying Dutchman a forerunner of death and disaster, he is not considered as their cause, any more than the petrel is the cause of the storm or the vulture of the battle. He is simply "dreeing his weird," which is to haunt the tempest, and live, undying, in an atmosphere of danger and death.

Not so Claudian. His doom is not one great miracle, but a series of ever-recurring wonders. The guilt is his, the punishment falls on everyone but himself. "Thy course," says the Holy Clement (there is surely a touch of irony in the name)

> "Thy course like baneful star across the sky
> Shall blight and wither all upon thy track.
> The innocent sunshine shall die out before thee,
> And the black shadow of misfortune follow.
>
> "Thy soul shall thirst and famish to do good
> And try in vain to do it.
> The happiness, as pure as crystal well,
> Touched by thy lips shall muddy at its source.
> Thy pity shall envenom what 'twould soothe;
> Thy charity breed pestilence and ruin,
> Until that day the vaulted rocks shall split,
> A gulf be widened betwixt thee and me;
> Then thou shall choose either to die, or live
> Accurst till doom."

It is all very well to say that the misery he spreads around re-acts upon himself; this may be very true, but it is small comfort to those whom he "blights and withers," "envenoms," and strikes down with pestilence. The providence which, to punish a man for killing a monk, makes him a sort of locomotive upas-tree, and turns him loose upon society for a whole century, may perhaps be well-meaning, but economical it certainly is not. The end is ridiculously dispropor-

tionate to the magnitude of the means. One is reminded of the test by which Tantalus tried the omniscience of the gods, when, instead of merely putting a little arsenic in the turtle-soup, he fricasseed his own son Pelops. Until I saw "Claudian," this had always seemed to me the acme of reckless wastefulness in the application of means to ends.

In dealing with legendary themes, our aim should surely be to humanize and not to brutalize them. There is in "Claudian" a calm, nay a reverential, acceptance of monstrous injustice in the action of the higher powers, which we do not find in the crudest mediæval myths. It is to be observed that Claudian has not, like Faust, sold himself to the Evil One. It is distinctly through the intervention of the powers above, and not of those below, that he is sent forth to carry calamity, destruction, and misery wherever he goes. The authors leave us no loophole of escape from the theory that it is "the mills of God" which grind so "exceeding small." Claudian's redemption is the direct object of this century of agony for his innocent surroundings. That the world may be to him a purgatory, it is made a hell to everyone else. As a railway train was roasted to save Wilfrid Denver's life, so a whole city has to be horribly destroyed for the ultimate salvation of Claudian's soul. At first even he is staggered by this climax to the hundred years of horror. "Impavidum feriunt ruinæ" cannot literally be said of him. But, in a little, a light breaks in upon him. He sees in this crowning calamity a crowning mercy. The "vaulted rocks have split," and he is going straight to heaven. The fact that the chasm is filled with the bodies of men and women does not seem to give him pause. He "chooses death," and a flash of thunderless lightning promptly descends, killing him, as such miraculous electricity naturally would, after an interval of five minutes for recitation. At last he dies in the glory of limelight and the odour of sanctity, and we are given to understand that his expiation is complete. Was the game worth the candle? is a question

which does not seem to have occurred to either authors or audience. We read in the legend of St. Sylvester that Constantine, while yet a Pagan, was attacked with leprosy, and was recommended by the priests to try as a remedy a bath in the warm blood of three thousand babies; but the emperor replied, "Far better it is that I should die than cause the death of these innocents." No such weak humanitarian scruples trouble the breasts of Claudian or Messrs. Wills and Herman. They seem to say, like Albany in "Lear":...

> "This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
> Touches us not with pity."

They accept the blight and venom, the pestilence and earthquake, as the "ways of God," which need no justification to man. I think a protest is called for in the name of common sense, if not of piety. Such means to such an end are not the "ways of God," but merely the ways of melodramatic playwrights.

I am far from grudging "Claudian" its success. Audiences go to a speclacular play not for theology but for spectacle, and at the Princess's they get it. Mr. Wilson Barrett has surpassed himself as a manager, and as an actor has at least maintained his standing. Such a transparently nonsensical conception of the methods of providence cannot affect for good or ill the action of any human being. No one believes for a moment that such things ever happened or ever could happen, except in the Realm of Melodrama. There they are matters of every day occurrence. The eccentricities of providence in "Claudian" are only notable for their vastness, and for the utter complacency with which the authors treat them. Without the deus ex machinâ, whether he arrive in the shape of an earthquake or of "Hawkshaw the Detective," melodrama could not exist. My plea is only that he need not be treated with such superfluous respect as is shown him by Messrs. Wills and Herman. One word of rebellion—one hint that the grim pessimism of their conception is regarded by themselves as anything

short of the most roseate optimism—would do much to clear the somewhat stifling moral atmosphere.

Mr. Herman's strength as a constructor of drama clearly lies in his prologues. The statement of the problem in "Claudian," as in "The Silver King," is strong and striking; the weakness lies in the working out. It would be hard to conceive a more utterly unmotived expenditure of emotion than that to which we are treated in the part of Almida. Her sudden passion for Claudian is apparently a reminiscence from "Der Fliegende Holländer," but is robbed of its significance by the fact that a woman's love is not supposed to have a greater influence on the fate of Claudian than any other effect of the ban under which he lies. A cruder method of "working in the female interest" could scarcely have been invented. Her blindness and her restoration to sight are equally arbitrary—two motiveless miracles, without even the claptrap of effectiveness, which in melodrama excuses such trifling with the order of nature. Then the semblance of a dramatic conflict which might have been extracted from her position between Claudian and Agazil is entirely neglected for the sake of some grotesquely repulsive passages with an impossible Tetrarch. The flinging of Agazil over the battlements is only equalled in point of gratuitous absurdity by his reappearance, sound in wind and limb, in the following act. No explanation is offered of his escape from the foaming torrent; as he is a personage of eminent virtue we cannot even conclude that the melodramatic providence has specially reserved him for a drier fate. But the saddest error of the play is the feebleness with which the authors work up to their great effect of the earthquake. It is a lost opportunity, a possibility wasted. A profound and impressive effect might be obtained from a vivid picture of the signs and omens, the vague unrest, the growing presentiment of a mysterious doom, said to precede these mighty catastrophes. A skilful dramatist, by the cumulative power of small touches, might have worked up his audience to a state of breath-

less anticipation. Messrs. Wills and Herman make no such attempt. At the beginning of the short scene in which the catastrophe occurs they introduce a young woman (else unheard of in the play), who recites a narrative of some former earthquake, and states her conviction that another is impending. There is no gradation of terror, no hush of foreboding awe. When the sensation comes it is effective enough, indeed masterly in its way, but it lacks human interest. We feel no more sympathetic excitement than when a penny dropped through a slit sets in motion an ingenious piece of clockwork. Somewhat similar, yet very different, is the effect in "Sardanapalus," when the courtiers, in his great banquet-hall, hail the monarch as a god. There is a crash of thunder, a flash of lightning, and in the weird semi-darkness which follows we see the revellers struck prostrate to the earth, while Sardanapalus, with Myrrha clinging to him, stands awe-struck yet half defiant on the lofty steps of his throne. This differs from the earthquake in "Claudian" as dramatic poetry differs from stage-carpentry. When "Claudian" and the play by Mr. Jones, which is to follow it, have run their course, why should not Mr. Wilson Barrett follow the example of his great predecessor at the Princess's, and revive "Sardanapalus?" There is some talk of a revival of "Hamlet," and I have no doubt that Mr. Barrett would make an extremely satisfactory Prince of Denmark; but I, for one, cannot but lament that he should even temporarily desert the drama of the present for the drama of the past. "Hamlet" we have always with us; "Sardanapalus" would be an improvement on "Claudian," which is a great deal less powerful without being a bit more modern; but why should Mr. Barrett take to melting up and recoining old metal, instead of extracting new ore from the rich vein which he struck in the "Silver King" and its predecessors?

WILLIAM ARCHER.

Christianity and Capitalism.

A REPLY.

I HAVE just come from visiting some of the patients in Whitechapel Infirmary, one of those places whither are relegated those who have failed in life and in health, and there my eye was caught for a moment by a white cross, inscribed with the letters I.H.S. (Jesus Hominum Salvator,) under which lay the sick, broken and moaning paupers, whose one hope seemed to be "to go quietly out," as an old man told me, "having had 74 years of life, and been tired out with the last five of them." 'Jesus Saviour of men' was a bitter and terrible mockery amid the scorched remnants of the fires of such present damnation, and the startling contrast made me feel with Dr. Aveling, not that the ideal itself is to be spurned or spitted on (it has been so treated enough, surely, by those who profess it), but that "to the false nature of our commercial system, and the false basis of our ethical system are traceable the indescribable, the nameless horrors of our modern life."

Dr. Aveling and the Christian Socialists are at one in a great many things; they are at one in wrestling with the powers of darkness in high places, in a stern determination that the horrors of our modern life *ought** not to be, and in the unconquerable faith that they are not natural, and so will cease to be. That is to say, they both believe in an underlying ideal, and that a kindly one, and one that will yet come

* It would be interesting to hear Dr. Aveling's note on this word.

to victory. Nay, more than this, they both, especially the Christian Socialists, regard with contempt and indignation the particular follies of what Dr. Aveling is pleased to call "Christianity." If, in answer to a question, how to inherit the sort of life he denominated eternal life, Jesus answered with two commandments, and a 'parable' not only "anti-religious" in tone, but even infidel (Samaritan) in its garb, we shall not do more than thank Dr. Aveling if he puts the same parable into 19th century prose, and reiterates our Master's lesson in our all too forgetful ears. Yes! not only is the nostrum called the "gospel" wholly inefficient as a remedy for the condition of the poor, but it is highly deleterious, being a soporific that dulls the eyes of the doctor and makes his healing hand shake. Four treatises of the name of gospels have been long in existence, and it is neither of these four that is here intended, but a certain fifth gospel, as remote from the original tale as human perversity can well make it. Not only is there present among us a man fallen among thieves and stripped and wounded, but priests and Levites in plenty have hurried by; (this we all admit) or what is a still more damnable and anti-eternal life proceeding, have stopped, supplied the wounded man with a tract on his wickedness of life, immortal soul and the like, and then passed on chuckling inwardly at their extreme devotion. This is Dr. Aveling's view of 'Christianity' and the 'gospel;' no wonder he abhors it. Men have indeed preached and proclaimed this, and have called this Christianity, but we detest it also, and, if Dr. Aveling will be candid, he will add "and so did Jesus." The infidel (Samaritan) who is in favour of a wine and oil gospel, tenderness, compassion, and expenditure at personal inconvenience is certainly more to our tastes, than the priest with his unsympathetic tract and covert treaty with the thieves. So we are very glad to join Dr. Aveling or any other who would fain do the Christ-mandates in not only assisting the wounded man, but even preventing further outrages by vigorously tracking the thieves to their

haunts and executing justice upon them. The popular Christianity of to-day is only too palpably for the most part a wild incoherent gibbering of the ghosts of old beliefs, confined to one set of words and phrases, of recondite meaning and absurd metaphor, or it is an æsthetic jumble of things old and new, the old being often effete, and the new mean and trivial, yet mingled with all this dusty and musty mass of rubbish, there are pieces of gold, not a few, and pearls of great price. Is there nothing in the Christianity which rallied England around Queen Bess, or caught all the serious thought and manhood of England into Puritanism, and grim determination was mingled with tears, to bind kings in chains and to set the people free? Is there nothing in the Christianity which moved Savonarola to leave the haunts of rich oppressors and stand forth a champion for the poor and the oppressed against wantons, tyrants, and a culture which was diseased, because of its 'false ethical basis'? Dr. Aveling should not talk with such glibness of 1500 years of Christianity to any folk who care for the history of the human mind. They might begin by asking, for instance, what Christianity has been preached for so long, and shewing him that there has been no single belief of that name so continuously held. They might proceed to ask a few questions as to his opinion, for instance, on the coming of the Friars, or on John Milton, or on little pastor Oberlin, or on any of those who—

> Could see the Mother with the Child,
> Whose tender winning arts
> Have to His little arms beguiled
> So many wounded hearts.

And it is simply a lamentable deficiency in Dr. Aveling's historical acquirements (due, no doubt, to the accidental omission of certain cerebral ganglia) that causes him to surprise us with a sentence like the following:—"The teachings of Jesus Christ are not of an order which can regenerate society." Indeed we always thought that—

> Men call'd from chamber, church, and tent,
> And Christ was by to save.

And there are few lovers of the better life now, who will not,

whatever be their creed, acknowledge that they have personally felt some regenerative power from some of the Christ sayings or principles; and so too with societies, as the scantiest gleaning of human history would tell Dr. Aveling. To denounce and renounce *in toto* the whole of our past history for 1500 years, is more fitted for a petulant and boyish mind than for a scientific student like Dr. Aveling, who might surely have seen by his studies that we are more the creatures of the past than the creators of the future. The Christian Socialists would not be such ardent believers in free will as to take up this position, or such dogmatists as thus boldly to assert that untruth and lies having prevailed and dominated mankind for so long, by some sudden and new departure in the nature of things, that truth, newly revealed to Dr. Aveling, is henceforth sure of a triumphant path. The mere fact that so many noble spirits have lived and died in a faith, proves to us what mighty truths must be therein contained, and that it is these, or this idea, which will "pursue its majestic way," and not any new spick and span idea which starts *de novo*. So much for historical continuity on behalf of slighted science. Would Dr. Aveling consider that Political Economy is a subject to be abhorred of all good Socialists, because Malthus and his mischief obtained such a fatal grip of that science and brought such woe upon our race? Surely not! And still less would he reject all scientific teaching because of this monstrous and abortive birth. Then is he quite justified in refusing to discern between a genuine and a spurious gospel, a historical Christ and a distorted traditional mockery?

Again, what does Dr. Aveling mean by religion in the phrase "Science is entirely irreligious?" He evidently has some bugbear notions of a "supernatural" derived from the *Record* newspaper, and which a Christian Socialist would repudiate as decidedly as Dr. Aveling himself. As a clergyman of the Church of England and a Socialist, I may be permitted to state that I consider a belief in such a super-

natural, as is advocated by imbecile writers in inferior Church papers, to deserve the name of atheism, to be not only scandalously opposed to the great doctrine of the Incarnation, and therefore to be heretical, but also to be based upon nothing except the witless fancies of faithless theologians. To believe in a great First Cause, who originally set the ball rolling, and has once or twice superseded natural laws, I consider to be unworthy of the name even of Theism. If a deity sits outside the universe watching our struggles against his pitiless laws, our defeats and annihilation, when he can and will not interfere to help, I am not only an atheist, I am an anti-theist. But Dr. Aveling surely knows that this is not the creed of the Christian Socialists. He can surely trace in human fables of this sort the grotesquely-distorted human image, and notice how far it falls short of the least of our brothers the heroes. But religion has been long ago defined as the relation of the microcosm to the macrocosm, of the knowing mind to the thing known, and therefore to concern all knowledge, all mental attitude, and so all life. Is science then irreligious? By its very nature it demands above all things certain relations, such as fearlessness, faithfulness, self-suppression, and the like. The science of the country clergy who write to the *Guardian* to reconcile contradictions indeed lacks all the needful relations, is irreligious, and therefore not science at all; while the late Mr. Darwin possessed these qualities in an eminent degree, and was (whether he knew it or not) deeply religious. And where and what is this macrocosm to which we are to be related before we can become religious or scientific—this Nature, as it is manifested to the microcosm? The answer of Jesus shows that he had penetrated deeply into scientific philosophy. The God, the kingdom of Heaven, the reality of which Nature is the garment, is within us. We find that Nature is a something within our consciousness, a part of our understanding, and so seek for God in the reality of Man. If then Dr. Aveling can create a man more ideal than Christ, we will

cease to call Christ divine, or to strive to attain to Him. But until that happy time arrives we will manfully fight under *His* banner against what destroys and degrades. And this not because we hope to go droning on our narrow existence interminably, "saving our own souls;" by which is meant, not as Jesus meant, "healthening and training" them, but swallowing nectars we have not brewed, and watching, if not with the savage glee of Tertullian, yet with mild delight even more atrocious, the struggles of our less favoured human brothers in torment. The fundamental principles of our creed forbid such a wicked hope. Our personality, in as far as it consists of a life apart from our ideal, or our "own soul," is a thing to be got rid of. There is only one ideal man underlying all outward personalities. If I can be but a Christ I can never live or hope alone. Apart from humanity and nature I know not what I should be or am. But have we yet fathomed nature and man? What physical death is we know not: are we yet sure what life is? or even what the "matter" and "force" are with which the Materialists are so confidently at home? Then beyond the veil our hopes may extend, but our hopes are not knowledge; and Christians are sure that if no clear light of knowledge is given us on this subject it is for this obvious reason that our business is with this life, if life it may be called. This death we do know, the agony of an ideal not yet reached, and of a rising again not yet attained to; of an outcast and slain Christ who will still live. It is because we cannot disjoin ourselves from what we know that we can rear a fabric of Socialism. It is because we feel a kind, pitiful, human Jesus to be ever near, and with, and in us that we can be inspired with fervour for the noble work that lies so gigantic before us. It is because we believe in the Reality of life being a merciful Father that we "dare go" to the dwellers in the fever-haunted charnel-houses, for which they pay more rent weekly than their graves will cost once for all, and tell them that if they will struggle to be free the living soul of the world is on their side, and will put down

the mighty from their seats, and exalt the men of low estate. If we did not believe in the merciful Father we should at any rate stop our ears to the torture of their cries of despair. Is it more or less scientific to sift the true from the false, and to cleave to the true, rather than to insist on standing apart, like inhuman Noah, mid a perishing world? Even the poor ranters, who bawl out their uninspired Bible, and their (mostly non-human) Christ are surely to be commended in this, that they give their dupes the works of a people among whom their emancipator was born, and the records of him, which breathe hope, the very mainspring of action, to those who have no hope, and fierce denunciations of religionists and the oppressive rich. Let us be thankful even for Moody! While the Ritualist with his "practical piety" is doing his best to body out the "eternal melody," we can but accept with gratitude his small contribution to great truths.

I have now pointed out to Dr. Aveling his errors in regard to "Christianity," as well as freely admitted how unpardonable, as well as inane are the faults of that which calls itself Christian and is not, now that religion involves no belief in the supernatural whatsoever, but is a belief in the ideal, realised at least once in history, often partially realised, and never wholly absent from any man; so that to realise this ideal is the one and only end of human life. This involves a complete set of relations of conduct. From these we come to hold certain political principles, such as the universal brotherhood of man, and that therefore all should "start fair" in the world—not that some should be born with a silver spoon, and others with a mouthful of dust and ashes, and many more propositions, none of which are at present in dispute. Now, and lastly, let me point out to Dr. Aveling that his remark upon Mr. Headlam's quotation, "the earth is the Lord's," involves a position that Dr. Aveling himself would disavow. The Lord, then, has neglected His property! Has He? Because, when we have gone astray from the "service of perfect freedom" and human brotherhood, and given our-

selves over to a silly and vicious individualism, we have not had the softest of pillows and the most delicious lotus-eating of lives? Because when the poor have allowed the yoke of tyranny to be placed on their necks, and seen their brothers wasting in misery while they themselves were brutally contented, the collar has been allowed to gall their necks, their nerves have not been numbed, is that a proof that they have been outraged by eternal justice? Would it be a thing to be desired that a people should depart from freedom and brotherliness, and not find the way beset with misery? Does not Dr. Aveling think that rich as well as poor feel the curse? The sickly "Masher" finds life quite as bitter, even more bitter to his languid soul than the haggard labourer. The curse is on both. Or, to view the question from another point, where would Dr. Aveling get his notion of what is right, except from principle derived from a study of what exists? If the World-Spirit has done wrong, how could Dr. Aveling possibly find it out, unless from intuitions from somewhat? This is a piece of pre-Baconian philosophy, based on nothing. Or, the same question again, would Dr. Aveling reward a man who rushed from a crowd of waverers into a fire to save a life in danger? Then, if so, he would approve that man above his fellows in this action. That is to say, he would think good action preferable to self-indulgent inaction. I dare say he would even go on to tell us that life is esentially a series of actions. If so, the best life would be a series of the best actions, and not a long tale of gratifying sensations, ever weakened by time, and it would be best for us to be urged on to these actions, even by most ungratifying sensations.

So much on Dr. Aveling. Now on the part of the Christian Socialists. We feel that he who is not against us is on our side, and anyone who will work righteously for the bettering of things and of men will be sure of our hearty co-operation with him where our objects agree. We feel but little doubt when we offer to work shoulder to shoulder with Dr. Aveling

and those who think with him on Socialism that time will be the judge between us, and do not wish to cut and stab men whose words may offend us, perhaps because we misunderstand them. Whether mankind eventually enrol themselves under the banner of Christus Liberator or of some other than he, in our own minds we have little doubt. Meanwhile we go on hoping that the white cross and Jesus Hominum Salvator is a hope that will not for ever mock suffering humanity. Whether this be so, or whether we are deluded let time shew: we are content to wait the issue. "Knowing this we know no more:"—

Whoever fights, whoever falls—
Justice conquers evermore.

CHARLES L. MARSON.

A NOTE BY THE REV. STEWART D. HEADLAM.

Dr. Aveling's bark is far worse than his bite. He attacks "Christianity" in brave words, and doubtless will be considered by many a bold bad man for doing so. The admission of such an attack into the first number of a Socialist magazine will probably prejudice some, whom we want to educate, against the Socialistic cause, but the religion and the Church of Jesus Christ will not be hurt by it.

As a Socialist I am sorry that, having to deal with Christianity and Capitalism, so able a writer as Dr. Aveling should not think it worth while to expose the evils of the latter. As a Christian I thank Dr. Aveling for carting away under the name of "Christianity" a lot of rubbish which has been allowed to accumulate round the religion of Christ. As a believer in to-day I am sorry to find that one who is doubtless well abreast of the best modern teaching in art, literature, and science is, as regards the Christian religion, somewhat behind a Bethnal Green school girl.

For only the space of one page does Dr. Aveling attempt to get at the heart of the matter, and that is the one devoted to the Christianity of Christ. And here his hatred of supernaturalism is so much stronger than his love of Socialism that though he must know that to a large degree the work of

Jesus was both secular and Socialistic, he does not write a single word to show that He was anything better than a purse-proud plutocrat. Dr. Aveling mentions Him only to object that His teaching was unscientific, to quote one saying of His, and to assume that He taught about a Heaven and a Hell after death, and that therefore His teaching was detrimental to any attempt to better earthly conditions.

I venture to put it to Dr. Aveling whether, if the Gospels had just been discovered, say by some Agnostic traveller, he would have had nothing more than this to say about the author of "the revolutionary Asiatic creed," whether it is not simple prejudice which now prevents him from seeing how grand, how social, were the principles which He laid down?

But, indeed, how can He be called unscientific who teaches His followers simply to seek for the truth, and that so they would be free? Why because He noticed the fact that in the narrow Jewish society which He came to break in pieces there were always a lot of poor men, should He be assumed to have foretold that there always must be poor men in Europe? And if it were a fact that there always will be "poor with us," is that any reason against our so revolutionising society that it shall be the workers who are rich and the lazy who are poor, instead of, as at present, the workers being poor and the lazy rich? And as for the Heaven and the Hell *after death* I simply challenge Dr. Aveling to give me half-a-dozen passages in the Gospels where they are spoken of. What Jesus did was to show that the kingdom of heaven, the righteous Socialistic society, was to be established upon earth, and that if men did wrong, if they were selfish instead of social, they would suffer terribly for it, and that that suffering was intended to purify them.

When Dr. Aveling attacks "Christianity" we have much to thank him for, but he will have a task before him which will keep him from Socialist propaganda for many a month if he tries to show that Jesus was the supporter of Capitalism.

STEWART D. HEADLAM.

The Poet Laureate as Philosopher and Peer.

IN one of Victor Hugo's most remarkable novels, "L'Homme qui Rit," we have a strange account of the discovery of an unknown Baron, and his sudden and startling appearance in the House of Lords. Gwynplaine, "the man who laughs," the hero of this fantastic story, was the heir to an English peerage, who, by a Court plot, had been stolen in his infancy, mutilated, and exposed to die on the shore of Dorsetshire. By a refinement of cruelty, the muscles of his face had been so cut as to cause him to wear a perpetual and ghastly grin, which had the effect of producing the contagion of irrepressible laughter in those who beheld him. Rescued from death, and brought up as a strolling stage-player, under the title of "L'Homme qui Rit," he was at last discovered to be a peer of the realm, and took that place in the august assembly to which his rank entitled him. A memorable scene then ensued. Rising to speak on the motion then before the House, which was the question of a grant of money to a member of the royal family, he succeeded in restraining, by a desperate effort, the laugh which was usually on his face, and delivered to the astonished peers a powerful democratic and revolutionary harangue. His audience sat in amazed silence; but, unfortunately, in the middle of his speech, he was so carried away by emotion that he relaxed the constraint which he had put upon his features, and broke forth into the fatal laugh. The effect was instantaneous. A vast

and uncontrollable fit of laughter seized upon the whole assembly; dukes and lords clapped their hands and vied in their derisive shouts; bishops held their sides; the Lord Chancellor covered his face; and the House adjourned in the wildest excitement and confusion.

But what has this to do with Lord Tennyson? The gravity of his features, and his well-known aversion to any display of revolutionary sentiment, seem to preclude any possibility of a comparison of his appearance in the House of Lords with the scene I have just described. He is not a man who laughs, and he is not likely to say anything which would appear ridiculous to his fellow peers. And yet, rightly regarded, his advent to the House of Lords is perhaps a more laughable event than any which fiction has imagined. That a man who bore the name of Alfred Tennyson, a name which will always be remembered and revered wherever the English language is spoken, should be willing to enter an assembly which is in direct and glaring opposition to all the noblest instincts of the English people, this in itself is enough, one would imagine, to elicit laughter, loud and irrepressible, from the gravest of poets and the demurest of senates. And if it excites no such audible display of feeling among the parties most closely concerned, it is nevertheless a fact that it has caused much amazement and ridicule in the nation at large. The civilized world has laughed at this ludicrous spectacle—a man of genius, a man of the people, joining the ranks of the most bigoted and selfish of aristocratic assemblies.

Yet it should be remembered that this last act, which has excited such widespread surprise and disapprobation among almost all classes of Englishmen, is nothing more than the culminating point of a process which has long been going on. It cannot be denied that during the last ten years the whole weight of the Poet Laureate's influence has been thrown more and more in favour of the Conservative and reactionary party; while professing to stand aloof from the troubled

element of politics, he has, for all practical purposes, done all that he could to arrest the march of free thought, and to hinder the awakening of the people. The bigoted and intolerant tone of many of his late poems has caused sorrow and disappointment to all true-hearted Reformers, and is the more deplorable and inconsistent since it comes from one who hitherto posed as himself a champion of independent thought and a lover of liberty. But, after all, it is perhaps better that we should now have in Lord Tennyson a professed opponent rather than a lukewarm friend; and, in spite of his great and deserved reputation as a poet, his loss to the cause of liberty will be found to be less serious than might at first sight be imagined. For, while we fully admit the greatness of his purely poetical powers, we have no hesitation in asserting that the *thought* which runs through his writings is as feeble as the *expression* is beautiful. His philosophy, if such it can be called, was false and hollow from the beginning, and has become more and more unscientific with increasing age and intolerance.

Here it may be objected that we are raising unnecessary difficulties in discussing the philosophy of a poet. "It is the duty of a poet," say some, "to sing, and not to teach." This may or may not be true as regards the duty of poets in general, but it certainly is not the course that has been followed by Lord Tennyson; it is not the view that he himself has taken of his own duties and capabilities. Would to heaven that it were so! It would have been better for him and for all of us if he had thought it well to follow the wise example of Gray, and Collins, and Keats, and restrain himself to that art of poetry in which he has so few rivals. For if ever a poet has come near to perfection in his work, Lord Tennyson has done so in those poems where a great but simple thought had to be expressed, and where there was no room for the introduction of any controversial matter. For example, in "Ulysses" we have a splendid representation of the indomitable energy of the will; in the "Lotos Eaters,"

of rest; in "St. Agnes' Eve," of purity and resignation; in "Rizpah," of horror, and pity, and love. But, unfortunately, the Poet Laureate was not content with this simplicity of subject; he has deliberately descended into the arena of strife, and must be judged accordingly. Indeed, it is so obviously useless to attempt to exonerate him from this criticism that many of his admirers boldly take the bull by the horns and claim for him the position of a great teacher and thinker. It will be found, I fear, that his thoughts when sifted are light as chaff, and that his philosophical system is a mixture of opportunism and shallow optimist theories. In his delightful poem of "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue," he has described the process of his own poetic inspiration, and the influence of his Muse:

> "Until the charm have power to make
> New life-blood warm the bosom,
> And barren common-places break
> In full and kindly blossom."

One could hardly desire a more correct description of Lord Tennyson's practical philosophy. It is expressed in language of the fullest and kindliest blossom; but the common-places of his thought will be found on investigation to be very barren indeed.

Let us now proceed to consider the tendency of the Poet Laureate's teaching on questions of religion, morality, and politics. Lord Tennyson is often claimed as an ally by the orthodox church party; but it may be doubted whether he is at heart a very 'sound' champion of the faith, at any rate on the question of the truth of Christian dogma. It should be noticed that on this subject the assistance he has given to orthodox belief has been less by any outspoken avowal than by hints and suggestions, which imply a sympathetic feeling, but are no guarantee of personal adherence. He gives the Christian the advantage, so to speak, of the best position in his poems; he loves to throw a favourable light on the orthodox portions of the picture and an unfavourable light on the reverse; and thus in an indirect way he has undoubtedly

done service to the Church. But his attitude is always such as to suggest the idea that he believes Christian doctrine must be upheld less for its own inherent truth, than because it is bound up with some external advantage to mankind. As an instance of this indirect approval, we may refer to the passage in "The Two Voices," where the speaker, after long hesitation between the advantages of death or life, is cheered by the sweet and balmy airs of a lovely morning. It is of course a Sabbath morning.

> "Like softened winds that blowing steal,
> When meres begin to uncongeal,
> The sweet church bells began to peal.
>
> "On to God's house the people prest:
> Passing the place where each must rest,
> Each entered like a welcome guest."

The sight of this solemn scene rescues the would-be suicide from the gloomy depths of his despair. It is a slight touch, but it is characteristic of Lord Tennyson's narrow and partial delineations of human nature.

Other examples will readily occur to the mind; perhaps the most striking is to be found in one of his later poems, "In the Children's Hospital." There, among other characters, we have a description of a terrible doctor, with red hair, big voice, big merciless hands, fresh from the surgery-schools of France, and addicted to the worst practices of vivisection, who roughly informs the hospital nurse that one of the children under her charge is dying and will not need more of her care. When she timidly suggests that there is the more need "to seek the Lord Jesus in prayer," he treats her with brutal scorn.

> "Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I know that I heard him say
> 'All very well—but the good Lord Jesus has had his day.'"

In this passage Lord Tennyson has deliberately gone out of his way to couple disbelief with roughness and brutality, and I cannot imagine anything more disingenuous than to draw a picture which may conceivably be true in itself, but is calculated to suggest an absolutely erroneous inference to the mind. There may be doctors like the one described,

devoid of all gentleness and humanity; but, as Lord Tennyson knows very well, it is not their belief or disbelief that has made them so. Gentleness is not an invariable concomitant of Christianity any more than of scepticism.

We shall come to still worse instances by-and-by on other questions, but this is no unfair example of the illogical and indirect aid which the Poet Laureate renders now and again to the church party on the subject of Christianity. He never meets the unbeliever face to face as an avowed opponent, but he sneaks behind him and trips him up unawares, or gives him a foul blow "below the belt," while posing all the time as the impartial and philosophical by-stander who wrote those famous lines (but that was many a year ago.)

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

Such is Lord Tennyson's attitude with regard to Christianity. But there is another question in which he has taken a far more pronounced part, and has shown himself more and more intolerant and dogmatic in his advancing age; though, unfortunately, here also he has adopted that circuitous and illogical method which I have just noticed. The immortality of the soul is not merely the cardinal belief of the Poet Laureate's philosophy—in that he would be at one with many of the best and noblest teachers of mankind; but it is the *sine quâ non* of his morality, the condition without which life is worthless, the criterion by which he passes immutable judgment on the characters of his fellow-men. To illustrate this it will be necessary to touch briefly on three or four of his poems, and first on "In Memoriam," the tenderest and noblest of all his works. It is worthy of remark that in this poem, where he has himself felt most deeply, he is least intolerant of the opinion of others. As he himself says:—

"If these brief lays, of sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn."

This is a true and sensible estimate of the philosophical value not only of "In Memoriam," but of all Lord Tennyson's

poetry; and had this wise thought been kept in remembrance such a poem as "Despair" would never have been written, and that ill-starred drama, "The Promise of May," would never have made its brief appearance on the stage. But even in "In Memoriam," tender and beautiful as the poem is, we may discover the germs of that fatal fallacy, lately developed to the full in the Poet Laureate's philosophy, that happiness and morality in this present life are dependent on a belief in a future existence.

"Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men—
At least, to me? *I would not stay.*

Let him, the wiser man, who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things."

Passing over this astounding misrepresentation of the theory of evolution let the reader note well the extraordinary idea of "*not staying*;" for therein is struck the key-note of much of the Tennysonian philosophy. It is indeed sad that a great writer should lend his sanction to the foolish clamour, so often raised by those who cling desperately to some particular form of belief, that unless their special doctrine be true, life would no longer be worth living, and the call of duty would no longer fall with authority on our ears. How different from this cuckoo-cry are the noble words of Frederick Robertson, himself a far firmer believer than Lord Tennyson:—

"If there be no God and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks." *

This, however, is not the opinion of the Poet Laureate. With him there must be a sure belief in futurity, or there can be no action in the present. Virtue is not her own reward,

* Address to Brighton working men.

as we have lately been taught by some mistaken moralists, but, as we learn from the poem entitled, "Wages," needs

"The glory of going on, and still to be."

But let me quote Lord Tennyson's own words:—

"The wages of sin is death: if the wages of virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm or the fly?"

One would have thought that even under these depressing circumstances a really religious and virtuous man would find much work to do in the world, and many a duty to perform; but virtue, in the gospel according to Lord Tennyson, thinks otherwise. Take away the eternity on which she has set her heart, and—"She will not stay."

But if there is some faulty teaching in "Wages" and "In Memoriam," what shall we say when we come to "Despair" and "The Promise of May"? In the former of these we have a terrible picture of a hopeless life and attempted suicide; in the latter of a life spent in deliberate vice and heartless libertinism; in both we are given to understand that the evil is the direct consequence of scepticism and unbelief. Can anything be more grossly unfair and misleading than this? No doubt cases may occur where, in a peculiar class of character, loss of belief leads to unhappiness and even ruin; but that can hardly be held to justify a poet or dramatist in taking such individual cases and representing them as a general law. It would be at least equally easy to produce instances where exactly the contrary has occurred, where disbelief in the supernatural has led to a surer morality, a sounder judgment, and an altogether happier estimate of life. But, we, know, any stick is good enough to beat a dog with; and, in his crusade against dogs of unbelievers, Lord Tennyson has no scruples as regards his choice of weapons.

Since morality, according to the Poet Laureate's teaching, is thus dependent on the holding of certain religious beliefs, we shall not be surprised if we find it taking strange forms in some of the characters which he has delineated in his poems. His treatment of the chief characters in the "Idylls of the

King," especially at the close of the story, will furnish a remarkable instance of his *modus operandi*. Anyone who has read Sir Thomas Malory's "History of King Arthur," compiled about the year 1470 from still earlier romances, must have noticed how greatly Lord Tennyson is throughout indebted to the old historian for the subject-matter and even the words of his Epic. But there is one important difference in his version of the Arthurian legend, and that too in the most vital and interesting part—the love of Lancelot and Guinevere. In the old story, though the fatal results of this guilty love are narrated sternly and unsparingly, the fact is never lost sight of that the lovers are true to each other to the bitter end; it is Lancelot and not the King who visits Guinevere in the sanctuary; it is Lancelot who, after the Queen's death, bears her body from Almesbury to its resting-place at Glastonbury; it is Lancelot who lingers and agonizes over her tomb, until death relieves him from his sorrow, and "the angels heave up Sir Lancelot towards heaven, and the gates of heaven open against him." Nothing can exceed the simple pathos and dignity of the story as thus told by the ancient historian, and those who know and love it cannot readily forgive Lord Tennyson for the alterations he has thought fit to introduce, however beautiful the language, in his Idyll "Guinevere." The sudden repentance of the Queen; the discovery that Arthur, not Lancelot, is her own true lord; the one hope to be the mate of Arthur "hereafter in the heavens"—all this is very gratifying to the cheap *Daily Telegraph* morality of the nineteenth century, but it is very untrue to nature, and very unlike the work of a great teacher. It is worthy of Dr. Watts, of Martin Tupper, or of Canon Farrar—that complacent trinity of well-meaning moral mediocrities—but it is not worthy of Alfred Tennyson.

The defects of the teaching in "Maud" are as glaring as the poetry is beautiful; but they have been so often exposed before now, that there is no need to dwell upon them here. It may be said, of course, that the Crimean war was a national

and not an individual error; yet it is sad to think that the most furious denunciation of peace and the most foolish beatification of war are to be found in the works of the leading English poet of that generation. Lord Beaconsfield is popularly regarded as the chief author and exponent of the doctrine of Jingoism, but even that cynical statesman never advocated a spirited policy with such deliberate persistence as was done in the pages of "Maud" by that great moral teacher, Lord Tennyson, author of the famous lines—

"Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace."

I have no space here to consider the questions treated of in the "Princess" and "Enoch Arden." The more one studies the former, the more one is convinced that it was rightly styled by its author "A Medley"; and those who analyse the story of Enoch Arden may well feel a grave doubt whether it has been handled with the delicacy which is supposed to be one of the Poet Laureate's special characteristics. But, letting that pass, I should like to remark, before leaving this part of our subject, that the characters drawn by Lord Tennyson are, with few exceptions, conspicuous for some grave defect, some moral flaw, which is the more fatal because it is unintentional on the part of the author. For of all faults to which a teacher of morality is liable, the worst is obviously that of not knowing whether he is describing what is moral or the contrary. If we study the Tennysonian characters, whether it be the hero of "Maud," rushing off to the wars to kill other people because he has been unfortunate in his domestic career; or the hero of "Locksley Hall" departing "seaward," and invoking a thunderbolt on his Amy's residence; or Leoline, in "Aylmer's Field," committing suicide on the news of Edith's death; or the nurse in "The Children's Hospital" passionately asserting that she could not serve in the wards unless Christianity were true; we shall recognise in all of them the same moral defect, the same lack of any solid faith and well-founded enthusiasm, such as alone

can enable a man to fight the battle of life for the sake of virtue itself and without reference to any selfish ulterior consideration. They all mean well; but they are all subject to the same unfortunate weakness before alluded to, that, under the stress of trial or disappointment, they "*cannot stay*." Two noble exceptions readily occur to the mind, the character of Enoch Arden, which is all of the Poet Laureate's own creation, and that of Arthur in the "Idylls of the King," which, in its best points, is drawn from the old prose History.

Lastly, let us briefly consider the drift of Lord Tennyson's political tendencies. We shall find some fine sentiments concerning freedom and a limited monarchy scattered here and there among his earlier poems, but his system is at heart nothing more than pure opportunism coloured by a mild optimism. His opportunism appears most distinctly in the nameless poem beginning "Love thou thy land," which by a significant juxtaposition is placed in some editions next to "The Goose." Among other wise saws we are there taught to "pamper not a hasty time," to "watch what main-currents draw the years," "nor wed raw Haste half-sister to delay," while in the same poem it is admitted that

> "Meet is it changes should control
> Our being, lest we rust in ease."

It would be amusing to hear Lord Tennyson urging this last sentiment on his fellow peers in the House of Lords, and at the same time warning that sedatest of assemblies against the danger of wedding raw Haste!

In "Will Waterproof" we find an exposition of some of the Poet Laureate's pet optimistic doctrines. He will not "cramp his heart," or "take half views of men and things," for the outcome of the party warfare of Whig and Tory is "a true result of good." Being assured of this satisfactory event, the Poet Laureate has naturally a lofty contempt for all extreme politicians, and considers those the truest statesmen who make it their aim to strike a balance between contending parties, and are never guilty of any indiscreet enthusiasm in

a great cause, which, in Tennysonian phraseology, would be termed "the falsehood of extremes."

If you ask the Poet Laureate why, though ill at ease, he continues to "subsist" in England, the answer is that it is the land of freedom; and so great is his love for that deity that if the time should ever come when individual freedom should be mute, we have (once again) his own word for it that "he will not stay." The thought never suggests itself to Lord Tennyson that Whig and Tory may, after all, *not* be working together for a true result of good; that our English freedom may, after all, *not* be of the most satisfactory kind; and that, if "banded unions persecute," it would be nobler to stay at home and fight them than to hurry off to the "palms and temples of the South."

After what we have seen of the Poet Laureate's opinions, religious, social, and political, I do not think we can justly be surprised at his having become a member of the House of Lords. He was always a half-hearted "Liberal" in his youth; and in his old age he has become more and more illiberal and dogmatic. He cannot correctly be called a "Lost Leader," for he never was a leader of thought, certainly not of advanced thought; yet, in one sense, he has done battle for the party of progress, for all true poets, apart from their teaching, must in some degree aid the great cause. And, whatever we may think of Lord Tennyson's philosophical teaching, we must all alike admire and revere his grand poetical gifts; indeed it is just because we do so revere them, because we have known his poems from childhood, and have conned them over and over till they have become almost a part of our being, it is precisely for this reason that we deplore the intolerant tone of his later writings and the final hallucination which has made him deem it expedient to prefix to the name of Alfred Tennyson a foolish and inglorious title. How can I conclude better than with Mr. Browning's famous words, which are certainly not less applicable to the present

Poet Laureate than to the predecessor to whom they are supposed to refer?

"We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire.

* * * * * *

Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!"

H. S. S.

The Sun-Maiden.

I looked out over the ocean,
And saw a maiden stand,
Where billow and cloud commingled
In a vanishing golden land.

I passed out over the ocean,
And held the Sun-Maiden's hand,
And lost for ever a treasure
That was mine in the Fatherland.

ERNEST RADFORD.

Record of the International Popular Movement.

ENGLAND.

The appearance of To-Day—"which at last gives Socialism an organ in England"—has been most cordially welcomed by the Socialist press of the Continent. In addition to these public utterances I have received numbers of letters, from one or two of which I quote, as they may interest English readers. My dear and honored old friend, P. Lavroff, wishes us "all success" and "long life." August Bebel writes: "I accept the flattering invitation to contribute to To-Day, but I am bound to add that I cannot say positively when I shall be able to send in my first contribution, as, just now, I am overwhelmed with work. . . . I am exceedingly glad that, from all appearances, the Socialist movement is beginning to take serious proportions in England. With this much is gained for the whole movement. With England, the victory is certain—the course of events will become irresistible." Liebknecht writes to me in the same sense; and from Austria and France I have had most kindly letters, all wishing To-Day "long life" and "*beaucoup d'abonnés*."

The great meeting held by Mr. George in St. James's Hall on January 9th is, it seems to me, chiefly remarkable for two facts; that every utterance of Mr. George's that could be construed into going further than his own theories, and touching upon Socialist principles, was enthusiastically applauded; and that Michael Davitt received a real ovation. That this Fenian, this rebel, this "felon," and "ticket-of-leave-man," met with such a reception from an *English*

audience is assuredly worth recording. Till the Irish and English people understand they are fighting the same enemy there is no hope for either.

As to Mr. George, his lecture was an *exposé* of his views as stated in "Progress and Poverty," with a good deal of God Almighty thrown in. It is hardly necessary to say in To-Day that Socialists fully recognise the immense importance of this great land question, and are grateful to Mr. George for the good work he is doing. But to represent the land question as anything more than a part of the whole Socialist programme is most mischievous, for it is simply playing into the hands of the capitalists. When Mr. George points out the importance of the land question we are entirely with him, but when he says that nationalizing the land (were such a thing possible under our present conditions of production) solves all social problems, we are forced to protest. I must, for my own part, also protest against Mr. George's continued references to God. I am sure Mr. George is quite sincere in his belief that God is a sort of supernatural King Lear, with chiefly Gonerils, Regans, and Cornwalls for children, and Mr. George to play Cordelia. But, no doubt those landlords who say an *Almighty* God would never have let them enjoy their land so long had they been wrong, are sincere too, and logical to boot. It was almost grotesque to hear Mr. George's vivid description of the horrible miseries of the people, and his references in the same breath to a "beneficent and *Almighty* father." Mr. George is doing good work in waging war against the land thieves, but let him confine himself to work for the "Himmelreich auf erden":—

"Den Himmel aber lassen wir
Den Engeln und den Spatzen,"

There is so much to record concerning this Socialist movement in England that I rather hesitate to take up these columns for speaking of a personal matter. As, however, I have no other means of refuting a very serious charge

brought against my father, I hope the readers of To-Day will forgive my touching on the matter here. On the 29th of last November a letter from Mr. Sedley Taylor appeared in the *Times*, which repeated the old calumny that my father had knowingly misquoted a passage from one of Mr. Gladstone's speeches to suit his own purpose.

There has never been a better calumniated man than my father, but his calumniators were, as a rule, too contemptible to be worth answering. In this particular case my father did answer his anonymous accuser, because the alleged misquotation appeared in the inaugural address of the International Workingmen's Association.

On reading Mr. Taylor's letter, which is only a *rechauffé* of the old story, I at once wrote to the *Times*. So often had I read in English papers of the "fairness" of the English press that I never doubted my answer would be given the same publicity as that accorded to Mr. Taylor's accusation. Days passed, and my letter did not appear. Still impressed with the idea that even the *Times* might be honest in a personal matter, I again wrote to the editor. With no result. Then I addressed myself to the *Daily News*, which I had so far found very fair. But apparently a dead lion may be kicked with impunity by living professors, and the Liberal *Daily News* could not stretch its liberality to the length of publishing my letter. I therefore publish both Mr. Taylor's letter and my own reply:—

To the Editor of the "Times."

Sir,—I ask leave to point out in the *Times* that the origin of the misleading quotation from Mr. Gladstone's Budget speech of April 16, 1863, which so eminent a publicist as Professor Emile de Laveleye has been led to reproduce through reliance on German sources, and with respect to which he inserts a correction in the *Times* of this day, is to be found as far back as 1864 in an address issued by the council of the famous International Working Men's Association.

What appears extremely singular is that it was reserved for Professor Brentano (then of the University of Breslau, now of that of Strasburg) to expose, eight years later in a German newspaper, the bad faith which had manifestly dictated the citation made from Mr. Gladstone's speech in the address. Herr Karl Marx, who as the acknowledged author of the address attempted to defend the citation, had the hardihood, in the deadly shifts to which Brentano's masterly conduct of the attack speedily reduced him,

to assert that Mr. Gladstone had 'manipulated' (*zurechtgestumpert*) the report of his speech in the *Times* of April 17, 1863, before it appeared in 'Hansard,' in order 'to obliterate' (*wegzupfuschen*) a passage which 'was certainly compromising for an English Chancellor of the Exchequer.' On Bretano's showing, by a detailed comparison of texts, that the reports of the *Times* and of 'Hansard' agreed in utterly excluding the meaning which craftily-isolated quotation had put upon Mr. Gladstone's words, Marx withdrew from further controversy under the plea of 'want of time!'

The whole of the Brentano-Marx correspondence is eminently worthy of being unearthed from the files of newspapers under which it lies buried, and republished in an English form, as it throws upon the latter disputant's standard of literary honesty a light which can be ill spared at a time when his principal work is presented to us as nothing less than a fresh gospel of social renovation,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Trinity College, Cambridge, November 26th. SEDLEY TAYLOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

Sir,—In the *Times* of November 29th Mr, Sedley Taylor refers to a certain quotation of a speech by Mr. Gladstone, 'to be found as far back as 1864, in an address issued by the council of the famous International Working Men's Association.' He continues: (I here quote Mr. Taylor's letter from "What appears" to "want of time,")

The facts are briefly these, The quotation referred to consists of a few sentences from Mr. Gladstone's Budget speech of April 16th, 1863. After describing the immense increase of wealth that took place in this country between 1853 and 1861 Mr. Gladstone is made to say: 'This intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power is entirely confined to classes of property,' An anonymous writer, who turns out to be Professor Brentano, published in a German paper, *Concordia*, of the 7th March, 1872 a reply in which it was stated: 'This sentence does not exist in Mr, Gladstone's speech, Marx has added it lyingly, both as to form and contents' (*formel und materiel hinzugelogen*).

This was the only point at issue between my father and his anonymous opponent.

In his replies in the Leipzig *Volkstaat*, June 1st and August 7th, 1872, Dr, Marx quotes the reports of Mr, Gladstone's speech as follows; "The *Times*, April 17th—The augmentation I have described, and which is founded, I think, on accurate returns, is an augmentation entirely confined to classes of property. *Morning Star*, 17th April—This augmentation is an augmentation confined entirely to the classes possessed of property, *Morning Advertiser*, April 17th—The augmentation stated is altogether limited to classes possessed of property."

The anonymous Brentano, in the 'deadly shifts to which his own masterly conduct of the attack had reduced him,' now took refuge under the assertion usual in such circumstances, that if the quotation was not a forgery it was, at all events, 'misleading,' in 'bad faith,' 'craftily isolated,' and so forth. I am afraid you would not allow me space to reply to this accusation of Herr Brentano, repeated now, after eleven years, by Mr. Taylor, Perhaps it will not be required. as Mr. Taylor says; 'The whole of this Brentano-Marx correspondence is eminently worthy of being unearthed from the file of newspapers in which it lies buried and republished in an English form.' I quite agree with this, The memory of my father could only gain by it, As to the discrepancies between the newspaper reports of the speech in question and the report in 'Hansard' I must leave this to be settled by those most interested in it.

Out of thousands and thousands of quotations to be found in my father's writings this is the only one the correctness of which has ever been

disputed, The fact that this single and not very lucky instance is brought up again and again by the professorial economists is very characteristic. In the words of Mr Taylor, 'it throws upon the latter disputant's (Dr. Marx), standard of literary honesty a light which can ill be spared at a time when his principal work is presented to us as nothing less than a fresh gospel of social renovation.'

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

London, November 30, 1883. ELEANOR MARX,

Having spoken of the bourgeois press which, after giving publicity to a libel on a dead man refuses to insert the reply, I must also refer to a paper that pretends to represent the working class. In the *Labour Standard* of Dec. 8th appeared an article, a *leader* (I emphasize the word leader, because some of Mr. Shipton's friends have tried to make Continental workmen believe the article in question was a mere "unofficial" contribution from an outsider), positively begging Sir William Harcourt to hang O'Donnell. Said the trades-union oracle; "We most earnestly hope the Home Secretary will listen to none of those appeals for mercy which are certain now to flow in; that, upon the contrary, he will insist upon justice"! To appeal to our virtuous Home Secretary *not* to show mercy is worthy of Mr. W. S. Gilbert at his wildest.

I hope the readers of To-DAY will not forget that on the morning of Monday, February 25th, George William Foote will be released from Holloway Gaol. All who admire Mr. Foote for his courage and devotion, all who are grateful to him for what he has suffered in the cause of freedom of speech and of the press, should be outside Holloway Gaol on the 25th to give him a hearty welcome.

RUSSIA.

The apparent calm of Holy Russia has been rudely disturbed by the execution of Sudeikin. Not that such an act was unexpected. The Nihilist Executive Committee distinctly said, after the death of Alexander II., that they would wait a certain time before taking any fresh measures, in order to give the Czar a chance. Even the reactionary press of Europe was astounded at the modest demands of the Nihilist

Committee. To these demands Alexander III. replied by fresh persecutions, and since the trembling despot will not make peace, it must be war.

A Russian friend writes me concerning Sudeikin; "Details of the act you will, for the present, find in the bourgeois press. All our friends, whether innocent or guilty, whether Nihilists or not, are jealously watched; hundreds are being daily arrested, so that to send letters, save in a roundabout way, is impossible. Soon, no doubt, an official account (*i.e.*, in one of the "secret' papers of the Nihilists) will be published. As soon as it is, or as I have any sort of news, I will let you know."

Meantime, all who are interested in the Russian movement, and can read Russian, should get "Westnik Narodni Woli," Lavroff and Tichomiroff's new periodical. It is a large volume (400 8vo pages), and is full of most interesting matter. It contains, besides the "programme" of the Review by its editors, articles on the "Mission of Socialism," by Lavroff; "Two Years of the Life of One Escaped from Siberia," by Debagori-Mokriewitsch; "The Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Science," by Tichomiroff; "The Financial Crisis," by Rjäsanoff; and an exhaustive account of the revolutionary movement, its martyrs, literature, and so forth, by Tichomiroff, who is especially qualified to deal with this subject.

FRANCE.

One of the French Socialist leaders, in spite of the heavy work entailed by "la propagande," sends me some very interesting notes, which I cannot do better than translate:—

"French workingmen had seen in the Republic the Eldorado that was to ameliorate their condition, They have been sorely disappointed. They have had to go on doing the same hard labour for the same meagre wages, and they are beginning to ask themselves if in overturning Napoleon, and in raising to power all the large and small Gambettas, they had not been merely fooling themselves. For some time discontent with the Republican Government has grown greater and greater, and the men in power while trying to appease the people are only displeasing the bourgeoisie. M. Waldeck Rousseau—the real successor of Gambetta—for M. Ferry is only a man the opportunists uphold till it suits them to kick him out—has just like Bismarck manufactured a "State Socialism" that is to satisfy the workers without injuring the masters. His State Socialism is confined

to the developing of the "Chambres Syndicales," the equivalents of your Trades' Unions, with this difference, that certain 'Chambres Syndicales'—as for instance those of the masons, carpenters, &c —would do the works undertaken by the State and by the Municipalities. But the employers at once made M. Ferry, M. Rousseau, and other Gambettists understand that this would be creating dangerous rivals to themselves in all the great public works.

"The Socialism of M. Waldeck Rousseau has received a further defeat in the mining departments of the North, The workmen, acting on the advice contained in the Minister's speeches, wanted to organize Miners' Trades' Unions, but the directors of the mining companies of Augin, and of Denain have put a stop to any such attempt at organisation. They have dismissed every one of the workmen belonging to the Union. The other workmen made common cause with the latter, and proposed a general strike to force the company working the mines to modify its despotic orders and to take back the dismissed miners. The government was about to be placed in a very awkward position Had it been, I do not say intelligent, but even a little careful of its dignity, it would have defended the miners It is true that in every great miners' strike in France, not a single government has remained impartial. Each one has enthusiastically lent its police, its gendarmes, its soldiers, and its magistrates in order to put down the strikes, to shoot some of the miners, and to arrest and condemn others to months or years of imprisonment For the moment the situation has been saved by a certain Roudet, who has mediated between the government, the companies and the miners, and whose conduct is very suspicious. But matters are becoming every day more critical The working men demand some rights under this Republic which they have made and which they are ready to defend, while the government is only seeking to place the riches and the forces of the State at the disposal of the capitalists"

One of the great misfortunes of France has been the indifference of the provinces to all the great revolutionary movements. It is therefore of the utmost interest to note that at this moment the provinces are ahead of Paris in the great Socialist work. In many provincial towns groups of the "parti ouvrier" have been constituted. A friend writes "Guesde, immediately after his release from prison, together with Bazin, and the Citoyenne Paule Minke, went on a large propagandist tour in the south and west of France. At Bordeaux, Albi, Carcassonne, Montpelier, Perpignan, Nismes, Cette, Lovère, and Narbonne they have been lecturing, and numerous groups have been founded." Darboy, too, though only just released from prison, has at once taken up his propagandist work.

The Socialist press is increasing. Besides the very excellent *Défense des Travailleurs*, of Rheims, and the *Travailleur*, of Pierre-les-Calais, and other weekly papers, Socialist organs, will shortly appear at Lyons, Roanne, Montluçon, and Alois.

"The French Working Men's Party," writes Paul Lafargue, "follows in this the German Social Democrats, who, before Bismarck suppressed the Socialist press possessed some thirty or forty journals."

At Paris the Cercle de la Bibliothèque Socialiste is to begin this month (January) a series of lectures "for the propaganda of the communistic theories of Karl Marx." The first lecture will be by Lafargue, on "The Economic Materialism of Karl Marx, and of the Action on Men and Societies of the Economic Condition in which they are placed."

In the last number of To-Day I spoke of the memorial stone which is to be erected to the memory of Ch. Delescluze. The committee have very properly decided to erect a monument, not to Charles Delescluze alone, but to him and the Communistic combatants who lie buried near him.

January 6th was the anniversary of the death of Blanqui. The people of France have not forgotten the forty years of imprisonment, under every form of Government, that Blanqui endured for their cause, and Père Lachaise was visited by thousands. The modest little stone erected to his memory was covered with wreaths and flowers.

GERMANY.

We have to record a whole series of successful Socialist candidatures in the municipal elections. In Berlin two more Socialists have been elected (the total number being now five). At Esslingen the Working Men's party gained three out of six seats; at Heppens and at Besigheim Socialists achieved a victory, while in the other towns where elections took place they were defeated by insignificant majorities. These victories have made Bismarck anxious for the Reichstag election next year, and, as a first measure, "secret voting" is to be abolished. In other words, workmen who vote for Socialists will be dismissed by their employers, and subjected to fresh persecution. So be it! If this last chance of

speaking out is taken from the people, why so much the worse for Bismarck and the class he represents.

Last month I tried to give English people—Irish people are accustomed to this sort of thing—some idea how German working men are persecuted. Let me supplement this with an account of the proceedings at the funeral of a Socialist at Frankfort.

Rudolf Döll, one of our most energetic workers, died of consumption last December. "On the morning of the 10th," writes the *Sozial Democrat*, "one saw masses of people approaching the house where Döll had died, but there was also the police busy "prohibiting" the red ribbon attached to some of the crowns. . . . In order to avoid difficulties, two large crowns, one sent by the 'Socialist Working Men's Party of Germany,' and the other from the 'Frankfort Socialists,' were tied with *black* ribbon. . . . When the mourning coach appeared the cross-bearer stepped forward in order to open the procession, but he was asked to bear his own cross—home, which, after some demur, he did.

"Although a week-day, at least 1,500 friends had come . . and in the churchyard the police had to object to many more red ribbons.

"After the coffin had been lowered into the grave a chorus of male voices sang a most touching song, with which the Cemetery Commissary tried to interfere, by attempting to fill up the grave while the chorus was proceeding. Then our friend Frohme (one of the members of the Reichstag) advanced to the grave, and said; 'In the name of the Social Democrats of Germany I lay this crown upon the grave'—when Police Commissary Meier stepped forth and threatened to 'disperse the meeting.' 'You have made a demonstration," he cried. "No; you are provoking us," answered the crowd. When suddenly all were silenced—even the Police Commissary keeping quiet with shamefaced mien—the young wife of one of our friends, surrounded by numbers of women, mounted upon the little mound by the grave, and,

in a clear and penetrating voice cried, while placing a large wreath tied with *red* ribbon on the grave, 'I dedicate this in the name of Germany's Socialist women and girls.' It was a thrilling sight. On the one side Döll's bride, bowed down with grief, and supported by old friends; on the right side of the grave the representatives of the State, and opposite to them the group of women, full of earnestness, dignity, and enthusiasm. Surrounding these the masses of people, while from the background of leafless trees, half hidden in the fog, arose the threatening memorial stone to the 'fallen of '48.'—a picture worthy a great painter. . . . But this was too much for the Commissary. 'The meeting is dissolved,' he yelled—no one stirred. 'We will each throw in some earth,' said Frohme, and, despite all the efforts to prevent it, this was done. Now Frohme advised the people to disperse; advice quietly followed. The Commissary then tried to explain to Frohme. 'If you had not used the word Social Democracy,' he said, 'I should not have interfered, but that is forbidden!' "

As another example of the joys of German citizens, I may say that Liebknecht, during the serious illness of three of his children, was unable to be with them and his poor wife, as he has been, under the 'Socialist Law,' expelled from Leipzig, and can live no nearer that town than Borsdorf.

SWITZERLAND.

On the 9th of last September 176 delegates, representing 250 trades-unions, met at Zurich, to consider the condition of the workmen of Switzerland. The committee, in an address to the "Working Men of all Countries," report that the chief resolutions come to were for international action in demanding Factory Acts. After energetically protesting against the action of certain English trades-unions on this question, the address ends with the good old cry, "Proletarians of all countries unite!"

ELEANOR MARX.