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An Unsocial Socialist.

SECOND BOOK.

CHAPTER VI.

ONE sunny forenoon, as Agatha was sitting reading on the doorstep of the conservatory, the shadow of her parasol deepened; and she, looking up for something denser than the silk of it, saw Trefusis.

"Oh!"

She offered him no further greeting, having fallen in with his habit of dispensing, as far as possible, with salutations and ceremonies. He seemed in no hurry to speak; and so, after a pause, she began, "Sir Charles—"

—"is gone to town," he said, interrupting. "Erskine is out on his bicycle. Lady Brandon and Miss Lindsay have gone to the village in the wagonet; and you have come out here to enjoy the summer sun and to read rubbish. I know all your news already."

"You are very clever, and, as usual, wrong. Sir Charles has not gone to town. He has only gone to the railway station for some papers; and he will be back to lunch. How do you know so much of our affairs?"

"I was on the roof of my house with a field-glass, by means of which I saw you come out and sit down here. Then Sir Charles passed. Then Erskine. Then Lady Brandon,

driving with great energy, and presenting a remarkable contrast to the disdainful repose of Gertrude."

"Gertrude! I like your cheek."

"You mean that you like dislike my presumption."

"No: I think cheek a more expressive word than presumption; and I mean that I like it—that it amuses me."

"Humph! What are you reading?"

"Rubbish, you said just now. A novel."

"That is, a lying story of two people who never existed, and who would have acted very differently if they had existed."

"Just so."

"Could you not imagine something just as amusing for yourself?"

"Perhaps so; but it would be too much trouble. Besides, cooking takes away one's appetite for eating. On the same principle, I should not relish stories of my own confection."

"Which volume are you at?"

"The third."

"Then the hero and heroine are on the point of being united?"

"I really dont know. This is one of your clever novels. The characters are most unnatural, except that they are rude to one another, as real people often are; and I do not care a straw what becomes of them. I wish they would not talk so much."

"No matter. Two of them are in love with one another, are they not?"

"Yes. It would not be a novel without that."

"Do you believe in your secret soul, Agatha—I take the liberty of using your Christian name because I wish to be very solemn—do you really believe that any human being was ever unselfish enough to love another in the story-book fashion?"

"Of course. At least I suppose so. I have never thought much about it."

"I doubt it. My own belief is that no sensible man has any faith in the thoroughness or permanence of his affection. Yet he does not doubt the sincerity of his mistress's professions; and he conceals the hollowness of his own from her, partly because he is ashamed of it, and partly out of pity for her. And she, on her own part, is playing exactly the same comedy."

"I believe that is what men do, but not women."

"Indeed? Pray do you remember pretending to be very much in love with me once when—"

Agatha reddened, and placed her palm on the step as if about to spring up. But she checked herself, and said, "Stop, Mr. Trefusis. If you talk about that I will go away. I wonder at you! Have you no taste?"

"None whatever. And as I was the aggrieved party on that—stay, dont go. I will never allude to it any more. I am growing afraid of you. You used to be afraid of me."

"Yes; and you used to bully me. You have a habit of bullying women who are weak enough to fear you. You are a great deal cleverer than I, and know much more, I daresay; but I am not in the least afraid of you now."

"You have no reason to be, and never had any. Henrietta, if she were alive, could testify that if there is a defect in my relations with women, it arises from my excessive amiability. I could not refuse a woman anything she had set her heart upon—except my hand in marriage. So long as your sex are content to stop short of that usurpation of the throne of my bosom's lord, they can do as they please with me."

"How cruel! I thought you were nearly engaged to Gertrude."

"The usual interpretation of a friendship between a man and a woman! I have never thought of such a thing; and I am sure she never has. We are not half so intimate as you and Sir Charles."

"Oh, Sir Charles is married. And I advise you to get married if you wish to avoid creating misunderstandings by your friendships."

Trefusis appeared to be struck by this remark. Instead of answering, he stood, after one startled glance at her, looking intently at the knuckle of his forefinger.

"Do take pity on our poor sex," said Agatha maliciously. "You are so rich, and so very clever, and really so nice looking, that you ought to share yourself with somebody. Gertrude would be only too happy."

Trefusis grinned, and shook his head, slowly but emphatically.

"I suppose *I* should have no chance," continued Agatha pathetically.

"I should be delighted, of course," he replied with simulated confusion, but with a lurking gleam in his eye that might have checked her, had she noticed it.

"Oh do marry me, Mr. Trefusis," she exclaimed, clasping her hands in a rapture of mischievous raillery. "Pray do."

"Thank you," said Trefusis. "I will."

"I am very sure you shant," said Agatha, after an incredulous pause, springing up and gathering her skirt as if she were about to run away. "You do not suppose I was in earnest, do you?"

"Undoubtedly I do. *I* am in earnest."

Agatha hesitated, uncertain whether he might not be playing with her as she had just been playing with him. "Take care," she said. "I may change my mind and be in earnest too; and then how will you feel, Mr. Trefusis?"

"I think, under our altered relations, you had better call me Sidney."

"I think we had better drop the joke," said Agatha, attempting to conceal her growing alarm by an assumption of gravity. "It was rather in bad taste; and I should not have made it, perhaps."

"It would be an execrable joke," said Trefusis; "and therefore I have no intention of regarding it as one. You shall be held to your offer, Agatha. Are you in love with me?"

"Not in the least. Not the very smallest bit in the world. I do not know anybody whom I am less in love with, or less likely to be in love with."

"Then you must marry me. If you were in love with me, I would certainly run away. My sainted Henrietta adored me; and I proved unworthy of adoration—though I was immensely flattered."

"Yes, indeed. The way you treated your first wife ought to be sufficient to warn any woman not to become your second."

"Any woman who loved me, you mean. But you do not love me; and if I run away, it will be an advantage to you; for you will be rid of me, and I will have it expressly stipulated in our settlements that you shall have half my fortune in such an event."

"You will never have a chance of running away from me."

"I shall not want to. I am not so squeamish as I was. No, I do not think I shall run away from you."

"I do not think so either."

"Well, when shall we be married?"

"Never," said Agatha, and fled. But before she had gone a step he caught her.

"Dont," she said breathlessly. "Take your arm away. How dare you?"

He released her and shut the door of the conservatory. "Now," he said, "if you want to run away, you will have to run in the open."

"You are very impertinent," said Agatha. "Let me go in immediately."

"Do you want me to beg you to marry me after you have offered to do so freely?"

"But I was only joking:—I dont care for you," she said, looking round for an outlet.

"Agatha," he said, with grim patience, "half an hour ago I had no more intention of marrying you than of making a voyage to the moon. But when you made the suggestion, I

saw its value in an instant; and now nothing will satisfy me but your keeping your word. Of all the women I know, you are the only one not quite a fool."

"I should be a great fool if——"

"If you married me, you were going to say; but I dont think so. I am the only man, not quite an ass, of your acquaintance. I know my value, and yours. And I loved you long ago, when I had no right to."

Agatha frowned. "No," she said. "There is no use in saying anything more about it. It is out of the question."

"Come, dont be vindictive. I was more sincere then than you were. But that has nothing to do with the present. You have spent our renewed acquaintance on the defensive against me, retorting upon me, teasing and tempting me. Be generous for once; and say yes with a good will."

Agatha felt her power of resistance suddenly wane, and threaten to leave her helpless. Terror-stricken, she said hastily, "There is not the least use in bothering me: I will tell you nothing to-day."

"Promise me on your honour that you will say yes to-morrow, and I will leave you in peace until then."

"Indeed I will not."

"The deuce take your sex," he said plaintively. "You know my mind now; and I have to stand here coquetting because you dont know your own. If I cared for my comfort I should remain a bachelor."

"I advise you to do so," she said, stealing backward towards the door. "You are a very interesting widower. A wife would spoil you. Consider the troubles of domesticity, too."

"I like troubles. They strengthen—Aha!" (she had snatched at the knob of the door, and he had swiftly put his hand on hers and stayed her). "Not yet, if you please. Can you not speak out like a woman—like a man, I mean? You may withold a bone from Max until he stands on his hind legs to beg for it; but you should not treat me like a dog. Say yes frankly, and do not keep me begging."

"What in the world do you want to marry me for?"

"Because I was made to carry a house on my shoulders, and will do so. I want to do the best I can for myself; and I shall never have such a chance again. You know that you will marry someone someday." Agatha shook her head. "Yes, you will. Why not marry me?"

Agatha bit her nether lip; looked ruefully at the ground; and, after a long pause, said reluctantly, "Very well. But mind, I think you are acting very foolishly; and if you are disappointed afterwards, you must not blame *me*."

"I will take the risk of my bargain," he said, releasing her hand, and leaning against the door as he took out his pocket diary. "You will have to take the risk of yours, which I hope may not prove the worse of the two. This is the seventeenth of June. What date before the twenty-fourth of July will suit you?"

"You mean the twenty-fourth of July next year, I presume."

"No: I mean this year. I am going abroad on that date, married or not, to attend a conference at Geneva; and I want you to come with me. I will shew you a lot of places and things that you have never seen before. It is your right to name the day; but you have no serious business to provide for; and I have."

"But you dont know all the things I shall—I should have to provide. You had better wait until you come back from the continent."

"There is nothing to be provided on your part but settlements and your trousseau. The trousseau is all nonsense; and Jansenius knows me of old in the matter of settlements. I got married in six weeks before."

"Yes," said Agatha sharply; "but I am not Henrietta."

"No, thank Heaven," he assented placidly.

Agatha was struck with remorse. "That was a vile thing for me to say," she said; "and for you too."

"Whatever is true is to the purpose, vile or not. Will you come to Geneva on the twenty-fourth?"

"But—I really was not thinking when I—I did not intend to say that I would—I—"

"I know. You will come if we are married."

"Yes. *If* we are married."

"We shall be married. Do not write either to your mother or Jansenius until I ask you."

"I dont intend to. I have nothing to write about."

"Wretch that you are! And do not be jealous if you catch me making love to Lady Brandon. I always do so: she expects it."

"You may make love to whom you please. It is no concern of mine."

"Here comes the wagonet with Lady Brandon and Ger—— and Miss Lindsay. I mustnt call her Gertrude now except when you are not by. Before they interrupt us, let me remind you of the three points we have agreed upon. I love you. You do not love me. We are to be married before the twentyfourth of next month. Now I must fly to help her ladyship to alight."

He hastened to the house door, at which the wagonet had just stopped. Agatha, bewildered, and ashamed to face her friends, went in through the conservatory, and locked herself into her room.

Trefusis went into the library with Gertrude whilst Lady Brandon loitered in the hall to take off her gloves, ask questions of the servants, and read the letters which had arrived during her absence. When she followed, she found them standing together at the window. Gertrude was listening to him with a patient expression which she now often wore when he talked. He was smiling; but it struck Jane that he was not quite at ease.

"I was just telling Miss Lindsay," he said, "than an extraordinary thing has happened during your absence."

"I know," exclaimed Jane, with sudden conviction. "The heater in the conservatory has cracked."

"Possibly," said Trefusis; "but, if so, I have not heard of it."

"If it hasnt cracked, it will," said Jane, gloomily prophetic. Then, assuming an interest in Trefusis's news with some effort, she added, "Well, what has happened?"

"I was chatting with Miss Wylie just now, when a singular idea occurred to us. We discussed it for some time; and the upshot is that we are to be married before the end of next month."

Jane reddened and stared at him; and he looked keenly back at her. Gertrude, though unobserved, did not suffer her expression of patient happiness to change in the least; but a blueish white colour suddenly appeared in her face, and only gave place very slowly to her usual complexion.

"Do you mean to say that *you* are going to marry Agatha," said Lady Brandon incredulously, after a pause.

"Yes. I had no intention of doing so when I last saw you, or I should have told you."

"I never heard of such a thing in my life! You fell in love with one another in five minutes, I suppose."

"Good Heavens, no! we are not in love with one another. Can you believe that I would marry for such a frivolous reason? No. The subject turned up accidentally; and the advantages of a match between us struck me forcibly. I was fortunate enough to convert her to my opinion."

"Yes, she wanted a lot of pressing, I dare say," said Jane, glancing at Gertrude, who was smiling unmeaningly.

"As you imply," said Trefusis coolly, "her reluctance may have been affected, and she only too glad to get such a charming husband. Assuming that to be the case, she dissembled remarkably well."

Gertrude took off her bonnet, and left the room without speaking.

"This is my revenge upon you for marrying Brandon," he said then, approaching Jane.

"Oh yes," she retorted ironically. "I believe all that, of course."

"You have the same security for its truth as for that of

all the foolish things I confess to you. There!" He pointed to a panel of looking glass, in which Jane's figure was reflected at full length.

"I dont see anything to admire," said Jane, looking at herself with no great favour. "There is plenty of me, if you admire that."

"It is impossible to have too much of a good thing. But I must not look any more. Agatha says she does not love me; but I am not sure that she would be pleased if I were to look for love from anyone else."

"Says she does not love you! Dont believe her: she has taken trouble enough to catch you."

"I am flattered. You caught me without any trouble at all; and yet you would not have me."

"It is manners to wait to be asked. I think you have treated Gertrude shamefully—I hope you wont be offended with me for saying so. I blame Agatha most. She is an awfully double-faced girl."

"How so?" said Trefusis, surprised. "What has Miss Lindsay to do with it?"

"You know very well."

"I assure you I do not. If you were speaking of yourself, I could understand you."

"Oh, you can get out of it very cleverly, like all men; but you cant hoodwink me. You shouldnt have pretended to like Gertrude when you were really pulling a cord with Agatha. And she too, pretending to flirt with Sir Charles—as if he would care twopence for her!"

Trefusis seemed a little disturbed. "I hope Miss Lindsay had no such—but she could not."

"Oh, couldnt she? You will soon see whether she had or not."

"You misunderstood us, Lady Brandon: Miss Lindsay knows better. Remember, too, that this proposal of mine was quite unpremeditated. This morning I had no tender thoughts of anyone—except one whom it would be improper to name."

"Stuff and nonsense! I never heard such rubbish as you talk."

"I will talk no more at present: I must be off to the village to telegraph to my solicitor. If I meet Erskine, I will tell him the good news."

"*He* will be delighted. He thought, as we all did, that you were cutting him out with Gertrude."

Trefusis smiled; shook his head; and, with a glance of admiring homage to Jane's charms, went out. Jane was contemplating herself in the glass when a servant entered and begged her to come and speak to Master Charles and Miss Fanny. She hurried upstairs to the nursery, where her boy and girl had come to blows in disputing each other's prior right to torture the baby. They were somewhat frightened, but not at all appeased, by Jane's entrance. She scolded, coaxed, threatened, bribed, quoted Dr. Watts, appealed to the nurse and then insulted her, demanded of the children whether they loved one another, whether they loved mamma, and whether they wanted a right good whipping. At last, exasperated by her own inability to restore order, she seized the baby, which had cried incessantly throughout; and, declaring that it was doing it on purpose and that it should have something to cry for, gave it an exemplary smacking, and ordered the others to bed. The boy, awed by the fate of his infant brother, offered, by way of compromise, to be good if Miss Wylie would come and play with him: a proposal which provoked from his jealous mother a box on the ear which sent him howling to his cot. Then she left the room, pausing on the threshold to remark that if she heard another sound from them that day, they might expect the worst from her. On descending, heated and angry, to the drawing-room, she found Agatha there alone, looking out of window as if the landscape were especially unsatisfactory this time.

"Selfish little devils!" exclaimed Jane, making a miniature whirlwind with her skirts as she came in. "Charlie is a

perfect little fiend. He spends all his time thinking how he can annoy me. Ugh! He's just like his father."

"Thank you, my dear," said Sir Charles from the doorway, where he had just arrived unperceived.

Jane laughed. "I knew you were there," she said. "Where's Gertrude?"

"She has gone out," said Sir Charles.

"Nonsense! She has only just come in from driving with me."

"I do not know what you mean by nonsense," said Sir Charles, chafing. "I saw her walking along the Riverside Road. I was in the village road; and she did not see me. She seemed in a hurry."

"I met her on the stairs, and spoke to her," said Agatha; "but she didnt hear me."

"I hope she is not going to throw herself into the river," said Jane. Then, turning to her husband, she added, "Have you heard the news?"

"The only news I have heard is from this paper," said Sir Charles, taking out a journal, and flinging it on the table. "There is a paragraph in it stating that I have joined some infernal Socialistic league; and I am told that there is an article in the Times on the spread of Socialism, in which my name is mentioned. This is all due to Trefusis; and I think he has played me a most dishonourable trick. I will tell him so too when I see him next."

"You had better be careful what you say of him before Agatha," said Jane. "Oh, you need not be alarmed, Agatha: I know all about it. He told us in the library. We went out this morning—Gertrude and I; and when we came back we found Mr. Trefusis and Agatha talking very lovingly to one another on the conservatory steps, newly engaged."

"Indeed?" said Sir Charles, disconcerted and displeased; but trying to smile. "I may then congratulate you, Miss Wylie?"

"You need not," said Agatha, keeping her countenance as well as she could. "It was only a joke. At least it came about quite in jest. He has no right to say that we are engaged."

"Stuff and nonsense," said Jane. "That wont do, Agatha. He has gone off to telegraph to his solicitor. He is quite in earnest."

"I am a great fool," said Agatha, sitting down and twisting her hands perplexedly. "I believe I consented; but I really did not intend to. He surprised me into speaking before I knew what I was saying. A pretty mess I have got myself into!"

"I am glad you have been outwitted at last," said Jane, laughing spitefully. "You never had any pity for me when I could not think of the proper thing to say at a moment's notice."

Agatha let the taunt pass unheeded. Her gaze wandered anxiously, and at last settled appealingly upon Sir Charles. "What shall I do?" she said to him.

"Well, Miss Wylie," he said gravely; "if you did not mean to marry him, you should not have promised to do so. I dont wish to be unsympathetic; and I know that it is very hard to get rid of Trefusis when he makes up his mind to get something out of you; but still—"

"Never mind her," said Jane, interrupting him. "She wants to marry him just as badly as he wants to marry her. You would be preciously disappointed if he cried off, Agatha, for all your interesting reluctance."

"That is not so, really," said Agatha, earnestly. "I wish I had taken time to think about it. I suppose he has told everybody by this time."

"May we regard it as settled then?" said Sir Charles.

"Of course you may," said Jane contemptuously.

"Pray allow Miss Wylie to speak for herself, Jane. I confess I do not understand—if you have engaged yourself t o him—why you are still in doubt."

"I suppose I am in for it," said Agatha. "I feel as if there were some fatal objection, if I could only remember what it is. But as I can't, there is no help for me. I wish I had never seen him."

Sir Charles was puzzled. "I do not understand ladies' ways in these matters," he said. "However, as there seems to be no doubt that you and Trefusis are engaged, I shall of course say nothing that would make it unpleasant for him to visit here; but I must say that he has—to say the least—been inconsiderate to me personally. I signed a paper at his house on the implicit understanding that it was strictly private; and now he has trumpeted it forth to the whole world, and publicly associated my name not only with his own, but with those of persons of whom I know nothing except that I would rather not be connected with them in any way."

"What does it matter?" said Jane. "Nobody cares twopence."

"*I* care," said Sir Charles angrily. "No sensible person can accuse me of exaggerating my own importance merely because I value my reputation sufficiently to object to my approval being publicly cited in support of a cause with which I have no sympathy."

"Perhaps Mr. Trefusis has had nothing to do with it," said Agatha. "The papers publish whatever they please, dont they?"

"Go it, Agatha," said Jane maliciously, "Dont let anyone speak ill of him."

"I am not speaking ill of him," said Sir Charles, before Agatha could retort. "It is a mere matter of feeling; and I should not have mentioned it had I known the altered relations between him and Miss Wylie."

"Pray dont speak of them," said Agatha. "I have a mind to run away by the next train."

Sir Charles, to change the subject, suggested a duet.

Meanwhile Erskine, returning through the village from his morning ride, had met Trefusis, and attempted to pass him

with a nod. But Trefusis called to him to stop, and he dismounted reluctantly.

"Just a word to say that I am going to be married," said Trefusis.

"To—?" Erskine could not add Gertrude's name.

"To one of our friends at the Beeches. Guess to which."

"To Miss Lindsay, I presume."

"What in the fiend's name has put it into all your heads that Miss Lindsay and I are particularly attached to one another?" exclaimed Trefusis. "You have always appeared to me to be the man for Miss Lindsay. I am going to marry Miss Wylie."

"Really!" exclaimed Erskine, with a sensation of suddenly thawing after a bitter frost.

"Of course. And now, Erskine, you have the advantage of being a poor man. Do not let that splendid girl marry for money. If you go further you are likely to fare worse; and so is she." Then he nodded and walked away, leaving the other staring after him.

"If he has jilted her, he is a scoundrel," said Erskine. "I am sorry I didnt tell him so."

He mounted, and rode slowly along the Riverside Road, partly suspecting Trefusis of some mystification, but inclining a little to believe in him and, in any case, to take his advice respecting Gertrude. The conversation which he had overheard in the avenue still perplexed him. He could not reconcile it with Trefusis's profession of disinterestedness towards her.

His bicycle carried him noiselessly on its indiarubber tires to the place by which the hemlock grew; and there he saw an odd sight. Gertrude was sitting on the low earthen wall that separated the field from the road. Her straw bag, with her scissors in it, lay beside her. Her fingers were interlaced; and her hands rested, palms downward, on her knee. Her expression was rather vacant, and so little suggestive of any serious emotion that Erskine laughed as he alighted close to her.

"Are you tired?" he said.

"No," she replied, not startled, and smiling mechanically —an unusual condescension on her part.

"Indulging in a day-dream?"

"No." She moved a little to one side, and concealed her basket with her dress.

He began to fear that something was wrong. "Is it possible that you have ventured among those poisonous plants again?" he said. "Are you ill?"

"Not at all," she replied, rousing herself a little. "Your solicitude is quite thrown away. I am perfectly well."

"I beg your pardon," he said, snubbed. "I thought—Dont you think it dangerous to sit on that damp wall?"

"It is not damp. It is crumbling into dust with dryness." She concluded with an unnatural laugh which intensified his uneasiness.

He began a sentence; stopped; and took time to recover himself by placing his velocipede in the ditch opposite to her: a proceeding which she witnessed with impatience, as it indicated his intention to stay and talk. She, however, was the first to speak; and she did so with a callousness which shocked him.

"Have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"About Mr. Trefusis and Agatha. They are going to be married."

"So Trefusis told me. I met him just now in the village. I was very glad to hear it."

"Of course."

"But I had a special reason for being glad."

"Indeed?"

"I was desperately afraid, before he told me the truth, that he had other views—views that would have proved fatal to my dearest hopes."

Gertrude frowned at him; and the frown roused him to brave her. He lost his self-command, already shaken by her

strange behaviour. "You know that I love you, Miss Lindsay," he said. "It may not be a perfect love; but, humanly speaking, it is a true one. I almost told you so that day when we were in the billiard room together; and I did a very dishonourable thing the same evening. When you were speaking to Trefusis in the avenue, I was close to you; and I listened."

"Then you heard him," cried Gertrude vehemently. "You heard him swear that he was in earnest."

"Yes," said Erskine, trembling; "and I thought he meant in earnest in loving you. You can hardly blame me for that: I was in love myself, and love is blind and jealous. I never hoped again until he told me that he was to be married to Miss Wylie. May I speak to you, now that I know that I was mistaken, or that you have changed your mind."

"Or that he has changed his mind," said Gertrude scornfully.

Erskine checked himself, with a new anxiety for her sake. Her dignity was dear to him; and he saw that her disappointment had made her reckless of it. "Do not say anything to me now, Miss Lindsay, lest—"

"What have I said? What have I to say?"

"Nothing, except on my own affairs. I love you dearly."

Gertrude made an impatient movement, as if that were a very insignificant matter.

"You believe me, I hope," he said, timidly.

Gertrude made an effort to recover her habitual ladylike reserve; but her energy failed before she had done more than raise her head. She relapsed into her listless attitude, and made a faint gesture of intolerance.

"You cannot be quite indifferent to being loved," he said, becoming more nervous and more urgent. "Your existence constitutes all my happiness. I offer you my services and devotion. I do not ask any reward." (He was now speaking very quickly and almost inaudibly.) "You may accept my love without returning it. I do not want—seek to make a

bargain. If you need a friend, you may be able to rely on me more confidently because you know I love you."

"Oh, you think so," said Gertrude, interrupting him; "but you will get over it. I am not the sort of person that men fall in love with. You will soon change your mind."

"Not the sort!—oh, how little you know!" he said, becoming eloquent. "I have had plenty of time to change; but I am as fixed as ever. If you doubt, wait and try me. But do not be rough with me. You pain me more than you can imagine, when you are hasty or indifferent. I am in earnest."

"Ha ha! That is easily said."

"Not by me. I change in my judgment of other people according to my humour; but I believe steadfastly in your goodness and beauty—as if you were an angel. I am in earnest in my love for you as I am in earnest for the perfection of my own life, which can only be accomplished by your aid and influence."

"You are greatly mistaken if you suppose that I am an angel."

"You are wrong to mistrust yourself; but it is what I owe to you and not what I expect from you that I measure by thinking of you as an angel. I know that you are not an angel to yourself. But you are to me."

She sat stubbornly silent.

"I will not press you for answer now. I am content now that you know my mind at last. Shall we return together?"

She looked round slowly at the hemlock, and from that to the river. Then she took up her basket, rose, and prepared to go, as if under compulsion.

"Do you want any more hemlock?" he said. "If so, I will pluck some for you."

"I wish you would let me alone," she said, with sudden anger. She added, a little ashamed of herself, "I have a headache," by way of explanation.

"I am very sorry," he said, crestfallen.

"It is only that I do not wish to be spoken to," she said. "It hurts my head to listen."

He meekly took his bicycle from the ditch, and wheeled it along beside her to the Beeches without another word. They went in through the conservatory, and parted in the dining-room. Before leaving him she said with some remorse, "I did not mean to be rude, Mr. Erskine."

He flushed, murmured something, and attempted to kiss her hand. But she snatched it away and went out quickly. He was stung by this repulse, and stood mortifying himself by thinking of it until he was disturbed by the entrance of a maid-servant. Learning from her that Sir Charles was in the billiard-room, he joined him there, and asked him carelessly if he had heard the news.

"About Miss Wylie?" said Sir Charles. "Yes, I should think so. I believe the whole country knows it, though they have not been engaged three hours. Have you seen these?' And he pushed a couple of newsapers across the table.

Erskine had to make several efforts before he could concentrate his attention on the printed matter. When he had mastered its purport, he said, "You were a fool to sign that d ument. I told you so at the time."

"I relied on the fellow being a gentleman," said Sir Charles warmly. "I do not see that I was a fool. I see that he is a cad; and only for this business of Miss Wylie's I would let him know my opinion. Let me tell you, Chester, that he has played fast and loose with Miss Lindsay. She has just told Jane that she must go home at once; Miss Wylie declares that she will have nothing to do with Trefusis if Miss Lindsay has a prior claim to him; and Jane is annoyed at his admiring anybody except herself. I expect a deuce of a row upstairs before long. It serves me right: my instinct warned me against the fellow from the first."

Just then lunch was announced. Gertrude did not appear at it. Agatha, usually loquacious, was silent and moody. Jane tried to make Erskine describe his walk with Gertrude;

but he baffled her curiosity by omitting from his account everything except its commonplaces.

"I think her conduct very strange," said Jane. "She insists on going to town by the four o'clock train. I consider that it's not polite to me, although she always made a point of her perfect manners. I never heard of such a thing!"

When they rose from table, they went together to the drawing-room: Sir Charles being in the habit of assisting his digestion by music. They had hardly arrived there when Trefusis was announced; and he was in their presence before they had time to conceal the expression of consternation which his name brought into their faces.

"I have come to say good-bye," he said. "I find that I must go to town by the four o'clock train to push forward my arrangements in person:—the telegrams I have received breathe nothing but delay. Have you seen the *Times?*"

"I have indeed," said Sir Charles emphatically.

"You are in some other paper too, I hear; and will be in half-a-dozen more in the course of the next fortnight. Men who have committed themselves to an opinion are always in trouble with the newspapers: some because they cannot get into them; others because they cannot keep out. If you had put forward a thundering revolutionary manifesto, not a daily paper would have dared to allude to it—there is no cowardice like Fleet Street cowardice! I must run off: I have much to do before I start; and it is getting on for three. Good-bye, Lady Brandon, and everybody."

He shook Jane's hand; dealt nods to the rest rapidly, like cards before a game of whist, making no distinction in favour of Agatha; and hurried away. They stared after him for a moment; and then Erskine ran out and went downstairs two steps at a time. Nevertheless he had to run as far as the avenue before he overtook his man.

"Trefusis," he said breathlessly; "you must not go by the four o'clock train."

"Why not?"

"Miss Lindsay is going to town by it."

"So much the better, my dear boy; so much the better. You are not jealous of me now, are you?"

"Look here, Trefusis. I dont know and I dont ask what there has been between you and Miss Lindsay; but your engagement has quite upset her, and she is running away to London in consequence. If she hears that you are going by the same train, she will wait until to-morrow; and I believe that would be intolerably disagreeable to her. Will you inflict that additional pain upon her?"

Trefusis, evidently concerned, looked doubtfully at Erskine, and pondered for a moment. "I think you are on a wrong scent about this," he said. "My relations with Miss Lindsay were not of a sentimental kind. Have you said anything to her—on your own account, I mean?"

"I have spoken to her on both accounts; and I know from her own lips that I am right."

Trefusis uttered a low whistle.

"It is not the first time I have had the evidence of my own senses in the matter," said Erskine significantly. "Pray think of it seriously, Trefusis. Forgive my telling you frankly that nothing but your own utter want of feeling could excuse you for the way in which you have acted towards her."

Trefusis smiled. "Forgive me in turn for my inquisitiveness," he said. "What does she say to your suit?"

Erskine hesitated, showing by his manner that he thought that Trefusis had no right to ask the question. "She says nothing," he answered.

"Humph!" said Trefusis. "Well; you may rely on me as to the train. There is my hand upon it."

"Thank you," said Erskine fervently. They shook hands and parted: Trefusis walking away with a grin suggestive of anything but good faith.

CHAPTER VII.

Gertrude's judgment was so disturbed by the shock she had suffered that she was unaware of the extent to which she had already betrayed her disappointment, and believed that anxiety for her father's health, which she alleged as the motive of her sudden departure, was an excuse plausible enough to blind her friends to her overpowering reluctance to speak to Agatha or endure her presence; her fierce shrinking from the sort of pity usually accorded to a jilted woman; and, above all, her dread of meeting Trefusis. She had for some time past thought of him as an upright and perfect man deeply interested in her. Yet, comparatively liberal as her education had been, she had no idea of any interest of man in woman existing apart from a desire to marry. He had, in his serious moments, striven to make her sensible of the baseness which he saw in her worldliness: flattering her by his apparent conviction—which she shared—that she was capable of higher motives. Almost in the same breath, a strain of gallantry which was incorrigible in him, and to which his humor and his tenderness to women whom he liked gave variety and charm, would supervene upon his seriousness with a rapidity which her far less flexible temperament could not follow. Hence she, thinking him still in earnest when his whimsical fancy had swerved into florid romance, had been deeply misled. He had no conscientious scruples in his love-making, because he was unaccustomed to consider himself as capable of inspiring love in women; and Gertrude was equally unaware that her beauty gave to an hour spent alone with her a transient charm which few men of imagination and address could resist. She, who had lived in the marriage market since she had left school, looked upon love-making as the most serious business of life. To him it was only a pleasant sort of trifling, enhanced by a dash of sadness in the reflection that it was so vain and fleeting.

That one of the ceremonies attending her departure which cost her most was the kiss which she felt bound to offer Agatha.

She had been jealous of her at college, where she had esteemed herself the better bred of the two; but that opinion had hardly consoled her for Agatha's superior quickness of wit, dexterity of hand, audacity, felicity of resource, capacity for following or forming intricate associations of ideas, and consequent power to dazzle others. But her jealousy of these qualities was now barbed by the knowledge that they were much nearer akin than her own to those of Trefusis. It mattered little to her now how she might appear to herself in comparison with Agatha. But it mattered the whole world (she thought) that she must appear to Trefusis so slow, stiff, cold, and studied—that she could not find words or means to make him understand that she was not really so. For she would not admit the justice of opinions based on what she did not intend to do, however habitually she did it. Like most of her fellows, she had a theory that she was not herself, but what she would have liked to be. As to the one quality in which she had always felt superior to Agatha, and which she called 'good breeding,' Trefusis had so far destroyed her conceit in that, that she was beginning to doubt whether it was not her cardinal defect.

She could not bring herself to utter a word as she embraced her schoolfellow; and Agatha was tongue-tied too. But there was much remorseful tenderness in the feelings that choked them. The silence would have been awkward but for the loquacity of Jane, who talked enough for all three. Sir Charles was without, in the trap, waiting to drive Gertrude to the station. Erskine intercepted her in the hall as she passed out, told her that he should be desolate when she was gone, and begged her to remember him: a simple petition which moved her a little, and caused her to remark that his dark eyes had a pleading eloquence which she had noticed also in the kangaroos at the Zoological Society's gardens.

As she drove along with Sir Charles, he worried his horse in order to be excused from conversation, which might too easily turn upon the sore subject of her sudden departure.

He made a few remarks on the skittishness of young ponies, and on the weather; and that was all until they reached the station, a pretty building standing in the open country, with a view of the river from the platform. There were two flies waiting, two porters, a bookstall, and a refreshment room with a neglected beauty pining behind the bar. Sir Charles waited in the booking office to purchase a ticket for Gertrude, who went straight through to the platform. The first person she saw there was Trefusis, close beside her.

"I am going to town by this train, Gertrude," he said quickly. "Let me take charge of you. I have something to say; for I hear that some mischief has been made between us which must be stopped at once. You——"

Just then Sir Charles came out, and stood amazed to see them in conversation.

"It happens that I am going by this train," said Trefusis. "I will see after Miss Lindsay."

"Miss Lindsay has her maid with her," said Sir Charles, almost stammering, and looking at Gertrude, whose expression was inscrutable.

"We will get into a Pullman car," said Trefusis. "There we shall be as private and no more alone than we should be in a corner of a crowded drawingroom. I may travel with you, may I not?" he said, noting Sir Charles's disturbed look, and turning to her for express permission.

She felt that to deny him would be to throw away her last chance of happiness. Nevertheless she resolved to do it, though she should die of grief on the way to London. As she raised her head to forbid him the more emphatically, she met his gaze, which was grave and expectant. For an instant she lost her presence of mind, and in that instant said, "Yes. I shall be very glad."

"Well, if that is the case," said Sir Charles, in the tone of one whose sympathy had been finally alienated by an unpardonable outrage, "there can be no use in my waiting. I leave you in the hands of Mr. Trefusis. Goodbye, Miss Lindsay."

Gertrude winced. Unkindness from a man usually kind proved hard to bear at parting. She was offering him her hand in silence when Trefusis said,

"Wait and see us off. If we chance to be killed on the journey—which is always probable on an English railway—you will reproach yourself for ever afterwards if you do not see the last of us. Here is the train: it will not delay you a minute. Tell Erskine that you saw me here; that I have not forgotten my promise; and that he may rely on me. Get in at this end, Miss Lindsay."

"My maid," said Gertrude hesitating; for she had not intended to travel so expensively. "She—"

"She comes with us to take care of me—I have tickets for everybody," said Trefusis, handing the woman in.

"But—"

"Take your seats, please," said the guard. "Going by the train, sir?"

"Goodbye, Sir Charles. Give my love to Lady Brandon, and Agatha, and the dear children; and thanks as much for a very pleasant—" Here the train moved off; and Sir Charles, melting, smiled and waved his hat until he caught sight of Trefusis looking back at him with a grin which seemed, under the circumstances, so Satanic, that he stopped as if petrified in the midst of his gesticulations, and stood with his arm out like a semaphore.

The drive home restored him somewhat; but he was still so full of his surprise when he rejoined Agatha, his wife, and Erskine, in the drawingroom at the Beeches, that he said without preface the moment he entered, "She has gone off with Trefusis."

Erskine started up, clutching the book he had been reading as if about to hurl it at some one, and cried, "Was he at the train?"

"Yes, and has gone to town by it."

"Then," said Erskine, flinging his book violently on the floor, "he is a damned scoundrel and a liar."

"What is the matter?" said Agatha rising, whilst Jane stared openmouthed at him.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Wylie: I forgot you. He pledged me his honor that he would not go by that train. I will—" He hurried from the room. Sir Charles rushed after him, and overtook him at the foot of the stairs.

"Where are you going? What do you want to do?" he said.

"I will follow the train and catch it at the next station. I can do it on my bicycle."

"Nonsense! you're mad. They have thirty-five minutes start; and the train travels forty-five miles an hour."

Erskine sat down on the stairs, and gazed blankly at the opposite wall.

"You must have mistaken him," said Sir Charles. "He told me to tell you that he has not forgotten his promise, and that you may rely on him."

"What *is* the matter?" said Agatha, coming down, followed by Lady Brandon.

"Miss Wylie," said Erskine, springing up; "he gave me his word that he would not go by that train when I told him that Miss Lindsay was going by it. And he has broken his word and seized the opportunity to persecute her which I was mad and credulous enough to tell him of. If I had been in your place, Brandon, I would have strangled him or thrown him under the wheels sooner than have let him go. He has shewn himself in this as he has in everything else, a cheat, a conspirator, a man of crooked ways, shifts, tricks, base ambitions, lying sophistries, heartless selfishness, cruel cynicism—" He stopped to catch his breath, and Sir Charles interposed a remonstrance.

"You are exciting yourself about nothing, Chester. They are in a Pullman, with her maid and plenty of people; and she expressly gave him leave to go with her. He asked her the question flatly before my face; and I must say I thought it a strange thing for her to consent to. However, she did

consent; and of course I was not in a position to prevent him from going to London if he pleased. Dont let us have a scene, old man. It cant be helped."

"I am very sorry," said Erskine, hanging his head. "I did not mean to make a scene. I beg your pardon."

He went away to his room without another word. Sir Charles followed and attempted to console him; but Erskine caught his hand, and asked to be left to himself. So Sir Charles returned to the drawingroom, where his wife, at a loss for once, hardly ventured to remark that she had never heard of such a thing in her life.

Agatha kept silence. She had long ago come unconsciously to the conclusion that Trefusis and she were the only members of the party at the Beeches who had much common sense; and this made her slow to believe that he could be in the wrong and Erskine in the right in any misunderstanding between them. She had a slovenly way of summing up as "asses" people whose habits of thought differed from hers. Of all varieties of man, the minor poet realized her conception of the human ass most completely; and Erskine, though a very nice fellow indeed, thoroughly good and gentlemanly, she thought, was yet a minor poet, and therefore a pronounced ass. Trefusis, on the contrary, was the last man of her acquaintance whom she would have thought of as a very nice fellow or a virtuous gentleman; but he was not an ass, although he was obstinate in his socialistic fads. She had indeed suspected Trefusis of weakness almost asinine with respect to Gertrude; but then all men were asses in their dealings with women; and since Trefusis had transferred his weakness to her own account it no longer seemed to need justification. And now, as her concern for Erskine, whom she pitied, wore off, she began to resent Trefusis's journey with Gertrude as an attack on her recently acquired monopoly of him. There was an air of aristocratic pride about Gertrude which Agatha had formerly envied, and which she still feared that Trefusis might mistake for an index of dignity and

refinement. Agatha did not believe that her resentment was the common feeling called jealousy: she still deemed herself unique; but it gave her a sense of meanness which did not improve her spirits.

The dinner was dull. Lady Brandon spoke in an undertone, as if there were someone dead in the next room. Erskine was depressed by the consciousness of having lost his head and acted foolishly in the afternoon. Sir Charles, unequal to the task of pretending to ignore the suspense which was weighing on all their minds pending intelligence of the journey to London, ate and drank and said nothing. Agatha, disgusted with herself and with Gertrude, and undecided whether to be disgusted with Trefusis or to try and trust him affectionately, followed the example of her host. But she got tired of the dullness after dinner, and accompanied him in a series of songs by Schubert. This proved an aggravation instead of a relief. Sir Charles, excelling in the expression of melancholy, preferred songs of that character; and as, like most Englishmen, his musical ideas were founded on what he had heard in church in his childhood, his style was so oppressively monotonous that Agatha took the first excuse that presented itself to leave the piano. Sir Charles felt that his performance had been a failure, and remarked, after a cough or two, that he had caught a touch of cold when returning from the station. Erskine sat on a sofa with his head drooping, and his palms joined and hanging downward between his knees. Agatha stood at the window, looking at he late summer afterglow. Jane yawned, and presently broke the silence.

"You look exactly as you used to in school, Agatha. could almost fancy that we are back again in number six."

Agatha shook her head.

"Do I ever look like that—like myself as I used to be?"

"Never," said Agatha emphatically, turning and surveying the substance of which Miss Carpenter had been the unripe antecedent.

"But why?" said Jane querulously. "I dont see why I shouldnt. I am not so changed."

"You have become an exceedingly fine woman, Jane," said Agatha gravely, and then, without knowing why, turned her attentive gaze upon Sir Charles, who bore it uneasily, and presently left the room. A minute later he returned with two buff envelopes in his hand.

"A telegram for you, Miss Wylie; and one for Chester."

Erskine started up, white with vague fears. Agatha's colour went, and came again with increased richness as she read,

I have arrived safe and ridiculously happy. Read a thousand things between the lines. I will write tomorrow. Good night.

"You may read it," said Agatha, handing it to Jane.

"Very pretty," said Jane. "A shillingsworth of attention—exactly twenty words. He may well call himself an economist."

Suddenly Erskine burst into a crowing laugh which caused them to turn hastily and stare at him. "What nonsense!" he said, blushing. "What a fellow he is! I dont attach the slightest importance to this."

Agatha took a corner of his telegram and pulled it gently.

"No, no," he said, holding it tightly. "It is too absurd. I dont think I ought—"

Agatha gave a decisive pull, and read the message aloud. It was from Trefusis, thus,

I forgive your thoughts since Brandon's return. Write to her to-night; and follow your letter to receive an affirmative answer in person. I promised that you might rely on me. She loves you.

"I never heard of such a thing in my life," said Jane. "Never!"

"He is certainly a most unaccountable man," said Sir Charles.

"I am glad, for my own sake, that he is not so black as he is painted," said Agatha. "You may believe every word of it, Mr. Erskine. Be sure to do as he tells you. He is quite certain to be right."

"Pooh!" said Erskine, crumpling the telegram and thrusting it into his pocket as if it were not worth a second thought. Presently he slipped away, and did not reappear. When they were about to retire, Sir Charles asked a servant where he was.

"In the library, Sir Charles; writing."

They looked significantly at one another, and went to bed without disturbing him.

CHAPTER VIII.

When Gertrude found herself beside Trefusis in the Pullman; with her maid reading his newspapers just out of earshot; a male passenger admiring her a little further off; two women scrutinizing her critically as if they suspected her of being there with no good purpose; and a few persons who seemed to have seen a lady and gentleman before, and to have a natural repugnance to embarrass them by staring; she wondered how she came to be travelling with him against her resolution, if not against her will; and whether he would say anything to her; and, if so, what it could be, and how she should treat him. She was not long in doubt. He began promptly, and went to the point at once.

"What do you think of this marriage of mine?"

This was more than she could bear calmly. "What is it to me?" she said indignantly. "I have nothing to do with it."

"Indeed?" he said. "You are a cold friend to me then. I thought you one of the surest I possessed."

She moved as if about to look at him, but checked herself, closed her lips, and fixed her eyes on the vacant seat before her. The reproach he deserved was beyond her power of expression in words.

"I cling to that conviction still," he resumed, "in spite of Miss Lindsay's indifference to my affairs. But I see that it will be hard to bring you into sympathy with me in this

matter for many reasons. In the first place, you have never been married: I have. In the next, you are much younger than I, in more respects than that of years. Your ideas on the subject are probably derived from fictions in which, by trade usage, happy results are tacked on to conditions very ill-calculated to produce them, and which in real life hardly ever do produce them. If our friendship were a chapter in a novel, what would be the upshot of it? Why, I should marry you; or else you should break your heart at my treachery."

Gertrude moved her eyes as if she had some intention of taking to flight.

"But our relations being those of real life—far sweeter, after all—I never dream of marrying you, having gained and enjoyed your friendship without that eye to business which our nineteenth century keeps open even whilst it sleeps. You, being equally simple in your regard for me, do not think of breaking your heart; but you are, I suppose, a little hurt at my apparently meditating and resolving on such a serious step as marriage with Agatha without confiding my intention to you. And you punish me by telling me that you have nothing to do with it—that it is nothing to you. But I never meditated the step; and so had nothing to conceal from you. It was conceived and executed in less than a minute. Although my first marriage was a silly love match and a failure, I have always admitted to myself that I should marry again. A bachelor is a man who shirks responsibilities and duties: I seek them, and consider that it is my duty to undertake the responsibility of educating a family with the monstrous superfluity of means which I am powerless to restore to its producers and rightful owners. But I was in no hurry, having other things to occupy me, and being fond of my bachelor freedom, and doubtful sometimes whether I had any right to bring more idlers into the world for the workers to feed. Then came the usual difficulty about the lady. I did not want a helpmeet: I can help myself. Nor

did I expect to be loved devotedly; for the race has not yet evolved a man lovable on thorough acquaintance. Even my self-love is not thorough nor constant. I wanted a genial partner for domestic business; and Agatha struck me quite suddenly as being the nearest approach to what I desired that I was likely to find in the marriage market, where it is extremely hard to suit oneself, and where the likeliest bargains are apt to be snapped up by others if one hesitates too long in the hope of finding something better. I like Agatha, and believe I shall be able to make her like me, and that the attachment so begun may turn into as close a union as is either healthy or necessary between two separate individuals. I may mistake her character; for I do not know her as I know you, and have scarcely enough faith in her as yet to say to her the things which I have said to you. Still, there is a consoling dash of romance in the transaction. Agatha has charm. Do you not think so?"

Gertrude's emotion was gone. She replied with cool scorn, "Very romantic indeed. She is very fortunate."

Trefusis half laughed, half sighed with relief to find her so self-possessed. "It sounds like—and indeed is—the selfish calculation of a disilluded widower. You would not value such an offer, or envy the recipient of it?"

"No," said Gertrude, with quiet contempt.

"Yet there is some calculation behind every such offer. We marry to satisfy our needs; and the more reasonable our needs are, the more likely are we to get them satisfied. I see you are disgusted with me—I feared as much. You are the sort of woman to admit no excuse for my marriage except love—pure emotional love, blindfolding reason."

"I really do not concern myself—"

"Do not say so, Gertrude. I watch every step you take with anxiety; and I do not believe that you are indifferent to the worthiness of my conduct. Believe me, love is an over-rated passion; and it would be irremediably discredited if it were not that young people and the romancers who live upon

their folly have a perpetual interest in rehabilitating it. No relation involving divided duties and continual intercourse between two people can subsist permanently on love alone. Yet love is not be despised when it comes from a good nature. There is a man who loves you exactly as you think I ought to love Agatha—and as I dont love her."

Gertrude's emotion stirred again, and her colour rose. "You have no right to say these things now," she said.

"Why may I not plead the cause of another? I spoke of Erskine." Her colour vanished, and he continued, "I want you to marry him. When you are married you will understand me better; and our friendship, shaken just now, will be deepened; for I dare assure you, now that you can no longer misunderstand me, that no living woman is dearer to me than you. So much for the inevitable selfish reason. Erskine is a poor man, and in his comfortable poverty—save the mark—lies your salvation from the baseness of marrying for wealth and position; a baseness in which women of your class stand in constant peril. They court it: you must shun it. The man is honourable and loves you: he is young, healthy, and suitable. What more do you think the world has to offer you?"

"Much more, I hope. Very much more."

"I fear that the names I give things are not romantic enough. He is a poet. Perhaps he would be a hero if it were possible for a man to be a hero in this nineteenth century, which will be infamous in history as a time when the greatest advances in the power of man over nature only served to sharpen his greed and make famine its avowed minister. Erskine is at least neither a gambler nor a slave driver; and if he lives upon plundered labour, he can no more help himself than I can. Do not say that you hope for much more; but tell me, if you can, what more you have any chance of getting. Mind, I do not ask what more you desire—we all desire unutterable things. I ask you what more you can obtain."

"I do not think Mr. Erskine such a wonderful person as you seem to think him."

"He is only a man. Do you know anybody more wonderful?"

"Besides, my family might not approve."

"They most certainly will not. If you wish to please them, you must sell yourself to some rich captain of industry or great landlord. If you give yourself away to a poor poet who loves you, their disgust will be unbounded. If a woman wishes to honour her father and mother to their own satisfaction nowadays, she must dishonour herself."

"I do not understand why you should be so anxious for me to marry someone else?"

"Someone else?" said Trefusis, puzzled.

"I do not mean someone else," said Gertrude hastily, reddening. "Why should I marry at all?"

"Why do any of us marry? Why do I marry? It is a function of our life that craves fulfilment. If you do not marry betimes from choice, you will be driven to do so later on by the importunity of your suitors and of your family, and by weariness of the suspense which precedes a definite settlement of oneself. Marry generously. Do not throw yourself away or sell yourself: give yourself away. Erskine has as much at stake as you; and yet he offers himself fearlessly."

Gertrude raised her head proudly.

"It is true," continued Trefusis, observing the gesture with some anger, "that he thinks more highly of you than you deserve; but you, on the other hand, think too lowly of him. When you marry him, you must save him from a cruel disenchantment by raising yourself to the level he fancies you have attained. This will cost you an effort; and the effort will do you good, whether it fail or succeed. As for him, he will find his just level in your estimation if your thoughts reach high enough to comprehend him at that level."

Gertrude moved impatiently.

"What!" he cried quickly. "Are my long-winded sacrifices to the god of reason distasteful? I believe I am involuntarily making them so because I am jealous of the fellow after all. Nevertheless I am serious: I want you to get married; though I shall always have a secret grudge against the man who marries you. Agatha will suspect me of treason if you dont. Erskine will be a disappointed man if you dont. You will be moody, wretched, and—and unmarried if you dont."

Gertrude's cheeks flushed at the word jealous, and again at his mention of Agatha. "And if I do," she said bitterly, "what then?"

"If you do, Agatha's mind will be at ease; Erskine will be happy; and you!—you will have sacrificed yourself, and will have the happiness which follows that when it is worthily done."

"It is you who have sacrificed me," she said, casting away her reticence, and looking at him for the first time during the conversation.

"I know it," he said, leaning towards her and half-whispering the words. "Is not renunciation the beginning and the end of wisdom? I have sacrificed you rather than profane our friendship by asking you to share my whole life with me. You are unfit for that; and I have committed myself to another union, and am begging you to follow my example, lest we should tempt one another to a step which would soon prove to you how truly I tell you that you are unfit. I have never allowed you to roam through all the chambers of my consciousness; but I keep a sanctuary there for you alone, and will keep it inviolate for you always. Not even Agatha shall have the key: she must be content with the other rooms—the drawing-room, the working-room, the dining-room, and so forth. They would not suit you: you would not like the furniture nor the guests; and after a time you would not like the master. Will you be content with the sanctuary?"

Gertrude bit her lip; and tears came into her eyes.

"And will you keep a corner of your heart for me?"

She slowly gave him a pained look of acquiescence.

"Will you be brave, and sacrifice yourself to the poor man who loves you? He will save you from useless solitude, or from a worldly marriage—I cannot bear to think of either as your fate."

"I do not care for Mr. Erskine," she said, hardly able to control her voice; "but I will marry him if you wish it."

"I do wish it earnestly, Gertrude."

"Then you have my promise," she said, again with some bitterness.

"But you will not forget me? Erskine will have all but that—a tender recollection—nothing."

"Can I do more for you than I have just done?"

"Perhaps so, but I am too selfish to be able to conceive anything more generous. Our renunciation will bind us to one another as our union could never have done."

They exchanged a long look. Then he took out his watch, and began to speak of the length of their journey, now nearly at an end. When they arrived in London, the first person they recognized on the platform was Mr. Jansenius.

"Ah, you got my telegram, I see," said Trefusis. "Many thanks for coming. Wait for me whilst I put this lady into a cab."

When the cab was engaged, and Gertrude, with her maid, stowed within, he whispered to her hurriedly,

"In spite of all, I have a horrible pain here" (indicating his heart). "You have been brave; and I have been wise. Do not speak to me; but remember that we are always true friends."

He touched her hand, and turned to the cabman, directing him whither to drive. Gertrude shrank back into a corner of the vehicle as it departed. Then Trefusis, expanding his chest like a man just released from some cramping drudgery, rejoined Mr. Jansenius.

"There goes a true woman," he said. "I have been persuading her to take the very best step open to her. I began by talking sense, like a man of honor; and kept at it for half an hour; but she would not listen to me. Then I talked romantic nonsense of the cheapest sort for five minutes; and she consented with tears in her eyes. Let us take this hansom. Hi! Belsize Avenue. Yes; you sometimes have to answer a woman according to her womanishness, just as you have to answer a fool according to his folly. Have you ever made up your mind, Jansenius, whether I am an unusually honest man, or one of the worst results of the social organization which I spend all my energies in assailing—an infernal scoundrel, in short?"

"Now pray do not be nonsensical," said Mr. Jansenius. "I wonder at a man of your ability behaving and speaking as you sometimes do."

"I hope a little sincerity, where it is meant to act as chloroform—to save a woman from feeling a wound to her vanity—is excusable. By the bye, I must send a couple of telegrams from the first post office we pass. Well, sir, I am going to marry Agatha, as I sent you word. There was only one other single man, and one other virgin down at Brandon Beeches; and they are as good as engaged. And so——

"Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill:
The man shall have his mare again;
And all shall be well."

THE END.

London, 1883.

"Peace reigns in Warsaw."

Ask, Is it Peace? of the nations, and thou shalt for answer be told,
Peace is for those who can buy her, she barters her honour for gold.

Tyrants together have sworn upon crowns and contemptible things,
Peace shall be nought any more but the armèd alliance of kings.

Where is the garland of olive wherewith she was shadowed of yore?
Where the goodwill that of old for a frontlet of glory she wore?

Surely a strange and wonderful Peace broods over the land,
Peace propped up upon muskets, a two-edged sword in her hand.

Dare to dispute her sway, and for battle she thirsts and is fain,
Dare to deny her dominion, and thou thyself shalt be slain.

Honey and oil of the olive and wheat and the fruits of the earth—
These are no longer her emblems, but drought and disaster and dearth.

Nay, but this cannot be Peace that of old to the nations was wed;
Not Peace she, but an harlot who triumphs and reigns in her stead.

What shall be said of her beauty with that red stain on her brow?
What shall be said of her body, and whom doth she wanton with now?

What is her meed but a hissing, and what but a byword her name?—
Girt with reproach for a garment, and robed in a raiment of shame.

How should her worshippers greet her, wherewith is her grace to be won?
What is the gift must be brought, and the sacrifice meet to be done?

Offer the oil of the olive—her fierce eyes kindle with ire;
Pour out the blood of a victim, and thou shalt have all thy desire.

Ask in her temple for nurture, and pray of her priests to be fed,
Stones she will give thee for succour, and bayonets rather than bread.

Nought may appease her fierce anger but travail and torture and toil,
Nought but the sweat and the tears of the sorrowing sons of the soil.

These be the gifts that delight her, these only she taketh for toll;
These and these only can quench the insatiate desire of her soul.

Glory is hers and high honour of those that oppress and enslave;
Shelter she gives to the poor in the sheltering mouth of the grave.

Commerce and riches increase in the hot rank steam of her breath;
Keen is its blast to the toilers, and cold as the shadow of death.

Tyrants may kiss and caress her, and kindle a curse at her lips;
Hers is the name they invoke to envemon the lash of their whips.

All that is evil and base is refreshed by the glow in her eyes;
All is abashed that is honest, and withers, and dwindles, and dies.

Therefore, since shame is the portion she chooses and is not ashamed;
Since without scorn and derision her harlotries may not be named;

Since she has truckled to tyrants, and wantoned with cowards and kings;
Since on her brow is a blood-mark, and healing is not in her wings;

Now shall the people proclaim that the day of her triumph is done,
Swear that her throne shall no more be set up in the sight of the sun;—

Yea, though there come in her stead, or in gloom or in sulphurous glare,
War with his horrible eyes and a hissing of snakes in his hair;

Yet for the glorious sake of the Peace that hereafter shall be,
All men shall turn from the traitress, and swear of her snares to be free;

Shake off her evil dominion, and swiftly make end of her might,
Rend her imperial raiment, and put her away from our sight.

Ferdinand Freiligrath.

ALTHOUGH the life of my father as a poet and politician is well known in its general outlines, yet being so closely interwoven with his writings, the latter may perhaps not be fully comprehended without a detailed account of the former. After the death of Freiligrath many pamphlets and monographs of his life appeared in Germany, most of them unreliable and more or less unsatisfactory. Since 1882, however, a really good biography exists, written by Dr. Wilhelm Buchner in Crefeld, entitled: "Ein Dichterleben in Briefen." And this it truly is, the widow having furnished from her husband's immense correspondence, such letters as set forth the tenor of his life from youth to old age, as far as may be, in his own words.

To those readers who care to follow the life of the German poet and patriot more closely than it is possible to do in a magazine article, these volumes can be recommended; for those, however, who have neither the time nor opportunity a shorter account may be welcome.

Ferdinand Freiligrath was born in Detmold, the capital of the small principality of Lippe Detmold, in the year 1810. He was the son of Johann Wilhelm Freiligrath, a public teacher in that town, of very modest means. So modest indeed, that it was a matter of impossibility to follow the wish of his heart and give his gifted son a University career; an omission always deeply regretted by Freiligrath himself, who pathetically alludes to it in his poem: *Odysseus*. The com-

plaint was doubtless a natural one; at the same time it is very characteristic of Freiligrath's innate modesty, as despite this disadvantage, he nevertheless acquired his vast literary knowledge with the instinctive intuition as well as with the stern resolution and perseverance of genius.

At the age of fifteen he was put into his uncle's business in Soest, where he remained, learning all that could be learned in that quiet out-of-the-world Westphalian town, until his twenty-first year. Having lost his father two years before, he was left to decide for himself, and he decided to go to Amsterdam, where he accepted a situation as clerk in a large banking house. But long before this his muse had already fluttered her wings, and many a poetical contribution of his went forth anonymously to the local papers. These early poems are not without merit, with here and there a happy expression, a flash of picturesque beauty; it is only on comparing them with his later work that one is able to distinctly perceive the immense gulf there is between the talented, clever verse of the boy, and the original and finished work of the man. It is worthy of remark, however, that two of his most characteristic poems, "Moos Thee," and "O lieb so lang Du lieben kannst," were both written as they stand now, at the respective ages of sixteen and nineteen. The first named, "Moos Thee" is the first in his volume of poems, and of daring originality. Being ill, he was ordered to drink,

> This beverage, which I owe
> To Geyser's depth and Hecla's hill.
>
> In fields where ice lies layer on layer,
> And lava hardens o'er the whole—
> And the circle of the Arctic Pole
> Looks forth on snow-crags ever bare.
>
> Where fierce volcanic fires burn blue,
> Through many a meteor-lighted night,
> Mid springs that foam in boiling might;
> These blandly-bitter lichens grew.

And this youth of sixteen unrolls to us a picture of Iceland, with its volcanos, its lonely seas, and its mystery, so vivid and so daring, that in reading, one feels this indeed is a new

poet! The poem ends with the remarkable prophecy, which was to be so fully verified but few years afterwards :—

Oh, let the flames that burn unfed
Within me wax, until they glow,
Volcano-like, through even the snow
That in few years shall strew my head.

And as the stones that Hecla sees
Flung up to Heaven through fiery rain,
Descend like thunderbolts again
Upon the distant Faroese.

So let the rude but burning rhymes
Cast from the cauldron of my breast;
Again fall flashing down and rest
On human hearts in farthest climes.*

In utter contrast to this wild and daring effusion, is the second poem with its heartfelt pathos. And yet the one is as thoroughly characteristic of the poet and the man as the other. Unfortunately no translation can come near the noble simplicity of this poem, although it has been translated into many languages.

At Amsterdam Freiligrath remained nearly five years in the banking house of Jacob Sigrist, from 1832 to 1836, and here were written most of the poems which took Germany by storm when they were published in 1838. In Amsterdam he lived a lonely but busy life, a life that retrospectively he liked to look back upon, and it is easy to imagine what effect the sight of the sea, of the ports, of the ships coming and going to all ends of the world, had upon the poet! In the day he was fully occupied with his business, sometimes up to nine o'clock in the evening; while after that, he devoted his hours to the study of modern languages, of history and geography, studies that often considerably shortened his night's rest.

It was at Amsterdam that he undertook, at the request of a German publisher, the translation of Victor Hugo's poems and odes, which he actually set himself to translate at the rate of an ode every night! Considering that he came home tired out after ten hours of office work, one hardly knows

* Translated by J. C. Mangan.

what to admire most, the ability to do it, or the resolution to conquer the task. True, the poetry of Hugo was akin to his own genius, and he writes to a friend—"This Hugo sets my brain on fire." But much as he admired the French poet, he particularly loved the literature of England, and from Amsterdam date many of his finest translations from Moore, Campbell, Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott, and above all, from his favourite, Robert Burns. In the meantime several of his own poems had appeared in Germany in the "Musenalmanach" of the veteran poet Chamisso, and also in the "Morgenblatt," and had created no little sensation by their strange beauty and striking originality. Poets like Chamisso, Uhland, and Gustav Schwab, wrote to the unknown young poet, affectionately and sympathetically encouraging him with many a kind word, and warning him at the same time to avoid the terrible, to which his exuberant fancy was sometimes prone to incline. Freiligrath was deeply touched at these friendly manifestations so utterly unexpected by him, and when some time after Baron von Cotta personally wrote to open his house to him whenever he should think of publishing his poems, Freiligrath, whose position in Amsterdam had been for some time irksome to him, decided to leave his situation and return to Soest. Here he spent the summer of 1836 to May, 1837, in preparing his poems for the press, sifting and selecting those he deemed worthy of insertion, and mercilessly rejecting many more than were chosen. When his MSS. had finally gone to Stuttgart, he quietly entered again into a mercantile situation in Barmen. His poems appeared in 1838, and, as is known, served to make the young poet, who had already drawn much attention to himself, famous overnight. The admiration and love which his nation from the very outset brought to the new star which had arisen with such splendour, seemed almost incapable of augmentation, that it still deepened, still grew more intense as years went on and the poet became patriot as well, we shall see anon.

It is now time that we turn to these poems themselves.

The time in which they appeared was one which was singularly favourable for the utterances of a poet of Freiligrath's stamp. The classic period had ceased with the death of Goethe; Ludwig Uhland and Chamisso were no longer young; Eichendorff's lovely and dreamy romanticism belonged to a school fast passing away; Lenau's exquisite poems thrilled with a hopeless and enervating Weltschmerz; while Heine was pouring forth his inimitable but corroding wit. Attacking the noblest names, nothing was sacred from his poisoned shafts, and he was all the more dangerous because he was incomparably the most brilliant among modern lyrists, and moreover stood forth a poet by right of the divine gift. The influence of Heine on the generation of his day, it must be confessed (in spite of the admiration his genius compels, and of the fascination to which one involuntary succumbs again and again), was essentially a bad influence. The rest of the poets of that period were innocent enough, warbling mildly and prettily, if somewhat sentimentally, of spring and nightingales and forget-me-nots. Into the midst of this period burst Freiligrath's songs, with all the glow of their eastern imagery, with the terrible glare of the desert, with the frozen majesty of the Arctic regions, with the breath of the Savannahs, with the mystery and gloom of the ocean. Tbe poems are seldom long, and each is a vivid picture which you hardly so much read as see before you. Their tone is manly and self-reliant, and there is a wonderfully stirring ring and subtle music in the verses. He shows us the kraken struggling with the sea serpent; we hear the lion-king of the desert, awakening with his roar the royal mummy in the pyramid, and see him mounting the giraffe and riding the fainting animal until it drops dead beneath its rider; we see the spectre caravan defiling past us on its way to Mecca; we follow the Sheikh as he raves at the mirage of the desert. Anon Freiligrath paints, with the minute fidelity of a Tenier, a watchnight of the Gueux; and again, he apostrophises the sea, and shows us what is hidden beneath the purple wave. Never is he tired of singing the

ocean with its dread mystery, whether of storm or of calm, and rarely has the dreamy and vague emotion produced by the sea, been more exquisitely sung than in his Sand Lieder, a few of which I quote in Mr. Justin McCarthy's happy translation.*

I sing not of the desert sand
Where savage herds in contest meet,
I mean the grains that on the strand
Are crumbling now beneath my feet.

For that is but the breathing curse,
The Desert's restless wandering ghost,
Beneath whose death-shroud, man and horse,
Camel and rider, all are lost.

Cool and fresh the sea-sand lies,
Furrowed and wet with ocean's brine;
A ready table, whither flies
The sea-mew's brood on fish to dine.

And again:—

Inward from ocean blows the breeze,
The sands are tossed, the sea-weeds roll;
On fickle changing sands like these
Wild floating thoughts must fill the soul.

Flying before the wind and flood
The whirling sands each other chase:
So flies and strays my restless mood
And holds to no abiding place.

I cannot quote all, but may be allowed to finish with the last stanzas:—

High above me float
Three sea-mews, dull and slow—
I need not lift my eyes,
I know the way they go!

For on the glowing sands
That in the sunshine lie,
With far outstretching wings
Their darkening shadows fly;

A single feather falls
Downward in the flight,
That I of ocean sands
And the flying birds may write!

That Freiligrath could stir deep emotion is shown in poems like the "Emigrants," in which all his love for his

* See "Con Amore," by Justin McCarthy. 'The poems of Freiligrath.'

native land breaks forth in the pathetic appeal to those about to leave their Fatherland:—

Oh, say, why seek ye other lands?
The Neckar's vale hath vine and corn,
Full of dark firs the Schwarzwald stands,
In Spessart rings the Alp-herd's horn.

Ah, in strange forests you will yearn
For the green mountains of your home,—
To Deutschland's yellow wheatfields turn,—
In spirit o'er her vine hills roam.

How will the form of days grown pale,
In golden dreams float softly by,
Like some old legendary tale,
Before fond memory's moistened eye!*

In the same tender and quiet strain of pathos are the poems of "Nebo," "The Death of the Leader," "The Picture Bible," "Autumn," "The Fir Tree," and many others. But I can only indicate the characteristic beauty of these poems, they must be read, if possible in the original, to be able to appreciate them truly.

Such then were the poems which made Freiligrath's name known over the length and breadth of the land, and the success of which justified him (who had been urged from all sides to do so, latterly by Immermann himself) in at length deciding to leave business and live for literature alone. In the summer of 1839, therefore, he left Barmen and the many friends who had crowded round him during his stay there, friends who remained true and staunch when the storm broke and the waves went over his head.

His first step was to take a pedestrian trip through his native land of Westphalia, which he loved with all the intensity of his strong and earnest nature. It was his intention to edit a work in conjunction with his friend Levin Schücking celebrating the "Red Land" as it is called, in prose and verse. The plan, however, as far as Freiligrath was concerned, came to nothing, and his only contribution was the splendid poem "Der Freistuhl zu Dortmund," where occurs the celebrated verse, in which he vindicates himself from the

* Translated by G. E. Shirley.

charge that he cared not for his own country. Unfortunately there is no translation extant of this powerful poem, and I must therefore quote the German :—

Und so denn freudig hegt er sein Gericht !
Den Boden wechselnd, die Gesinnung nicht,
Waehlt er die rothe Erde für die gelbe !
Die Palme dorrt, der Wüstenstaub verweht :—
An's Herz der Heimath wirft sich der Poet,
Ein Anderer und doch Derselbe !

He now settled in the charming little Unkel on the Rhine, opposite Rolandseck and in the shadow of the Drachenfels, where he remained a year imbibing in full draughts the romance of the noble river. He sings :—

In luscious glory of its vine
Of purple and of yellow cluster,
I saw the Valley of the Rhine
Arch, like a goblet green of lustre ;
A chalice rare ! Tradition dreams
Upon its brink, on ruins hoary—
The wine that in the goblet beams—
Love and Romance, renowned in story.

This is the first of many poems which celebrate his beloved Rhine, but I can only allude to the poem (an impassioned appeal : " Rolandseck ") with which he rebuilt the Rolandsbogen which had been destroyed by a winter's storm. This, and the translation of Shakespeare's " Venus and Adonis " filled up the year. In the following summer he engaged himself to Ida Melos, daughter of Professor Melos of Weimar, and sang the three lovesongs " Mit Unkraut," " Ruhe in der Geliebten " and " Du hast genannt mich einen Vogelsteller " which will remain for ever bright gems in German love literature. In May of 1841, Freiligrath was married to the beloved wife and faithful companion of his stormy and unsettled life.

He first lived at Darmstadt, where he had hopes of founding and editing a paper " Britannia " specially devoted to English literature, and to which several of the first writers had promised to contribute. This plan, very dear to Freiligrath's heart, fell through, owing to the sudden withdrawal of the publishers. And it was now that, quite unknown to

him, Alexander von Humboldt had induced King William IV. of Prussia, to bestow a pension of 300 thalers on the poet. Small as it was, it sufficed to give a breathing space for the moment, and Freiligrath gratefully accepted it. He now went to live at St. Goar on the Rhine, between Coblentz and Bingen, and here he spent a glad summer, free from cares, and happy in the friendship of Longfellow, who was staying at Marienbad near St. Goar, of Emanuel Geibel, then a young rising poet; of his old friend Levin Schücking; of Berthold Auerbach, (who had just brought out his "Dorf Geschichten" which Freiligrath hailed with his fine poem "Dorf Geschichten") and of many others. He wrote much, but except a poem here and there did not publish what he had written; for careless and full of mirth as the summer had been outwardly, there had been a gradual change and development going on silently for some time in the Poet, which found expression in his next publication: "Ein Glaubensbekenntniss." To understand the process of this change we shall have to go back a little, and to see what were the conditions in which the Germany of that day found herself. Only so can we understand the metamorphosis of a poet who had only a year ago sung:—

Der Dichter steht auf einer höheren Warte,
Als auf der Zinne der Partei!

into the champion for political liberty, for the rights of the people and for the destruction of all that was "rotten in the State of Denmark."

KATE FREILIGRATH-KRŒKER.

(To be continued).

A Playwright's Grumble.

The highest thing that Art can do is to set before you the true image of the presence of a noble human being. It has never done more than this, and it ought not to do less.—RUSKIN, *Lectures on Art*.

FROM my study-window the hill-side slopes down a quarter of a mile to one of the prettiest and most old-fashioned of Buckinghamshire villages. The red-tiled roofs, subdued by lichen, just overlook the orchard trees, or throw up a brightish red chimney here and there, where the branches hang low enough to give them a peep, or half or wholly hide amongst the tall spreading elms; the clean blue smoke lazily smears the deep masses of dark green foliage; the noble church-tower, with its "never sere" garland of ivy, rises four-square and dominant above the irregular house-tops, commanding them with its heavenward purpose, as the precepts of its religion command the waywardness and fickleness of human life; haystacks and cornstacks dot the shorn fields; all through the year men are pursuing in their turn the healthy primal tasks of tilling and sowing and reaping, those blessed occupations that, as Keats says, Deity delights to ease its heart of love in holding peaceful sway over. The wooded hills shut in a bit of as yet untainted English landscape, not greatly changed, one is pleased to think, during the two hundred and twenty years that have gone by since Milton took refuge here close by in the time of the great plague of London. There is no railway within five miles; no gas, but plenty of clean air; no water-companies, but plenty of clean water. There is scarcely a view that does

not make a picture, and the human life that is framed in this setting has all the outer conditions of health and happiness.

The whole scene is typical of the greater part of English life fifty years ago. A few generations back it would have been impossible to have wandered out from a town and not to have lighted upon many such scenes; in a few generations to come, at our present rate of progress, such a scene and such conditions of healthy human life will be almost impossible throughout the length and breadth of England.

Loftier and stronger and more dulcet voices than mine have raised this cry and have vainly urged Englishmen to save England. Great heavens! my countrymen, thirty millions of us, the richest nation in the world, so rich, that twenty-nine millions of us cannot afford pure air or pure water or unadulterated food! English life growing more monotonous, more suburban, more stereotyped in its dull, weary, mechanical routine every day; as one of your teachers has it, "the higher classes hopelessly materialised, the middle-classes hopelessly vulgarised, the lower classes hopelessly brutalised," the insatiable locust of industrialism devouring every green thing, men turned into machines for producing and selling with the most exhausting labour of body and mind all the cheap and worthless produce of modern life; a whole London directory full of us mainly toiling with infinite pains to solve the eternally barren problem of how we can most easily live *upon* each other, instead of asking ourselves the fruitful question of how we can most effectually live *for* each other. Just think of what the type of English life threatens to become, and then think of the despair of the playwright who approaches it with Ruskin's words in his mind, "The highest thing that art can do, is to set before you the true image of the presence of a noble human being. It has never done more than this and it ought not to do less."

Those of us who have been at the Health Exhibition this summer may have watched the open admiration of the visitors for the representation of the street of Old London.

Dismal dwellers in suburban regions were open-mouthed in their loud praise of the beauty of a street picture that was once as common in England as gas-works and telegraph-posts are to-day—Good folks, with all our vain bluster of money-making this last fifty years, this England of ours is rapidly becoming a very intolerable dwelling-place, except for the lucky few of us. Imagine in two centuries' time a representation of an average modern English street of to-day and ask whether it could ever awaken a moment's interest or admiration in any living breast. Unless indeed by virtue of the glorious gospel of free trade, free and glorious permission to speculative builders to ravage and desecrate England, we shall by that time have reached such a refinement of ugliness and impotence in architecture, that even our Dalston of to-day shall by comparison shine divinely beautiful, and our Wandsworth shall shed its parting benediction of hoary loveliness upon a degenerate twenty-first century.

The test of any social state is not its power to shelter and teem with hopeless, sickly, impoverished, degraded millions, but its power to produce, in however restricted quantities, average happy, healthy individuals; not its power to compel hecatombs of human organisms into dull blind uniformity of ceaseless toil, but its power to allow free men free development of character and choice of healthy labour. What can be more striking than the difference between the average Englishman of two generations ago as any country-bred middle-aged man can recall him from memories of childhood, and the probable average Englishman of two generations to come, the typical Englishman we are menaced with, when railways and steam tramcars shall have done their perfect work, and having provided us with means of going everywhere at a moment's notice shall have left us no longer any place worth going to or stopping at?

But perhaps it is more saddening to look upon the pleasures of the multitude than upon their toils. On a recent first Monday in August I had the double misfortune

of being out-of-doors on a Bank Holiday, and at a railway terminus in the East of London. Crowds and crowds of white unwholesome faces, pinched, anxious, haggard, keen with discontent, or jaundiced and petrified with melancholy, by reason of a ceaseless hand-to-hand fight with starvation; plenty of coarse witless jesting but little real mirth; not one thoroughly merry and healthy English face did I see out of all those myriads. I saw no real happiness but only fierce anxiety, flurry, restlessness, scrambling and crowding into third class carriages to be whirled away for a few miles for a few hours from deadening barren toil to deadening barren pleasure—will any one say that these men's grandfathers on such an August day fifty years ago at work in some late hay or early harvest field were not happier and healthier and every way in a more enviable condition than their descendants taking their pleasure on this Bank Holiday? Was not the work-a-day life of those days better than the holiday life of these?

Are not the types of peasantry that Burns and Wordsworth drew more noble, more manly, more healthy than the type of working man our modern civilisation has created? And yet we go about to make the village life of England impossible, and still we glorify the agencies that are turning England into one dull stifling town, with all the houses alike dreary and ugly, and all the lives that are lived in them alike weary, flat, stale and unprofitable.

Forty thousand John Brights preaching till they are black in the face the divine gospel of free trade in useless unhealthy labour, shall never persuade me that we are journeying towards the millennium on our present track.

How can it be so when each year sees more and more of the country spoiled and devoured and rendered unfit to support free and natural human existence?

The gauge of the value of any human life or any group of lives, is its capacity for heroic art-treatment. How spontaneously the Elizabethan drama rose from the national life of

England in the sixteenth century—how spontaneously the brilliant and corrupt comedy of the Restoration rose from the brilliant and corrupt Court of Charles II. It is always to be remembered that Shakespeare interpreted ancient heroic life through modern heroic life—he painted Greek and Roman heroes so well because he had English heroes ready to his hand.

There is no possible way of weaving great and noble modern plays unless the playwright be supplied with the raw material of great and noble modern lives. While the bulk of English lives are petty and suburban, so too, must remain the bulk of English modern plays.

Where is the playwright to find his models?

Is he to eschew modern life and evolve some poetic world and fit it out with unnatural beings from his own imagination?

That doubtless is a temporary way out of the difficulty and an age sick of itself, an age grown weary of itself, will fly as readily for relief to unreality on the one hand as it will to sensation on the other. But there will never be any final resting-place for us in unreality whatever glamour we may throw around it. Virtually the only scene and time for any really living drama for us is England and the nineteenth century—

> Not in Utopia—subterraneous fields,
> Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where,
> But in the very world, which is the world
> Of all of us—the place where in the end
> We find our happiness, or not at all!

Yes, and where we find our dramas, or not at all! And there will never be much poetry in our dramas till we put a little more into our lives.

After all, perhaps the worst and most fruitless way a workman can spend his time is in grumbling at his tools, and here is one playwright who has been finding fault with the conditions of his art, instead of resolutely setting himself to discover amidst all that is unlovely and dull and mechanical in modern society, that secret aspect of poetry and beauty and

faith which, somewhere or the other, every human life that is lived unfolds to the careful searcher—that touching of all our later days, close-pent in the aimless warfare of city life, with pencillings of the divine light that shone about us in our infancy when "trailing clouds of glory" we came hitherward "from God who is our home."

HENRY A. JONES.

Russia's Last Martyrs.

THE political trial of September 27th and 28th continues to excite public attention in Russia. The mystery which shrouds its incidents and the cold-blooded cruelty with which it was conducted reminds a modern European reader of the stories of the torture chamber of the Inquisition.

The court-martial was held with closed doors. Even now nothing is known of the proceedings or the sentence. There was not the slightest guarantee for an impartial enquiry or a fair hearing. Some telegrams announced that all eight prisoners were sentenced to death; others, that all but the two military officers were reserved for the lingering tortures of the mines or central prisons. To-day we hear that Baron Stromberg alone escaped the capital sentence; to-morrow that all, save him, were acquitted. We in Europe have received from our friends the terms of the indictment, but are left in absolute uncertainty of all beyond that. We may hope that the Neapolitan practice of suffocating women has not been revived in Russia, but the government of that country evidently thinks the fate of the political prisoners a matter on which public opinion in Western Europe and in Russia itself has no right to enquire. Alexander II. showed the like contempt when he kept Hessy Helfman, during several months of her pregnancy, under sentence of death. But whatever may be the final decision of the present Czar, the greatest extension of his clemency would but slightly alter the fate of the condemned. It is only a question of the

form of death—whether by the gallows, or by imprisonment in the fortress of Shlisselburg or the Central Prison.

We shall neither see nor hear of them again. To us they are as the dead, and when we think of our friends, their names call up before us only the pale shadows of martyrs, and among them stand the stately figures of Vera Figner and Ludmila Volkenstein. Would that we knew they were dead! Better that they should have dashed their brains out against the walls of their casemates than have suffered outrage from a warder as did Ludmila Terentieva.

Vera Nicholaevna Figner came of an old and noble family, being a grand daughter of that Figner, who distinguished himself by many deeds of heroism during the war of 1812 against Napoleon I. She was born in the Kasane province, and spent her girlhood with her parents there. After receiving a liberal edncation in the Institute she was married, while yet in her teens, to a young lawyer. Her opinions differed greatly from those of her husband, from whom she separated. This separation was legalised in after years, but to her it was always a painful subject to which she never referred.

Her family was distinguished for unusual beauty, and Vera and her eldest sister Lidia excited great admiration in the proudest circles of Kasane society. Her personal charms, her brilliant accomplishments, her sweet and cheerful temperament, seemed to have destined her to play the part of one of the careless queens of Russian society; but Vera early showed signs of devotion to nobler things. At this time the Government had already entered on the path of reaction, and was relentlessly punishing every suggestion of liberal thought and political honesty. All attempts at reform were abandoned. Bribery and corruption controlled at Court and in every department. The zemstvos became the idle playthings of the governors. Every day the long roll of exiles was added to. All protests, even when urged by the nobility, fell on deaf ears.

The general discontent, though powerless to check despotism, was bitter enough to fire thousands of young enthusiasts with the idea of appealing to the people themselves to wake from their apathy and save their unhappy country. Despotism had itself to thank for the impulse this movement received from the Socialist agitation in other countries. Its restrictions on advanced education within the Russian frontier compelled the young of all classes to seek enlightenment in the Universities of Western Europe. There they came under the influence of customs and modes of thought in glaring contrast with the backward and degraded state of their own country. Thus was prepared the remarkable movement "among the people."

In 1872 Vera Nicholaevna went with her eldest sister to Zurich to study medicine. At this time her political views were not formed, and she did not belong to the well-known Zurich society of young women—Bardina, Lubatovich, and others—whose sad lot was shared by her elder sister, when the Political Trial of the Fifty at Moscow in 1877, at one blow ended the activity of all those heroines. But she took part in the eager discussions on the situation in Russia which was then the one topic of interest to the Russian colony in Zurich.

Meanwhile the prisons were being filled with thousands of young propagandists. In five years the Government instituted seventeen political trials. Besides the Fortress and other dungeons, 300 cells in the House of Detention in St. Petersburg were constantly filled with political prisoners, fresh victims being always at hand to fill the vacancies caused by death or exile. Many suffered all the rigours of imprisonment for three or four years while awaiting trial. Numbers succumbed to their hardships and the agony of suspense.

Such infamies could not occur without exciting public sympathy for the victims, and Vera's first action in the Cause on her return to Russia was the formation of a society to

ameliorate the lot of the prisoners. This was no easy task, for owing to the miserable prison fare, several thousands of the suspects required constant supplies of food and clothing, and towards the annual cost (20,000 roubles), no public collections could be made, nor would the regulations allow aid to be given save by the nearest relatives. Thus, even when money was obtained, a thousand forms of official obstruction had to be overcome before the prisoners could be reached. Over these difficulties Vera Nicholaevna's personal qualities enabled her to triumph. To the most cruel warders she appeared as an avenging angel, the personification of their conscience, before whose demands and reproaches the prison bolts flew back. To the prisoners themselves she came as a messenger of mercy and hope, whose tender care and cheerful smile were the sole links that connected them with the joyous life of freedom they had lost for ever. She passed several years in these labours of love, collecting funds, visiting the dungeons, getting permission for the dying to spend their last hours outside the prison walls, and procuring money for those who were banished to Siberia.

The memory of these harrowing scenes and the close contact with official barbarity could not but have an effect on her noble character. Indeed the policy of the Government and the deepening distress throughout Russia were enough to have fired a less generous nature with enthusiasm for the cause of liberty. To that cause Vera devoted herself heart and soul, when in 1877 her sister was banished to Siberia. With a band of friends she went "among the people" in the provinces of Simbrisk and Saratoff. At this time the Russian revolutionary party made a last attempt to organise a national democratic party, strong enough to force from the Government the changes stubbornly denied to the general but unorganised discontent. The group with which Vera threw in her lot was but one of many formed with the same object—to live among the peasantry as doctor's assistants, school teachers, or village clerks, to gain their confidence,

and give voice to their despair. To this end she passed the necessary examinations and took the situation of a doctor's assistant.

At first all went well. The revolutionists were welcomed by the peasants, and hopes of a general rising were entertained. But despotism dared not risk the formation of such a party. The bitterest persecution soon proved the impossibility of a peaceful political struggle, and the Party of Progress took up the gauntlet thrown down by the Government. War to the death against this crushing despotism, became the duty of every honest Russian.

Vera Figner played the part of peace-maker at the Revolutionary Congress at Varonege, where the difference between the older and more moderate party, and those who accepted the new situation, became apparent; but when absolute unity of action became impossible she joined the party of "Narodnaia Volia." The first action of its Executive Committee was to pass sentence of death on Alexander II., for the revolting crimes he had sanctioned. In April 1879 had commenced the judicial murder of guilty and innocent alike, which in less than five months carried off Dubrovin, Ossinsky, Brantner, Sviridenko, Solovieff, Bilchovsky, Gorsky, Fedaroff, Chubaroff, Lisogub, Davidenko, Wittenberg and Logovsky. Some of these—Lisogub, for instance—were only guilty of subscribing money to carry on a peaceful Socialist propaganda. It was to punish such crimes as these murders that it was decided after 19th November, 1879, to execute the sentence of death on the Czar. Regicide was never a principle of the party, but an incident in their warfare—of which the object was the abolition of despotic government, and the convocation of the "Semsky Sobar," elected by universal suffrage, to draw up a constitution.

Vera Figner devoted herself to the cause she had taken up. In every part of Russia—from St. Petersburg to Charkov, from Odessa to the Caucasus—were seen the results of her propagandist work. But her chief success was amongst the

imperial army, and this was the real reason why she was sentenced to death. She was charged with taking part in different attempts on the life of Alexander II., of taking dynamite to Odessa for one of these attempts, and of living in a house in St. Petersburg where the manufacture of bombs was carried on. But Frolenko, Lebedeva, and Isaeff, who were actually engaged in these attempts, were only sentenced to hard labour for life—not to the gallows. Vera, who was only implicated in these offences, was condemned to death for the same reasons as the military officers sentenced at the same trial. Conspiracies are spreading fast in the army, and the Czar, who depends on his bayonets alone for defence against the discontent of his people, is palsied with terror at the thought that these very bayonets are to be turned against him. Tyrants are most cruel when their fear is excited. Revolutionary ideas in the army must be mercilessly stamped out. And no one, except perhaps Jeliaboff, had done more to spread such ideas amongst the troops than this gentle and winning girl.

The very work which ensured her this savage sentence is her best claim to the gratitude of the Russian people. Her burning words could rouse the man and citizen in the soldier. The conspiracy in the army attributed to Sukhanoff, was in great part organised by her; and more than once it furnished a military escort to protect her from the police.

The open, trusting nature which was her honour as a woman and her only weakness as a conspirator, led her to confide in Degaieff, whose first victim she was when that villain entered into relations with Colonel Sudeikin. From the moment of her arrest she knew her fate was sealed, but her gaolers and the Procurer himself bore witness to the unchanged sweetness and strength of her character even in face of death. To them she appeared the personification of the Revolution, whose every word was a prophecy of the downfall of the system their cruelties supported. No properly constituted court could have condemned such a woman. But in Russia

justice means only the confirmation of the will of the Czar or of the officials whose dupe he is.

Ludmila Volkenstein was sentenced to death by the same court—fitting instrument of the son of Alexander II., who hanged the boy Rosovsky for merely posting revolutionary placards in the street. This noble woman was as pure as her sister-martyr, and she also had sacrificed wealth and social position for her opinions. She took part in the anti-despotic propaganda of 1877, and in the following year gave shelter to Goldenberg, who had executed Prince Kropotkin, governor of Charkov and therefore responsible for the horrible condition of the Central Prison. This generous deed compelled her to leave Russia, and she remained abroad for five years. In 1883 she decided to return and join the "Narodnaia Volia," and came to St. Petersburg with a false passport. This she confessed at the trial, she had felt it her duty to do. But this was her only offence. For this she was sentenced to death.

The Russian governing classes are insensible to the feelings which made the hangman, Troloff, refuse to execute Sophia Perovskaia.

Let us see who were the military officers condemned at the same trial. The youngest—Tikhanoff—received a clasp and brevet promotion for personal gallantry in the Russo-Turkish war. I will give the record of service of two others.

"MICHAEL TURIEVITCH ASHENBRENNER.—Entered the Imperial service January 18th, 1860, on passing educational course at the Military College, Moscow; promoted for gallantry in action, May 8th, 1866; decorated with 4th class of order of St. Ann, with inscription "for bravery" in the assault on the fortress of Khadjent on May 24th, 1867; order of St. Stanislaus, 3rd degree, July 9th, 1867; promoted to Major and order of St. Ann, 3rd degree, for gallantry in action, July 7th, 1869; order of St. Stanislaus, 2nd degree, with swords, for exceptional bravery in the storming of Samarcand; order of St. Ann, 2nd degree, July 23rd, 1876,

for exceptional and zealous service; medal for the war of 1877-1878."

"NICHOLAS DANILOVITCH PAKHITONOFF.—Passed with distinction into Imperial service on August 9th, 1876, from the Vladimir Military College, Kieff and Michael Artillery Academy; second captain, August 27th, 1881; order of St. Ann, 4th degree, "for bravery" at the storming of Nichopol; order of St. Stanislaus, 3rd degree, with sword and bow, on October 26th, 1877, for distinction in battles of July 7th. 8th, 9th, before Plevna; March 22nd, 1878, order of St. Ann, 3rd degree, for battle of Plevna; April 17th, 1878, order of St. Stanislaus, 2nd degree, with swords and bow, for storm of Plevna; October 6th, 1879, order St. Vladimir, 4th degree, with swords and bow, for passage of Balkans and engagements with Turks; medal for war of 1877-1878; Iron Cross of Roumania; selected for distinction in final examination at Artillery Academy."

All these officers belong to a new school of Russian revolutionaries. When the hopeless experiment of peaceful agitation was being tried, Ashenbrenner was fighting in Tashkend, Pakhitonoff in Bulgaria, and Baron Stromberg was serving on one of the rotten hulks which compose the Russian Pacific Squadron. They took no active part in the revolutionary movement until all honest and intelligent Russians had been forced to agree that the only real use of the sword was to strike down capricious depotism. Then only began the military conspiracy, participation in which was the crime which cost these six officers their lives. They were charged with belonging to a society, affiliated to the "Narodnaia Volia," consisting of a centre and local groups, established to organise an armed rising to substitute a constitutional assembly for the present Government. On this charge they were condemned, though Tuvacheff had resigned his connection with the society, and Tikhanovitch's only offences were conniving at the escape of a political prisoner and rejoicing at the death of Alexander II.

The authorities have long striven to suppress the fact that the military and naval forces are honeycombed by revolutionary societies. The execution of the naval officer Sukhanoff was the first result of their panic. Now the Government, forced to acknowledge its danger, attempts to terrorize the army, its only bulwark against general revolt. Every such attempt but makes it more evident that the system which exists only through these means is hastening its own downfall.

LEO TICHOMIROFF.

The Elections in Germany.

IN Germany the elections to the Reichstag take place every third year. They were held this year between the 28th October and the 15th November. On the first day of the General Election only 299 out of 397 contests were decided. In the remaining 98 constituencies it was necessary to hold another ballot before the 15th November. For the benefit of English readers I may explain that the number of constituencies (397) does not at all correspond to the original division into electoral districts. The electoral law allows one member to each 100,000 inhabitants. This proportion has long ceased to exist. In most constituencies, especially in the large towns where population has largely increased, each member represents more than 100,000 inhabitants. For instance, Berlin, according to its present population, should have twelve members instead of the six it actually has. Other large towns are similarly situated. Several motions for redistribution of seats and an increase of their number have been brought forward by the Social-Democrats, but have been negatived by the reactionary majority as inopportune. The determination of the Government to maintain the existing disproportion is proved by the fact that the Chamber in the Assembly Hall now in course of erection is planned for 397 seats only. Some think this may indicate an attempt by the Government to restrict the suffrage. In Government circles the subject has been mooted, and Herr von Puttkammer (the Prussian Home Secretary) in the Lower House of the Diet recently made a violent attack on the system of universal,

equal and direct suffrage, and contended with great emphasis that this institution had not proved "successful," and it is true the Government has not yet been able to obtain a working majority of Conservatives alone. After their previous failures, will they consider the result of the present election more "successful?"

That result is on the whole a considerable change in the relative strength of parties. The Progressists (Radicals) have been driven back all along the line, and the advance of the Conservatives is amply compensated by the success of the Social-Democrats, which is acknowledged on all hands to be the significant fact in the elections.

Since 1878 the Social-Democrats in Germany have been harassed by an infamous Coercion Act. Berlin, Hamburg-Altona, Leipzig, have been under a minor state of siege, and the police have expelled many hundreds of our party from these districts. In most constituencies our meetings have been proclaimed and our handbills seized under the powers given by this act to the police who have triumphantly posed on the guardians of public order. Meanwhile the opponents of Social-Democracy have been free to valiantly slander their gagged antagonists and to dose the electorate with their doctrines under official and influential patronage—with this result. Three years ago no Social-Democrat polled an absolute majority at the first ballot, the whole twelve took their seats after a second ballot. This year on the 28th October the first ballot secured nine Socialists their seats. In the districts under a minor state of siege there were elected in Berlin (IV.) Singer, in Hamburg (I.) Bebel, in in Hamburg (II.) Dietz, in Altona Frohme, in Leipzig (rural district) Viereck; in other districts—in Chemnitz, Geiser; in Zwickau, Stoller, in Glauchau, Auer, in Greiz, Blos. Further there were twenty-four candidates for second ballots. Success was gained by Hasenclever in Breslau (I.), Kräcker in Breslau (II.), Schumacher in Sollingen, Liebknecht in Offenbach, Harms in Elberfeld, Sabor in Frankfort, Grillenberger,

in Nuremberg, Heine in Magdeburg, Hasenclever in Berlin (VII.), Vollmar in Munich (II.), Meister in Hanover, Bock in Gotha, Rödiger in Gera. In a number of other elections Socialist candidates were defeated by very small majorities, for instance, Frohme in Hanau, Vollmar in Mayence, Hainzel in Hamburg (III.), &c., &c. This was only effected by a co-alition of Conservatives, National Liberals, Progressists, and even Middle Class Democrats. Thus the Social Democrats will be represented by 22 members in the new Reichstag, a result which our party has every reason to be proud of, the more so as most of these victories have been won in large towns—the centres of political and economical activity. The following is the official summary of the vote cast for the Social Democratic party in the various states.

	1881.	1884.	Increase.
Prussia	132,000	253,000	121,000
Bavaria	21,800	36,500	14,700
Saxony	88,000	120,000	32,000
Wurtemburg	6,000	10,000	4,000
Baden	4,700	10,000	5,300
Hesse	13,800	20,000	6,200
Elsass-Lothringen	600	3,000	2,400
Mecklenberg	1,000	2,300	1,300
Brunswick	6,000	7,700	1,700
Hamburg	23,000	37,300	14,300
Lubeck	900	2,600	1,700
Bremen	4,600	4,800	200
Small Principalities	9,600	42,800	33,200
Total	312,000	550,000	238,000

These figures give a summary of the results. The increase in the last three years in the number of votes cast for us amounts then to more than 75 per cent. If this rate of increase were to be maintained, within 15 years the Social Democrats would be in an overwhelming majority in

Germany. We may expect however that the rate of increase will accelerate.

I have already hinted at the calumnies directed against Social Democracy. In this form of electioneering the National Liberals excelled all others. In many constituencies, especially in Middle and South Germany, manifestoes were issued by these mud-slinging patriots. It is well to give specimens of their style to our party in other countries. In one with the two-edged title "Masks off!", National Liberal fanaticism revels in stringing together passages of the *Sozial Demokrat* torn from their context, with scraps of Most's *Freiheit* and the Social Democrats are described as a band of criminals and murderers whose sole object is to "remove" all their opponents, and Social Democracy as a ravenous wolf "crouching for a spring on State, Civil Society, Church, and Religion," against which the only safe-guard is the election of National Liberals. Another passage runs:—

"Our Fatherland has been cemented by the blood of its sons. With those scenes in our memory, it is our solemn duty to maintain the inestimable blessings they won for us. There is amongst us a much more dangerous internal enemy, undermining all that is holy, degrading all that is beautiful, embracing all that is vile. The names of the murderers Hödel, Nobiling, Stellmacher, Kammerer, Schenk and Schlossareck, are blazoned on the flag of Social Democrats, who are not ashamed of owning publicly that their way leads through blood and carnage. The atrocities of Schenk who murdered many harmless people are vaunted by them as glorious exploits . . . We also shall fall as victims to the bloodthirstiness of these wretches if we do not close our ranks, to crush them out by united and energetic action. The beneficial results of the Sick Funds Act, the Insurance against Accidents, and for Provision in old age are ridiculed. They intend to prevent the working classes bettering their position in a peaceful way, in order to lead them through bloodshed and riot, to the revolution where you, farmer, you,

tradesman, now the tool of these scoundrels, will be their victim."

One might be tempted to look only at the comical side of these furious disquisitions. But that would be a mistake. *There is method in this madness!* It was not without purpose that the National Liberals threw their stink-pot among the people the very day before the Second Ballots, at a time when a reply was not possible. In spite of all his madness the pamphleteer is clever enough to speculate on the effect which his effusion would have on the great number of people incapable of reasoning and ignorant of the real state of things.

With such dirty and foul means the National Liberals have fought, and Conservatives and Catholics did not act very much better, and in consequence have been condemned by all sensible and decent men.

It is interesting and instructive as well to observe the difference of opinion existing in the different camps as to the successes obtained by the Socialists. The Progressists say, "That is the reply to the Anti-Socialist Act." An out-and-out Progressist, Deputy Barth, writes in his journal, *The Nation*, as follows:—"A serious defeat of the upholders of the principle of the existing order of society—that is the result of the elections. We Liberals have lost the battle; the policy of Socialist promises has been victorious. It did not require much acuteness to discern the immense difficulties of our political position, wedged in between the masses discontented with their economical position, and a government which recognises as justified the 'kernel' of this discontent, and which continually accuses previous legislation, in fact their predecessors in office, of having neglected their duties towards the discontented. State Socialism has given to Social-Democracy that which in all times has given the greatest impetus to revolutionary movements—the acknowledgment of the essential justice of the movement. That the power of the state was at the same directed against the ugly shell, enclos-

ing the justifiable 'kernel' of Social-Democratic teachings, has only contributed to foment in the movement the sense of social injustice. The policy of the Chancellor may now show how far he is able to fulfil the hopes he has raised. That the performances will fall immensely short of the expectations of the masses infected with Socialism, and that they will be exploited by the Social-Democratic leaders with increasing success as small instalments of the Socialist demands, and also as concessions to the Social-Democratic teachings, I do not doubt in the least. Finally, however, even the most reckless statesman will have to put a stop to his concessions to Socialism, and then we shall see whether the structure of the State is strong enough to withstand the disappointment of the greed that has been roused. Every step forward on Socialist path makes a halt more difficult."

This opinion is in some points correct. The Imperial Government will not be able to shelve the question of social reform; Social Democracy will be led by the logic of events, and will force the State to grant larger and larger concessions.

Somewhat amusing are the effusions of the Catholic *Cologne People's Gazette*. It states with great satisfaction, that with the single* exception of Mayence all the constituencies seriously contested by the Social-Democrats were *Protestant districts*; against the Social-Democratic storm-tide directed against the constitutional parties of all shades, the ultramontane party with the Catholic workmen has stood like "a rock in the sea." After that the pious print puts forward this nonsense:

"Bebel's new gospel of a life with little work and much pleasure, in contrast to the biblical, 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread' sounds certainly tempting enough to the ears of poor Catholic workmen; but the great majority of them have common sense enough to see that the dreams of the future Social-Democratic State are bubbles, and

* There were other exceptions, for instance, Munich. [Translator's note.]

that an attempt to realise them could only be made by a physical force revolution, and they have religious faith and Christian morality enough to turn away with disgust from the godlessness of Social-Democracy. But let the progress which Social-Democracy has made of late, even in the Catholic districts, be a solemn warning to all whom it may concern, clergy and laity, to carefully nurse and foster the good spirit which still exists in a great part of the Catholic working-class! Let them care for the spiritual and material well-being of the workmen and their families, very often in very needy circumstances, with zeal and self-sacrifice, and especially let them oppose to the so-called Socialist propaganda, the Christian-Socialist Workmen's Associations."

The praise given to the "Catholic workmen" must have a tragi-comical effect on those acquainted with the state of affairs. If the Catholic workmen goes with the priestly party, he does so simply because the miserable priestly education has never allowed any spark of intelligence to develope within him; he follows blindfold the commands of the "black constabulary," and this obedience of stupidity and ignorance these pious gentlemen call "horror of the godlessness of Social Democracy."

Another humourous folly is put forward by the strictly 'laissez-faire' *Weserzeitung* published in Bremen, in charging to the Imperial social policy the blame for the whole misfortune of the Social-Democratic successes. This organ of the Bremen plutocrats writes:—"The responsibility for the results of the elections rests solely with the representatives of the 'Social policy.' The gravest warnings have been left unheeded. The adherents of the Social policy in the press and on the platform have sown discontent with the existing economical institutions, they have been preaching that with free competition only a few could obtain and enjoy the happy results of civilisation, that the State had hitherto never fulfilled its duty of protecting the feeble, that henceforth the fulfilment of this duty ought to be demanded. Not in vain

have the destitute masses, who make up four-fifths of the nation, been taught that only the self-seeking Liberals opposed the demands for security of existence against the economical disadvantages of accidents, old age, illness and want of employment. Not in vain has it been preached at all street-corners that the system of self-help was the war of all against all, in which 'the drones flourish at the expense of the working bees,' and in which the old workmen perish by the wayside. The seed has taken root. The masses are joining hands and organising themselves, without committing the blunder of foolish pronunciamentos, to lift from its hinges the whole old order of things."

Thus the Bremen paper. It is true all that has not been preached to "no purpose," but certainly not without cause. Social-Democrats may proudly claim that it was they who in alliance with facts forced Government and the ruling classes in Germany to acknowledge the necessity of Social reforms. Things have come about as Social-Democrats have predicted, their principles and demands are more and more justified as the facts are better understood. Thus, and by no other means, it is possible to understand why Social-Democracy is indestructible, why no Coercion Act could check its rising tide. The Social policy of the Government is very innocent of the electoral successes of Social-Democracy; in Germany the mass of the population knows very well what the Social-Democrats think of this kind of social reforms. The last Congress of the German Social-Democrats held in 1883 in Copenhagen has defined openly its position with regard to the social reform of the Imperial Government, and has declared that the so-called "Social Reform" *was only a means to lead the workingmen off the right path.* We may safely say that the success of the Social-Democrats means a defeat of the *laissez faire*-party as well as a defeat of the Imperial Government. The 550,000 votes cast on the 28th October for the Social-Democrats, and cast by the intelligent working class of the

large towns and industrial centres, are a protest against the one as well as against the other.

The most prominent paper of the National-Liberals, the *Cologne Gazette*, consoles its readers in very original style trying to minimize the "undisputable successes" of the Social-Democrats. The same paper which a day before the elections was calling upon the Government to apply the Anti-Socialist Law with the greatest rigour, now comes out as follows. "The one feature, which is comforting and, in a certain sense, even satisfactory in the increase of socialist votes and seats held by Social-Democrats is that unmistakeably the idea has found favour with the Social-Democrats that they must be national before everything else, that they can secure welfare and happiness only by co-operating in positive legislation with the efforts of the Government and of the national parties. We do not hesitate to say that we think twenty Social-Democrats in the Reichstag in a certain sense a lesser evil, if an evil at all, than five. As they are brought to co-operate with others, and, on the ground of the great number of voters they represent, can claim a serious consideration of the conditions to which they owe their election, the violent struggling against the powers that be will cease; and its place will be taken by a recognition of the necessity of obtaining positive reforms by the aid of these powers. And we are glad to see that the Socialist party almost everywhere recognises that the National Liberals are much nearer to them, than the Progressists. By declaring their readiness for Social Reform the National Liberals have recognised that the Socialist movement is justified in so far it goes for reform, not revolution; whereas the Progressists might perhaps be willing to abolish the Anti-Socialist Act to spite the Government, but would oppose not only the revolutionary tendencies, but also the positive and rightful claims, of Social-Democracy, allowing the police-cutlass and the struggle for existence, the natural law of the extinction, of

the weakest, to settle these questions. The idea is perfectly right, and the more thoughtful Social-Democrats see it, that their better friends in Parliament do not sit on the Radical benches next to them, but further on to the right, where social reforms are favourably regarded."

All the German papers which are not National Liberal ridicule this sermon, which apparently had no other purpose but to get the Social-Democratic voters of Cologne to vote for the National-Liberal candidate. Miracles would have to happen before the Social-Democratic members would look to the "right" side of the house for friends. They know no friendship but with their own cause.

I hope to give further information in a second article, as to the impression made by the Social-Democratic victories, the constitution of the new Reichstag, and the general parliamentary outlook.

KARL FROHME.

Reviews.

AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE. A proposal by Malthus Questell Holyoake, of the Inland Revenue Department. London: Crown Publishing Company, 267, Strand, W.C.

From time to time the author of this pamphlet comes before the public with a proposal for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, or revenue from stamps on theatre tickets or something equally ingenious—and useful. So long as public opinion is not against the wickedness of wasting human labour, there will not be much objection made to the publication of his views. But he is taxing forbearance rather far when he sends his brilliant suggestions to all the notable men in England, with a request for the expression of their opinions. About half this pamphlet consists of reprints of the opinions of great men on Mr. Holyoake's previous suggestions. Those who have read them say with remarkable unanimity that they don't think much of them, while a large proportion hope to have the pleasure of reading our author's lucubrations at their earliest leisure. Thus Mr. Holyoake would seem to be public spirited to a fault, and to have no objection to scornful criticism, so long as his projects are noticed. He is immensely gratified by Mr. John Bright's mild hope that "the coming years may do something" in the direction of overcoming the difficulty which Mr. Holyoake evidently sincerely believes arose during the building of the tower of Babel. We would suggest to Mr. Holyoake the advisability of studying the universal language invented by Sir Thomas Urquhart, the translator of Rabelais. That will keep him employed for some time, and meanwhile the growth of the English-speaking populations of America and the Colonies, and the prosecution of a few more wars by England against uncivilised peoples may do more in the direction of his suggestion than even Mr. John Bright dares to hope.

THE DILEMMAS OF LABOUR AND EDUCATION. By Akin Károly. London: W. Swan Sonnenschein, & Co., Paternoster Square.

This is a collection of five essays; and the first, entitled "The Dilemma of Labour," is considerably the most important of the five. The writer quotes in his preface M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu's foolish contention that fortunes and incomes go on gradually equalising themselves, and claims on the contrary to prove by virtue of a law as unassailable as any axiom in mathematics that the chasm between rich and poor is for ever widening. By a complicated process of reasoning in which M. Károly displays great acumen and ingenuity, though we shall presently criticise some of its details, he leads up to the question as to what is the retribution of the toil of the poor, or to what extent does their poverty participate, if not in accumulated wealth, at least in the fresh annual produce of labour.

"To this question," he declares, "we are able to give a peremptory and categorical answer, by means of a law which we have been so fortunate as to discover, and which, in regard to its character and importance, we venture to compare—we hope without presumption—with the law of gravitation."

To this comparison, and to the author's very high estimate of the character and importance of his newly discovered law, we venture—we hope without presumption—to demur. For it is, as M. Károly himself observes, an axiomatic law, which simply means that it partakes largely of the nature of a truism. Now the law of gravitation is by no means either an axiom or a truism, and though truisms and axioms have their own value, yet the highest praise that can properly be allotted to them is the acknowledgement that they are very convenient formulæ.

But we must present our readers with M. Károly's enunciation of the law itself. It is this—"the aggregate annual produce subdivides itself spontaneously between poor and rich in the same proportion as, in the average price of produce of all kinds, the item of wages holds to all the remaining items united;" and this law is, as he asserts, independent of all possible market fluctuations affecting prices or wages. The same, however, may be said of the more simple statement that the share of the poor in the produce of their toil is represented precisely by the wages which they receive; or in other words, a poor man gets his pay, and has to be content with it. But in the case of axioms of this kind the anxious enquirer may reasonably complain that "he gets no forrarder" until he has independently discovered the ratio between the amount of wages and the amount of the other items in the price of produce. That it is a convenient formula we willingly allow, especially as bringing into prominence the fact that with the invention and multiplication of machinery the relative amount of the wages item must necessarily fall, and with it the relative amount which the labourer can obtain in the division of the produce of his labour.

In the elucidation of this law M. Károly brings out with great clearness the fact that in the annual exchange between rich and poor of wages on the one hand, and payment for the necessaries of life on the other, the nett money gain is nil. But in estimating the actual gain of the rich he falls into an extraordinary mystification, and uses words which are altogether devoid of meaning. We will quote the passage to which we refer, in the last line of which we fail to find any point at all.

"The poor return to the rich in the purchase of goods the money they receive from the latter in the shape of wages; and at the end of the year they are no richer in money than they were at the beginning. The rich, on the other hand, who spend money in wages for the production of the goods they appropriate, receive back the identical sum on selling to the poor the goods these latter appropriate. Consequently the rich also, so far, are no gainers in money. But what the rich actually do gain is the value of the labour supplied to them by the poor; while the gains of the poor consist in the value of the produce supplied to them by the rich, after deducting the price of their own labour embodied in the same."

The last clause of the above sentence is unintelligible as it stands, since so far from deducting the price of their own labour embodied in the produce, the poor actually receive exactly this amount, that is, the equivalent in goods of the value of their wages.

The essay entitled "The Dilemma of Education" is devoted to the examination of the truth of which all Socialists are well aware, namely, that the Darwinian doctrine of the survival of the fittest, which is an inexorable law in the animal kingdom, becomes, as it were, turned completely inside out when we reach the domain of the intellectual. M. Károly apparently imagines that this truth is a new discovery of his own, and

after an accumulation of proofs that the most intellectual are not the most prolific, he springs it upon his readers as a startling effect at the end of his essay in these words:—"On the whole, and summing up the main scientific upshot of our discussion, we venture upon an assertion which will disagreeably surprise:—If, in the struggle for existence, the individuals most apt to live overcome the rest—which in fact is a mere truism—and thus continue their breed: as regards mankind, the fittest to live are generally the most unworthy of existence." This, though it has all the air of a startling paradox, is, of course, a commonplace with Socialists, and has long furnished them with a complete answer to those shallow sciolists of Darwinism who invoke the principle of the survival of the fittest as being in the long run a panacea for all human difficulties and woes. However, we are grateful to M. Károly for having worked his way independently to this truth, and placed it in a striking light in order to arrest the attention of the ignorant.

To the discussion of all his "dilemmas" Mr. Károly brings a fund of evidently original argument, and his little book is very well worth reading. We will conclude with an interesting quotation which deals with the somewhat hackneyed topic of luxury in a new light:—

"A vast literature has accumulated on the subject of luxury, but its whole philosophy lies in a nutshell. Were but strictly indispensable things produced, undoubtedly, and that notwithstanding the institution of property, no misery or want need exist in this world; nor would toil and overwork burden the greater portion of mankind. The quantity of plain, wholesome nutriment required for man's sustenance is very moderate; and from their perishable nature, most food-provisions are not liable to storage or accumulation through avarice or greed. The simple clothing requisite for man's protection in any climate, is likewise of small amount; and although most clothing material is or can be made durable, yet few would care to possess much wearing apparel if there were no ornament or variety about it. Again, the extent of space or house-room, with the quantity of furniture, useful for wholesome breathing and comfortable shelter, is equally limited; and simple furniture, like houses, requiring rarely to be renewed, and both being cumbrous, none would care to possess in that kind more than they could actually utilize. The natural wants of man being thus few and circumscribed, and the means for satisfying the same ample and abundant, even without the aid of modern machinery,—want and overwork, so far, need never have existed on earth.

"But as soon as Luxury steps in, the aspect of the whole world changes. To confine our view merely to the above-mentioned items—and luxury gives rise to countless artificial wants,—even the food that a luxurious person is wont to consume exceeds, if not in quantity, yet in variety, that of man in the state of nature; and being gathered and fetched from all parts of the earth, entails a vast amount of human labour. One luxurious dress that a lady will wear, sometimes for one evening only, may keep dozens of other women and men at work for weeks, or even for months; and there is virtually no limit, not even in the days of the year, to the number of such dresses that women will desire, and if they can will get to possess;—and a similar remark, in past periods, applied also to men, when they also indulged in finery. Of the number of palaces that a family will wish for, if only to visit once in their lifetime, neither is there any positive limit; while of the quantity of furniture that people now actually do store up, when ordinary houses and apartments are turned into show-rooms of knick-knacks and gew-gaws,—that their proprietor scarcely ever sets eyes upon, but which yet he will constantly go on adding to,—there is absolutely no end."