TO-DAY.

No. 35.—OCTOBER, 1886.

A Song.

All my life
Have I dreamed of you, my dear.
I was sure that you would come,
Thrill my nerves when you drew near,
Touch my heart and take it home—
All my life, my dear.

All my life
(Soul of mine) I sought you, dear;
Meet you, greet you, first to-day;
Has your heart no ears to hear?
Coldly turn your lips away?
Ah, farewell, my dear!

ADELINE SERGEANT.

"Blood."

ROLAND KER and I had been friends all our lives. We were together at the Shepherd's Bush Young Gentlemen's Preparatory School, together at Rossall, together at Guy's. It was no small grief to me when he started for Leipzig, while I was obliged to go the weary rounds of an assistant in a large and poor practice. At Leipzig he met an American doctor, who persuaded him to cross the herring-pond in search of money and experience, and so it was that we completely lost sight of each other, though we continued to correspond with regularity. Young men do not write each other detailed accounts of their smaller adventures, and I knew very little of my friend's life, save that he had been fairly successful and had married soon after he had reached the United States. This did not surprise me. Ker was always an inflammable young dog, just the man one would expect to see married in a hurry. But what did rather astonish me was that he should, on his marriage, have given up medicine, and have retired with his bride to a remote village "down East." Medicine and pleasure had been the twin deities of Ker's devotion, and in leaving the beaten tracks of life he necessarily gave up his chances of much practice of the one, or much pursuit of the other. I could only conclude that his love for his wife must be of a more lasting nature than his passions had usually been, and that he felt her society to be a compensation for all that he had foregone.

I had not seen Ker for seven years, when a certain uncle of mine died. He had made an immense fortune by a patent pill warranted to cure gout, and on the strength of this lived so well that in his fiftieth year he succumbed to an attack of that malady. I don't know if he ever tried his own patent; it is more than probable that he did not. I had always expressed the warmest belief in the pill, and had always returned him at least a tithe of his tips in cigar-cases, fusee

boxes, and the like, so he naturally looked upon me as a young man with sound ideas on the subject of expenditure, and left me a very comfortable little fortune—nothing Rothschildian certainly, but enough to free me from my bondage to Dr. Bolus, and to enable me to travel about and visit my friends and relations. This was not so great an advantage as it may appear, for my relations were few and uncongenial, and my only friend was in New Hampshire. Seven years' separation does a great deal in the way of cooling down friendship, especially between men, and perhaps Ker and I should never have met again, if the sweetest girl in the world had not been going to New York just about that time. Her name was, as well I can remember, Almira Finch. She had been at school in Canterbury for three years, and now her parents had come to take her home. Had this happened at any other time, it would have plunged me in despair, of course; but in my moneyed position a trip across the Atlantic was a trifle, and I took my passage to New York in the "Albatross."

I need not enlarge on the opportunities which the voyage offered to young lovers, especially as I did not avail myself of them as much as might have been expected. There was another man—but there, that's ancient history to me now. However, by the time we reached New York life had ceased to have any attractions for me. I bade a stern farewell to Almira and plunged into the wild dissipation of a journey to New Hampshire. I telegraphed to Ker and received an enthusiastic reply.

He met me at the station with a conveyance which he called a buggy. In spite of his beard, he seemed at first very little altered, but before I had been driving along beside him for five minutes I was conscious of a change in him, and that not merely the change which seven years might have been expected to produce. In the first excitement of our meeting he was the old merry "medical," who had boxed, played billiards, done anything and everything but read and attended classes, in our old days at Guy's. But as we went along, and our first incoherent greetings gave place to something like sustained conversation, I noticed in his face a worn, anxious look—and in his voice a tone of weariness and depression. I have observed this look and this tone in men who live from hand to mouth, and are wearing their lives out in a struggle against poverty. But this I knew was not his case. And I have noticed them in men who have made unhappy marriages.

"I hope my sudden arrival will not inconvenience Mrs. Ker," I said, and pricked my ears for his answer. There is a special tone which you can recognise—if you are sharp enough—which always accompanies, even in the most guarded natures, an allusion to the "unloved wife."

But it was not in this tone that he answered. On the contrary, there was a new tenderness and softness in his voice as he said:

"No, she doesn't care much about strangers, but you're not *that*. Whatever pleases me always pleases her too."

No, that was not the trouble.

"Have we much further to go?" I asked presently.

"Miles," he said. "Quite the other end of nowhere."

"What made you come here?" I asked. "Are you near your wife's friends?"

"No," he answered, whipping up his large-boned grey mare. "We're near no one, and we like it."

After that there was no more to be said on that point. We fell to talking of old times, and, under the influence of reminiscences, the cloud lifted more than once, and Roland seemed almost himself again.

"Do you remember all our absurd experiments in Torrington Square?" I asked presently. "I've often wondered if you kept them up. I soon left off those sort of games, and kept rigidly to the orthodox lines. But you really did do some rather big things in Germany, so I heard. Have you done much since?"

"Yes," he said, and there was a feverish uneasiness in his manner. "Oh, yes. I've done a good deal since I came to America. I've done enough to last me all my life. I do nothing but study now."

"Ah, I see," I said. I did see. I saw that somehow or other this love of experiments was connected with the change in my friend's manner. Perhaps he had murdered someone in the interests of science, and had a tenderer conscience than most experimentalists. The evening shadows were deepening; the wind was driving light patches of cloud across the face of the pale, just visible moon. The country was singularly uninteresting, and the road went up and down, up and down, over a succession of rolling hills, only one of which could be seen at a time. The farmhouses grew scarcer and scarcer, the woods less thick and less frequent. I was rather tired with my journey, and I was really, I think, half asleep, when Ker drew rein in front of his house. It was a very English-looking house—as far as I could see, for the trees that surrounded it were thick and many. It lay in a little hollow—caught, as it were, on the arm of a hill—and was built in the solid, lasting fashion of the early Georgian era. It had a wide, straight front, with a good many windows, through which tasteful draperies of muslin could be seen. The whole place looked comfortable, well-kept, and refined, but in spite of all it looked very lonely, and I couldn't help thinking I should not care to live there.

As an old serving-man took the reins I remarked on the

lonely situation of the house. "But I suppose you keep a revolver and half-a-dozen house-dogs," I added.

"I have a whole armoury of firearms," he answered, as he got out of the trap, "but no dogs. My wife doesn't like them; in fact, her dislike amounts to antipathy. She hates even to hear them mentioned. But come this way. Hiram will take your traps to your room."

The corridors through which we passed were softly carpeted, and throughout the house I noticed a luxury so studied and so at variance with Ker's former happy-go-lucky tastes and meagre exchequer that I at once laid the credit of it to Mrs. Ker's taste and Mrs. Ker's money. My room was comfortable and carefully arranged, and there were little touches about it which spoke of the hand of a cultivated woman. I made haste with my toilet, for I was quite anxious to make the acquaintance of Roland's wife. I felt a conviction that she would be charming. She was.

Roland Ker was waiting for me at the foot of the stairs, and led me into a large, low, somewhat old-fashioned drawing-room. A fire burned on the open hearth, though it was July, and on the soft fur hearthrug before it stood my hostess. She was not actually tall, but was lithe and slender, and had a suggestion about her of being much taller than she actually was. She had a grace of movement which few women have, and which modern poets describe as "panther-like." She had eyes which the same school would term "unfathomable"—beautiful changing eyes—the "greenest of things blue—the bluest of things grey." She wore a dress of some white clinging woollen material, trimmed with soft white fur, and setting off to advantage the perfect curves of her figure. Her hair was of the rarely seen colour which we call *blond cendré*. She was nervous, as I judged from the little start she gave as we entered the room. A shy look came into her eyes, but passed almost at once as she came forward, and, without waiting for an introduction, held out two deliciously soft white hands, and said in a very low and sweet voice—

"You are Ernest Wicksteed. Of course I have heard all about you. I hope you will stay a long time and be happy with us."

She spoke in a curiously childish, hesitating way, with an air of having learned her little speech by heart. But I found that this was her habitual manner.

The dinner was very good. Among the courses were several kinds of fish prepared with great skill. I concluded that the Kers paid some attention to their table, as in that out-of-the-way place fish must have been difficult to get. The wine was good, but Mrs. Ker drank only milk.

"Wine is not good for her," said Ker, when I offered her Burgundy, and I fancied his tone had some hidden meaning.

Good heavens! Was it possible that wine had any temptations for this lovely creature? I could not think it. And yet that would certainly account for Roland's harassed and worried look, and for his choosing to live in this remote part of the world.

The evening passed delightfully. Neither Ker nor his wife seemed to have grown rusty in their retirement, and our conversation was lively and interesting. As we talked and she grew animated, I was struck by a subtle change in her, whose cause or nature I was for some time unable to determine. After a while I found that the mystery lay in her eyes, which changed with every change of voice and gesture. They dilated and contracted in a most bewildering and fascinating fashion, which would have been perilous for the modern "singer" who might have come within their range.

"Let us have some music, Pussy," said her husband, and she smiled at him and went obediently to the piano.

Her voice was a *contralto*, full and *vibrante*. I don't know what she sang, but it was something slumbrous and passionate, that was like her eyes—like herself. As she played and sang her whole body swayed and moved in unison with the music. It was evident that music was a part of her nature. Never, before or since, have I heard anything at all like her singing. When she ended I thanked her again and again, and begged for another song. She would have granted it, I think, but, to my amazement, Ker crossed to her side and closed the piano abruptly.

"Not to-night," he said, laying a caressing hand on her head. "You will tire yourself, Pussy."

She acquiesced at once, and came back to the fire, but talking did not seem easy after that music, and she soon bade us Good-night. The day's journey and long ride had tired me, and after a social pipe in Roland's den I prepared to turn in.

"Sleep well," said Ker, as we parted.

But that was exactly what I could *not* do. From a shelf of books in my room I took down a volume of Poe's tales and read for hours—getting wider and wider awake. Tired out though I was, I could not sleep. At last I thought I would try smoking as a sedative, but not in this dainty dormitory. I opened my door; the house was very still. I crept down slipperless to the little room where Roland and I had had our pipes. The door was partly open, and to my surprise I saw that the fire still burnt there. There was no other light, but I gave a start that almost betrayed me as I saw Ker sitting in a chair, his elbows on its arms, his fingers buried in his short brown curls, and in his eyes a mixture of hopelessness and anxiety indescribably painful. What

was this secret sorrow? It was evidently not a moment to thrust my presence on him, and I was about to turn to creep back as silently as I had come when he made a movement that for a moment made me think he had heard me. He leant forward to something on the hearthrug. My eyes followed his hand. It rested on the head of his wife, who lay curled up in an almost indistinguishable heap at his feet. Some dark, heavy mantle seemed to be thrown over her white dress.

I turned away instantly and regained my room, with a heart-ache for my friend's sake. What a terrible and unmistakable confirmation of my suspicions! My journey downstairs had certainly failed to supply a narcotic, and I did not close my eyes till dawn.

When I went down to breakfast the next morning I was almost able to persuade myself that I had dreamed this strange *tableau vivant*. My hostess was in the highest spirits and fresh as the June morning itself, and Ker had not about him even such marked traces of anxiety as I had noticed on the previous day.

He and I spent the day in the saddle, riding thirty miles to visit some acquaintances of his. We got home to dinner at seven, and the evening passed as had the previous one, save that we had no music. I felt baffled again. In spite of what I had seen I could not believe that my friend's wife was the slave of any horrible propensity such as I had imagined. It was quite evident that this was a singularly happy match. The two were more like lovers than the ordinary Darby and Joan. Of course I don't mean that they made love to each other in that offensively obtrusive way which always suggests secret wrangling. Only they seemed to suit each other, and to a close observer (I flatter myself I am one), it was evident that they had few, if any, interests apart from each other.

We parted early. Ker looked worn out, and I did not wonder, remembering the vigil in which his last night had been spent. I myself was in not much better case, and fell asleep almost before my head touched the pillow.

I awoke with a start in the grey of the morning. The loud and vigorous barking of a dog came sharp through the chill air. Someone breaking in was my first thought, and then I remembered that my friend did not keep a dog. I sprang up, and put my head out of my open window. Almost immediately below it, his four thick legs planted uncompromisingly far apart, stood a big lurcher-looking brute of a dog, his white teeth and red tongue plainly visible, and his hair bristling from crest to tail. His barks were so vigorous that with each one he lifted all his four feet off the ground at once. What on earth was the matter with him? I followed the direction of his eyes, and saw—good heavens!—was I

dreaming, or was it really my friend's wife who was clinging fast with feet and fingers to the sheer side of the woodstack over against the house, the hanging train of her furred white dress draggled and muddy just above the reach of the dog's angry teeth? No, not the woman I had seen before, but a horrible mad likeness of her; all the softness and beauty gone, her lips drawn back from her teeth in what seemed an agony of rage or terror, her wonderful hair actually seeming to be *on end*, her whole frame trembling with excitement, and her great glowing green eyes fixed on her assailant. This was not a time for close observation or prolonged reflection. The revolver I had brought from England was in an instant in my hand. I fired. Missed. Fired again, and saw the brute of a dog leap up and roll over. I flung on some clothes and rushed downstairs. As I passed Ker's door I dashed it open and called his name without stopping. Guided by the freshness of the air I found the back door, and in a moment was in the yard. She was not there. At least I did not see her at first.

"Mrs. Ker!" I cried. "It's all right. The dog's dead."

A fierce shriek answered me, and those eyes looked at me a moment from the top of the woodstack. Madness was in every line of her face; her whole appearance was more that of some wild creature of the cat tribe than of a woman. Her hands were stretched out like claws, and her body drawn back like a tiger's before the spring. The heavy fur cloak and dress that in her frenzy she had wonnd tightly about her added to the illusion. Was she really a woman? I moved towards the woodstack, still shouting my soothing commonplaces. This takes some time to tell; it did not take a minute to act. And before that minute was over Ker was beside me. They fixed their eyes on each other.

"Come to me," he cried, in a voice of passionate tenderness and appeal. "Come to me my darling, my Pussy."

The horrible appropriateness of this last epithet struck me even at that moment.

There was no answering tenderness in her eyes. With unabated fury gleaming in them, she sprang cat-like from the woodstack, and leaped at him. As he clasped her in his arms she fastened her teeth in his shoulder, with a horrible inarticulate sound, half hiss, half howl. I saw the blood spurt out, staining his white shirt. He winced and set his lips hard, but gave no other sign, only stroked her hair with his hand. He was deadly pale, but he held her fast, and murmured to her the tenderest words of endearment and love. In a few seconds she sighed, her whole frame seemed to relax, to give way; she flung her arms round his neck, and broke into slow, heavy, heart-rending sobs—distinctly human, these.

He lifted her and carried her into the house, laid her on the sofa, and knelt beside her, stroking her head with the gentle

touch that I was growing accustomed to see in him. Her sobs grew fainter and fainter. Presently they ceased altogether, and her breathing grew steady and regular.

"She is asleep," he said, turning to me, and then he hid his face in the folds of her dress and gave one hard, broken sob.

I laid my hand on his shoulder.

"What is it, old friend" I asked? What does it all mean?"

"I suppose I must tell you?" he asked wearily.

"Tell me nothing," I interposed. "Let it all be as though it had never been."

"I *will* tell you," he said impatiently, "I have never told any one yet, and I feel as if telling it might keep *me* from going mad too."

So, sitting by his wife, with his hand never intermitting its slow, soothing movement over her blond hair, he told me her story. She was the daughter of the American gentleman who had persuaded him to leave Leipzig. He had fallen in love with her at first sight, and she with him. The only drawback to their happiness had been the extreme delicacy of her health. She showed symptoms of pulmonary disease, and her father and Ker had both feared that she would not live another year, her decline was so rapid and so complete. Passionate love and his old fondness for experiments had combined to inspire him with an idea. He became convinced that transfusion of blood would be the only thing to save her life. He would gladly have given his own blood, but to that she would not consent. And then came the strangest part of the story. She had always been fond of cats, and now she herself suggested that their blood should be used in preference to that of any other animal. She had insisted on this, and he had supported her in it, believing that it would save her life. The operation was successfully performed, and her life was saved. She was restored to full bodily vigour. But her mind! Almost immediately after the operation, a change took place in her. Was it really the effect of the cat blood, or had the bare thought of it affected her brain? Her old tastes were mixed and modified by an ever-increasing love for warmth, softness, and all the things that cats love, and a corresponding antipathy to all the things that cats hate. She had seemed to be half cat, half woman. Her father would have broken off the engagement, but Ker's deep and ever-increasing love put that out of the question. He had married her, and had given up his life to the task of trying to strengthen the woman, and weaken the cat nature. But, in spite of all, these paroxysms came upon her at intervals with ever-increasing force. She had never had so severe an attack as this. He had thought the attack had spent itself on the previous night, and so had

been off guard. She must have got up while he was asleep, and this chance tramp's dog had turned the current of her blood. The story was a long one as he told it, a story told out of the very heart of the man.

"She was so sweet, so lovable, so perfect," he said at last, "and this is all my fault, all my fault!—And yet, as she is, she is my whole world. If I lost her—Oh! heaven, I cannot bear to think of it; my whole life's light would go out. She will be all right now; she is always all right after a sleep. My darling; my only love, my wife." He spoke to her, forgetful of my presence, leaning over her to look in her sleeping face. Then he sprang erect with a cry that I shall never forget.

She was asleep. She was "all right," and Roland Ker's whole life's light had gone out.

FABIAN BLAND.

Sending a Wire.

A CELEBRATED professor not long since asked a class of young men if any amongst them could tell him what electricity was? The knowing ones smiled, as who should say, "We are not so easily caught," but one young man rose to his feet, and evidently had something to say. "Well, sir?" said the Professor. The student hesitated, stammered, and said at last, "If you please, Sir, I *did* know, but I have forgotten!" "Dear me!" said the Professor, stamping his foot in mimic rage, "here's an appalling calamity—*the only man in the world who ever knew what electricity was has forgotten!*"

It may be humiliating to have to confess it, but the wisest of the wise have as yet failed to find out this secret, or to answer the question, "What is Electricity?" It is an easy matter to say that if a plate of zinc and a plate of copper are put into a mixture of sulphuric acid (H_2SO_4) and water (H_2O), a wire fastened to each plate, and the ends of the wires brought into contact, a "current" passes; but the word "current" is only a convenient cloak for our ignorance. We know that force of some sort passes, and can prove the fact by noting its effects in a manner to be presently described; but what that force is we cannot tell, and, as our friend the Professor said, it is very unfortunate that the only man who ever did know had a bad memory and forgot all about it.

We have become so accustomed to the luxury of "sending a wire," that we do not trouble ourselves to think much about the force which carries our message, or the manner in which that force is utilised for our convenience. Let us try to see "how it is done." I will presume, for the sake of clearness, that the majority of the readers of *To-Day* know absolutely nothing about the matter, and I shall therefore avoid all technicalities, and try to make my description as plain as the subject will allow.

I am sitting at one end of my oblong dining-table, and before me is a glass jar, into which I have put a pint of water mixed with say a tablespoonful of sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol). Into

this mixture I put a piece of zinc having a copper wire soldered to one end, and also a piece of copper which likewise has a copper wire soldered to it. So long as the ends of these copper wires remain apart, nothing happens beyond the usual chemical change which the acid effects in the zinc; but the moment I join the ends of the copper wires a current of electricity starts from the zinc, goes through the fluid to the copper, out at the copper wire at the top into the copper wire at the top of the zinc, and from the zinc into the fluid, and so on through the same circle. By touching the end of one wire with the end of the other, I have "completed the circuit," which means that I have finished the road along which the electricity is to travel. Electricity will not travel without a pathway, and it will not start till that pathway is completed; if there is a break of even the hundredth part of an inch the current refuses to leap over it. But the moment the road is finished the current is all round it in such a short time that it can hardly be called time at all; at any rate, no known means of measuring small intervals of time can measure such a short interval as that occupied by the current on going round its circuit, be that circuit a foot or a thousand miles. If in place of one of the short pieces of copper wire just mentioned I have a coil of wire fifty miles long, and touch the end of that coil with the end of the other short wire, the current travels along the fifty miles as rapidly as it would along fifty inches. I can test this by making a small loop in the wire, and suspending within the loop a magnetised needle pointing to the north, which turns its northern end towards the west when a current of electricity passes in one direction through the wire with which the needle is surrounded. This loop and needle form a rough and ready galvanometer, or current detector. This needle will turn towards the west the instant the two ends of the wires are joined, whether those wires are five inches, or fifty miles, or a thousand miles in length.

Now suppose that at the other end of the table a friend sits, and that he has before him a jar, etc., exactly like my own. I now pass a wire from my copper plate to his zinc plate, this wire lying at my right hand; he also passes a wire from his copper plate to my zinc plate, the latter wire lying to my left. Each of us has attached to his battery, and close to the jar, a needle arranged as just mentioned. Now, by a suitable arrangement of brass or copper strips for changing the direction of the current, I can start that current through the wire to my right, or the wire to my left, whichever I choose. If I take the former course my needle turns to the right hand, and his needle turns to his right hand too; but if I take the latter course, and send the current through the left wire, the needles will both turn to the

left hand. In whichever direction I send the current the wire along which it starts is called the "lead," and the current will come back by the other wire, which is therefore called the "return." Either wire is thus lead or return at will. It will easily be understood that if my friend and I agree between ourselves that one motion to the right means A, one to the left B, one to right followed by one to left, C, and so on, we shall be able to send messages to each other a letter at a time, and thus form words and sentences. This is exactly what is done by the telegraph clerk when we "send a wire," only instead of being at the other end of the table, the receiver of the message may be at the other end of the country, or at the other side of the world for the matter of that. It is with the electric current as with those obliging tradesmen who advertise their willingness to call upon us for orders—"distance is no object."

It will be seen from what I have said that the following are essential to the transmission of a message, *i.e.*, to deflect a needle by means of an electric current :—

A battery.
A needle to show the sender the effect he is producing.
A similar needle to enable the receiver to observe the signal transmitted.
A "lead" wire to convey the current to the receiving station.
A return wire to bring back the current and complete the circuit.
A ready means of enabling the sender to change at will the direction of the current.
A battery at the receiving station, to enable the receiver to intimate to the sender that his message is received and understood.

However elaborate may be the arrangement of the details, the above are the essential components of the apparatus for transmitting a practicable working electric current from one part of the earth to another, so long as the single needle instrument is employed; and the vast majority of instruments used both in the railway and postal services are single-needle instruments.

It is absolutely necessary that the circuit shall be completed whenever a signal is given—in other words, we must have not only a leading wire to convey the current, but there must also be a "return," by which the current comes back to the battery whence it started. It may be asked "why is it necessary to have a return at all? the current has given its signal and done its work—why trouble further about it?" But this question is based on an entire misconception of the facts. *The current never starts until there is a clean path by which it can travel back to its starting-point.* Until that path is complete there is no current at all, and to speak of sending a current a certain distance to do its work, caring nothing about where it goes to after, is to talk of an impossibility. When the telegraph clerk moves his handle he completes the circuit of his own battery; the distance between the strip of brass

which he moves and the strip touched by it—say $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch—is the only break in the circuit; and although the two strips may remain in contact only the hundredth part of a second, the current has gone round the circuit, done its work, and returned to the battery before he can remove his hand from the handle.

It is not at all necessary that the return shall be effected by a second wire. The earth itself is one huge conductor of electricity. So long ago as 1747 Watson proved that a Leyden jar (a contrivance for storing a charge of electric force) could be "discharged through a circuit one half of which consisted of moist earth," though Steinheil first actually made the earth act as a conducting wire in a telegraphic circuit, and in 1837 he constructed a telegraph at Munich, and attached each end of his wires to a copper plate buried in the earth, the earth itself acting as the conductor of the current from one plate to the other. It was proved in 1841 by Cooke and Wheatstone that the earth may replace one half of the conducting wire and thus serve as a return. They found, in fact, that the battery produced a greater effect when the earth was used as a return than when the current travelled over a path entirely metallic.

In the year 1844, Matteucci made numerous experiments, which proved beyond doubt that the current, after traversing the leading wire and going to earth by the earth-plate, took its course direct to the earth-plate at the other end of the wire. In the *Comptes Rendus* for January 11th, 1846, he says:—"The circuit of a pile of ten Bunsen's elements was established by plunging the two poles in two wells, 160 metres apart, a galvanometer being in the circuit to ensure the passage of the current. In this interval were two other wells almost in a straight line with the two extreme wells. The distance between these two wells was 30 metres; they were distant from the two extreme wells, one 80 metres, the other 50. The extremities of a good long wire galvanometer were plunged into the two intermediate wells; the current was then passed in the long circuit, when a deviation of 35 or 40 degrees was instantly obtained. On reversing the direction of the current in the long circuit, that of the *derived* circuit was likewise reversed."

This "earth-circuit," or rather the completion (by using the earth as a conductor) of a circuit part of which consists of overhead or underground wire, is one of the marvels of telegraphy. I have been asked the following question:—"Why does not the current, when it leaves the earth-plate, diffuse itself in the earth's mass, instead of going to the earth-plate at the sending station?" Because the current makes direct for the only point where it can complete its circuit. Suppose, for example, I send a message from King's Cross Station to York. Bearing in mind that the circuit

must be clear all round before there can be a current at all, we shall be able to trace the course of the current which takes one single letter of my message to York. The telegraph clerk moves his handle, and completes the connection between his battery and the line wire to York; the current goes by that wire to the instrument at York, where it moves the needle in the same direction as the needle at King's Cross had moved; it then goes from the machine through the rest of the wire to the earth-plate—a plate of metal buried in the earth. How, at this point, does the current act? As it has done through every inch of its course—*it follows the line of least resistance.* There is a conductor (though there is no second wire) between the earth-plate at York and that at King's Cross, viz., the earth itself, which from its vast size offers practically no resistance* at all to the current of electricity, which goes unerringly to the only point in all the vast globe where it can find its circuit completed; viz., to the earth plate at King's Cross. It *must* take that course, there is no other open to it.

These turnings and twistings of the current take place in an infinitesimally small space of time. As I have said, the current is back at the sender's battery before he can take his hand from the handle of the machine. There are some facts which seem so much too big for the human mind to take in, that when we try to think about them we involuntarily close our eyes as if to shut out the idea, and find relief by retiring into momentary darkness. The attempt to realise the appalling distance of the fixed stars always produces this effect upon me; so also does the thought of the speed at which electricity travels. The action of the common electric bell depends upon the extreme rapidity with which the circuit can be made and broken. This, as we all know, is done so quickly that the ear cannot separate the sound of the bell into distinct strokes of the hammer, nor can the eye follow the hammer in its course. Yet between every two blows the current starts from the battery, travels to the electro-magnet, goes round every coil of wire (hundreds in some cases) round that magnet, then to the metal point where the contact is made and broken, and through the return wire to the battery again. Whether the wire is only the length of your own hall, or stretches from London to Aberdeen, the current traverses the whole circuit between every two

* "Resistance" is the hindrance offered by the conductor to the passage of the current. Copper is a good conductor, *i.e.*, it offers but small resistance. If the current is not carefully kept within the carrying power of the wire, the latter grows hot, and when a substance of high resistance is interposed in a circuit that substance glows with a brilliant white heat. This is the way in which the electric light is produced in incandescent or "glow" lamps.

strokes of the hammer. The telephone yet more forcibly illustrates the inconceivable rapidity with which the current travels. In this instrument, which is now nearly as common as the electric bell or the telegraph, the circuit is completed by the pressure of the diaphragm against an electro-magnet, and the sound heard is of the same musical pitch—that is, vibrates as many times per second—as the sound spoken. If a child sings into the receiver the note high C (second leger-line above the treble stave), the diaphragm of the receiving instrument approaches, and leaves the magnet 1056 times in every second, and at every motion the current traverses the entire circuit, whether it is from the West End to the City, or from the General Post Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand to the Post Office in Edinburgh. The recorded results of experiments to determine the speed of the electric current vary considerably, and some of them sound like a story from the Thousand and One Nights. Sir Charles Wheatstone, in 1835, found that a spark passed through a quarter of a mile of wire at a speed which represented no less than 288,000 miles per second. The lowest estimate ever made affords ample justification for the statements I have made above.

The space at my disposal forbids for the present any further discussion of a subject which (speaking for myselt) is full of fascination, and one upon which, with the Editor's kind indulgence I should like to say more another time. All I have been able to attempt now is to show the readers of *To-Day* that in "sending a wire" we call into requisition the most subtle and at the same time the most potent and marvellous force which man has yet discovered.

JOHN BROADHOUSE.

Does it Pay?

Having lately embarked in an agricultural enterprise on a small scale, I confess I was somewhat disconcerted, if not actually annoyed, by the persistency with which—from the very outset, and when I had been only two or three months at work—I was met by the question at the head of this paper. Not only sisters, cousins, and aunts, but relations much more remote, and mere acquaintances, at the very first suggestion that I was engaged in trade, always plumped out with the query, Does it pay? And this struck me the more because in the innocence of my heart I fear I had not sufficiently realised the importance of this point. At any rate it had seemed to me that there *might* be other considerations of comparable weight. But I soon found out my mistake; for none of my well-to-do friends asked whether the work I was doing was wanted, or whether it would be useful to the community, or a means of healthy life to those engaged in it, or whether it was *honest* and of a kind that could be carried on without interior defilement; or even (except one or two) whether I liked it, but always: does it pay? I say my well-to-do friends, because I could'nt help remarking that while the workers generally ask me such questions, as whether the soil was good, or adapted to the purpose, the crops fine, the water abundant, &c., it was always the rich who asked the distinctively commercial question—a professional question as it appeared to me, and which marked them as a class, and their modes of thought. Not that I have any quarrel with them for asking it, because the question is undoubtedly, in some sense, a very important one, and one which has to be asked; rather I ought to feel grateful and indebted, because it forced me to think about a matter that I had not properly considered before.

What then did it mean? What was the exact sense of the

expression, does it pay? as here used? On enquiring I found it came to this: "When you have subtracted from your gross receipts all expenses for wages of labour, materials, &c., is there a balance equivalent to four or five per cent. on your outlay of capital? If yes, it pays; if no, it doesn't." Clearly if the thing came up to this standard or surpassed it, it was worthy of attention; if it didn't it would be dismissed as unimportant and soon be dropped and abandoned. This was clear and definite, and at first I felt greatly relieved to have arrived at so solid a conclusion. But after a time, and carrying on the enterprise farther, I am sorry to say that my ideas (for they have a great tendency that way) again began to get misty, and I could not feel sure that I had arrived at any certain principle of action.

My difficulty was that I began to feel that even supposing the concern only brought me in *one* per cent., it was quite as likely as not that I should still stick to it. For I thought that if I was happy in the life, and those working with me were well-content too, and if there were children growing up on the place under tolerably decent and healthy conditions, and if we were cultivating genuine and useful products, cabbages and apples or what not—that it might really pay me better to get one per cent. for that result, even if it involved living quite simply and inexpensively, than ten per cent. with jangling and wrangling, over-worked and sad faces round me, and dirty and deceptive stuff produced; and that if I could afford it I might even think it worth while to *pay* to keep the first state going, rather than *be* paid for the second.

I knew it was very foolish of me to think so, and bad Political Economy, and I was heartily ashamed of myself, but still I couldn't help it. I knew the P.E.'s would say that if I disregarded the interest on my capital I should only be disturbing natural adjustments, that my five per cent. was an index of what was wanted, a kind of providential arrangement harmonising my interest (literally) with that of the mass of mankind, and that if I was getting only one per cent. while others were sending in the same stuff from France and getting ten per cent., it was clear that I was wasting labour by trying to do here what could be done so much more profitably somewhere else, and that I ought to give way. This was what I knew they would say; but then from my own little experience I readily saw that the ten per cent. profit might mean no superior advantage of labour in that part, but merely superior grinding and oppression of the labourer by the employer, superior disadvantage of the labourer in fact; and that if I gave way in its favour, I should only be encouraging the extortion system. I should be playing into the hands of some nefarious taskmaster in another part of the industrial world, and by increasing his profits should

perhaps encourage others, still more unscrupulous, to undersell him, which of course they would do by further exactions from the worker; and so on and on. I saw too that if I abandoned my enterprise, I should have to discharge my workpeople, with great chance of their getting no fresh employment, and to them I had foolishly become quite attached; which was another serious trouble, but I could not help it.

And so in all this confusion of mind, and feeling quite certain that I could not understand all the complexities of the science of Political Economy myself, and having a lurking suspicion that even the most able professors were in the dark about some points, I began to wonder if the most sensible and obvious thing to do were not just to try and keep at least one little spot of earth clean: actually to try and produce clean and unadulterated food, to encourage honest work, to cultivate decent and healthful conditions for the workers, and useful products for the public and to maintain this state of affairs as long as I was able, taking my chance of the pecuniary result to myself. It would not be much, but it would be something, just a little glimmer as it were in the darkness; but if others did the same, the illumination would increase, and after a time perhaps we should all be able to see our way better.

I knew that this method of procedure would not be "scientific"—that it would be beginning at the wrong end for that—but then as I have said I felt in despair about my ever being clever enough really to understand the science—and as to half-knowledge, that might be more misleading than none. It was like the advice in the Bible: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," obviously irrational and absurd, and any argument would expose the fallacy of it, and yet I felt inclined to adopt it.

For when on the other hand I tried to make a start along the ordinary lines, I found myself from the outset in a hopeless bog! I could not, for the life of me, tell *how much* I ought to take as interest, and how much I ought to give in wages—the increase of the former evidently depending on the smallness of the latter. If I adopted just the current rate of wages, there was nothing in that, for I knew that they represented a mere balance of extortion on the one hand, and despair on the other, and how could I take that as my principle of action? If I gave more than the current rate I should very likely get no interest at all, and so be consigned to perdition by all my well-to-do friends, including the Professors of Political Economy; while if I gave less, I should certainly go to hell in my own eyes. And though I pondered over this dilemma, or rather trilemma, till I was sick of it, I never could see my way out of it.

And then I reflected that even if I was lucky enough to pitch on some principle of wage-payment which would leave a nice little balance of Interest—it was quite doutbful whether I should feel any right to appropriate such balance to my own use. That also was a great trouble. For I could not help seeing that after taking my proportional payment for my labours in the concern, and some small remuneration for my care of superintendencies, if I then appropriated a considerable interest on the Capital laid out, I should without any extra work be much better off than my coadjutors. And though the P. E.'s assured me this was all right, and kind of providential, I had serious qualms, which, do what I would, I could not shake off. I felt keenly that what I should then be taking, would only be so much subtracted from the wages of these others, and that the knowledge of this would disturb the straightforward relation between us, and I should no longer be able to look them in the face.

I could not help seeing too that it was by means of this *general system of the appropriation of balances* that a very curious phenomenon was kept up—an enormous class, to wit, living in idleness and luxury, they and their children and their children's children, till they became quite incapable of doing anything for themselves or even of thinking rightly about most things—tormented with incurable *enuni*, and general imbecility and futility; all art and literature, which were the appendage of this class, being affected by a kind of St. Vitus' dance; and the whole thing breaking out finally for want of any other occupation into a cuff and collar cult, called respectability.

And then I began to see more clearly the meaning of the question (asked by this class)—*does it pay?—i.e.*, Can we continue drawing from the people nourishment enough to keep our St. Vitus' dance going? I thought I saw a vision of poor convulsed creatures, decked out in strange finery, in continual antic dance peering in each other's faces, with eager questioning as to whether the state of profits would allow the same doleful occupation to go on for ever. And all the more eager I saw them on account of the dim wandering consciousness they had that the whole thing was not natural and right, and the presentiment that it could not last very long. And then I saw a vision of the new society in which the appropriation of balances was not the whole object of life; but things were produced primarily for the use and benefit of those who should consume them. It was actually thought that it *paid better* to work on that principle; and strangely enough, the kingdom of heaven was at the centre of that society—and the "other things" were added unto it. But there was no respectability there, for the balances that could be privately appropriated were not large enough even to buy starch with, and a great many people actually went without collars.

And so I saw that the eager question (in the particular sense on which it had been asked me) was in fact a symptom of the decay of the old Society—a kind of dying grin and death-rattle of respectability—and that a new order, a new life, was already preparing beneath the old, in which there would be no need for it to be asked; or if asked, then in which it should be asked in a new sense.

EDWARD CARPENTER.

Socialists of the Armchair.

UNDER the title "Perverse Socialism" Sydney Olivier, professedly on behalf of "all true Socialists" and in defence of "the larger Socialism," has criticised the ordinary Socialist propaganda, the more familiar Socialist oratory, and the most vigorous Socialist journalism. A great part of his article was devoted to an attack on the doctrine of value as asserted in "Das Kapital." I am no idolater of Karl Marx, and there are many more qualified than myself to decide whether Mr. Olivier has seriously damaged the great German thinker's reputation, and more capable of defending it if they think the matter worth attention. But I am concerned chiefly with Mr. Olivier's confident assertion that "outside the proletariat there are thousands ready for the larger Socialism, who are repelled from participation in the Socialist movement by the re-actionary tendencies of its loudest preaching." In other words those who have hitherto borne the heat and burden of the Socialist propaganda in this country, who can fairly claim some credit for having roused public attention, and who have met with the most success in enrolling fellow workers, are entirely on the wrong tack and foredoomed to failure. The very boldness of this contention is sufficient to attract attention, and as his reasons for it are but a repetition of the cavillings of many others who have little but criticism to offer, I will endeavour to show these candid friends that our tactics are governed by some leading principles. The main counts in Mr. Olivier's indictment against the active Socialists I will give briefly in his own words. They issue a sketch showing, with more force than artistic merit, a number of work-people tramping the road and enjoined to "Look and be thankful"

on shady parks railed in for their betters, and on typical articles of luxury securely barred from their reach. The agitators thus begin their "plans for a noble edifice by devoting attention to the kitchen,"* and limit their Socialism to "the provision of material necessaries and conveniences and the creation of a common ownership in the requisites of production other than human energy." They urge that "economic evils can be extirpated by re-adjustments of economic organisation." They foment class hatred and incite to a class war, "which cannot be done in a spirit of Socialism"! They preach the extremely simple gospel that "The wage workers are poor; the capitalist class is rich: Let the former storm the latter's citadel and the inheritance will be theirs." They indulge in "reckless denunciation of all classes except wage receivers." Their language "with regard to politicians, economists, historians, contemporaries who misunderstand Socialism or oppose it, would be ridiculous if it could be believed to be sincere," and they do not even spare Mill, Sidgwick and the rest. They lead the temperate-minded citizen to mistrust "these haters of mankind." They hint at "a physical force revolution incited by the mere hope of increased wealth," which would be "mere folly"—and much more to the same effect.

It is only fair to say that Mr. Olivier does not maintain that this is all that the Socialist stump orators mean. He fears, however, that it is all the temperate-minded citizen will gather from their open-air discourses. It is even vaguely hinted that "the frank appeal to the stomach" and the "Ye are many, they are few" argument *may* be due to a conviction of the necessity of aggravating social discontent. If Mr. Olivier's love for his fellows ever becomes powerful enough to drive him to compete with the propagators of the narrower Socialism he derides, he will further find that it is easier to pick your words when writing in a study, than when delivering open-air addresses almost daily. If he obtains, even at second hand, any real knowledge of the actual life of an average workman, he will find many a hard

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* Mazzini, from whose criticisms of Fourier this sentence is quoted, is of course no authority on the Socialism, perverse or other, which has been elaborated since his day. But he was a revolutionist, and scared many a sleek citizen thirty years ago by his rendering of the theory of the dagger, which I commend to our rosewater revolutionists. "Say to an enslaved people 'Arise, slay or be slain. You are not men but machines to be used at the good pleasure of your rulers. You are not a people but a race of despised and disinherited serfs. Arise, in holy anger. If your oppressors have disarmed you, create arms to combat them; make weapons of the irons of your crosses, the nails of your workshops, the stones of your streets, the daggers you can shape from your workmen's files. *Blessed be in your hands every weapon that can destroy the enemy and set you free*'—this language is mine, and it should be yours."—*Letter to Manin*, 1865.

word spring to his lips when he is trying to characterise the evil done by those who not only turn a deaf ear to Socialist theories, but close their eyes to social misery, and he will find himself running short of the charity which hopeth all things when he hears the nicely balanced platitudes of speakers and writers who deliberately choose to be on the side of the wealthy and respectable. But apart from all this—and I am free to admit that, being after all only human, I myself may often have alarmed the temperate minded citizen by too sweeping generalisations in the heat of extempore speaking or in the fury excited by watching the undeserved torture of fellow-creatures dear to me—apart from the mere slips to which even the most captious critic will find himself liable if he ever takes to action, there is a real difference between the view of the problem before us taken by Mr. Olivier and his kind, and that universally held, so far as I know, by all members of any working class Socialist organisation in the world. He utterly ignores the fact that every militant Socialist takes the class view, and that his "larger Socialism" is merely a repetition of the time-worn exhortation to the individual to be good, which has been made by every religious teacher in the past with the singular lack of success which stares us in the face in all the class relations of every civilised country at the present day.

To take his own words again, "The larger Socialism insists that even economic evils can only be remedied by a revolution in economic motive," for salvation "looks to the new social religion, the perfect human religion, which has co-operation for its spirit, love for its secret, and education for its method," and insults no one "by disgraceful appeals to the stomach." Now, no one objects to Mr. Olivier's gallant attempt to moralize the individual. It is a pity that he should style his homilies Socialism, for the word is already defamed by all ignoble use, and the readiness of Conservatives to apply it to the unprincipled bribery of Mr. Chamberlain's doctrines of ransom, and of Liberals to affix it to the shameless *panem et circenses* proposals of Tory Democrats. If Mr. Olivier wishes to increase the confusion in the public mind, Social Democrats at any rate, may congratulate themselves that they have a party name which clears them of any complicity in the attempt to influence classes of men by appeals which may now and then influence individual conduct. Mr. Olivier may convert many individuals by his exhortations if he is as powerful an agent as the apostles and prophets, (who, by the way, were strongly addicted to denunciation) as many a Catholic preacher has been, or even as Auguste Comte and John Ruskin are to this hour. But he will be quite as powerless to affect the economic motive of the ruling class in England to-day, as the Christian religion is to shorten the labour-day on railways

and tramways, as the conception of the *Grand Etre* is to accomplish what the Trade Unions have done, or as the Gudli of St. George is to abolish machinery. In fact, he says to the modern Capitalist class, hankering after their pound of flesh in the shape of satisfaction of their desires at the expense o other men, "Then must the Jew be merciful." He will surely meet, he does meet, with the same retort, "On what compulsion must I, tell me that?" and since the fires of a burnt-out hell and unquestioning devotion to the will of God do not have much weight either with Mr. Olivier or our modern Shylock, the latter pauses for a reply. *We have one*, and this is it.

The proletariat, morally no better than their masters, also seek the satisfaction of their desires with the least pain to themselves, urged by exactly the same relentless instincts of self-preservation and reproduction which have acted in countless ages past, have made the world what it is, and will inevitably continue to act until centuries of security from want destroy the animal instincts. The motives of the individual no more influence this great conflict of class interests than does the undoubted fact that any one individual may rise superior to his material condition disprove the truth that the average of human intelligence and morality is inexorably fixed by the economical condition of the race. Even if Mr. Olivier is "not acquainted with any of the Socialist writings of Marx," he must be aware that the growth of the great industry of necessity thins the numbers of those whose "economic motive" impels them to maintain the existing order, while it swells the ranks of that great army of the disinherited and oppressed, whose heavy tread sounds ever nearer in our ears. Thus the ordinary motives, the baser if you please to call them so, impel the one class (which is decreasing in numbers, activity, and power), to keep hours long, wages low, and employment insecure. The very same instincts prompt the other class to revolt against the poverty which is rendered bitterer by the daily more glaring contrast between the condition of the idle and the working-classes. Here you have a distinct conflict of class interests, a class war. Quite apart from any question of individual morals or religion, economical changes such as the contraction of the world-market, increased competition of black or yellow labour, the use of machinery and the application of invention intensify the social strife, while the spread of education, the printing press, the massing of the workers in large towns, and their greater facilities for combination, have increased the power of the property-less class which is recruited every time a large fortune is "made." No one therefore, who knows that God fights on the side of the big battalions, can doubt that the workers will have their way in the long run. But they can only attain their object and follow the promptings of *their* "economic motive," by seizing the control of the

political and industrial machine. They are doing this now, though without quite knowing why, and in perfect ignorance of any theories of value.

Now militant socialists want to hasten this "readjustment of economic organisation." They see that the inevitable victory of the class-interest of the proletariat must mean the abolition of classes, co-operation instead of competition, identity of interests instead of class war, general leisure and well being in place of the hurried scramble for existence of to-day. Then there will be a chance for the growth of social instincts, possibly for the general acceptance of a perfect human religion. The lion will lie down with the lamb in good time, we hope, and the millennium be ushered in, but Armageddon has to be fought out first.

It is just this antagonism of classes which the Socialists of the Armchair cannot acknowledge. But it is precisely the recognition of its existence which defines the Socialist, and explains why he deliberately strives to fan the class-feeling of the workers into open flame. He sees the class war raging, with the dead and wounded all on one side. He sees no hope of its cessation, save by the victory of the army of labour, and to that end he devotes all his energies. There can be no peace till the enemy is vanquished and his arms taken from him. Therefore the more he desires peace the more vigorous are his blows, the louder his call to arms.

And just as he cannot see any saving virtue in crying "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, so he cannot see any wisdom in ignoring disagreeable facts and persuading oneself that they no longer exist. To adapt the illustration used by Mazzini, we would all like to spend our lives in designing noble edifices, but to the people who have to live in them the kitchens and the drains are rather important. The open air propagandists may offend Mr. Olivier's friends by insisting on the necessity for animal comfort, but at any rate they are actually evoking the only force which can create houses where the inmates shall be secured the physical health which is the basis of all intellectual and moral health. But even if Mr. Olivier's talisman could translate the designs of his castle in the air into marble, the inhabitants of those noble edifices would find their high imaginings marred by torpid livers and poisoned blood if the kitchens and the drains had been sacrificed to artistic effect. No doubt man does not live by bread alone, but without bread he cannot live at all. It may be distressing to be reminded that man is animal, whatever else he may be; but nothing can alter the fact.

Most of the class to which Mr. Olivier and I belong do not fully grasp what the life of the many really is. If they did, they would hardly be repelled from the movement by any errors of style. They might not work in a way which was

distasteful to them, but they could not sit still in their armchairs if the sights of our great cities haunted them as they haunt men who have got to understand what needless misery there is in the world. I fear, from my own experience, that Mr. Olivier will find that "the thousands" who stand aloof from us will stand aloof from him if he asks from them anything but wordy sympathy. Not one in a thousand of such critics is capable of real self-sacrifice. Creatures of their circumstances to a great extent they may be, but I frankly confess that I am unable to adequately describe them in the vocabulary of the polite letter writer.

H. H. CHAMPION.

Capital:

A Criticism on Political Economy.

By KARL MARX.

Translated from the Original German Work,

By JOHN BROADHOUSE.

(Continued from our last number.)

Behind these attempts to represent commodity-circulation as the source of surplus value, there is a *quid pro quo*, a muddling up of Use-value and Exchange-value. Thus, for example, Condillac says:—"It is false that in exchange an equal value is given for an equal value; on the contrary, each of the contracting parties gives a lesser for a greater. If equal values were always exchanged, there would be no profit made by either party. But both make it, or should make it. Why? Because things only have a value proportioned to our necessities; one thing is more to one and less to another, and inversely. We only offer for sale those things which we do not require for our own consumption. We seek to part with what is useless to us, and to obtain something which is useful. It would naturally be supposed that we should, in exchange, give an equal value for an equal value every time we exchanged if the things exchanged were each estimated as equal in value to the same sum of money. But there is another thing to be taken into consideration, and that is whether each party exchanges a superabundant article for a necessary on'(*w*). Condillac not only confounds one thing with another—Use-value with Exchange-value, but he supposes, with chd-like simplicity, that in a community based on commodity-production the producer must produce his own means of subsistence,

w Condillac, "Le commerce et le gouvernement," 1776, ed. Daire and Molinari, in the "Melanges d'economie politique," Paris, 1847, p. 267).

and only put into circulation the superfluity which he does not require for his own necessities(*x*).

Notwithstanding this, we find that Condillac's argument is often reproduced by modern economists when they wish to prove that the developed form of exchange, *i.e.*, commerce, is a source of surplus value. Thus, for example, it is said that "Commerce adds value to products, for they have more value in the hands of the consumer than in those of the producer; we may thus consider trade strictly an act of production"(*y*). But commodities are not paid for twice over, once for their use-value and once for their exchange-value; and if the use-value of a commodity is of more use to the buyer than to the seller, its money-form is of more use to the seller than to the buyer. Otherwise, would he sell? Thus we may just as well say the buyer achieves "strictly" an act of production, when he transforms, for example, the stockings of a hosier into money.

When commodities, or commodities and money, of equal value (that is, equivalents) are exchanged, it is obvions that no one can take out of the circulation more value than he has put into it. No formation of surplus value takes place. In its purest form, commodity-circulation requires the exchange of equivalents; but everybody knows that in practice this purity of form is departed from. Let us suppose a case of the exchange of things which are not equivalents.

In all cases exchangers on the market are brought face to face only with other exchangers, and any power they possess is only the power of their commodities. The material difference between the latter is the material motive for exchanging them, and this motive brings the exchangers into a relationship of mutual dependence upon each other, in the sense that none of them has in his hands the things he himself wants, while each hss those things which are wanted by others. Beside this distinction as to their different utility, the commodities have no other difference than that between their natural form and their value-form—money. In the same way the exchangers

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x Le Trosne pertinently replies to his friend Condillac, "In an established community there is no superfluity." At the same time he contradicts Condillac thus:—"If the two exchangers each receive an equal greater for an equal less, one receives as much as the other." It is because Condillac has not the least idea of exchange-value that Professor Roscher has taken him as the patron of his own childish ideas; *vide* his work, "Die Grundlagen der National Œkonomie," 3rd edition, 1858.

y P. P. Newman, "Elements of Political Economy," Andover and New York, 1835, p. 85.

only differ in one respect—some are sellers, or possessors of commodities, others are buyers, or possessors of money.

Granted now, that the seller may, by some unexplained privilege, sell his commodity for more than it is worth—say for £110, when its value is only £100, that is to say, with a nominal rise in price of 10 per cent. The seller thus nets a surplus-value of £10. But after having been a seller he becomes a buyer. A third exchanger comes to him as a seller, and in his turn enjoys the privilege of selling his commodity 10 per cent. too dear. Our friend has thus gained 10 per cent. on the one side to lose it on the other (*z*). The definite result is that in reality all the exchangers reciprocally sell their commodities 10 per cent. above their value, which comes to the same thing as though they sold them at their real value. A general rise in prices has the same effect as if, for instance, the prices were reckoned in silver instead of gold. The money-names—the prices— of the commodities are raised, but their real value remains unaltered.

Suppose, on the contrary, that buyers enjoyed the privilege of buying commodities at prices below their value. In this case it is not even necessary to remember that the seller may in his turn become a buyer. He was a seller before he became a buyer. He has already lost 10 per cent on his sale before he gained 10 per cent on his purchase. Everything remains in its former state(*aa*).

The formation of surplus-value, or the transformation of money into capital, can thus proceed neither from sellers selling above value nor from buyers buying below it(*bb*).

The problem is in no way simplified when external considerations are introduced, as, for example, by Torrens, who says:—"The effective demand consists in the power and the inclination (!) of consumers, whether exchange is either direct or by means of an intermediary, to give for commodities a larger proportion of all the ingredients of capital than the production costs"(*cc*). Producers and consumers come

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z "By the augmentation of the nominal value of the products . . . . sellers are not enriched . . . . since what they gain as sellers, they precisely expend in the quality of buyers" ("The Essential Principles of the Wealth of Nations," &c., London, 1797, p. 66).

aa "If we are forced to sell for £18 a quantity of products worth £24, and then employ the same money in buying, we shall in our turn get for £18 that for which £24 has been paid" (Le Trosne, *l.c.*, p. 897).

bb "Each vendor can thus only succeed in habitually raising the prices of his own commodities by submitting habitually to pay more for the commodities of other vendors; and in the same way each consumer can only buy cheaper by submitting to a similar reduction in the price of what he himself sells" (Mercier de la Rivière, *l.c.*, p. 555).

cc R. Torrens, "An Essay on the Production of Wealth," London, 1821, p. 349.

before each other in circulation only as sellers and buyers. To maintain that producers obtain surplus-value because consumers pay more for commodities than their value, is merely seeking to mask this proposition:—The commodity possessor, as a seller, enjoys the privilege of selling too dear. The seller has himself either produced his commodity, or he represents the producer; but the buyer also has either produced the commodity which has been turned into the money held by him, or he takes the place of its producer.

There are thus two producers brought face to face; what distinguishes them is that one sells and the other buys. It does not help us one whit to say that the former, under the name of producer, sells too dear, and that the latter, under the title of consumer, buys too dear(*dd*).

The defenders of the illusory idea that surplus-value arises from a nominal advance in prices, or from the privilege of sellers to sell too dear, are of necessity driven to contend that there is a class which always buys and never sells, and which always consumes and never produces. The existence of such a class is quite inexplicable from our present standpoint—that of pure and simple commodity-circulation. But let us not anticipate. The money with which such a class constantly buys should come regularly from the producers' coffers into their own, gratis, without exchange, freely, or by virtue of an acquired right. To sell to this class at a price beyond the value, only means to recover some of the vanished money which to his sorrow he has parted with(*ee*). The towns of Asia Minor, for example, paid their tribute to ancient Rome in specie every year. With that money Rome bought commodities of those towns, and paid too dear for them. The Asiatics cheated the Romans, and thus recouped themselves by way of trade part of the tribute levied on them by their conquerors. But they were none the less duped in the end, for their commodities continued to be paid for with their own money. This was no enrichment, and created no surplus-value.

(To be continued).

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dd "The idea of profits being paid by the consumers, is, assuredly, very absurd. Who are the consumers?" (G. Ramsay, "An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth," Edinburgh, 1836, p. 184).

ee "When a man is in want of demand, does Mr. Malthus recommend him to pay some other person to take off his goods?" asks an astounded Ricardian of Malthus, who, like his pupil, the parson Chalmers, cannot sufficiently glorify the class of mere buyers or consumers. *Vide* "An Enquiry into those Principles respecting the Nature of Demand and the Necessity of Consumption, lately advocated by Mr. Malthus," etc., London, 1821, p. 55).

The Fabian Society and Political Action.

A NOTE.

THE Fabian Society has taken a step which may have an important effect on the Socialist Movement, if those who are responsible for the management of the Society know their own minds, and see clearly the results which should follow from their actions. English Socialists will await with some interest the next move in the development of the policy which the Society initiated by the holding of its June Conference, and followed up by the meeting at Anderton's Hotel, on the 17th ult. Invitations were sent out to all the Socialist bodies in London, and judging by the crowded state of the room they were largely accepted. Most of the better known Socialists were there. Messrs. William Morris, H. H. Sparling, Graham, Davis, Donald and other members of the Socialist League were present, and the Social Democratic Federation was fully and satisfactorily represented by about a score of its members, including Messrs. Burns, Champion, Fielding and Keddell. Several members of the Socialist Union and the Christian Socialist Society also attended the meeting.

Mrs. Besant moved, and Mr. Hubert Bland seconded, a resolution, which, though perhaps a little vague in some respects, very distinctly affirmed the desirability of the formation by Socialists of a political body, to work by political methods. To this Mr. Morris moved, and Mr. Davis seconded, a rider, condemning, in the plainest language, parliamentary action of any sort or kind. After a sharp—even a rather heated discussion—the resolution and rider were put to the vote, all Socialists present being invited to take part in the division. The resolution was carried, and the rider rejected by a majority of about two to one.

Although the resolution itself may have been a trifle misty, there was no lack of definiteness in the speeches of most of its supporters. They made it perfectly clear that in their opinion the time had come for the formation of an orthodox English Socialist Party; and for its formation in such a way as to exclude from its ranks any who do not believe in political methods. The applause with which their remarks were greeted from the crowded room made it evident that they were not alone in their views.

Nor were the opponents of the resolution any less definite. Mr. Morris placed quite fairly and distinctly before the meeting, the issue of Thews and Sinews, *versus* Votes. It was noticeable that some of the strongest opposition to his arguments came from members of his own organization.

Now is the matter to end here? This is what Socialists who are not Fabians want to know. Those who supported the resolution did more than express their approval of the formation of a Socialist Political Party, they virtually affirmed that *no such body at present exists*. Upon this point there is no room for doubt, for though it was suggested by Mrs. Wilson and others, that the Social Democratic Federation already offers all that is required in the way of a political organization the majority of those present did not seem to agree with her, but rather to endorse cordially the contrary opinion expressed with no uncertain voice, by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Hubert Bland. Those who know Mrs. Wilson's opinion of the merits of party politics will doubt whether she intended to compliment the Social Democratic Federation by claiming for it a position which few Socialists conceive it to hold. It now remains to be seen if the promoters of this meeting intend their resolution to bear fruit in action, or to be merely the expression of a "pious opinion."