TO-DAY.

No. 55.—JUNE, 1888.

Elysium.

Ah, when, two happy ghosts, shall we
Sit hand in hand beside that shore
Where moans the illimitable sea,
Which now we name Eternity,
For evermore and evermore?

I think the shining waters break
So softly on the mystic shore,
Such music in the ear to make,
We should keep silence for their sake,
For evermore and evermore.

We should not need one word to say,
Of any burden that we bore
Along Life's stony, toilsome way,
So far would seem that tedious day,
So surely past, for evermore.

Nor should we any longer know
The ills that vexed us heretofore,
The bitter word that worked us woe
The griefs whereat our eyes o'erflow,
Should then be soothed for evermore.

And there, two happy ghosts, might we
List to the waves, as once of yore
We heard them by another sea
Break on the pebbled beach, while we
Thought love was ours for evermore.

Ah, sweet! the years are long and gray,
Since you and I, upon that shore
Stood silent, while the echoing day
Sent back the thunders of the bay,
For evermore and evermore.

I think ghosts our will haunt that hill
And not the faint Elysian shore,
And shepherds, who have slept their fill,
Shall start to see us sitting—still—
Still hand in hand for evermore.

ADELINE SERGEANT.

——et impera.

I have always regarded Mrs. Besant as one of the few surviving legatees of the metaphysicophobia which has characterised English thought until recently, and which reached its zenith in the last generation in the Bentham-Mill-Lewis school. Personally, I am not afflicted with that complaint, believing as I do that metaphysics, *i.e.*, the analysis of consciousness, experience, or reality itself, whether in general or on any special plane, in contradistinction to the generalisation of its particular phenomena, is the highest of all sciences. But in the May number of To-day, I find Mrs. Besant perpetrating a piece of antiquated metaphysics that makes a benighted metaphysician like myself stand aghast. We have a concrete whole to deal with, to wit, Human Nature or Society. Mrs. Besant very properly distinguishes certain attributes or aspects of this whole, presumably in their order of importance. She further finds that the economical side of Human Affairs is the most fundamental. So far so good. But now Mrs. Besant wants to isolate this economic aspect of human affairs, this not merely for theoretical purposes, but for practical as well, in other words to treat the economic basis of society as something *really* existing independently of the other relations of social life, just as sweetness might be imagined to exist independently of the other qualities of sugar, or "force" apart from matter energising, etc. I can hardly believe that Mrs. Besant really thinks "the communalising of rent and interest" (as she terms it) by which I assume she intends what other people mean by the "communisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange" could take place while leaving untouched the existing basis of religion, morality and the family. One of the great discoveries of Marx was the interdependence of human affairs on an economic basis. To Mrs. Besant, apparently, Socialism does not either directly or indirectly affect the *whole* of human interests, but is *exclusively* concerned with the economical change. Mrs. Besant will understand, therefore, that for me and those who hold the same views it is impossible to regard such questions as the family, morality

and religion (understanding thereby the socially-recognised ideal of life) as outside the "universe of discourse" when the discourse is of Socialism.

To turn to Mrs. Besant's utterances on the marriage question. Mrs. Besant is right in assuming that the phrase "hostile to the present forms, etc." with me at least means something more than "opposition to the inequalities of the present marriage laws," as for example, that the husband should be compelled to maintain a lazy and worthless wife, while the wife is under no such obligation as regards the husband. Mrs. Besant asks "why should agreement on the communalising of rent and interest necessarily connote agreement on the best form of the sexual relation?" Again, waiving Mrs. Besant's statement of the "economics" of Socialism, I reply that those economical arrangements are indissolubly bound up with the ethical notions of *equality* and *liberty*, (real as opposed to nominal) which are incompatible with the compulsory enforcement of the dogma that "marriage ought to be indissoluble save by death," the only *raison d'être* of this dogma being the individualistic basis of property-holding. When I speak of "hostility to the present form" of marriage I mean, of course, hostility to the compulsory enforcement of that form by law or custom. It would be sheer midsummer madness to assert that under a Socialist *règime* people would be prevented from uniting in a lifelong relation if they wished to do so, would be forcibly severed in fact. "Agreement on the best form of sexual relation" is not demanded. What is demanded is simply and solely the recognition that Socialism implies perfect freedom in the sexual relation so far as the law and public opinion are concerned. (I purposely eliminate the question of children as that is not necessarily involved, and introduces a problem which ought to be dealt with on its own merits, and apart from that of the mere union of the sexes). As stated in the "Communist manifesto," the freedom of sex-relations contemplated by Socialism is little more than the abolition of a sham and the recognition of a fact. To those who approve the present abominable and infamous theory of enforced lifelong monogamy, the rank soil in which flourishes lying, maiming, and murder, I contend, in spite of Mrs. Besant, we have a right to refuse the name Socialist. Historically, as Mrs. Besant must know, sex-relations, like other relations, have changed with the principle on which wealth is produced and distributed. Hence anyone who, like the Socialist (?) referred to by Mrs. Besant, supposes the same sex-relationship will prevail under a Socialist as under an individualist system of economics, must be a very "half-baked" person indeed.

To one statement of Mrs. Besant I must take particular exception. She says, speaking of "promiscuity" (that awful bogie) that "it does not appear likely, to say the least, that civilised man will revert to the sexual relation of his barbarous ancestors." Now I should observe that we are here concerned, not with Civilised man, but with Socialised man, which makes all the difference, for collectivism is undeniably a *reversion*, if you like to call it so, to primitive conditions—*with a difference*, of course. Mrs. Besant is here arguing on the exploded linear theory of progress. Mr. Leroy Beaulieu, also arguing on this theory, finds Collectivism (*i.e.*, the economical side of Socialism), to be itself untenable for the same reason. The fact that group-marriage obtained in early society should rather be (as far as it goes) a presumption in favour of something analogous to it obtaining in the future. Though I am not concerned to defend "promiscuity" as Socialistic, but only freedom of choice, which is quite a different thing, yet I may suggest, as a crumb of comfort to the timid, that if this shocking "promiscuity" should ever become a generally recognised form of the sex-relation a bountiful providence would probably find a new word which would soften its horror, just as when Atheism (another ugly word) became fashionable, the same beneficient influence (presumably) moved Professor Huxley to call it Agnosticism. Mrs. Besant makes one or two, what to me seem rather questionable assertions in her zeal to defend the modern family; as that "men and women now need more than difference of sex to stimulate the sex-attraction." I should have said that *as a rule*, and always *barring special deformity or idiosyncratic antipathies*, difference of sex was quite sufficient with most persons to stimulate the sex-attraction. I fancy there is a good deal of humbug among people as to this. However, it is a matter for discussion independently of the present issue. In fine, what I maintain is, that while Socialism is by no means incompatible with the life-long union of one man with one woman from choice, yet it *is* incompatible with any compulsion, or pressure being exerted in favour of this, or any other particular "form" on the part of law, custom or public opinion. With perfect freedom and tolerance in this matter of sexual relations, I have sufficient faith in progress to feel assured that the "form" best adapted to the new needs of society will evolve itself, survive, and in the end be generally and spontaneously adopted.

As to religion I have often enough explained why I hold Christianity to be in spirit radically antagonistic to Socialism. Those who oppose me on this point content themselves with citing a few ebionistic texts and carefully evade my main

argument. Mrs. Besant in her remarks altogether ignores the place of Christianity in universal history.

In concluding, I am pleased to be able to designate what in my humble opinion is the soul of truth in Mrs. Besant's fallacies. It is this. Socialists have been hitherto too apt to abuse more or less sympathetic non-Socialists without reflecting how they could make use of them. To my thinking there is no reason why we should not unite with Christians, Radicals or what-not for the securing of immediate results—eight-hours bills, feeding of children in board schools, or any attack on the sacredness of private property in the means of production, no matter how slight or from what quarter it may come. Although any close contact with a man, for example, who advocated in the face of our police and criminal reports the perpetual enforcement of the existing system of monogamic marriage, would be extremely distasteful to me, yet I for one would be quite prepared to tolerate the atmosphere of such a person for a time, if I thought I could get an eight-hours bill out of him.

But while admitting all this I hold it none the less important that the words Socialism and Socialist should be understood to imply the clear consciousness of what is contained in the Proletarian movement of modern times, as well as what merely appears on the surface—what this economic change really means in its effects on the whole of Human life. A man who calls himself a Christian Socialist is for me by his own confession a "hybrid Socialist." It is no use mincing matters. If a man is not prepared to accept the consequences of the social revolution "all round," he cannot be anything else than a "hybrid Socialist." It is ten to one that such a man does not even accept communisation of the means of production unreservedly. If you question him closely you will find that his aims on the subject are at best nebulous, and often that he only seeks some modifications in a more or less Socialist direction of the existing organisation of society. Socialists *sans phrase* must never forget that (to quote the Communist Manifesto of 1847) "in the movement of the present, they represent and take care of, the future of the movement.

E. BELFORT BAX.

The Story of a Heart.

RICHARD JEFFERIES is chiefly known to literary fame by such books as "The Gamekeeper at Home," and "The Amateur Poacher," in which the most exquisite descriptions of country scenery and open-air life are combined with a singularly poetical treatment of natural history and scientific phenomena. Less popular than these writings, yet in reality far more characteristic and remarkable, is the small volume entitled "The Story of my Heart, my Autobiography," a title which is fully justified by the contents of the book, although there is but little narrative of facts and dates and places. Real autobiographies—autobiographies in which the writer unveils, not the outward circumstances of his fortunes and life, but the inner intellectual and spiritual history of himself, are rare indeed, but this is one of them. It is just for this reason, because it is the story of a heart, and not of a lay-figure, that it possesses a peculiar and inexpressible charm for some readers, especially, of course, for those who are in sympathy with the main current of Jefferies' thoughts and aspirations.

The book may be regarded under two aspects—its treatment of metaphysical questions and of social. The leading thought by which it is inspired throughout is the intense and passionate yearning for what the author calls "soul-life." Not content with those three ideas which he says the primeval cavemen wrested from the unknown darkness around them—the existence of the soul, immortality, and the deity—he desires to "wrest a fourth, and even still more than a fourth, from the darkness of thought." He believes that we are even now on the verge of great spiritual discoveries, that "a great life, an entire civilization, lies just outside the pale of common thought," and that these soul-secrets may be discovered by a resolute and sustained endeavour of the human mind. This "fourth idea," which cannot be precisely formulated in words, since there are no words that can adequately express it, is the conception of a possible soul-life which is above and beyond the idea of existence and immortality, beyond even deity

itself; a spiritual entity which is even now realised in part by the absorption of the soul, in rapturous moments of reverie and devotion, into the beauty and infinity of the visible universe. In this mysticism and vision-faculty, of which there are many traces in the book, we are often reminded of De Quincey; but in Jefferies' case there is a more distinct purpose and a deliberate perseverance in the search after the unknown. "I looked at the hills," he says, in his description of a spot to which he used daily to repair with the object of thus communing with the spiritual world, "at the dewy grass, and then up through the elm branches to the sky. In a moment all *that* was behind me; the house, the people, the sounds, seemed to disappear, and to leave me alone. Involuntarily I drew a long breath, then I breathed slowly. My thought, or inner consciousness, went up through the illumined sky, and I was lost in a moment of exaltation."

It is open to question how far there is anything exceptional or novel in such experiences as these, which may be nothing more than that ecstasy of spiritual rapture of which all poetical minds have been at times cognisant, or, on the other hand, may be, as Jefferies apparently considered them to be, a kind of new and peculiar revelation—a glimpse vouchsafed to him, more than to other men, of the new ideas, and even new physical forces, which are destined sooner or later to become the subjects of thought. At any rate it is on these spiritual impulses, this intuitive conception, that Jefferies' strange notion of a "fourth idea" is based; while at the same time he absolutely discards the most cherished axioms of modern scientific enquiry, refusing to admit the "it must follow" which springs from the accepted law of cause and effect, and declining in his metaphysical creed to be pinned to any inevitable choice between creation, evolution, or the eternity of matter. Men of science will smile at such presumption; but it is nevertheless remarkable that this distrust in the approved scientific methods should be felt and expressed by one whose own powers of observation were extraordinarily keen. Whatever may be the ultimate verdict of time on Jefferies' metaphysical speculations, there is no doubt they are well worth studying; right or wrong, correct or incorrect, they have certainly the merit of being singularly interesting, stimulating, and suggestive.

When we turn to the consideration of social subjects we find that Jefferies is at once despondent and sanguine—despondent when he remembers the past, sanguine when he looks forward to the future. "Full well aware," he says, "that all has failed, yet, side by side with the sadness of that knowledge, there lives on in me an unquenchable belief,

thought burning like the sun, that there is yet something to be found, something real, something to give each separate personality sunshine and flowers in its own existence now. Something to shape this million-handed labour to an end and outcome, leaving accumulated sunshine and flowers to those who shall succeed." But the first step towards the future success must be the full acknowledgment of the past failure, the recognition that for want of proper organisation little has as yet been effected by centuries of labour and discovery, and further that the established theological dogmas are utterly impotent to give strength or consolation to the mind. "Human suffering is so great, so endless, so awful, that I can hardly write of it. It is the duty of all rational beings to acknowledge the truth. There is not the least trace of directing intelligence in human affairs. This is a foundation of hope, because, if the present condition of things were ordered by a superior power, there would be no possibility of improving it for the better in the spite of that power. Acknowledging that no such direction exists, all things become at once plastic to our will." So, too, if we realise that mere ingenuity of workmanship is in itself worthless, that "control of iron and steel has not altered or improved the bodily man," and that "no benefit to the heart or to the body accrues from the most accurate mechanism," we may learn an invaluable lesson for our future guidance, and on the disappointments of to-day lay the foundation of the true prosperity of a coming age. Like Thoreau, Jefferies maintains that a mere fraction of the heavy toil which men now undergo might, under a rational system of forethought and organisation, be sufficient to fill the whole world with abundance of comfort and happiness. "This, our earth," he says," produces not only a sufficiency, but a super-abundance, and pours a cornucopia of good things down upon us. Further, it produces sufficient for stores and granaries to be filled to the roof-tree for years a-head. I verily believe that the earth in one year produces enough food to last for thirty. Why, then, have we not enough? Why do people die of starvation, or lead a miserable existence on the verge of it? Why have millions upon millions to toil from morning to evening just to gain a mere crust of bread? Because of the absolute lack of organisation by which such labour shall produce its effect, the absolute lack of distribution, the absolute lack even of the very idea that such things are possible. Nay, even to mention such things, to say that they are possible, is criminal with many. Madness could hardly go farther."

The contemplation of past and present misery may thus, according to Richard Jefferies' opinion, serve to stimulate mankind

to wiser exertions and more unselfish aims; while the very fact that there is no proof of an overruling intelligence, and no sure consolation for the ravages of death, should be interpreted, not as a reason for despair, but as an urgent injunction on each individual to make the best possible use of his own lifetime, and as a sign that man's destiny is in his own hands whenever he is strong enough and wise enough to shape it to a nobler end. A strong belief in the perfectibility of man (perfectibility in the sense of the prospect of unlimited improvement, as Godwin taught in his political writings a hundred years ago) is the main feature of Jefferies' social creed; he looks forward with absolute confidence to a time when the human body shall have reached a state of perfect physical vigour, and the human mind shall have burst the bondage of the narrow circle of ideas by which it is now encompassed; when mankind, no longer doomed through the improvidence of preceding generations to a lifetime of wasted labour and heart-corroding anxiety, shall dwell in peace and leisure and contentment. It is interesting to notice that Jefferies, like Godwin, is inclined to the fantastic belief that an age may come when even death will be found to be not inevitable to the ideal human race, since "in the course of ages united effort, long-continued, may eliminate those causes of decay which have grown up in ages past, and, after that has been done, advance farther and improve the natural state."

This is a noble creed, whatever objection may be taken to it by the theologian on the one side, or the man of science on the other; in fact, all that Jefferies says about the duties and destinies of the human race gives proof of the loving warmth and loyalty of the heart whose story is here unfolded to us. One feeling only we miss with some regret in this autobiographical record, and that is the sense of brotherhood between man and nature, the bond of sympathy between the human animal and the lower animals to whom he is in some measure akin. In spite of Jefferies' extraordinarily keen appreciation of the loveliness of nature, this sense of brotherhood which has been a characteristic feature of many lofty spirits, from St. Francis of Assisi to Wordsworth, and has been especially developed in the modern humanitarian movement, seems to be almost entirely unknown to him. "There is nothing human in nature," he says, giving as his reason the fact that man, in any extremity of need, must look in vain for assistance to earth or sky or sea; and apparently forgetting that the absence of assistance does not necessarily indicate a similar absence of sympathy. He dwells with strange insistance on the repellent aspect of the more monstrous forms of animal life, such as certain sea-fish, the toad, and the snake;

and asserts that even the shapes of the horse, dog, and other domestic animals, though familiar to the eye through long intimacy, are in themselves "anti-human," or at least "ultra-human." Entirely rejecting the theory of evolution, he seems to regard man, or at any rate the mind of man, as wholly independent and unconnected with the general order of the universe. "Centuries of thought," he says, "have failed to reconcile and fit the mind to the universe, which is designless and purposeless, and without idea. I will not endeavour to fit my thought to it any longer; I find and believe myself to be distinct—separate; and I will labour in earnest to obtain the highest culture for myself." One looks in vain to this philosophy of purely human aspiration for such a sentiment as that which is expressed in Wordsworth's lines;

> "To her fair works did Nature link
> The human soul that through me ran;"

or,

> "Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels:"

For Jefferies, tender and unselfish though his teaching is, on all points in which the welfare of humanity is concerned, appears not to have been inspired by that wider sympathy which can embrace all forms of life.

Such is the substance of the metaphysical and social ideas of which Richard Jefferies makes confession in his "Story of my Heart." Stated thus in bald and brief outline, and divested of the transcendant charm of the language in which he himself expressed them, his thoughts and aspirations will doubtless seem to a critical reader to be fanciful rather than philosophical, indicative of eccentricity rather than of genius. But when read in Jefferies' own words, and studied rather as a prose-poem (for such it is) than as a philosophical treatise, the book can scarcely fail to be appreciated at its true value. As a master of prose style Jefferies has been equalled by few modern writers and surpassed by fewer still; so perfectly melodious are his sentences, so full of tender gravity, so simple yet so subtle in their structure and modulation. In reading some passages of the "Story of my Heart" one could fancy that the words, as has been said of Shelley's words, "were really transparent, or that they throbbed with living lustres;" for beneath the apparent calm there lurks a white heat of intense and passionate feeling. "Who would have imagined," says Jefferies, in a description of one of his raptures of "soul-prayer" on a hill-top to which he daily resorted, "who could have imagined the whirlwind of passion that was going on

within me as I reclined there?" In the same way a careless or unsympathetic reader might miss the real intensity of spiritual emotion by which the story, so simply told, is throughout inspired; though none, I think, could fail to admire the beauty of the language, as it ripples on from thought to thought in harmonious sequence, with here and there the repetition of a favourite word or image (for Jefferies was a great master of the refrain) as a keynote or undertone.

Here, in conclusion, is a specimen of Jefferies' prose-poetry, which may serve to illustrate what I have said of his manner of thought and expression. It is an account of an ancient grass-covered tumulus on the hills where he used frequently to wander and meditate.

"Sweetly the summer air came up to the tumulus, the grass sighed softly, the butterflies went by, sometimes alighting on the green dome. Two thousand years! Summer after summer the blue butterfles had visited the mound, the thyme had flowered, the wind sighed in the grass . . . . Two thousand times the woods grew green, and ringdoves built their nests; day and night for two thousand years—light and shadow sweeping over the mound—two thousand years of labour by day and slumber by night. Mystery gleaming in the stars, pouring down in the sunshine, speaking in the night, the wonder of the sun and of far space, for twenty centuries round about this low and green-grown dome. Yet all that mystery and wonder is as nothing to the thought that lies therein, to the spirit that I feel so close."

H. S. SALT.

The Belfry.

Here bells once swung their heavy tongues
  And called the faithful in to prayer.
Climb up the ladders shaky rungs,
  And let us see what now is there;
There now no clamourous bell's tongue swings
But gentle, soft, warm wings.

The birds build in the belfry high—
  In God's own house they make their nests;
And we have watched them, you and I,
  And envied their unruffled breasts,
And longed to find some sure retreat,
And build our nest, my Sweet.

Yet since we may not build a nest
  Within the church's shadow, dear,
It surely were not all unblest
  To build a happy nest out here,
Where all the winds of heaven blow
And rose and heartsease grow.

E. Nesbit.

Advocatus Diaboli.

MOST readers are aware that when it is proposed to add a new name to the long list of the Roman Calendar a court is held, to one of the officers of which is deputed the task of bringing to light, as far as may be, all the sins and misdeeds committed by the individual who is about to receive the honour of canonisation. To the officer in question is accorded the title that I have placed at the head of this paper. By many he is looked upon as a sort of deputy Mephistopheles, by others as little else than a mere buffoon. Neither conclusion does him justice, since, if his duties be honestly performed, he may serve some important uses, two of which may here be pointed out.

Possibly, but not probably, he may convince the court that their supposed swan is nothing more than a respectable goose; that the man whom it is posing as a saint has been as great a sinner as the advocate himself.

On the other hand, if the saintship be assured, he may prove that a possibly glorious future lies before each one there assembled, since the candidate for canonisation was by no means an angelic being who passed through life calm, holy, and unperturbed, but a man of like passions with themselves, who gained his glorious goal by wading through a sea of sin and sorrow; and that the meanest of his admirers may hope, by culture and self-restraint, to attain to a like perfection.

Now it seems to me that some of our Socialist Societies would be the better for the possession of a Devil's advocate, whose business it should be to show up some of their leaders' or lecturers', deficiencies, and thereby challenge their claims to popularity. Doubtless the post would be a thankless one, kicks and not halfpence would constitute the advocate's pay, and only a small minority would have the courage to back him. But that minority would consist of the best men of the party, and would probably be the means of doing a vast amount of good. To the lecturer himself might safely be left the part of advocatus Dei, or (here clearly the same thing),

Advocatus Populi; and, since the principle of mutual admiration has been largely developed of late, there need be no fear of his failing to obtain, for the present at least, a considerable numerical majority.

Question time would be our Advocate's opportunity. I am not supposing the party assailed to be a trained and tried lecturer, one who has already earned the right to canonisation. Such a man will have fairly studied the pros and cons of his subject, and be prepared to answer any question that might be asked with reference thereto, or, at worst, to evade it cleverly in case of urgent expediency. Moreover, such an one knows that questions cropping up in a mixed audience form an important factor in a lecturer's education.

The man I have in view is the enthusiastic amateur, who, however great his fitness in some respects, is, perhaps, because of his really fine enthusiasm, lacking in tact, training, or self-control. As a rule he has studied one side of his subject only, and this for two reasons; (1) he has less time at his disposal than the professional lecturer, and, (2) he does not *care* to see both sides. In confronting an opponent the "put yourself in his place" idea, never occurs to him. In rushing at conclusions he makes common sense yield place to sophistry, and, having deceived himself, is convinced that if people will only look at the thing honestly they will see with his eyes. Intuitively he grasps a truth, and, having done so, asks himself, not "Why is this true?" but "How can I prove this?" snatching at any argument that seems to favor his view without at all testing its validity. The consequence is a mass of false reasoning which, while it ensures the plaudits of the unthinking, drives away disappointed the truth-seeking waverer, who would gladly have accepted the conclusion had the argument been sound. Pity he cannot see that where the truth of a conclusion is assured it is well that the discussion should be exhaustive, and that to treat a true thing otherwise than truthfully is alike a crime and a blunder.

It should be borne in mind that men of this stamp are generally very lovable, and therefore invested with a greater capacity for harm-doing. Their best friends are often angry with them, but go on loving them nevertheless; while those not sharp enough to detect their foibles look upon them as prophets, and accept their sayings as the outcome of inspiration.

The enthusiastic amateur will find a remedy for every evil that a capitalistic community is heir to, and has never a doubt as to the efficiency of his nostrum, or the practicability of his *modus operandi*. Take an instance which came under my own notice. A lecture was delivered to a Socialistic audience

in a provincial town, subject, "Employment for the Unemployed." The lecturer touched on the present unhappy state of things generally, and chiefly on that of the labour market; and then entered into the details of his proposed remedy. Briefly it was this. The Guardians of the Poor, or, as he preferred to call them, the Guardians of the Poor Rates, should take over all disused factories and set a certain number of those who are now unemployed to work therein. Wages were not to be paid in coin but in labour notes, exchangeable for such commodities as the men might require presumably at stores kept for that purpose. The profits were to be devoted to the acquisition or the building of other factories, and the consequent diminution of the unemployed list. The men were not to be hurried or overworked, the evils of competition were to be done away with, and the work to be made as pleasant as possible. As a natural consequence the produce would be of surpassing excellence, and, since profit would be a minor consideration, the fortune amassing capitalist would be beaten at all points; his factories eventually falling into the hands of what would then, in simple truth, be a Socialist Federation.

A delightful lecture, but a little utopian and lacking in detail, which three or four listeners were not slow to discover; and some pertinent questions were put. Said one, "I gather that in your ideal factory payment, remuneration—call it what you will—will be given to all alike. That being so what inducement, if any, will you hold out to men possessing the necessary skill and capacity, to take the parts of managers and foremen? I can imagine some coming forward from love of the work, others from love of their fellows. If more are needed and the capable men prefer an easy day's work at forge or bench to the worries and anxieties of managership, what then?"

It was of course open to the lecturer to say that he was not at the moment prepared to go into minute detail, but that he trusted that when the time came men would be found ready and willing to work in whichever way they might for the benefit of the community at large. But he didn't. He is a capital fellow to fight when there is practical fighting to be done, but when he is theorizing, for one to point out a flaw in his theory, or even to suggest a difficulty in the working out thereof, seems to him tantamount to predicting failure. He is therefore indignant with, or impatient of, the questioner, whom he looks upon as a mere quibbler—none the less so that he cannot answer the quibble. So he fenced with the question and attempted to chaff and browbeat the questioner, until the latter rose to explain, and repeated the former. Then the

lecturer resumed his tactics, winding up with a second blunder, "and now I hope our friend is satisfied!"

"Our friend," however, was not satisfied, and took the offered opportunity to say so. He added "You may of course decline to answer my question, or admit your inability to do so. I maintain that you have not even touched the point at issue?" There the matter dropped. The few thinking men who were earnestly seeking for a firm foothold gave ejaculatory expression to their discontent, and the harm was done.

While making his "reply" the speaker took occasion to dub managers indiscriminately as idlers and self-seekers, completely ignoring the fact that where both labour conscientiously, and under favourable conditions, the life of the hand worker may be ease itself compared to that of the brain worker. Is this wise? Surely the province of the true Socialist is not the setting of class against class, but the breaking down of the barriers that separate class from class: and the hope to be cherished is the elimination of the bad from each and the sharing of the good by all: in a word the doing away with class distinctions. Yet our socialist writers and lecturers for the most part, professional and amateur, treat the members of the manual working class as though they were demigods, who, if the social positions were reversed, would be quite free from the vices and follies of the now well-to-do folk; while by refusing to credit the said well-to-do folk with a single virtue they literally force many who would otherwise be helpers to take up antagonistic attitudes. Here is work for our Devil's Advocate! to show that not the posessors of property only, nor the non-posessors only, need education, but each and all alike.

A striking instance of the absolute ignorance of the merest rudiments of economics on the part of some of our most prominent lecturers came under my notice a short while back. A very well-known member of the largest of our Socialist organisations, a man whose constant boast it is that for a quarter of a century he has been fighting the battle of the workers—was discussing with another well-known lecturer the possible solutions of the land problem. His own particular solution was the giving to every man an equal portion for his own use. Lecturer No. 2 pointed out to him that land was of varying fertility, that one piece of land might yield twice as many bushels of potatoes per acre to the same amount of labour as another, and that thus an injustice would be done to the man who received the less fertile land. "Oh, my dear fellow," said lecturer No. 1, "that difficulty is easily got over, of course in that case you would give twice the quantity of the unfertile land"!!!

I have tried to touch the key-note of the air that our Devil's Advocate would have to play, he might extemporise any number of variations. Let him strike and spare not, in absolute certainty that those whom he hits the hardest will eventually be the most eager to thank him for so doing. Clearly it is time the people realized, and acted upon, what has been proved over and over again, that a cause which has truth at bottom suffers more from its injudicious friends than from its bitterest enemies.

GEORGE ELSTRIE.

NOTE.—Since writing the above I have read the article on "Working-Class Usury," by Mr. Standring, in the March number of TO-DAY, and am glad to see that he, at least, can face the facts. I hardly agree with him that individual cases are not a fair test, since enough might be quoted to prove the existence of a system. I know of one in which a man left a northern town in quest of work. He could obtain none there and had come to his last shilling; so borrowed three shillings of a mate on the understanding that six shillings should be paid for it when he obtained work. The terms were offered by the borrower and accepted by the lender, neither appearing to think them anything very extraordinary. It must be remembered that no payment was to be made until the borrower obtained work, however long a period might elapse. As a matter of fact the money was repaid in three weeks, so that the rate of interest was £1,733 6s. 8d. per cent. per annum. In the works that my informant had left was a man who made a practice of lending small sums, taking what interest he could get. He sometimes received eighteenpence on the Saturday in return for a shilling lent the preceding Tuesday.

Capital:

A Criticism on Political Economy.

By KARL MARX.

Translated from the Original German Work,

By JOHN BROADHOUSE.

(Continued from our last number.)

Section III.—Branches of Industry in England in which there is no legal limit to Exploitation.

Up to this point we have considered the tendency to extend the working day—the hunger of the wehr-wolf for surplus labour in a department in which the horrible exactions,—which an English economist says are not surpassed even by the cruelties of the Spaniards to American Red Indians (*z*)—have caused capital at length to be restrained by the fetters of legislation. We will now look at some branches of production wherein, to this day, labour is exploited without any fetters, or was so quite recently.

Mr. Broughton Charlton, a county magistrate, stated, as the chairman of a public meeting held in the Assembly Room at Nottingham, on January 14th, 1860, "that there was an amount of privation and suffering among that portion of the population connected with the lace trade, unknown in other parts of the kingdom, indeed, in the civilized world. . . . . Children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning, and com-

(*z*) "The cupidity of mill-owners, whose cruelties in the pursuit of gain have hardly been exceeded by those perpetrated by the Spaniards on the conquest of America in the pursuit of gold" (John Wade "History of the Middle and Working Classes," 3rd ed., London, 1835, p. 114). The theoretical portion of this work, which is a sort of handbook of Political Economy, is, considering the time when it was published, original in some parts, *e.g.*, on Commercial Crises. The historical portion is very largely an unblushing spoliation of Sir F. M. Eden's "History of the Poor," London, 1799.

pelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven, or twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening, and their humanity absolutely sinking into a stone-like torpor, utterly horrible to contemplate. . . . . We are not surprised that Mr. Mallett, or any other manufacturer, should stand forward and protest against discussion. . . . . The system, as the Rev. Montagu Valpy describes it, is one of unmitigated slavery, socially, physically, morally, and spiritually. . . What can be thought of a town which holds a public meeting to petition that the period of labour for men shall be diminished to 18 hours a day? . . . We declaim against the Virginian and Carolinian cotton planters. Is their black-market, their lash and their barter of human flesh, more detestable than this slow sacrifice of humanity, which takes place in order that veils and collars may be fabricated for the benefit of capitalists?" (*aa*)

The Staffordshire Potteries have been the subject of three inquiries by Parliament during the last 22 years. The result of these is contained in Mr. Scriven's Report in 1841 to the "Children's Employment Commissioners," in Dr. Greenhow's Report in 1860, published by command of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council (Public Health, 3rd Report, 112-113), and in Mr. Longe's Report in 1862, in the "First Report of the Children's Employment Commission, June 13th, 1863. For our purpose it is sufficient to select from the Reports of 1860 and 1863 some statements made by the children who were exploited. From the children we shall be able to judge as to the adults, particularly the girls and women, in a branch or trade compared with which spinning cotton looks like a delightful and healthy occupation (*bb*).

A boy named William Wood, aged 9, was 7 years and 10 months when he was put to work. His work was "running moulds"—carrying moulded articles into the drying-room, and taking back the empty mould. He began work every day at six in the morning, and left off at nine at night. "I work till nine o'clock at night six days in the week; I have done so seven or eight weeks." Fifteen hours at work for a boy 7 years old! J. Murray, 12 years old, said "I turn jigger, and run moulds. I come at six—sometimes come at four. I worked all night last night; till six o'clock this morning. I have not been in bed since the night before last. There were eight or nine other boys working last night. All but one have come this morning. I get 3s. 6d. I do not get any more for working at night. I worked two nights last week." A lad of

(*aa*) *Daily Telegraph*, January 17th, 1860.

(*bb*) F. Engels' *Lage*, &c., p. 249.

ten, named Fernyhough, said, "I have not always an hour (for dinner). I have only half-an-hour sometimes—on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (*cc*)."

Dr. Greenhow says the average length of life in the pottery districts round Stoke-on-Trent and Wolstanton is remarkably short. Though in the Stoke district only 36·6 per cent., and in the Wolstanton district only 30·4 per cent., of the adult males over 20 are engaged in the potteries, yet amongst men at that age in the former district over half, and in the latter nearly two-thirds, of the entire deaths are caused by chest disease amongst the potters. Dr. Boothroyd, a medical man practising at Hanley, states that "Each successive generation of potters is more dwarfed and less robust than the preceding one." Dr. McBean, another practitioner, says:—"Since he began to practise among the potters 25 years since, he had observed a marked degeneration, especially shown in diminution of stature and breadth." These statements are extracted from the report by Dr. Greenhow in 1860 (*dd*).

The following is from the Report of the Commissioners in 1863. Dr. Aldridge, Senior Physician to the North Staffordshire Infirmary, says:—"The potters as a class, both men and women, represent a degenerated population, both physically and morally. They are, as a rule, stunted in growth, ill-shaped, and frequently ill-formed in the chest; they become prematurely old, and are certainly short-lived; they are phlegmatic and bloodless, and exhibit their debility of constitution by obstinate attacks of dyspepsia and disorders of the liver and kidneys, and by rheumatism. But of all diseases they are especially prone to chest disease, to pneumonia, pthisis, bronchitis and asthma. One form would appear peculiar to them, and is known as potter's asthma, or potter's consumption. Scrofula attacking the glands, or bones, or other parts of the body, is a disease of two-thirds or more of the potters. . . . . That the 'degenerescence' of the population of this district is not even greater than it is, is due to the constant recruiting from the adjacent country and intermarriages with more healthy races" (*ee*). Mr. Charles Pearson, formerly House Surgeon of the same Infirmary, writes in a letter to Mr. Commissioner Longe, amongst other things:—"I can only speak from personal observation and not from statistical data, but I do not hesitate to assert that my indignation has been aroused again and again at the sight

(*cc*) Children's Employment Commission, First Report, &c., 1863. Evidence, pp. 16, 18, 19.

(*dd*) "Public Health, 3rd Report, etc.," pp. 102, 104, 105.

(*ee*) "Children's Employment Commission," 1863, pp. 22, 24.

of poor children whose health has been sacrificed to gratify the avarice of either parents or employers." He sets out the causes of the potters' diseases, and reckons them all up in one phrase, "long hours." The Report of the Commissioners hopes that "a manufacture which has assumed so prominent a place in the whole world will not long be subject to the remark that its great success is accompanied with the physical deterioration, wide-spread bodily suffering, and early death of the work-people . . . . by whose labour and skill such great results have been achieved" (*ff*). What is true of the Potteries in England is also true of those in Scotland.

Lucifer matches were first made in the year 1833, at which date phosphorus was used in the manufacture. The trade is at the present time largely carried on in Birmingham, Liverpool, Norwich, Glasgow, as well as Manchester and London, in which towns it has been extending since 1845. The extension of it has been accompanied by lockjaw, and in that year a Viennese physician discovered that that affliction was confined to match makers. Of the workers, half are under 13 years old, and most of the rest are under 18. It is such an injurious trade, on account of the bad and unhealthy odours, that only those who are absolutely driven by necessity send their children to it.

In 1863 a number of witnesses were examined by Commissioner White, and of them 270 were under 18 years old, 50 under 10, 10 under 8, and 5 only 6 years old. The hours of labour were 12 to 14 or 15, the hands frequently taking their meals in the workrooms, breathing air laden with the noxious phosphorus fumes.

In the printing of wall-papers the commoner sorts are done by machine, and the better qualities only by hand. The busiest time of the year is from October to April inclusive. During these months the work proceeds without intermission, from 6 in the morning till 10 or 11 at night, or even later.

J. Leach stated that last winter he had 6 girls out of 19 away, ill from overwork, and that he had to "bawl" at them to keep them from falling asleep.—W. Duffy said: "I have seen when none of the children could keep their eyes open for the work; in fact, none of us could." J. Lightbourne: "I am 13. Last winter we worked till 9 at night, and the winter before till ten. I used to cry with sore feet every night." J. Apsden: "When my boy was 7 years old I used to carry him backwards and forwards through the snow, and he used to work 16 hours a day. I have often fed him as he stood at his machine, for he could not stop it or

(*ff*) "Children's Employment Commission," p. xlvii.

leave it." A man named Smith, manager of a Manchester factory, says: "We (speaking of his "hands") work, without stopping for food, till the regular day of 10½ hours is finished at 4.30 p.m., after that all is overtime" (*gg*). (We wonder if Mr. Smith goes without meals during the "normal" day of 10½ hours?) He continues, "We seldom leave work before 6 p.m. (he means to say "leave off the consumption of our labour-power machines"), so that in effect we work overtime all the year round. For our hands, young and old, numbering 152 children and 140 adults, the average week's work for the last 18 months has been at the the lowest 78½ hours. During the 6 weeks ending 2nd May, 1862, the average was 8 "normal" days or 84 hours weekly." And this same Smith, who is greatly devoted to the *pluralis majestatis*, adds with a ghastly smirk, "Machine work is not great." And the employers in the hand-printing say:—"Hand labour is not so unhealthy as machine work." In general the factory owners are indignant at the idea of stopping the machines during meal times. Mr. Otley, manager of a wall-paper factory in the Borough, says "a clause which allows work between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. would suit us (!) very well, but the hours 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. are not suitable. We always stop our machine for dinner (How kind, to be sure!). The waste of paper and colour is not worth mentioning. But I can quite understand why the loss of time is not liked." The opinion of the Committee is that the fear which leading makers have of losing time and thence losing profit, should not be a sufficient reason for allowing children under 13 years old, and young persons under 18, to work 12 or 16 hours a day, regardless of their food, or simply to give it them at odd times, as water or coal to the steam engine, or oil to the wheel, merely as auxiliary material to the labour machines, during the production process(*hh*).

Apart from the bread-making machinery introduced of late, no English industry has, down to our own day, so persistently conserved a mode of production so archaic, so ante-Christian (as we learn from the poets of the Roman Empire) as baking. But, as we have before said, capital takes the technical modes

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(*gg*) Of course this is not to be taken to mean the same thing as our surplus labour-time. In this particular case, 10½ hours constitute the normal working day, which of course comprises the normal surplus-labour. When this is ended comes "overtime," for which a slightly better price is paid. From this it seems that the labour expended during the "normal" day is really underpaid, and the overtime only a device to extort more surplus-labour, which would still be the case if the labour-power of the "normal" day were properly remunerated.

(*hh*) *l.c.*, Appendix, pp. 123, 124, 125, 140 and liv.

of the labour-process as it finds them, and is at the outset quite indifferent as to what that process may be.

The extraordinary extent to which bread is adulterated, particularly in London, was first made known by a Committee of the House of Commons "On the Adulteration of Articles of Food" (1855—56), and Dr. Hassall's Book "Adulterations Detected" (*ii*). The result of the facts then brought out was the Act of the 6th August, 1860, "For preventing the Adulteration of Articles of Food and Drink," an ineffective law, as it of course shows the most solicitous consideration for every free trader who decides "to turn an honest penny," by buying and selling adulterated articles(*kk*). That Committee stated with more or less *naïveté* its conclusion that by free trade was chiefly meant trade in adulterated (or as it is wittily put in England, "sophisticated") goods. As a matter of fact this sort of sophistry is better able than Protagoras to prove white black and black white, and more clever than the Eleatics at demonstrating *ad oculos* that realities are nothing but appearances(*ll*).

Anyhow, this Committee fixed public attention on its "daily bread," and consequently upon the baking trade. At the same time public meetings were held, and petitions presented to Parliament embodying the outcry of the journeymen bakers of London against their long hours and so forth. This outcry was so pressing that Mr. H. S. Tremenheere, who was also a member of the oft-mentioned Commission of 1863, was appointed a Royal Commissioner to enquire into the matter. His Report, combined with the evidence which he elicited(*mm*),

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(*ii*) Finely-powdered alum, sometimes mixed with salt, is a regular article of trade, known by the distinctive name of "Baker's Stuff."

(*kk*) Common soot is a well-recognised and very energetic form o carbon, and is sold by capitalist chimney sweeps to English farmers for manure. In 1862 the English Juryman was called upon to decide in an action whether soot mixed without the buyer's knowledge with 90 per cent. of sand and dust was "genuine" soot in the "commercial" sense, or "adulterated" soot from a legal point of view. These "friends of commerce" came to the conclusion that it was genuine commercial soot, and the plaintiff was non-suited, and mulcted, moreover, in the costs of the action.

(*ll*) Chevallier, the French chemist, in his work on the "Sophistications of Articles," mentions ten, twenty or thirty various modes of adulterating many of the upwards of 600 things which he notices. He admits that he does not know all the modes, and does not speak of all that he does know. He mentions the following:—of sugar, 6 modes of adulteration; olive oil, 9; butter, 10; salt, 12; milk, 19; bread, 20; brandy, 23; meal, 24; chocolate, 28; wines, 30; coffee, 32; and so on. Even God Himself does not escape this fate; vide Ronard de Card, "On the Adulteration of Sacramental Materials," Paris, 1856.

(*mm*) "Report etc., relating to the grievances complained of by the journeyman bakers, etc., London, 1862," and "Second Report, etc., London, 1863."

stirred up, not the public heart, but the public stomach. The men of England are well acquainted with the Bible, and they knew very well that unless a man is elected by grace to be a capitalist, a landlord, or a sinecurist, he is commanded to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but they did not know that while he was eating his daily bread he took with it a certain quantity of human perspiration, together with the matter from abcesses, cobwebs, dead black-beetles, and rotten German yeast, to say nothing of alum and sand, and various other pleasant mineral substances. Without, therefore, showing the least respect for his holiness Free Trade, the free trade of Baking was put under the supervision of Inspectors appointed by the State (at the end of the Parliamentary session of 1863), and by the same Act journeymen bakers under 18 were forbidden to work between 9 at night and 5 in the morning. The final clause (of the Report) speaks volumes with regard to overwork in this time-honoured and familiar business.

Books of To-Day.

WE doubt whether that masterful being, the "general reader," will find Stepniak's new book (*a*) quite as entertaining as those which have preceded it from the same author's pen. It is wanting in the personal and dramatic element which kept the reader of "Underground Russia" in a condition of perpetual and almost painful tension; it lacks the varying interest and the powerful and often lurid style of "Russia under the Tzars," and it has for the ordinary Englishman a less pointed application than the "Russian Storm Cloud." And yet we come away from it with a stronger impression of its writer's personality and ability than we did from any of his previous works. Let us here make a frank, and possibly priggish, confession. Stepniak is the one Socialist who has never disappointed us. To use a word much in disfavour now with super-sensitive literary persons, he is always "reliable." Together with keen philosophic insight and clearness of political vision he unites that steadiness of head and robustness of thought which we have always ignorantly, but patriotically, imagined was peculiarly characteristic of men of our own race. He is as enthusiastic as a Marseillaise revolutionist, and as cautious as a Dutch professor. Feeling to the very depth of his soul the wrongs and anguish of the masses of his fellow countrymen he never permits himself to be carried away into hysteria. He is always pre-eminently sane, and entire sanity is a quality rarely met with in those who take part in the early struggles of a young cause. We agree with Mr. Hyndman that the English socialist movement must remain English, and, to this end, that any possible leader must be of English blood, but pending the arrival of that much needed man we could not wish the party a better fate than to be led by the virile mind and sober judgment of the author of the two volumes before us.

In this book Stepniak enables us to touch bottom in our investigations into the social and political condition of Russia. Important as are the Monarchy, the aristocracy, the army, the Intelliguentia, as factors in the problem, they one and all fade into insignificance beside the question of the *Moujik* who makes 82 per cent of the entire population of the country. In a word the Russian question is the agrarian question, and it is to a most thorough and exhaustive examination of agricultural Russia that Stepniak has devoted the whole of two thickish volumes. It is sad reading, this long life-history of the dumb, patient, toiling folk who form the base of the pyramid on whose apex stands the subject of the constant panegyrics of the fervid democrat who edits the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The story of the Russian peasant is not unlike a landscape on the shores of

(*a*) "The Russian Peasantry," by Stepniak. Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London, Paternoster-square, 1888.

the Arctic sea—a long, dull, gray outlook, unbroken, save now and then by a black tempest of suffering or a fiery hail of persecution. It is almost incredible that a people can live and multiply under the conditions sketched out in the first volume of this work, but live and multiply the *Moujik* does—and live and work, and love and think. This thought of his, this "thaumaturgic art," as Carlyle calls it, which he has acquired, it is on which the hopes of every Russian patriot are based. At present it takes the direction, almost entirely, of religious speculation, and yet from this fact –a fact in which your ordinary Socialist would see nothing but a cause for despair, Stepniak largely draws his conclusion that "supposing Socialism is not entirely a dream, of all European nations, the Russians, provided they become a free nation, have the best chance of realising it."

The whole of the first volume is occupied with the consideration of the economic condition of the peasantry, and it is a tale of little else than starvation tempered by floggings. So horrible is the whole story that the reader asks himself a dozen times before the author asks it for him on the last page but one, how is it that this people has never, goaded to madness, risen and sent the whole social system flaring up to heaven in one great holocaust of blood and fire? Here is his question and answer "Where lies the source of this phenomenal endurance displayed by a mass of several scores of millions of people, whose bitter dissatisfaction with their lot admits of no shadow of doubt? In the character of our race? In our people's past history or present political superstitions? Each of these causes must certainly have had its share of influence, though they are but secondary ones, which cannot explain this strange fact satisfactorily. We, for our part, think that the main cause of it lies elsewhere, and is this: the moral, political, and social discontent seething in the heart of the rural population of Russia has found a sort of safety-valve in the new evolution of religious thought which nowadays covers almost the whole field of the intellectual activity of the Russian labouring classes. Almost the whole moral and intellectual force produced by the modern Russian peasantry runs in the channel of religion; religion engrosses the leading minority of the people who understand most thoroughly and feel most keenly the evils of the day, and who alone would be able to put themselves at the head of any vast popular movement. That religion should play this part of intercessor between popular discontent and its logical outcome—open rebellion—is all the more natural and unavoidable, inasmuch as our new popular religions are not merely a protest against, but to some extent a cure to the evils against which the popular conscience is most indignant. The religious enthusiasm proper to all new sects has re-established—for a time at least—more paternal relations between those men who adhere to them, and has subdued the fierce and cynical struggle for economical predominence which is raging in our villages."

The second volume is to the religious, as is the first is to the economic, condition of the *Moujik*, and is the result of an immense amount of study and research, although we believe many of the facts of the contemporary religious movement were gained by personal experience during the author's wanderings as a propagandist. We cannot say that this second volume interested us as much as the first, although its opening chapter has impressed us more profoundly with Stepniak's ability than any of his previous writings. We differ from almost every proposition he makes in his criticism of Christianity, but we are bound to confess that this criticism is altogether free from the crudities and misapprehensions, which disfigure the polemical work of nine out of every ten anti-Christian writers. His perfect sanity makes all his judgments worthy of careful thought, and all his arguments need answering. To sum up, the book is

well worth reading either by the student of sociology or the casual reader, but of course the former will find in it more pleasure and profit than the latter. It concludes with the expression of something more than a hope that the iron tyranny of the Tzardom, will, ere long, be broken and give place to a Constitutional Government. In the first Cabinet of this Government, Stepniak has more than made out a claim to hold an important portfolio.

A writer in *Our Corner* said some few months ago that Mr. W. Morris' prose did not differ perceptibly from any body else's prose, and at the time it was made the criticism was a just one, for *A Dream of John Ball*,(*b*) was not then published. The prose of this little volume differs very perceptibly from other peoples', so much so indeed that we question whether there are half-a-dozen men living who could do anything at all like it. Dreams are generally very bad reading indeed; they are too often the resort of unskilful writers anxious to be rid of the restrictions of possibility, and timorous of attempting the romantic, and so they are usually either wildly extravagant or painfully prosaic and undreamlike. Mr. Morris has steered clear of both extremes. The vague illusive atmosphere of dream-land surrounds us all through the story. Every scene has the definite-indefiniteness of a sleep-picture. For instance, in the skirmish between the Kentish yeomen and the soldiers, one feels that one is present at a very real fight, in which real arrows cleave the air and swashing blows are struck, but directly the struggle is over and the dead and wounded borne away, one finds it absolutely impossible to say exactly what has happened—to describe the nature of the ground, the disposition of the combatants, etc. This is just as it should be when the narrator is a poet telling his dream, not a "special" writing of an actual event. Perhaps the poet is most in evidence in the speech of John Ball at the village cross. What distinguishes a poet like Mr. Morris from us ordinary groundlings is, we take it, less his mastery of form and diction, though even here, heaven knows, the distinction is obvious enough, than the spiritual insight which guides him straight to a truth at which we can only arrive by the painful and often tortuous path of research and ratiocination. This mysterious faculty of hitting the mark without deliberate aim-taking, is the real meaning of that much misused word, inspiration. It is always given, never acquired, and he who has it is a poet, though no line of verse ever flows from his pen. When the divine afflatus is upon him he speaks with the voice of one having authority—he is, *pro tem*, infallible, and must be followed and obeyed, for he is possessed by a power not himself which makes for truth. Take the instance above mentioned of the speech of John Ball. Be it remembered Mr. Morris, the Mr. Morris of the platform and the *Commonweal* articles, is not a Christian—not only is he not a Christian but he is positive in his antagonism, he is anti-Christian, yet these are the words he puts into the mouth of the central figure of his dream, the hedge priest John Ball "Forsooth, ye have heard it said that ye shall do well in this world that in the world to come ye may live happily for ever; do ye well then, and have your reward both on earth and in heaven; for I say to you that earth and heaven are not two but one; and this is that which ye know, and are each one of you a part of, to wit, the Holy Church, and in each one of you dwelleth the life of the church, unless ye slay it. Forsooth, brethren, will ye murder the church any one of you, and go forth a wandering man and lonely, even as Cain did who slew his brother? Ah, my brothers, what an evil doom is this, to be an outcast from the Church, to have none to love you and to speak with you, to be

(*b*) "A Dream of John Ball," by William Morris. Reeves & Turner, 196, Strand, 1888.

without fellowship! Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death; and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them, and the life that is in it, that shall live on and for ever, and each one of you part of it, while many a man's life upon the earth shall wane." Here we have the very essence and innermost core of Christianity discovered to us by a man who in his uninspired moments is anti-Christian. Leo xiii. speaking *ex cathedra* could not have been more rigidly orthodox. Now try to imagine Mr. Belfort Bax or Dr. Parker writing the above speech and you will realise at a glance the immensity of the gulf which divides the clever writer or speaker from the poet, the inspired one.

One leaves Mr. Morris' book with something deeper than the feeling of æsthetic gratification which follows the enjoyment of rare and beautiful literary work, and with something higher than the exaltation with which one listens to prophetic utterances; for one has a heart-deep sense of satisfaction at knowing that at last, after centuries of neglect and scorn and derision, something like justice has been done to the brave and loyal priest and martyr in the people's cause. This reverent memorialising of the true heroes is surely an earnest of the near triumph of the true cause, and we are not altogether without hopes of some day being present when Mr. Morris unveils a statue of John Ball in Trafalgar Square.

What is the average belief of the average Englishman, of the American Republic? That it is a land where the silly class distinctions of the old world are unknown, where the etiquette of the Court has given way to the courtesy of the people, and where, consequently, politeness and culture are the inheritance of the many, not the privilege of the few. A Paradise of women, where every woman is queen in right of her womanhood, and every man is a courtier free from servility. A land of general helpfulness in which the stranger finds a friend in every passer-by. A land of celerity, where every train is express—where letters travel with the speed of telegrams and telegrams with the quickness of thought. Above all, a wide, breezy, expansive land, whose atmosphere is clear and crisp, health-giving and tonic—the exact opposite of the mephitic air of the older civilizations—and whose citizens are healthier, robuster in mind and body, more human, more free, more intelligent, more everything that is good, than the men and women brought up under the debasing influences of ruined castles, Established Churches, Lord High Chamberlains, and first, second and third class railway carriages.

Such is, or something very much like it is, the view of the ordinary Briton who has never crossed the Atlantic. Dr. Aveling (*c*) has crossed the Atlantic and this is what he thinks of the Great Republic which lies beyond it. To begin with its children;—"They seem to have died long ago, and to have left only a decrepid race of wizened little men and women. Their faces are quite hard; their voices empty of music; their ways no more the ways of children than an ape's grimaces are human. These terrible children are more like fœtuses than healthy, full-born human beings. If they are the children of the poor, the sign they bear on their brows is oppression; if they are the children of the rich, it is the seal of cruelty and lust." Of its citizens and citizenesses: "The New York populace is very ill-mannered, and, worse still, very ill-woman-ered. A stranger in New York is glared at, giggled at, snorted at, guffawed at, if so be as he or she is anywise otherwise than the usual citizen." Again, "The Americans are a very, very dirty

(*c*) "An American Journey," by Edward Aveling—New York J. W. Lovell and Co., London, William Reeves, 185, Fleet Street, E.C., 1888.

people. I have never seen—in my worst nightmares I have never dreamed of, such filthiness of habit as is habitual." This charge of uncleanness the author reiterates upon every other page. In the hotels (alas for English notions of American hotels), it is next to impossible to get a bath. "The idea of a daily cold tub does not exist in this land," and when one does get at that necessity of an average Englishman's life, it is "livid with dirt, dust, and indescribable filth." That great American institution, expectoration, seems to have made Dr. Aveling as sick as he makes his readers by his accounts of it. It is everywhere, "even in the drawing-rooms of the grandest hotels. Office, billiard-room, bar, reek with spittoons, and the floors reek with the pools and the streaks of variously coloured saliva that has missed them, or was never aimed at them." This is why hotels must have a separate entrance for ladies. Our sympathy for the American "lady" is a trifle diminished when we learn that she is in the habit of *chewing snuff*, which she shovels into her mouth with a little spoon called "a dipper." The chivalry with which the Americans are supposed to treat their women folk is also a figment of the imagination. They never yield their seats to them in tram-cars and they not unfrequently spit on their gowns. As we have said above, if there was one thing in which we have all and always believed that the Americans beat us in a common canter it was in the quickness and comfort of their travelling, and here again we are doomed to disillusion. Cars, cabs, railways, are all as bad as bad can be. "When an American tells you that you can walk through from one end of the train to the other—trust him not, he is fooling thee. You may tumble, or scramble, or leap, or bound, or be chucked through, but walk—never! The windows are kept as hermetically sealed as a thermometer. And if I, gasping, opened one an inch or so, everybody fled from my vicinity, as if from a leper." The trains are atrociously slow, the fastest travelling only thirty-two miles an hour. So are the telegraphs, so are the posts. "The average period required by the post office for the delivery of a letter, in the same city as that in which it was posted, seems to range from twenty four to thirty-six hours." It must not be supposed from the above that Dr. Aveling found nothing which pleased him on his journey, but the "note" of the book is distinctly one of complaint, not to say of indictment. He tells us that he never loved England so much as when he was in America. It is written in a light, chatty, and readable style, and although there are too many desperate attempts at being funny, these are set off by amusing anecdotes and occasional felicities of phrase—"A chubby note of interrogation" seems to us a happy description of a healthy little English child. Some very graceful verses called "The Legend of the Lemmings" which should have seen the light long ago, prove that Dr. Aveling numbers the poetic faculty among his other literary accomplishments.

When, with a sigh of relief, we turned over the last page of Miss Clapperton's "Margaret Dunmore," we made a vow never again to look into a book calling itself a Socialist novel. We have broken our vow and we have been duly punished; and we hereby do our best to save our readers from a similar infliction by warning them on no account to read the latest literary effort of Miss Constance Howell (*d*). It is a perfectly preposterous production, and the failure is the more egregious inasmuch as the effort was so ambitious. The chief characters are a husband, wife, and their only son, the heir. The husband is an atheist who thinks that

(*d*) "A More Excellent Way," by Constance Howell.—Swan, Sonnenschien & Co., London, 1888.

atheism is not fit for women and children, and judging by its awful effects upon his wife and son he is almost justified in his opinion. So when his wife, after reading the works of a few sceptical writers, abandons Christianity, he is much annoyed, insists upon her attending church, and has his little son subjected to a course of religious instruction. For sixteen years or so the mother keeps silence as to her theological beliefs and devotes herself to the writing of three books intended for the perusal of her son when he should have arrived at years of discretion. One of these books is a "History of the Jews," and we don't mind betting that in that history it was suggested that Moses was drunk when he went on to Mount Sinai, and that it contained many other pleasantries of a similar delicate and edifying nature. Of course, when the young man comes of age he reads these charming volumes and equally of course he promptly blossoms into a full-blown atheist, joins the National Secular Society, to the funds of which his mother was a liberal subscriber, and becomes a bore. A little later he turns Socialist, joins the Social Democratic Federation and takes to outdoor lecturing. Now, every novel reader knows that to deal successfully with the mental and moral conflict which precedes conversion from a religious belief something more than talent is required; the exigency of the case calls for genius. Kingsley attempted it in "Hypatia," and came to grief. The author of "We Two," was even more unsuccessful; and in our humble opinion Mrs. Ward has not deserved all the praise which has been showered upon her undoubtedly clever book "Robert Elsmere." Where such writers as the above have failed it was not very likely that Miss Howell would have succeeded, and she has not. Her novel is as crude as a cabbage and as dull as a dead fish.

Before entering upon a conflict with authority it is desirable to know upon which side stands the law, for under a democratic regime, short of successful revolution, the law is in the long run pretty certain to triumph over the law breaker, whether the latter be policemen or street preacher. A party defending its legal rights, however much it may be bludgeoned, fined, and imprisoned at the outset, if it only goes on long enough "suffering it up" is quite sure of eventually gaining the good will and active help of the majority of the citizens. Just as, on the other hand, a government, although it may make itself unpopular for a time by arbitrarily enforcing the law, will, as soon as it is made quite clear that it *was* enforcing the law, receive the support of the electorate beyond whom is no appeal. The innate good sense of a democracy tells it that the Executive is after all only its Executive, and that so long as any given law exists, that Executive fails in its duty if it does not enforce it with horse, foot and artillery. It is just as well frankly to recognise that the wider the extension of the franchise the narrower are the rights of the minority, and that under a pure democracy those rights disappear altogether. Universal suffrage jockeys revolution, and the minority are only left the choice of bowing to the ballot or facing the gallows. The right of rebellion is the most sacred of all moral rights, and it is open to any man at any time to raise the standard of revolt against the majority of his fellows, but he should clearly understand that if he does so, he does so with the rope round his neck, and that it is unmanly to whine about tyranny when the victorious majority pull the other end of it. The subject uppermost in the minds of most Socialists just now is the question of public meeting, the right, that is, of meeting in public places out of doors. Hitherto the question has been much confused by the difficulty of discovering the exact bearing of the law upon it. The doctors have disagreed and the minds of laymen have been muddled. Therefore we think our thanks are due to Mr. Blagg for having put each of us in a position to judge for himself what his legal rights of addressing

his neighbours in the highways and byeways really are.(*e*) His little book is an admirable compendium and summary of all that statute and custom has to say on the subject of public meeting in England. The conclusion which he comes to is "that public meetings are, in themselves, lawful, but subject to reasonable conditions ; and that it is for the Court to decide whether or not a particular assembly was unlawful and whether those who took part in it have committed any offence." That is to say the whole matter lies with a jury, and as a jury means simply public opinion, it is public opinion we must gain over to our side if we want to establish our right to meet or for the matter of that to do anything else. Mr. Blagg's little book should have a place in the library of every Socialist branch and Radical Club, and be studied by everyone interested in the continuance of the out of door propaganda.

(*e*) The Law as to Public Meeting, by J. W. Blagg. Butterworths, Fleet Street, London, 1888.

Notices of a large number of books are unavoidably held over until next month.