TO-DAY.

No. 57.—AUGUST, 1888.

Adam to Ebe

Just for this once, this once I will be wise!
No blossom here shall turn to fruit for me.
This sweet half-certainty that is not doubt,
This sadness that joy's mists are wreathed about,
These long looks, lengthened out in dreams again,
I would keep these, renouncing other gain.
I pluck and wear my flower of Paradise;
I will not have the apple it might be!

For flowers mean perfume, promise of delight
More dear than fruit has ever granted yet:
And fruit is much too sweet, and much too sour,
And, with the first bite, one regrets the flower.
The flower will die—but your clear eyes shall weep
A gathered flower, whose fragrance time shall keep,
And its white memory shall light my night
—Dark with the thousand thoughts one would forget.

For—since we have not talked of love, but gazed
The one sweet second more than others do,
Touched hands, and known the electric flash that flies
From each to each, through meeting hands and eyes,
Have dreamed and doubted, questioned and replied,
And laughed not gaily, and not sadly sighed—
All we might be and are not—heavens untried—
In each for each eternally abide.
I am to you what no man else can be,
You, what no woman ever was to me,
A splendid light, a life's ideal, raised
Above the dust mere loves degrade one to;]

Yet, how refuse, when lips like yours invite?
When eyes like yours look sad, how turn away?
I cannot tell you why my lips are fain
From this sweet offered apple to refrain,
For, at the word, our blossom shed would be
And the mere fruit be left for you and me:
The only word could save, would ruin all!
So—the old tale! The bloom will slowly fall,
The fruit grows ripe—I, spite of will and wit,
Must bite the apple if you offer it;
Then will the dream-lights flicker out and die
And we shall wail, awakened, you and I,
Then I to you am nothing any more
Than what some other fool has been before,
And you to me no more my sweet Dream-queen
But what some fifty other fools have been.
I cannot save you, Eve! Your apple bite
And—ere your teeth have met— our world grows gray.

E. NESBIT.

My Friend Fitzthunder, the Unpractical Socialist.

"I CANNOT help wishing, in spite of the feelings of many esteemed friends of the Cause," said Fitzthunder to me lately in his inimitably grave and weighty way, "that somebody with more leisure than I would make a careful study of the unpractical Socialist, and compile a Socialist noodle's oration to be printed and hung up in the halls where revolutionary speechifaction most prevails." He paused, and added, with a flash of irony, "A young convert with an introspective turn and a few notes of his earlier lectures would find plenty of material for the work without much preliminary reading."

Now I could stand this sort of thing well enough from some people; but from Fitzthunder it was really too much. For, if you will believe it, Fitzthunder's only business in life is to defeat Socialism by a plan, peculiar to himself, of taking it in detail and baffling it point by point. Let me explain for the benefit of the outsider that Socialism involves placing in the hands of the people the land, capital and industrial organization of the country. The conditions of industry and of individual character are such, that the average man is industrially helpless unless he can find these three indispensables simultaneously. Land is of no use to him without capital. Land and capital are of no use to him unless they are organized as a going concern in which a post is prepared for him. Our first parents knew of no such difficulty. Adam would have gone at it with a home-made spade, and lived in the sweat of his brow. But the average man of to-day is, happily, not Adam; and hence his case requires less primitive treatment. This complexity is the Achilles' heel of Socialism; and at it Fitzthunder draws his bow (a long bow) with deadly effect. He finds a Henry Georgite agitating to get the land

for the people. Straightway he is down on him with a demonstration of the uselessness of land without capital. Then he hunts out the agitators for the restitution of capital to the people by taxation of ground values and of large incomes. Them he confounds by conclusively shewing that the capital would not be of the least service to the workers so long as the landlords retained the land, and the private employers the industrial organization. This done, he demolishes those who are urging municipal organization of relief works for the unemployed by proving that what the workers really want is the land and capital of which they have been robbed, and without which they can never enjoy the full product of their own labour. Having thus carefully fortified the three strategic points at which capitalism is threatened, his next care is to repair and strengthen the old defences against Socialism. Chief among these are the restriction of the franchise to comparatively well-to-do people by property qualification; and the maintenance of an irresponsible hereditary caste with a veto on popular legislation. In championing these Fitzthunder is in his element. Upon the would-be abolisher of the throne and the House of Lords, he heaps his scorn. What does the House of Lords matter whilst the House of Commons is full of the Lords of Capital? There is no House of Lords in America: yet look at the condition of the people there! What you have to attack is not title, but private property in the means of production. And you talk of democracy!—of the vote!—of the suffrage! Look at the countries where there is "universal suffrage"; and you will see there the atrocious gulf between the industrious poor and the idle rich, just as you see it here. Do not be misled by the quacks, the sciolists, the men on the make, who earn a cheap popularity by talking about the suffrage and the House of Lords. Socialism is the one thing needful. Go straight for the land, the capital, and the industrial organization: they are the vital parts of the hydra of capitalism.

As I have said, when you succumb to these denunciations, and do go for the land, the capital, and the industrial organization, Fitzthunder is quite ready to block you on those lines too. And whatever line he blocks, he warns you against the men who are trying to open it. Beware of A, the Land Restorationist; of B, the unemployed agitation man; of C, the Radical with the progressive income tax proposal; of D, the democrat; of E, the republican; of G, the foe of the peers; of H, the member of the committee for taxing land values; of I, the national insurance schemer; and, in short, of the whole alphabet except F. They are ambitious: they are aiming at parliament: they want to get their names up. What have

they done for the people in the past? Nothing: the people are still slaves. What will their measures do for the people if carried? Let us see. Suppose A gets you the land, of what use will it be without the capital, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

The disadvantage of all this to Fitzthunder is, that it makes him unpopular. The disadvantage of it to the rest of us is that it makes Socialism unpopular. A, B, C, and the others do not like F's abuse. In deploring the misery of the people they reflect back his blushes and give sigh for sigh; but in drawing up the battle against this misery, they carefully exclude Socialists from the council, because they know that the moment they attempt to storm any particular position, Fitzthunder will promptly go over to the enemy on no better ground than that the attack is not a general one, commanded-in-chief by himself.

Having in this wise checkmated all the active politicians who are working, consciously or unconsciously, for Socialism, all that Fitzthunder need do, in order to secure the *status quo*, is to stand still. This seems simple; but it is not so to a man who is always frantically crying "Forward." Such conduct would fall short of even the very moderate degree of consistency which Socialists now expect from their speakers. Fitzthunder has, therefore, to find excuses for not progressing. Usually he takes a hint from Mr. Micawber, and explains that he is collecting himself for a spring. The workers, he says, are not yet organized for revolution—and Fitzthunder insists on revolution. The achievement of Socialism without it would be to him as flat as a pantomime without a transformation scene; and I have no doubt that if his conception of it could possibly come off, he would pop up after it with a rhetorical version of "Here we are again," and, with his Ishmaelite tactics, make a capital clown in the Socialist harlequinade.

I must not here do Fitzthunder the injustice of implying that he means anything positively by "the revolution." But he means a great deal negatively by it. No matter what the revolution is, everything else is clearly "a mere palliative." Your business being to make the revolution, you are to be spared from making anything else, because everything else is rose-water in comparison; and it is one of the accredited first principles of political science that revolutions cannot be made with rose-water. It is waste of time, he declares, to get Socialists elected to vestries: the International Social Revolution is not going to be made by the parish of St. Nicholas Without and St. Walker Within. It is reactionary to meddle with the School Board: education is only a dodge of the capitalist to make educated labour as cheap as unskilled labour is to-day. As to Parliament, what

is it but a nest of exploiters? What could a few Socialists do there in comparison to what they could do—on Fitzthunder's lines—outside?* They would be corrupted, howled down, ignored in the newspaper reports. Besides, Fitzthunder has a certain moral delicacy in meddling with Parliament. To seek entrance there is to give the institution a certain sanction. It is bowing the knee to Baal, going through the fire to Moloch. Even about voting, Fitzthunder's conscience is not easy. It is a delegation of his inalienable personal rights, a surrender to another of his own individuality. Who, he justly observes, can represent him as well as he himself? Representation is a fraud: no man can represent another. Down, therefore, with this political sham; and erase your name from the register of voters. I sometimes pity Fitzthunder for the cruel necessity that compels him to delegate to selfish tradesmen his inalienable personal right to make his own boots.

Fitzthunder is fond of reading "historical" novels. As he pores over these, he imagines that he is spoiling for a fight; and he never realizes until he is actually in the field how slightly merely speculative courage appals a policeman. He cares nothing for drilled battalions: at the supreme moment the people will rise to a great revolutionary idea; spontaneously organize themselves; and sweep the scum of capitalism into the abyss of bygones. "We are many: they are few," he tells us. Then Mrs. Fitzthunder, who, in spite of her private knowledge of poor Fitz's folly, takes kindly to a movement in which every man is a hero, and every woman a heroine, *ex-officio*, backs him up with stories of what the women did in the Commune of Paris; and dreams of herself serving a revolutionary cannon in an effective attitude, with a becoming red cap of Liberty on. Mrs. Fitzthunder, I may add, is very dark, and has never converted a single woman whose complexion does not suit the crimson cap. She is more dangerous than Fitzthunder in some ways; for she is more plucky (not knowing any better) and would probably really fight, whereas Fitzthunder would no more allow matters to reach fighting point if he could help it, than Charles V. dared snuff a candle with his fingers.

I used to try to argue with Fitz; but he always set up the impregnable defence of suddenly becoming the most sensible of men; agreeing with every word I said; and actually appealing to me for confirmation when he claimed that he had said so,

* I cannot resist saying here that if Fitzthunder could be depended on to put a stop to all parliamentary business as effectually as he has put a stop to the business of the Socialist councils, it would be an excellent piece of Anarchist tactics to send him there at the earliest opportunity.

himself, all along. When I was a young hand in the movement I stood in great awe of him, and quite believed that he, having solved all the difficulties that were puzzling me, was ready to shew me my duty the moment I educated myself up to him. But the more I educated myself, the more I found that Fitz did not in the least understand the subjects upon which I had supposed him to be a great authority. When I at last realized that he was a tremendous humbug, I tried, as I have said, to reason with him. I knocked his wretched arguments into a cocked hat. I asked whether we could have Socialism *without* the land, *without* the capital, *without* the industrial organization. He said certainly not—that that was the gist of his whole teaching. I demanded whether a state could be permanently Socialistic without being Democratic. He answered that he had been a Democrat from his earliest boyhood. I wanted to know whether the removal of restrictions on the franchise, and the abolition of the House of Lords, were not essential preliminaries to democracy. He reproached me for having considered it necessary to put such a question to him. I insisted on his telling me whether the Socialist movement (as distinct from the movements of the Socialists) did not consist in the successive occupation and conquest of all these fortresses of the common enemy, by sections of the democratic army, seconded at each operation with might and main by the fully conscious Socialists. He said that he had preached nothing else all his life. Then, seeing that he was going under, I heaped confutation and insult on him. I asked whether he had done half as much for the people as the men whom he accused of having done nothing because they had not done everything? Whether his parroted pet phrase about revolutions not being made with rose-water was any more to the point than Napoleon's original pet phrase about omelettes not being made without breaking eggs; and whether either one or the other had ever been used except as an excuse for murder? Whether revolutionary heroics were or were not the refuse of sensational novels, epic poems, and Italian opera? Whether it was science or savage superstition to conceive the evolution of Socialism as a miraculous catastrophe, with alarums, excursions, and red fire? Whether before talking about the Commune, he had sat down and worked through Lissagaray's history of that event with the help of a map of Paris and his awakened conscience? (He said he had; but I didn't believe him). Whether that terrible book had not branded into his miserable brain the falsehood of all his murderous rant about the people spontaneously organizing themselves, even with death at the gate? (He said that his wife was a fool, and that

he never meant any such thing). Whether—I wanted to rub this into him—the Fitzthunders of that time had not shewn themselves willing to undertake—and bungle—everything for the people except the paramount duty of holding their tongues and doing five minutes serious thought for the morrow; and whether the people had not refused to do anything but fight and die senselessly in their own particular streets or neighbourhoods, like rats in a pit? Whether it was anything to boast of that the children and women had outdone the men in devotion, simply because nothing was done that was beyond the capacity of a child or a woman? (He said he thought I approved of women—that there were enough of them in the Fabian Society anyhow—and that nothing could be done without devotion). Whether the Commune did not prove that devotion without foresight and common sense could do nothing for the people but expose them to remorseless massacre at the hands of Capitalism fighting for its life? Whether—

But here Fitzthunder stopped me resolutely. He had listened to me patiently, he said: he thought I would allow that. I weakly did allow it. Now would I listen for a moment to him? I consented, still more weakly. He then delivered an address across the hearthrug which lasted an hour and thirty-five minutes, and which was nothing but a windy repetition of what I had been putting to him. I submitted because, being an extremely magnanimous man, I had no objection to let him think that he was converting me to his view, instead of I converting him to mine—which he would have died sooner than admit.

But he was not converted. The spots of the leopard broke out at his next Sunday lecture as luxuriantly as ever; and I now no more dream of arguing with him than of attaching any value to his assurances that he quite agrees with me. Besides, I like Fitzthunder, and can get on pleasantly enough with him when we do not talk shop. I also, by-the-bye, bar Art; for though he does not know the front of a picture from the back, artistically speaking, or the architectural points of Westminster Abbey from those of the Charing Cross railway bridge, yet he lays down the law at second hand about the corruption and degradation of Art under Capitalism in a way that I despise. Otherwise—always judging him by the easy standard of private acquaintance—he is the best fellow in the world.

But judged by the very different standard which we must, if we are in the least in earnest, apply to a leader of the people, Fitz is an ass, and a nuisance. He is the epitome of whatever is shallow, juvenile, ignorant, personally vain, vulgarly sensational, intellectually dishonest, and prac-

tically discreditable and obstructive in our propaganda. Yet his influence is immense. He belongs to nearly all the societies, and has played unspeakable havoc with most of them. The Socialist League is dying of him. He has knocked the federal council of the Social Democratic Federation into smithereens. He is at the bottom of the futility of the Anarchists. The only society he benefits is the Fabian, which really owes its separate existence to the demand among reasonable Socialists for a body in which Fitzthunder is resolutely sat upon. And the Fabian does sit heavily on poor Fitz, who, gasping something about "dilettanti" (Fitz sometimes speaks Italian fluently), flies back into the places he has laid waste. Why he is tolerated even there is a puzzle. William Morris knows what a good-for-nothing windbag he is as well as I do: yet he will listen to his speeches, and say "Hear, hear" occasionally with an accent which conveys quite plainly "You may run him down as much as you please; but there is a great deal of truth in what he says." Hyndman positively admires him, and is so conscious of his influence that he has never dared to set his face openly against him. Champion once had so horrible a conceit of him that when the impostor was first shewn up by a fellow Fabian of mine in this magazine, Champion told the writer that the article had hurled the whole movement into confusion. A month or so afterwards, Champion, unable to stand Fitzthunder any longer, let him have a bit of his mind in unmitigated language in *Common Sense*, and went over to the National Labour Party, whereupon Fitz, sinking to the occasion, endeavoured to wreck him by denouncing him in "the capitalist press" as a Tory agent. Kropotkine is completely cut off from the practical work of the movement by Fitzthunder, in whom he believes devoutly. The effect of his teaching on young working men just entering the movement, who see his views apparently endorsed by Morris, Hyndman and Kropotkine, may be imagined when I add that two of his most cherished dogmas are (1) that none of the common obligations of morality need be observed by the workers towards the proprietors (this is the famous "Tory gold" doctrine); and (2) that anything that relieves the misery of the poor only makes them less favourable to the Revolution.

I am sorry to have to assassinate my poor friend—my other self, and the best fellow in the world, as I said before—in this fashion. But my objection to have anything to do with him in his public capacity is a representative one, shared as it is by others who are among the ablest Socialists we have got. We hold aloof from the League, not because we mistrust Morris but because we object to Fitzthunder. We hold aloof from

the Federation, not because we dislike Hyndman and Burrows, but because we wont have Fitzthunder. We hold aloof officially from many highly dramatic reunions of the faithful, because they convey nothing to our minds except a general notion that Fitzthunder has been reading "Tricotrin," and is rather the worse for it. In short, we are perfectly convinced that by whatever agencies Socialism will realize itself in this country, Fitzthunder will always be the foremost obstacle. In which spirit I, for the present, bid Fitzthunder not, alas! adieu, but *au revoir*, wishing him well out of that public sphere for which his talents so eminently unfit him.

REDBARN WASH.

Björnson, and his tales of Norwegian peasant life.

LIKE the sparkle on the waters of a fjörd in the summer sunshine, like the murmur of the pine-forests in the summer wind, like the laughter of the cascades as they leap merrily down the mountain side—like all these in the freshness and sweetness of their communion with Nature are the peasant tales of Björnstjarne Björnson. For in them we find all the brightness and simplicity, all the beauty and grace of the homely old Norwegian life, together with the mingled grandeur and gladness of the fair Norwegian land. They are the works of a true Norwegian, of a true patriot, of a true son of the land which all his life he has loved so well. "In Norway will I live" he has said, "in Norway will I fight or fall, in Norway will I sing and die." It is this which gives his homely tales their power and reality. For he speaks as one of the people of whom he writes, and amongst whom he has spent his life, from the day when he first drew breath in the bleak, old parsonage on the mountain-side at Kvikne, till he came to live on his pleasant "gard" near Diserud in the lovely Gausdal valley.

Very cold and wintry was the old home of Björnson's childhood, Björgan as it was called, the parsonage attached to the parish of Kvikne in the Orkedal, one of the many valleys of the Dovrefjeld. One of his earliest memories as a child, he tells us, is of the time "when I used to stand on the table, and see the swift runners in snow-shoes faring away from us toward the valley . . . . and saw the Lapps come whizzing down the mountains from the Röraas forest with their reindeer and up the slope towards us. . . . . "The coming of winter at Björgan" he says elsewhere, "was sorrowfully early." It was very bleak and exposed, no corn could be got to grow round the "gard," the snow covered everything. The people, too, where rough and wild, and Björnson's father as parish priest needed great tact and power in dealing with them. But he was a man of great moral strength, "a person," as his son says in most appropriate metaphor "capable of keeping a boat still against wind and storm."

But soon the boy visited pleasanter scenes. His father was transferred in 1838 to the parish of Naesset in the Romsdal, amid some of the loveliest scenery in Norway. The lofty mountains with their bold peaks, the sloping plain approaching the Molde Fjörd, the numberless waterfalls tumbling into the lovely valleys below, together with the level character of the valley-land and the peculiar formation of the mountain peaks gave this dale a distinctive character. It impressed the boy very strongly, though he was only six years old when the family went to live there. "Here at the Naesset parsonage," he says, "one of the finest gards in the country, lying broad-breasted between two arms of the Fjörd with green mountains above and cataracts and gards on the opposite shore, with undulating fields, and eager life in the heart of the valleys, and out along the Fjörd mountains from which naze after naze, with a huge gard on each, project out into the water—here at the Naesset parsonage where I could stand at evening and watch the play of the sun over mountain and Fjörd until I wept as if I had done something wrong, and where on my snow shoes, down in some valley or other, I could suddenly pause as one spell bound by a beauty, a yearning which I was powerless to explain, but which was so great that I felt the most exalted joy as well as the most oppressive sense of imprisonment and grief—here at the Naesset parsonge my impressions grew."

As he grew older Björnson was sent to school at Molde, just across the Fjörd. There he began to to read widely the folk-tales of Asbjörnson, the old stirring Sagas, and the more modern poetry of Wergeland (b. 1808-1845) patriotic and tedious, "the inarticulate cry of a young unsatisfied nation." And so, amid the fairest surroundings of nature and of literature the boy grew up into a consciousness of the National Life, and of the spirit of the Norwegian fatherland, till when 16 years old he went to Christiana, and at 20 entered the University there in 1852.

Here he met with a set of students of more than ordinary promise and intellect. Several of them have since made their mark. Ibsen, the poet, was there; and Vinje, the cultivator of the new Peasant dialect, Sars the historian, Frithjof Foss, the well-known novelist. All of them were eager to revolutionize the literary world of the day, and they have certainly made a distinct advance in the new development of Norwegian literature. But, strange to say, it is not his first year at the University which marks the development of Björnson's genius so much as the following year spent at home in the Romsdal. For during this year he lived much among the peasant population around there, mingled with them in thought and feeling,

composed songs and poems in a popular peasant style, and, to use his own words, "saw the peasant life again with new eyes."

And this fresh insight into the heart of the peasantry, this close communion with those who, more than in any other country, formed the real soul of the nation, was not long in leading to important results. For, after indulging for a year or two in dramatic work, both critical and original, at Christiana, he concluded his University course and proceeded to Copenhagen. Here he wrote the greater part of that lovely prose idyll "Synnövé Solbakken" (1856-7). This, his first, and, as some think, his best tale of peasant life, marked a new era in the literary life of the country. It roused the nation to a consciousness of its nationality and to an appreciation of the beauty of its homely peasant life. Its success was immediate, for, apart from the intrinsic merit of the story, its fresh originality, and the novelty both of subject and treatment, it was in harmony with the views of the leading literary party of the day. This, the "National-Liberal" party, as it was called, required that literature should be at the same time nationalistic in its spirit, Christian in ethics, devoid of the defiance and passion of much modern work, innocently idyllic and yet retaining all the features of the old Norse type. "Synnövé Solbakken" embodied these aspirations in the loveliest form, and the somewhat *blasé* literary world of Copenhagen welcomed this simple story with the same affection that the artificial courts of the XVIIIth century extended to the pastoral tales of romantic shepherds and their loves.

The story of "Synnövé Solbakken" is, in its outline, of the simplest type. It is the story of a peasant boy and girl, Thorbjörn and Synnövé, of their love and of the girl's softening influence upon the rough and hasty nature of her lover; how they had loved one another as children, but how as years go on Synnövé is not allowed to see much of her lover owing to his evil reputation for an unruly temper and roughness. Still she is true to him in spite of her parents' discouragement, in spite of his own wilfulness and folly. They meet one day at the mountain pasture—

"Come let us talk a little" said he at last, seating her gently on the heather, and sitting down beside her.

Drying her tears she meant to smile, but it was a pitiful smile. He took one of her hands and looked into her face.

"Dear Synnövé, why mayn't I come over and see you?"

She was silent.

"Have you ever asked that I might come?" No answer. "Why don't you ask" he went on, drawing her hand closer.

"I dare not," said she very softly. His brow darkened;

drawing in his knee, he rested an elbow upon it, putting up the hand to his face . . . . "if this is the case, I shall never get over," he said.

Instead of answering she began to pull some heather.

"I dare say—I have done much that may displease . . . but people should not judge so hardly. . . . I am not bad" . . . and he stopped, adding after a while, "and I am young . . . scarcely twenty . . . I may" . . . he stopped—"But one who really believes in me . . . ought"—and then he broke down altogether. He heard a low voice beside him :—

"You should not talk like this—you do not know how much I . . . I cannot even tell Ingrid." . . . She cried bitterly . . . I suffer so much."

He caught her in his arms, drawing her closer and closer. "Speak to your parents," he whispered "and it will be all right."

"It depends on you" she said gently.

"On me?"

Synnövé turned and put her arms round his neck. "If you loved me as I love you" she said tenderly, trying to smile.

"And don't I?" whispered he.

"No. No! you take no advice from me. You know what would bring us together but you will not—why not?" And now, having begun to speak out she could go on. "Oh! if you knew how I have waited and waited for the day when I might welcome you at Solbakken! but there is always something that should not be . . . and I must be told of it by the very parents from whom I should wish to hide it!" . . .

It was clear to him all at once. He understood now how she waited at Solbakken for the happy moment when she might lead him to her parents—it was *he* who made such a moment impossible."

But in the end, and after a severe lesson, the moment comes and he is received by Synnövé's parents as her betrothed, and the tale closes with the picture of the two lovers gazing together out of the window of Synnövé's home across the valley to the dwelling of her lover. A simple tale in truth, yet filled with a sweet beauty and homely poetry of the loveliest and rarest type.

It was followed in 1858 by another peasant tale "Arné," then "En Gad Glut" (a Happy Boy) in 1860; and after an interval "Fiskerjenten" (The Fishermaiden) in 1868; and then "Brudeslaaten" in 1875.

The main features of all these tales are their peculiarly national character and their homely realistic simplicity. Björnson sees the peasant in the light of the old Norse Sagas;

indeed, it was said that his first tale was a rejuvenescence of of the old Saga style. The subject of all of them is what the Germans call "volksthümlich"—a word which implies what "popular" and "national" mean to us, and something more. They deal with the loves and hopes, the sorrows and joys of the daily life of the peasant—ordinary everyday subjects in sooth, with no wild, romantic additions—only the eternal romance of that glorious open life among the dark pine forests and laughing fjörds of the land of sunshine and of snow, with the pleasant green mountains towering proudly up above, and the merry waterfalls dancing, pure and sparkling, down their sides to meet the smiling sea beneath.

The relations between the characters in these tales, too, are of the simplest: the maiden and her lover, children and their parents—nothing unusual or "novelistic." And yet they appeal to the hearts and emotions of all who read them as deeply as the most powerful combination, the most intricate complexities, or the wildest improbability of any of our modern novels. For the poetry and truth of them rest upon the eternal and primary feelings and emotions of the heart of man, while their external form presents us with an idyllic and yet realistic picture of the Norwegian peasant. And the spirit of the author himself is seen in that of the people he represents, for he and they are in a true sense fellow countrymen, and he has lived among them and knows them and loves them truly.

It is noticeable that there is no gradual improvement or development in the series of Björnson's peasant tales. His first effort is a perfectly matured product, and as artistic in form and conception as his later novels. And yet there is no repetition. From the background of the free and healthy peasant life the characters in his tales stand forth in all the reality of figures drawn from nature. They are persons and not types. Synnövé, Gunlaug, the Fishermaiden, Marit are all distinct and separate figures, with a definite and artistic individuality of their own.

But it must be remembered with all this that Björnson's peasant tales form only one epoch and exhibit only one side of his literary activity. For after his fortieth year (in 1872) his views, ideas, even his style, seem to undergo a sweeping change which many of his admirers deplore, while others welcome it as heralding a period of greater activity and wider freedom. From this epoch his works are stamped with burning, perhaps too vehement love of freedom, and express the author's new views of politics and social life. The poet and dramatist seem to have become secondary to the orator and politician. Since his visit to America in 1880 he has

developed into the greatest popular orator in Scandinavia, and one of the most eager leaders in the movement for radical reform. Indeed, recently, he has been in such sharp collision with the Monarchy as to temporarily exile himself to Paris. But on his return home this summer (1886) he received a most enthusiastic reception. "Steamers carrying corporations and admirers met him many miles from Christiana. Cannons mingled their deep voices with the ringing hurrahs from thousands on ship and shore; and when he landed the streets were thronged with festive people eager to make him feel that his voluntary exile had not estranged him 'from their hearts.'"

It is impossible here to dwell on the later political activity and recent literary development of Björnstjene Björnson. It is the peasant tales that will always cause him to be welcomed in foreign lands, and it is probably on these that his fame will find its surest foundation. They, together with the dramas of Björnson's contemporary, Ibsen, mark the final close of the period of development and preparation through which Norwegian literature, from 1815 onwards, had been passing. In the dramas of Ibsen peer and peasant alike recognised their common ancestors; in Björnson's tales they see the reflection of the national features of their own age. In spite of all distinction of rank, and of all barriers of place and time, the nation has gained the consciousness of its own nationality and unity, both in the past and in the present; and is now treading the first steps on a new path. And this national spirit is seen in its purest and most beautiful form in the hearts and faces of the peasantry that Björnson has depicted for us—simple, stately figures, full of true nobility and beauty, while all around them is the breath of the wind blowing over the fjörds, the scent of the pine forests and the murmur of the fir-trees on the glorious old Norse hills, with snow-clad peaks that sparkle merrily back in the face of the smiling sun.

H. DE B. GIBBINS.

Aristotle on Wealth and Property.

Part II. Property.

HAVING in Book I. provided his citizen with a family and possessions, Aristotle begins Book II.

"Our purpose is to consider what form of political community is the best of all for those who are most able to realise their ideal of life." "Three alternatives are conceivable. The members of a state must either have all or nothing in common, or some things in common, and some not." The second alternative says Aristotle is impossible. The citizens must at least share in the possession of the site of their city, from which one gathers that there was no Athenian Duke of Bedford.

Plato in the Republic had proposed that the citizens should have all things, even their wives and families, in common. In order to answer Plato he criticises two alternatives first, that everything including wives and children should be common, and next, that property should be common, but that wives and children should be left unnationalised.

Plato had said that if his full scheme could be realised no citizen, or rather no "guardian," would have any individual desires; the word "my," "my child," "my wife," would never be heard, and the whole state would think and feel as one man. Aristotle says that such an atttempt at excessive unity would destroy the state as a state altogether. A state must consist of different parts combined and balanced, so that a harmonious and complete community is produced. Plato's scheme by assimilating all members of the state would make such a complete combination impossible. But even if Plato's scheme were tried the interests which concerned "all," and not "each," would be neglected, "What is everybody's business is nobody's business." A boy, says Aristotle, would be lucky

who could get one real uncle, even in exchange for 10,000 of Plato's fathers.

Next, considering the question of property alone, is it better in the most perfect state that it should be common or not?

"Of community of property there are three possible kinds. Either the land may be owned by individuals and the produce thrown into the common stock (as it is the custom with some nations). Or the land may be held and farmed in common, but the produce distributed among individuals for their special use (as is said to happen among certain barbarian tribes), or, lastly, the land and its produce may both be common. If land were cultivated by slaves of the state, division in this last case would be easy enough, but if the citizens cultivated the land themselves there would be constant quarrels between those who do more than their share of work and receive less than their share of reward, and those who do less work and receive more. I will translate what follows literally "now it is difficult for men to live together and share all human possessions and particularly this kind of possession, and the communities of fellow colonists make this clear. For nearly all fall out with each other through quarrels about everyday matters and trifles, and again we most often fall out with those servants whom we most often employ for the common daily duties. Community of property then involves these and other inconveniences, but the arrangement which at present holds, particularly if it were improved by superior moralisation and a system of good laws would be much superior to it, for it would have the good points of both—that is of the common and individual holding of property. Property should be common in some respects but essentially individualised. For men's interests being kept separate will not cause quarrels and those interests will be advanced when each man confines his attention to what is his own, while, owing to better moralisation with regard to use, the proverb will be realised and the property of friends will be common. The fact that the rough outline of such a state of things is actually found in existing cities shows that it is not impossible, and particularly in those states which are best managed some things are actually open to common use and others might easily be made so. For though each has his private property he puts some parts of it at the disposal of his friends, and other parts he uses for the common good, as in Sparta men use each other's slaves as if they were their own, and their horses and dogs as well, and even when they are travelling in the country provide themselves with provisions from the fields along their way. So it is evident that

possession should be private but use common. But how men are to be brought to this mind it is the business of the legislature to contrive.

And, again, with regard to pleasure it is unspeakable what a difference it makes to consider anything one's own. For perhaps it is not in vain that each man has an affection for himself, but that this is a provision of nature. Men rightly blame selfishness but what is blameworthy is not all self-love but excessive self-love, which is also true of the love of money, since, indeed, all men love both themselves and money. And, again, the giving of favours and help to one's personal or family friends and companions is the keenest of pleasures, and this is the direct result of private property. . . . (after a few sentences referring to P's. other proposals).

Now legislation, of the kind proposed, has a fair show and an appearance of humanity, and any one who hears of it receives it gladly, thinking that all men will have a wonderful affection for each other, particularly when the proposer goes on to accuse the evils which are now found in states, as resulting from property not being common, such as lawsuits about contracts, and trials for perjury and subservience to the rich. Now every one of these things results not from private property but from men's wickedness, for we see that those who have common possessions and who share alike quarrel much more than those who have private property; but the number of those who live in conditions of community and quarrel is small, while we compare them with the much larger number of those among whom private property obtains. And again, we ought to speak of the advantages which men would lose by having property in common, as well as the disadvantages. Taken all together the life proposed is impossible . . . (Plato again). . . But one should acknowledge that the State is a multitude of individuals as I have said before, and try to make it a single community by means of education, and it is absurd that a man who wants to bring in education, and who thinks that by that means the city will become good, should attempt to correct it by such expedients as I have mentioned, and not by manners, philosophy and laws, just as the law-giver in Sparta introduced common access to property, and in Crete common meals at the public tables. And one ought not to be ignorant of this either, that it is necessary to attend to the experience of long time and many years during which these things, if they had been good, would not have remained unknown. For almost everything has been found out, but some things men have not collected together and others they know but do not use.

He then criticises in some detail, though perhaps from our

point of view, rather inadequately, Plato's proposals in the Republic and the Laws, and afterwards runs through certain other proposed forms of Government.

He begins with Phaleas of Chalcedon, who was the first to propose that the citizens should have equal possessions. His method had a curious impractical practicality and consisted simply in this. That the rich should give marriage portions but not receive them, while the poor should receive but not give them,

Aristotle criticises Phaleas first from the Malthusian point of view, saying that it is no use trying to fix the size of each holding without fixing the number of each man's children, for otherwise the holdings will be broken up and the rich will become poor. Secondly, he says that an equality in education is more important than an equality in possessions, but allows that Phaleas very likely meant his citizens to have an equal education. Thirdly, he denies that such a measure would abolish crime. He classifies crimes as committed, first, through actual want of necessaries; second, in order to satisfy importunate desire; third, to obtain pleasure. It is important that we should notice his remedies. To prevent the first class of crimes he proposes that men should have a small property and work to do; to prevent the second, that they should learn self-control; and to prevent the third, that they should seek for that pleasure which each man can obtain for himself, the pleasure of culture. His third objection is that Phaleas neglected to protect his state from its neighbours. If each citizen were well off the state would be so rich that it would be worth while for the neighbours to invade it. As an instance of the protection which poverty gives to a state he mentions the case of the city of Atarneus. Autophradetes was besieging it, and Eubulus asked him to calculate the cost of taking it, offering to sell him the place for less. Aristotle had the disadvantage of living before the days of the Tonquin and Burmah expeditions. Fourthly, he has not provided for the "rent of ability." In order to produce a stable state one's object should be, says Aristotle, to prevent the good men from desiring to get more than their share and the bad men from being able to do so. Fifthly, Phaleas has committed Mr. Henry George's mistake and forgotten that wealth consists of other things besides land, *e.g.*, slaves, herds, money, and goods and chattels. Finally Aristotle takes away all our sympathy for Phaleas by telling us that he proposed that all the actual work of the state should be done by public slaves.

I have chosen rather to give a short account of the two first Books of the Politics than a general description of the whole

work, extending as it does to eight Books. For in these two books Aristotle deals either adequately or inadequately with almost every question raised by modern Socialist economics. He had not, of course, discovered what we call the "Law of Rent," that is to say, the analysis which proves that no scheme of "occupying ownership," however cunningly contrived, can result in exact distributive justice. But Plato had not discovered it either, and against Plato's "New Harmony" one has to admit that Aristotle's arguments hold good. In Greece at that time, centuries before the modern idea of representative government was conceived, where Mr. Robertson of the Board of Trade would have been considered an exceptionally honest official, where each city and each faction in each city was consumed with an intense desire to exterminate all its rivals, where there was scarcely any trace of combined free labour, where, in fact, Individualism was in the full flush of its splendid youth, Aristotle was probably right to turn resolutely away from Plato's dream of aristocratic Socialism and to hope that a spread of kindly feeling might make private property tolerable.

But now that industrial development has on the one hand made associated labour necessary, and on the other hand has enormously increased the inequalities which result from private property, now that the development of political knowledge and political machinery is making possible a self-governed nation of workers, now that the individualism which survives in practise has almost disappeared in theory, we know enough of Aristotle to be sure that from different premises he would if he were now living draw a different conclusion.

GRAHAM WALLAS.

Sunward Sonnets.

I.

Through seas of light above the opal blue,
Across the Adriatic sped our ship,
Her long wake trailing towards the ocean's lip,
Far from the isles of Greece, in our fond view:
A vision bright that all our thoughts embue,
Which from the book of days may never slip,
But in the golden haze of memory dip,
And its fresh youth continually renew.

It was my fortune late to tread upon
The marble stairs of Athen's sacred steep,
To see its columned gate in moonlight sleep
Beneath the shadow of the Parthenon,
Fair still in ruin, though well Time might weep
For Pallas fallen and her glory gone.

II.

Mid wrecks of Hellas dead in marble great,
Whose relics whiten still Ægean's shore,
Gold treasuries of kings, Art's precious ore
Cast up by Time's slow waves to us so late:
It reached me then these things to meditate—
How fell such pillared state—how lost its lore?
What palsy touched the hand, what ate the core
Of ancient life—why Hellas met her fate?

And so, methought of nations now that sail
Upon the wings of commerce and of gold,
With new found force electric, iron and steam,
To yoke fierce Nature's neck—shall these avail
To save us, or our toil-wrung wealth redeem
If Freedom fair and Justice loose their hold?

WALTER CRANE.

Capital:

A Criticism on Political Economy

By KARL MARX.

Translated from the Original German Work,

By JOHN BROADHOUSE.

(Continued from our last number.)

This much concerning Ireland. In Scotland, the farm men protest against their 13 or 14 hours' work in the trying climate, with 4 hours extra on Sundays(*uu*), and at the same time a railway engine driver, signalman and guard are being examined by a coroner's jury in London. A terrible railway accident has just occurred, killing hundreds of persons. The fault rests with the men. They all affirm positively that their working hours used to be 8 a day (12 years since). During the last 6 years the hours had gradually increased to 14, 16, and 20, and sometimes even to 40 or 50 hours at a stretch, during holiday times, or other occasions of great pressure. Being only men, their powers of endurance failed under such a strain, their brain refused its office, their eyes became dim. The "respectable" jurymen returned a verdict of manslaughter, but added a "rider," hoping that the railway officials would henceforth purchase extra labour-power, and not make such extravagant demands on it(*vv*).

(*uu*) Meeting of farm labourers at Lasswade, Edinburgh, on the 5th of January, 1866 (vide *Workman's Advocate* January 13th, 1866). The formation since the end of 1865 of a Trades' Union among the agricultural labourers of Scotland is a historical event. In March, 1867, the labourers of Buckingham struck for a rise in wages from nine or ten to twelve shillings. It is thus evident that the agitation of English working classes, suppressed after its manifestations in 1830, recommences about 1860 till it marks an epoch about 1872. This is again alluded to in my second volume; also in the blue-books since 1867 touching the English agricultural labourers.

(*vv*) *Reynolds' Newspaper*, January 20th, 1866. Week by week this periodical contains a most appalling list of railway accidents. Upon this subject a North Staffordshire railway man says:—"The results that may occur should the driver and fireman of the locomotive relax their

From among the mass of labourers of all kinds and classes, on whom the mark of overwork is everywhere evident, let us select two whose cases will prove that capital reduces all to the same state—whether milliner or blacksmith.

At the end of June, 1863, all the London newspapers contained a paragraph with the "sensational" title, "Death from Simple Overwork." It was the case of the death of a milliner, Mary Ann Walkley, aged twenty, who worked in a high-class milliner's shop, owned by a Madame Elise. The old, old story was again repeated (*ww*). She worked an average of 16½ hours continuously, and during the season frequently 30 hours, during which time her strength was occasionally revived by a draught of sherry, port wine, or coffee. It was the height of the season. The splendid dresses worn by the ladies who attended the ball in honour of the Princess of Wales were required at almost an instant's notice. Mary Ann Walkley had been at work for 26½ hours, together with 60 other girls, 30 in one room, which only contained ⅓ of the cubic air space it should have had: and they slept in twos in little stuffy boarded compartments, forming portions of a bedroom (*xx*). And this was

vigilance needs no explanation. It is impossible for the men to keep a good look out, after 30 hours continuous work, exposed to the weather. Such cases as the following are not at all rare:—A stoker began early on Monday morning. When his "day's work" was done, it came to 14 hours 50 minutes. Before he had eaten his tea, he was again called on, and kept on duty for another 14 hours and 25 minutes, which comes to 29 hours 15 minutes' continuous work. His week was made up thus:—15 hours on Wednesday; 15 hours 35 minutes on Thursday; 14½ hours on Friday; 14 hours 10 minutes on Saturday; his week's work thus coming to 88 hours and 40 minutes. To his great amazement he only received 6 day's pay for the whole. Supposing there was a mistake he asked the time-keeper what was supposed to be a day's work, and was told 13 hours for a "goods" driver, or 78 hours a week. He then asked for the extra pay he had earned over the 78 hours, but was refused it. But at last they consented to give him another "quarter" (10d.), *l.c*, 4th February, 1866.

(*ww*) Cf. F. Engels, l.c., pp. 253, 254.

(*xx*) Dr. Letheby, the Physician to the Board of Health, says:—"The minimum of air for each adult ought to be in a sleeping room 300, and in a dwelling room 500 cubic cubic feet." Dr. Richardson, Senior Physician to one of the London Hospitals, says:—"With needlewomen of all kinds, including milliners, dressmakers and ordinary sempstresses, there are three miseries—overwork, deficient air, and either deficient food or deficient digestion. . . . . Needlework, in the main, ... is infinitely better adapted to wemen than to men. But the mischiefs of the trade, in the metropolis especially, are that it is monopolised by some twenty-six capitalists, who, under the advantages that spring from capital, can bring in capital to force economy out of labour. This power tells throughout the whole class. If a dressmaker can get a little circle of customers, such is the competition that, in her

called one of the best milliner's shops in London. Mary Ann Walkley was taken ill on Friday, and died on Sunday, to the great astonishment of Madame Elise, without having got her work finished. Mr. Keys, the physician who was summoned to the death-bed, gave testimony to the effect that "Mary Ann Walkley has died from long hours of work in an over-crowded workroom, and a too small and badly-ventilated bed-room." In order to give the doctor a lecture on the art of behaving himself, the coroner's jury declared that "The deceased had died of apoplexy, but there was reason to fear that her death had been accelerated by overwork in an over-crowded workroom," etc. "Our white slaves," wrote the *Morning Sear* (the mouthpiece of the free traders, Cobden and Bright) "who are toiled into the grave, die without noise or clamour "(*yy*).

"It is not only in dressmakers' rooms that working to death is the order of the day, but in a thousand other places; in every place, I had almost said, where a 'thriving business' has to be done. . . . . We will take the blacksmith as a type. If the poets were true, there is no man so hearty, so merry as

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home, she must work to the death to hold together, and this same overwork she must of necessity inflict on any who may assist her. If she fail, or do not try independently, she must join an establishment where her work is not less, but where her money is safe. Placed thus, she becomes a mere slave, tossed about with the variations of society. Now at home in one room, starving, or near to it, then engaged 15, 16, aye, even 18 hours out of the 24, in an air that is scarcely tolerable, and on food which, even if it be good, cannot be digested in the absence of pure air. On these victims consumption, which is purely a disease of bad air, feeds." "Work and Overwork," in the *Social Science Review* of the 18th July, 1863.

(*yy*) *Morning Star*, June 23rd, 1863. The *Times* took advantage of this circumstance to defend American slave-owners against Bright and others. That journal, in a leader on July 2nd, 1863, said:—"Very many of us think that, while we work our own young women to death, using the scourge of starvation instead of the crack of the whip as the instrument of compulsion, we have scarcely right to hound on fire and slaughter against families who were born slave-owners, and who, at least, feed their slaves well and work them lightly." Just as the *Standard*, a Tory journal, attacked the Rev. Newman Hall:—"He excommunicated the slave-owners, but prays with the fine folk who, without remorse, make the omnibus drivers and conductors of London work 16 hours a day for the wages of a dog." And lastly comes the oracle Thomas Carlyle, of whom I wrote in 1850:—"The genius is gone to the devil, but the culture is left behind," who, in a brief parable, reduced the American Civil War (the one great event of contemporary history), to the level that the Peter of the North seeks with all his power to break the head of the Paul of the South, because he of the North hires his labourer by the day, and he of the South hires his for life (*MacMillan's Magazine*," Ilias Americana in nuce," August, 1863). The bubble of Tory sympathy with town workers —not at all with country workers—has thus at length burst. The end of it all is—Slavery!

the blacksmith; he rises early and strikes his sparks before the sun; he eats and drinks and sleeps as no other man. Working in moderation, he is, in fact, in one of the best of human positions, physically speaking. But we follow him into the city or town, and we see the stress of work on that strong man, and what then is his position in the death-rate of his country? In Marylebone blacksmiths die at the rate of 31 per thousand per annum, or 11 above the mean of the male adults of the country in its entirety. The occupation, instinctive almost as a portion of human art, unobjectionable as a branch of human industry, is made by mere excess of work the destroyer of the man. He can strike so many blows per day, walk so many steps, breathe so many breaths, produce so much work, and live an average say of 50 years; he is made to strike so many more blows, to walk so many more steps, to breathe so many more breaths per day, and to increase altogether a fourth of his life. He meets the effort; the result is, that producing for a limited time a fourth more work, he dies at 37 for 50" (*zz*)

Section IV.—Day and Night Labour. The "Turn" System.

When the means of production (constant capital) are regarded from the point of view of creating surplus value, they are seen to exist for the sole purpose of absorbing labour, and every drop of labour they absorb carries with it a proportion of surplus labour. When they cease to do this their very existence entails a relative loss upon the capitalist, as while they lie idle they represent capital advanced to no purpose. This loss becomes absolute when the stoppage in their use renders new outlay necessary on starting work again. The carrying of the working day into the night, and so beyond the limits of the natural day, only serves as a palliative, and only quenches to a very small degree the capitalist's vampire thirst

(*zz*) Dr. Richardson, *l.c.*

for labour's life-blood. It is therefore the natural and ordinary tendency of capitalists production to use up labour during every hour of the 24. But it is a physical impossibility to continually exploit the same labour-power by night as well as by day, and to obviate this natural difficulty, it becomes necessary to alternate people whose power is used up by day with people whose power is used up by night (*a*). This alternating system may be carried out in various ways; thus it may be so arranged that those who work day work one week do night work the next. It is a known fact that this "turn" system, or the alternation of two relays of workers, was in full swing in the prosperous younger days of the English cotton trades and that it still flourishes, *inter alia*, among the cotton spinners in the districts of Moscow. The 24 hours' system of production still holds good in many branches of manufacture in Great Britain which are "free"—in the forges, blast furnaces, rolling-mills, and other iron-producing works in England, Scotland and Wales. Beside 24 hours for 6 days a week, the time of work in those works includes a good portion of Sunday. The labourers include men and women, old and young of both sexes. The ages of the young people run from eight (six in some cases) to 18 (*b*).

In some branches of these trades girls and women work all night along with the men (*c*).

Setting aside the generally injurious effect of night-work (*d*) the unceasing continuance of the process of production for 24 hours affords very acceptable opportunities of over-stepping the bounds of the proper working day, thus in the above mentioned branches of industry, which are excessively fatiguing, the normal day's work is usually 12 hours, night or day.

(*a*) These alternations are known in the Black Country and other manufacturing districts as "turns"—thus the "day turn" and the "night turn" are common expressions.—J. B.

(*b*) "Children's Employment Commission," Third Report, pp., 4, 5, 7.

(*c*) "Both in Staffordshire and in South Wales young girls and women are employed on the pit banks and on the coke heaps, not only by day but also by night. This practice has been often noticed in reports presented to Parliament as being attended with great and notorious evils. These females employed with the men, hardly distinguished from them in their dress and begrimed with dirt and smoke, are exposed to the deterioration of character, arising from the loss of self-respect which can hardly fail to follow from their unfeminine occupation."

(*d*) A steel manufacturer, who employed children in night work, observed: "It seems but natural that boys who work at night cannot sleep and get proper rest by day, but will be running about" (*l.c.*, Fourth Report, 63, p. 13.) Treating of the importance of sunshine for the

growth and nourishment of the body, a physician says: "Light also acts upon the tissues of the body directly in hardening them and supporting their elasticity. The muscles of animals, when they are deprived of a proper amount of light, become soft and inelastic, the nervous power loses its tone from defective stimulation, and the elaboration of all growth seems to be perverted. . . . . In the case of children, constant access to plenty of light during the day, and to the direct rays of the sun for a part of it, is most essential to health. Light assists in the elaboration of good plastic blood, and hardens the fibre after it has been laid down. It also acts as a stimulus upon the organs of sight, and by this means brings about more activity in the various cerebral functions." Dr. W. Strange, senior physician of the Worcester General Hospital, from whose work on "Health" (1864) this passage is quoted, says in a letter to Mr. White, one of the commissioners: "I have had opportunities formerly, when in Lancashire, of observing the effects of night-work upon children and I have no hesitation in saying, contrary to what *some* employers were fond of asserting, those children who were subjected to it soon suffered in their health" *l.c.* 284., p. 55). The fact of this question having provided a subject for a discussion would appear to indicate how capitalist production affects the brain powers of capitalists.

Books of To-Day.

AMONGST the many changes of thought brought about by the evolutionary theory of life, none is more striking than that manifested in the rejection, by all serious students of history, of the Carlylean doctrine of the importance of the hero in history. The old idea that the man made the epoch has given place almost entirely to the more scientific view that the epoch makes the man. Almost, we say, not quite, for the "average man" is still with us in countless hosts and, science and philosophy to the contrary notwithstanding, he is of opinion that there would have been no reformation had Luther never been born; and that he himself would never have been troubled with doubts as to his lineal descent from Adam had Darwin not written the "Origin of Species." Now, for our own part, we are good enough disciples of Hegel to feel very tender towards the average man—to recognise that he generally has something to say for himself, and that his views of men and things are worthy of more than contemptuous dismissal. He is seldom right but he has mostly managed to pick up a few grains of truth which have escaped the keen vision of his philosophical superior. This question of the influence of great men upon the course of history is a case in point. The existence of nearly a million Socialist voters in Germany is no doubt owing to causes other than the speeches and writings of the splendid constellation of social philosophers and economists of which Ferdinand Lassalle was the biggest and most brilliant; but, on the other hand, there is equally little question that had the early steps of the English movement been directed by men of the mental calibre of Rodbertus, Marx, Engels and the author of the "Arbeiterprogramm," instead of by—well we had best name no names—we should all be looking forward to the next general election with hopes and fears very different from those which now possess us. Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx were unquestionably the outcome of the social and economic forces of the period in which they first saw the light; but just as unquestionably the present Social Democratic party in Germany is the legitimate offspring of Marx and Lassalle; and in this fact lies the partial justification of the view of Carlyle and the average man that the hero makes the age.

No one who knows aught of Ferdinand Lassalle will find it easy to believe that a book having him for its central figure can possibly be anything but enthralling. Yet such is the fact: Mr. Dawson has accomplished the miracle, and his book(*a*) is positively dull. Not uninteresting though—even he has been unable to manage that—for the "Messiah of the nineteenth century," has been too strong for his English biographer and

(*a*) *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle*, by W. H. Dawson Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London, 1888

has made his marvellous personality felt in spite of prosy style and unskilfu construction. And what a man he was! No wonder men loved him, cowards hated him, and women threw themselves into his arms. No wonder his coffin was seized upon by the police; for the dead body of Lassalle was likely to be more dangerous to tyranny than the living form of any other man. No wonder he has received the highest testimony which men can bear to the greatness of man, the belief that he is not dead but liveth; that he will "one day return to the scene of his labours with enhanced glory." "A singular belief," goes on Mr. Dawson, but a true one nevertheless say we, who believe with Freiligrath that

"They cannot kill the spirit, my brother."

When German militarism, has gone to pieces of its own rottenness, when international industrialism has worked out its own salvation, not with fear and trembling, but with great hope and strenuous effort, when Socialism has ceased to be the shibboleth of a party, and become the word-symbol with which we shall signify the world's organic life, then the "singular belief" of the ignorant German peasant and proletaire will be a realised fact, and Ferdinand Lasalle will have "risen indeed."

It would be unfair to Mr. Dawson, however, to say no more of his book than that it is dull and, in spite of its dullness, interesting. It is a very full and careful account of the evolution of Socialism in Germany, from the end of last century to the conference of St. Gallen, and it is quite evidently the result of a great deal of hard and honest work and of painstaking research. There are short accounts of all the lesser lights of German Socialism, and with Rodbertus and Marx the author deals at some length. His critical analysis of "Capital" is a careful and useful piece of work, but we doubt whether its merits will be recognised by the extreme Marxites, as Mr. Dawson evidently thinks that Marx owed more to Rodbertus than either he himself or his disciples have ever acknowledged. On the whole we do not hesitate to recommend the book to all those who desire to learn the history of German Socialism and its lessons, and who are not fastidious in the matter of literary style; but *the* English life of Lassalle has yet to be written.

Professor Gonner's handbook(*b*) is a cautious and intelligent introduction to what takes the name and place of Economic Science in our University class rooms. That is to say, it is a handbook, not of Economics, but of the current adaptation of Economics to the needs of young gentlemen of the proprietary classes, who must not be told that they have no right in equity to a farthing of their incomes. The plan adopted is the usual one. The rent of land is dealt with in a chapter which is completely isolated from the rest of the book. It is explained that rent does not enter into price. That admitted, it follows that rent has nothing to do with the theory of exchange, which is accordingly treated without any reference to the varying productiveness or limited supply of accessible land. On these conditions it is easy to prove that if contracts were free, commodities would exchange normally in proportion to their cost of production, and everything would be for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Except for passing examinations, such a handbook is about as useful as a treatise on physics with gravitation relegated to a separate chapter, and the rest conducted on the assumption that atmospheric pressure might be treated as non-existent. It is really time to ask writers on political economy whether it is strictly honest to state without qualification that rent does not enter into price, when both the facts and the theory shew that part of the price of all commodities, except those produced at "the margin of cultivation," is

(*b*) *The University Economics*, By E. C. K. Gonner. London, R. Sutton, 1888

rent. Also whether it is reasonable to declare that commodities tend to exchange in the ratio of their expenses of production, when, as a matter again of both fact and theory, they neither exchange nor tend to exchange in any such ratio. As to treating wages as the result of an exchange of services for subsistence matter between equally free contractors, it is not necessary to ask whether that is ingenuous or not. The only question that arises is whether it is any longer expedient. Considering that the division of the "catallactic atoms" of the labour market into proprietors and proletarians has been not only admitted but stringently legislated upon for fifty years past, it is daily growing harder for even a university professor with any sort of countenance to affect ignorance of it and write futile chapters about wages as if it did not exist. Professor Gonner, however, admits by his title page the distinction between "University Economics" and real economics; and for this humorous stroke he is much to be applauded. He is also quite honest in his explicit refusal to defend private property in land. For the rest, he attempts to disclaim all concern with the moral aspect of his applications of economic law, an irresponsibility which may be conceded to writers who, like Jevons in dealing with value, do not *apply* economic laws at all; but which must emphatically be denied to writers like Professor Gonner, who commits himself to a distinct advocacy of Free Trade, and a qualified disparagement of Socialism, besides laying down the canon that taxation should be so contrived as to leave those on whom it falls in the same relative positions as if there were no taxation. That canon would be an excellent one in a perfectly socialized community. As a practical suggestion to Chancellors of the Exchequer under our present system—and it is apparently so intended—it is a mere pre-economic superstition. This point apart, Professor Gonner has done what he professes to do very capably. From the point of view of Socialism or even pure economics, his way is only a way of "holding a candle to the devil"; but it is due to him to point out that he holds it steadily and is acquainted with all the latest improvements—except, perhaps, the extinguisher.

In a recent attempt to account for the results of some bye-elections, the *Times* remarked of Her Majesty's Government that it had "failed to be interesting," and the criticism shewed an insight into human nature quite unusual in a political leader writer. Even in a politician the best intentions go for very little if he fails to interest us, but in a novelist they go for nothing, indeed for less than nothing; they actually irritate us. We realised this fact very keenly while reading the latest work of John Law.(c) The writer evidently meant so well—the book is so obviously the result of careful observation made upon the spot, that we felt we ought to like it; and yet somehow we are obliged to confess to ourselves and our readers, that it didn't interest us a bit. The matter of the story is not unpromising, and in skilful hands would not have been unworkable, but John Law's manipulation is extremely amateurish, and her style is snippy and snappy to the point of aggravation. Though she apparently aims at realism she never tells us enough about any of her characters to give us the slightest interest in them or their fate, and although the story is intended to be tragic—and so far as the actual events go is tragic enough—the main element of tragedy, the sense of iron destiny which drives men and women into relations with each other whose end must be calamitous and catastrophic, is altogether wanting. All through the story one feels that Jos. Coney may get work on the next page, marry Polly Elwin in the next chapter, and be seen giving their first-born the bottle at the end of the book. That he does nothing of the sort, that his sweetheart jilts him, that he becomes an

(c) *Out of Work*, by John Law. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1888.

object of interest to a female savage called "Squirrel," and that he finally dies of exhaustion on his mother's grave—strike one as being mere chance incidents in no way fateful or inevitable. The fact is, we expect, that John Law has been bitten by the mania for slumming, has gone down to the East End, note book and pencil in hand, and has then worked up a series of disconnected sketches into a book of 300 pages. As disconnected sketches, the result of her oriental experiences might have been worth reading, but as a novel they are a rather painful failure. Young middle-class novelists would do well to leave the East End severely alone. It is difficult enough to get beneath the skin even of the men and women amongst whom we live, and of whose flesh and bone we are a part, but to see more than the unwashed cuticle of the people between whom and us yawns the great gulf made by present day economic conditions is impossible, or possible only to genius. This is, perhaps, the severest censure one can pass on modern society, but the fact remains, and writers like John Law should recognise and profit by it, and find some better outlet for their humanitarian emotions than such literary productions as *Out of Work*.

The worst of such criticism as the above is that it is apt to give the impression that the writer criticised has no merit whatever, and in the case of John Law such an impression would be far from truthful. She can be faithful enough in her portraiture of the men and things she really knows, and she appears to know the *genus* dissenter uncommonly well. Those who, like the present reviewer, have spent weary, backaching hours on the hard benches of schismatic conventicles, will bear witness that her testimony is true when she writes as follows. "The chapel had been built to hold five hundred people, but that Sunday morning only two hundred men, women and children had come to worship in it. These two hundred formed a well-fed, well-dressed little company, cheerful and contented as people ought to be who are in a "state of grace," who know that whatever may happen to the unsaved, their own souls are safe. Perhaps, their feelings of security in some measure accounted for the careless behaviour of the Methodists, the nodding and smiling they indulged in after a prayer had been said and places had been found in Bibles and hymn-books. People who are on good terms with the Deity and accustomed to treat Him with paternal intimacy, may well dispense with the bowing and scraping which seem good in the eyes of Puseyites and Catholics." One last word to our author before we put her book away upon the highest shelf of our library. Let her for the future, unsmitten by the fear of agnostic criticism, not hesitate to use the good old theological and conventional terms which are understanded of the people. "A smile of God" is poetical, and in the deepest and highest sense of the words, true; but a "smile from the Absolute" is calculated only to excite risibility in the Finite and Relative.