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ROMANCE AND REALITY.

TOURGEE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT.

The serious problem presented by the Inequality in the Army of Women Wage Workers—What Must Be Done to Solve It—Miss Van Etten's View.

The social movement, or, as it is generally called, the labor movement, has become a favorite topic with novelists during recent years. The economists and statisticians no longer have this field all to themselves. Writers of fiction, too, have taken up the rule, such as far into the dark regions of science as the professors, but they get them to learn more of the conditions which exist. So it is not unusual that the background upon which the novelist traces the characters of his story is a more faithful representation of the social and economic situation than is presented by the compilers of heavy-weight statistics and complex theories. I really believe the former of these two schools has done most to turn the heads of readers in the right direction.

Merrile Eastman, Christian Socialist, by Alison W. Tourgee, author of "Fool's Errand," "Bricks Without Straw," and other well known works, has just been issued in book form. Many will say that this is the best of fiction's contributions on the social question. While it shows deeper research than is apparent in "Metaxotti," it is not open to the objections made to "Looking Backward." Fault is found with Mr. Bellamy's book because it goes far into details as to frighten the timorous, who fear they will be turned out of their homes and have their individuality squeezed to death if ever its proposals are adopted. Mr. Tourgee is conservative in his statements and modest in his recommendations in "Merrile Eastman."

And yet he is not afraid to state the truth plainly. The words "socialist" and "socialism" could have been left out of the title and story and not have lessened its beauty or weakened its force; but it is to the author's credit that he was not afraid to use them, though they have been misapplied, distorted and abused. No one need be frightened at the title. Would that every patriot in the land were occupied by a "Merrile Eastman," and that every Christian were as upright, level-headed and brave as he. "Sensationalism" cannot be applied to his sermons, for his proposed remedies be characterized as "harebrained schemes." An earnest Christian clergyman, he became convinced that it was his duty to help God's children to help themselves on earth, as well as to save their souls.

The character is beautiful, and yet not in the slightest degree unnatural. It is what would be the man instead of the exception were not man's nature deformed by his own environments. "Merrile Eastman," though conscious of man's inhumanity, fully aware that in the mad race for wealth and power men become more selfish and cruel every day, is not a pessimist. He believes in God, and has faith in his creatures—when their eyes are opened and they see the way they will walk in it, and he labors to make those he can reach see it.

It is true he does not advocate any very radical measures nor inaugurate any far-reaching reforms; but he does the best that can be done today, and the story deals with the present time. He proclaims the right of every man to equal opportunity with his fellow man, and declares it to be the duty of the strong to help the weak. As to the church, I quote from one of his sermons: "The function of the church as an element of civilization is not to prescribe methods, nor to devise remedies; that is the function of government, the duty of society. The function of the church is only to inspire action, to provide impulse, to exalt and purify motive, to incline man to apply the Christ spirit to collective human relations."

Collective obligations are the greatest of human duties, because they touch the welfare, not of one alone, but of millions of human souls. The Christian who claims to do his duty to God and shirks his duty to man is a sad failure. . . . The duty of love is the keynote of Christianity. To do good to all men, to promote the highest welfare of all men, is its distinctive quality. Prayer and creed are all subordinate, are only steps to the great end. To do is the active principle or the Christ message."

"He that has gathered with unflinching greed until he holds the destiny of thousands in his hands may be fair in profession, honest in dealing as the law defines honesty; but he has hardened his heart, shut his eyes to his fellow's welfare and gone back to Cain's silly plea, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' He is his brother's keeper. Every soul is responsible for the good it might have done, for the sin resulting from temptation it might have removed, for the justice it might have granted or secured and did not."

With a short extract from the author's preface, which is of course his own opinion and not charged to one of his characters, I will leave the further consideration of this interesting story for another of the immediate past, and the duldest mind perceives that the concentration of power by reason of the control of property must, in a very brief period, inaugurate the ratio of dependency to an extent never equaled in any civilized country. Already a new feudalism has been developed in which power is transferred, not by blood, but by bequest, as with all of allegiance, but by dependency. The barons of wealth are today more potent in molding the destinies of others than the feudal lords ever were or ever could be. The strong arm is potent only as far as the sword can reach; the controller of opportunity cables his will around the world and grapples his dependent by the throat even at the antipodes. Feudal strife reduced the number of lords, but rarely increased the privileges of the fiefdoms. In like manner competition between the great lords of production, of trade and transportation lessens the number of controllers of opportunity, but increases the power of the remainder. . . . The man who labors for himself is a master; he who is dependent for opportunity upon another's will is half a slave."

Among the important and serious problems which confront the promoters of labor's interests is that which deals with women's work. So great has been the extension of "woman's sphere" in recent years that it is now impossible to consider any labor question without taking her into account. It is true she does not compete directly with man in many of the heavier industries where special physical strength is necessary; but by cutting into the lighter employments she displaces him, and he in turn becomes a competitor with his fellows who occupy these special fields. Workingmen cannot quarrel with the women for this; they must live, and as a rule the women wage workers are the daughters, sisters and wives of the very men they displace.

It is to the credit of organized workmen, especially in this country, that they see the situation in a proper light. Instead of attempting to fight the women workers, most of the unions recognize their right to work where they can, and endeavor to help them, at the same time protecting their own interests by demanding equal pay for equal work without regard to sex. That way lies the only solution of the question. Public sentiment must be brought to bear to that effect, and the women themselves must be educated up to a point of appreciating their labor and of uniting with their brothers in the demand. Much is being done in this direction by such courageous women as Ida Van Etten, of New York, but much remains to be done.

In this respect we seem to be in advance of England. There the unions generally have not taken the broader ground, and women workers are not infrequently called "blacklegs" by the men into whose callings they have entered. The introduction of women into the London postoffice during the strike of some months ago has caused considerable excitement and not a little bitter feeling in labor circles on the other side of the Atlantic. In England, as in this country, the improvement in machinery has been the chief factor in driving women into the army of wage earners. The era of machinery is the era of the woman worker. It is also the era of reduced wages.

Recently Miss Van Etten had this to say on the subject:

Some years ago salesmen, bookkeepers, clerks, stenographers, typewriters, etc., had salaries sufficient to support them. Now they have not. Women came into these occupations, took any position that was offered them, and the employers, who may be sure, fixed wages at the lowest possible point. Then men's wages were reduced. No employer will give more to a man than to a woman if he can get the latter to do the same work satisfactorily. The result has been that the wages in many occupations have been brought down below what was considered the living point for men formerly. Women generally can afford to take wages which would not support a single man, let alone a man with a family, for they have homes, and their little earnings simply become a part of the family earnings.

It is hard to get workingwomen to realize that they are committing almost a crime in driving their natural protectors and providers out of their occupations by accepting wages on which a man cannot live. They only think of the few dollars to be drawn from the end of the week, and do not consider that the injury will react upon themselves eventually. I have seen a great deal of the condition of workingwomen in all branches of trade in this city, and I can only say that since their sphere has been extended, they are worse off even than the working women in London, about whom so much has been written. And the worst of it is they have dragged men down with them to starvation wages. Unconsciously they have combined with the manufacturers, storekeepers and others employed to make life harder for the workers of both sexes.

Miss Van Etten has made close enough study of this subject to qualify her to speak with intelligence upon it, and to earn a serious consideration for her words. She says: "Organization is the one remedy. Women must recognize the dignity of labor and must go at it as a life affair. They should organize as extensively and as compactly as men do. It is hard to convince men of this, however. There are few working women's societies in existence at present. Those organized in the last year or two have already accomplished much good. Their example will, I hope, promote the organization of others. The condition of the women cloakmakers has been greatly improved since I organized them. I have received in the last few days many requests for information as to the methods of organization from women in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and other western cities."

Every labor organization should aid in the good work this brave woman has inaugurated. They should help to educate the women in the principles of unionism. There are cases on record of factory girls' unions which were as well conducted and as firm in demanding their rights as the best of the men's unions. Men and women must suffer while the latter learn; but they must be aided by every possible means if they are to make lasting progress.

Jos. R. BUCHANAN.

Bakers' National Convention.

General Secretary August Lohmar, of the International Bakers' and Confectioners' union, has issued his call for the annual convention of delegates to be held on March 21 at Indianapolis, Ind. Unions having 100 members or less are entitled to one delegate, unions with over 100 members and not exceeding 200 two delegates, and unions with 200 members or over three delegates. The proceedings will be conducted in both English and German.

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BRITISH PHILANTHROPISTS.

Strong Language of Carlyle on Those Who "Embarked in Philanthropy."

By way of individualizing for ourselves the philanthropist as Carlyle believed he found him in his own country, we ask first, I think, What is his place in society? what is his relation to those not philanthropists? By way of answer to this question we learn from Carlyle that society is divided into two great classes, as they may be called the great dumb "materialistic class" and "the articulate class." This latter class we find is further divisible into two—a large ignoble majority, "intelligent and influential, busied mainly in personal affairs," who "accept the social inequities and the miseries consequent upon them," and "a select amiable minority in whom some sentiment of public spirit and human pity still survives, among whom, or not anywhere, the good cause may expect to find soldiers and saviors." It is these last, "the select amiable minority," that are Carlyle's philanthropists. If we say that in some measure they answer to the remnant of old Hebrew times as treated of by the late Mr. Matthew Arnold we shall not go far wrong.

Passing to Carlyle's charges against the class now under consideration, those who, to quote his own words, "embark in the philanthropic movement," his first and heaviest charge, at bottom inclusive of all others, is that they misconceive the situation. It is not that they deny the existence of great public misery—we have seen that they are even impressed and stirred to action by it. They at least do not call good evil and evil good, put "bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." No; but they seem never to have asked themselves how it came about that "any world or thing fell into misery," or if they did the true answer to the question seems never to have occurred to them, viz., that it was because it had "first fallen into folly, into sin against the supreme ruler of it, by accepting as a law of conduct what was not a law, but the reverse of one."

The offenses and omissions of the last 200 years, Carlyle believed, had been every one of them registered against his countrymen in heaven's chamber; but at the wide lain there generating rightfulness interest and compound interest, until at last they had produced the frightful situation the philanthropist would cope with, having for some of its palpable external features, a "middle black peasantry," by the thousand, at home, 30,000 "discouraged needlewomen who can't sew;" secondly in jail treated by the method of love, the deserving poor, struggling hard outside to keep their heads above water, further taxed as the risk of their entire embezzlement, in order that among ourselves the method of love may reign; 3,000,000 paupers in the country, "Connaught potentially cannibal," and as "the evangel of freedom and real programme of a new era," the "whitewashing" of the "scandalous population" and the "weeping out of the gutters."—Lecture of Robert Niven.

An Eye to His Bizarre Rights.

A young business man in town recently bought a strip of land along the lake shore in Lake View, and a short time after moved up into the vicinity of the land. His friends say that he did it so that he could watch the land, but this he denies. However, he has a good eye for the main chance.

"It isn't a big strip," he said, "but it gives me riparian rights; that is why I bought it."

"Going to fill in?" he was asked.

"No. The waves are making half a foot a month for me by washing up refuse."

This is to show that he has a good business head. It was rumored in real estate circles that he got out on the shore in the morning with a hoe and a rake and pulled in everything that got within reach, but this could not be verified. The following, however, can be:

"He was standing at the window one morning, looking over his land, when he suddenly started his wife by exclaiming excitedly:

"Great Scott! There are a lot of boys on my land playing sailors!"

"What of it?" his wife asked innocently.

"What of it?" he cried. "What of it? Why, they're digging harbors on my riparian rights. Wait a minute and I'll fix it."

He grabbed his hat and rushed out.

"Did you settle it?" asked his wife when he returned a moment later.

"Oh, yes," he replied with the air of a man who had done a good stroke of business. "It's all right now. I told 'em that that was no way to play sailors in Chicago; that they ought to build piers to land their boats at, and now they are building piers and making more land for me every minute."

That's the eye for business some men have.—Chicago Tribune.

He Was Ready.

A story overheard ran something like this: "I was sitting in a box at a theatre one evening when one of the men present said: 'I always look around in a theatre for the safest way of escape in case of fire, or for some way in which I could reach the stage if any accident were to occur there. Now, suppose that actress' gown should take fire. I would step on that garland there, steady myself by the rail with the arm which held my overcoat, reach my foot across to that fringe in high relief and spring thence to the stage. In thirty-five seconds I should have reached her and have the flames smothered with my coat.'"

"I laughed at him. Well, as it happened that very actress' gown did catch fire, and she gave a piercing scream that almost threw the house into a panic. What did my friend do? Forget all about his fire scheme and lose his head like the rest? Not one bit of it. He did just exactly what he said he would do. His coat was around the woman in less time than it took me to wonder at his activity, and the audience was cheering him. It was a sort of discipline with him, you see." Repeated in print for the benefit of those who may have a chance to play the hero some time.—New York Tribune.

Burdens of Indolence.

None so little enjoy life and are such taxicab to themselves as those who have nothing to do. The active only have the true sense of life. He who knows not what it is to labor knows not what it is to enjoy. Recreation is only valuable as it is induced by. The life knows nothing of it. It is a question that renders rest delightful and sleep sweet and undisturbed. The happiness of his depends on the regular prosecution of some laudable pursuit or calling which engages, helps and satisfies all our powers.—New York Ledger.

Richness of the New States.

Only four of the six states created within the past two years have sicknesses as few as we have here. These are the Dakotas, Montana and Washington. North Dakota has been dubbed the "Flaxier" state, South Dakota the "Sorghum" state, Montana the "Sheep" state, and Washington the "Chestnut" state.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Didn't Think of It.

The wedding men among the Indians told them that no bullets could pass through their great shirts, but it never occurred to a buck to hang his shirt on a turkey limb and blow away at it and note the result. It was, therefore, "cheap" disappointments," where the shirt didn't prove bullet proof.—Detroit Free Press.

ODDS AND ENDS.

Fifty-one large and valuable libraries were sold in London last year.

The China sea and the Bay of Fundy are the two roughest seas in the world.

A Chinaman who died recently at Portland, Ore., left property valued at \$200,000.

Mougel Bey, who originated the idea of damming the Nile for the purposes of irrigation, is dead.

In Paris, reception continues for elderly matrons are frequently made of satin duchesse.

There are 377.77 grains of pure silver in a Mexican dollar, and 371 1/4 grains in an American dollar.

The plethoric state of our insane asylums emphasizes the truth of this being an age of crazes.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton has just lost a son, Capt. George Stanton, who was a member of the Louisiana senate.

Gen. Custer's only sister, Mrs. Margaret Custer Calhoun, is the wife of Lieut. Calhoun, of the United States army.

Miss M. Louise Edwards, of Annapolis, is to occupy the chair of oratory of Almar College, Greenville, Ill.

Children should say "Yes, mamma," "No, sister," or "Yes, Ma'am." This is preferable to the use of "mamam." Yes or no alone is rude.

A leud comb is frequently and successfully used to darken the color of hair which happens to be more brilliant than pleasing.

Wash white silk handkerchiefs in tepid water with castile soap suds, and press when cold and nearly dry. To iron them out of hot water turns them yellow.

Tempering steel is done in various ways—sometimes by heating the metal and cooling slowly in water, sometimes the cooling is done by a blast of cold air.

One course of masonry of the Wolf Rock lighthouse was unavoidably left incomplete. It was swept away in a winter gale, although each stone had been securely fastened by cement and bolts as usual.

A correspondent says, "I got so that I decided to go to the park on account of the lunch baskets to carry around; now the children put their lunch in a paper bag, their napkins into their pockets, and after lunch we are free to enjoy ourselves."

Tails of the Roving Dog.

My friend called one morning after breakfast with three dogs, and as usual brought in his hands a bundle of newspapers, as he thought, the other two small fry in the garden. The younger members of the family were busy entertaining the coldest with sundry dainty morsels, when all at once, to everybody's surprise, the roving mongrel appeared on the scene. He had a look of half protest, half shame, that was very comical. His owner told me he very much resented having to play second fiddle to the coldest, and the little creature before us had very much the expression of envy as he watched the various tidbits disappearing down the coldest's capacious throat. An impulse of compassion moved me, and I threw him a morsel from the table. His flimsy eye turned to me with a look of singular tenderness.

I understood the meaning of that look a couple of hours afterward, when sitting writing in my study I glanced out of the window and saw the rover coming up the long garden path, now slowly and hesitatingly, now more briskly as if encouraging himself in a hazardous effort. He had, it was evident, in that moment of my weakness, recognized a new opportunity. My family circle had impressed him as fond and indulgent, and what was more it was not marred by the presence of a rival favored by nature with greater physical attractions than his own. Here was precisely the asylum for an unappreciated and harassed philosopher.

I tried to look very angry as I went out to drive him away, but his penetrating eye went through it to the pretense. After a while he believed of running down the path he would suddenly stop, turn and fix his bleared eye on me and with a stump of a tail jocosely, as if he perfectly understood we were acting a little play. I could not repress a laugh, and that of course encouraged him in regarding the whole performance as a joke. He renewed these attempts for some days with a persistence worthy of a better cause. It was only when I had schooled myself to put on my sternest manners that he gave up the enterprise as hopeless.—Cornhill Magazine.

English Miss Pies.

"I almost wonder," says a lady who passed her holidays in England, "how our British cousins survive a succession of Christmas. They could not, I believe, if they did not come twice a month apart. The generous preparations in the way of feasting were a surprise to me, for which even the well stocked larders of my New England childhood's home did not prepare me. Fancy a hundred and fifty or two hundred mince pies by way of one meal! This is by no means an unusual number for an English country family to put in stock. Many of them, of course, are given away; all the children of the village who come to the house to offer wishes for a merry Christmas expect and receive a pie. "The pies are about saucer size, and deeper than the average American pie, and what will interest American housekeepers is that they are made without meat. Mince meat without meat is a paradox, but such is the English conundrum. It is very rich, however, with suet, fruit and liquor. An English mince pie is something to remember, delicious beyond description."—New York Times.

Politician to Newspaper Vendor.

On the Brooklyn side of the Wall street ferry there was until quite recently an old newspaper vendor who had seen a great deal of New York life. He was James Mullin, and in later years he had a number of acquaintances and patrons among Wall street men who live in Brooklyn. Mullin was years ago foreman of No. 28 Home, in the days when the Brewery was one of the sights, as well as a terror, whose fame had spread all over this country as well as abroad. Those were times when the organization known to fame as the "Dead Rabbits" and their conspirators the "Bossy Boys" had things pretty much their own way in the Sixth ward. James Mullin exercised a potent influence in politics in those times; and later, during the Tweed regime, it was a political factor of much importance. Take many of the old figures he failed to fit into the new order of things, and gradually disappeared from a position of political importance to selling papers.—New York Sun.

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