

The Open Court.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

Devoted to the Work of Conciliating Religion with Science.

No. 253. (VOL. VI.—26.)

CHICAGO, JUNE 30, 1892.

Two Dollars per Year.
Single Copies, 5 Cents.

COPYRIGHT BY THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO.—Reprints are permitted only on condition of giving full credit to Author and Publisher.

THE RELATION OF SOCIAL REFORMS.

BY DAVID R. DEWEY.

INNUMERABLE reforms press in upon us from every side. Few have the time or patience to examine their merits, or, analyse their final aims. Even those who do give the time and patience to an attempted solution of the many difficult problems of life are beset with great perplexity, and often turn away distracted by the apparently conflicting claims of church, state, political economy, and morals.

The perplexed student hears that the economist rebukes reforms which lessen the amount of wealth production; that the upholder of the family deplors any movement which tends to lessen the importance of this institution; and that the moralist denounces the citizen for daring to put certain political ideals superior to the reform of conduct. Charity reform, divorce reform, civil service reform, temperance reform, tax reform for the removal of poverty, and a score of others are wrangling with each other for supremacy, so that the support of any one of them appears to be a disapproval of the rest.

We can never make a great and permanent advance in social reforms until we understand that the ethical standards of one age are not the standards of its successor, and that these variations in ethical standards make absolute economic generalisations impossible. The conditions which lead us to affirm that there are certain laws now controlling human action in industrial life may change. Of course the law itself does not change, but the interpretation of the law, or the action of the principle as it affects related conditions may change. It is conceivable, for example that the interpretation of the laws of physiology might so change. The processes of physiological functions may have changed with the advance of the race in comfort. It has been affirmed that with the increase of luxury, making an extended and varied dietary possible for man, the human appetite is decreasing. The man who lives on but three or four food staples consumes more than he who has the choice of many. If this be so it might be possible that certain digestive functions would change or become powerless from lack of exercise. In this case we would have to restate some of

the principles of physiology. Whether the foregoing hypothesis be reasonable or not, it serves as an illustration of what undoubtedly does take place in the industrial sphere. The motives which governed the savage in the production, exchange, and distribution of wealth are not the same which governed the members of the church in the apostolic era. The motives which influence the religious pietist in the distribution of wealth are not the same which affect the modern representative of an old and honored aristocratic family. There is a political economy for the lazy inhabitants of the Easter Island who, thanks to nature's providence, need to work but three days in the year to satisfy wants for a year; and there is another for the peasants who live in the bleak climate of northern America. Just so there is a physiology for the mollusc, another for the radiates, and another for the vertebrates. There have been stages of industrial life as there are different gradations of animal life. Man has passed from the hunting, through the pastoral and the agricultural to the manufacturing stage. He has passed from a stage where the family was the unit into a stage where the individual supplants the family.

In short there is no universal economic man, good for all time. It is only recently that the English economists have modified their views as to the universality of the so-called economic man. Dogmatism and *a priori* assumption have crept into economic thought because a few economists have lost sight of what may be termed the relativity of ethics and the fact that industrial life and industrial forces have not permanently and invariably flourished in a uniform ethical atmosphere. We must learn to make our reform fit the times. In our loyalty to the one reform which seems to us the solution of social evils. We must not be intolerant of all others. Identification with a particular reform should never be so complete that one cannot defer the temporary triumph of his own principle for the permanent acquisition of some other social force which may in itself be of less absolute value than the first, but which is of such a quality that it will grow into the civilisation of the times.

Another point which should be observed by students of social reforms is the supremacy of ethics as a

guide of life. It is the privilege and duty of the teacher of ethics to tell the student of economics that as character and conduct are the supreme end of life, the economic tests of efficiency must be constantly revised in the light of the highest known standard of morals. The reformer who is trained especially in the school of political economy is undoubtedly in danger of regarding the quantity of wealth products as the end of social effort. It must however be remembered that ethics always pronounces the final judgment. Teachers of morals not only have the right, but are bound to arraign current industrial conditions. If the present industrial régime is not conducive to the highest ethical conduct, as understood in this age, it is the duty of the moralist to strive to modify economic institutions as far as possible in order to realise those ideals.

A mere modification of the externals of industrial life will not necessarily produce radical changes in ethical conduct. There must be a careful adjustment of cause and effect. Many of the Nationalists and Christian Socialists are in danger of exaggerating the effects of economic change upon morals, and, by losing their sense of proportion are led into illogical sentimentalism. There are two classes of Nationalists in this country,—those who are thorough-going socialists and those who advocate simply the nationalisation and municipalisation of certain particular industries. It is to some of the latter class that criticism should be directed. As long as these incomplete socialists advocate their reforms on practical business grounds they have a logical position, but there is no reason for affirming that we are not a Christian state because we do not hand over to the government the management of railroads and mines or to the city the management of gas-works. These are for the most part financial questions. Suppose that a considerable number of monopolistic businesses should be undertaken by the government, what would happen?

I can imagine that my gas bill may be lessened; that a telegram may be sent at a fair price; that the price of coal will not suffer the sharp fluctuations in price which now obtain. Life may be made more agreeable and attractive. But in all this is there any cure for poverty? It is indeed difficult to appreciate the passionate and almost pathetic earnestness which is thought to be based upon ethical considerations, that demands State socialism of a limited form as a remedy for economic evils. These changes may all be desirable; their merits I am not discussing; the moral I wish to draw is that we must not lose the sense of proportion in judging social movements.

Another field for a more correct analysis of the interplay of economic and ethical principles is found in the work of charity. It is here that the philanthropist and the economist have had in the past a prolonged

contest. The general course of poor-law legislation in England and the change of sentiment in this country has been to make the State not nearly so indulgent to paupers as in former times. Not only almsgiving, but other forms of charity have been condemned on the ground that they discourage prudence and thrift. Because political economy asserted that the giving of alms indiscriminately had a very marked effect as far as the production of further wealth was concerned, it was called a cold and selfish science, and then more lately by a curious revolt in public sentiment it was appealed to as a comforting authority by those who would not give time to an intelligent study of the various kinds of charity effort which modern society demands.

An excellent practice is the habit of analysing the various elements which enter into our daily actions with respect to our fellow men and particularly those actions which lie a little outside of what we are pleased to call imperative duties. Let us analyse the ethics and economics of giving money to a poor man. First, the ethics of the act. When I give the money I may exercise in myself the feeling of consideration for others, benevolence, and it may be actual self-denial. In the recipient there may be aroused a feeling of gratitude, a renewed hope of fulfilling the conditions of living through work, and what is perhaps of still greater significance, the sense of social interdependence, in the feeling that he is a member of society, living in society, and not an outcast or social pirate.

On the other hand the gift may occasion a neglect of the right conditions of living and lead the recipient to continued idleness when he might otherwise labor.

Secondly, what are the economics of the case? By the gift of the money, I reduce my purchasing power so much. I can purchase so much less. The recipient's purchasing power is increased by an equal amount, so that as far as affecting the selling power of labor and its products there is no difference. To the community it makes no difference which of us has the money. The gift may also enable the recipient to find labor once more and thus be enrolled in the army of producers.

On the other hand the recipient if encouraged to idleness by the ease in getting alms, may also become less of a wealth producer, and thus the wealth production of the community will be less. We thus see that we have a great variety of possible effects of a single act; ethical considerations to be balanced against ethical considerations; economic considerations to be balanced against economic considerations, and finally ethical considerations to be balanced against economic considerations. Shall we develop thrift rather than benevolence? Which character is the more important to develop, that of the giver, or that of the

recipient? Shall we seek to socialise or individualise society?

In the last few years the problem has become still more complicated in those countries where the right of suffrage is being extended to poorer and poorer classes. A generation ago ethics and political economy were thought sufficient to settle the principles of charity; now a new claimant appears and demands a hearing,—Politics or the State. Democracy is generous in her gifts, even to the extent of conferring citizenship upon paupers. You cannot stem the tide of democracy; you must in the interests of the State and political ideals remove the pauper, even if certain ethical and economic ideals be sacrificed.

We now come to sociology as it relates to the family institution. The Roman Catholic world is under the domination of the family idea. Catholic reformers make much of the institution of the family. This is superior to the State or to the individual. Testimony is abundant on this point and I need but cite from Pope Leo's recent Encyclical Letter on the Condition of Labor.

The family it is stated, is a true society, anterior to every kind of state or nation, with rights and duties of its own, totally independent of the commonwealth. A father therefore must be permitted by the State to acquire individual property which he can transmit to his children by inheritance in order that the children may, as it were, continue his own personality. The State may befriend the family in time of extreme necessity; it may enforce justice between the different members; but it can never abolish or absorb paternal authority. The child belongs to the father, and is, as it were, the continuation of the father's personality; and to speak with strictness, the child takes its place in civil society, not in its own right, but in its quality as a member of the family in which it is begotten.

The importance of the family institution also governs the papal philosophy with regard to wages. A workman's wages must be sufficient to enable him to maintain not only himself, but his wife and his children in reasonable comfort. As Cardinal Manning observes in commenting upon this declaration: "The Home, not the Individual, is to be the measure of remuneration; therefore what the unmarried man may find sufficient to keep himself upon will not suffice." This Catholic ideal therefore must be reckoned with in the study of social reforms. It will profoundly effect any reform which proposes to break up family life by laying its hands on the children and youth. It is useless to waste strength in temporary victories. If the reformer is convinced that there is a political ideal which is superior to this family ideal, he must seek to modify the acceptance of the latter and not be foolishly content with repressing for the time being its realisation.

Again it is necessary to take into account the element of certainty or uniformity in cause and effect, which is generally overlooked in treating social phenomena. Reasoning from specific experience in the sphere of social life is as possible as in any natural science, and the generalisation of laws may be undertaken with confidence. With all our knowledge of heat, atmospheric vibrations, and distribution of moisture we cannot predict with certainty the weather two days in advance. Indeed it would sometimes seem as if it were possible to predict with more certainty in the realm of social science than with the data which physics provides. We can predict within a very narrow margin of error the number of people who will marry next year in Massachusetts; the proportion of both grooms and brides at different ages; the percentage of re-marriages and the number of divorces. We can tell in what month these marriages will occur and what proportion will be contracted by native born and foreign born. The accuracy of our predictions for example on these points is more certain than a prophecy as to the average temperature during any month of the year. We know too that a certain number in the next twelve months will be killed by the reckless use of fire-arms; that so many will be drowned, and in short that our population is pretty sure to do a great many things for which there appears to be no apparent reason for regularity. These illustrations of apparent regularity in social occurrences do not presuppose the impossibility of modification in the future; if other forces are introduced to counteract the forces which produce these results we shall have a different issue. We must insist most emphatically upon the observance of a simple rule, the collection of all the data before generalisation is entered upon. It is in the non-observance of this rule that most of the errors in reasoning in regard to social problems, have sprung.

For example it is not enough to collect statistics of crime but you must determine whether the statistics refer to the same thing at different periods. In the interpretation of criminal statistics it is necessary to observe whether there has been any change in the law which makes criminals; and whether there has been any change in the spirit and earnestness with which the law is executed by the police officers; or whether there is any change in the attitude of the court toward the prisoners brought to the bar. Without the observance of such qualifying influences it is as absurd to reason in regard to the increase or decrease of crime as it would be for a Physicist to reason in regard to the severe cold of a winter day from the observation of water frozen in his laboratory, without noting whether there was the usual fire in the furnace or the windows left open or not. If students therefore will only be careful and patient in the collection of their

data they can reasonably hope to disentangle the uniform tendencies where now there appears to be utter confusion.

Another practical rule for the student of social reforms is: To throw away prejudice; social problems are a part of our lives. Social conditions hem us in at every side. It is therefore difficult for us to detach ourselves from these social institutions and forces and study them dispassionately and disinterestedly. We must step outside our environments, travel around them, and critically survey them from all points of the compass. We shall thus find that our individual social bulwarks that are so snug and well fortified within, have on the outside a rough and irregular aspect; that there are yawning gaps in masonry, and that here and there the fortifications are crumbling away.

Suppose the Physicist approached the study of electricity with a prejudice against electricity and a predilection in favor of steam, what progress would he make? And yet a considerable number of our essayists and students of social reforms work with similar prejudices. It would be better if these persons never appeared in print, or with public utterance. They befool the people and make confusion worse confounded; optimism, save as a measure of healthy enthusiasm, misguides as well as pessimism. A student of social reforms then must cultivate fairmindedness, and a judicial spirit even at a sacrifice for a time of positive convictions. Positive convictions will come in time, but inquiry must precede with patient steps. It is dogmatic prejudgment which has blocked the advance of the social sciences. With the development of the spirit of inquiry, and the careful co-ordination of the various aims of life, reform can be entered upon with confidence, and a belief that the labor will be enduring.

NICOLAUS LENAU.

BY EMMA POESCHE.

[CONCLUDED.]

I.

Lenau had now attained what an ambitious author desires, fame! But he was in need of something more, a practical profession, calm and steady work that would subdue the flight of an imagination ever ready to soar to a dizzy height. His studies prove that he intended to become a useful worker, the only trouble was that he could never make a firm resolve and begin. Independent, master of his time, he spent it as he pleased, now sociably, in his self-chosen circle of friends, now in solitude, occupied with literary and philosophical studies and writing.

He began an extensive epic-dramatic work which had for its subject the Faust legend, a subject that has occupied so many authors since the middle ages.

Goethe's brilliant success did not discourage our poet; it was not his intention to compete with the great master, he could not expect to surpass the unsurpassable, but he considered the Faust theme the property of the nation, of each individual poet; a frame, into which he might work his own struggles with the world, religion and science, a subject which Goethe could not have intended to monopolise. Goethe's Faust represents all humanity, Lenau's Faust only the individual, Lenau himself. The last monologue strikes us as being characteristic of its author, *his* Faust dies by suicide. There is no Gretchen, only a short love-scene with a princess that reminds us forcibly of his own unlucky love affair.

On returning to Vienna he made the acquaintance of a young married lady, Frau Sophie von Loewenthal, who inspired him with a passion that endured the remainder of his life. If she had happened to be free when he first met her, his sad fate might have been changed into a happy one. This constantly growing passion, struggling with his inborn sense of honor and morality, undermined his whole existence, as it were. He found it almost impossible to tear himself from the sweet presence of a woman who refreshed and elevated him, who knew his thoughts even before they were uttered, and in fact was more than his second self. His devotion is expressed in the following poem, entitled:

A WISH (WUNSCH).

“ Forest so grand and lonely
With thy mysterious tone,
If she and I could only
Dwell here alone—alone!

Ah, with thy trees so slender!
A hut I would provide,
It would have Heaven's splendor:
O come, thou lovely bride!

I'd spread in adoration
Rich moss beneath her feet,
In love's deep inspiration
Her smiles I'd fondly greet.

For her my bullet flying
Through beasts in their abyss!
For her the savage dying
Who would disturb our bliss!

With moonlight shining mildly,
And silent stars above,
Around her I would wildly
Twine songs of glorious love;

And in the evening's glowing
Upon this rock I'd stand;
We both would watch the flowing
Of roaring waters grand.

My arm should hold, caress her
While gazing from above;
And to my heart I'd press her,
My heart so warm with love!”

He struggled with his passion, fled and—had to return. He felt that Vienna was his home, its pleasant associations, congenial musical circles, opportunities for occasional excursions into the mountains etc., made life there more endurable than elsewhere. Driven

hither and thither by his restless fancy, spending his time partly in Vienna and partly in Stuttgart, where he read the proof-sheets of the new editions of his works, he became more popular every day.

In Mr. and Mrs. Reinbeck's house a spare room was always ready for his reception, where he even found shelter when he fell sick with the scarlet fever.

His *Faust* proved a great success, four editions being necessary to supply the popular demand. Not so his next work "*Savonarola*," for it seemed that Germany had outgrown dogmatic preaching, and it availed nothing that the poet moulded his religious philosophical abstractions into a perfect metric form. A host of antagonists, harsh critics, the sensitive poet retiring into the depths of his inmost nature and finally uttering an outcry of despair to her whom he could never claim as his own, were the results of this work.

A number of poems characterise his state of mind at that period, among which "*The Three Gypsies*" is most widely known :

"On the heath three Gypsies I found
Near a willow reclining,
As my team most wearily wound
Through the sand, hot and shining.

One was seated apart, alone,
To his violin clinging ;
Flaming sunset around him shone,
Fiery his tune was ringing.

Held the second a pipe of clay,
Watched the smoke that was rising,
Glad as if earth for him this day
All good luck were comprising.

And the third one peacefully slept,
And his cymbal hung near him ;
Over the chords the breezes swept,
Wondrous dreams rose before him.

Motley their clothes, and ragged and torn,
Patch'd in various places ;
Yet with careless, defiant scorn
Each his destiny faces.

Three times over they seemed to say :
'When life is dark, distressing,
Smoke and fiddle and sleep it away,
Three times disdain expressing !'

Watching them long, while gazing back
Slowly my way I wended,
Swarthy faces and ringlets black
In the distance were blended

This ebbing in Lenau's spirits was followed by a reaction, and one day he surprised Sophie by communicating to her his intention of marrying a famous singer, Caroline Unger, and asking her advice on the subject. Sophie's reply hurt him deeply, as may be seen from his next communication : "You should judge my lacerated heart charitably. Caroline loves me intensely—if I cast her off I make her miserable as well as myself. If you withdraw your heart from me you kill me ; if you are unhappy nothing remains for me but to die. Your Nicolaus."

Still neither of them died, only the betrothed couple's love died out after a while. The spoiled queen

of the stage and the spoiled poet did not seem to find it easy to agree, and when Caroline sent him her portrait with "*Caroline von Strehlenau*" inscribed in one corner, he thought it rather premature, got out of humor with the singer and broke off the engagement.

A trilogy that was to have Huss, Ziska, and Hutten for its heroes began to occupy his mind, but dwindled down to a series of ballads "*John Ziska*" and "*Pictures of the Hussitic War*." The history of the Crusades was his next special study, it was to form the foundation of a new poem "*The Albingensians*." The critics unite in opinion that in this work his genius reached its climax.

Although Lenau was very reluctant to mingle in aristocratic and court circles, where he deemed himself out of place and was granted "a fool's and poet's liberty," he at times enjoyed the hospitality of the chivalrous poet Alexander Count of Wurtemberg, until death robbed Lenau of this kind friend.

His acquaintances found Lenau much changed since the days when he had been a student ; his success had led him on a new path and estranged him from his old associations, he appeared moody and eccentric. The soothing presence of his sympathetic friend Sophie was alone able to give him a feeling of momentary happiness, which vanished as soon as they parted, for then "he wished for death for both of them."

In March, 1844, we find him again in Stuttgart, consulting his publisher, and later in the season at Lichtenstein, accompanied by his hospitable friends, the Reinbecks. Still later he is established at Baden for the summer, perhaps to study social life for his new poem "*Don Juan*."

He seemed to have made profound studies in this direction, for he surprised his friends and shocked Sophie by announcing himself as engaged to be married, this time to a Miss Marie Behrend from Frankfurt on the Main. He, the old bachelor, now forty two years of age, who had always declared "matrimony to be unnatural and therefore immoral," he with his abnormal habits and wants, would it be possible for him to be contented in a commonplace household after his roving existence ?

This time the woman of his choice was a German maiden with the humility and sweetness of a Madonna. She also possessed mental beauty, and Lenau was so overwhelmed by her charms that he could not find words to express his delight. "What a girl, what a girl!" he repeated over and over to his friend Berthold Auerbach. As if regretting lost hours and years, he seemed to be hurrying head over heels into matrimony, settled accounts with his publishers, made new contracts, and fell into an exalted frame of mind.

He returned to Vienna, where his friends noticed his over-excited condition, he appeared alternately

quiet, violent, merry, and then again cast down. His heightened color spoke of feverish blood, and he complained of anguish caused by frantic dreams.

Confronted by Sophie, his friend of long standing, he realised his blind forgetfulness. Explanations followed—explanations of such a nature as to wring from the lips of the tortured woman these ominous words: "One of us will become insane!"

She was the wife of an intimate friend, the mother of blooming children, Lenau's strong moral principles might have warned him long ago, but he had never learned to control his passions. When it had come to this crisis, he having given himself up to the influence of Marie, trying once more to cherish a "Platonic friendship" side by side with hymeneal bliss, our poet was miserably shipwrecked. At present he saw no way out of his dilemma. He was engaged and had to make preparations for his wedding, for he would and could not give up Marie.

Arrived in Stuttgart, he endeavored to make arrangements with his publishers for a fixed annual income, as a foundation for his new household. This matter worried his mind immensely and he covered sheets of paper with figures, trying to solve the problem.

One morning, while he was discussing the subject with his hosts, the Reinbecks, he was so overwhelmed by a sense of the difficulties of his position that he sprang up frantically, and the next moment he felt as if his face were torn and lacerated, causing him to rush to a mirror.

The face was paralysed, the left corner of his mouth distorted, his cheek insensible, and although his eye could move, it looked glazed and staring.

He was quite overcome by this discovery, being a medical student he knew full well what it portended, and though his face became natural again after a fortnight, he considered himself stamped by death.

He was troubled about Sophie, whom he had left in Vienna, despairing; he pitied his fiancée; sometimes he had fits of weeping. His hysteric condition increased from day to day, and in the night of Oct. 12, 1844, ended in an attack of raving insanity.

In the morning he took up his violin, playing some Styrian waltzes with great fervor, dancing to his own music and becoming so excited that he stamped on the floor until the whole house shook.

"My Guarnerius violin has worked wonders!" he exclaimed, imagining himself cured. But this was only the beginning of a long time of suffering and struggling for a mind that still resisted the strong clutches of the dark demon insanity without avail.

The sympathy of his numerous friends followed Lenau to the insane asylum, and flowers, letters, and occasional visits gave witness of their devotion. So-

phie corresponded with him and in one of her letters she writes: "The other day I witnessed a scene on the Danube that reminded me painfully of you. A pilgrim, a poor countryman of yours, stood in a boat, clad in a plain linen coat, rowing leisurely hither and thither without aim, his dark melancholy eyes fixed on the waves, unconscious of the people on the banks who were watching his odd movements. He had evidently thrown off his hat, exposing his head to the hot sun, the boat seemed to contain no provisions, only a large green wreath which he had fastened like a penon at his prow. Was not that the image of a genuine poet? Your image, dear Nicolaus?—Have you not been floating about in a light skiff on the turbulent river of life, never seeking its banks, with head unprotected, only treasuring the laurel wreath instead of earthly possessions! And when other sensible people drew their nightcaps, hats, or other kinds of head-gear carefully over their skulls—have you not exposed your noble head to the sun, the storm and the lightning, entwined by the beautiful evergreen crown, but not protected? Oh! those smooth, graceful laurel leaves may adorn the brow, but they do not shelter it from the injury of these rough times, and therefore, therefore you are ill. I watched the poor pilgrim for a long while and remembered his compatriot with a painful longing."

The guitar had cheered the boy Nicolaus, the violin was his faithful companion in the dark days of his insanity. When his friend Auersperg visited him at the asylum, Lenau, weeping bitterly, began to play some lovely airs on his favorite instrument, but soon his bow broke into wild, fantastic antics, gradually calming down again. He said: "Such is my illness, a constant rising and falling of my spirits!"

Count Anton von Auersperg (whose *nom de plume* is Anastasius Gruen) the scion of one of the oldest and noblest families of Austria, appeared on the field of politics as the champion of Liberty during the worst times of Metternich's despotism. His political poems had a powerful influence throughout Germany. After 1848 he became a member of the Austrian House of Lords, and the Lord fulfilled what the poet had promised. A lifelong friendship united him with Lenau; although entirely different in their dispositions, they had the same lofty aims, the same nobility of mind. Their friendship endured beyond the tomb, for Lord Auersperg may be said to have erected a monument to his friend, in his "Biographical Sketches of Lenau" which, by the bye, have supplied the principal material for this paper.

It would be too sad to follow the patient through all the phases of his sufferings, of his waning reason, suffice it to say that he was relieved of his burdensome existence in August 22, 1850. "The poor Nicolaus is

very wretched!" he once said to his warden, who found him weeping bitterly one night.

He was softly bedded into his native earth in a peaceful village church-yard, his coat-of-arms overthrown on his coffin, as an indication that Nicolaus was the last member of the Niemsch von Strehlenau family.

CURRENT TOPICS.

AMONG the topics current at this time, is the exuberant rain, which reminds me of my experience in Scotland a few years ago. It rained so continually there that the pleasure of my visit was very much impaired; and one day I said in a rather peevish way to a Scotchman of my acquaintance, "Does it rain every day in Scotland?" "Yes," he said, in a tone of apology, "but it does not rain all day"; and this excuse I borrow for Chicago whenever a stranger tells me that its weather is open to criticism. It may seem strange to "advanced thinkers," but it is nevertheless true, that some people still cherish the ancient biblical opinion that the rain comes down upon us from a great reservoir of water "above the firmament." The other day I met an old friend whose home is a hundred miles away; and being short of other topics we talked about the rain. I asked him what the prospect was out there in the country where he lived; and he answered, "Bad! very bad! The land is full of water; the creeks are full, the rivers are full, and the sea is full. If the rain does not stop soon I fear that the ocean will overflow us, and leave nothing of the dry land except the mountains, and I am a little dubious about them. If it wasn't for the promise and the rainbow covenant I should expect another flood."

* * *

The quality of humor necessarily varies according to national traits; and, as I sometimes believe, according to national drinks; the wit of wine, for instance, being quicker and more sparkling than the wit of beer. Much as I admire American humor for the breadth of its laugh and its good natured irreverence, I still think that Irish humor has a more piquant flavor, because of its impudent gaiety in converting trouble into play, and its cheerful way of throwing gleams of light across the face of somber things. I have just been reading an Irish account of a faction fight which took place last Sunday in Tipperary, or Tralee, or somewhere over there, between the Parnellites, and the Anti-Parnellites, in which a great many heads were broken on either side. According to the account aforementioned, "clubs and stones and pieces of broken platform were the weapons. The chairman was knocked senseless, and while four of his friends were trying to carry him away from the thick of the fight they were set upon by a party of Parnellites, and were knocked down and beaten." The battle continued for an hour or two; sometimes one side being driven, and sometimes the other, according to the arrival of reinforcements. After the ground was well covered with wounded men, a regiment of soldiers came upon the field and dispersed the combatants. "And had it not been for that," says the account, "there might have been a riot." And I wondered how many killed and wounded it requires in the estimation of Irish humor, before a battle of that kind reaches to the dignity of a riot.

* * *

Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said, this is a glorious country at election time, when the conventions meet and the howling dervishes of the party make unprecedented rain in their loud enthusiasm for favorite sons, or "sages" of this and that. My fears all vanish and I know that my country is safe when I behold the bubbling citizen with patriotism gleaming from his bosom in the shape of a badge with somebody's effigy on it. When I see my fellow countrymen by

thousands badged with effigies marching through the streets, terrible as an army with banners, and full of *elan*, whatever that is, I know that the grand heroic spirit still survives, and that they can be depended on to keep the bridge, as did the mythical Horatius in the brave days of old. As I behold them defiant of the angry rain or the fiery sunshine, "marching through Georgia," and shouting as they go, it comforts me to know that although republics may be ungrateful, republicans and democrats are not, and that the winning effigy will see to it that the wearer of the badge is "taken care of," if he will howl and yowl so loud that the effigy can hear him, and remember him. But he must get up and howl.

* * *

It has always been to me a curious anomaly that a people whose political existence is based on a Declaration of Independence, and who devote one day in the year to the celebration of Independence, should so eagerly and proudly give their personal independence up to party, and seal the contract of surrender with a badge; and what puzzles me most about it is that I have done it myself over and over again. I sympathise with Moses in his trouble with his people who perversely relapsed into idolatry whenever his back was turned, for I believe that most of us are idolaters by nature; and for that reason, we hail the presidential election because it gives us idols that we may worship with a noise, and effigies to wear upon our hearts. At the Palmer house the other day I heard a democratic delegate proclaiming his allegiance to his party idol in a very boastful but rather inconsistent way. He was anxious to show that his personal independence had been absorbed into party loyalty, and he fiercely denounced Governor Boies as a "mugwump." "I'm a democrat," he said, "and I won't vote for a mugwump under any circumstances." "But," said another, "Suppose he gets the nomination, what then?" "Well, was the reply, "in that case I'll vote for Harrison; I never will vote for a mugwump." His answer showed that there was yet manhood enough left in him to make a protest against his own attempt at self-subjugation. He did not see that the man who will not vote for a mugwump, is a mugwump, for he asserts his freedom to bolt the ticket. Even yet, that fanatical partisan does not know that there is so much good spirit of personal independence remaining in him.

* * *

Amid all the turmoil and excitement made by the convention, it was inspiring to see the signs of conscious responsibility upon the faces and the actions of the delegates, and the army of badge wearers from the mountains and the plains, and from Beersbeba to Dan. Every man of them seemed to bear upon his own shoulders the politics of a great nation, and the anxiety resulting from the possession of so much power gave to their activities a quality which is excellently well described in the good old Saxon word, "fussy." I met an antediluvian democratic relic here that I used to know in Marbletown before the war; he was rear rank man, last file on the left, of the "First, last, and all the time" club of Marbletown, a fellow so insignificant, that had he been lost in the labyrinths of the great city, nobody would have missed him; and yet he actually patronised me when he extended me a finger in recognition of old times, as if it were an act of condescension from a great man oppressed by the awful duty of selecting the chief magistrate of a mighty people. He put on a Cardinal Wolsey far-away look that said plainer than words, "Excuse me if I appear inattentive and abstracted, but the cares of state are heavy; too heavy Cromwell for a man that hopes for heaven." Then he left me because he had an appointment at three o'clock with Whitney, and Gorman, and Watterson; and he really must run round to his hotel and see if an expected message for him had arrived from Grover Cleveland. This was the manner and style of thousands of them; but meanwhile, a half a dozen men at the Richelieu, and a half a dozen at the Palmer, and a half a dozen at the Grand

Pacific are weaving the threads of combinations into a "ticket" as patiently and as mechanically as your grandmother knits a stocking,—and with as little noise.

* * *

Of course, the fervid spirit of the election time spoke from the pulpits, as was right; for men who command the attention of congregations ought to speak to them on every subject that has an ethical side; being responsible, as the lawyers have it, for what they say. The fault of election sermons is that they are generally sentimental, gushing with worship of heroes, and exalting impossible politics. One of them, preached in Chicago the Sunday previous to the Democratic convention, will serve as a fair specimen of the whole. The subject of it was, "Some Presidents, and President making," illustrated, as the custom is, by an historical Washington, and an imaginary Lincoln; self-sacrificing patriots who never sought the presidency, but had it thrust upon them because they were the most worthy to receive it. Said the preacher, "What we need to-day is the same high sense of the duty and dignity of American citizenship as that displayed by Washington and Lincoln. It ought to be enough to defeat any man that he has actively sought to be President." The preacher did not see, that measured by such a standard, Lincoln was too short for the presidency, and ought to have been defeated. As to Washington, *he* could stoop to take the presidency, but he is the only man who ever could. Every other man has had to reach up for it. Excepting Washington, and him alone, the presidency was, and is, bigger than any president. And besides, the presidency in Washington's time was not the great office that it afterwards became. Before the expiration of his second term the presidency had become a prize to be struggled for by parties; so that Washington himself could not have been unanimously elected again, nor even elected at all without a struggle. It is a mistake to suppose that the presidency was not "actively sought" by Lincoln; and it is a greater mistake to suppose that he did not use the science of practical politics as a help to his ambition. As a skilful politician Lincoln has had no equal yet in the state of Illinois.

* * *

If the papers have their own way, we shall soon become a degenerate race of sycophants and snobs, grovelling before our "betters," and retreating backward from their presence as royalty requires all subject inferiors to do. When a gathering like a national convention makes a little additional excitement by bringing together some celebrated and some notorious men, the newspapers immediately begin to revel in obsequious personal description, for the pleasure of a constituency of snobs; in which matter, perhaps, the papers are not altogether to blame, as they print what is to the taste of readers, and for which their patrons are willing to pay. If this is true, and it is the public instead of the newspapers who are responsible for those fulsome details, then we shall soon fall, even if we have not already fallen, very low in the scale of personal self respect. I do assert with confidence, that you will not find in any newspaper published in any of the ancient monarchies between London and Teheran such servile adulation of kings as our newspapers offer like incense to our most worthy and most unworthy celebrated men. They gush like a love sick dime novel over a Senator or a Chief Justice; and when their hero opens his mouth they make him talk with an egotism truly Byronic, and "splendid." Here is a short specimen which I take from this morning's paper, "Senator Gorman leaned his shapely head upon his hand and after a long and thoughtful silence replied." I need not give his reply; I merely wish to direct attention to that "shapely head," and that "long and thoughtful silence." Then the paper drops into the hysterical sublime after this fashion, "At this moment a messenger entered the room bearing in his hand a sealed letter, which he handed to Senator Gorman. The Senator took the letter, broke the seal, and after reading it with knitted

brow, he crushed it between his fingers, donned his hat and coat, and seizing his cane with an air that shows high breeding, he left the room, and walked hurriedly down the stairs, and out into the street. Arriving there, he flung himself into a coupé, and giving his orders to the coachman in a low tone, he was driven, some said to the Auditorium, and others to the Richelieu." All that theatrical introduction to nothing; and of this, column after column, to the extent of hundreds of acres with which the Chicago papers alone have carpeted the political floor of the American republic;—if it is a republic.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

LIFE OR DEATH.

BY VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

A Soul, half through the Gate, said unto Life :
 "What dost thou offer me?" And Life replied :
 "Sorrow, unceasing struggle, disappointment; after these
 Darkness and silence." The soul said to Death :
 "What dost thou offer me?" And Death replied :
 "In the beginning what Life gives at last."
 Turning to Life : "And if I live and struggle?"
 "Others shall live and struggle after thee
 Counting it easier where thou hast passed."
 "And by their struggles?" "Easier place shall be
 For others, still to rise to keener pain
 Of conquering Agony!"—"And what have I
 To do with all these others? Who are they?"
 "Yourself!"—"And all who went before?"—"Yourself."
 "The darkness and the silence, too, have end?"
 "They end in light and sound; peace ends in pain,
 Death ends in Me, and thou must glide from Self
 To Self, as light to shade and shade to light again.
 Choose!" The Soul, sighing, answered : "I will live."

MR. C. S. PEIRCE has resumed his lessons by correspondence in the Art of Reasoning, taught in progressive exercises. A special course in logic has been prepared for correspondents interested in philosophy. Terms, \$30 for twenty-four lessons. Address: Mr. C. S. Peirce, "Avisbe," Milford, Pa.

THE OPEN COURT.

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO.

EDWARD C. HEGELER, PRES.

Dr. PAUL CARUS, EDITOR.

TERMS THROUGHOUT THE POSTAL UNION :

\$2.00 PER YEAR.

\$1.00 FOR SIX MONTHS.

All communications should be addressed to

THE OPEN COURT,

(Nixon Building, 175 La Salle Street,)

P. O. DRAWER F.

CHICAGO, ILL.

CONTENTS OF NO. 253.

THE RELATION OF SOCIAL REFORMS. DAVIS R. DEWEY	3295
NICOLAUS LENAU. (Concluded.) EMMA POESCHE.....	3298
CURRENT TOPICS. Whence Comes the Rain? Irish Humor. The Wearing of a Badge. What is a Mugwump? Convention Fuss. Impossible Politics. Are we Sycophants and Snobs? M. M. TRUMBULL.....	3301
POETRY.	
Life or Death. VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.....	3302