

that of Savary, the man of mystery at the Duc d'Enghien's execution, the conspirator suspected of complicity in the death of Pichegru and Captain Wright, who married Mlle. de Coigny, a great heiress, and the daughter of a most ancient family.

Another of the Emperor's avocations was the consideration of ways and means to put into execution the law of May 1, 1802, establishing the University of France. It is said, not without probability, that he was deeply impressed by the Jesuit system of education,

which so perfectly subordinated every detail to a central power. Having already substituted in the schools the study of military science for that of history and philosophy, he hoped so to organize the university as to secure the absolute devotion of all its instructors, with a subordination of all its parts to the support of his political sovereignty. Although more important matters compelled the postponement of his plan until 1810, he eventually succeeded on the lines which he was at this time considering.

(To be continued.)

William M. Sloane.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

By the Author of «Social Evolution.»



Tis one A. M. We are on the open chalk downs under the stars, and twenty miles due south from London as the crow flies. The low summer moon, which has been but a few hours above the horizon, is already sinking away in the southwest. There is but little light, for the pale yellow beams do not illuminate; now, even before the dawn has come, they are waning, and a ghostly air has settled upon the almost invisible landscape. The northerly breeze has come through the wood which meets the sky in the foreground, and the aroma of leaves, still in all their delicate summer freshness, lingers on the night air. The distant bay of the watch-dog comes over the hills, to be answered by another still farther away, and yet now by another in the valley below. But the sounds themselves are part of the solitude; they seem only to increase the silence.

Under the clear sky the heavy dew has made the grass dripping wet, and in the uncertain light it is difficult to keep to the steep pathway through the upland meadows. In the low ground below, where the trees rise specter-like through the mist, the railway runs. It is but a few hours ago since the roar and crash of wheels echoed up here, and the tail lights of the Continental Express flashed through the trees; but shadowy and unreal seems the world to which such life belongs, a part of a far-off existence which has no touch or communication with these rural fastnesses. It is a silent land. Celt and Roman and Saxon alike have carried highways of the world through it. But it is still silent; now, as ever, the life of the highways

tarries not in these solitudes which sleep between London and the southern sea.

Chur-r-r-r-r!—distinct and eerie, the sound comes up the hillside, the air vibrating with the harsh, rolling note. Now it is answered by a similar sound, and the belt of small oaks and bracken below seems suddenly possessed by a troop of invisible spirits. It is the fern-owl, or night-jar, calling to his mate—a sound which has caused a growth of superstition to follow the bird into every land in which it has traveled. The female, who nests on the ground, is usually sitting when the male makes the night air thrill with his strange note. The bird is heard here only about this season. Out of the unknown it comes with the rising year, and thither it returns with its decline, reaching here on the crest of that great migratory wave of life from the south, of which we know so little, and which now, almost with the summer solstice, will turn again as mysteriously as it came.

Slowly the splendid summer night opens out as the ground still rises. Far away in the north, in the direction of London, a soft opal light hangs upon the horizon. It is the fringe of twilight from the midnight sun circling below the horizon, though it is still more than two hours to sunrise. The moon has almost ceased to shine, but the planets burn more brightly as the light wanes, and a deeper hush seems to fall upon the darkening landscape. Hark! In the still night air at this altitude the ear catches now for the first time a solemn undertone of the night. It is like the subdued echo of the surf, but from a shore so distant that the sound is here only the gentlest sigh in the air; the ear strains after it when at times it seems to

melt back again into the silence. The ground here is the watershed between two rivers, the northern Thames and the eastern Medway. It has been raining heavily during the past week; every little rill is full, and the river in the valley below is still in flood. It is the faint sound of the plash and fall of many waters which reaches here in the stillness. This is that voice which, once heard at night on the open hills or moors, is never forgotten; that sound which, more than any other audible to human ear, suggests the infinite—

The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be.

The pathway through the fields runs close to the hedge now. The scent of white clover comes down the breeze. In front, where the ground rises highest, the Southdown sheep lie huddled against the sky-line. They have given a historic name to a breed famous for its mutton; yet even in such descendants survive the instincts of long-forgotten ancestors. It is the highest spot of the pasture they have chosen to rest in, and they lie with noses to the wind, waiting, they know not why, for an enemy that will never more disturb the slumber of their degenerate lives. Faint brushing sounds come through the grass; shadowy forms which the eye does not catch seem to move before; a hollow, sepulchral double knock comes from the depths of the hedge: it is only the angry, warning stamp of the rabbits that have been disturbed feeding.

As the road goes north the scene changes. These rolling chalk downs, with the deep combs nestling at intervals between, have given trouble to the ancient road-makers: now the track mounts suddenly and steeply, and in an instant descends again almost precipitously. Here the hills have closed round again, the breeze is no longer felt in the valley, and the shadows seem to come closer. The long, lush grass, almost ripe for cutting, still stands by the road, and the green wheat, already in the ear, makes a somber gloom on the southern slopes under the hazel copses. Crake-crake, crake-crake!—far and wide the sound echoes through the still air. It is not a stone's throw off now, and it comes from the thick cover by the roadside, harsh, loud, and strident, drowning all other noises of the night. It is only the love-note of the land-rail, one of the most familiar of all the night sounds in this strange, wanton honeymoon of our Northern year, when for a few short weeks all nature stirs and glows and seeks

to utter herself of a life that passeth understanding. Thus still for a little does the male bird cheer the female as she sits on the eggs. Yet a few weeks more, and he will be no longer heard; for he will change and relapse into silence and other moods when the young are hatched out. The sound ceases suddenly now, only to render audible a similar note in the distance. When it is renewed, after a short interval, the bird has moved. He travels quickly through the long grass. Well do you remember how in other days you hunted him, what good sport he made, how fleetly the long legs carried the slim, brown body, how loath he was to fly, and how heavily he rose. The country-people said, indeed, that his wings were of little use; that, left to himself, he never used them; and even that he shed his feathers, and slept through the winter in the rabbit-burrows. Yet not the least of nature's mysteries are the now well-established wanderings of this familiar land-rail of our homestead meadows. By what strange routes has he been tracked over land and ocean with the waning year, south along the Nile valley, and even across the equator into southern Africa! And yet, withal, what faithful ardor drives him, that he should return again to woo his mate and rear his chicks in this gray twilight of our Northern night.

The path leaves the road and crosses the fields again. The shrill cry of the partridge comes up the breeze. A little while ago, leaving the beaten track, the foot stumbled into a cut thorn-bush on the open ground. Now where the grass is smooth and short the same accident happens again. We are in a land where the love of wild nature has left many a strange mark on character—a land in which respect for law still struggles unsuccessfully with the inborn belief that a man may take wild game and yet scorn to be a thief. The poacher loves these long, even slopes as they will be later in the year, and the cut thorn-bushes have relation to his visits. The men walk them at night, two abreast and far apart, carrying a long, narrow net between them, slightly lifted in front and weighted behind. The birds lie on the open ground and do not rise. As soon as the net is over them they are doomed, and a whole covey may be captured at once. The thorn-bushes are the snares which wreck the net.

In the dim light mansions begin to loom out of the trees, and to take up the best positions on the higher grounds. The outskirts of the metropolis have met us; just now, where no landmark showed the spot, the first

boundary line was crossed—the line which marks the limits of the London Metropolitan Police area, a circle within which sleeps a population of nearly 6,000,000. Under the oak copses the way winds. It is sheltered here from the north, and the air is warm and still. Hark! From the depths of the straggling thicket which skirts the wood there comes now a sound in which there is something curiously weird when heard for the first time and from a distance. It is a bird singing in the night. Clear, soft, and distinct, the notes rise and fall in the silence. It is the nightingale; this is a favorite haunt of the birds. It is surprising how far the sound travels; even after a quarter of a mile has been traversed in its direction it is still a considerable distance off. Similar sounds come now from the copses above, but the birds have each appropriated a situation; solitary they sit without changing position, each in continuous song throughout the night. It is the male bird which thus sings to the female as she sits on the nest. It is only a few steps from the thicket at last, and the songster cannot be more than twenty yards off. You do not wonder now at the estimate of the extraordinary quality of the bird's song, nor that it should have stirred the tongues of men to strophes in many languages. Full, rich, and liquid, the notes fall with a strange loudness into the still night. Yet it is not so much the form of the song itself which is remarkable as the passion with which it seems to thrill. Sweet, sw-e-e-t, sw-e-e-e-t—lower and tenderer the long-drawn-out notes come, the last of the series prolonged till the air vibrates as if a wire had been struck, and the solitary singer seems almost to choke with the overmastering intensity of feeling in the final effort. The stars shine through the feathery branches of the silver birches as you listen; the hoarse bay of the watch-dog still comes at intervals on the breeze; far down the valley burns the red eye of the railway signal; in the distance a coal-train is slowly panting southward, a pillar of fire seeming to precede it when the white light from the engine fire shines upon the steam: but the bird still sings on and on. It is lost in a world to which you have no key; it has not changed its position nor ceased its song since sunset, and it will be singing still with the dawn. Strange infinity of nature! Thus must its kind have sung here while the name of England was yet unfashioned on men's lips, and it was still a pathless wood to the northern Thames. Thus do the birds sing still on the

fringes of modern Babylon, oblivious and indifferent to all that men consider the vast import of the seething life beyond.

The nesting season, when the birds sing, is drawing to a close. As the road winds near the copses, the voices of other nightingales are heard, but they are not nearly so numerous as a few weeks ago. The birds are slowly retiring before the growth of the metropolis. The writer's experience must have been that of many a Londoner in the outer zone. He has heard the bird from his bedroom window at night for a season; then the builder has come, its favorite grove or thicket has been cut down, and it has flown farther out, to return no more. The nightingales begin song here by the end of April, and they are almost silent by the end of June. They do not migrate till much later, and they continue year after year to frequent a locality until driven away; for, like the swallow, the same nightingale returns each year, faithful to its old haunts. The nightingale is not the very shy bird it is often supposed to be; although it usually keeps in the depths of its thicket, it may be easily seen moving about in the daytime. It sings then also, but its song is usually not continuous as at night.

The opal light in the northeast is spreading to the zenith. The path is through the fields again—another of those public footways which render England dear to the lover of nature. Although it is yet an hour and a half to sunrise, a red tinge is on the horizon, but everything is still ghostly and indistinct. Flip, flip!—a pair of larks flutter up from under the feet in the half light; they do not rise skyward, but they are already on the alert waiting to welcome the dawn. Hark! There is the first songster away on the right, the herald of the approaching day. This ridge is the last wrinkle of the chalk downs, the land which the larks love; from the next we shall overlook the outer rim of the great clay basin on which the metropolis is built, and London will have straggled to our feet. A large gray bird, slimmer than a pigeon, sails out of the elms by the wayside into the morning twilight. It is the restless cuckoo, already astir. She does not call—it is too early. Besides, she has grown silent; the purpose of her strange, feckless life here is spent; a fortnight more, and her voice will no longer be heard in the land. The chorus of larks grows louder in the growing light. Already the southern slopes of London are in sight, shadowy and indistinct in outline, yet with a clearness rarely seen, and peculiar only to the smokeless summer dawn.

Away still on the horizon runs the inner rim of the London basin, the line along which rise the heights of Richmond, Wimbledon, Sydenham, and Blackheath. Not so long ago, and its southern limit was still a wooded solitude; now the life of London has flowed far over its crest to the south, west, and east.

The bats are still wheeling in the streets of Croydon; a railway signalman swinging a red lamp crosses the way in front, and passes homeward; two men carrying lanterns and searching the ground pass down a yet unfinished side street. They are looking for the water-valves; this is the hour at which they can try the water in the new-laid connections with least fear of protest from the sleeping householder. Through the deserted roadways and sleeping squares the way mounts to the hill on which the water-tower stands. No other footsteps have broken the silence. Our janitor has kept his promise, and the key grates in the lock in a moment. Up we go the many steps,—almost in the dark, it seems, for it is still nearly an hour to sunrise,—and then out into the open at the top.

It is a strange world, dim and silent, which unrolls itself before the eye here. There are in many ways few aspects of life more impressive than the awakening of nature on the fringes of a great city, and there are not many points of vantage better than this. Far below, the rows of houses and streets spread away on every side, the southern outskirts of the great circle, twenty miles across, which London occupies. Away to the north, farther in, though still only in the outer zone, rises the last ridge which shuts in the Thames valley; on its crest the gaunt glass structure of the Crystal Palace sits darkly on the horizon. Behind, to the south, stretch the downs we have traversed in the night. Between lies a great suburban land of brick buildings, new for the most part, here ranged in great solid blocks deep and wide, there straggling loosely apart. Everywhere between rise tall trees, now dark in their full summer foliage, the last survivors of that great North Wood in which, down almost into recent times, the charcoal-burners plied their trade—the North Wood which still gives its name to the district of Norwood, and which was so called to distinguish it from the other great wood, the Southern Weald, which stretched through Kent, Surrey, and Sussex. It is a fair land still, as it sleeps now under a cloudless sky out of which the stars have not yet faded, a battle-field, withal,—a land upon which the invading Celt and Roman and Saxon has in turn left his hand, it is true,—but a battle-

field, most of all, where nature fights year after year a losing stand against the blighting and despoiling forces of civilization.

Hark! There comes now the first sound from below. It is a thrush tuning for the opening symphony. After a few tentative notes it bursts into full song. Cherry-dew, cherry-dew! Be-quick, be-quick! Strangely clear and distinct, the full notes ring out in the still morning. Soon it is joined by another, and in a moment another and another have answered from the high elms around. The volume of sound continues to grow, but as yet it is only the thrushes which greet the dawn. Soon there reaches the ear a faint, harsh murmur; now it is louder, and soon it swells into a hoarse din. It is as if a great army of workmen had suddenly begun to labor below, and the harsh chip and fret of countless iron tools rose upward in blended discord. It is the multitudinous voice of the house-sparrow. He rears three families in the year, and he has begun his day's work of eighteen hours. He it is who, alone of wild birds, can regard the nineteenth century as an era of unexampled prosperity. He has multiplied in incredible numbers with the growth of towns. Nay, more: following the Anglo-Saxon, he has spread with the extending race to the ends of the world, till over two continents, with a certain appropriate inaccuracy, he is known and banned as the English sparrow. From the lower shrubs of the private gardens the rich, mellow note of the blackbird begins now to blend with the others. Louder and louder swells the chorus of voices, as the finches, robins, and other small birds join in at last. It is a strange harmony—one which is seldom heard by the sleeping world. The strangest feature is, indeed, the almost complete absence of any human sound; save for the occasional scream of the whistle of a belated locomotive shunting on the distant line, all but the voices of the birds is silent.

Round the tower the bats are still hawking. From below there reaches up a familiar twitter. It comes from a line of swallows which stand huddled up after the night on the paling, their white breasts showing in marked contrast to the black-painted fence. One takes wing now, at last, to begin that long chase after flying insects which the bats have not yet abandoned. Thus do the fringes of the night overlap the coming day.

As the light grows, the features of the land open out. One does not wonder here why the migratory wild birds come to us in the far Northwest in such numbers. Why should they

linger amid the barren larch plantations and the *petite culture* of the Continent? Where else, despite the growth of the towns, has the country been preserved so unchanged as in England? To the right stretch the natural woods and copses in the direction of Chiselhurst; nearer at hand lie the Addington hills and the splendid wooded lands of the manor of Croydon, still an appanage of the see of Canterbury, and doubtless not greatly changed since the great Lanfranc held them of the Conqueror. Away to the left roll the level plains toward Windsor, the great trees so thickly strewn over the land as almost to give it the appearance of a thickly wooded country—trees which rise unkempt in the free air of heaven, with limbs unlopped, in all their natural beauty. To the south stretches the open land, the commons of Epsom and Banstead, and the range of the North Downs, with the little village of Purley, associated with the fame of Horne Tooke, sleeping on the edge. It is all little changed since the days of the author of the «Diversions,» always and except for the vast growth of London. What would the eccentric parson and politician have thought of the age if he had lived to see the metropolis almost at his doors, and all that the whirligig of time had brought with it? Would he have thought any better now of the crime which split the Anglo-Saxon peoples in two, or of his countrymen who fined and imprisoned him for opening a subscription for the widows and orphans of the Americans «murdered by the King's troops at Lexington and Concord»?

The rooks are spreading out across the sky as they sail from their nests to the distant

pastures. As the light ripens, the view enlarges of greater London stretching away to the north. Like the arms of a great octopus, its fringes strike far into the open land. Farther in, caught between them, rises bravely many a pleasant grove; parks, open spaces, and even fields gleam a fitful green among the bricks in the morning light—but surrounded all; doomed, injected morsels waiting to be digested at leisure, to serve the strenuous purposes of another life. And yet only the outer suburban zone is visible here—a land of beauty without refinement, of wealth without distinction; a land of groves and spires and villas hedged round with reformatories, schools, and asylums. And everywhere, from horizon to horizon, the unfinished brick and timber of the builder, emblems of the ever-rising flood, of a movement of which the springs are at the ends of the earth, of a life which takes toll of every land under heaven.

Now at last, away in the northeast, the fiery red rim of the sun shows above the horizon. There has been no gorgeous preparatory display, no massing of shades and colors for the opening ceremony. With scarce an anticipatory flush he rises full into a gray, expressionless sky, and a moment afterward disappears into a bank of fog which hangs on the horizon over the Essex marshes. A fitting tribute, perhaps, to the race and clime. For he has risen over the first meridian, over the mother city of the Northern vikings. It is from here that the nations have learned to count their distance. It is from here that they measure his course in his race round the trackless seas.

Benjamin Kidd.

SHAKSPERE.

HE heard the Voice that spake, and, unafraid,
Beheld at dawning of primeval light
The systems flame to being, move in flight
Unmeasured, unimagined, and unstayed.
He stood at nature's evening, and surveyed
Dissolvèd worlds—saw uncreated night
About the universe's depth and height
Slowly and silently forever laid.
Down the pale avenues of death he trod,
And trembling gazed on scenes of hate that chilled
His blood, and for a breath his pulses stilled;
Then clouds from sunbright shores a moment rolled,
And, blinded, glimpsed he One with thunder shod, . . .
Crowned with the stars, and with the morning stoled!

Henry Jerome Stockard.