

possible amount of arithmetic and geography within a given time. It is probable that Dr. Arnold would have been considered wanting in the requirements of an American school-teacher of the present day. It is certain he would have found himself hopelessly trammelled, as many an aspiring teacher finds himself trammelled, by the expectations of his employers. The teacher who would fain be less of a machine—who would like to take time to do some thorough training, and to develop the men and women of the future—gets no opportunity. He must bring the largest possible crop of arithmetic and geography at the end of the year; all his better work in building character will count for nothing with the "Board." Then there are hobby-riders, seeking to drive into the already overcrowded course some special study. The arts of design are often useful in a business way, therefore drawing shall be universally exacted of the pupils. Music is charming at home, therefore the vocal teacher must have place. In one considerable city, a wealthy merchant in the Board of Education, who found telegraphy valuable in his own office, has succeeded in putting every boy and girl in the town to clicking telegraph keys.

But, no matter what is put into the course, it is rare that anything is taken out. The school-master finds no place on which to stand. His individuality is utterly repressed. He is a mere cog-wheel in a great machine. He sinks down at last to the level mediocrity which machines always produce; he becomes a hearer of lessons, a marker of registers, a worker for examination week. It is not chiefly his fault that he does not do higher work. There is hardly space for it, and there is no market for it.

We debate about courses of study and modes of procedure in our schools, but the chief thing, after all, is to get a genuine teacher. The master of the famous "Gunnery" school, whose death recently attracted so much attention to his methods, did not teach anything that was not to be found in other schools of the same class. He was not even specially remarkable for his own scholarship, nor for extraordinary attainment in his pupils. But there was in him a manliness which communicated to his scholars something better even than the knowledge they acquired. There is a school district on the edge of the Adirondack wilderness, where the Roman Catholic and Protestant voters have long struggled for control. Sometimes a Catholic teacher would receive the appointment, and, as he would not read the Bible in school, the Protestants would refuse to let their children learn the multiplication table from him. Then the Protestants would put in a teacher. But whichever carried the day, there was much uniformity in the stupidity of the teacher and the inefficiency of the school. It did not occur to any one that the quality of the teacher, as a teacher, was of more importance to the district than the religion to which he might belong in a nominal and hereditary way. But it chanced, in the summer just passed, that the district secured a genuine whole-hearted school-master. He was a Catholic, but Protestants soon forgot it, as he was not a propagandist. The boys and girls, for the first time, were eager for school hours and in love with school days. The district forgot the battle of religions in their feeling that the teacher was giving them something they had never had before.

All the world over, human short-sightedness puts the means for the end. The organization and regular conduct of a school system is of value only as it helps the schools to attain their main end. The minister of public instruction who boasted that he could look at his watch and know just what question was being asked at that moment in every school of a given grade in France, was a good illustration of the system-worshiper. A system of education that defeats its own end by destroying the free and individual action of the teacher is the nightmare of human progress. No doubt, teachers of enthusiastic devotion may do much under existing conditions, but it seems a pity to spend so much time and effort in producing unfavorable conditions.

The Situation in Ireland.

WHY do not things settle down in Ireland? is the question which those naturally ask who have watched the struggle of the last three years, noted the demands of the peasantry, and perceived what a long way the Land Act passed by Mr. Gladstone's government went toward satisfying those demands. Why is the news always of outrage on the one side, arrests on the other? Was the Land Act really an insufficient measure of reform? Or is the land question, after all, not the crucial question in Ireland? Natural as such a question is, it is one which those will hardly ask who understand Irish character, and know how old and deep is the resentment which the bulk of the Irish population feel toward what they still call "the English Government." Of the material grievances Ireland had to complain of, the Protestant establishment and the condition of the tenantry were no doubt the gravest, and the latter far graver than the former. But they were not the only grievances; so that to settle them is not to settle everything.

For many years past there has been in Ireland a party which, whether it called itself Repealer, or National, or Fenian, or Home Rule, has substantially had always the same object—that of shaking off the rule of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and making the island, if possible, absolutely independent; if not, then at least practically so for most purposes. This party has enjoyed the sympathy of the Roman Catholic peasantry, and of a large section of the Roman Catholic middle class, as well as of some few Protestants. But it had from them little more than sympathy. They did not care enough to take up arms or do anything more than vote for Home Rule candidates. Fenianism, though it seems to have made a sort of scare in England, was never really formidable. Perceiving this, Mr. Davitt, who is the ablest man the National party has produced of late years, resolved to rouse the peasantry and win their support by appealing to their material interests. He organized the Land League, and the movement at once acquired an importance it had never had before. There was now something definite to struggle for, something more solid than a green banner and visions of national independence. No equally skillful move had been made since the days of Daniel O'Connell.

Mr. Gladstone's government recognized the change in the situation, and finding that the loyal Protestant population of the north of Ireland supported the demand for a sweeping change in the land laws, they conceded it, and forced the Act of last session through,

many of their own supporters making extremely wry faces over a measure so opposed to ordinary English ideas. They hoped thus to undo the alliance between the tenant farmers and the Nationalists which the Land League had created. They removed the motive, the practical grievance, which that alliance had rested on, and trusted that nationalism would relapse into its previous weakness.

To a great extent they have succeeded. There can be little doubt, in spite of the disturbances cabled from Ireland, that the great mass of the tenant farmers will take advantage of the Act and pay their rents so far as they can. They will recognize, probably they have recognized already, that no further concessions can at present be expected from the British Parliament, so that the wise course is to make the most of the Act. Thus the Land League will lose much of the active support it has had. But there remain, still unappeased, and not likely to be appeased, the Nationalists, many of whom looked on the land agitation as only an engine in the contest for independence. Fearing to lose all of what they had gained, they of course do their best to keep the excitement alive, to deter farmers from applying to the Land Court, to minimize the advantages which that court offers. It is the easier to do this because during the past two years a habit of lawlessness has grown up in which there is something attractive. There is a fascination in the act of conspiracy. It quickens the pulse and begets a sense of power—power all the dearer because it is secret. The Land League courts, and the people who (probably in many cases without the sanction of the Land League courts) carried on the land war by shooting at agents, or maiming cattle, or beating tenants who had paid their rents, cannot be expected to give up their practices at once, especially as the most active men among them are Nationalists, who dread nothing so much as the contentment of Ireland and a good feeling between her and Great Britain, since that would make their cause hopeless.

"But then," some one asks, "why do not those tenant farmers who are going to use the Land Act repudiate the Land League courts and the outrages one reads of?" They have got what they wanted, or nearly all of it; "why do they not show their gratitude by helping to reëstablish order?" The truth is, that gratitude counts for little in politics anywhere; and all the less in this particular case because the people think that it was English fear, not English goodwill, that gave them the Land Act. Besides, they have for more than a century been in the habit of regarding the Government (whether Liberal or Tory makes no difference), the law and its ministers, as their natural enemies. They have been carrying on a sort of guerrilla warfare against landlords—that is to say, against the exercise of those full legal rights which the law gave the landlord, but which their sentiment disapproved. An act done in the course of this warfare, even if the law calls it a crime, appeared to them in the light rather of an act of war, a sort of irregular foray on the enemy, than of an offense against the peace and good order of society. Hence, even those who took no active part in what are called agrarian outrages did not exert themselves to check them, would not give evidence, would not as jurymen find a verdict of guilty—not to add, that they would possibly

risk their own lives by doing so. This old habit is not to be got rid of at once, and it makes the great difficulty which those who govern Ireland have to reckon with. It is quite sufficient to account for the continuance of disorders in Ireland now, and it may last for years to come. Nothing seems likely to extinguish it but the growth of a feeling among the people that the law is on their side, and that outrages on individuals are threats to themselves.

If the Land Act succeeds, if rents are reduced, and are paid regularly, and if a large number of farmers become land-owners, the Irish peasant may become, probably will become, as firm a supporter of the rights of property as the French peasant is. All this must take time. Confidence is a plant of slow growth; so too is material prosperity in an old country without remarkable physical resources; and it may be long before either the contentment of the peasants, or a sense of the commercial advantages which English connection gives, or even the bestowal of a better and more popular system of local self-government, allays that desire for national independence which is strong enough to keep the people restless, yet apparently never strong enough (unless when backed by some material interest) to unite them in its cause.

George Eliot and Emerson.

ON the horizon of almost every mind there rise at times the spectral clouds of Doubt and Disbelief. The timid turn away and try to forget, or shiver in uncertain apprehension: the brave man pushes to close grips with the terror, to find if it be fact or phantom, or if perchance it be even a disguised friend.

It is profoundly interesting to study those lives in which the tendency to religious disbelief has been conscientiously accepted and lived out. The result of such observation is not always what we should expect. For instance, there has lately died in England a man who gave up all belief in God and immortality, yet who was, his friends tell us, of pure life and lovable character, and who carried his disbelief with buoyancy of spirit, and every appearance of happiness. On his tomb is the inscription: "I was not, and I was conceived: I lived and did a little work: I am not, and grieve not." We are not told whether this summing up of his story was from Professor Clifford's own hand; but it might well have been, for it expresses his belief and temper.

In the November number of *THE CENTURY*, there was given a personal sketch of George Eliot, which showed the far different effect upon her mind of convictions like Professor Clifford's. Mr. Myers's delicate and sympathetic presentation of her character, from the standpoint of loyal and reverent friendship, confirmed the impression given by her books, that the renunciation of belief in God and immortality wrought in her a profound and abiding sadness. Her unshaken fidelity to duty, amid the shadows that lay upon her spirit and upon the universe, affects us as most heroic and pathetic. The use to which she put that great pain, in drawing from it a finer sympathy and service to the fellow-beings whom she saw as orphans with her in a fatherless universe, is a supreme example of how the bitterest personal experience may be made to bear sweet fruit. But still, to her just and truth-loving mind, the world appeared a sadder place than it was in