

pointed out. For in many villages of India not only the cattle, but the lives of the inhabitants, are constantly exposed to the attacks of wild beasts. The Disarmament Act has deprived them of their means of defence. And it is under these circumstances that the people of India are compelled by the Home Government to bear the whole burden of a war of which, according to their spokesman at Willis's Rooms, they entirely disapprove. No passage in any of the speeches delivered elicited heartier applause than Mr. Fawcett's emphatic declaration that it was a gross injustice to the constituencies of this country to suppose that this mean and cowardly policy was approved by them. In condemning the repeal of the import duty on cotton, Mr. Ghose was careful to guard himself against the imputation of being an advocate for Protection. He declared himself an ardent Free-trader, and had no difficulty in showing that his objection to the repeal of the cotton-tax did not mean a hankering after Protection. The British Government, be it remembered, has not simply repealed a prohibitory tax. The tax in question touched the pockets of some influential people in Lancashire; but it yielded too important an item of revenue to be given up without some equivalent. The cotton manufacturers of Lancashire, however, have much influence in a general election. The voiceless millions of the Queen's subjects in India have none. The Government has accordingly relieved the pockets of the Lancashire manufacturers by the abolition of the duty on cotton imported into India; and the vacuum thus caused in the Indian exchequer they have filled by the imposition of odious taxes on the impoverished and unrepresented natives. It is idle to palliate so transparent an electioneering dodge by unctuous appeals to the doctrine of Free-trade.

But probably the most important, in the long-run, of Mr. Ghose's list of grievances, and perhaps the most difficult to deal with satisfactorily, is the wholesale exclusion of the natives from any sensible share in the administration of their own country. In the Army they cannot rise above the rank of subaltern. The Civil Service is, indeed, open to them theoretically, but their admission into it has hitherto been clogged with conditions which exclude them. In renewing the Charter of the East India Company in 1833 both Houses of Parliament solemnly decreed, without a dissentient voice, that no native of India, "shall, by reason of religion, place, birth, descent, and colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, or office, or employment whatever." In the Proclamation in which the Queen announced, in 1858, the transference of the Government of India to herself, this pledge was solemnly repeated. These promises were understood avowedly by the Court of Directors as throwing open both the Covenanted and Uncovenanted Services to natives, without restriction. "How have those promises been fulfilled?" asked Mr. Bright; and answering his own question, he showed that, for the first twenty years after 1833, "not one native of India was appointed to any office to which natives were ineligible before 1833." And during the forty-six years which have intervened from 1833 to 1879, he declared that "only nine persons, natives of India," had been admitted to the Covenanted Service. These are startling facts, and Mr. Bright even ventured to say that difficulties were put in the way of the natives, on purpose to exclude them. Without going into the question of motives, however, the difficulties themselves are indisputable. What justification can be offered for the oppressive rule which obliged Native candidates to pass their examination in England? And as if this were not a sufficient obstacle, the Government some time ago reduced the eligible age of candidates from twenty-one to nineteen years. The practical effect of this was to compel Native candidates to come to England to prepare for their examination at the age of about seventeen. Is it likely that youths of that age would be sent by their parents, without friends or protectors, to pursue their solitary studies in a strange land for two years? And if any were bold enough to make the venture, and the candidate failed to pass the examination, he had no other chance, for he was past the eligible age. Certainly this was a grievance which demanded a speedy remedy; and we are glad to observe, as we are writing, that the remedy has been supplied in the new regulations published yesterday by the Government of India. As to the subject generally of the admission of the Natives, without restriction and on equal terms, to all offices short of the very highest, it is too large a question to be discussed at the end of an article. In one sense, English rule in India can never be other than an anomaly. We shall never govern it like previous conquerors. They settled down in the country,

and made it their home. Our occupation of it will never be anything else than that of a foreign garrison. And as we educate the natives, and weld them more and more into that unity of feeling and hope and action which constitute national life, are we not, in fact, preparing them to do without us? That, however, is a problem which belongs to the dim future; and its advent in any practical form may, we believe, be postponed indefinitely by the application of a policy which shall enable the mass of the population to perceive that our rule is for their good, and which shall, at the same time, admit the educated classes fairly to careers of honour and profit in the administration of their native country.

#### LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

THE appearance of a volume of "Essays" from the pen of George Eliot, must have brought home to some among its many readers a certain surprise at the reflection that the class of work to which it belongs is not more numerous. Thoughts on life in its broad moral aspect have occurred to all of us; and should, one would think, have found literary expression as frequently as thoughts on more special subjects. But it would not be difficult for the contemporary reader of the "Impressions"—beginning with the "Letters of Seneca," perhaps, and ending with the "Essays of Arthur Helps"—to carry about with him all the books with which the latest utterance of our great writer suggests comparison. We are not about to attempt any survey of the list. Our aim to-day is to choose out a single specimen, and invite the reader's attention to that little collection of "Maxims" which is generally regarded as the handbook of cynicism. We must allow that it was always so regarded. La Fontaine has a pretty little fable, in which he likens the reader of the "Maximes" to a Narcissus in self-esteem, but not in beauty, who is repelled from a crystal stream by the unpleasing reflection of his own face, and unceasingly attracted towards the stream by its limpid beauty. And the feeling was so general, that La Rochefoucauld pleaded demurely in self-defence that if he had libelled human nature, it was in company with "several Fathers of the Church," who would have been a little surprised, one fancies, at the honour of his society! The fact that we aim at occupying the reader's attention with the little volume, shows that we have the presumption to consider the general opinion, to some extent, mistaken. No doubt there is plenty of cynicism in the "Maximes." But there is a great deal into which the popular imagination imports the cynicism by dropping the limitations. We have all heard La Rochefoucauld's saying that in the misfortunes of our best friends there is always something not unpleasing to us. A writer in the *Saturday Review* has well shown how wrongly this remark is understood, when it is supposed to mean that our affection for our best friends is insincere. It means only that this affection is not entirely disinterested. How often have we felt, at the bottom of our hearts, on hearing of the misfortune of a friend, a certain satisfaction in reflecting that we have now at length a chance of serving him! This is not a noble feeling, it is part of the egotism and narrowness of human nature; but it has no relation to envy or spite, or to anything that is low and vile.

Or take at hazard another of these sayings which are least respectful to humanity:—"Nous aurions souvent honte de nos plus belles actions, si le monde voyait tous les motifs qui les produisent." Does that mean that all heroism is a sham? It will not be so read by the many in whom it revives a sense of humiliation. As they recall the praise or the gratitude which they could have answered with this sentence, as they recognise that this great sacrifice, that act of devotion, would have been judged differently, if the outside world had seen all the motives which led to it, they will not allow that they have been hypocrites. They will rather be ready to discern a mixture of generous motive in much that does look like hypocrisy. The sense of an incomprehensible tangle which recurs with these recollections, tends rather to clear a space on the very edge of what is poor and petty for our conceptions of what is noble, than to lower our conceptions of what is noble. We can believe that generosity may lurk behind obvious vanity, when we have caught a glimpse of vanity lurking behind obvious generosity. Such maxims lose all their meaning when we forget their temperance. The point of this saying lies in the word "tous." If we say that people would often be ashamed of their finest actions, if the world saw their real

motives, we make the saying mean only, "There are hypocrites in the world,"—a very coarse and obvious truth. It is not that there has been a pretence to one kind of motive, while the action has been performed from another; it is that the complexity of impulse has been greater than any retrospect can disentangle, it is that no one who knew how mingled was the motive could fully appreciate the action. And in this belief not only is there nothing cynical, there is an antidote to cynicism.

Our own age, perhaps, is better qualified to appreciate the spirit of the "Maximes" than that which succeeded to La Rochefoucauld's. Voltaire, who classed the book among those which have contributed most largely to form the taste of the French nation, spoke of its moral tendency much as people do now-a-days. But the eighteenth century could not be just to the seventeenth. In matter of style, Voltaire might have made a model of the "Maximes;" it would be possible to detach some of his sayings which might sparkle in harmonious lustre by their side, but in matter of feeling, Voltaire and La Rochefoucauld belong to opposite worlds. Both are emphatically the children of their age. In this respect, we should set La Rochefoucauld above the great writer whose name has been made a pretext for the introduction of his. In the impressions of "Theophrastus Such," the reminiscence of Queen Anne will perhaps blur the Victorian stamp for the future student of English literature, while no revivalist sympathy confuses the pure seventeenth-century dialect of the "Maximes." They represent their age on the side for which the succeeding age had least sympathy. Their world, says Sainte-Beuve, is that of Jansenism, omitting only the idea of Redemption. Their picture of human nature is the true background for the Christianity of Port Royal, the background apart from which, indeed, the cloister would lack its meaning. The saintly aspiration not only finds its appropriate setting in the worldly confession; to a considerable extent, the two have a common element. "Man is fallen," is the burden of both utterances. Or if it is less the Fall than the lowness of human nature which is suggested by the worldly utterance, the difference is imperceptible from the point of view of the eighteenth century. When Nature becomes a synonym for all that we need to observe and obey, it does not matter in what dialect men express an opposite opinion. The rainbow might or might not show itself against the cloud, but in both the cloud is there. The men of a following age could have as little sympathy with those who simply painted it in its darker hues as with those who used this black background to set forth the brightness of a supernatural radiance.

Certainly there is no glimmer of the supernatural radiance on the page of La Rochefoucauld. But any real study of the "Maximes" reveals, beside the sternly contemptuous picture of what man is, fugitive glimpses of an ideal of what he should be, which is, indeed, the result of a narrow experience and an exclusive sympathy, which takes no cognisance of the needs of the majority of human beings, which knows nothing of the sanctity of pure conjugal love and the pieties of duteous kindred; but which, with all its narrowness, is yet the ideal of a high-minded nobleman, full of scorn for what is false, of tolerance for what is inevitable, rich in that subtle insight which alone renders tolerance a positive influence. A life of intrigue and gallantry—a paltry ambition to which neither the purity of woman nor the interests of a nation are sacred, when vanity sees its object beyond them—these things are as despicable as they are hateful, no doubt. But the candid reader of La Rochefoucauld will allow that they are not incompatible with an insight into what is noble. Nor need we fear any injurious inference from this concession. No man's thoughts should be judged from his life. The practice of many a saint would be nobler than it is, if it conformed to the ideal of many a worldling, and we do not underrate the strength which assails the arduous heights of virtue, when we allow that it may well be divorced from the keen sight which discerns them. We only echo the lament of every age,—that light supplies no force.

The complaint of a reader who for the first time opens the much-quoted volume is perhaps not so much that these reflections are cynical, as that they are obvious. The indignant "How false!" may be repeated less often than the impatient "How trite!" We would not deny that La Rochefoucauld's delicate French sometimes enshrines a platitude. But let our impatient reader take up, after long years—especi-

ally if they be full years—the little volume he has flung aside, and he will find that what seemed false and what seemed trite are alike illustrated by the records of memory. Here and there a reflection, dismissed at first with a hasty "of course," becomes the seed of long retrospect, and the index to all that is most poignant in regret. Elsewhere, some maxim, dismissed at first as a libel on human nature, is felt at once as a painful stimulant to conscience, and a lesson in tolerance and forbearance. There are sentences which will remain simply neat statements of the opinion that men and women are very poor creatures, and that the less trust we put in them, the better. But the reiterated lesson that man is incomprehensible gives a new meaning to these accusations. We are made to feel much more forcibly the strange disguises which baffle all human judgment, than the particular judgment of humanity as a whole; and in the reminder that man is hidden from others, and even from himself, we lose the sense of contempt for man which in particular sentences is expressed distinctly enough. The two lessons are both there, but they are not entirely consistent, and we listen to that which is most original and most specific.

One defect in these "Maxims" will be felt as much at last as at first. They lead us into a very narrow world. It is an intensely individual world. There is nothing of the air of business which pervades every sentence in a volume in some respects not unlike it,—Bacon's "Essays." The world of affairs is as though it were not, just as with Bacon the world of society is as if it were not. And the world of society, to which alone all La Rochefoucauld's reflections apply, is the world of society in its narrowest sense. There is not a sentence to show that he had ever given a thought to the existence of the poor and needy, or to the mutual duties which make up the ideal of a virtuous home; nor is there a hint as to those problems which concern the common duties and responsibilities of men in their corporate character. Human beings are contemplated as well-born, well-dressed, well-bred, and bound by two links alone, those expressed by words in which we lose some shades of meaning in writing otherwise than as *amitié*, and *amour*.

Much of what he says on the last of these subjects reminds us, we must confess, that the best and the worst thing in the world are called by the same name. Still, he never leads us to the lowest deep. His sayings have nothing of the loathsomeness of Chesterfield's hints to his son. They belong to the region of sentiment,—of debased and guilty sentiment,—but still of real feeling, not of that mixture of heterogeneous motive in which it is difficult to assign the palm of evil. Sainte-Beuve almost tells the history of La Rochefoucauld's *liaison* with Madame de Longueville, in threading together a few of these maxims, and the warning, "Si on juge de l'amour par la plupart de ses effets, il ressemble plutôt à la haine qu'à l'amitié," takes a new meaning, when we compare it with his mention of her in his memoirs. The vista opened towards that region of transitory affection where the saddest memories of human life have their root—the picture of an emotion that lives for pain long after it has died for joy—is not a vision that, in the interests of morality, any one need regret. Perhaps, indeed, few records of experience are more instructive.

In all those passages which relate to friendship, on the other hand (so far as they can be distinguished from the former class), no degrading recollection impairs the force or delicacy of the lesson. But we exchange the French for the English word with reluctance. Is our nature colder than that of our neighbours, that the word "friendship" means so much less than its French synonym? Perhaps it is rather that the greater warmth and purity which is supposed to distinguish the domestic life of England is bought at the cost of a certain indifference to the pleasures of any other kind of intercourse than that with wife and children. The cost may not be excessive, but it is great. Madame de Sévigné wished to write a treatise on friendship; we wish that before sitting down to emulate Cicero, whom, in the opinion of her admirers, she would have entirely eclipsed, she had called La Rochefoucauld to her side, and given us the result of their joint reflections. We should, however, have cared most for his share in the result. Hers would have had more liveliness, more that the reader of to-day would have recognised as bearing on every-day life. But the weight of feeling would have come from him. She could have said much on the "infinite number of trifles that friendship demands us to

avoid or to respect" (we translate her remark from recollection), but he would have contributed more to the stability of Friendship, if he could have inspired his ideal of what was implied in loyalty to it. The most magnanimous of men would be more magnanimous, if he invariably remembered that "*le bien que nous avons reçu de quelqu'un, veut que nous respections le mal qu'il nous fait*;" the most dutiful would be more dutiful, in a like observation of the warning that "*on ne sauroit conserver longtemps les sentiments qu'on doit avoir pour ses amis et pour ses bienfaiteurs, si on se laisse la liberté de parler souvent de leurs défauts*;" and the appeal, "*Quand nos amis nous ont trompé on ne doit que l'indifférence aux marques de leur amitié, mais on doit toujours de sensibilité à leurs malheurs*," would, if it found a hearty response, render the most merciful more merciful. But it is less in the sayings which read like a translation from the "*De Amicitia*" that we feel the value of La Rochefoucauld's remarks, than in the warnings against that false persuasion of mutual knowledge which makes the shock of discovery needlessly destructive. "*Ce qui nous rend si changeants dans notre amitiés, c'est qu'il est difficile de connaître les facultés de l'âme, et facile à connaître celles de l'esprit*." Here is one of those remarks which might be expanded into a lengthy dissertation without adding an idea. It is not perfectly obvious; perhaps at first it will not seem true. The importance of recollecting that the whole of the nature cannot be judged from a part, will not indeed be disputed by any one; the bitterest experience of life attaches itself to the discovery of the delusion. But it will not at once be granted that mental qualities are more obvious than moral. We must remember the point of view of the "*Maximes*;" we must keep in our minds that everything there said is applicable to the social world, and for the social world, in its narrow sense, the truth is incontestable. We form an opinion as to a man's mental power from a few words on a railway platform or at a table d'hôte. Such hasty opinions are very often mistaken, but they are not baseless; and when we find them erroneous, we are simply finding them out to be but opinions. But we may have no opinion on the moral qualities of an acquaintance of many years. The intercourse of society—and La Rochefoucauld is always thinking of the intercourse of society—is not only imperfect in this respect, it is misleading. The man who dropped into the only easy chair in a room may be the most unselfish creature in the world; the quick-sighted being who was the first to supply your trifling need would not, perhaps, have sacrificed any real wish to save your life. An every-day illustration of this truth is forced upon almost all fellow-travellers. A common journey is a dangerous experiment for friendship not because vexed questions start up on the threshold of a picture-gallery or a cathedral, not because the atmosphere of Alpine heights or Italian towns is inimical to friendship, but because the fellow-travellers are, under such circumstances, forced into recognising defects to which they had previously no clue. It is not impossible that if you had known the failing which has made your friend a thorn in the flesh through your common journey, you might still have chosen him as a fellow-traveller. However great the shock of finding his ideal of courtesy to inferiors, for instance, so different from your own, you might have taken that into account beforehand, if you had known of it, and arranged matters accordingly; the disaster has been that you came upon the discovery quite unprepared for it. People are forced suddenly, under such circumstances, into a kind of knowledge of each other which they no more gain from social intercourse than they can tell a bird's note from its plumage. We are constantly making this sort of discovery. Wherever a friendship becomes a connection, some one awakens with a surprise that is at once reasonable and unreasonable to the unsuspected qualities in a character he thought perfectly well known to him. It is not that he knew the person less well yesterday, and better to-day. It is that a new aspect has dawned on him, of which the old gave no hint. How often has a life-long disappointment imprinted this truth on the minds of many a wedded pair! Love may last, a common set of interests may weld the two together, may make them, to all intents and purposes, a most united couple, and yet the person wooed and won may be lost as utterly as if the bridal had been the funeral day. Perhaps the vision is forgotten. None the less, it was a reality while it lasted.

Thus explained, the lesson of our hiddenness from each other is, it may be said, trite. It is trite, as all the deep lessons of life are trite. What many have felt, many have tried to say, but in nothing is originality more manifest than in the power

to give obvious truths a shape in which they arrest attention. And there are few truths which, entirely believed, would do more to sweeten human relations than this sense of our blindness with regard to each other. Not, of course, that it would of itself produce tolerance. But to be convinced that we see only a small part of the nature, and cannot judge the rest of the nature from it, this would remove the greatest obstacle, next to direct selfishness, which makes a mutual understanding difficult. For nothing so hinders a ready perception of one kind of excellence, as to be on the look-out for another.

La Rochefoucauld, we have said, was eminently the man of his age. We are reminded, in analysing his merits, of a more profound saying than any of his own,—that the man of his own age is the man of every age. He belongs to the century of Louis XIV.,—the age of wit and sprightliness, of hard-heartedness and narrow sympathies, of immorality and saintliness, of everything that is unlike our own time. And yet in some respects he appears eminently suited to our time. Probably all such delicate and subtle utterance, expressing that which lies below the ebb and flow of the sentiment of the day, will afford some passages that seem specially appropriate to every age. We find there the weariness, the disappointment, the languor of modern life, its conscious futility, its unrest. We find, too, the seed of what is best in it,—its vague yearning after some indefinite ideal, its desire for simplicity, its anxious effort after truthfulness. Large aims, wide views, deep thoughts, we shall seek in vain. But some merits are detachable from these, some, perhaps, for beings as narrowly limited as mankind, are even incompatible with them. And these, such as they are, will be found in no literary work in greater perfection than on the page of La Rochefoucauld.

#### TESTAMENTARY FREEDOM.

WE are very jealous in England of our Testamentary Freedom. When any one proposes a law which would limit that freedom, as it is limited, for instance, in France, there is a sort of impression that he is a Socialist, or at all events, the kind of person to whose opinion no one of any judgment would accord even the least imaginable weight. So far as regards the esteem, or want of esteem, in which your judgment would be held, you might almost as well advocate a law compelling a testator to leave a tenth part of his disposable personal estate to the religious society of which he was a member, as a law compelling the testator to leave the greater part of his property to his own family, and forbidding him to cut out his relatives in favour of other friends. And yet, though this is the theory of English society,—and a theory so jealously held, that we can hardly imagine a change of opinion much greater than would be necessary to admit of any law tending in the direction of the French limitations on the right of disposal of property by will,—nothing appears to have more difficulties placed in its way, than the actual exercise of this freedom in the case of large estates. Last week, our Probate Court was considering the will of a young Welsh proprietor who, though he had been as reckless as possible in his expenditure during life, was certainly in no sense incapable of understanding what he was about, or of forming his judgment on the kind of grounds—call them caprices, if you will—which with, perhaps, fifty per cent. of our race, pass current as adequate motives for doing what we do. It appears that Mr. Lloyd took somewhat arbitrary dislikes, and formed, it may be, somewhat arbitrary alliances. Certainly he did not like his sister to inquire what his testamentary dispositions were, or what he intended to do with his jewellery; but there are, we suspect, a good many Englishmen who would have objected equally to the curiosity of relatives however near, upon points so tender. Mr. Lloyd was also guilty of caprices in other respects. He spent in one year £700 on tobacco,—certainly a large allowance for a fortune of only £4,000 to £5,000 a year. But then if a man is to anticipate his means at all, it is perhaps less irrational to do so in order to gratify an over-delicate taste in cigars, than in order to gratify a taste for racing or gambling; and every Englishman of fortune has, as everybody knows, an indefeasible right to anticipate even a strictly limited life-interest for the purpose of either racing or gambling, without having his independence of mind called in question for so doing. Then, again, Mr. Lloyd paid £122 for lessons on the banjo,—lessons in negro melodies. But if he had spent the same in lessons on the violin or the flute, no one would have even remarked on the item at all as an extravagance, in the expenditure of the owner of £4,000 or