

could find in their hearts not to pay the good little woman the whole sum in a lump, necessary for the desired presentation. But to enumerate the stories which have delighted us would be very nearly to copy the list of contents. We must be content to quote the speech of the writer of begging-letters to his friend the vendor of roast "tatoes," who thinks it "queer there's nothing about 'tatoes in the Testament. Anyhow, I thank God," he continues, "for creatin' of 'em. It's a pleasure to sell 'em. They're such a fillin' comfort, specially with a nice dollop o' butter in 'em, to them as buys 'em." The begging-letter writer thought so too:—

"I like your potatoes," he had said, 'because they're the best I can get anywhere, and they're the handiest I can get for my supper where I'm staying now—so it's only common-sense to buy them. You've nothing to thank me for, so far. Perhaps I was kind to you formerly, but I have met with so little gratitude in the course of my chequered existence that when I do see a show of it, it staggers me. Perhaps I may not have done much to merit gratitude; perhaps I may have done very much. Opinions differ, and it ill becomes a man to trumpet his own praises. There is only one thing I will ask of you, Sam. When you discover the identity of your anonymous benefactor, oblige me with his address. It will be for his benefit as well as mine,—or rather, of the numerous objects, deserving objects, whom I shall be able to bring within the play of his most benevolent hose-pipe. I have no doubt that his benevolence would burst him if it could not find a vent, and for his own sake as well as sufferers'—many sufferers whom I know, with unexceptionable vouchers of calamity and character—I wish to discover his address, were it only to thank him for justifying my belief in the innate goodness of human nature. It is often buried, sir—buried at a decent depth, I must confess—but it is *there*, sir, if you only dig deep enough. How refreshing, then, to a rightly-constituted mind to find that it is to be met with on the surface if the rightly constituted mind could only find the place! In the meantime, Sam, I shall eat your potatoes, because I relish them, and you must allow me to pay for them, Sam. It would be *infra dig.*—I am making no punning allusion to your stock in trade—for a professional man, a man of extensive acquirements, although in a pecuniary point of view, unfortunately, they have not secured the extensive acquisitions which, perhaps, they merited—to accept eleemosynary tubers from a prosperous street-seller, even though that professional man may possibly have slightly contributed to that prosperous street-seller's prosperity."

And now we must leave our readers; but we will leave them in the green fields, to which we said at our commencement that these volumes led us, both by their spirit and their words. In his "Travels behind a Plough," when our revered and reverend author was a little boy in search of an appetite and rosy cheeks, we have this beautiful reminiscence of summer days in the meadows about his host's farm-house:—

"When the hay had been cut, and tossed, and cocked, and carried—littering the trees that joined hands across the lanes with wisps that the birds would have been glad of a few weeks before—and forked up into stacks under tarpaulins, and combed into neatness of side, and thatched into security of top, an atmosphere of languor brooded for awhile over the farm. The wooders and the rabbits seemed the only busy creatures on it. The woods grew darker, the hedges grew dusty. Bees were ever humming drowsily round the flowering sweet-lime in the farm garden. The luscious-scented blossoms dropped off in the blue-green bean fields. Green corn was fast becoming golden, with heavy ears which, in heavy land, tapped sleepily, as the wind softly moved them, against even a tall man's hat. The brown coverts of young partridges that sprang whirling up in sudden fright, and then as suddenly dropped like stones into the golden green seas, spangled with blue corn-flower and rough-stalked scarlet poppies, were daily growing less distinguishable from their papas and mammas."

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL.*

THIS is an elder work of Dr. McCosh, whose *Christianity and Positivism* was lately reviewed in these columns. It belongs to that numerous family of writings which owes its existence to the protest of liberal orthodoxy against the *Essays and Reviews*, and is written throughout with much piety and some candour. The greater part of it seems to us rather better than an average sermon, and if there are any persons who imagine that no one can take any interest in science without being irreligious, we can fancy that they might derive benefit from reading the book. We propose, in the remarks which follow, to criticize rather the aim which writers like Dr. McCosh set before themselves, than to estimate this particular specimen of their efforts. His last book has lately given us occasion to attempt a statement of the difficulties—arising both from the world of Nature and of Man—which in our day divert men's sympathies from theology; but, as our object was then mainly with the human element in this movement, we only touched upon the other in passing. We now return to it, wishing that by some such considerations as those which follow, any thinker could be awakened to the need there is of approaching, from a different point of view and with a different intellectual apparatus, the task undertaken by so many excellent men, with no other qualification than zeal for religious truth and a certain amount of reading. "Those who would end

with certainties," says Bacon, "must begin with doubts." All that will be attempted here is to show that a large problem has to be solved; but let it not be said that those who attempt to point out its magnitude either take for granted, or are indifferent to, its solution.

It would surely be waste of time to prove that the chasm which books like this attempt to bridge, exists. No one in our day will deny the divergence of those who study the laws of the visible world and those who promulgate and teach what are supposed to be the laws of the invisible. Few will deny this divergence to be a misfortune, for it is a misfortune equally obvious to those who sympathise with either side, and is felt by many who sympathise with neither. Everyone knows that when you speak of So-and-So's "opinions," you mean what he thinks about religion, while if you wish to express his corresponding attitude towards science, you speak not of what he thinks, but of what he knows. The veriest idler of the Clubs is aware that no one has an *opinion* about gravitation, and without caring a straw for science, even he has learnt from experience that it is better to attend to what is certain than to what is probable. Such a one as we are imagining does not trouble himself with attempts to "reconcile" science and theology, but he cannot read the newspapers without discovering them to be frequent enough to prove the difficulty of the feat they aim at accomplishing, and is probably enough of a logician to draw the inevitable inference that what some men think, is discredited by the mere difficulty of reconciling it with what other men know. He does not necessarily cease to yield a languid deference to the outward forms of religion, but every avenue which might lead into those depths of our nature where intellect and conscience find common ground, and thus connect those forms with realities, is closed as with bars of iron. Now we do not pay this state of mind the compliment of asserting that science has anything to do with it, nor do we suppose there would be any great difference in the numbers of those whose lives are ruled by indolence and wordliness if the thoughts of men about religion ceased to be apparently refuted by their knowledge of science. But while this is the aspect presented by the result of thought to the unthinking, the position which indolence and worldliness hold is fortified by logic. In that struggle against the tyranny of sense which not the most worldly of us is quite without, the order and the majesty of law seem not with man, but with his enemy. The instincts that centre in the conscience seem to belong to a world of chaos, and those which take their rise in the senses to be the only guides to a world of order.

In the belief that this result is more evil than almost any alternative, an attempt is here made by one who holds the Supernatural to be the only permanent home for the spirit of Man, to exhibit the case of those who in our day regard this conception as an injurious fiction, diverting men's attention from the enduring facts of Nature.

The meaning of the word "Nature" has been given by Coleridge in terms which would satisfy at once the scholar and the physicist. Nature, he says in effect, is literally *Natura*, that which is always "about to be born." It is the effect as latent in its cause, it is the chain of varying force by which all that we hear and see and touch is connected together. Whether we are to include in this natural world the will of Man depends wholly on the question whether we consider will to be a mere effect. It is for the very purpose of establishing this distinction that Coleridge gives his definition of Nature. *Will*, he says, is an exercise of creative force, a fresh start in time, a sequence which is not a mere consequence. Anyone who believes this must look upon all Will as supernatural, but those who do not believe it are not obliged to look upon all Will as natural, or Calvinism would have no logical standing-ground. There is a point where originating, uncaused, Will must, according to the view of the theologian (whatever his opinion on free-will), have come in contact with nature, and the question is, Does nature bear any trace of this? Does "that which is always *becoming*," to repeat the words of Coleridge, bring with it any evidence of that which does not *become*, but is? Does a mind not bringing that conception to the study of the outward world find it there? This question is often supposed to be answered, when it has been established that a mind which does bring this conception will find it strengthened by the study of the outward world. It is this slight shifting of the issue which makes controversy unprofitable. Once allow that such books as the Bridgewater Treatises or Paley's *Natural Theology* are appeals to Theists only, and you change their whole character. They remain valuable and instructive illustrations of the light the Supernatural throws upon Nature, but they and the principles they embody cease to have any relevance to the question we are

* *The Supernatural in Relation to the Natural*. By James McCosh, LL.D. London: Macmillan.

now urging on men of science,—does Nature bear any testimony to the Supernatural?

Now it can scarcely be doubted that a grave change has been introduced into the conditions of this problem by the general surrender of the principle of independent specific creation. When the student of nature, whatever his theological opinions, supposed every species of animals and plants to be descended from an ancestor which had no natural connection with any other, the very conditions of his study brought him in contact with the supernatural. There is a definite plan, for instance, in every natural order of plants. On the old theory this plan was transferred directly from the mind of the Creator to the outward world. Natural history was a science which broke off abruptly in face of supernatural Will. The mind of the inquirer could find no screen to shut out the thought of an intelligence like in kind to his own and infinitely superior in degree; there must be a creative mind, because there was a result which could in no other way be accounted for. The hypothesis of independent specific creation, in fact not only implied, but *was* the common territory of theology and science. Here the supernatural overlapped the natural, here the chain of every-varying effect, reaching its last link, touched on cause which was not effect. This, at all events, has ceased to be the case. We have receded very far from that uncased cause. Have we kept it in sight? That is the question. Do not confuse it with the other question, whether to those who approach it from a different region the shadow it casts is widened by the change. There is the same sort of difference between nature on the old and new belief as there would be, to take the least misleading analogy, between a farm or estate where every alternative had to be submitted to the distant owner, and one where the subordinates were left to make the decision for themselves. If you had an independent knowledge of that distant owner, you might recognize his discernment of intelligence in the shrewdness with which the bailiff should decide what trees were to be cut down or what crops were to be sown. But how could you from this shrewdness ever convince a sceptical friend that the bailiff was not the owner?

The difficulties which would lie in the way of such an attempt are common to any hypothesis of evolution. But if we are to accept that theory of origin which is associated with the name of Mr. Darwin, we must accept these and others besides. It is not merely in this case that the imaginary servants of our distant proprietor do not refer to him for direction; they are not, with regard to the ends which we see them accomplish, even well chosen. Those who believe the perfect wisdom of the owner, must explain the apparent waste of power in his management of his estate by the belief that his purposes embrace some results wholly out of their ken. A wise man would not fling a handful of wheat where only a single grain would take root. If a wise God acts thus, it must be with some purpose, including the development of species, no doubt, inasmuch as it results in that, but also for transcending it in directions which we cannot remotely conceive. With regard to this particular end, we are obliged to use language which would imply chance even where it is not intended. "I have sometimes spoken," says Mr. Darwin (*Origin*, p. 131), "as if the variations" (which are ultimately species) . . . "had been due to chance. *This, of course, is a wholly incorrect expression*"—but it precludes the necessity of lengthy paraphrase, and will be misunderstood by no one. Still the very fact that it is convenient to use this word points out the direction in which it will guide all association. And we may exhibit this tendency yet more clearly by quoting a passage, which has been quoted before as a remarkable anticipation of this theory, but which we bring forward only to show the kind of ideas and belief with which it is most naturally connected. A hypothesis is such a different thing, according as it is suggested and confirmed by observation of outward fact, or accepted on the mere evidence of its own satisfying coherence, that we hesitate to give the same name to the two things. But so far as one can speak of the same theory in the mind of a thinker of to-day and of 2,000 years ago, Natural Selection may be described in the words of the only great speculative genius of Rome:—"We see," says Lucretius, "that many conditions are necessary in order that a race should be perpetuated, and among all the animals which have existed, some have been brought into the world unfitted for these; others, again, have perished from being unprovided with any peculiar advantage in the struggle for existence. For races are preserved in this struggle either by their own craft, strength, or at least activity, on the one hand, or else by being useful to us, many different races of animals being secured from extinction by the guardianship of man." We see nothing here wanting to the theory of Natural Selection (speaking from the point of view of the logician, and not the naturalist), except the minute fortuitous variations, which are, of course, all that gives it its value as a

product of science, but which, when we are considering its influence as an idea, may be thrown out of account without loss. Now let us turn back to the origin of the world which was to be a home for the races thus selected by nature. "The elements of things came together according to no previous scheme, but in the whirl of infinite time, having exhausted every possible arrangement, they have now fallen into that by which the present universe is composed." Do not the two conceptions fit one another? The ceaseless movement of the elements, trying, as it were, every possible combination, is so fitting a prelude to that ceaseless variation of organism which at last arrives at some accidental advantage conferring success in the struggle for life, that we think every one who has fully studied this noble poem, and who is not too scientific to overlook some glaring absurdities, must feel as if the theory of Natural Selection fell here into its place as part of a coherent scheme. Now, what is it which gives such unity to the poem on the *Nature* of things? It is the sense of delight and deliverance in escaping from the notion of the Supernatural, the relief at discovering that what we call Creation was a result, "not," to quote Mr. Darwin, "arrived at by means superior to, though analogous with human reason," but by change which had not its source in any will. We accord sympathy of the imagination to such a mental condition with greater difficulty than attention of the intellect. It is more easy for us to put ourselves in the position of believing that this throbbing human world is the product of some agency or sets of agencies which do not feel or think, than in the position of those who desire to find this true. The certainty of the worst misfortune would be to most of us infinitely less terrible than the suspicion that the laws which govern the universe came from some impersonal cause. It would be here irrelevant to inquire what changes are implied in this change of feeling, we only mention it that we may not seem to ignore it in pointing out that all the inspiration of the philosophic poem in which natural selection was, we may say, prophesied, comes from the conviction that the scheme of which it formed part was one wholly to supplant the idea of Providence; that the "divina voluptas" which breaks forth at every halting-place in the argument is most conspicuous at the discovery

"At contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa."

If these remarks have any force, we do not see how a thinker can shut his eyes to the fact that the testimony of Nature to the Supernatural has become in our day more recondit, if not more uncertain. Its absolute value we make no attempt to estimate. It is enough here that we accept as unquestionable a thickening of the veil of second causes, by which we are screened from the direct view of creation. The chain of "that which is always becoming" is lengthened in our hands, and that which *is* seems, from this point of view, further off than it did to our fathers. And hence for those who deem the spiritual and intellectual world not to be separate regions, but rather distinct only as the smell of a rose is distinct from its colour, there has come a time like the period when we waken up to the discovery that affections which have filled our life with warmth are not quite what they were. We speak of an experience which will not be familiar either to the man of science or the theologian. Neither of these is a good judge of his influence on the intermediate world. The study of Nature seems to absorb and to a great degree almost satisfy the whole being; he who is sustained by that continual contact with large ideas and observation of unvarying sequence is secured, to some extent, from keen desires and permanent suffering. The intellectual life has the danger or the privilege, according as we choose to regard it, of sheltering the soul surrendered to it from strong emotion. The spiritual life finds in this strong emotion (and it is quite equally a danger or a privilege) the fuel for its brightest flame. But for the every-day crowd, who only fitfully and at intervals partake of either life, the fact that their influence is mutually hostile is of deadly significance; and their common rival, the life of sloth and ease, draws back to lower aims many a heart which has shrunk back from the life of the soul because science has cast on it the shadow of superstition, or from the life of the mind because theology has set on it the brand of infidelity.

How differently would the utterances of religious men fall on the ears of those who are passing through this dark valley if they would acknowledge that the shadow is an objective reality! What a power would he have for direct utterance of the truth as revealed to himself who should have courage to confess, "It may be that God really designs to shroud himself in that complex combination of cause and effect which we call Nature." This, we should have thought, would have been not too great an effort of candour and trust for the followers of him who said, in

speaking of the lessons of nature, "To them that are without, these things are done in parables." Anyhow, it is, we are sure, the indispensable preface to the success of any movement which shall turn the attention of our contemporaries and our children to a region where the laws of the Supernatural world are exhibited as unquestionably as the laws of the Natural in the phenomena of every-day practical life.

THE INTERNATIONAL.*

A FRENCHMAN, as a rule, and if he can, begins at the beginning, and consequently, no one should be surprised to find, on the threshold of a history of the International, the usual references to John of Leyden, Babeuf, Saint Simon, and Fourier, followed by a dissertation on workmen's associations, and on the varied efforts made by Frenchmen, not only to improve the status and augment the profits of the workmen, but to reform the whole human race, and establish the universe itself, so far as man is concerned, on a new footing. It is as impossible not to regard these enthusiasts with genuine sympathy, as it is to perceive that, unhappily, their exertions are mainly based on the assumption that human nature is something different from what it is; and that if co-operative movements, small or large, are to succeed, they must contrive to accommodate themselves to the strengths as well as the weaknesses of humanity. Man's strongest tendency is to preserve his own existence, and next, to acquire something that he may not only call his own, but employ at his discretion; and if he gives up aught for the good of individuals or of the State, nothing is more certain than that he wishes to do it with his own consent. Unless this instinctive acquisitiveness were allowed moderately full play, is it at all probable that production would be equally great? But we must not allow the interesting chapters of M. Villetard to carry us off into the region of discussion. The object of his book is to relate the history of the International, and if he lays his foundations deep, we may perhaps be permitted to approach the structure when it emerges from the ground.

Combinations of workmen are not new in the history of States; they have long subsisted in England and on the Continent; the novelty lies in the extent to which they have been developed, and the prospect—or shall we say simply possibility, of a further extension, until Europe and America present to the eyes of statesmen and economists a system of affiliated Trades' Unions. The conditions favourable to the growth of such an organization are of modern origin,—they are the spread of education among the poor, the immense increase of industrial and commercial transactions, and, above all, that facility of intercourse which has sprung up within the last quarter of a century. Whether the obstacles to a world-wide organization of workmen—diversities of race, of language, of political and religious beliefs—can be overcome is a question that the next hundred years may answer; but, at present, these obstacles plainly exert a greater force than the facilities of travel or the relative progress of education. Moreover,—the history of the International shows it,—there is a tendency to divert these associations from industrial to political purposes, from the original scheme, which contemplated improvement, in the status of the workman, to fundamental changes in the essence and framework of society; and it is not at all unlikely that this tendency towards violently subversive methods will prove the strongest of all obstructions to the spreading of a network of workmen's associations over two continents.

The International, according to M. Villetard, had its origin in the visit of French workmen to the Exhibition of 1862. The Emperor Napoleon encouraged this fraternal visit, apparently in the hope not only that the French would learn something from their comrades, but that, like the Treaty of Commerce, the intercourse begun in this festive fashion would help to establish a French influence here that would be useful as a political engine in critical times. The workmen, as may be remembered, were warmly received and hospitably feted; the English read an address to their brethren in which were foreshadowed a fraternal alliance, a union of workmen. "Let us hope," they said, "that since we have shaken hands and have seen that as men, as citizens, and workmen, we have the same aspirations and the same interests, we shall not allow our fraternal alliance to be broken by those who may think it their interest to see us disunited; let us hope that some means of international communication may be found, and that each day will form a new link in the chain of love which shall unite the labourers of the world." M. Villetard not unreasonably calls this document the birth-certificate of the International. No formal step, however, was taken to found a society.

* *Histoire de l'Internationale*. Par Edmond Villetard, Rédacteur du *Journal des Débats*. Paris.

Many of the French workmen, sent to London wholly or partially at the expense of the State, remained here, and, of course, began and sustained a close correspondence with their fellows at home. The laws of France did not admit of organizations like our Trades' Unions, for authority weighed heavily on the French *ouvrier*, and kept him in leading-strings; but in 1864 the Emperor thought it prudent to lift off a little of the pressure, the "loi sur les coalitions" was adopted by 222 to 36; and in September of the same year an International meeting was held in St. Martin's Hall, whereat the bases of the new Society were laid down. The constitution of societies in France and elsewhere followed immediately, and the International rapidly became at once a power and a bugbear; a power, because it really gave more unity and consistency, yet still in a very limited degree, to the efforts of workmen upon the European labour market; a bugbear, because it frightened unduly landed proprietors and capitalists and employers of all kinds. The original design of the International was to give effect to what is called solidarity between the workmen of every country; in other words, to secure, so far as it can be secured by that method, not only higher wages, but a share in the profits of capital. The subjection of the workman to Capital, a grim tyrant, was declared to be the source of his political servitude, and from this the workman was to be emancipated by a successful war against the common enemy. The vulgar, common, practical aim of the International was that of the Trades' Union, the maintenance and increase of the rate of wages. There can be but little doubt that the "practical English," who do not escape the sneers of M. Villetard, were captivated by the idea of a mighty Trades' Union which would relieve them from the dread of foreign workmen during periods of strike; but the French associates in the enterprise, as he sharply points out, soon enlarged the scope of a design which Karl Marx has carried into the regions of ideal communism. The International, begun in London in 1862, was not finally established until 1866, at the Geneva Congress, where the "pacte fundamental" was adopted. Varlin, an influential leader on the French side, gives an account of the labours of 1866, and one sentence reminds us forcibly of the germinal alliance between Tory lords and working-men just come to light. In fine, he writes, "the International set up against the political lucubrations of Cabinets the economical programme of the Geneva Congress." Substitute Hughenden for Geneva, and we have a fair description of the Scott Russell coalition. The Commune, bombarded out of Paris, reappears in Belgravia and Park Lane, and Karl Marx is thrown into the shade by the avatar of the Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli,—perhaps not the least remarkable consequence of the Bonapartist delegation of French workmen in 1862 to form fraternal relations with the English Trades' Unions.

M. Villetard, employing documents produced by members of the International, traces the growth of this singular body, and the gradual enlargement of its scope as a politico-social power, working a little by sustaining strikes, working much by spreading radically communistic ideas. In fact he demonstrates the identity of the French leaders of the International with the famous Central Committee and Commune of Paris during the two sieges. But he also shows how much disunion there really was in the show of union, and how the hostilities within these bodies were as profound as those within the Convention. As an agency for sustaining strikes the International has hitherto displayed little efficacy, not having at its command resources at all equal to any one of the great English Unions. It is not formidable to "capital" on that side of its character, and makes up for the shallowness of its purse by the energy and recklessness of its propagandism.

We cannot imagine the International to be dangerous in England,—perhaps it is even useful as an irritant; but in France it may lead to disturbances, not only because logical Frenchmen go great lengths in search of an ideal social state, but because all French parties are intolerant of discussion, and are worse, in that respect, than the English Government under the Regency. The influence of the International lies in vagueness and secrecy, an influence which cannot be sustained or far-reaching in the glaring publicity of English political life.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

A Snapt Gold Ring. By Frederick Wedmore. (Smith and Elder).—This is a cleverly written without being a good novel. The hero, an artist and a man of culture, begins his career by introducing himself in a very free-and-easy fashion, to a young dressmaker. Here, thinks the reader, is the "gold ring," fragile enough to be easily "snapt." The reader is mistaken. The dressmaker's acquaintance with the hero has for its end his introduction to the real heroine, who is a lady by