

M. Zevaco argued that he had not gone beyond the bounds of legitimate argument, and there are probably those, both in France and in England, who will maintain that, so long as incentives to assassination remain incentives and nothing more, they are covered by the general and salutary law of freedom of speech. The answer to this is twofold. First, incentives to assassination, when published in a newspaper, may have an effect quite independently of any attempt to put them into action. What would be the object of killing M. Constans? To make the next Minister of the Interior avoid the measures which had proved fatal to his predecessor. What is the object of threatening to kill M. Constans? To make M. Constans himself avoid these measures. Thus, the political end aimed at in the two cases is the same, and if impunity were assured to those who preach assassination, the political mischief might be as great as if it were assured to actual assassins. Secondly, there is an immense practical difference between argument and direct exhortation. If M. Zevaco, or M. Courret had contented themselves with setting out the abstract beauty of murder, or even with proclaiming the duty incumbent on good citizens of cutting short a tyrant's life, the chance of their readers seeing the connection between this and the murder of M. Constans, or of some Deputy who has made himself obnoxious to the conductors of the *Égalité*, might be so slight as to make it needless to interfere with them. But when the victims are pointed out by name, as in one article, or by official position, as in the other, the offence ceases to be abstract, and becomes most inconveniently concrete. There is nothing academical about M. Zevaco's invitation to M. Constans, or about M. Courret's denunciation of the Deputies. It must be assumed that a threat of this kind is meant to be executed on the particular persons against whom it is directed. If so, it is not a plea for tyrannicide; it is a provocation to murder.

DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE.

EVEN among that large class of readers whose perusal of anything requiring close attention is limited to its title, many have probably derived satisfaction from Mr. Herbert Spencer's articles "On Justice," in the current *Nineteenth Century* and its predecessor. Merely to know that this virtue is recalled to men's minds seems, to us at least, something to be thankful for. Dr. Johnson's reflection, in the evening of a life that had brought him in contact with all the best English men and women of his own and a younger generation, "I have found mankind more kind than I expected, and less just," has probably been made, sooner or later, by all who ever reflect upon life. For Justice has as its foe not only every vice, but many a virtue; it is hard to say whether selfishness or compassion do most to oppose it, and if one were to reckon up the most unjust of one's acquaintance, one would find the list include all the ungenerous persons one knew, and many of the most generous. But what we would urge now is that Justice has against it not only all vices and many virtues, but some circumstances in which there is no moral element whatever. Nobody really expects justice from an uneducated person. Who, for instance, in inquiring the character of a servant, ever asked whether he or she were just? It is as definite a quality as the honesty, sobriety, and obligingness with which we are all so familiar, and it would in some positions of trust be as valuable a qualification as any. Injustice does as much harm in the upper servants of a large household as it does anywhere. But we should feel, if we were asked whether our butler or housekeeper were just, almost as if we were asked whether he or she spoke foreign languages. We should perceive that the inquirer was not familiar with the uneducated classes, that he was requiring from the uncultivated a kind of virtue that was inseparable from intellectual cultivation.

In our own day, the class in which no one expects individuals to appreciate justice has become the governing class. Its prejudices have become the fashion. The French noble who said that God thought twice before he damned a man of his quality had not breathed an atmosphere of stronger adulation than the artisan who listens to some of our orators, and reads some of our newspapers. It is not merely that these writers and speakers *pretend* to look at things from his point of view, though there is

something of that too. It is that the temptation really to see only what tells on his side is irresistible. The poor are flattered now for precisely the same reason as the rich were formerly. They hold the key of all that the world values. They are not themselves able to enter on the realms of distinction, but they can admit others; to please them is to advertise oneself; and there is just as much temptation to see things with their eyes as there was formerly to follow the prejudices of the aristocracy, or, more recently, those of the *bourgeoisie*. Or, rather, there is a great deal more. To speak unpalatable truths to a governor at any time requires disinterestedness and courage; but in our time it often requires what is much rarer,—indifference to the reputation for disinterestedness and courage, a resolute shutting of one's ears to much that comes in the guise of the loftiest aspiration, and of the purest humanity.

No King or Emperor, we will venture to say, was ever greeted with more flagrant flattery than an uneducated man who is told that his class has, in dealing with other nations, always been on the side of justice. If that were true, if poverty had no moral disadvantage, half the reasons for alleviating the disadvantages of poverty would be gone. What people mean when they speak as if it were true, supposing them to speak sincerely, is that if you make all fashionable persons into a class on one side, and all non-fashionable persons into a class on the other, you will find a healthier set of sympathies in the second class than in the first. They cannot mean that *any* political opinion was ever held mainly by uneducated people, so that you can compare the prejudices of the educated and uneducated. They know perfectly well that the comparison between Bedford Square and Grosvenor Square throws no light whatever on the comparison between both and White-chapel. But they choose to forget this, partly because that is the way to get power, and partly also because it seems the way to give help. Anybody can become important who puts into sonorous language the belief that the poor are always morally clear-sighted on the great issues of national life, and any one who does so finds himself in company with many of the great helpers of the past. Only by motives so potent in their appeal to both sides of our nature, could men who know anything of life be led to talk as if the incapacity to weigh evidence were a qualification for direct intuition, and the ignorance of certain elements of a problem equivalent to a miraculous discernment of its answer. There are people who do really believe these things, and have the power to say them glibly. But those who say them only by dint of shutting their ears to truths they are capable of understanding, incur a heavier guilt than many a convicted criminal.

There is no doubt that it is an important part of justice to recognise the limitations of the judge. He who tries to be just to one who has hurt him will often find that he has been hard, and sometimes that he has been cruel. In general, we should be inclined to say that to aim at justice where our own interests are concerned is to seek to be as God, discerning good and evil, and that we shall be safest when we remember that, except in very definite relations, only he who created can judge. But then it is precisely these definite relations which make up the world of politics. In this realm, not only ought men to be just, but they ought not to be anything else. Whenever a legislator takes a tone of generosity, he is turning his face in a wrong direction. Take, for instance, a question actually before the public,—that of supplying dinners for poor children at the expense of the ratepayers, and observe how the whole question has been confused (as Miss Octavia Hill has just observed in the little annual address which contains so much good sense, as well as some qualities not always united with good sense) by the practice of talking of these as *free* dinners. Perhaps it is desirable that they should be given: we do not enter on that point. We only protest against any phraseology which implies that it is generous to give these dinners, or niggardly to decide against giving them. There is no more scope for generosity in such a decision than there is in deciding whether one will wrap a shawl round one's hands or one's feet. To decide that A's children shall be fed at the expense of B, C, and D, may be very unjust, or it may be a necessary measure which is neither just nor unjust; but in no case can it be generous. And the way of talking as if it were so, or at least as if those who argued against the measure did so from a want of sympathy with those to whom it would be a boon, is a

specimen of the flagrant wrong that is done to the poor of our day by those who seek to please them.

We have a memorable picture of the moral ills which attack a State when it ceases to aim at justice. The same pen which has given us an account of the plague at Athens in the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, has given us an account of a worse disease at its end, when civil discord had established a new standard of what was permissible, and the normal attitude of man to man was either that of a fellow-partisan or a foe. In such a State, Thucydides tells us, "reckless daring is held to be loyal courage, prudent delay the excuse of a coward, moderation the disguise of weakness, and frantic energy the true quality of a man." The true bond at such times, we learn, is "not reverence to divine law, but a common defiance to it." Many of our ablest men, and some good men, are labouring to reproduce in our own country on a far vaster scale the evils set before the eyes of all readers in this imperishable warning. They are labouring to do for Europe what the Peloponnesian War did for Greece, to transfer loyalty from a State to a party; in other words, to obliterate from the whole world of practical dealings those towards whom it is recognised as a duty to be just. Small indeed was the circuit within which the Athenian at his best recognised the claim of anything that we can call Justice. But that narrow and rigidly limited enclosure did yet hold the germ-idea of justice—the common relation of fellow-citizens to a State. We are called to a far higher justice than theirs, but our justice, like theirs, must begin at home. If we think that Politics knows a higher law than Justice—that we can give the needy anything more valuable than that reverence for equity which their circumstances make it most difficult for them to acquire—then England will lose at once the glory of a great Empire, and that far more enduring glory which belongs to a defender of the oppressed, a helper of the weak, and a guardian of the equivalent blessings of liberty and of unbending law.

THE DANGERS OF HYPNOTISM.

THERE is an account in last week's *Lancet* (of April 5th) of a meeting of medical men at Leeds, to witness Dr. Milne Bramwell's feats in producing by a mere exercise of will, the same effects which the inhalation of chloroform or ether produces in the way of extinguishing all the pain of a severe operation. These feats may be regarded by a great many readers as holding out nothing but new benefits to the world. To us, however, they present a prospect for the world much more alarming than agreeable. The complete insensibility to pain which Dr. Milne Bramwell produced at the house of Messrs. Carter Brothers and Turner, dental surgeons, of Park Square, Leeds, is, indeed, no brand-new phenomenon. A case of the same kind is quoted in Dr. Carpenter's "Mental Physiology," in which complete relief from severe pain was given by Mr. Braid, one of our first experimenters in what is now called hypnotism, and we believe that Mr. Braid was able to remove the severest pain almost as completely as Dr. Milne Bramwell appears to have done to the satisfaction of more than sixty dentists or general practitioners who witnessed his operations (if mere exercise of will can be properly described by such a word as 'operations'), and their success. The phenomenon is, as we have said, not new; but it is new to have it popularised before an audience at once so considerable and so competent to judge, and to find that the various gentlemen present at such a meeting cordially agreed in the final statement of one of the scientific witnesses present, that "the time has now come when we shall have to recognise hypnotism as a necessary part of our study." For consider for a moment what this hypnotism means. It means that certain persons,—we earnestly hope that they are few,—of whom Dr. Milne Bramwell is a remarkable example, obtain the power so to control the whole organism of their patients that they can make them perfectly insensible to excessively painful surgical operations at will, and may even so influence the whole sensitive system of their patients that the latter will believe water to be (for instance) bad beer, or, so far as we can judge, would equally believe the most frightful poisons to be mere water, and will, in fact, act implicitly on the suggestions made to them by the hypnotist. The power of these hypnotists has long been recognised in France, and M. Charcot, the eminent

hypnotist, has, we believe, declared that the use of hypnotism, except by physicians using it for the purposes of healing, should be punishable under the criminal law. That is all very well to talk of, but how are you to legislate effectually against the use of moral influence over the nerves, by people who are not physicians? The mere consideration of the problem how to draft such legislation is enough to demonstrate its virtual impossibility. Dr. Bramwell, for instance, is stated to have sent the following letter to one of his patients: "Go to sleep by order of Dr. Bramwell, and obey Mr. Turner's commands." Mr. Turner was one of the firm of dental surgeons at whose house the Leeds meeting was held, and the patient had no sooner read the note than she at once obeyed the order, and the sleep "was so profound, that at the end of a lengthy operation, in which sixteen stumps were removed, she awoke smiling, and insisted that she had felt no pain, and, what was remarkable, that there was no pain in her mouth." Now, suppose that the same power over this woman's organisation had been obtained by some layman with no medical knowledge,—and it is obtained, remember, by moral and not by medical means,—and that the order had been given her not to feel the salutary pain of some obstruction in the passages of the body, under the innocent impression (suppose) that merely to relieve pain could be productive of no possible mischief: is it conceivable for a moment that any modern Legislature could be persuaded, first, that this exercise of will for the mere purpose of giving relief was a dangerous and mischievous act that ought to be punished; or, next, that it might really have the effect attributed to it, and yet be the indirect cause of the patient's death by removing the most serious danger-signal which Nature hoists? Yet it is hard to suppose that a girl who can have sixteen stumps extracted from her mouth without the smallest sensation of pain, could not be rendered equally insensible, say, to the anguish caused by the closure of some of the principal passages in the body, until it would be quite too late to adopt any of the remedies,—medical or surgical,—by which such obstructions are removed. Yet the mere removal of the pain would in such a case as we have supposed, produce the most fatal consequence, since no physician would be able to diagnose the case properly, in the absence of the violent pain which the hypnotist had extinguished by the mere exercise of will over a trained patient. Of course the power of removing pain, when the proper steps are being taken to remove the cause of pain, is a beneficent power; but it might be a most mischievous and fatal power if it were exercised by some person (as it well might be) either without any knowledge of the cause of pain, or without the wish to remove that cause. Again, what is to prevent a malignant operator who had discovered his power to hypnotise, from suggesting to his patient that, under defined circumstances, he should take up and swallow a draught of deadly poison under the impression that it was some delightful or curative medicine? Such a suggestion might be made to take effect in the operator's absence, though suggested to his mind under his immediate influence at a previous *séance*; and if it were, what conceivable evidence of the murderous intention and effect of this result of hypnotism could ever be obtained? We do not suppose that arsenic or prussic acid would cease to be deadly because the patient had taken them under the impression that they were some delightful or healing drug; and yet it cannot be doubted that if the evidence which convinced more than sixty trained witnesses of the power of the hypnotist to influence the organisation by suggestion, were satisfactory, the same power might be used for deadly as easily as for beneficent purposes. It was stated that one of the patients, from whose mouth "two large molar teeth" were extracted without the least sign of pain under Dr. Bramwell's hypnotic influence, had been completely cured of drunkenness by hypnotic suggestion. Now, if a man could be completely cured of drunkenness by hypnotic suggestion, one would suppose it quite as easy, if not easier, to induce the habit of drunkenness, or any other evil habit, under the same powerful influence. And if that could be done, how is evidence to be obtained of so nefarious and fatal a procedure due to moral and secret influence, and to moral and secret influence only? To us it seems that the prospect of a most dangerous use of this wonderful power, —whether in innocent or in guilty hands,—is far more substantial, than could be at all compensated for by the beneficent uses to which, of course,—if it be a real and considerable