

the Government with driving, by its exceptional decrees, the Catholic laborers into the ranks of the atheistic Social Democracy, at the same time inveighed against Belgian liberalism as a pernicious freemasonry, and thus wrestled at once, with his wonted volubility, with Conservatives and Liberals, Government and socialism, foe and ally. A Polish representative declared the opposition of his fraction to any prolongation of the law, protesting in the Polish interest against exceptional legislation in general, but also condemning the Socialist doctrines as subversive not only of State and Church, but of the principle of nationality, so dear to Poles.

This provoked the ire of Bebel, the aggressive Socialist chief, who began his harangue against the bill with an attack on the Poles, its most outspoken opponents. Then, assailing its advocates, he alluded, in the course of his invectives, to Stöcker's insinuation of a secret harmony between Socialists and Jews. This gave the famous court-preacher an opportunity to turn the discussion on Social Democracy into the anti-Semitic channel, and accuse a Jewish member of the Socialistic parliamentary group of hypocritically wearing on his back the badge of Social-Democratic principles. The Jew retorted by reminding Stöcker that tribunals before which his anti-Semitic agitation had brought him had branded his forehead with the mark of lying. Hänel, the most incisive German-Liberal opponent of the prolongation bill, characterized Stöcker as "the Bebel of religious intolerance and State Socialism." Bebel spurned his ally's comparison as an insult, Stöcker being a perjurer. A tilt between Socialists and Windthorst, both in opposition, followed, and the irregular-skirmishing ended with a victory of the latter at the ballot, the two-year amendment being adopted. Thus the Ultramontanes, holding the balance of power between Conservatives and National-Liberals on one side and the German-Liberals and Social-Democrats on the other, and disposing of the vote of the Separatist fractions, again triumphed over Bismarck, who, however, assured the Reichstag, at the close of the debate, that what the Government failed to obtain now it would surely recover before the lapse of the two years. And, victorious or beaten in debate—such is German constitutionalism—the Government has always its way in fact.

ON LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

In the last number of the *Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement* M. Bréal has published a lecture on learning foreign languages, in which he has attacked a practical problem in a practical way, not as a philologist, not as a determined tracker down of etymologies, not as an ingenious restorer of such dilapidated linguistic monuments as the 'Song of the Arval Brethren,' but, to use his own expression, as a *paterfamilias*. Literature, philology he ruthlessly puts aside, and absolutely discards all the cumbersome apparatus of grammar. The object he proposes is the practical acquisition of German, of English, Italian, Spanish. Philological study of these idioms he considers a waste of time for the young. Greek and Latin are the true educational gymnastic. English and German are needed as means of communication, of exchange among the peoples. He denies the familiar as-

sertion that the French have not the bump of languages. The Minister of Public Instruction has recently tried the experiment of sending young Frenchmen abroad to learn English and German, and the experiment has had the happiest results. From Germany, from England, the students have brought back not only a good knowledge of German, of English, but enlarged views. They have learned to appreciate different methods of thinking, reasoning, living. Of course the state cannot repeat this experiment on a large scale, but the system of exchanges so common between French-Swiss and German-Swiss families is recommended as an admirable and economical method of training young girls in foreign languages. M. Bréal admits that this is somewhat repugnant to French ways, but France has widened her ways so much in the last thirty years that we may look forward to greater latitude in this direction also. To those who can go abroad he gives the eminently sensible advice not to go abroad in order to pick up the language, but in order to study something definite, to work at something definite, whether banking at Frankfurt, bookselling at Leipsic, brewing of beer or Aeginetan sculptures at Munich. You will learn banking, bookselling, beer-brewing, you will make yourself an authority on the origin of Greek art, and you will be a capital German scholar to boot.

The trouble that a philologist has to encounter is that he carries with him the sense of his profession. He is too much bent on being grammatical; and M. Bréal tells an amusing story of the efforts of a young French professor who betook himself to Germany equipped with the orthodox apparatus for the acquisition of the language. Endowed with a good memory and a prodigious power of work; he mastered his grammar, the 248 irregular verbs and all, in the space of a week. Then he put his knowledge to the test by going to a lecture; but he found, to his dismay, that he could not catch even one grammatical form, not even one of those rascally irregular verbs he had acquired with so much pains. His next point of attack was the vocabulary. Grammar is only the skeleton, words the flesh and blood. So he addressed himself to the radicals of the German language first, and finding a book that offered him a complete assortment of German radicals, he devoured it eagerly and digested his 1,000 roots in four days. The result was not a whit better. His next resource was Ollendorff—'German in Ninety Lessons.' Ninety lessons—that means three months. Why not take three lessons a day? In thirty days Ollendorff is his—but not the German language. Jacotot, Robertson, Ploetz follow—all to no purpose. At last he conceived the heroic purpose of committing the dictionary to memory. 30,000 words cannot be considered a trifle. Still, at the rate of 1,000 words a day, a dictionary can be appropriated in a month. The failure was as absolute as before, and, to crown his humiliation, he met certain French artisans who had crossed the border with him and had learned German while working at their trade. The young professor finally succeeded in learning German, and afterwards published his experiences for the benefit of the world.

Still, with all respect for M. Bréal, the time spent on grammar, roots, Ollendorff, and dictionary was not all wasted. The true way to learn a language is to take it in at every pore, and the philological pore is not to be despised. A mature man cannot become a child again, although it is very true that in order to learn a language well one must get into childlike ways of mimicry. People who are plagued with a profound sense of their personal dignity never learn to speak a foreign language well. Of course M. Bréal is too sensible a man not to emphasize the

fact that this infantine knowledge of language goes even more rapidly than it comes. A child learns a language perfectly in a year, and forgets it totally in six months; and those who learn languages as children do unlearn them with corresponding facility.

Much that M. Bréal says on the education of the ear, on the mastery of phrases, is excellent. For English as against German he has much to say. English is much nearer akin to the French than is German. It is the French form of the Germanic mind. It is a beautiful language, "all sinew and muscle, a language that seems to have resolved the problem of packing away the maximum of *esprit* in the minimum of matter"; and the short monosyllables which the German poet Platen detested, carry to M. Bréal's mind a sense of plenitude and strength. At the same time, he acknowledges that, owing to a false start, he has never been able himself to do much with it practically, and he unconsciously illustrates the trickiness of our idiom by supposing a child, equally at home in English and in French to address his English-speaking mother with the startling phrase, "Let me come on your knees" (*Prends-moi sur tes genoux*)—which is, being interpreted, "Take me on your lap."

TOLSTOI AND MONTAIGNE.

THE old and the new are the same: the wisdom of the ancients repeats itself in every age; the thirteenth century instructs the nineteenth, and the men of the sixteenth century are our brothers. In every land and in every generation are born those souls who, hearing the word of God, follow after it and hold commune with it

—on their behalf
Who, on the plain, with dance amain
Adore the Golden Calf."

Tolstoi to-day in Russia, Garrison yesterday in America—with only the differences of accent and emphasis belonging to each personality and the circumstances of each—utter truths eighteen hundred years old and far older yet, the truths of the Sermon on the Mount. The striking similarities between these two thinkers must have occurred to every one who in this last year has read Mr. Garrison's *Life and Count Tolstoi's 'Ma Religion'*, for it is conspicuous; and it is extremely interesting.

Not less interesting is a resemblance to be found between Tolstoi and Montaigne. Completely unlike as is the tone of their minds, many of Montaigne's pages might be used as mottoes for Tolstoi's chapters. For us who have not suffered nor struggled as the sensitive and high-hearted Russian has done, who have not known the moral strife he has endured, there may be a fuller sense of kinship and sympathy with Montaigne. Yet if we better understand his position of thought, none the less—all the more, in fact—there is a curious, one may even say a profound, satisfaction in being led from his point of view to the neighboring, though narrower, outlook of our coetaneous, and in adjusting our knowledge of life to the discovery and acceptance of all which they see in common.

While the strongest moral conviction of Tolstoi's mind is the belief in non-resistance to evil-doers, his greatest moral struggle, it is evident, has been in delivering himself from all dominion of human authority; and this freedom from social control he must regard, though he does not distinctly say so, as not only the right but the duty of every man. Here, perhaps, a colder and keener intelligence would find one of the weak points of his system; but no heart can deny the force and power of his indictments against the Church (all creeds) as a teacher of evil doctrines, and against the State (all governments) as an inciter to evil deeds, and against Society (all civilization) as a promoter of evil passions. War is

the very embodiment of the things condemned by this man's rectitude. In his eyes, a righteous war there cannot be: a war for religion, a Christian army, are self-contradictory terms, and a war of patriotism is founded on delusion. A soldier's profession, however disguised by genius and by honors, is at bottom simply homicide. All this is summed up in two words by Montaigne: he speaks of war as "cette maladie humaine." A "malady" can be neither Christian, nor patriotic, nor honorable.

In a passage of eloquent emotion Tolstoi contrasts Jesus saying, "Take thy cross, and follow me," with the vilest of gold-laced men, whose business is to kill his fellow-creatures, saying, "Take, not your cross, but your knapsack and rifle, and march to a suffering death." He continues (we translate from the French version):

"Abandoning their families, their wives, their children, tricked out in grotesque habiliments, and placing themselves at the orders of the first comer of higher rank, starved, frozen, exhausted by forced marches, they go, not knowing whether, like a herd of cattle to the slaughter, till the moment comes when they are placed within the range of cannon balls and bullets, and commanded on their side to kill men of whom they know nothing. They kill and are killed. And none of them knows why or wherefore. It needs but for some ambitious leader to brandish his sword and shout to them sounding words, and they precipitate themselves headlong to death."

Break off here in the middle, and turn to Montaigne:

"In our wonted actions, of a thousand there is not one that has regard to ourselves. He whom you see scrambling up the ruins of that wall, furious and beside himself, exposed to so many gunshots: and that other, all scarred, frozen, and pale with hunger, resolved to die rather than open the way to him—think you they are there for themselves? It is for one whom, perchance, they have never seen, and who gives himself no concern about them, but lies sunk the while in sloth and pleasure."

And then he asks: "Who does not readily exchange health, peace, and life for renown and glory, the most useless, vain, and false coin that we pass current?" This is the very keynote of a large part of Tolstoi's book; as the first clause of the just quoted passage is merely a different wording of one of his repeated phrases—"In our wonted actions, of a thousand there is not one that has regard to ourselves."

"For custom lies upon us with a weight
Heavy as frost and deep almost as life."

It was custom which imposed upon Tolstoi in his youth the practice of duelling, and other conditions which he refers to and depicts in this striking passage:

"In my life—exceptionally fortunate in a worldly point of view—I can count so many sufferings endured for the doctrine of the world, that they would equal one or another martyrdom for the doctrine of Jesus. All the most painful moments of my life, beginning with the orgies and duels of student days, my army life in war time, the illnesses and abnormal and insupportable conditions I have passed through (one notes and corrects here a self-evident mistranslation in the French), all this was martyrdom endured for the doctrine of the world. Yet I speak of my own life, one, as I say, exceptionally fortunate in a worldly point of view. How many martyrs have endured and are enduring at this moment, for the doctrine of the world, sufferings which it would be difficult to count up!"

"Je voudrais," says Montaigne, "qu'on me fust raison de ces loix d'honneur qui vont si souvent choquant et troublant celles de la raison." It is such martyrs who, as life darkens to its end, must question—

"What was that word which once sufficed alone for all,
Which now I seek and never can recall?
I know not; I will do the work the world requires,
Asking no reason why, but serving its desires;
Will do for daily bread, for wealth, respect, good name,
The business of the day."

"Alas!" they ask, "is that our one duty?"

"And then, as weary of its vain renewing
This question, thus their mournful thought pursuing,
'I know not, I must do as other men are doing.'"

The thought which Lessing expressed in the phrase, "The Christian religion has been tried for eighteen hundred years; the religion of Christ remains to be tried," is the thought which Tolstoi's book but amplifies and insists upon. And here, too, Montaigne has the precedence. "If this ray of divinity," he says—that is, a lively faith in God—"if this ray of divinity at all touched us, it would appear in everything about us; not only our words but our works also would be pervaded by the light and lustre of it; all that went out from us would be seen to be illuminated by this noble enlightenment." But, in truth, he adds, comparing the life of Christians with that of other human societies, "this so divine and celestial order distinguishes Christians only by their language!" We remain behindhand "there, where, on account of the advantage of our religion, we ought to shine in excellence: at an extreme and incomparable distance; and men should say, 'How just they are, how charitable, how good; it is because they are Christians.'"

The peculiar token of our truth of doctrine should be our virtue of life." Just afterward he says: "Some men persuade the world that they believe what they do not believe; others, in greater number, persuade themselves so; not understanding what it is to believe." Tolstoi says, "Our existence finds itself now in such contradiction with the doctrine of Jesus that we have the greatest difficulty in understanding it."

Once more the words of the poet already quoted (Clough) enforces other utterances of the writers we are especially considering. He speaks for many men when he cries:

"Ah me! this eager rivalry of life,
This cruel conflict for preëminence,
This keen supplanting of the dearest kin,
Quick seizure and fast unrelaxing hold
Of vantage-place; the stony hard resolve,
The chase, the competition, and the craft
Which seems to be the poison of our life,
And yet is the condition of our life!
To have done things on which the eye with shame
Looks back, the closed hand clutching still the prize!
Alas! what of all these things shall I say?
Take me away unto thy sleep, O God!"

Such a life may be compatible, as Tolstoi asserts, with the Christian religion—the religion of the Christian churches—but not with the religion of Christ. As a follower of Jesus, he says of himself: "I have understood in what my true good consists; I have faith in that. . . . Not only I have faith that I ought thus to live, but I have faith that if I thus live, and only so, my life will have for me all possible meaning, and will be reasonable, joyful, and indestructible by death"—since, as Montaigne says, "there is nothing so easy, so gentle, and so favorable as the divine law."

There is a remarkable passage of Montaigne which at first glance we might seem to have advanced three hundred years away from, but Tolstoi indicates that we should err in so thinking. Montaigne, speaking of the evil qualities in us, declares that they are connected with the fundamental conditions of our life, and continues:

"In the same way, in all civilizations, there are necessary offices not only vile but vicious. . . . Though they become excusable since they are needful, and general necessity effaces their true quality, they must yet be left to those citizens . . . who sacrifice their honor and their conscience as others sacrifice their lives for the good of their country. . . . The public good requires that there should be traitors, and liars, and murderers: let us resign these duties to people more obedient and more supple than we."

"One has but to study the complicated mechanism of our modes of government," says Tolstoi, "to recognize that . . . one set of men make laws; another set apply them, a third harden others . . . to unreflecting and passive obedience; the fourth, these very men so hardened, become the instruments of all kinds of violence." Or, as he has before declared, no judge would execute his own sentences, while no officer of the army, no private soldier, save from

the influence of discipline, would even wound one single man, much less kill them by the hundreds and sack their towns. "The distinctive trait of civilized man," he avers, "is that he does through obedience what is considered by the larger number as iniquitous, that is, as opposed to conscience."

We come to a close only for want of space. There remain countless instances of likeness in the thoughts of these two meditative minds. Those who care to pursue the subject may compare what they say concerning the advantages of the simple over the learned, of the poor over the rich; concerning prayer and immortality; about punishments, or even about such minor matters as commentaries. At the last moment we can but beg their readers to remember, in connection with Tolstoi's admirable pages on the difference of our feeling towards our compatriots and towards foreigners, (as with Garrison's generous declaration, "My country is the world, my countrymen are all mankind"), Montaigne's delightful passage: "I look upon all men as my compatriots, and embrace a Pole as cordially as a Frenchman, holding in less high regard the national bond than the universal and common one."

ON THE EVE OF GLADSTONE'S SPEECH.

LONDON, April 8, 1886.

BEFORE three hours are over, Mr. Gladstone's scheme of home rule will be known to the whole world. Americans may, perhaps, read with interest a few notes on the condition of English opinion at a momentous historical crisis. My aim at this moment is simply to state what I believe to be facts; but any readers of the *Nation* who may peruse what I write should bear in mind two considerations: the first is, that though my aim is simply to state the truth, I cannot profess to be without a bias. My conviction is, that any scheme of home rule or federalism is opposed to the interests of England, and this belief is, I know, certain to affect both my observations and the inferences they suggest. The second consideration is, that in a period of revolution—and no one can conceal from himself that England is passing through a revolution, even though it be one accomplished under forms of law—phases of sentiment change from day to day, almost from hour to hour. The opinion of this week is not the opinion of a week ago; it may differ widely from the prevalent opinion of a week hence. Add to this, that I am not "inside politics," and can make no claim whatever to any wide knowledge of the different classes which make up the large world of England. My observations, whatever their worth, are based on knowledge of the sentiment prevalent in what, for want of a better term, I can best describe as the class of lawyers and university men. Subject to these remarks, which I most earnestly request any reader to bear in mind when judging of this or any other letter by me on current politics, I note with some confidence the following features in the condition of public opinion.

First.—The educated classes have as a body withdrawn their confidence from Mr. Gladstone.

This assertion will, I know, be disputed; it is one of those statements which, from their nature, do not admit of absolute proof. For myself I feel no doubt of its correctness, but I am perfectly aware that it would be challenged by Gladstonian Liberals. (The expression, by the way, "Gladstonian Liberal," is singularly characteristic of the time, and suggests many reflections.) The facts on which I rely in support of my contention are (*inter alia*) the changed tone of journals which, like the *Spectator*, the *Guardian*, or the *Scotsman*, used at one-time to place unhesi-