

out as a novel, passes the comprehension of a Philistine. From the point of view of fiction, it is not pathetic but simply revolting.

**The English School of Diabolists.**

I pass now to the fourth class, that of the lurid and nonsensical. These, I take it, are written under the inspiration of the French school of Diabolists. That school, as the reader knows, is possessed with ideas of black magic, spirits of evil, devils become incarnate, and numerous other nightmares of corruption. You are introduced to modern alchemists who use Latin incantations, pour mysterious fluids out of green phials, and by the black arts transform men into monsters, or penetrate the corrupt mysteries of their being. Several English imitators of this school have come into my hands recently, but the wildest is, perhaps, Mr. Machen's "Great God Pan," published in the Keynote Series. Here we have a physician who practises the black art, and by an operation on the brain releases for the time being the spirit of a woman that she may visit the spirit world and "see the Great God Pan." She awakes, a lunatic "convulsed with an unknowable terror." Shortly afterwards she has a child whom we gather from certain lurid hints to be a she-devil incarnate. "When the House of Life is thrown open there may enter in that for which we have no name, and human flesh may become the veil of a horror one dare not express." That is Mr. Machen's favourite style. The unnameable, the unknowable, the inexpressible, and the unmentionable have a nameless fascination for him. When a child she meets unnameable monsters in the woods, and another child who is her companion goes into indescribable convulsions. Being a lady of unimaginable fascinations, she quickly marries, and on the night of her wedding begins talking to her husband of whispering things "things which even now I would not dare whisper in blackest night, though I stood in the midst of a wilderness." She robs and ruins her husband, and inspires him with inconceivable horrors ["I tell you, you can have no conception of what I know: no, not in your most fantastic, hideous dreams can you have imagined forth the faintest shadow of what I have heard—and seen"]. After committing various unnameable villainies in remote parts of the world she turns up again in London, meets her husband, murders him, and causes a mysterious sequence of suicides in high life. "She gives entertainments to her victims which few survive: but one who did survive wrote an account which makes men sick at heart, turns their lips white, and sends a cold sweat pouring like water down their temples. The account contains suggestions of forces which cannot be named, cannot be spoken, cannot be imagined except under a veil and a symbol . . . the terror that may dwell in the secret place of life, manifested under human flesh: that which is without form taking to itself a form. . . . How is it that the very sunlight does not turn to blackness before this thing, the hard heat melt and boil beneath such a burden?" Then the loathsome creature herself commits suicide, and a doctor who was present describes the scene in an orgy of nonsensical language. "Horror and revolting nausea rose within him, an odour of corruption choked his breath," as he saw "that which was on the bed, lying there black like ink," gradually dissolve itself into a nasty jelly, the "form wavering from sex to sex, dividing itself from itself and then again reunited." Then he saw "the body descend to the beasts whence it ascended, and that which was on the heights go down to the depths, even to the abyss of all being." Finally, in a black atmosphere, which was not dark, yet the negation of light, he sees an indescribable form the "symbol of which may be seen in ancient sculptures and in paintings which survived beneath the lava . . . too fool to be spoken of . . . as a horrible and unspeakable shape, neither man nor beast, was changed into human form; there came finally death." At this point the doctor loses control of grammar and sense as well as language.

**Sex-Mania Incoherent.**

The wild absurdity of all this really makes comment superfluous. But note the sexmania in it all. It is an incoherent nightmare of sex and the supposed horrible mysteries behind it, such as might conceivably possess a man who was given to a morbid brooding over these matters, but which would soon lead to insanity if unrestrained. I imagine, however, that Mr. Machen's desire has simply been to emulate certain French practitioners in this line; indeed, the fact that he is so often reduced to gasping negatives proves that he has not made it clear even to himself what he is after. His work is innocuous from its absurdity, but the type is most truly decadent. Sex-mania has in all ages revelled in the thought of the imaginary inarticulate horrors in the "abysses of being."

**The Philosophy of Sex Mania.**

Mr. Machen, no doubt, would tell us that his book was a kind of allegory, but others are quite seriously at work constructing a decadent and mystical philosophy of human nature. While I have been writing these articles, there has come into my hands a book of translations from the fantastic Norwegian Ola Hansson, by "George Egerton," with a remarkable preface appended to it. Hansson, we learn from George Egerton, "has broken new ground in literature, that of physiological mysticism," and in his novel bearing the suggestively decadent title of "Amorosa sensitiva" he has plumbed greater depths of "physiological mysticism" than any of his predecessors. The book in question gives the "psycho-physiological key" to all his subsequent work. Finally, Hansson is an exponent of Friedrich Nietzsche's "triumphant doctrine of the ego," he is "one of the most striking literary phenomena of the age—he is the incarnation of the nervous life of today." He is a specialist in psychology, a pathological hunter in the *terra incognita* of the human soul, laying bare hidden places with the sure, deft touch of a skilled surgeon." He has, of course, "been absolutely true to the principles of his art" (a Philistine thinks he knows what that means). Most of his work is suffused with "erotic mysticism." I know nothing of Ola Hansson, and this description does not tempt me to make his closer acquaintance, but the passage above quoted seems to me extraordinarily interesting as showing the structure of thought and pseudo-philosophy which underlies the "revolting woman" novel. The writer, it will be seen, is possessed with the thought of "psycho-physiological" mysteries and erotic mysticism; she talks of the decadent Nietzsche's "triumphant doctrine of the ego," she speaks with admiration of this "pathological hunter in the *terra incognita* of the human soul"; she finds him to be an incarnation of nerves, and is proportionately delighted. Surely nothing could better expose the thoroughly morbid state of mind which underlies the Keynote novel. In Norway, it seems, this surgeon of the corrupt soul—Ola Hansson—has failed to find appreciation. In this country, I have no doubt, he will be applauded by all the critical pack as a beautifully "brave" and "consummate artist."

In a concluding article I shall endeavour to sum up the case which I desire to present against sexmania in the new fiction.

(To be concluded.)

[The preceding articles appeared on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, March 5, 6, and 7.]

THE "WESTMINSTER GAZETTE" IN THE PROVINCES.—Readers in the country can have the Special Edition of THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE, containing all the day's news, sent post free to any part of the United Kingdom for 9d. a week, payable in advance, to the Publisher, who will advise them of the nearest WESTMINSTER GAZETTE Agent on receipt of a postcard.

**NOTES OF THE DAY.**

We have seen the claim put forward by the Opposition that the Government are to introduce no Bills except "by leave of the Lords." The *Standard* "goes one better" than that this morning, by announcing that the Opposition are to oppose the second reading of the Irish Land Bill "by order of the Lords." For, after declaring that the Tories do not at all like the look of Mr. Morley's Bill now that they see it in print, it proceeds as follows:—

The Fifth Clause, dealing with improvements, is more sweeping than was expected from Mr. Morley's statement, and if it be left unamended it is believed that it would in a great number of cases lead to the rental being fixed at simple prairie value. The character of this clause, and of several others, will materially affect the attitude of the Opposition on the second reading of the Bill; and, unless some promise of modification is obtained, it may be necessary, with a view to the future action of the House of Lords, to divide against the second reading.

The italics are our own, but observe the theory of it. "It may be necessary" to divide against the second reading, not in order to reject the Bill in the Lower House, but "with a view to the future action of the House of Lords." That is to say, the Lords intend, if they dare, to wreck the Bill when it comes up to them, and with a view to that end they instruct the Tories in the Commons to cover them by voting against the measure on its second reading!

The argument, we suppose, is something like this. It would look so awfully bad if the Lords were left to do their own self-interested business all by themselves. It would look as if they were just a set of landlords playing for their own hands in the same old fashion as before; and in order to give colour to their proceedings the disinterested Tory Commoner is first to give an impartial vote which may be exploited as the opinion of the "constitutional" rather than of the Landlord Party. Then the Lords will be brought in just to give the stamp of their approval to the well-weighted decision of the Conservative Party. A highly courageous and truly noble Plan of Campaign is it not? We can only say that if the average Tory M.P. is induced by these arguments to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the Irish landlords in the Upper House he will be an even more innocent and humble person than we had taken him to be. If he really gives a vote against the second reading when the division comes we shall not forget on our side that it is "by order of the Lords."

If it is true that the proposal to free the evening schools was only lost at the School Board yesterday by the absence of two Progressives, we hope the conduct of these absentees will be marked by their constituents. Diggleism, it is quite clear, is only scotched. Witness also the defeat of the reasonable proposal gradually to increase the accommodation of Infant schools, wherein, as usual, Mr. Diggle sees some insidious design against Voluntary schools. But if our people stay away, we must not complain that the reactionaries grow bold.

The specific, if rather loose, numbering of the people in the Transvaal Republic, which Lord Ripon has obtained from the British Agent at Pretoria, will surprise some people. There is no reliable Census to go on; but the Agent computes that the British subjects of all sorts, colonists and others, already in the Republic, amount to over 62,000, and there are 15,000 other foreigners, as against a burgher population of 70,000 to 80,000; and this latter has to be made up by lumping persons from the Orange Free State—the other Dutch Republic—with Transvaal Boers proper. These figures are striking enough in themselves, when it is remembered that the British and other aliens are all excluded from the franchise. But they would be more so if the Agent had counted only the adult male persons who are actual or potential voters. The Boer figures, of course, include men, women, and children; the actual number of full voting burghers are but 18,000. The 62,000 British subjects are almost all men and potential voters. No wonder the Boer shrinks from franchise reforms and puts off the evil day as long as he dares.

Many of our readers will be glad to know that Mr. Alfred Milner has published his book (through Mr. Edward Arnold) the excellent lecture on Toynebe, which he lately delivered at Toynebe Hall, and which was noticed in these columns at the time. In a note appended to this reprint of the lecture, Mr. Milner mentions the interesting fact that during the closing months of his life Toynebe was much occupied with the question of Old Age Pensions.—

Almost the last time I saw him he expounded to me in much detail a scheme for supplementing the pension funds of Friendly Societies by State contributions, which greatly resembles alike in its general outline and in its underlying principles the plan lately shadowed forth by Mr. Chamberlain. Toynebe died in the spring of 1883, so that in this, as in so many other new social movements, his position was, as Mr. Milner says, that of a pioneer.

Mr. Milner makes but a slight—not to say slighting—allusion to Toynebe's association with Mr. Ruskin. But it is interesting to note how closely Toynebe's conception of Old Age Pensions, "bestowed not as a matter of charity but of right," follows the principles laid down by Mr. Ruskin twenty-five years earlier, and constantly reiterated by him in later days. We know no better rhetorical statement of the case than is to be found both in "Unto This Last" (1862) and in "The Political Economy of Art" (1857). The chapter on the subject of Old Age Pensions in the last-mentioned book is specially interesting for its exposure of the cant often involved in head-shakings over the "pauperising" of the poor by persons, in better circumstances, who would take, or have taken, alms themselves delightedly. Yet

a labourer serves his country with his spade, just as a man in the middle ranks of life or in the upper, Mr. Ruskin might have added, for is there any assemblage of men with so many pensioners as the House of Lords contains? and therefore it with his sword, pen or lance; if the service is less, and therefore the wages during health less, then the reward, when health is broken, may be less, but not, therefore, less honourable; and it ought to be quite as natural and straightforward a matter for a labourer to take his pension from his parish, because he has deserved well of his parish, as for a man in higher rank to take his pension from his country, because he has deserved well of his country. . . . As we advance in our social knowledge, we shall endeavour to make a government which shall have its orders of the *ploughshare* as well as its orders of the *sword*, and which shall distribute more proudly its golden crosses of industry—golden as the glow of the harvest, than now it grants its bronze crosses of honour—bronzed with the crimson of blood. "I know well," said Mr. Ruskin, "how strange, fanciful, and impracticable these suggestions will appear to most of the business men of this day." And at the time when he spoke (1857) he was no doubt right. But he, too, was a pioneer. And it may be that Old Age Pensions are one of the things in which Arnold Toynebe set himself to reduce to practicable detail the suggestive rhetoric of Mr. Ruskin.

"ISIS VERY MUCH UNVEILED." THE STORY OF THE GREAT MAINTIA HOAK, told by E. Edmund Garrett, from sources mainly Theosophical, reprinted from THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE, with replies from leading Theosophists in the title of a new volume of the Westminster Library.—ISIS VERY MUCH UNVEILED, Third Edition, with Mr. Justice Bayly and the Author's Remarques thereon, may be obtained of any Newsagent, Bookstall, at the Railway Bookstall, or from the Publisher, WESTMINSTER GAZETTE Office, Tudor-street, E.C.

**"TACTICS AND TANTRUMS."**

To the EDITOR OF THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE. SIR,—In your leading article of this morning you accuse me of having said in the *Methodist Times* of this afternoon that "all Moderates are children of the devil," so giving fresh currency and plausibility to the malignant falsehood about me which, for obvious reasons, certain London and provincial journals have been diligently circulating during the last fortnight. What I really did say was, that "of course there are any number of excellent and honourable people in both camps."

You accuse me, in the second place, of contending "that no 'righteous' Progressive will touch' the Moderates" "with the end of a bare pole." What I actually did say was "I demand that the Moderates should be allowed to enjoy the fruits of the victory which the workmen gave them. Any attempt to wriggle out of the situation would disgrace and almost ruin the Progressives. The Moderates are at least entitled to the vice-chairmanship and half the new Aldermen. We must respect the popular judgment, and do to others as we should expect, under similar circumstances, to be treated ourselves." I went on to protest against the election of "Lord Tweedmouth—a most excellent man, but an ex-Whip of the Liberal Party"—as chairman, and I contended "that much may be said, under the circumstances, for an exalted and impartial outside chairman."

I need quote no more in order to show every just man who, in this particular case, to use your own words, has been guilty of "short-sighted," "un-Christian and uncharitable judgment."—I am, &c.,

8, Tavistock-street, Gordon-square, March 7. HUGH FRICE HUGHES. [Mr. Hugh Frice Hughes's letter is decidedly—though, we are sure, unintentionally—misleading. We did not accuse Mr. Hugh Frice Hughes of saying the words he quotes. On the contrary, we expressly indicated that we were not quoting his own words. "What," we said, "[Mr. Hughes's temper] all seems to come to is this," and in the following passage we carefully distinguished his own words from our summary. Whether we represented his temper fairly or not, we may leave to the judgment of our readers, after citing some of the terms in which Mr. Hughes referred (*Chronicle*, March 4) to the fact that half of the voters on Saturday were not of his way of thinking:—

A more terrible exhibition of stupid and criminal ingratitude has never been witnessed. Well may the liquor-sellers, the sweaters, the jerry-builders, the slum exploiters, the gamblers, and the purveyors of open markets for vice, drink one another's health, and go wild with joy. The mighty Samson, who threatened them all, is shorn of his locks, and for three years, at least, there can be no more attempts on an adequate scale to abolish the slums, to educate the children [?], to relieve the struggling ratepayer at the expense of the millionaire ground landlord, and to bring light, refinement, and joy into the dark abodes of the wretched poor. Let us *immediately form an every-man-for-himself Association*, to be a nucleus around which good citizens, without distinction of sex, class, or political creed, may gather to educate and inspire the municipal council. To introduce party politics on such an issue is to accept the fundamental principle of Tammany Hall, which is simply a political caucus, that systematically subordinates the municipal interests of New York to the supposed exigencies of the political party which Tammany represents. We are already in the Tammany "down grade." For the first time in the municipal history of London we have liquor-sellers and paid professional political wire-pullers elected to seats at Spring Gardens. But if the Non-conformists—to whom as a Nonconformist I make this respectful and earnest appeal—organise themselves, we shall, in 1896, see Tammany in the bud. . . . I love London as I love my native land. My dearest longing is to see London "a holy city," "a city of God," that it can never be in the hands of liquor-sellers, gamblers, and paid professional political wire-pullers. If Black Saturday rouses the Nonconformist conscience to a vivid sense of its urgent and Sacred duty, Black Saturday will be transmuted into the greatest blessing yet, wicked, unhappy, but lovable and redeemable London, has ever known.—Ed. W. G.]

**THE ETHICS OF BLACKBALLING.**

To the EDITOR OF THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE. SIR,—It is an interesting question which is raised in the extract you quote from *Truth* about the blackballing of Mr. Rhodes at a certain club, and the consequent withdrawal of his friends and supporters. But the position taken up in your extract seems to me illogical. I quite agree that "every club is a republic, where all are absolutely equal." But if one member is free to blackball a candidate, surely another member must be free to resign. *Truth* says that "the newly-coined phrase, an 'influential member,' is a vulgarity." Agreed. But then what is the sense of saying that the withdrawal of H.R.H., or the Duke of Fife, is calculated to wreck the club? If H.R.H. resigns, there will be room for another member, and as all members are "absolutely equal" what harm will be done? Surely the suggestion that the withdrawal of any particular member will wreck the club savours itself of the very "vulgarity" in question.—I am, Sir, &c., March 7. LORIC.

**THE FIRST PHILHARMONIC.**

However it may be with others, Queen's Hall is certainly none too large for the Philharmonics. Concerts may come, and concerts may go, but the Philharmonics go on for ever. If there was a vacant seat at the opening concert of the season last night, there certainly were not many. Which should be a cause of satisfaction to all who have at heart the cause of good music, while the moral for those who are unfortunate enough to be responsible for concerts less popularly attended lies on the surface. Let them also continue their labours, even unto the eighty-third season, and they also shall reap the exceeding great reward of hard upon a century's musical well-doing. Only one novelty figured in yesterday's programme—this being an overture from the pen of Mr. Frederic Lamond, entitled "Aus dem Schottischen Hochlande"—though why, because he happens to be residing in Germany, this clever young Scotchman should feel called upon thus to forswear his native tongue it is hard to say. But this is a detail. The overture itself is a decidedly fresh, vigorous, and picturesque piece of work, in which its author's power of handling with skill and effect a rather unwieldy orchestra is at any rate displayed—together with other qualities here and there which seem to justify the hope of better things to come. Naturally, under the sympathetic direction of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, this Scottish composition lost none of its native fervour, a capital performance being secured. The only remaining feature of the evening's doings requiring comment was the performance of Herr Sauer, who evoked remarkable enthusiasm by his performance of the solo parts in Mendelssohn's pianoforte concerto in G minor, and Weber's Concert-stuck.

**NEW MUSIC.**

Among the new music issued by Messrs. Reynolds and Co. are some pretty things. One of them is a "Scherzo in F flat," by A. H. West, which for its brightness and cheerfulness would be just the right thing to play to the generosity of people who ask for "a little music." A slight drawback to the composition is the monotony of the rhythm. Another effective composition is the "Summer-Time Waltz," by E. Hesse, about which there is more originality and swing than usual. There are one or two somewhat peculiar passages in it; but even they are preferable to the average sea-saw. "Our Duet," by A. Joker, is "a musical joke," and by no means a bad one, in exception to the rule that when you have to label any pleasantry "This is a joke" that joke is in a bad way. The bars consist of two notes, but the treble is so varied that the result is very effective, if rather absurd. Some of the new "nigger things" are very pleasing. Thus, of "Dinah," a negro serenade by G. Byass, written and sung by M. B. Spurr, the music is quite charming; the refrain is beautiful, catchy, and novel. "The Darkest Wedding" nigger dance, by J. W. Moore, is after the style of our friend the "Barn-door." The tune is pretty, though not striking, and goes with a good swing, as a dance should. "Life's Promise," song composed by Clara M. L. Wade (Stanley Lucas), is one of the pleasant songs with just a touch of sadness in them which are sure to "catch on." The last verse of the song is very effective, and exceptionally pretty.