

by birth and education, she was already on such terms with the married scoundrel who took advantage of her, that before he had threatened, or she had yielded to his threat, he was in a position to make an appointment with her alone, to call her an "obstinate little devil," and generally to treat her as a woman of the street. She is a woman, we have learnt—and it explains much—who had fancies about what she should do "if she were unfortunate enough to bring an illegitimate child into the world."

Sex-Mania Rampant.

There are critics, I believe, who consider the psychology of this story to be profound, its significance immense, and its "bravery" heroic. For myself, I see neither art, life, nor meaning in it—nothing, in fact, whatever except what I have called sex-mania. Here, for instance, is a description of a convent school going out for a walk in charge of a Sister of Mercy—

They are laughing and talking gaily, for the sisters are favourites, and number many "flames" amongst the crowd of girls filled with sickly sentiment, "schwarmerei," and awakening sexual instinct. They are genuinely in love. If their favourite leans over their shoulder to correct a theme, and happens to touch their arm, it calls forth a blushing disturbance in even the most stolid of the pupils. They colour quickly if she speaks to them suddenly, and touch hurriedly her scapular or the great cross at the end of her beads. Here we have a simple and innocent scene, distorted by the pervading sex medium. It is just a detail, not required by any context or part of any story; but with the writers who regard life thus even the simplest relations between human beings are liable to the imputation of sex.

More "Discords."

That is Discord No. I. Discord No. II. tells of a lady who fell madly in love at sight with a foreign wood-carver. She was the clergyman's niece, and he a workman engaged in restoring the church. She sees him two or three times, without speaking to him: he comes and sings under her window one night, and then departs. Her life is blasted, and years later she has a "sort of Indian summer of the senses" and tells the story to a chance acquaintance in a flood of passionate words. Discord Nos. III. and IV. are both very ugly, but neither are grotesque or unnatural. The first tells the story of a woman betrayed by one man, then in his absence by another, then by others, and so on to drink and ruin. A thoroughly vicious character, if there is a standard: one "who just gets insane and lets herself get carried away." "He didn't admire me . . . not a bit. . . I tried to attract him, there was a kind of excitement in it . . . and . . . well, we let ourselves drift." No doubt true and not uncommon, but as it stands, a gruesome subject for fiction. No. IV. is a harrowing story of drink, and suicide, but, to do it justice, strong, and in parts pathetic. No. V. takes again to the revolting daughter—

A Very Unpleasant Sermon.

A young and absolutely innocent girl is just married to a "florid, bright-eyed, loose-lipped man of the world," and it is the moment of her "going away." The girl is in tears upstairs with her mother, who is "flushing pailfully, making a strenuous effort to say something to the girl—something that is opposed to the whole instincts of her life." We see them next at the station. "The train runs in: a first class carriage marked 'engaged' is attached, and he comes for her: his hot breath smells of champagne, and it strikes her that his eyes are fearfully big and bright," &c., &c. Then after five years she returns. Her husband has just gone to Paris with a girl from the Alhambra. "These little trips," she announces, "have been my one solace. I assure you, I have always handed them as lovely scenes in the desert of matrimony, resting places on the journey. My sole regret was their infrequency." Then she launches out and overwhelms her mother with a torrent of denunciation for letting her marry this man. There are seven pages of this, and it spares no part of a sensual man's relations with his wife.

Now this, I am prepared to be told, was written under a stern sense of duty. There are cases like this in the world, and it is essential that mothers should be reminded what they are doing when they barter their daughters to a man of this description. That is the argument, and though I cannot harmonise it with any view of fiction as an art, I desire to give it full weight. But taking it as a sermon, if that is the right view, will anyone say that it is any degree more forcible for the offences against good taste which are to be found on every other page, or that the most forcible effect could not have been produced without the nasty details of the man's appearance, the still nastier details of his departure with his bride, and the many similar touches in the girl's rhetoric? If the story is intended to appeal to the mothers, I venture to think that this is not the right way of going about it; and if that is the intention, has George Egerton considered the large possibility that it will not reach them at all, but fall into the hands of others to whom these things appear far otherwise than as sermons?

The Final "Discord."

We pass now to the sixth and last "Discord," in some ways the best written, which gathers up the whole "keynote" conception of life, and ends by applying a keynote remedy. Here we are introduced to a young Norwegian widow, "a seductively attractive thing of piquant contrasts—the attractive artificiality, physical lassitude, and irritable weariness of a disillusioned woman of the world, and the eyes of a spoiled child filled with frank petulant query." She is lying on her sofa "feeling as if she wanted to scream." Clearly a hysterical lady, in a bad state of nerves. At her husband's death she was "sorry in a way, and dreaded the loneliness," but "the strongest feeling she had when he was dying was a fierce inward whisper of exultant joy that she was herself again." Also clearly a very advanced egoist. This lady takes a trip down the fiord, and lands on an island where she finds a man lying on his back sleeping. When he wakes up, and she, in her turn, has fainted and been restored, he expounds life to her. "Truth," he says, "doesn't wear a fig-leaf!"

Shall I tell you what I see? A great crowd of human beings. Take all these men—male and female—fashion them into one colossal man, study him, and what will you find in him? Tainted blood: a brain with the parasites of a thousand systems sucking at its base and warping it; a heart robbed of all healthy feelings by false conceptions, bad conscience, and a futile code of morality—a code that makes the natural workings of sex a vile thing to be ashamed of; the healthy delight in the cultivation of one's body as the beautiful perfect sheath of one's soul and spirit, with no shame in any part of it, all alike being clean, a sin of the flesh, a carnal conception to be opposed by asceticism. A code that has thrown man out of balance and made sexual love play far too prominent a part in life—it ought to be one note, not even a dominant note, in the chord of human love—a code that demands the sacrifice of thousands of female victims as the price of its maintenance, that has filled the universe with an unclean conception of things, a prurient idea of purity—making man a great sick man.

This is their first conversation, he it noted; they have met for the first time, been in each other's presence only a few minutes, when the man must needs go straight for the sex question, and propound the great sex paradox, which in Mr. Oscar Wilde's language is merely this, that there is nothing immoral but the moral. For strip this passage of its sophistries and its verbiage and it has no other meaning than this, that the sexual relation is rendered impure by the attempt to regulate it through marriage, that marriage and nothing else is the cause of prostitution, and if you abolish marriage and cease to call it prostitution you will get rid of the "carnal conception," the "prurient idea," and the whole evil. If it doesn't mean that, there is no point in making the "code of morality" responsible for the trouble, and that it does mean that is proved by the sequel wherein the woman, "not being willing to go into old-fashioned bondage," concludes a terminable contract with the man, he to be free to depart if he

should tire, or if "his fancy should waver, and if he should seek new eyes and new lips"—

"You will be free to go."
"Free man?"
"Free man"—with pride—"and free woman!"
"And what do you ask me for this?"
"Has any woman in the world a claim on you—have you any wrong to right—is there any child who has a right to call you father?"
"No, no, dear lady!"—with exultant pride—"not one."

"Discordant" Philosophy.

Why he should feel "exultant pride" we cannot conceive. For him to have a child out of wedlock would, according to the theory, have been a healthy, wholesome, and positively moral occurrence. If he may seek "new eyes and new lips" in the future, why not in the past? This, I suppose, is an atavistic lapse into the old morality. But the whole thing is an amazing medley of confused thought. If we try to reduce it to logical sequence, it works out somehow like this: The present futile code of morality (i.e., marriage and the disapprobation of irregular alliances) produces prostitution; abolish marriage, permit promiscuity, and prostitution will disappear. Thus stated (and, I think, the statement is fair), what an amazing bondage to words the whole thing is! Permit a man to woo a woman and leave her, and you will avoid prostitution. Call it by another name, and you will be rid of the thing. Or, again: it is the present code of morality which "makes the natural workings of sex a vile thing to be ashamed of," which "demands the sacrifice of thousands of female victims." Remove the present code, and, I suppose, there will be nothing to be ashamed of. Men will cease to buy the favours of women; they will keep to their terminable contracts; all obstacles, such as poverty, which prevent men and women marrying when they would, will disappear with the abolition of marriage. Remove the code "that makes the natural workings of sex a vile thing," and we shall be rid of the things which the Puritan, with his "prurient idea of purity," calls coarse, vicious, and sensual. This, surely, is the wildest parody of the Christian doctrine that "to the pure all things are pure." A Philistine, indeed, may without fear call it cant, and, like much cant, almost without meaning, if it is supposed to have any application to human nature.

Sex and Nothing but Sex.

"Sex ought to be one note, and not even a dominant note, in the chord of human love." The reader may judge for himself how far that doctrine is carried out in this book. There are six stories and, with one exception, they harp on sex problems, enter into details about sex, dissect it, probe it, analyse it, perorate about it. They tell "the truth" about the world, and the truth is that marriage consists in mating innocent girls to vicious men with the connivance of grasping and snobbish parents, that man regards woman as his prey and his slave, that he seduces her and blackmails her, that what is called morality is the cause of all immorality, that women are everywhere groaning under this tyranny, straining to break their bonds, assert their ego, obtain their liberty. Happily the world consists still in large part of Philistines to whom this seems an absurd travesty. Marriage has its hard cases; some men make it a tyranny for their wives, and some wives for their husbands—the latter point, I observe, is generally overlooked by the "revolving world." But not all men, nor most women, think always about the sex problem; nor does a sane being find the world reduced to chaos though he or she should fail in its solution. That is only the way of the neuropathic egoist.

(To be continued.)

INFLUENZA AND SUICIDE.

A TALK WITH DR. FORBES WINSLOW.

During the past few days, while the influenza has been at its worst, special attention has been called by the coroners to the number of suicides. In order to ascertain further particulars on the matter, a representative waited yesterday on Dr. Forbes Winslow, the well-known brain specialist, who courteously gave us much information on the subject:—

"It is certainly my experience," said the doctor, "that influenza can be a considerably incentive to suicide. And for this reason. The chief effect of influenza is to cause a condition of mental depression which even amounts to melancholia. This is a common sequela to influenza, and most cases of melancholia must be regarded as suicidal."

"You don't imply, of course, that influenza and suicide go forth hand in hand?"

"I don't say that, but I do maintain that in certain stages of influenza the patient may—very often does—develop suicidal symptoms. Influenza has a direct action on the mind. The deprivation of energy is often absolute, and the body gets into a low state of health; the mind acts on the body, and the patient doesn't care what becomes of him. This is equally applicable to the strong as well as to the weak."

"Do you advise, then, that the mental condition of influenza victims should be specially watched?"

"If the influenza shows signs of increasing very much—if a great desire for solitude and the shunning of all society is apparent—then I certainly think that the patient ought to be watched for fear of anything worse developing."

"Is there any favourite mode of suicide in this connexion? Have you yourself in your own immediate circle, doctor, known an influenza patient wishful of committing suicide?"

"I have examined the statistics of suicides as to the different methods adopted. In early age the favourite mode is hanging, in adult life firearms are chiefly resorted to, while strangulation is generally adopted by would-be suicides in advanced life. This is applicable to the general run of suicides and applies to influenza patients. Yes, I have known plenty of victims of influenza who showed a tendency to suicide. The majority are females, because their minds are not so occupied as men's. The suicidal effect of disease is not a little peculiar. For instance, a person who has been in robust health up to the time of contracting influenza is much more likely to endeavour to commit suicide than a person who is insane before he is laid low by the epidemic. In the cases of insane persons the ailment is not followed by the same intensity of mental depression as with a person otherwise healthy."

"How may we avoid this alarming tendency to suicide when there appears to be no preventive to influenza?"

"I am fully convinced that a very large number of the persons who say they are suffering from the epidemic are not victims of anything of the kind. You see, influenza is a fashionable complaint, and they so work themselves up that they really believe they have the pans incidental to the influenza. It is the *malade imaginaire* of old, and you may be surprised to learn that men are more addicted to this than women. The force of imitation goes a long way nowadays. Whatever the fashionable epidemic, there is always a class of individuals who imagine they have got the complaint. Suggestion seems to get hold of the minds of an enormous number of folk. I remember being on the Continent during the Franco-Prussian War and paying visits to a number of lunatic asylums. Why, there were dozens of Emperor Napoleons. It was much the same during the Tichborne trial. I examined many people, sane otherwise, who imagined themselves to be Tichbornes and Ortons. During the present century infanticide, incendiarism, homicide and suicide have all been epidemic at one time or another. At Lyons there was an epidemic of drowning, and at Rouen in 1896 there was a dreadful epidemic of suicide. In 1884, again, there was an epidemic of self-mutilation in the French Army. It is probably the same to a great extent with influenza—with many persons it is an epidemic breeding imitation. What people ought to do to avoid the complaint is to maintain an active mind and banish all fear of contracting it. This is the best prescription."

NOTES OF THE DAY.

On the whole the results of the five matches between Mr. Stoddart's team and the Australians are, we think, about just. Assuming the conditions to be even, the Englishmen are a little better than the best Eleven that the Australians can put into the field. Taking the five together, the Australians undoubtedly had the worst of the luck in the first, and the English in the third and fourth of the games. In the second and fifth neither side had any particular favour from fortune. The uncertainties of cricket are certainly illustrated by the fact that the side which won three games out of five should have been beaten in the remaining two by 382 runs in one case and an innings and 147 runs in the other. The first of these defeats is not easily excused, but the second took place on a wicket on which anything might happen. Putting all five together, we think we are justified in saying that on a good wicket the Englishmen would probably win three games out of every five, i. e. not two out of every three, whereas on a bad wicket they seem to be a little worse than the Colonials.

We wonder how much political force there is in these cricket matches. Does the federalising of Australian cricket help at all towards Australian Confederation? Certainly, these "Australia v. England" matches do vastly more than any merely political movements to popularise the Colonies in the mother-country, and almost as much, perhaps, as frequent Colonial loans to popularise the mother-country in the Colonies. Our special correspondent assures us that the spectators at Melbourne to-day were enthusiastic in spite of the final victory going to the visitors—a display of good feeling which contrasts very favourably with the way in which the victory of a "foreign" team is sometimes received in this country. As for the interest on this side, it has been very great, and indeed Australian elevens and Australian oarsmen are probably the only thing which bring home to the mass of Englishmen the existence of Australian Colonies at all.

Mr. Gladstone's "Psalter with a Concordance," which is published by Mr. Murray to-day, is certain to receive a very wide welcome. The text chosen is that of the Book of Common Prayer, which Mr. Gladstone holds to be of "incomparable beauty." As to the Psalter itself, it is, he says, "the only book of private devotion at our command which we are authorised directly to associate with Divine inspiration." Appended there is, besides other "auxiliary matter," a Concordance of over seventy pages compiled by Mr. Gladstone nearly half a century ago. He has kept it beside him all these years, and in publishing it now is acting upon a belief which he says, "I consider to be both sound in itself and suited to the exigencies of the present day, that the precious treasure of the Psalter should have a set of appropriate *admissula* for itself." Altogether the arrangement and get-up of the little book is excellent, and it will be treasured in many homes not only as a charming edition of "The Psalter," but for what it contains of loving work by its venerable and venerated editor.

The two masters of the situation at Spring Gardens are likely to be the Influenza and—Mr. G. S. Elliott. The only other point of resemblance between them is the uncertainty of their movements. The Influenza strikes where it listeth, and no man can tell quite for certain how Mr. Elliott will vote. The Progressives call him a Progressive, but the Moderates call him an "Independent Unionist," and the *Globe* even made "A Unionist Majority" out of him. As for the Influenza, at the present moment it is on the side of the Progressives. "There is no tie," says Mr. Harrison, adding gleefully, "Mr. Corbett is ill." But who can be sure that "our men" will not be struck down next? Under which circumstances might it not be well to depose the twin kings—Mr. Elliott and the Influenza, and install King Compromise in their place?

The storm-signalmen are repeating their old tricks with the most amusing regularity:—

The supporters of the Government (we are told in this morning's *Standard*) look forward with great misgivings to the prospects of public business. It is expected that from four to six days will be taken in each case for the second reading of the Welsh Church Bill and the Irish Land Bill; and it is recognised that the passage of these Bills through Committee will occupy a large part of the available time of the Session. Many of the supporters of the Government are greatly concerned at the position of affairs.

Note the trick of it. "The supporters of the Government look forward," &c., "it is expected, it is recognised," &c., "many of the supporters of the Government are greatly concerned," &c. One might imagine from this that the supporters of the Government thought it right and proper that the Irish and Welsh Bills should be discussed for ever and ever, and were accordingly incensed, not with the Opposition, but with the Government.

It is, of course, true that we do foresee the possibility of obstruction becoming flagrant. And the most effective measure, it seems to us, is to let it be known early that we intend not only to get the Irish and Welsh Bills through Committee, but also to secure at least our "One Man One Vote" Bill before Parliament rises. If there is to be obstruction this Session, then we shall simply have autumn sittings to finish what has been left over. But this is not a possibility which we view with any "grave concern." On the contrary, if the Lords are going to throw out "One Man One Vote," we shall rather gain than lose if the Opposition choose to postpone that event until the very eve of the General Election. The object-lesson will be all the more effective for our purposes if it is still fresh in the popular memory.

The news in the *Chronicle* that Count Munster in Paris and M. Herbetie in Berlin have "sketched the possibility" of "neutral autonomy" for Alsace-Lorraine, by which "Luxembourg or Switzerland may benefit without detriment to the two Great Powers most concerned," is as important as it is interesting. But is it true? Certainly, more unlikely stories have been found to have truth in them. That the German Emperor will go a long way to secure a good understanding with France is perfectly plain. Then, as a high authority has told us, this is "the age of Buffer States." The most pleasing aspect of the matter is the way in which the patriotic Deloncle is absorbed in it. Anything to keep him out of mischief!

Yesterday M. Jules Roche set the French Chamber by the ears by making a sensational comparison of the strength of the French and German armies, and Kaiser Wilhelm made one of his characteristic "Brandenburgers-of-old" speeches to a company of naval recruits. The curious thing is that both orators seem to have imagined that they were promoting the interests of peace. Here are the two equivocal perorations, which, strangely enough, fall exactly side by side in the *Standard* columns, thus:—

All hopes were legitimate, but only on **Thus will our Navy prosper and grow** condition that France should be **great, in the work of peace and for the** clemently strong to await the dawn of the **benefit and good of the Fatherland;** and day when she will see reason, right, and **thus, as we hope in God, shall our worthy** justice triumph over might.—*M. Roche.* **the enemy.**—*The German Emperor.*

Clearly the speakers' mixed emotions were too much for them.