

exorbitant rate was demanded, and that for a monopoly of "the traffic" a still larger sum was offered seems sufficiently clear; but which of the two cases is supposed to furnish the parallel alluded to, or whether analogy could be gleaned from both of them, is not even dimly discernible.

Everyone knows or ought to know that across the St. Lawrence there is only one Victoria Bridge, but nobody would think of asserting that in the United Kingdom there was only one farm. If in that part of the Empire the farms were few and the applicants therefor were many, there was some field for selection however restricted, and land elsewhere was cheap and abundant if they had chosen to go to it. Such argument could not apply to the Bridge. Vacant farms "at home" are offered to the public, from whom tenders are received. These tenders—rightly regarded as the opinions of the many respecting the value of the land—usually determine its rent.

The apparent liability of so vast a number as three millions of people to arbitrary eviction in Ireland is a serious matter indeed, but the test of a system should be looked for in its practice and results, and not in its theory. Tenancy at will seemingly places in the hands of the landlords a power incompatible with sound principles of economy. To shew, however, that they have not "had everything their own way," it may suffice to mention Mr. Gladstone's Land Act with its Bright clauses specially designed as a check upon the above-mentioned power. Nothing herein written should be understood as advocating or favourable to tenure of so uncertain a character, nor assuming that it has not its faults; but with all the evils so freely ascribed to it, and however unpleasant its aspect from a distance it does not seem to have worked so badly in Ireland as some people would make us believe. When there is the authority of Mr. Edward Stanley Robertson, a native of the island, for the statement that "there are few facts in modern history better worthy of notice than the advance in material wealth which has taken place in Ireland during the thirty years between 1846 and 1876," the land system in that country cannot be accurately described as "pernicious." Mr. Robertson says that "from 1877 down to the present year a reaction has been going on which is largely connected with a general depression all over the world," but he does not hold "that the reaction is likely to be permanent." A country which during a period of thirty consecutive years has had such a marked increase in its wealth and prosperity arising from its almost sole occupation; a country that has stood the strain of two bad seasons in succession, and which but very partially yielded to the pressure of a third season, disastrous in its effects, aggravated by general depression and by the growing and formidable competition from the American continent cannot be so helplessly nor so hopelessly steeped in poverty as to stand in need of revolutionary change.

The landlords not only possess the right to evict, but they exercise it; they give their land to the labourers or not just as they list, and when labourers "are starving around" them, food, and not "land," is the right thing to give them, the opinion of "H. B. S." in these particulars to the contrary notwithstanding. When "H. B. S." shews how Canadian loyalty can be a "bug-bear" and "a very pretty figure" at the same time, it cannot be said that his surprises are exhausted. Although it is an hundred years old, he thinks it needs nursing. It would be easy to point out what it is that seems really to require the tender process. Letting that pass we are, for the sake of effect, invited to make a law affecting the million of Roman Catholics in Lower Canada. The probable consequences of an insane attempt to restrict the religious freedom of the Lower Canadians, even if not guaranteed by treaty, are not pleasant to contemplate.

Those who might "try it on" would not take long to find out that even the "pretty bug-bear" Canadian loyalty has its limits. Christian forbearance is undoubtedly a virtue, but when men are smitten on one cheek they are not in the habit of meekly presenting the other for similar treatment. Certes no one imagines that the "pretty figure" would blaze if the air from Penetanguishene to Gaspé were deprived of its oxygen. Such a chemical feat would be as feasible as an attempt on the ancient faith of our compatriots. It is not at all difficult to say what might happen were the Queen or her ministers to violate the constitution. Ere now crowned heads have been cut off, and sovereigns have fled from their subjects; yet loyalty survives and is not a blind and unreasoning adherence to right or wrong as it may happen.

The cheat of the "fifteen millions" is too disgraceful to discuss, and is a new element in this writing. "H. B. S." has his idea of chivalry, and is welcome to it; but he might find a more fitting comparison for the heroic deeds of Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Stuart, than the defence of "his hole" by "the veriest rat," which, by the way, defends itself and not its hole. A writer who treats the public to a discourse on brain-power should not require to be told that to belittle the conquered is to rob the conqueror of half his glory. As to the Irish, their seditious discontent grows out of their sore distress, aggravated by designing demagogues: they are not in open rebellion, nor are they likely to be. On the representation of "H. B. S." I do not object to call Joseph Kay, Q.C., an authority; but when the former speaks of primogeniture as "one blot on the land laws," it must be repeated that theory does not furnish the test of a system, and it is to be hoped "H. B. S." will not be offended when it is again ventured to be suggested that there may

be some things he has yet to find out. Primogeniture has its faults, like everything human. The eldest son of an intestate should not have more than a superior share of the estate. If "H. B. S." were the eldest son in the case of many an entailed property that could be named, he would have ample reason to modify his opinion touching the exaltation.

Saxon.

"MOTHS."

There is one writer whose books are a passion. People read them with feverish avidity, and it is half the business of society to rave about them. You hear of "Ouida" as you hear of "absinthe," as something at once fascinating and unwholesome. The critics have all sorts of things to say against "Ouida's" novels, yet are glad to get the veriest earliest copy of every new one for their own enjoyment. Now, these novels one and all depict modern life in colours so warm, and with details so startling, that it becomes a duty to the student of life to ask—"Is what this gifted woman describes *all* imagination, or is it based on actual existence? Are the cynical men and heartless women fancy creations, or are they drawn from real life?" Again, is society as utterly rotten to the core as "Ouida" represents it? or does a morbid cynicism distort what it sees into these ghastly experiences? A general impression is that these books are exaggerations of what goes on in the world, and this is no doubt the case; but then comes the question, to what extent does she exaggerate? It may be taken for granted that if the terrible things we read about were mere creations of the "heat-oppressed brain," society would take no interest in them. The unlikeness would rob them of all charm. We are driven, then, to the conclusion that there must be some truth—some reflection, however distorted,—some element of reality strong enough to seize upon and hold the interest of those addressed, and who for the most part move in the circles supposed to be described, and the only question left for us is one of quantity.

The question I am raising is not a literary one. I do not refer to "Ouida" with a view of expressing any opinions on her claims as a writer. My position is that here we have the most popular writer of the day bringing out book after book in which she undertakes to depict high life, and in these books presenting it as something so mean, so base, so hollow, and so wanting in every noble or gracious quality, that the mere picture of it tends to inspire only feelings of loathing and disgust. It is right to inquire, then, is this ghastly phantasmagoria of vice and degradation a reality or a creation, and if there is any reality in it—how much?

Let us glance at one or two points in the last outcome of this writer's pen—the story called "Moths." Here is a picture of childhood in fashionable life: "Those who are little children now will have little left to learn when they reach womanhood. They are miniature women already. They know the meaning of many a dubious phrase; they know the relative value of social positions; they know much of the science of flirtation which society has substituted for passion; they understand very thoroughly the shades of intimacy, the suggestions of a smile, the degrees of hot and cold that may be marked by a bow or emphasized by a 'Good-day.' When they are women they will, at least, never have Eve's excuse for sin; they will know everything that any tempter could tell them. Perhaps this knowledge may prove their safeguard, perhaps not. At all events, they will be spared the pang of disillusion when they shall be out in a world which they already know with cynical thoroughness—baby La Bruyères, and girl Rochefoucaulds in frills and sashes." It is painful to be compelled to acknowledge that there is as much truth as there is bitterness in this passage. In society, the age of children is past. As a substitute, we have in society little men and women who respect nothing, are surprised at nothing, and with the charm of innocence have lost their chief claims to endearment.

Let us take next a description of "society"—that world which these premature men and women contrive to understand, even before they are big enough to figure in it. "It is a world of moths. Half the moths are burning themselves in feverish frailty; the other half are corroding and consuming all that they touch. . . . You will be surrounded with the most invidious sort of evil—namely, that which does not look like evil one whit more than the belladonna berry looks like death. The women of your time are not perhaps the worst the world has seen, but they are certainly the most contemptible. They have dethroned grace, they have driven out honour, they have succeeded in making men ashamed of the sex of their mothers, and they have set up nothing instead of all they have destroyed, except a feverish frenzy for amusement, and an idiotic imitation of vice."

These are hard sayings, but are they too hard? What are we to say? When we see the idle, frivolous lives that women lead; the time, and thought, and money they squander over their dress, often in a vain attempt to rival some leader of the *demi-monde*, whose name they would affect to shudder at were it breathed in their presence; when we find how little interest they take in anything that is earnest, helpful, or elevating, and more especially when we study the details of the marriage market and the levity with which divorce is regarded,