

in the presence of the solitude of nature, that solitude which speaks of no loneliness, that silence which is without sorrow, the most restless experience, something akin to awe. Into the heart of some "child of the century" (ominous phrase that carries its own story) suggestions, unborrowed from the cosmopolitan atmosphere of a great city, will rise. And in the simplicity of immensity the vague whisper of Wonder will be dimly caught.

Everything is no longer faded and tainted with the weariedness of self. Wonder transforms each common object with a touch that Midas had never learned. The wind whistling through the trees tells new stories, wilder and fresher than those old "sensations" with which the jaded nerves are already sated. The sunlit waters mirror more wondrous pictures than those artists who have insulted art by defacing nature. And into this new world there seems to dawn an earnestness laden with that burden which is beyond pleasure-purpose. Universal purpose in which the individual's aims are absorbed but not crushed; limitless, inexorable purpose, co-equal with time and space.

Is the recognition of this purpose the secret, or is it a dream of mysticism, vague and profitless as the life-weariedness itself? This we cannot answer, but if it is mysticism, it is also the basis of art, of poetry, of everything fresh and holy, which the spirit of man has seized in its highest and purest moments.

It was such solitude, such mysticism as this, which fired with undreamed-of energy the lonely maid of Orleans. It was such solitude that prompted the dauntless spirit of Marat's murderess with limitless determination, limitless resignation. Perhaps, indeed, the lines of a French dramatist, assigned to Charlotte Corday herself, strike to the very root of the question:—

Celui qui n'a pas su hair la servitude,
Celui-là ne peut pas t'aimer—O solitude!

Substitute for the limited "servitude," of which Marat was the author, the almost universal servitude which springs from introspection, self-absorption. For if real power means mastery of self; real liberty, in a sense by no means insignificant, means forgetfulness of self.

PARIS LETTER.

The terrible heat promises to suspend all labour, save that of swinging in a hammock over a fountain, and sipping some anti-parching beverage, whose base must consist of soda water and pounded ice. Mortals unable to keep down the temperature with these aids, must only find refuge in going to their bed, after executing vengeance on blankets and quilts. Look at the effects of the terrible heat; the orthodox cab-men on strike, when a non-striker occupies their seat upon the box, engage him to drive a select few to the suburbs, then beat the cab-man to within an inch of his life, finishing by smashing the vehicle, and at a moment when Parisians are most in need of the phaetons to drive through the woods in search of cool air till after midnight. So long as the Behring Straits seal fishery debates lasted, citi-

zens enjoyed the discussion, because there were constant allusions to icebergs and polar seas. All that is now finished. It is rumored the Senator Berenger, who has become the public purveyor of manners, let it be understood in the proper quarter that the allusions to the increase and multiply powers of the seals, were rather too frequent for Parisian taste, and, perhaps, could only be excused in an indignant Australian when handling the rabbit pest. There is a run on the hoi polloi ice shops, only equal to that on a flash bank. Spoons are discarded; the vendor has only time to wash the ice cups and saucers in a common bucket; the ordinary price of an ice, that the lips draw up from the glass, is one sou; but if a dozen be taken, fifteen will count as twelve. Boys and girls make up parties of a dozen, and draw lots as to who are to receive the extra three. Veterans rely on bad wine and worse alcohol; while there are thousands who are content with a "split," from the Wallace free fountains, and crowd around the "drop scene" like travel-stained Saharians at an oasis.

There are phenomena still. I was riding on an omnibus, a few mornings ago, for cabs are rare, and Victor Hugo indulged in no other kind of locomotion, so one may be excused, and had for neighbours two excellent farmers, with faces as bronzed as the features of a Rameses, that had just arrived by train from the centre of France. They soon struck up a conversation; and, to my natural question, if any green fields or green leaves existed in the provinces, they looked at me as if I had pocketed the war indemnity of five milliards. Then they burst into a laugh; when one laughs one is disarmed. As for their part, they were never so contented; even Martin's wife after being thrashed by her lord and master, could not be more so. Their wheat was more than fair; if the straw was short, the ear was well-filled; the potatoes were excellent; as for their vineyards, the difficulty is to obtain empty wine barrels to contain the vintage. Beet was weak, but not a failure, while forage promised to be as rare this winter as silver rupees in India. However, the profits from other crops would more than cover losses. The farmers have renounced sending their starving cattle to the fairs, where no price could be fetched; so they kill them and salt the meat in wine barrels, for their own or local use. My bucolic co-voyagers were even content with the Shadrach and Co. weather. I suggested they ought not to profess that idea too strongly in Paris, when so many young persons carried penny thermometers in their hats, to register the external heat, or, perhaps, that of brain temperature. France will not have to import large stocks of grains to cover the supposed deficit in the harvest, calculated at one-fifth. There is more home-grown wheat offered than can find purchasers, so Canaanites may come to Egypt for corn. Despite the calculations of M. Licht, that the annual sugar crop of the world will be short by one-fourth, half a lump daily less put into our cups and glasses, would more than conjure the sugar famine.

The French commence to perceive that Siam may prove a difficult nut to crack, and that they have shown their hand too

fully; that they are not at all ready to rush a solution, while the Siamese will have time to make ready, present, and fire. M. Lanessan is blamed for bungling, and it is hinted, that the only result will be, to set Siam in a blaze, provoke attacks on the foreign devils—the English being in the majority, when the British will simply bombard, land men, and take over Siam, as they have Egypt. That solution is not improbable. Of course, England will not permit any European power to pass over her interests in Siam. And France admits she has not the class of ships on the spot to follow out her plans. It was herself inaugurated this new system of diplomacy in China, and recently at Tientsin when she placed a gun boat at Tientsin, for every one the English anchored there.

A great abuse has been unearthed, the various public establishments owned and occupied by the State, affording house accommodation to thousands of officials, while the museums are declared to require enlargement for exhibits, rooms are occupied by clerks etc., and their families. These free quarters represent a rent value of hundreds of millions, and necessitate an annual expenditure of many other millions. It was about 1833, that the invasion of the Government premises commenced; since the occupation has extended like a plague. As the evil has been indicated, a commission will be appointed to weed out those households whose presence is of no necessity in the building. Hence, there is terrible walling and gnashing of teeth. The reform should not be so much fixed on ejections, as the making it impossible for the evicted, or others, to take root afresh.

Since British India has smashed bit metalism, and compelled the shutting down of silver mines, the money market is in a terrible state of perturbation. Not a few early birds have seized the occasion to file their schedules. Many creditors have utilized the incident to stay payment, assuring their shop debtors, that as soon as the metal crisis is over, they will have their bills paid. It is difficult to drain pockets of gold, where there is no gold. Not long ago, M. Clemenceau, in full Chamber, accused the Government of being forgers, because they coined silver five franc pieces that were really not intrinsically valuable for two-thirds of the amount they represented at the selling price of silver. India having resolved to put an end to the fictitious value of silver money, the latter has "dropped" fifty per cent. On 29th June last, the Bank of France had in its cellars gold to the value of 1,717 millions frs, and silver, 1,280 millions frs. If the latter pile can only fetch 640 millions frs. when sold as old silver, provided buyers can be found, the loss will be sensibly felt. In France, a five franc silver piece will always have the purchasing power of five francs in gold—but beyond the frontiers, the coins, and those of other countries as well, must rank in value with silver forks, spoons, and cover dishes.

It is refreshing to pass an evening at the Neuilly Fair, outside Paris, where even Mrs. Grundy tolerates the harmless nonsense of visiting the penny gaffs, the infant prodigies, and all the wonders of the age. It is the comic epilogue always