

ray!' and many other like inarticulate shouts in many varieties of interjectional dialect all the evening; and everybody agreed that after all Herr Max was *very* little grayer than before the trial, in spite of his long and terrible term of imprisonment.

He was a little embittered by his troubles, no doubt;—what can you expect if you clap men in prison for the expression of their honest political convictions?—but Ernest tried to keep his eye steadily rather on the future than on the past; and with greater ease and unwonted comforts the old man's cheerfulness as well as his enthusiasm gradually returned. 'I'm too old now to do anything more worth doing myself before I die,' he used to say, holding Ernest's arm tightly in his vice-like grip: 'but I have great hopes in spite of everything for friend Ernest; I have very great hopes indeed for friend Ernest here. There's no knowing yet what he may accomplish.'

Ernest only smiled a trifle sadly, and murmured half to himself that this was a hard world, and he began himself to fear there was no fitting feeling for a social reformer except one of a brave despair. 'We can do little or nothing, after all,' he said slowly; 'and our only consolation must be that even that little is perhaps just worth doing.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LAND AT LAST: BUT WHAT LAND?

LONG before the 'Social Reformer' had fully made its mark in the world, another event had happened of no less importance to some of the chief actors in the little drama whose natural termination it seemed to form. While the pamphlet and the paper were in course of maturation, Arthur Berkeley had been running daily in and out of the house in Wilton Place in what Lady Exmoor several times described as a positively disgraceful and unseemly manner. ('What Hilda can mean,' her ladyship observed to her husband more than once, 'by encouraging that odd young man's extraordinary advances in the way she does is really more than I can understand even in her.') But when the *Le Bretons* were fairly launched at last on the favourable flood of full prosperity, both Hilda and Arthur began to feel as though they had suddenly been deprived of a very pleasant common interest. After all, benevolent counsel on behalf of other people is not so entirely innocent and