

it met some favour in the towns, it was almost unanimously rejected by the farming community. Obviously what Disraeli called the "territorial democracy" of America is not willing to be deprived of its property by force of law, and as they form an irresistible phalanx, it is not likely that we shall hear much more of Mr. Henry George in practical politics.

The wage-earner has some consolations in his poverty. Given the qualities which make him useful to an employer, he is tolerably certain of work, and is free from cares which sit heavily on the wage-payer. That, barring misfortune, he is able in Canada by steady working and saving to acquire a slight provision for old age, and educate and put out his children in life, is proved by thousands of examples. His employer must also be parsimonious and industrious to accomplish his end. But the self-denial is much greater in one case than the other, and the temptation to let the money go as it comes infinitely more pressing. No man who loves his kind and looks at this matter with an unselfish eye can help desiring that the comforts of life were more equally distributed among all sorts and conditions of men.

J. GORDON BROWN.

CHRISTMAS IN THE POOR-HOUSE.

An' is it "merry Christmas," lad, you're wishin' me, to-day?
Indeed, I didn't know the time had slipped so fast away!
You wonder I don't think it long, alone here, an' half blind,
But life to me goes by like dreams, an' then, the folks are kind.

I sit here, still an' quiet, an' the old days come again,
Like friends who sit an' talk with me of long past joy an' pain;
An' many a dear face smiles at me out of the bygone years,
That I have sadly missed so long,—that last I saw through tears!

Aye, lad! I know it's lonesome for an old man to be here,
With ne'er a soul of kith or kin his closin' days to cheer;
But He who came at Christmas came to bless the poor and lone,
An' I know that He is with me, an' they are still my own.

There's one,—the fairest face of all,—or so it seems to me,
A dear old face that long hath lain beneath the churchyard tree:
Mother an' father,—both—she was, so brave an' gentle, too,—
No love has ever been to me more tender or more true.

An' there's another bonnie face, that looks as young an' sweet
As when I looked, at eventide, its blush an' smile to meet;
I see it, as I saw it when we stood up side by side,
While there, before the altar rails, I took her for my bride.

Ah well! too soon she left me an' the little ones to mourn,—
There was Jenny, Jack, an' Molly—an' Willie newly born—
I did my best—God knows—for them, but, with the best of will,
It's hard for a poor man, alone, a mother's place to fill!

My Jenny! I can see her, too, so merry and so bright,
In darkest days she cheered us all—our household's very light;
But all too hard for her young strength, the task she tried to do,
An', with her mother's very look, she drooped an' faded too!

Then Jack, my boy!—so big an' strong—I thought he would have been
A prop for my old totterin' feet, a staff whereon to lean;
But he went on "the road," an' there, there's many a risk to run,
An' home one day they brought him—dead—ere half his work was done:

An' little Molly married soon, and her big family
Soon kept her busy—little lass! but still she cared for me.
She died too, an' the childer's all scattered far an' wide,
There's none to mind the old man now since my poor Molly died.

But Will!—who had her look an' smile, my heart is sore for thee!
They lured my boy to evil ways, an' long he's lost to me;
An' I have mourned him many a day, but now I leave my prayer
With Him whose love is round him still—a Father's love and care!

What, lad! you say you've heard from him—have seen him too, may be?
An' is he turned to better ways, an' does he mind o' me?
Nay, now, there's somethin' in your voice that minds me o' my boy!
God bless thee, Will! an' thank Him, too, for this best Christmas joy!

FIDELIS.

LONDON LETTER.

THERE is a charming passage in that curious book, *The Woodlanders*—which might have been written, almost chapter for chapter, by two men of totally opposite characters—in which Hardy describes with some of his delicate touches (like Caldecott's drawings in quality), how, directly a sapling is planted, it sighs, sighs, sighs, never ceasing, only increasing in volume, till its last hour. Here among the Bournemouth pine woods, lining the deep cleft between the hills which runs down to the sea, tall trees, swaying backwards and forwards, moan unceasingly in mournful, melancholy undertones, while beneath their shadow invalids echo the sound; and the two combined—mournful invalid and moaning tree—are apt to be a trifle depressing. It is true the sun looks in occasionally on these dark plantations, and brightens us considerably when he does appear; and the music of a

small brook, so spick and span as hardly to look natural, which trips along the valley-meadow, makes us forget for a moment the troubles of the pines; while the town band, with *Ruddigore* and the latest valse at its noisy finger-ends, occasionally drowns our own griefs in a bewildering braying of many instruments. But about three o'clock on a November afternoon, with rain in the air, a light mist rising, colourless skies overhead, gray waves swishing backwards and forwards on the deserted beach, it takes a strong-minded person indeed not to be influenced by these adverse circumstances, and pronounce Bournemouth unutterably dreary. People are fond of this place, though. Henry Taylor lived here for years, and died here. Stevenson, the writer, possesses a small gabled villa (now shuttered, and forlorn-looking enough) on the east cliff. Close to his back doors a wild common comes struggling up in picturesque disorder of hillock and furze-bush, after the appearance, particularly as regards the inequality of the ground, of Hampstead Heath,—dividing him and a few other householders, with its gaunt arms, from the rest of the town. Near to the sea, girdled by trees, the great woods belonging to Lord Londesborough shelter him from the east winds. In this retreat he spends all the days he gives to England. Hardy, who lives outside Dorchester, a few miles off across the heather, told me how a tall gentleman walked into his room the other day to congratulate the author of the *Mayor of Casterbridge* on his great success, and to suggest that the novel should be dramatized. The gentlest, quietest, most modest of little men was charmed to discover that his unknown visitor was Stevenson, and the two had a long talk; but no one has yet succeeded in making a play out of the book, though it is full of good situations. Was there ever a better opening for a melodrama than the scene where the wife is sold by her husband to the sailor at the fair? The land on which Hardy's house is built, by the way, is a small portion of some part of the New Forest, bought by the Black Prince, and now the property of the Prince of Wales, who hitherto has allowed no one to rent it; but when the novelist applied for a few acres, permission was at once accorded from head-quarters, "in acknowledgment of the pleasure Mr. Hardy's books had given His Royal Highness"; and this permission is a source of immense delight to the author who, when young and very poor, made up his mind that some day he would have a place of his own on this very spot, if possible, which is close against his native town, and well within some of his beloved Dorset dialect. He counts among his ancestors the famous Captain Hardy, Nelson's friend, of whom he gives a sketch in *The Trumpet Major*. But also he is not in the least ashamed of mentioning those humble members of his family who have built their modest fortunes with their own hands. Why does Hardy allow the Mr. Hyde of his nature occasionally to snatch the pen from him, and not only write whole chapters, but whole volumes? Is it from that curious inconsistency of character which one expects more in a woman than in a man? Did identically the same person write *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Two on a Tower*; or, *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *A Laodicean*?

To the left of Bournemouth, on the outskirts of the woods, in the cleared centres of which the prettiest villas, facing the sea, are planted, is Boscombe Manor, where the only son of the poet Shelley lives at such times when he is not in town, or abroad, or yachting. It is a charming, comfortable, unpretentious house, with a wide veranda, and is full of all sorts of relics; for here Sir Percy showed me, set in a glass case, the last pen—a worn-looking quill—which Shelley used, and had left lying on his desk; the volume of *Æschylus*, in worn cover and defaced leaves, which was in his pocket when he was drowned; a sketch of him by the young Duc de Montpensier; a portrait of him sitting among the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, painted by Miss Curran, who, all the world remembers, was once engaged to Emmet, and, spending her days "far from the land where her young hero sleeps," came across the poet's party in Rome; a lock of Mary's hair; a fine portrait of her by Opie, and many and many another possession, carefully cherished for over half a century. There is a curtained recess in the morning room in which is placed a copy of the marble monument to Shelley's memory in Christchurch, and in a silver vase, in front of which bloom heartsease, Shelley's favourite flower, is the heart over which Byron and Trelawney watched so carefully that brilliant July morning on the Mediterranean shore. Books, with the poet's autograph in them, has Sir Percy in plenty; manuscripts too, and letters to "Madre,"—that pretty Italian name by which Mary Shelley's son speaks of his mother; and the affection with which both he and his wife regard her memory is very touching to see. I think it was in 1859 that she died, and was buried in St. Pancras, with her father and mother, the Godwins; but when the railway ran shrieking across the great cemetery, and the tombs were levelled, the Shelleys had the three coffins brought to Bournemouth, and buried afresh in peace on the slope of a hill, in one of the prettiest churchyards in England.

Once I met Mme. Mohl at Boscombe, and that brilliant little lady entranced us all with her talk; and another time I saw Grantley Berkeley, who showed us next day, at his own house, the curtained bed in which Edward II. was done to death in Berkeley Castle. Mr. Berkeley wore the D'Orsay turned-over wristbands and collar, of which he boasted he was the only man living who had still the pattern; and he was interesting on the old, old scandals of the society of forty years back, when he frequented town,—long ago practically deserted for his curious cottage away in the wilds. "He who is solitary is always luxurious and generally mad," was one of Johnson's sweeping remarks. In Mr. Berkeley's case there was no sign of the madness, and very little of the luxury. I remember hearing from him a curious thing in connection with the assassination of William Rufus. A priest from Christchurch came early in the morning of the day of the murder, and, demanding audience of the King, implored him not to go hunting. "I have had a dream," said the father, "in which I saw your Majesty with a grievous wound." But William paid no heed to the super-