



EXALTING FARRER INTO AN ISSUE.

men who have died as a consequence of following any useful occupation have a just claim upon the country for maintenance.

THE question of whether outspokenness concerning vice in literature is immoral and consequently deserving of suppression by legal means is just now agitating the American literary world. Several books have lately been published which handle without gloves certain phases of society not conventionally regarded as fit themes for the novelist, the most prominent instance of this new departure being the notable case of Tolstoi's "Kreutzer Sonata," which was refused mail facilities by Postmaster-General Wanamaker, and Helen Gardner's novel, "Is This Your Son, My Lord?" which, though not fortunate enough to receive such a splendid gratis advertisement as an official condemnation, has nevertheless had an enormous sale. The number of books—principally novels—of this doubtful status from the ordinary conventional standpoint is being rapidly multiplied, and a decision on the question of whether they are to be suppressed or tolerated will have to be arrived at. In the current *Arena* Mr. Albert Ross, himself an author of three works the moral tendency of which has been called in question, argues, not altogether disinterestedly, perhaps, for allowing the public freedom of choice. As he says very truly a book should be judged not by isolated passages, but by its general tenor and motive. "Suppressions of isolated works like the Sonata, while dozens of others open to the same objection are allowed free course, is obviously both illogical and futile. Moreover it would not be possible to draw the line at the modern off-color novel and allow

the unrestricted sale of such classics as Chaucer, Swift and Rabelais, which are infinitely more outspoken.

TAKING a leaf out of the book of Sir John Macdonald, who is an adept in the art of "how not to do it," the Salisbury Government is going to appoint a labor commission. That means a year's respite at least from the necessity of dealing with the labor question, which has become a menacing factor in British politics, and, judging from recent bye-elections, threatens to restore to the Liberals the ground lost over the unfortunate Parnell escapade and the consequent set-back to Home Rule. The "royal commission" fad is always available as a means of gaining time, by holding out the hope of action without any definite promise which commits the Government to anything. As to whether it will avail the Government anything in the long run simply depends upon the earnestness and vitality of the political labor movement.

A HIGH ART NOVEL.

CHAPTER I.

ONE of the fairest counties of Merrie England. Need it be said it was Midlandsire? Hawthorn hedgerows, beloved of watercolor sketchers and occupying a width of twelve linear feet, enclosed the bush pastures of emerald green dotted with poppy flowers of scarlet and crimson lake. No wire fences offended the æsthetic eye. No railway with its hideous utilitarianism disturbed the rural quiet of the scene.

A gig flowed along the middle of the Queen's highway—and long may she reign. A gig is a vehicle composed of two tall wheels, a tea-tray, two gig-lamps and a horse. In this instance the horse was spavined and of a vandyke brown shade, the gig was chrome yellow and the American vendor of notions who sat therein and wondered why English hired men prefer to live in adobe hog-pens with thatched roofs in preference to clapboarded and shingled boarding-places, was of the fine squalid tint that time has developed in Portrait of a Gentleman by Tony Mengs.

A sunny summer evening set in with a very fair imitation of Claude Lorraine, the gig with Baruk C. Spoopendyke, the American in question, arrived at one of the few roadside taverns that are yet to be met with outside the pages of Dickens. "The Old Squire," by J. Willet, the old squire having been a bullocky person who had once owned the surrounding farms. You may see several copies of this inn or tavern at every Exhibition, but always skied and never on the line. Spoopendyke stared. He had never heard of the former John Willet, long since dead, nor of Barnaby Rudge, nor Joe, nor Dolly Varden. He had heard of GRIP, and knew it was a brilliant paper published at Toronto. But his whole attention was rivetted on the swinging sign-board representing the Old Squire. Not the ingenious virtuoso who first discovered that "The Angelus" is worth \$300,000 instead of the hundred dollars or so it originally cost, could have stared harder. When the red-headed ostler described by Wilkie Collins came out he mechanically surrendered the horse to him as if he had been a highwayman. Still he continued to stare at the swinging sign. It represented the effigy of a dumpling-faced, rose-madder-nosed, venetian-red-cheeked man in a wig and blue coat and yellow vest. Then the American went indoors and ate some beans and bacon, but, being a member of the C.T.U., touched not, tasted not,