

HENRIK IBSEN.

Much has been written of late upon the works, the philosophy and the literary influence of Henrik Ibsen. It may be interesting, to some of our readers, to know who this exceptionally peculiar author is and what he has done in the world of letters. From a great many of his productions we are shut out on account of the absence of translations; but the little we do know of the Norwegian poet we are glad to give for the benefit of others.

Chris. M. Waage says that, "outside Goethe's Faust, nothing has been written to compare with these two works in their particular line." He refers to Ibsen's philosophical poems, "Peer Gynt" and "Brand." On this subject the same author says: "It would be difficult to say which of these two poems expresses the grandest philosophy, for they are both filled with profound thought, and their appearance caused the literary world of northern Europe to wonder."

Such is the opinion of a great literary critic and an extravagant admirer of Ibsen. The truth is that the Northern hard is a dandy, a bohemian, a poetic philosopher and a freak of success amongst his own people. In appearance, speaking of his dress, manners and form, he was a regular Beau Brummel of the literary class. With whiskers *a la* Dunderoary, and "a silk hat of the latest fashion, a black velvet coat, a pair of tight-fitting fawn-colored trousers strapped under patent leather shoes, and his hands encased in elegant gloves." It appears that he had a great weakness for hair-oil and the scent of the rose or violet. Henrik Ibsen seems to have divided his time into three distinct parts. He would spend one-third of it gazing in admiration at his own physical perfections as reflected in his toilet looking-glass; another third in contemplating his own poems and wondering at his own greatness, as seen in his own mental mirror; and the last third in perusing over and over all the favorable comments that a Northern press deemed proper to make upon his achievements.

We said that he was a kind of bohemian, a Norseman given to Gypsy wanderings. He became a warm admirer of Denmark and sang the glories of that land in striking verse. In Copenhagen, surrounded by the first writers of the day, and amidst a very galaxy of talent, the poet spent many happy months; he was the admired of all, and of none more than of Henrik Ibsen himself. His historical dramas created considerable excitement and gained wide popularity in Denmark. He rambled away to the south, and after sojourning in Italy for a time, he found his way into Germany. There he partly settled down in Munchen. Amongst his friends and admirers have been such celebrities as Hans Christian Anderson, Professor Jerichau, Mrs. Johanne Louise Heiberg, Wilhelm Wiebe, Emil Paulsen, Carl Bloch, Frederick Sorensen and Neumanns. Amongst such authors, actors, artists and savants Ibsen was happy—but especially because they all admired, or pretended to admire and understand, Henrik Ibsen. So egotistical was he in his younger days, that he would spend a whole evening reading one of his five act dramas to a set of friends, little dreaming that his friends were inwardly blessing him after a peculiar manner.

As to Ibsen's philosophy it would be most difficult to define or explain it. Whatever theories he possesses, or has possessed, have only found expression in his leading poems. The last one of these productions, and the one which has been received with the greatest enthusiasm, is entitled "Master Builder Solness." Of

this the critic Zangwill says that the word "master bewilder" would have been a more appropriate title. The truth is that there is no philosophy at all in Ibsen's works. There is decidedly a vague attempt at profound reasoning; but to call the wild and fantastic effusions of the dreamy poet the expression of philosophical principles is so ridiculous that one scarcely can treat the matter seriously. The moment a writer conveys, in lofty verse,—so lofty that no person except the poet himself can rise to it—ideas beyond the ordinary range of comprehension, he is called a philosopher and his work philosophy. In Henrik Ibsen's productions we certainly do find much of that weird and mystic lore of the Norseland, such as Vikings and heroes of the dim past were wont to transmit to their children; but where is the philosophy therein? His grand works, like the romantic legends of his ancestors, resemble the grey mists that hang upon the cliffs of Norway, and that roll away in strange, fantastic and ghostly forms over the wild and restless bosom of the Scaderraak; Norsemen tell that these vapory shapes hide within their bosoms the guardian spirits of the land. There is a queer native superstition about the mists, and about the poems. Ibsen paints in language of artistic perfection pictures that come and go like the scenes in a panorama; but they leave no lasting impression. It suffices that a critic or friend should proclaim the author a philosopher, and some men will join in the chorus with exclamations of "deep thinker," "profound scholar," "great logician." In other cases—and they are almost countless—in order to be styled a philosopher and to have your works (no matter whether they be had prose or worse verse) considered deep and powerful, is only necessary to give expression to any kind of mystic theories, provided they tend not to the honor of God and the glory of His church.

We called Ibsen a freak of success. As an example we find that the poem alluded to as being so "bewildering," was written in Norway, the first composed for years upon his native soil. It was sent in November, 1892, to Copenhagen to be produced at the Royal Theatre. According to a daily of that city, on November 5th, Henrik Ibsen, in person, delivered the manuscript into the post office at Christiania. On the next day it was forwarded to Denmark. It went in a special train, with guards; the engine decorated and flags floated from the smoke-stack. At Frederikshold speeches were delivered and crowds came to salute the train. At Mellerud, the last station on Norwegian soil, the ovation was something beyond description. At Elsinore the publisher wet the manuscript. The whole city was astir and around the station thousands thronged. Mr. Hezel, the publisher, received a regular triumphal demonstration as he carried the manuscript from the railway depot to his offices. In the September Californian, Mr. Waage gives the full details of that famous journey of the famous composition of Henrik Ibsen.

Can our readers imagine anything more extravagant than thousands of people going mad over a document the contents of which, if read, eighty per cent. of them would not understand? Yet such the fame and merit of Ibsen; they are in the inverse ratio of each other. Some day or other we expect to find a complete translation of his works; until then they must, to a certain degree, remain as mysterious and incomprehensible as is to-day his so-called philosophy. And should they never become a portion of our English translated

literature, the world will be none the worse off. We prefer genuine poetry, in its proper place, and true philosophy in its proper form, than a milk-and-water mixture of poetic ravings and illogical theories.

Personal.

Last week Rev. Sisters Ste. Philomene and Marie Agathe, of the Sisters of Mercy, from Watertown, N. Y., paid a visit to Montreal. The former lady has many friends and some relations in this city, who were rejoiced to see her and to bid her a hearty welcome. It is wonderful all the good that they Sisters of Mercy perform. In their own unostentatious way they go about scattering blessings along the path of existence. The good Sisters departed well pleased with their visit.

LABOR DAY.

The Sermon in Notre Dame Church.
Some five hundred workmen belonging to the various labor organizations attended Mass Monday morning in the chapel of the Sacred Heart in the rear of Notre Dame Church. To enable the men to attend the procession only a low mass was said, the Rev. Abbe Marre officiating. Mayor Desjardins occupied a seat near the chancel along with Ald. Brunet, Mr. Jos. Beland, ex-M.P.P., and several officers of labor societies bearing their insignia of office. During the service several hymns were chanted, among them "Saint O Vierge Immaculee Brilliant Etoile du Matin." The Rev. Abbe Oclin, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, delivered a short sermon, in which he eulogized labor and praised those present for having knelt at the altar on the morning of this festive day to ask the blessing of Heaven upon themselves and their families. Nothing ennobled a man so much as labor, and when the workman offered up his toil to his Creator he fulfilled the mission for which he was placed upon earth. To most of them their earthly career was a trying one, but they should be consoled by the comforts which religion extended to all. If they only lived Christian lives and exercised their influence for good they would be rewarded in the other life. All the good which they did on this earth would be recorded on their behalf in the realm above. The workmen were praiseworthy when they realized that they had duties to perform as well as rights to have recognized. All that they did in God's name would be repaid many fold. He prayed the blessing of God should rest upon them and all their undertakings. After Mass the workmen marched down to Craig street and joined the ranks of the procession.

THE CORNER STONE LAID

For the Monument to De Maisonneuve.
The ceremony of laying the corner stone of the monument to M. de Maisonneuve, the founder of Montreal, in Place d'Armes Square took place Monday morning under the most auspicious circumstances. The Square was filled with the labor organizations, and while music filled the air and flags and banners floated gaily to the breeze genuine enthusiasm was manifested by the large gathering which numbered many thousands. Among those present were Judges Baby and Pagnuelo, Senator Murphy, Mayor Desjardins, ex-Mayor Grenier, ex-Mayor McShane, Ald. Jeannotte, Thompson, Beausoleil, Robert, Stearns, Dumbray, Desmarieau, Tansey, Savignac, Reneault, Messrs. J. D. Rolland, Richard White, Vicomte de la Barthe, J. A. U. Beaudry, A. O. De Lery Macdonald, Secretary of the Horticultural Society, W. D. Lighthall, Dr. J. L. Leprohon, R. W. McLachlan, Alderman Cresse, L. O. David, City Clerk; D. Parizeau, M.P.P., Victor Joseph Fortier, Maurice Perrault, L. W. Scotte, Sr., J. B. Learmont, J. G. H. Bergeron, M.P.P., A. Cousineau, A. Dion, Rouer Roy, Q.C., Mananahala Beaugen, ex-Ald. Martineau, M.P.P., Louis Perrault and many others. Among the labor delegates were Mr. L. Z. Boudreau, President of the Trades and Labor Council; Mr. Geo. Beales, President of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress; Mr. J. A. Rodier, Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, and representatives of nearly all the workmen's societies in the city. Monsieur Durand, Vice Consul of France at Quebec and acting Consul General during the absence of Count de Turenne, was present in his official capacity. He made the welcome announcement that the Government of the French Republic, through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, subscribed 500 francs for the monument.

Judge Pagnuelo gave the inaugural address, and was followed by His Worship the Mayor, Hon. Senator Murphy and others. Judge Pagnuelo then laid the corner-stone with the customary ceremonies. Judge Baby, Mayor Desjardins, Senator Murphy and Vice-Consul Durand and the labor representatives, also wrapped the stone and handled the trowel, and the ceremonies were concluded by the band playing "God Save the Queen." Under the stone was placed a leaden sheet, on which were engraved the names of the civil and religious authorities and the committee, together with copies of all the city papers and coins of the day.

MONTREAL'S GREAT FAIR.

The Exhibition of 1893 Starts Well.
The sun shown brightly on the opening of Montreal's third annual Provincial Exhibition Monday morning, and numbers of citizens and visitors were on the grounds, anxious to be there from the first. The two main thoroughfares, Bleury and St. Lawrence streets, the latter especially, presented an animated appearance as the loaded street cars and crowds of "foot passengers" made their way to where the big "show" was in progress. On entering the grounds one noticed, to the left, a little wooden building, fitted up for the accommodation of the secretary and his staff. These gentlemen were busy all the morning; but they managed to get through their work without any difficulty. Mr. Stevenson, courteous as usual, was on hand to give all the information desired, and the assistant secretary, Mr.

Peter Shonfeldt, was an assistant not in name only. The exhibits are nearly all placed, and everything points to a successful fair. The exhibits of live stock are, perhaps, smaller in number than usual; but the quality is quite up to the standard. The stalls are kept in good order and there is abundance of good clean fodder. Some fine specimens of Durhams are the first that catch the visitor's eye as he commences a tour to the States. One bull, two years old, weighs two thousand pounds; and there are three or four others approaching him in size, and ferns in the centre and surrounded by orchids, dracaenas, crotons and begonias, were

THE MOST STRIKING FEATURES OF THE FLORAL EXHIBIT.

The chief private conservatories represented are Messrs. W. R. Elmenhouts, W. W. Ogilvie, Andrew Allan, Sir John Abbott and the Montreal Seminary. Among the bouquets and exhibits of small flowers, the most conspicuous are collections of gladiolus, amaranthi, gladioli, fuchsias, geraniums and asters. The ceiling of the hall was artistically festooned with evergreen asparagus tenifolia. The display of fruits at the Western side of the hall though not complete at noon promised to be as great if not greater than that of any former year. The County of Hochelaga agricultural exhibit is complete in every detail. The prominent feature was the machinery, all sorts of dairy implements. On Tuesday this machinery was set in motion and the process of butter and cheese making can be seen by city folk. Cheeses of all sizes and ages, butter in tubs and in rolls, all the mysteries of milk and cream and curds will be investigated with interest by multitudes of Montrealers. All these can be seen in the southern end of the Hochelaga Hall. Through the middle of the hall run long tables heaped with roots. Though the season is early and the turnips, mangolds, etc., are not yet matured. The exhibits are large and varied. At the northern end of the hall stand some splendid specimens of ensilage corn, with ears large and plump. Some of the stacks standing against the eastern wall are over thirteen feet in height. **LABOR GAMES AT THE EXHIBITION GROUNDS.** The labor procession entered the grounds at about the half-past twelve with bands playing and banners flying. There were no speeches, and at two o'clock the following special programme of games was commenced: Putting the shot, 100 yards race, boys. 1/2 mile race, M. L. O. Half-mile race, open. Vaulting with pole. One mile open. 75 yards, ladies. 100 yard, delegates. 100 yards, young ladies. 120 yards hurdles. 100 yard, M. L. O. Egg race, 100 yards, ladies. 75 yards, girls under 12. 1/2 mile walk, ladies. 200 yards, police and firemen. Pole climbing, members electric Assembly. Wood sawing, professionals. Committee race, 100 yards.

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