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An Hour with the Editor



SIMPLICITY OF TRUTH

Goeth said: "People are so little inclined to believe in the truth, because the truth is so simple." In the course of his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." That seems to be very simple. One might suppose from it that if he could keep his heart pure, he would enjoy divine favor. It would never occur to him that he would have also to believe a complicated system of theology and go through a certain ritual to obtain the desired boon. "Ask and ye shall receive," said the Divine Teacher; but that is much too simple a proposition for most people. They can hardly believe it can be so. They prefer to believe that if you ask, perhaps what you wish will be given, or perhaps, and most probably, something else, which is really better than what you wanted, although you may never know it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," says the Book of Genesis. This is quite too simple for belief. It is so much easier to believe in primordial germs endowed with a potency sufficient for the evolution of a visible universe. Probably you will not know what that means. It sounds so very learned that you might naturally want to believe it. We don't know what it means either, but the words fit into each other quite as well as Herbert Spencer's "I think I perceive that there is no necessity for the hypothesis of God." Wise-sounding phrases like these are easy enough to believe, but a simple statement that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep" is past belief. This is the way in which we begot our intellects with mere words. We look for Truth in an elaborate garment coming in some mysterious way, and so fail to recognize in the simplicity, which is her characteristic.

In one of His addresses, Jesus spoke of the way to life as "strait and narrow." Strait and narrow mean the same thing. The idea that is usually conveyed by those who speak of this famous text is that in order to reach eternal life we must go through life in a long, straight and narrow path, on either side of which are all manner of pitfalls leading to perdition. But this is not what it says. It simply states that the way to life is narrow and that few people find it. The reason why is probably because it is narrow. If it was broad and conspicuous, any one could see it; but most people ignore it because it is inconspicuous. They go searching for something that is grand, involved, mysterious, difficult of comprehension. If that kind of a salvation is preached, people think there may be something in it; but anything that is as simple as what the Founder of Christianity preached is not to be thought of. The text referred to is generally used to admonish those that are living lives of wickedness; but we might be justified in thinking that it applies in some degree to the people who make creeds and preach dogma. "They would not come unto Me that they might have life," said the Divine Teacher. He did not say that they would not learn the catechism or subscribe to some formula of belief or accept certain ceremonies as efficacious. He said simply, "Come unto Me." That seems a very simple thing to do, and perhaps that is why so few people do it.

But Goethe was not speaking of religious truth especially, and his observation does not hold good in regard to religious truth alone. It applies to all truths, whether in the realm of the physical, the mental or the spiritual. We are finding this out in the physical world every day. We are learning that behind the various natural phenomena there are simple laws, and remember that all laws are truths, and there is nothing true that is not conformable to the law of existence. A little thought will show that there must be the case; it will also show that there must be absolute harmony between all truths. What is true in science must harmonize with what is true in religion. If things in any department of human investigation do not appear to harmonize, we may rest assured that there is something about them that we do not understand because in the very nature of the case there can be nothing discordant in the truth. As investigation progresses we will all come to understand this better.

The same idea holds good of our transactions with each other. We are all given to searching for hidden motives. That our neighbors are influenced by what is obvious seems hard to believe. A political leader announces a line of policy. The probability is that he is a very simple-minded person. Most successful public men are, and that is the reason why they are successful. On the very face of the policy there is a reason for it; but no one ever thinks of accepting that as the reason. We all go digging after something else. A minister of war decides upon a certain line of action in regard to the army. In everyday life the Minister is looked upon as a sane and patriotic citizen, but no one thinks of explaining his action as resulting from a sane and patriotic effort to serve his country. He has some other end in view which will not bear investigation, we assure ourselves if he happens to be on the other side of politics. If he is on our side, we are sure that he has some undisclosed motive praiseworthy, no doubt, but one that ought not to be talked about. It is hard to admit that our friends do things for reasons that are obvious. One of them passes us on the street without recognition. The most natural explanation is that he or she did not observe us; but we do not accept such a simple reason; and possibly make ourselves unhappy endeavoring to discover what the cause may have been. Here is an actual occurrence. A lady left a MS. with the Colonist to be published. It was not published. She called and asked for the reason. The person responsible for the omis-

sion said: "I'll tell you the literal truth. I forgot all about it." Yet it required some argument to convince the lady that there was not some hidden reason. The obvious reason was altogether too simple. Every newspaper man knows how prone the public are to seek for undisclosed motives lying behind matters of the most ordinary routine. We would save ourselves no end of unhappiness and trouble if we would realize that in all things, from the triviallest truths of religion down to the affairs of every day life the truth is usually very simple, whether it be fundamental truth, such as was first herein spoken of, or what may be called superficial truth, such as those matters just referred to.

WATERLOO

On his return to Paris from Elba, Napoleon put forth all his efforts to consolidate his power. An extraordinary assembly of the estates of the realm was called for the purpose "of correcting and modifying our constitution and of assisting at the coronation of the empress, our dear and well-beloved spouse, and of our dear and well-beloved son." Later he issued a manifesto in which he declared that he had abandoned the organization of "a grand federal system in Europe," and that "henceforward he had no other object than to increase the prosperity of France by strengthening public liberty." He also established a hereditary peerage. At this time, as was mentioned in the preceding article, the allies had 700,000 men in the field and the most that Napoleon could muster was 200,000. But the allied force was considerably scattered so that the disproportion was not as great as these figures indicated. Napoleon advanced into Belgium at the head of 122,401 men, mostly all veterans and undoubtedly the finest body of men he had ever commanded. Wellington had 105,950 men under him. Of those 30,000 were Netherlands, in whom little confidence was placed, and their conduct on the eventful day showed that they were not to be trusted. Of the remainder 35,000 were English, chiefly raw recruits; there were about 40,000 from various German principalities. Altogether it was a weak force because it was so lacking homogeneity. Wellington said "it was the worst army ever got together." Blücher had 116,897 men, nearly all of them veterans, and the whole forming a homogenous army.

Napoleon left Paris on June 12, and moving with his usual celerity he threw himself between the two opposing armies. He attacked both of them on the same day. He met the Prussians at Ligny, where he commanded in person and inflicted a severe defeat. Of the Prussians 12,000 were killed and wounded, and among the latter was Blücher. Marshal Ney was entrusted with the attack upon Wellington, which took place at Quatre Bras. He was compelled to retreat; but the check which the Prussians had received compelled Wellington to retire on Brussels, so as to effect a junction with Blücher. German historians have never forgiven Wellington for this, and they claim that he should have advanced to Blücher's assistance; but the Duke doubtless knew what was the wisest thing to be done under the circumstances. Much depended upon the result of the battle which was expected. If Napoleon won, all Europe would be at his feet. It was prudent, therefore, for Wellington to get more closely in touch with the Prussian force, and by retiring give Blücher time to recover from the check administered at Ligny. June 17th was occupied in this retrograde movement, and on June 18th, Wellington determined to try conclusions with the Emperor. The battle of Waterloo consisted of five attacks on the British position. The first was on the right, the next was on the left; the third was the famous cavalry attack, which broke into foam on the British squares; the fourth was a successful attack by Ney on La Haye Sainte, and the fifth was the charge of the guard. The battle began at 11.30 a.m.; the rout of the guard was complete at 8 p.m. The Prussians appeared on the scene during the third attack. The fate of the day was decided by the general advance of the British; it was rendered complete by the pursuit of the Prussians.

Various explanations of the defeat have been given. One of them is that Napoleon made a serious error in despatching Grouchy with 30,000 men in a fruitless pursuit of a part of the Prussians. Victor Hugo accounts for it by the awful loss of the French cavalry in the famous "sunken" road. Others say it was due to the fact that Napoleon was not well. But after the whole situation has been analyzed we come down to one undisputable fact, namely that the British infantry stood firm and let the French cavalry "foam itself away" against their bayonets. Had they yielded, Blücher would have arrived in vain. It is said of Wellington that, during the third stage of the battle, one of his generals approached him and asked him for instructions to be followed in case of his death. The Duke replied: "They are simple. Stand here until the last man dies." This, third attack, which Napoleon expected would decide the day was begun shortly after four o'clock. Ney led, and his cavalry was supported by a terrific artillery fire. For three hours the terrible trial of strength continued, when Ney was forced to retire, for lack of men. Then Friant was sent forward with eight battalions of the Imperial Guard against the British squares, but they stood firm and the dashing charge of the 52nd Foot threw them into confusion. It was at this juncture, speaking accurately at 7.30, that the advance guards of the Prussians came into action. Wellington saw at once that the day was his, and ordered a general advance. The exact losses of the opposing armies has never been quite determined. That of the French probably exceeded

31,000. The official returns of the allies put their loss at 22,428.

There never was a more crushing defeat. Despair seized upon the French. Wonderful acts of heroism were performed by officers and men in a vain effort to rally the fugitives. Napoleon himself seems to have lost heart, and for the time being almost his reason. Victor Hugo tells that he was discovered alone in the darkness walking back towards the field where his fate had been decided. Four days after Waterloo Napoleon abdicated. In announcing this step, he said: "I offer myself as a sacrifice to the enemies of France. My public life is finished. I proclaim my son emperor of the French." But the people were aroused. A reign of terror seemed about to be inaugurated. Napoleon endeavored to escape from the country by sea, but the vigilance of the British cruisers was too great, and on July 3 he surrendered himself to Captain Maitland of the Bellerophon. Much has been said about his having thrown himself upon the clemency of the British government; but he really had no other course left. If he had remained in France, he would probably have fallen a victim to public rage. Blücher threatened to shoot him on the spot where le Duc d'Enghien had been killed. That the deposed Emperor hoped to be allowed to live in England his letter to the Prince Regent shows; but in the existing condition of Europe such a course would have been full of danger. Therefore it was decided to send him to St. Helena, where he arrived on October 15. He died on May 5, 1821, being 52 years old. His life in St. Helena was unhappy chiefly because of his quarrels with the governor, and the end of his career was glorious.

FORCE

In the preceding articles on this subject, reference has been made to the force of gravitation, magnetic attraction and capillary force. What may be called vital force will now be spoken of. This naturally divides itself under two heads, vegetable force and animal force, using both expressions colloquially. A seed is a very wonderful thing. Thousands of years ago grains of wheat were placed in Egyptian tombs, but when they were planted after the lapse of many centuries, the moisture of the earth softened them, tiny green shoots appeared above the ground, and full stalks of wheat laden with new grain was the result. What was it that was imprisoned in that grain, which lay dormant for perhaps five thousand years, but was ready to make its presence felt as soon as conditions became favorable? What is the force which Nature stores up when she

"Within its shell russet and rude,
Folds up the tender germ
Uninjured with imitable art,
And ere one flowery season fades and dies
Prepares the blooming wonders of the next?"

What is the quality of the power hidden in the base of a leaf from a fir cone that it is able to produce a great tree, which will stand through centuries, and hand down its life to future generations of forests? By what agency is a rose able to take from the atmosphere, chiefly, the elements that compose the fairest of all flowers and arrange them in exquisite form, imparting to them an odor of the most marvellous delicacy? What is it that carries the sap to the topmost branch of the tallest tree? So we might go on asking questions, but never getting an answer. But this we do know, that the vital force in a plant acts successfully in opposition to the force of gravitation, for while to a certain extent plants grow downward, they do so voluntarily, so to speak, because by going downward they find what they are in search of. Their great tendency is towards upward growth. We cannot, of course, tell what this power is; we cannot take it out of the seed and put it under the microscope; we cannot weigh it. It acts contrary to the force of gravitation, not only in raising a plant itself in the opposite direction to the operation of that force, but by raising inert objects. It acts contrary to the force of cohesion, because it is able to split rocks asunder. It is so mysterious that, whereas it may be around us on every side, we cannot be conscious of its presence. We only know that it is working steadily and silently. Of all the forces it is, so far as we know, the only one that can remain dormant for apparently an indefinite time, and yet retain its original vigor. We cannot make the force of gravitation dormant. We cannot make magnetic force to objects, but they will lose it. We cannot take from water the cohesiveness of its particles; we may separate these particles widely from each other by converting the water into steam, but when the heat passes away the water in the particles are as cohesive as ever. Apparently if we destroy the vital force of an animal it can never be restored, and we cannot make it dormant. (Since the above was written we have seen a statement made by a distinguished English physician, that under certain forces the vital force of animals can be rendered dormant, and be subsequently revived. Of course dormant vital force is a very different thing from mere so-called suspended animation.) But in the case of plant life, as has been shown in the case of Egyptian wheat, and as is shown in a lesser degree by seeds of all kinds, the vital force may remain dormant indefinitely without losing any of its efficiency. Here we seem apparently to be face to face with a species of energy for which there is no parallel in nature, and its existence seems to show that the various forces cannot

be resolved into each other. One remarkable thing about the vital energy of plants, or rather it would be remarkable if it were not so common, is that without it a plant loses its power to remain erect, unless the solidity of its structure is such as of itself to resist the law of gravitation. Grass, when alive, may be beaten to the earth by the wind, but unless it is broken or entangled, it will take an erect position again. The change in a plant when its vital principle is destroyed is almost instantaneous, although in the case of those that have advanced to the stage of reproduction, the plant makes an effort to complete the process. Thus a rosebud placed in water will open its petals, although it doubtless would not produce seed that would possess vital energy. In the case of grain, the straw becomes yellow at the base just when the time for ripening of the seed arrives, and thereafter the grain apparently derives no further nourishment from the soil, although it probably does from the atmosphere. But a plant that has not yet reached the reproductive stage enters upon the process of decay the instant the vital energy is arrested.

In this connection reference may be made to a phase of the operation of this vital principle, which seems almost to argue intelligence. As a general proposition tropical plants are luxurious in leaf and flower, but meagre in seed. As they extend northward the luxury of foliage and bloom is less, but the seeds are more numerous, and better fitted to withstand adverse conditions. That is why "Manitoba Hard" is the best of all wheats. The rule holds good of plant-life generally. In some mysterious way the plant is instinct with a tendency to preserve its species from extinction. Therefore in the North it puts out many seeds and secures them as best it can from danger. The case seeds of the coniferous trees affords another illustration of the manner in which northern plants provide for their reproduction under strenuous conditions, and that the effort is necessary is shown by the fact that only a comparatively few of the seeds of the coniferous trees ever germinate. Therefore the vital energy of plant-life seems like an intelligent energy, wherein it differs from the other forces that we have been considering. The fact that

"The sunflower turns to its god in the West
The same face that he saw when he rose,"

is not a phenomenon similar to that just considered. This is probably due to the expansion of the cells of the plant under the influence of the sun's rays.

The circulation of sap in the trunk and branches of a tree is a remarkable phenomenon. The sap does not, as some suppose, move up the tree from its roots, but seems to be in general circulation through it. Whether or not this circulation is due to capillary force is an open question, but we may be quite sure that it is not due to this agency alone. One thing is certain, and that is that the sap is not taken up from the soil by any such means. It is formed in the body of the plant itself, the process in a general way being that the plant secretes the sap in proplets, which fill its cells. It is formed from moisture, which is taken in from the roots and the foliage. In cold countries one frequently in winter hears the trees crack with a loud report. This is due to the freezing of the sap in the cells. But while sap is generated in dead wood in a living tree, or, in other words, in wood that has matured, it will not generate in wood after the vital energy of the tree has been destroyed. Hence the production of sap is due to vital energy. It may be added that sap is present in all vegetation, and one of the insoluble questions of science is how certain trees, such as the maples, certain roots, such as beets, and certain grasses, such as sugar cane, secrete sap that is rich in saccharine matter, while others secrete it charged with other qualities. These things show how intensely mysterious and varied are the manifestations of what we have called the vital force of vegetable life. It has played an exceedingly important part in the development of the earth as it exists today. We need only refer to the coal fields, which contain the stored-up energy which it gathered from the Sun's rays when the world was young.

A Century of Fiction

VI.

(N. de Bertrand Lugrin)

Victor Hugo

Successful alike as dramatist, novelist and poet, Victor Hugo represents the greatest literary genius of the last century in France. His marvelous versatility is an outcome, to a great extent, of his own personal experiences, for he led a chequered and romantic career. Failure never daunted him; he rose supreme above all obstacles. Success could have no ill effects upon him; his genius was too pure and spontaneous a thing to be tainted by too great praise or over-increasing popularity. His name is renowned in every country, his works are universally read, and the benefit that he has conferred upon the world of letters is very great.

He was born during that unsettled time just following the French Revolution in Besancon, France. His father served under Joseph Bonaparte, and his intrepid mother, refusing to be separated from her husband, followed him with their children on all his journeyings. When the Bonapartist downfall was accomplished, the Hugo family settled in Paris, and little Victor attended a private school there. We

first hear of him attracting the attention of Chateaubriand, the brilliant litterateur and member of the reactionary party, who conferred a prize upon the lad for a poem of 320 verses which he wrote in competition with many other pupils. The first professional work was undertaken by Hugo when he was eighteen years of age. He and his brother tried jointly to edit a paper which proved in no sense a success.

Hugo fell in love and married very young, assuming domestic responsibilities before he was twenty-one, and though Louis XVIII, recognizing his talents and thinking to gain his aid for the Bourbon cause, pensioned him, yet the young man could earn but a precarious living, for his first literary efforts won him little or no success. "Cromwell" and "Amy Robsart," dramas of the Romanticist school, failed to please, and though a third play, "Marion de Lorme" was praised by Dumas, Balzac and Alfred de Musset, its presentation was forbidden by the censor. In 1830 he produced "Hernani," which was his first real success and a success that was very great.

Six years later Hugo was defeated in the election for members of the French Academy, and becoming a candidate in 1839-1840 he again failed to win the coveted seat. Nothing daunted he came to the fore the following year and his courage and determination were rewarded. His powerful influence was recognized by the Royalist party and he was created a peer of France, nevertheless in 1848 he supported the republic and even went so far in his paper to advocate his own cause for the presidency in opposition to Louis Napoleon. During the exciting times which followed when Louis Napoleon had been elected president, Hugo was compelled to leave Paris and conceal himself. A reward of \$5,000 was offered for his arrest and he fled to Brussels, and later to the latter place he wrote a very bitter satire on the president of France which he entitled Louis le petit. His most famous work, "Les Miserables," appeared in 1862, and was followed by "Toilers of the Sea," and "The Laughing Man," both rather horrible stories, but works of genius nevertheless.

When the Empire fell the exiles were all recalled to Paris, and Hugo returned among them. He was elected to the Assembly, and a little later resigned because he said he had been interrupted in a speech. During the Communist uprising he was in Belgium, but returning to Paris he was elected after a previous defeat, to a life senatorship in 1876. His last great work was that terrible and powerful romance "93."

Hugo's life went out in a blaze of glory. He lived to be eighty-three, retaining his faculties to the last. Five years before his death an anniversary performance of "Hernani" was given, and all Paris tried to gain admission to the theatre. From that time he became the idol of the people, and all France united in conferring honors upon him. He died in 1885, and the funeral services held in the Pantheon were attended by thousands.

Les Miserables

Before this great novel appeared, it had been translated into nine different languages and was issued simultaneously in Paris, London, Berlin, New York, Brussels, Madrid, St. Petersburg and Turin. It has since been translated into twelve other languages. Les Miserables is such a voluminous novel that it takes weeks in its reading, but it is so fascinating in its themes, so powerful in its portrayal of all the human emotions that it will always remain one of the most intensely interesting works of fiction.

Jean Valjean is its hero, a type of the humble farming class, who has been condemned to the galleys for stealing a loaf of bread for some starving children. He tries to escape and his sentence is lengthened from five years to nineteen. His long imprisonment has a very deterring effect upon his character, and when at length a kindly bishop befriends him upon his release from prison, he rewards his benefactor by stealing his silver. He is caught and brought back, and the bishop, who is a saint of goodness tells the police that he had given the silver to Valjean, and that the man has committed no fault. This act of the man changes Valjean's heart completely, nature becomes softened, the eye of his is opened to the beautiful of truth and the rest of his life is spent in imitating the bishop's example and helping his

In time he rises to positions of dignity. His first act of charity is Fantine, a grisette, who has been abandoned by her lover. He returns to the galleys through no fault of his own, but in order to save another man, and escaping, adopts little Cosette, Fantine's child, who since her mother's death has lived a miserable life amid sordid, wicked people. He brings her up tenderly and she repays his goodness with all her love and confidence. When she grows to beautiful womanhood she meets and falls in love with Marius, a worthy young man who loves her in return. Valjean arranges the marriage and settles for Cosette's future, then gives up all claim to his adopted daughter at Marius' demand, and promises never to see her again.

But such a sacrifice breaks his heart, and at the last, Cosette learning the truth for the first time, persuades Marius that her foster-parent is deserving only of love and praise and the two seek the old man out and he dies in Cosette's arms.

The greatest chapter in the book is the one which is descriptive of the Battle of Waterloo.