

is capable of anything so cold-blooded, would show him that it is the product of human effort, which varies vastly in its productiveness according to individual capacity and energy, and is stimulated by desires of profit and advancement which, if he were allowed to roll humanity flat, would stimulate no more. He would then see what was the value of that right to a fair share of the good things of the world with which he imagines all men to be born. The second generation would inherit an equality and fraternity of destitution. The reveries of Mr. Elisée Reclus do not materially differ from those of Rousseau, nor does he fail, amidst his yearnings for universal brotherhood, to show his affinity to the immediate disciples of that master. He is mealy-mouthed and wraps up his sinister meaning in highly philanthropic language, but he means to open the reign of fraternity with the guillotine.

It is perhaps an amiable and salutary, at all events it is a singular feature of conspiracy in the present age, that conspirators instead of holding dark meetings in caves and vaults, now take counsel with each other before an edified public in the leading magazines. While M. Elysée Reclus ingenuously propounds his plan for an anarchy, to be opened by a reign of terror, Mr. Head Centre Stephens, between the same covers, takes the world into his confidence on the policy and prospects of Fenianism in Ireland. Vanity is not the most malignant of vices, and with regard to this Irish question especially, it has done the community against which plots are being hatched no small service by loosening the tongues of the plotters. What the Head Centre himself wants he has not made very clear to us: apparently he wants some less Parliamentary and more military course of action. But there can be no doubt whatever as to his feelings toward Mr. Parnell, who by his dictatorship, and by his monopoly both of the glory and the gains of agitation, has evidently begun to give umbrage to his rivals in that line. Such has been for the last half century, in fact ever since Catholic Emancipation, the history of the political movement in Ireland. There has been a constant succession of adventurers, whose objects were usually selfish, and who have generally ended by selling the cause, or by pulling each other down. Mr. Stephens paints with a free hand the portraits of some of his predecessors in this line of ambition, and he may be well assured that the gallery is not yet closed. Agrarian suffering in Ireland unhappily is real, though, its main causes being overpopulation and thriftlessness, it cannot be relieved by public robbery, as the practical result of the confiscations already begins to prove. But the political grievances are unreal. Since Disestablishment, at all events, Ireland has had politically no serious ground for complaint. She has had more than her share of members in Parliament, and if her delegation, instead of looking after her legislative interests, has chosen to spend its time in brawling or, as Mr. Stephens alleges, in place-hunting, that is no fault of her partners in the union, who have never refused to consider any measure which the Irish members have, with anything like unanimity, proposed. There were defects in local institutions, but these, together with the parallel defects in the local institutions of Great Britain, Parliament was not only willing, but was actually preparing to cure. The political agitation, therefore, has always been hollow; it has derived force and substance only from its alliance with agrarianism; and the characters which it has produced have been accordingly poor and weak. Some of them have been enthusiasts: but the best of these have ultimately abandoned the cause, and taken to better ways of improving the lot of the Irish people; others have been mere sharpers. Not a single agitator has ever made two blades of grass grow where one had grown before, while as a body they have not only diverted the minds of the people from productive industry to political mendicancy, which is now becoming an ingrained habit, but by keeping the country in a constant turmoil, and rendering all investment insecure, have prevented the development of such resources as Ireland possessed. Mr. Stephens' testimony is strong as to the probable effect of the extension of the Irish franchise, which he says will put political power into the hands of a far more revolutionary class. He may be suspected of a lurking inclination, by creating alarm, to spoil the game of Mr. Parnell; but his forecast is, to say the least, as trustworthy as that of statesmen who have abandoned their judgments to the control either of a theoretic philanthropy or of the Irish Vote.

THE usual libations of obituary eulogy are being poured upon the grave of Charles Reade. He leaves a gap in the circle of great novelists which there seems to be nobody to fill. In fact there are decided symptoms of decadence in fiction, and the fund of plots and characters which the human mind is capable of inventing, appears to be approaching exhaustion, as well it may, considering that novels have been appearing in England at the rate of two in every three days. Reade's merits were

undeniable: they culminated in "Christie Johnstone": his plots were interesting, and some of them bore the test of dramatization; his characters, if not very deep, were clearly outlined; his language was eminently strong, fresh and vivid. His morality, as a rule, was pure, though in "A Terrible Temptation" it was, to use Mr. Compton Reade's phrase, "lubricious." It always seemed unaccountable that a generally clean man should have written that dirty book. It appears that Reade prided himself upon being a gentleman; but when stung by the criticism which he sometimes richly deserved, he gave public vent to his rage in language such as never came from a gentleman's lips or pen. This want of dignity had its root in the almost insane self-love which led him to introduce into one of his novels an elaborate, and it is needless to say, absurdly flattering portrait of himself. This is, at all events, a better excuse than that tendered by some of his friends, who declare that he did not lose his temper and that his pretended fits of rage were advertisements. But his main offence against art and against society was pamphleteering under the guise of fiction. His accounts both of the lunatic asylums and of the model prisons, though they might have some slight foundation in isolated cases of abuse, were, as general pictures of the institutions, totally and criminally false; and the attack on asylums could not fail to do mischief by setting families against the only remedy which affords any hope for the insane. To use fiction as an engine of controversy is to usurp an unlimited license of coining facts in support of your own case; and when the writer's object is to create a prejudice against any man or body of men the practice becomes at once a most culpable and a most dangerous form of slander. Denial is hardly possible, however innocent the victims of the attack may be. Even "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is not unobnoxious to criticism on this ground, and if it misrepresented the South, the responsibility of its author is heavy, for it did not a little to kindle on both sides the passions which led to civil war.

THE journals are full of F. D. Maurice, whose life has been published by his son. He was one of the intellectual circle of J. S. Mill, whose estimate of him in his own autobiography is perhaps as just as any that has been formed, though the portrait was that of a Christian leader drawn by one who was not a Christian. "I have always thought," says Mill, "that there was more intellectual power wasted in Maurice than in any other of my contemporaries. Few of them certainly have had so much to waste. Great powers of generalization, rare ingenuity and subtlety, and a wide perception of important and unobvious truths, served him, not for putting something better into the place of the worthless heap of received opinions on the subject of thought, but for proving to his own mind that the Church of England had known everything from the first, and that all the truths, on the ground of which the Church and orthodoxy had been attacked (many of which he saw as clearly as anyone), are not only consistent with the Thirty-Nine Articles, but are better understood and expressed in those articles than by anyone who rejects them. I have never been able to find out any other explanation of this than by attributing it to that timidity of conscience, combined with original sensitiveness of temperament, which has so often driven highly gifted men into Romanism, from the need of a firmer support than they can find in the independent conclusions of their own judgment. Any more vulgar kind of timidity no one who knew Maurice would ever think of imputing to him, even if he had not given public proof of his freedom from it by his ultimate collision with some of the opinions commonly regarded as orthodox, and by his noble origination of the Christian socialist movement." Mill rates Maurice's intellectual power very high, placing him even above Coleridge, whose disciple, however, in the fullest sense of the term, he unquestionably was, and whom, to ordinary minds, he at least rivalled in obscurity. It is easier to acknowledge in his writings the constant presence of an intensely religious spirit and of broad religious sympathies than to understand his theological system, or even positively to assure ourselves that he had one, while his modes of reconciling his liberalism with the formularies of the Church, are sometimes, and notably in the case of the Athanasian creed, so far-fetched and super-subtle as to shake our confidence in his good sense. To the formularies of the Church, however, he steadfastly adhered, and he even faithfully practised her asceticism, fasting rigorously on the appointed days. Yet the High Church Warden of Keble College who, in a notice of the Life, is anxious to add this eminent figure to the company of the faithful, evidently feels that he has a ticklish task in hand. On the question of Eternal Punishment Maurice came into direct collision with Orthodoxy, and was expelled from his Professorship in an Anglican College. Perhaps he gave even greater offence to Anglicans by his tilt against their renowned apologist Mansel, with whom he was not well qualified to cross swords as a logician, but upon whose theory he