

chiaro-oscuro of luxurious boudoirs into the open, free, cold and cutting air of Iceland, and some other hitherto ignored spots on the globe. He has shown us that human nature is incorrigibly the same everywhere, but he does not make us loathe human kind and convince us that life is not worth living, though he surely has given us some harrowing pictures to look upon. He has shown us as he pleads in that recent article of his, that the "true consort of imagination is enthusiasm, the man of imagination has never lived who was not also an enthusiast, and that enthusiasm is the great force that has ever done any good in the world, since the world began, that it is the salt of the earth, the salt without which the earth would rot, that enthusiasm living in the hearts of great men has again and again set the world aflame and purified as well as ennobled every nature it has touched, save only the natures that were already touched with fanaticism." Such enthusiasm cannot live at peace with realism, hence, the effort of the myriads of victims of realism to appear cynical. Men and women, girls and boys have been studying cynicism, with what ghastly results we know too well, but the redeeming portion is strong and many who are sick unto despair, must be glad to hear of a change. Yes, the "old order changeth" but for one older still, and the outlook is hopeful, for men and women and their children will go on reading novels, and the safe novel, the exhilarating, cheering though truthful, novel is being written, the novel which will convince us that heroism exists outside of a duelling enclosure, that "all the human heart can do is to be heroic" that this heroism is natural though an artist gives it that peculiar aloofness which constitutes Romanticism. Such novels as will show us that indeed "poor and petty are the passions of men, and God's hand is over all,"* novels that show that this world is a queer lottery but on honest principles, that show how "the Almighty tears our little passions, and works his own end in spite of our calculations." The romantic novel, in the beautiful sense of the word romance, is a power the true teacher and preacher will not ignore. "The innings of realism" says the *Contemporary Review*, "is over, it has scored badly or not at all and is

going out disgraced." Who has the 'vital spark' in him at all aglow, but will utter a devout *Deo gratias* to the above assertion? Though the danger of romanticism is possible we must hail the return to idealism in literature as one of the many healthy signs of the times, and join fearlessly in the cry for Romance *versus* Realism. The world has always "wanted to be lifted up, inspired, thrilled, to be shown what brave things human nature is capable of at its best." This can be done by the Romantics working in concert with the anointed preachers and teachers; it could never be done by the Realists and their progeny, the Cynics. As Caine says: "the Idealist must be a believer in God, a believer in man, a believer in the divine justice whereon this world is founded," and in the mercy, let us add, wherewith it is governed. Thinking in this manner, my reader will pardon me if I say a few words anent a recent work, the writer of which seems to have grasped the necessity of a change in modern literature. Is not William O'Brien's book another and a beautiful proof that enthusiasm, eager, sublimely mad enthusiasm is a power to be spoken of reverentially? Could an Irishman be other than an idealist? Has not Ireland been the home and asylum of Romance, since its green shores first echoed the songs of its wandering bards? And have we not grown into the habit of believing that there was no practical hope for Ireland, just because of its enthusiasm? Let political economists and physical analysts settle this. Certain it is that if the Irish novel is to gain a recognition, it will be because of its romanticism, not of its matter of fact cup-and-saucer realism. Anthony Trollope speaks emphatically of the absurdity of writing an Irish novel; it wouldn't sell, or as an American school-boy would say, it would be a "great sell," and why? It is an undeniable fact that Irish literature is not so rich in the line of novels as in any other line. Is it because the Irish act out their novels too well to be patient to read them, or is it because they are too eloquent, too well fitted to scale the heights of oratory and song? What is the reason that we must reluctantly say Trollope was not altogether wrong? We won't wait for the answer to this problem to assert that William O'Brien has given the lie to the Trollopian dogma. From a pecuniary point of view,

*Caine's "The Bondman."