

Russia's gagged press and stifled opinion, the world will stand aghast at the most terrible calamity of modern times. In no other country, with the possible exception of Turkey, would such sufferings be endured with the stoicism displayed by the Russian peasant in this sore trial. No murmurings, no piteous appeals for help are voiced, or if voiced, are not audible to the outside world. Mr. J. W. Wanless, M.C.R. agent in this village, who spent two years in Northern Russia and Kamschatka, relates that when his food is all consumed the Russian peasant betakes himself to bed at once to conserve his vitality. But though no cry escapes from these poor dumb creatures, schooled by centuries of stern training to philosophical calm, their sufferings through hunger's pangs are of necessity intense. Countess Tolstoi and her erratic husband, who are labouring nobly amongst their starving countrymen, state that every six dollars contributed now will save a peasant's life. Surely then, Canada will not stand idly by, but will contribute to rescue these starving unfortunates. Ontario, prosperous and comparatively wealthy, should take the lead in this worthy scheme, and an energetic committee of Toronto's business men should be formed at once to solicit subscriptions throughout the Province—men whose names would be a guarantee that the funds would reach Russia's starving poor. Let Grit and Tory call a truce for a moment—let the dense smoke lift from the political battlefield and disclose Canadians in common engaged in alleviating the poor famine-stricken peasants of the banks of the Volga.

C. M. SINCLAIR.

Courtright, Ont.

DESERT PLANTS.

IT is a marked characteristic of the cactus tribe to be very tenacious of life, and when hacked to pieces to spring afresh in full vigour from every scrap or fragment. True vegetable hydras, when you cut down one, ten spring in its place; every separate morsel of the thick and succulent stem has the power of growing anew into a separate cactus. Surprising as this peculiarity seems at first sight, it is only a special desert modification of a faculty possessed in a less degree by almost all plants and by many animals. If you cut off the end of a rose branch and stick it in the ground under suitable conditions, it grows into a rose tree. If you take cuttings of scarlet geraniums or common verbenas, and pot them in moist soil, they bud out apace into new plants like their parents. Certain special types can even be propagated from fragments of the leaf; for example, there is a particularly vivacious begonia off which you may snap a corner of one blade, and hang it up by a string from a peg or the ceiling, when, hi presto! little begonia plants begin to bud out incontinently on every side from its edges. A certain German professor went even further than that; he chopped up a liverwort very fine, into vegetable mincemeat, which he then spread thin over a sauciful of moist sand, and lo! in a few days the whole surface of the mess was covered with a perfect forest of sprouting little liverworts. Roughly speaking, one may say that every fragment of every organism has in it the power to rebuild in its entirety another organism like the one of which it once formed a component element.

Similarly with animals. Cut off a lizard's tail, and straightway a new tail grows in its place with surprising promptitude. Cut off a lobster's claw, and in a very few weeks that lobster is walking about airily on his native rocks, with two claws as usual. True, in these cases the tail and the claw don't bud out in turn into a new lizard or a new lobster. But that is a penalty the higher organisms have to pay for their extreme complexity. They have lost that plasticity, that freedom of growth, which characterizes the simpler and more primitive forms of life; in their case the power of producing fresh organisms entire from a single fragment, once diffused equally over the whole body, is now confined to certain specialized cells which, in their developed form, we know as seeds or eggs. Yet, even among animals, at a low stage of development, this original power of reproducing the whole from a single part remains inherent in the organism, for you may chop up a fresh-water hydra into a hundred little bits, and every bit will be capable of growing afresh into a complete hydra.

Now, desert plants would naturally retain this primitive tendency in a very high degree; for they are specially organized to resist drought—being the survivors of generations of drought-proof ancestors—and, like the camel, they have often to struggle on through long periods of time without a drop of water. Exactly the same thing happens at home to many of our pretty little European stone-crops. I have a rockery near my house overgrown with the little white sedum of our gardens. The birds often peck off a tiny leaf or branch; it drops on the dry soil, and remains there for days without giving a sign of life. But its thick epidermis effectually saves it from withering; and, as soon as rain falls, wee white rootlets sprout out from the under side of the fragment as it lies, and it grows before long into a fresh small sedum plant. Thus, what seem like destructive agencies themselves, are turned in the end, by mere tenacity of life, into a secondary means of propagation.

That is why the prickly pear is so common in all countries where the climate suits it, and where it has once managed to gain a foothold. The more you cut it down, the thicker it springs; each murdered bit becomes the parent, in due time, of a numerous offspring. Man, how-

ever, with his usual ingenuity, has managed to best the plant on this, its own, ground, and turn it into a useful fodder for his beasts of burden. The prickly pear is planted abundantly on bare rocks in Algeria, where nothing else would grow, and is cut down when adult, divested of its thorns by a rough process of hacking, and used as food for camels and cattle. It thus provides fresh, moist fodder in the African summer, when the grass is dried up and all other pasture crops have failed entirely.

The flowers of the prickly pear, as of many other cactuses, grow apparently on the edge of the leaves, which alone might give the observant mind a hint as to the true nature of those thick and flattened expansions. For when ever what look like leaves bear flowers or fruit on their edge or midrib, as in the familiar instance of butcher's broom, you may be sure at a glance they are really branches in disguise masquerading as foliage. The blossoms in the prickly pear are large, handsome and yellow; at least, they would be handsome if one could ever see them, but they are generally covered so thick in dust that it's difficult properly to appreciate their beauty. They have a great many petals in numerous rows, and a great many stamens in a rosette in the centre; and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, as lawyers put it, they are fertilized for the most part by tropical butterflies; but on this point, having observed them but little in their native habitats, I speak under correction.—*Grant Allen, in Longman's Magazine.*

A DIRGE.

PLACE ye the sunflower beside the cypress,
A touch of passion, a touch of pain—
Weave ye the death garland pure and tender
That dream of love was never in vain!

'Twas but a dream, but 'twas sweet while it lasted;
Sweet with the fragrance of love and death—
Tenderly cherish those locks ambrosial,
And feel in thy dreams the perfumed breath!

Spirits of dreamland who wander around her,
Ye come like angels of death to me—
There's a gleam of sunlight even in shadow,
My soul goes out in the darkness to thee.

Thou hast left me sweet angel, gone for ever,
The brightness, the sorrow has passed away,
Thy love like the foam on the seashore trembling
Gleamed for a moment and died away.

ENFANT PERDU.

SIDGWICK'S ELEMENTS OF POLITICS.*

PROFESSOR SIDGWICK here puts the top stone to an edifice which he has been raising for a good many years. Following his master, "the master of those who know," Aristotle, he divides the political science into Ethics, Economics and Politics, although the second division does not mean quite the same thing as it did with the Athenian philosopher. It must be about fifteen years ago that he produced his very remarkable book on "Methods of Ethics"; and although it was far from conclusive—indeed the author himself has partly changed his point of view since its first publication—it is a book which the serious student of Ethics will not neglect. Not long ago he gave us the second instalment in his "Principles of Political Economy," and now we have in our hands his "Elements of Politics."

It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Sidgwick is as free from prejudice as any writer can be expected to be. Of course he has his own modes of thought which we recognize in his last as in his previous productions; and he has his own style, we almost regret to add, although we are constrained to confess that it has improved. The first book on Ethics was, beyond all question, a heavy and a hard book to read; and, unless it is that we have got accustomed to his manner, we feel that the new book is easier. In regard to the writer's point of view, we are thankful to say that it is not revolutionary, nor is it obstinately conservative. Professor Sidgwick is not yet converted to Socialism. He stands upon the old ways of Individualism, but one can see that the new views have exerted some influence upon him.

The individualism for which he contends, as he points out, is not that individualism which takes freedom, the absence of physical and moral coercion, as the sole end of governmental interference; but the prevention of mutual harm and annoyance and interference with each one's efforts to procure the means of happiness. From this starting point he proceeds to discuss Property in Chap. V.—not a very interesting or animating section; next Contract, which is admirably done; and then Inheritance and Bequest which is, if possible, still better. Under this head we have some excellent remarks on the limitations of bequests, with some useful cautions respecting the teaching of Bentham and Mill. The next two chapters are on "Remedies for Wrongs," "Prevention of Mischief," and "Paternal Influence."

In Chapter X., on "Socialistic Interference," he discusses with care and sobriety some of the questions which

* "The Elements of Politics." By Henry Sidgwick. Price \$4.00. New York: Macmillan; Toronto: Williamson. 1892.

threaten to become burning in our own day. He shows clearly that mere Individualism is hardly sufficient in any department of life, and that the State has to care for the interests of the community by many kinds of interference with private liberty. The most individualistic of modern states, he observes, show some amount of Socialism; for example, in the limitation of copyright and of contract by bankruptcy. But he does not speak with entire certainty on the Socialism, in the narrower sense of the word, which aims at a greater equality in the distribution of wealth. On the one hand, he points out that public ownership and governmental management of the instruments of production would tend to produce this equality; but would tend to arrest industrial progress and diminish the product to be distributed. Still it is desirable to reduce these inequalities, and the effort may be defended on individualistic grounds. In his remarks on provision for the relief of the poor, whilst he fully admits its necessity, he points to the difficulty of the problem. The other chapters in the first Part are given to the "Maintenance of Government by Taxation, etc.," "Governmental Encroachments and Compensation," "Law and Morality," "Principles of International Morality," "The Regulation of War," etc.

The second Part of the book (Chapters XIX. to XXXI.) deals mainly with the "Structure of Government," taking up the Legislature, the Executive, the "Relation of Legislature to Executive," "Two Chambers and their Functions." In this last chapter he remarks that a second chamber, although not necessary, is useful in checking hasty legislation, and supplementing the deficiencies of the primary representative assembly. If, however, an Upper Chamber is to have co-ordinate power with the House of Representatives, it ought to be elected, directly or indirectly, by the citizens at large.

Important chapters are those on the "Control of the People over Government," "Parties and Party Government," under which he points out clearly and calmly the advantages and disadvantages of party government. On the one hand it tends to diminish the instability that attaches to Parliamentary Government, and to render the criticism of governmental measures more orderly and circumspect; but it tends to make party-spirit more comprehensive and absorbing, party-criticism more systematically factious, and the utterance of ordinary politicians more habitually disingenuous, and has various other inconveniences. These are severe criticisms, but they are just. When he comes to speak of remedies he sees clearly the difficulty of the subject.

In his "Classification of Governments," the author has some excellent remarks on a true Democracy which, he says, is quite compatible with a full admission of the need of specially qualified persons for the greater part of the work of Government. In fact, he adds, the representative system combines the principle of aristocracy with that of democracy, and also tends to have a useful element of oligarchy, if the representatives are unpaid.

It must be apparent that the account which we have given of this important work, is necessarily incomplete. To particular subjects here treated we shall probably have to return again. In the meantime we can earnestly recommend the volume to the serious study of all who profess to take any deep or comprehensive view of the great subject to which it is devoted.

ART NOTES.

ARTISTS and those who like really superior oil paintings should attend the private sale of the paintings of the late lamented and highly-gifted G. T. Berthon, Esq., many of whose works are so familiar to visitors at Osgoode Hall. The sale will take place at 533 Sherbourne Street, on and after the 30th instant. It may be added that duplicates of many of the Osgoode Hall portraits and those of other well-known Torontonians will be offered for sale. The famous portrait of the first Napoleon, who sat for the picture, is included in this collection. This portrait should be added to the national collection of France, both from its excellence and historic interest, and it should command a very large price.

THE Chantrey Bequest has bought sixty-one pictures for the National Gallery costing \$196,225. Brock's "A Moment of Peril," and Hubert Herkomer's "Chapel of the Charterhouse," cost \$11,000 each; and "The Port of London," by Vicat Cole, "Athlete Struggling with a Python," by Sir Frederick Leighton, and "Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon," by Orchardson, each \$10,000.

DR. CHARLES WALDSTEIN, Director, writes (Feb. 7) that the American School of Classical Studies at Athens is "swimming on famously this year." "We have already been digging at Sikyon and Eretria; I begin at the temple of Hera, at Argos, next week; and to-day I got from the Government a concession to dig for seven years at Sparta, Amyklæ and Laconia. This is a great triumph. The conditions are more favourable than the French treaty for Delphi. I begin at Sparta some time in March." A despatch to the American papers, dated "Paris, Feb. 28," reports that "Dr. Waldstein, of the American Archaeological School, has discovered at Argos the foundations of the Temple of Hera, which was destroyed by fire in 429 B.C.; also the remains of a second temple, containing vases, bronzes and fragments of sculptures, including a beautiful head of Hera." There are some 180 workmen employed on the excavations.