



FLOWER OF THE GRASS

I

THE literature of religion, as of ancient and modern travel, has given us many pictures of Eastern shepherd life, centred round the tending and guarding of its flocks: even the children are herding, the maids milking, the men shearing, guiding the flock, seeking the lost afield. We see the group of tents; the men mounted even for the shortest journey; the patriarch as of old sitting at his tent door; the women child-tending, weaving within.

We see how as the grass conditions the sheep, and the sheep the shepherd, so the gregarious sheep involve a gregarious people; hence it is that we are in presence of a large communitary family, not an individualistic one. As the larger the flocks and herds, the larger the number of children they can maintain: so what better can we wish the patriarch than flocks and herds, than children as the sand of the sea, or as the stars for multitude? As they multiply, there grows up all the opulence of the pastoral East: maid-servants for the children and men-servants for the flock, horses and asses, tents and

carpets, changes of raiment, weapons and jewels, camels to carry the whole.

Hospitality we find as of old ; and increasingly we admire the native courtesy of these good folk, their loving-kindness to their beasts and to each other. For as Abbé Huc and other travellers tell us, these terrible Tartars are the very gentlest of men ; and well they may. Anthropologists are laying great stress (the latest book—Shaler's 'Domesticated Animals,'—more than ever) upon the importance for human progress, for moral evolution, upon the reaction which the domestication and care of animals have upon man himself. And if pictures of child and pet lamb, of good shepherd and lost sheep, have become hackneyed to us through weak iteration, we may renew this meaning ; the first any spring, from the actual scene itself ; the other from that Border gravestone over one of the many shepherds who have sunk and slept amid its winter hill-drifts—'The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.'

Realise then how gentleness is thus the unceasing education of infancy, kindness the unceasing occupation of age, and how this kindly life is the essential biography of vast populations throughout ages ; action forming habit, and habit character, and character life, for the race as for the individual. In sheep-keeping, economics and morals uniquely coincide ; and thus, even before entering upon the consideration of the human family at all, we begin to understand the historic place of these shepherds in the religionising and moralising of the world. For, 'He prayeth best who loveth best': the theologian who would understand, who would use the Lamb as a sacred symbol, should first feel (ay, and use as teacher) the thrill of its gentle influence as a living thing.

What is Western Europe but the rock peninsulas of Asia? What fundamentally are its central populations (theologians and all) but churlish farmers of the valleys, savage hunters of the mountain forests, fisher pirates of the fiords, who take life rather than tend it—to this day the armed sons of Cain? Out of this elemental natural history of the European races grow

up mighty developments of Western industry and science, and from the lives of these types, their struggles among each other and with the pastors, come history, economics, and politics, all far complexer than that of the shepherd; yet in the very nature of their morally inferior occupations lies the root explanation of why all great waves of moral or religious impulse have come from the pastoral East. We begin to understand the saying, 'ex Oriente lux.'

Yet the ethical dynamics of the pastoral life are only beginning. Here, quite literally, all men are brethren, and brethren who live their whole lives together; hence a solidarity of family of which we have no idea. They have no possibility of isolated career, rarely a chance of separate initiative; and if injustice tend to arise, if might, as everywhere, tend to be right, and elder oppress the younger, the old parents are there to redress the balance with their natural preponderance of affection for their own youngest, and for the grandchildren about their knees. The intense solidarity of family comes to a head in the Patriarch, that type of noblest maturity for the human species. Thanks to the healthy life of saddle and tent, he longest of all men prolongs his prime, has children even in old age, is leader to the last. He is at once parent and chief shepherd, leader and general, lawgiver and judge; yet also daily guide, philosopher, and friend. He is the repository of passive experience—that is, of science; of active experience, meditative and practical—that is, of wisdom: he is at once philosopher and thinker, theologian and priest. So we have in one man a combination of the qualities which are specialised in many in our more complex societies of less complex men; but here these are normally united, universally and perpetually recurrent, not only of old in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but throughout the nomadic hordes to-day. In the patriarch's hands is the ultimate control of all the wealth and property of the community; he is the temporal as well as the spiritual power, his blessing carries with it every gift; and if he say, 'Depart, ye cursed,' what is to become of the solitary exile in the desert?

Our patriarch epitomises experience, and this in no small measure. Ulysses-like, he is at once geographer and navigator. He knows the firmament, and where the steppe is so featureless, and the water a changing or drying shallow if not even a mirage, there is no sure and definite guide but the stars. He knows too the seasons, the wind, and the rain: upon his knowledge, his skilled navigation, the whole maintenance of the tribe depends, for he must reach and leave each pasture at the right season. He must adjust his journey to many conditions, notably day by day to the indispensable wells. He is an experienced sheep-farmer; learned in pedigrees, skilled in breeding varieties, it would seem even in Jacob's day, to a degree from which our recent Western progress has still much to learn. (Let the town reader, who thinks all sheep alike, listen for a moment to the market-talk — 'I'll dae my best to judge Cheviots, but I ken naething ava' about Soothdoons.') Again, it is he who knows the other tribes, the clanships, the treaties and boundaries so necessary to avoid rendering desperate the struggle for existence. In every way, then, he is experience personified. The respect of his authority is thus no mere sentimental one, no mere admiration of the Old Man Eloquent; it is the child-faith in parent and teacher, multiplied by the necessary and implicit confidence of sailor in captain, of soldier in general.

With his old wife, he is the repository of the traditions of the family, of which he may be the actual ancestor; or if not the actual grandparent, the oldest uncle; and even if not by blood, then by courtesy even from the stranger, by affection at home. Note the Russian greeting of the village children to the stranger as 'Uncle,' or how President Krüger to his own people is 'Oom Paul.' That the family affection for their patriarch is more than reciprocated by him, the story of Jacob (or, for that matter, of most old grandparents alive) may equally show.

The patriarch has not only his own commanding presence, but also the cumulative majesty of dead dynasties of patriarchs,

who rise as they recede to sublimer and diviner height. Little wonder, then, that the pastors should have made their God in such an image: what greater, what better, if we are to use anthropomorphic terms at all, can they or we conceive than this loving All-Father, or how more glorify his name than as 'God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.'

Again, this whole social and economic life organises selective purity of race, in sheep and horse and man. The experience of ages has given clear perception and record of the equal importance and equal certainty of good breeding in beast and man alike; conviction too that evil breed is avenged unto the third and fourth generation, yet that the healing force of Nature is greater, showing mercy to thousands, as they again conform to the law of life.

We see then how the pedigrees and genealogies of pastoral pride are normal to the social type. But we seldom realise how logically and inevitably there must tend to arise a prevision of improving type; and projecting this ideal forward into the tribe, the advent of the Ideal Himself becomes not merely a matter of vague hope or groundless faith, but a legitimate and even a necessary Racial Ideal. Here then is another of the many ways in which modern science is not come to destroy, but to fulfil;—to destroy, it may be, here and there for the slaves of the letter, but to fulfil in spirit; reinvestigating origins, yet restating ideals. Thus each young mother may again know something of her old-world sister's Messianic Hope.

Every Western traveller tells us of the beauty of day, of the sublimity of night, the brilliance of moon and stars in that high, clear, dry, serene atmosphere; and thus arises not only the ancient astronomy, but those great tides of cosmic emotion yet of noble confidence and serenity, which rise in Genesis, flow through the Psalms, and culminate in the book of Job.

Yet feeling is far from wholly optimistic, for there is complete impossibility of defence against nature. In a storm at sea we may still be masters of helm and sail, but on land only passive

shelter will avail us from wind, or sand, or sun. We can but sit within the tent, seek shade from the short-lived gourd, or long for the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The drought may sweep away the flock as it ruins the Australian squatter; strange pestilence may walk in darkness or smite like the fire of God. The wind too may smite the house and it fall; one knows not what cloud of horsemen a day may bring forth; flocks and herds, sons and daughters, may thus alike be reft, and Job thus fall from riches to utmost poverty in a single day.

Yet after a brief crisis of overmastering emotion, when the old man cries aloud, and rends his garments, in an explosion of agony which for the moment rises to mania, then sinks to melancholia which sits refusing to be comforted, there soon returns that persistent faith in the universal Order which no mere individual calamities can shock; thus we have the resignation, the settled patience of Job. Meanwhile the scattered sheep are again gathering, they multiply into a flock; and the patriarch lives, even to have new sons and daughters to comfort his old age.

Long then before the modern geologist, the patriarch had learned that there is catastrophe as well as uniformity in the order of Nature. Storms will beat, and houses fall, and enemies conquer as of yore; and thus arises along with the faith in the orderly and beneficent course of things, that gloomy fatalism which so constantly paralyses Eastern peoples. Wherever Nature controls man, he is ultimately pessimist. Only in the measure of victory over the Titanic nature-forces does he grow gay. This victory is the essential matter; it is not a mere question of sky, as French critics often tell us. The Celt of the Western Isles lives in the northern paradise of beauty, and is steeped in it, yet 'has the gloom'; for he has no mastery over nature. Whereas, though the North Sea and its canal banks are but grey beside the ocean fiords and hills, the Dutchman sits jolly in Rotterdam, careless of wind and wet; because his broad craft will ride the storm, his pile-built house

stand sure amid the treacherous mud, and his mighty dykes ever thrust back and back the encroaching sea. Even the scholar there is gay; the wise Erasmus praises folly.

The shepherd's calling gives a patient certainty of increase. One cannot make haste to be rich, yet if Nature have her way one will be rich in time. The life is easy; from every other ordinary economic standpoint is one which seems but indolence. Animals do all the heavier work: and thus grows up a disdain of labour; a disdain too of the labouring man, who seems himself but a beast of burden; whose toil dulls the active life of the intellect, whose weariness quenches the passive meditative life of the spirit; who thus becomes 'as the beasts that perish.' Whereas the dignity of the Arab, the pride of pastoral races, rises in the saddle, reaches to the stars.

II

The pasture eaten bare, for the time being the land is waste, incapable of use till fresh grass be grown. It cannot be retained or guarded from other occupation; the next comers are free to have their turn; hence the idea of individual property in land is simply inconceivable. When attacked or molested, the policy is if possible to strike tents and move on, and this not from cowardice but common-sense. For here we have no continuing city; a few more days' grazing is not worth risking the whole flock for. Thus the pastor has ever receded before the farmer, Celt before Saxon, Boer before Englishman. But while he has no notion of permanent property for himself, the pastor can similarly have no notion or capacity of recognising any permanent occupation other than as encroachment; and hence arises the perpetual war between the incompatible land systems of shepherd and farmer. Hence then that ineradicable feeling of Highland peasant and Irish crofter of the superiority of 'right' over 'ownership' in pasture, for him mere might, let Duke of Argyll or Saxon parliament say what

they may. For where immemorial tradition is the title, what can there be but utter disdain of new-made parchments fetched from town? What are your law papers? what to us can they ever be—but the intrusive rubbish of a wholly alien social formation?—Dirt here upon the hill, however sacred at Westminster or Edinburgh?

Yet each of these social formations is inexorably driven and ground against the other by its internal pressure of population. 'The shepherds are needing a larger pasture, whatever.' 'Are they? The farmer needs a larger clearing too.' Hence the urge of pastoral conquest recurrent through the ages, from modern Pan Slavism back through the Pentateuch: hence the steadier expansion of Rome, whose conquering legion is the agricultural colony militant. Conversely, as these respectively lose their ground, we have for Rome the agony of the barbarian invasions; or here the Saxon crushing of the Celtic peoples. Taking the very widest view of Europe-Asia, the apparent permanence of China is associated with her ever-repeated inundations of pastoral immigrants—while the Fall of Rome is, for the geographer Richthofen, but a by-product of the building of the Chinese Wall, since this deflected upon Europe the irresistible waves of shepherd migration.

The natural increase of the sheep and of the family is long an advantage; yet since the pasture is constant there comes a definite limit to this. Now arises the phenomenon of swarming, which may be by the separation of patriarchs like Abraham and Lot; by the start of sons, like Jacob setting forth from Isaac; or by the start of sons-in-law with the wives and flocks for which they have served, like Jacob from Laban, for the pastoral apprentice also marries his master's daughter.

But for these new swarms there is no coming back to the old pastures. Here would be a material competition, and one which is impossible: for it would be ungrateful and impious in the young swarm, even were it strong enough, to attack the old. Hence it must look for new pastures—must look for a promised land. The Promised Land of the Jews is thus, like

one of their own patriarchs, or like the characteristic incidents of his life, something not solitary but representative and typical. Every migration is more or less to a promised land; and the migrating pastors have been the invaders and conquerors not only of Judæa but of half the world. The migration has not only the impulse and counsel of the aged patriarch but the enthusiasm and energy and novelty of youth and hope. The leader here is old enough to command and lead, but young enough to explore, to venture, and to fight; hence the restless energy of the pastoral invasions. These communitary shepherds are not only a troop of light cavalry, a chivalry of the desert, but a religious order; little wonder that such literal brethren support each other and their leader ('Another for Hector!') to the very last. Hence it needed the religious orders, the Templars and Hospitallers, to hold head against the Saracens.

The characteristics of intertribal war are also worth attention. On the one hand we have light horsemanship and skirmishing which lies in wait to pick up stray sheep or pick off stray riders. Tribute from pastor to farmer, much less to cities, is impossible; for who could collect it? The Czar and the Emperor of China each claim vast tracts of Asiatic territory; but the colour of their maps expresses nothing that the populations recognise, since neither armies nor individuals can collect their taxes for them. At most the leading points can be held as the Russians do with the Turcomans by the tactics of pastoral victors; that is of severity almost to massacre, then clemency, with at most occasional tribute in kind. Of old it was rather for mountain-shepherd, whether of Caucasus or of the Highland line, to take black-mail from farmer and toll from merchant. For every reason, the war-stroke must be sudden and decisive, like that of Abraham upon his forayers, Dundee at Killiecrankie,—the same tactics everywhere.

Where war for economic reasons has become extreme, the alternatives are the sharpest; for the attack, victory or utter retreat; for the defence, if not victory then extinction, by ex-

termination or assimilation. When religious differences intensify the conflict, the alternative takes the form of 'Sword or Koran': and even this is gentle and merciful, compared with the dealings of Joshua or Gideon, Samuel or David. That the secularist should therefore scoff at the piety of the Psalmist or the gentleness of Samuel is therefore natural enough; European populations gave the Mongols their commoner name from Tartarus. Yet in all such cases such criticism is from without not within; we see that the lion in war is none the less the lamb in peace. Both states of life and mind are equally genuine; but the former is temporary and exceptional, the latter the normal and the permanent. Were this understood, say as regards the Turks, we should not be divided into Turcophobes and Turcophiles, each with a half truth; and with more social science among our peoples and their politicians, Armenian question, Eastern question, and many more might have had happier issues.

The prize of victory, too, is enormous; sudden wealth of flocks and herds instead of long waiting on increase, wealth of weapons and horses, choice of captive women—perhaps the intensest incentive to the pastoral aggressions. The women of one's own tribe are like sisters: in any case the best matches are got afield, like Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel. The unseen, too, is more beautiful than the seen; thus the Mohammedan paradise is but systematised and elaborated from the imagination of the boy.

In more types than the pastoral, women's eyes have been soon dried over slain brothers; and these women are less individualised than Western ones. To the male cynic, sitting in one tent seems a good deal like sitting in another; and it is better to be mistress than maid. Save in rare cases as where a mean and vain-glorious victor insults the slain patriarch, like the husband of Rosamund, vengeance is little to be feared. In the association of the lower individuality of Eastern women with polygamy, there is obviously a vicious circle, each alternately

cause and effect. Thus we begin to work at the side of deep inferiority of pastoral society to those of Western types.

Officers of experience tell us of their feeling of real admiration for the swift and skilful decampment of a travelling menagerie; for the discipline of these nomadic civilians can give a lesson to skilled soldiers, because they have to practise it every second morning. A point like this helps us not only to appreciate the patriarch as a general on the march, but to understand the terrific swiftness and impunity of the pastoral invasions in history. What made the Huns of old so terrible was that they were here to-day and away to-morrow, their encampments vanishing like clouds, which no European army could follow. It is largely the survivals of this easy mobility with associated discipline and simplicity of transport which makes it so difficult for civilised Europe to intervene in Armenia to-day. The same factor told in the lightness and frequent impunity of the Scottish raids into England; and here lay the conscious strength in invasion of Wallace, or Bruce, Douglas, or Bucchleuch.

To insist on these military details of migration is the way to realise their importance in history. This done we may rationalise the story of Attila, Ghenghiz Khan, Tamerlan, or Solyman, of course, recognising besides these purely militant types the more spiritual leadership of a Moses, a Mohammed, or a modern Mahdi.

But to understand the pastoral type in war, we have still to see the emergence of a new type beside the patriarch. While the steppe produces the instruments of peace, it is poor in the instruments of war, and hence the need of exchange, the dawn of commerce; probably beginning in the barter of carpets for weapons, wool for steel.

Here then arises the caravan, with its leader of a very different type from the old patriarch—a younger man, in whom the active not the passive life strongly preponderates, and who is primarily not a father, but a picked son, ready to be leader, merchant, disciplinarian, and general: and who may become

merchant-prince and diplomatist, it may be strategist and conqueror.

All this then must be taken into our study of migrations. We are more ready to understand how the inspired caravan-driver becomes Mohammed, how the ritual of his religion is but the discipline of the caravan slightly idealised, his paradise but the thinly spiritualised promises of the good time waiting at Damascus.

While the patriarchs have no coherence, and the flocks wander wide, the caravans have a definite route, year by year, age by age. Not only the historian, but the archæologist are proving to us the vast antiquity of the great trade routes, and it is hardly possible to guess how old the diffusion of Kuen-Lun jade or Baltic amber. Of late M. Champault has been revealing to us Odin; no longer a misty Scandinavian Jove, but a caravan-chief trading between Odensee or Upsala in the North, with towns of the Black Sea, of the Caucasus; his Ases Asiatic caravaniers; their centres, the glorious Asgard, which hence become the Northman's quest.

From the comparative absence of organisation we pass to a high development of it, as the patriarch passes into ruling caravan chief. The shepherd kings seem ancient and gone; but the caravan kings, their junior contemporaries, are still with us—railway kings we call them now. The promotion of Lord Elgin from North British Railway Board to Viceroyalty of India is in fact no exceptional matter, but an instance of one of the great processes of history.

A Highland laddie goes to Aberdeen, learns the ribbon trade, peddles such things in Canada, shrewdly buys a railway share or two, then more and more; sees first where the railway is needed and then how to make it, finally rules the Canadian Pacific Railway, leads it across the Continent. Its highest point is called after him, Mount Stephen (Odensee again); then he is called after it, as lord and legislator; now doubtless duly feared and worshipped throughout his countryside, like many a

smaller deity since, or like Odin of old. Returning now to M. Champault, he suggests a new factor in the Fall of Rome, which gets us over the great difficulty of seeing how mere hordes could make way against strategists like the Roman generals without leaders of somewhat similar calibre. He finds these requisite leaders through the cutting of caravan routes by the Roman expansion to the Rhine and beyond the Danube, which necessarily turned their merchant chiefs—their occupation gone—into generals of invasions: and who could stir and organise whole populations, the more easily since these aggressions were really in every way reprisals; here for appropriated pastures, as there for ruined caravans. We know that Eastern waves were pressing on them behind; but the empire would not have been overthrown by mere fugitive hordes, nor mere wandering nomad ones; and the requisite military leadership before the advent of the skipper and forester Norsemen, is what M. Champault's caravaniers supply. The student of Gibbon, the reader of the last book on the Egyptian Soudan, may thus profitably compare notes in fresh ways.

III

But even patriarchs have not always been good. Paternal autocracy may readily go to excess; it is just a far-reaching intelligence which becomes the most readily tinged with suspicion. Benevolent despotism then easily sours into malevolent, and patriarchal gentleness becomes inverted into inhuman ferocity. The corruption of the best is the worst; and given unrestrained power, this perversion of matured intelligence, will, and feeling, soon work out the maddest orgies of human history. Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible are but earlier and later types of this degeneration; but the alienist as historian will yet classify the lives of Czars and Sultans wholesale, in series of which the elemental types and stages are in every asylum—the suspicious, the megalomaniac, the homicidal, and so on. What then is to be done with a person so dangerous? Put him in the asylum?

But if you have only a tent? and if you do not know what insanity is, nor perhaps even for years that he is insane at all? and then only at intervals? What is to be done? Hesitatingly, reluctantly, but gradually arises the conviction—there is no help for us but in his death. Yet since there are no public powers of any kind, save in the patriarch himself, who shall take upon himself to act? And how? Can he be slain openly among his guards, or must he be stalked in secret like the wild beast he is? Is the slayer just judge and needful executioner in the people's cause for whom he dares all things, or is he base conspirator and cowardly assassin? Shall he be for ever held as traitor and parricide, or hailed as deliverer, acclaimed patriarch in turn? All these things have been, and are. Why so frequently? It is to be noted that revolution by slaying the patriarch, whether justifiable or unjustifiable, is at any rate effective; for there must be a new patriarch, with whom things go back to their old ways, unless madness (this time necessarily not quite the same madness) reappear.

The extremest Royalist has hardly affirmed any right divine for criminal madness, at least if directed against himself; then the natural man within him boils up as against might diabolic; in Russia or Turkey it is thus the courtier who is most commonly the assassin, and hence we commonly miss the point to which all this is leading—the ancient and patriarchal Asiatic nature of despotism limited by assassination. Hence the crimes, which have in late years appalled Europe, which the anarchist and the newspaper reader are alike apt to imagine modern, are thus remotely ancient, are social reversions, are atavistic, not progressive. Understand then this primitive disease of power and the primitive treatment of it, and we are ready to re-read our Scottish history, so full of royal assassins and assassinations, as profoundly pastoral, and reinterpret the Celtic vices in a lurid but still oriental light. Turning to practical politics, how shall we put down assassination? ask anxiously the police and governments of Europe. By punishing the assassin?—much he cares; it is odds if you do not awake new

criminals. The only successful penal restraint upon assassination in history has been the terrible wholesale Roman one which made the lives of each whole household of slaves (Slavs mostly, i.e. pastors liable to assassinate their tyrant) responsible for that of their master, and once inexorably crucified nearly four hundred for a single crime. Wholesale deportation to Siberia is the nearest modern approach to this, although again in Scots history the proscribing of clans, in English history the massacres in Ireland, are of this kind. But all such governmental violence provokes new individual violences, and this again wholesale violence, hence vicious circles disturbing the surface of human history, and constantly obscuring its depths. The putting down of anarchist outrage lies then in social education; and there will be no safety till journalist and reader and man in the street, instead of thinking these horrors new, modern, the work of advanced minds, the product of recent science and what not, shall know that these are early disease-phenomena of patriarchal society, wholly irrelevant to our own. The most elementary comprehension of our own social order should make it as impossible to think of murdering a president to improve a government, as of knocking off an engine-driver to improve his railway track. The assassins of Garfield, of Carnot, were each bursting with vanity; each fool convinced that he had placed himself in the foremost files of time: and pity it is the most real precaution against any recurrence was not taken; that press and social science were not themselves ready to expose fully the hideous irrelevance, the wretched folly of such a deed. But thanks to popular good sense, not to governments, the preventive measure of general contempt has already replaced the dangerous provocation of alarm. The whole subject of Anarchism thus needs re-study; but with the general idea that its dramatic crimes, its gentle doctrines also, are primarily Oriental Antiquities, and only quite secondarily Occidental Novelties, the conditions of criticism and re-interpretation become fairly clear.

IV

Auguste Comte is popularly supposed to be a radical, a democratic man of modern science. But he makes his contributions to sociology from the standpoint of the hierarchy of feeling and genius, of the aristocracy of action and thought. Conversely, it is Frédéric Le Play, whose point of view it is that has been followed and developed above, and who is popularly supposed even in his own country to make his appeal to capitalist and conservative, to aristocrat and priest, who has really established for us the vital doctrine of all democracy; which is only becoming apparent as Liberal nonsense of the Sovereignty of the People, of the Infallibility of Majorities of the electors of county, city, or parish of Buncombe, goes the way of the once current Tory nonsense about the Divine Right of Kings. Comte sees the great stream of Humanity; but in this he calls attention mainly to the Calendar of Great Men, to men of genius as Her chief servants—for him, proletarian and woman are little better than grown children, to be guided and governed for ever by patrician and priest. But for Le Play, worker and woman unite to form the elementary human family, and from them, not only by bodily descent, but by social descent, from their everyday life and labour, there develops the whole fabric of institutions and ideas, temporal and spiritual. No blossom, however rare or marvellous, whether of practical, intellectual, or spiritual genius but comes ultimately from this humble root—this tiny seed of simple daily human life:

‘The lord is hay, the peasant grass—
This wood, but that the growing tree.

With Comte and the historians we visit the historic dome of Aix, and thrill as we read ‘Carolo Magno’ upon its vaulted floor; but with Le Play we see first the living everyday Charlemagne a solid thrifty Frankish farmer striding round his estate, seeing that his stewards keep accounts even of the

eggs, that is, have the assured wherewithal to maintain cities in peace, armies in war. We know the Northern Lords of Battle—our Bruce, our Coeur-de-Lion—from legend or history; Le Play shows us first of all the Viking axeman, not the coronet; he sees in their axecraft, the poise and swing and skill of woodman, of house- and boat-builder over Scandinavia or Canada to-day. The historians, Gibbon or Comte or Sir Walter, all explain for us much of the present by help of the survivals of the Past; but Le Play, like Lyell, explains to us the past from the actual Present.

The method is less romantic; there may be some disenchantment in learning that the commanding, the supremely self-assertive dignity of Norman noble was based on the swift decision and authority, the necessary and unquestioning obedience which necessarily springs up on board of every fishing boat; and that the hauteur of Lady Clara Vere de Vere comes not from a hundred earls nor even jarls, but from the simple ancestral fisher-carle, whose boys must learn to look sharp with the sail while he sits by the helm. The individuality, the independence of the women of Western Europe is for Le Play neither American nor New; it is the direct product of the life-conditions of all North Sea fisherwives, whose men pass their lives at sea, or in intervals of rest when they return; so leaving them, indeed compelling them, to develop the qualities of man and woman in one. And when the mother has to be father too, then the eldest girl, however small, must be much more of mother; so responsibility begins early, and here as everywhere gives individuality for its fruit.

The most interesting platform on which to see the evolved woman is thus not that of the public hall but of the railway station; most particularly it is here in our own Waverley station, at the arrival of that fishwives' train, which is one of the most characteristic sights of Edinburgh. For out springs the fair-haired Brynhild; there with set lips under a mighty burden frowns the stern Gudrun; there onward stride a trio, with weather-beaten deep-lined faces sorrow-wrought, the thread

of future footsteps weaving in their hands. Would we see the doughty countess who held her castle against the Roundheads' cannon, who laughed even at Oliver? or Black Agnes, untameable even in her iron cage on Berwick wall? or the great Abbess of Whitby presiding over Parliament? There they are every one; to this day the primitive aristocracy of European womanhood. It needs little physiognomy to see that the ladies of court and drawing-room, of stage or sick-room, of platform or university, are but their more polished, yet degenerate representatives. Long tails, it is true, despise short tails, and fine feathers the bare head and woven willows, yet the first woman little knows how strongly her feeling is reciprocated by the second. The first has the conscious advantage of more refinement, the second has, and that consciously, more to refine. As she gives the artist more to work on, so with the sociologist and the psychologist, the moralist or the singer. For surely not only in the life of experience and provision but in that of sympathy and sacrifice, the daintiest reticule, the woolliest workbasket, is but a small affair compared with the fishwife's creel. Hark to her homely song, any that know not how elemental economics deepens into human feeling:—

'Wha 'll buy my caller herrin', they're bonnie fish and halesome farin'.

Buy my caller herrin' new drawn frae the Forth.

When the creel o' herrin' passes, ladies clad in silks and laces
Gather in their braw pelisses, toss their heads and screw their
faces.

Wha 'll buy my caller herrin'!

O ye may ca' them vulgar farin',
Wives and mithers maist despairin'
Ca' them lives o' men.

Caller herrin', caller herrin'.

In America it is where democracy has free play, and where it is less confused by old developments and survivals of all kinds, that the natural growth of things is most obvious. How the stout axeman carves his way to fortune, wealth, and power, 'From Log Cabin to White House' is one of the most threadbare themes; and who does not see poor Richard as a canny Yankee, Emerson as his more spiritual brother?

We may follow the same elemental clues into many phases of life. The dull and unimaginative wealth of England and America, which so seldom gets any realities for its money save sorrow for its children, is half explained when we read the story of the Industrial Revolution, and see how the nobler leaders of the working class have been constantly wasting their lives in barren politics; or, perhaps at best, following the fate of Robert Burns, while it was left to too many of the grosser and duller types, the Arkwrights and the like, to drudge or gripe or crush their way to fortune.

Or let us now take race with occupation, and in the concluding struggle of the Civil War, ask what is the duel of Grant and Lee—of Grant the hammerer with Lee the strategist, but the fight of heavy and downright hitter with wary and skilful gipsy guide? And if we ask for light on Grant's racial type, what more characteristic than when he says, 'I will fight it out on this line.' For (all the better if unconsciously) he is renewing the age-old war-cry of his clan—'Stand fast, Craigellachie!' the only possible strategy in holding one's narrow glens. And if Strathspey look to the American a small outlandish place for the breeding of a hero of his continent, let him look in his atlas and see what coast, what river-mouth in history must have borne first the shock of the all-victorious Norse migrations which were to be the unmaking and making of Europe. Then he will see that these Craigellachie folk are of an old and fighting breed, the children of King Arthur's vanguard, the children too of his victors.

This elemental way of looking at all men and women is no doubt to many a commonplace, at least in general terms. They

know that if rank be rank, there must lie under its stamp the gold ; that rank is not mere stamp : that men must rise to rank, develop rank, attain rank through function, and in the measure of the reality and range of actual deed. That the war-duke is a soldier at his highest, the admiral a seaman at his best, no one will ever deny ; but he who doubts or forgets that there is the stuff of viking and admiral in every fishing village of Devon or of Fife must surely have forgotten that Drake or Jean Bart or Paul Jones were but such pirate-venturers (some say Columbus too) or that the kings and nobles of Europe are proud to represent the younger branches of existing Norse peasant and fisher stocks. As the child is father of the man, so is the worker of all men ; and it is time to be thinking less with the politician or the positivist, of the worker as a child (to be led by the nose or educated respectively), but to recognise in him, according to his kind, the stuff of each type however highly developed—of skill however masterly, of genius however sublime, of virtue however pure.

Thus, as James Watt, instrument maker, Glasgow, is the master smith of the last century, so Lord Kelvin is but a subtler avatar of the same craft-type ; fundamentally, of course, neither lord nor professor nor wrangler, but now the best Glasgow instrument maker in his turn, developed by the problems which his life there among the shipbuilders and electricians has brought him. So Whitworth, so Armstrong is swordsmith, arrowsmith ; all the inventors in short are the Thinking Smiths, be they lords of peace or war. Again, they who read the secrets of life are the Thinking Rustics : thus Pasteur is the thrifty Jura peasant, Darwin the Midland truant and poacher, fancier and gardener, happily only half-settled into squire.

Even in more abstract thought the same principle holds. No philosopher, however sedentary, should need much introspection to recognise his profound kinship here with the dreamy

and dreary loafer, there with the restless and careless tramp, rustic or urban, as his case may be.

Or shall we try politics—permit a word or two of comment on points suggested by the newspapers of the day. Just as Oom Paul is a Boer, or Jameson a trooper, or John Burns a journalist, or Mr. Labouchere a gamin, was not the great recent victory of Lords over Commons primarily the old victory of rustic over urban populations, that of slow but not silly peasants over smart but not wise mechanics and clerks and shop-keepers?

Next, why does the coalmaster or ironmaster, the master-weaver or master-smith change his politics as he becomes landowner and lord? It is not primarily a change of Society; the man is not a mere snob: but he inevitably leaves the direct and simple rationality of the workshop for the cautious empiricism of the field; in a word, from artisan he has become peasant. Here for the first time he realises the vast complexity of human affairs and his own ignorance in dealing with them, and so his simple Liberal formulæ, made in Birmingham, repaired in Newcastle, lose their old hold upon him. Little wonder that he lapses from grace—deplored by his successors in the party, until the call comes for them also to go up higher in their turn, and help him to let well (and ill) alone.

So far, then, some outlines of interpretation of things as they are, that is, as they have grown, as they become; at another season we may think of things as they may be.

PATRICK GEDDES.

