

also the refrain of all Tourguéneff's works. Man, limited on every side by a chain of stern, immovable forces, struggles helplessly like a fly caught in a spider's web, and the end is invariably defeat. From the author's philosophic stand-point, human life, no doubt, appears as lugubrious as he pictures it, but his view is at least a one-sided one, and it is but partly true. The comfort which the Christian religion holds out to our sorely harassed race he evidently does not accept, and most of his heroes seem as regardless of its existence as he. But for all that, we find nowhere in his works those impassioned tirades against the Gospel of Christ which so disfigure even the purely æsthetic writings of Heine. Tourguéneff is too perfect an artist to be beguiled into partisanship. Christianity is to him a great and marvelous phenomenon, the influence of which, as an element in the formation of character, he is by no means disposed to underrate. In its pure atmosphere, Liza, one of the noblest creations of modern fiction, lives and breathes and has her being, and her child-like faith strengthens and inspires her to deeds of heroic devotion and self-sacrifice. In Arina Vlassievna, the mother of Bazarof in "Fathers and Sons," religion assumes the more primitive guise of mysterious superstition, and in "A Strange Story," its aspect is pathological rather than psychological; it becomes a mania, and confronts

us in the most grotesque form of fanaticism. The instances we have here cited do not, however, contradict our assertion that Tourguéneff's relation to Christianity is merely that of a profound outside observer. He would have described with the same artistic pleasure the mental states of a dancing dervish or a scene of bacchanalian frenzy.

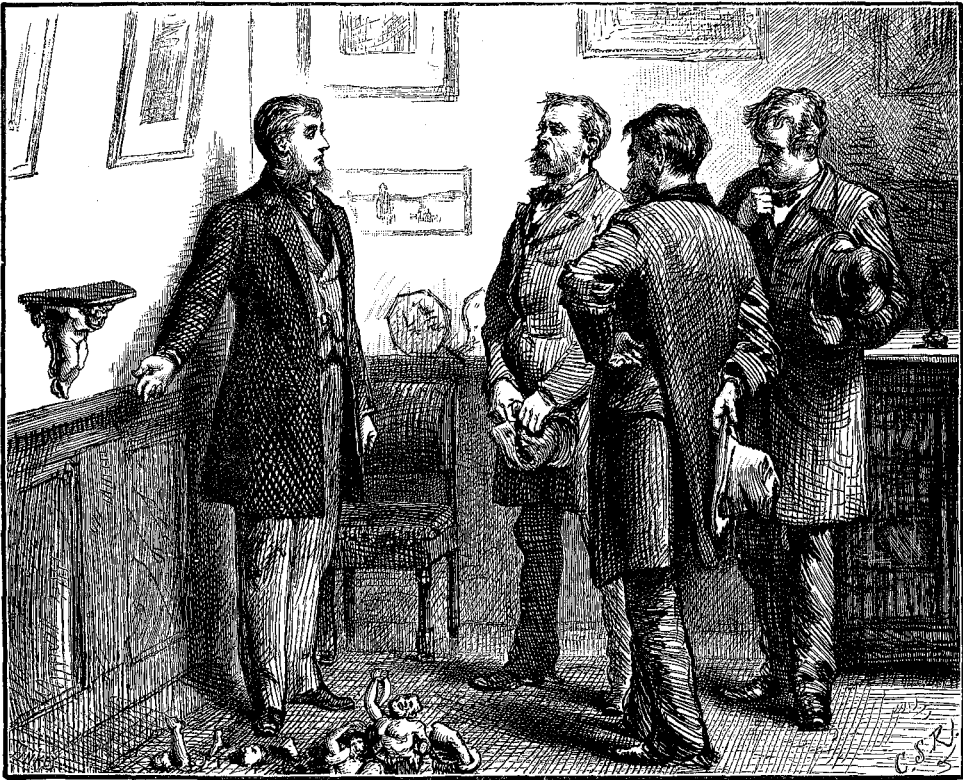
This apparently neutral ground which Tourguéneff occupies (which is as far removed from indifference as it is from partisanship), or rather the strict impartiality with which he views the great religious and social movements of the day, may lessen his influence for good during his own lifetime. Had he been an impassioned declaimer, he might perhaps have made himself the leader of some political faction whose power, while Russia is ruled by an autocrat, must necessarily have been very limited. But every faction, however great and noble its aims, is the expression and embodiment of a passing need of society, and has no *raison d'être* when the abuses against which it has fought are at length abolished. Tourguéneff, by his independence of party limitations, by his profound knowledge of humanity, and by his serene delight in realistic truth for its own sake, has gained for his writings the twofold dignity of æsthetic and historical classics, and for himself a place in the society of the Immortals.

STORM MUSIC.

List! through dusk silence warningly there steal
 The first, low notes of airy violins.
 With one shrill chord the symphony begins,
 While off the thunder's diapason peal
 Rolls through the flame-lit sky—God's chariot wheel.
 And hark! what trumpets blow from yon black cloud,
 While the strong trees in sudden terror bowed
 Seem from the tempest fleeing; then reveal
 The horror of their anguish by deep moans
 And wailings keen, far tossing to and fro
 Their tangled branches, where the angry wind
 Wreaks all his mighty passion unconfined—
 Then leaves them shattered, like brave men laid low,
 By war's hot breath, to die mid battle groans.

NICHOLAS MINTURN.

BY J. G. HOLLAND.



NICHOLAS GIVES THE DEAD-BEATS A LESSON FROM THE LAOCOÖN.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Nicholas left "The Crown and Crust," on the evening of his encounter with the three rogues, he had only the shadow of an idea of what he was going to do with them, on the fulfillment of their promise to call upon him the following morning. Of one thing he was sure: he cherished no resentments against them; he desired to do them good. How to accomplish his purpose was the question which the reflections and inventions of the night were, in some imperfect or tentative way, to answer. He had the men at an advantage, which he did not intend, in any way, to relinquish. He saw that they were to be treated with a firm hand. He supposed that they would endeavor to overreach him, and he had never felt himself so stimulated and excited as during the night which preceded their appointed visit. Indeed, he slept but little; but before morn-

ing he had reasoned the matter out to his own satisfaction, and evolved a scheme, in the success of which he felt a measurable degree of confidence.

He informed Pont, at an early hour, of the visit he expected, and told him that he should be at home to no one until these men had come and gone.

At precisely ten o'clock, according to the agreement, the men presented themselves together. There was a guilty, sheepish look upon their faces, most unlike that which they wore upon the previous day. Then they were all in earnest, in their propagation of lies for the securing of a gift. This morning they had no story to tell, no part to play—at least none that had been determined upon and rehearsed. They had been detected as rogues; they were under the menace of prosecution as such; and Nicholas had surprised them so much by his boldness and promptness in getting back his

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