

continuing to live in the possession of great power. What is peculiar in Mr. Gladstone's case is, that he creates immense political disturbance and uncertainty simply by existing in a private station, and by impressing everybody with the belief that in his seventy-sixth year he still has a future. Nothing quite like this is, we think, to be found in the career of any other prominent public man.

#### NEW LIGHT ON THE CAPTURE OF MAXIMILIAN.

THE controversy now raging in the Mexican press over the question of Maximilian's capture had its beginning last April, and bids fair, before it is closed, to falsify all the histories. The accepted view, both with Mexican writers like Payno and with blind partisans of the Emperor like Domenech, has been that the besieged troops at Querétaro were basely betrayed by Col. Lopez, one of their commanders and a favorite of Maximilian. The Colonel himself, it is true, passionately declared his innocence, in a letter made public at the time; but he was replied to by the generals of the Imperial Army, who brought against his unsupported assertion such an array of facts, apparently so conclusive, that the matter was considered for ever settled.

Last spring, however, Lopez, who has always been restless under the ignominy popularly attached to his name, appears to have been freed from some mysterious pledge to silence, and published a new letter, roundly denying the charge that he had played the part of a traitor to his chief, and boldly appealing to Gen. Escobedo, the head of the besieging army, for confirmation of his innocence. "You once wrote to me, General," said Lopez, under date of April 29, "that you had not spoken because you had not been asked to speak; now I ask you, in the name of the truth, and I beseech you for the sake of my honor, as well as your own, to speak." Escobedo was at the time at his estate in Guanajuato, but submitted to an interview with a reporter about the middle of May, in which he substantially upheld Lopez. He declared that Lopez came to him in the night of May 14, 1867, representing himself as an authorized ambassador from Maximilian, and offering, on the part of the latter, a surrender of Querétaro, together with an absolute renunciation of the Mexican crown. The only conditions asked were permission for himself and certain of his generals to depart with an escort to Tuxpam, there to embark for Europe, never to return to Mexico. Escobedo demanded some proof that Lopez was empowered to make such an offer, and was shown letters of Maximilian amply certifying what the secret emissary had said. Thereupon the Liberal General said that his orders were either an unconditional surrender or an assault. Lopez besought him to avoid the bloodshed which would result, and the probable spread of the war over the whole country, but Escobedo remained firm. Lopez asked nothing for himself, neither promotion nor guarantees nor money, but spoke only in behalf of the Emperor, to whom he professed the most unbounded attachment. And after the capture, when Maximilian was a prisoner; and when Lopez sought an interview with the fallen Emperor, Escobedo took

pains to ask the latter if it would be agreeable to him to see Lopez, referring to the rumors of treason, and Maximilian distinctly said: "Col. Lopez has not been false to me in the least."

The publication of this interview in the *Diario del Hogar* caused a tremendous sensation. Two of Escobedo's generals of division, Arce and Gallardo, rushed into print to express their incredulity, and to repeat the details of the suspicious conduct of Lopez on the night of the capture, of which they had been eye-witnesses. Escobedo politely replied to them, admitting their perfect honesty, but assuring them that they were mistaken. He also announced that he was preparing a detailed account of the whole matter, which he intended to transmit to the Secretary of War for publication in the *Diario Oficial*. It was expected that this narrative would appear last June; in fact, it is almost certain that it was sent to the Government as long ago as that; but, for some unknown reason, it has not yet been made public.

Meanwhile, several facts of great significance have been brought out in the newspaper discussions, going to show, it is probable, what the real state of the case will be found to be. A captain in the Belgian Guards, one of Maximilian's regiments, reports the general belief of the besieged troops that there was to be a surrender, and that Lopez was acting at the Emperor's orders. There was great surprise, the Captain says, at the cry of treason raised against Lopez: it was the understood thing, the men supposed, that the city was to be surrendered and the safety of Maximilian and his generals secured. On August 21 the *Monitor* published a letter of Maximilian's, which Gen. Escobedo had had photographed and shown to some of his friends. It was written to Lopez three days after the surrender, and besought him to keep a profound secret his errand to Escobedo, lest it might bring a stain upon the Emperor's honor. And Monday's despatches speak of a second letter, even more compromising, in which Maximilian refers to bribes offered to secure his personal safety.

All this points to the conclusion, which we believe will be supported by the official account when published, that the unfortunate Archduke had grown utterly weary of the whole affair, despaired of ultimate success even if temporarily triumphant, repented bitterly of his return after his abdication, and only wished to be well out of the struggle. The negotiations with Escobedo failing, he seems to have adopted the plan of a surrender under the guise of a betrayal, confident that he would soon be at liberty in Vienna. To his surprise, as to that of the whole world, he was soon put on trial for his life. Then he resolved to keep silent about all that had gone before, and to go to his inevitable death like a brave man. Why Lopez has remained quiet all these years, is a mystery. Why Escobedo has never spoken, is still more mysterious. Now that the long silence is to be broken, it may be expected that these points will be cleared up. It seems almost certain that we shall have to add to the other weaknesses of Maximilian a selfish cowardice in the last days of his empire, scarcely atoned for by his unflinching courage when the end finally came

#### TEACHING WHIST.

ONE of the most curious social phenomena of the year is the success which has attended the attempts to teach whist in classes, both in this city and in Boston, last winter, and during the past summer at some of the watering-places. It has been found, as a matter of fact, that a good whist-player, possessed of fair teaching capacity, has no difficulty in getting pupils enough to make it worth while to treat whist-teaching as a calling. The experiment thus far (which, we may mention, has only been made between ladies) has revealed the fact that the number of people who want to play whist both in summer and winter is very large, and is probably increasing, and also that a very large proportion of those who have been playing the greater part of their lives are really ignorant of what is called scientific or modern whist, as moulded by such great masters as Cavenish and Pöle. Then, too, a very large proportion of those who play either the old or the new game, whether to oblige friends by "taking a hand," or to help to pass dull days or dull evenings, suffer year after year from a consciousness of gross incapacity, and consequently from a sense of humiliation, from which they are eager to escape by obtaining competent instruction.

It is often said in general terms that the way to learn to play whist well is to play with good players. This is in part true, but it is mainly delusive. There is, to many people, not much use in seeing what good players do, without knowing the reason why they do it, and this good players are not ready to give, and in fact the rules of the game forbid their giving it while playing. All the direct instruction the unfortunate whist dunces receives while actually playing, he is apt to get only from the contemptuous reproaches of his partner, or the contemptuous silence of his opponents, after each hand. But it is not very profitable to know that you have been playing the part of an ignoramus without knowing how you showed it. In fact, good players play whist for their own pleasure, and never will or can be induced to mingle with their play a little kindly help for beginners or incapables. Their feeling towards them is rarely anything but one of annoyance at their appearance in a rôle for which they have no fitness. Some of the books even contain special directions for acting with stupid partners without any sacrifice of one's own comfort. All this makes a teacher of whist—that is, somebody who will deal tenderly with poor players, tell them why they have blundered, and what they ought to have done but did not do, in a spirit of kindness or even commiseration—wear the air of a ministering angel; and we should venture to predict, therefore, that the most successful teachers will be, as indeed they are now, women.

The reasons for the increasing popularity of whist, and consequently increasing desire to learn it, are not, we think, far to seek. It is not wholly a game of skill, like chess, and therefore does not impose that severe strain on the nerves which makes chess an impossible game in the evening to poor sleepers, especially if they are very fond of it. Moreover, although whist makes a constant

demand on the attention and the memory, it makes it through frequent changes of situation, which keep the faculties on the alert without severely tasking them. It is therefore very welcome to people who suffer from somnolency after dinner, or people who are thrown much together without having anything particular to say to each other, or who are thoroughly familiar with each other's views on everything worth talking about; and, above all, to people who have lost or have never acquired the habit of steady reading, or whose eyesight will not bear books. This class—the class who for one reason or another cannot read books in the evening—is a very large one, and one which newspaper reading is increasing enormously. The newspaper never, or rarely, asks anybody to keep his attention fixed more than a minute or two on one topic, unless by way of narrative; and a man who has read nothing but newspapers for a few years finds, by the time he reaches middle life, that he can neither read a book nor play any game of pure skill. For him whist is a great boon. It keeps him wide awake, and has just chance enough in it to treat him every few minutes to small surprises. It in this somewhat resembles a game common in England—of guessing during a ride or drive what there is at the other side of the next hill—in which the Duke of Wellington used to say he had passed all his military life. That is, you are pretty sure not to be wholly right, but you are also sure never to be very far wrong, and your errors are certain to be excusable enough to be interesting, and even sometimes flattering. The problems whist presents are, indeed, very like those which meet people in the course of a quiet, uneventful life, such as questions of dress, of housekeeping, of farming, or jaunting. They require close attention to and memory for details, some knowledge of character, and just philosophy enough for the chapter of accidents. Whist has none of the mental anxiety or harrowing regrets or self-reproaches of chess. There is always chance enough in it to save one's self-love, but not enough to furnish the wild excitement of poker or baccarat or *rouge et noir*.

Besides the people who cannot read, whist is useful to that other very large class who hate to be alone, and yet when in company have nothing particular to say. Sitting with one's fellow-creatures in silence is always very depressing, and sometimes very awkward. The situation among men is mitigated somewhat by smoking. To be sure, smokers need to talk, but they do not need to talk as much as people who have nothing to do but twirl their thumbs. But smoking is of no value in a company composed in part of women or of non-smokers. There must be some other refuge from sheer vacuity, and whist furnishes it better than any other amusement. Hence, people who shine or think they shine in conversation, often dislike it, or, if they take it up, seldom make good players. It keeps their stories and "good things" out of the market, and, indeed, their mental discursiveness and activity are a positive hindrance to their success. But we doubt if any man, whatever his special powers or accomplishments in other fields might be, has ever become a brilliant whist player without taking great pride in it, and without being

ready to sacrifice to it almost any other form of social enjoyment.

#### THE RUSSIAN REALISTIC NOVELISTS.

NEW French translations from the Russian novelists appear so fast that the Western reader will soon be able to judge of the whole movement. Besides another translation of Tolstoi's 'Power of Darkness' (which includes the variants and is far better done than that by Neyrcud), E. Halpérine—or, as he now signs himself, Halpérine-Kaminsky—has published a French translation of the adaptation of the folk-tale of 'Fool Ivan' (*Ivan Durak*), under the title of 'Ivan l'imbécile' (Perrin & Cie.), with which are put ten other short stories written for the peasants. Two more volumes that are promised, 'Le Prince Nekhludoff' and 'Au Bivouac,' will exhaust all of Tolstoi's earlier tales, and nothing will then be left but his articles on education, written in 1862-3, and his 'Moscow Census,' if, indeed, this last has not already appeared. This volume, while open to the charge of making much out of little by the usual artifices of thick paper, very coarse print, and plenty of blank pages, does not mix up the productions of different epochs, as some previous translators have done. A curious question arises about the second story in the book, entitled "Deux Générations" (which is the French for "Two Hussars"), and which deals with a prisoner in the Caucasus; it does not appear in the full and authorized edition of Tolstoi's works. Is it in the first edition, and, if not, whence was it taken? 'My Husband and I,' announced in the London papers, is apparently another translation of what is called 'Katia' ('Family Happiness').

Whether or not the mystical, religious, and socialistic works of Count Tolstoi have any real influence in Russia, their interest to us lies in their being the product of Russian thought, as well as of a great writer, and of revealing to us the curious ways in which the Russian mind works. Even what is allowed to be printed in Russia has little if any circulation among the peasants. There are no bookshops in country villages, few in any but the larger towns; and the colportage and peddling of books and tracts are surrounded with many restrictions and difficulties. In other classes these stories and articles have the success caused by curiosity. The books circulated in manuscript are naturally very limited in number, and find their way only among people who can afford to procure them—among those of the upper class who have a personal or a literary interest in the author, or, as Mr. Kennan shows, an idea that he can be used for revolutionary purposes. Russian society is glad occasionally of a mild spiritual excitement. Such it found in the early part of the century in the Jesuits, Mme. Krüdener, Mme. Swetchine, in freemasonry, and in Russian dissenters, as is told in part in 'War and Peace.' Such it found ten years ago in the revivalists, the prayer-meetings, the preaching of a Methodistical English lord whose name escapes us, but who visited Russia regularly for several seasons, and whose title added weight to his prayers and the Pashkoff sect which he helped to found. This phase is described also by Tolstoi in 'Anna Karénin.' Such spiritual excitement it finds in Tolstoi's forbidden manuscripts. Forbidden books are read in Russia chiefly because they are forbidden, and Leo Tolstoi's tracts are sought for now in the same way that his namesake Alexis Tolstoi's satirical, witty, and often "improper" poems were fifteen and twenty years ago.

The neglect of a writer like Gontcharoff, who is esteemed in his own country as inferior only to Turgeneff and Tolstoi, and is by many consider-

ed their superior, is astonishing. We must reflect, however, that he has written little—three novels, four short stories, and a book of travels, the 'Voyage of the Frigate *Pallas*'—and has rested on his laurels. Though still living, and high in the official hierarchy, though he has pictured characters which are recognized as purely Russian types, though he has given a very expressive word to the Russian language, he is already about forgotten. In his novel 'Oblomoff,' his greatest production (the first part only of which has been translated into French and passed off as the whole work), Gontcharoff represented the thoroughly Russian type of the indolent man, the man who never answers letters, nor replies to disagreeable questions, who puts off everything till to-morrow or a convenient time; and so exactly and carefully was this done that the word *oblomovism* was coined (not by him) to express these characteristics, corresponding, with some slight differences, to what had before been known as "Slavic indolence" (*Slavinskaya lyén*). To be sure, the name *oblomoff* meant the broken-down man, and the language itself aided. 'Obyryff' ('The Gulf'), Gontcharoff's last novel, has been also inadequately translated as 'Marcelle Nihiliste,' but even in its curtailed and abridged French form, assisted by Turgeneff's 'Fathers and Sons' and 'Virgin Soil,' and Dostoyevsky's 'Demons' (*Blésis*) (in French under the title of 'Les Possédés'), it enables us to understand Russian Nihilism. The four books should, however, be considered together. Now, under the title of 'Simple Histoire' (Perrin & Cie.) Halpérine has translated Gontcharoff's first novel, 'The Usual Story' (*Obyknovennaya istoriya*), which is in many points his best. Nowadays, it is perhaps a story not so common—of the youth from the country, boiling over with poetry and enthusiasm, who gradually subsides into the humdrum official; but such characters still exist, though the spread of Nihilistic feeling has made them rarer. All of Gontcharoff's works, we may remark, except his delightful 'Frigate *Pallas*,' have been conscientiously and well translated into German. The pure style of Gontcharoff, which, of course, cannot be seen from the translations, and in which among recent writers he is approached only by Turgeneff, is perhaps one reason for the admiration with which his books are regarded by Russians.

Dostoyevsky's 'Idiot' deserves neither all the praise nor all the blame bestowed on it by De Vogüé in his interesting preface to the French translation of 'Derély' ('L'Idiot,' Plon), but is a welcome addition to our sources of knowledge of Russian character. If to the novels of Dostoyevsky, Gontcharoff, Turgeneff, and Tolstoi we add those of Pisemsky, especially those translated under the titles of 'Mille Âmes' and 'Les Faiseurs,' written before the emancipation, which describes the financial and commercial activity of later years, we shall learn about all that Russian novels can teach us. The works of these five writers comprise practically the whole of the Russian realistic movement. They have as yet had no successors worthy of being put on a par with the least of them. The 'Idiot' makes us in a measure understand the vagaries of Tolstoi, as well as the reverence paid in Russia to the half-witted. It is a psychological study of a young man afflicted with epilepsy—the malady to which the author was subject—whose mind has been partially developed, but who really is nothing but a grown-up child. But his childish characteristics, his very simplicity, like the simplicity of Shakspeare's fools, are wisdom. The book contains many powerful passages—for example, the description of a criminal when he is guillotined; but in one place Dostoyevsky again allowed himself to express his petty jealousy of Turgeneff, whom he had so stupidly and untruly caricatured in 'Demons.'