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EDITORIAL

SENTIMENT AND REASON.

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MORE so than the Age that Jefferson wrote from Paris as the Age France was then traversing, when all principles and institutions seemed called to the bar, and were forced to justify their existence, our own Age is sceptic of tradition, whether in the matter of principles, institutions, or methods. That, in such an Age, the camp of the element, broadly termed "Opposition," should be a caldron boiling over, in which everything is up for discussion, is a matter of course. Not a principle but is to-day overhauled, not an institution but is to-day searchingly criticized, and not even methods escape; indeed, in the anxiety of all to achieve success, "methods" frequently assume importance above "principle," and around them the storm of discussion frequently rages more fiercely. It so happens in the matter of the method of agitation and education. One set, which may be called the School of Sentiment, hold that reasoning is ineffective, people feel; another set, which may be called the School of Reason, insist that sentiment is but a straw-fire, only thought builds up. In this, as in so many other instances, truth will be found in both extremes, and success only in combining them. An article in the *London Review of Reviews* entitled "The Labor Party and the Books that Helped to Make it" and closing with "The Books that Shaped Tolstoy," together with some contemporaneous events, may help to illustrate the point.

As to the "books that shaped" Tolstoy, the list begins with the Gospel of St. Matthew and Sterne's *Sentimental Journal*, winding up, in keeping with the keynote struck by the first two books, with Plato and Homer. As to the books that "helped to make" the Labor Party they are given in the shape of short autobiographic sketches by the forty and odd members of that delegation in Parliament. Keir Hardie's may be taken as the typical, or "complete" one. He says pathetically that his mother's songs made the strongest impressions upon him,

although she was, as he describes her, a woman “believing in ghosts, witches and warlocks”; and next in order he mentions the *Tales of the Borders*, Captain Cook’s *Voyages*, and the Scottish *Worthies*, as books that respectively quickened his imagination, awoke in him “a sense of wonder at the vastness of the world,” and turned him into “a hater of official tyranny and injustice.” Throughout the list of books that shaped these members of Parliament there is hardly mention of a scientific work; Marx occurs only once, John Stuart Mill a little oftener, Henry George still oftener, the bulk of the books is of the type named by Keir Hardie; as to the Tolstoy’s list, scientific works are absolutely excluded. Sentiment, not Reason marks this literature. And yet who would deny that Tolstoy’s sentiment has contributed a gigantic share in quickening the revolutionary pulse in Russia; or who would, on the other hand, dare assert that, without the constructive work of the scientifically trained, the Russian Revolution could have taken the shape of a practical Movement? Vaporous as Sentiment is, it has a mission to fulfill; hard to digest as Reason is, it is indispensable for practical results.

Reason cannot reach masses; against the solid, unlettered wall of the masses, mentally and physically tired through overwork, Reason alone butts its head as against a stone wall. Sentiment can reach masses; but Sentiment alone can not construct; its edifices sink in quicksands and vanish like ghosts, witches and warlocks. Sentiment and Reason combined are resistlessly successful. Sentiment dissolves the hard wall of mass stolidity, Reason fructifies it. Successful Revolutions are the mighty offspring of Sentiment and Reason wedded in holy alliance, in mutual love, and mutual respect.

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