PESSIMISM.

A VALUABLE BOOK.

PESSIMISM. A History and a Criticism. By James Sully, M. A., LL. D. Second edition, with new preface. 8vo, pp. 477. D. Appleton & Co.

For the general reader, English or American, Dr. Sully's treatise is probably the most convenient and comprehensive extant. It combines, as the title indicates, history with criticism. It is marked by the philosophic spirit, keen insight, and a candor which invites confidence. The reason for putting forward a new edition of this book is sufficiently shown in the preface. English and American thinkers have not at all commonly recognized the extent to which modern continental thought has been and still is affected by pessimism. It has indeed been the fashion to assume that pessimism has had its day, and that it is no longer a serious factor anywhere. But this, as Dr. Sully conclusively demonstrates, is a mistake, and a somewhat serious one, especially for Americans, who have constantly to reckon with the influences which are imported with the steady stream of European immigration, and who cannot afford to ignore philosophies which in their reaction upon the uneducated and the half-educated tend to engender all manner of mischievous and even dangerous experiments with the social system. The fact is that while the naturally optimistic Anglo-Saxon temperament has hitherto been little impressed by German, French and Italian pessimism, and while American and English philosophers have found a sufficient answer to these systems in the potentialities of Progress, the continental mind has at no time held the defence to be sufficient, and has been more and more disturbed by the arguments of the pessimists.

Not that pessimism has been having all its own way, even in Germany, where most it flourishes. It has found many antagonists there, and upon many lines. The increase of discussion, too, has of late stimulated English thought, as is shown in the translations of Schopenhauer's and Hartmann's works, and by the appearance in general literature of occasional faint reflections of the bolder and more uncompromising German tone. Such books as Mr. Mallock's "Is Life Worth Living?" cannot be regarded in the light of serious discussion, any more than Sir John Lubbock's "The Pleasures of Life" can be considered as in any way an adequate statement of optimist, or an adequate refutation of pessimist views. John Stuart Mill's "Three Essays on Religion" may be said to have presented the outlines of modern pessimism more clearly and radically than any English book since published; and as to the case for optimism, we are not aware that any Englishman has better summed it up than the author of the volume before us. It is, however, significant of the essentially unscientific character of most of the anti-pessimistic literature in English that Dr. Sully finds it necessary to give considerable space to an explanation of his inevitable exclusion of the strictly theological lines of discussion. On this continent such an explanation would not be called for, and if offered it would be thought almost grotesque. Yet in a book intended for general reading in either of the English-speaking countries, it is indispensable, which serves to show that the people of these countries, however advanced they may be in some things, are distinctly behind-hand in others.

Pessimism has of course existed from a very early period, and there is no ground for supposing that it will ever cease to exist, inasmuch as the problems upon which it rests are in many instances insoluble by finite reason. The existence of Evil, for example, is a crux against which all human thought has been shattered, down to the present day. Whole libraries have been written about it without securing the least increase of knowledge, the smallest approach to certitude. The facts of experience again are terribly untrustworthy supports to the optimist. Nature, "red in tooth and claw with ravin" affords him no help. The progress of civilization furnishes proofs of many evils ameliorated, no doubt; but then, as a pessimist has objected, not a few of these diminished evils were originally created by civilization. The Darwinian hypothesis has not strengthened optimism. Natural selection and the survival of the fittest, however interpreted, do not conduce to a cheerful conception of the world's purpose. They seem, from certain points of view, to eliminate what to most people is the vital consideration, namely, personal significance. Nature—"so careful of the type she seems, so careless of the single life"—appears to have in her arrangements no provision for individual claims to protection or perpetuation. Civilization, too, has in very few respects, if at all, lessened the ferocity of the struggle for existence. Pessimism necessarily impeaches civilization, and when its gloomy suggestions are filtered through the opaque minds of masses whose external conditions certainly are not cheering, it cannot be wondered at that the concrete results of such teaching are wild Socialist and Anarchist speculations and projections.

Schopenhauer, after devoting a lifetime to the study of the subject, could find no other solution than the voluntary suicide of the entire human race; nor could he guarantee that even that radical resort would be the end of everything. Hartmann, proceeding in part on different lines, has been no more successful in finding a remedy for the evil of existence. The old authorities upon which optimism rested formerly are being rejected and their credentials rudely challenged. From a purely rational point of view, the spread of pessimism consequently might be thought so unavoidable that a reaction against it was past hoping for. But in truth, even if Schopenhauer was right, his philosophy would be self-destructive. For if the world is will and idea; if Will imposes upon man as a necessity the desire to live, that imposition involves the dominance of the complex feelings and tendencies which result in optimism. The persistence of the desire to live, however, is (and experience confirms this) closely associated with a desire to improve our surroundings; and with this strong and possibly quite selfish prepossession often goes another, not obviously selfish; a desire, namely, to elevate spiritually both ourselves and our neighbors. Now, no matter how induced or whence originating, these three human tendencies are in themselves sufficient to insure the perpetual predominance of optimism in this world; and though pessimism be as ineradicable as evil, it can no more prevail than the latter.

But though it is possible to make this clear to cultivated understandings, the difficulty is that so many understandings are not cultivated. There was nothing in the teachings of Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau and the encyclopedists to justify the excesses of the Revolution; yet the second sprang by direct descent from the first. The Arcadia of the New Liberalism proved the ante-chamber to the Reign of Terror; and however strange the phenomenon, it was not the first time it had occurred—nor, possibly, will it be the last. Pessimism is indeed precisely the same kind of intellectual dynamite. Its effect upon the educated is never likely to be considerable. It may modify opinions, but there is no probability that it will ever be translated into action. With the uneducated, on the other hand, the latter is the tendency most to be expected. Convince an ignorant man that ethical rules and restraints are not binding, and that there is nothing to hope or expect here or hereafter, and the very logic of the situation urges him to seek the gratification of his material desires and tastes as soon as possible and by whatever means are available. Hence the importance of studying pessimism carefully, and of familiarizing the generation now entering active life with all its contentions, and with all that can be urged in opposition to them. For this purpose Dr. Sully's work is all that could be desired, and we hope that it will be read widely.

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REAL ESTATE.

BUSINESS AT THE EXCHANGE.

The most important property offered at the Exchange yesterday was No. 40 East Fourteenth-st., running through in an L to and including No. 79 University Place. The property has a frontage on University Place of 26 feet, with a depth of 62.3, and a frontage on Fourteenth-st. of 26.10 with a depth of 102 feet. It is rented as a whole for five years at $16,500, payable in gold, and for a further time of five years at an increased rental of $18,000. It was offered on behalf of the executors of Charles H. Marshall. The bidding opened at $155,000, and ran up to $247,000, but the property was withdrawn by the auctioneer, and remains in his hands to be sold at private sale.

William Kennelly offered on an assignee's sale, certain choice lots in One-hundred-and-thirty-seventh-st. They brought from $2,900 up to $3,100 each.

Two lots in East Forty-eighth-st. sold for $8,700 for the two to A. E. Sybel.

Two lots in St. Nicholas-ave. were sold for the estate of John Pentz, for $5,250 each.

Mr. Libby, formerly of the firm of Libby & Scott, has sold the store now occupied by Koch & Co., in One-hundred-and-twenty-fifth-st., running through to One-hundred-and-twenty-fourth-st., 200 by 100, for $575,000, that firm renting the same at the rate of $40,000 per annum. The buyer is stated to be a capitalist connected with the Standard Oil Company.

Thomas L. Reynolds & Co. have sold No. 237 West One-hundred-and-thirty-fifth-st., on a plot 25x84x100, a four-story flat, for $45,000, to F. Payne.

At the weekly stock sale by R. V. Harnett & Co., the following were disposed of: 100 shares American Sugar Refining Co., $100 each, 89; 10 shares Chatham National Bank, $25 each, 411; 12 shares United States Trust Co., $100 each, 809; $10,000 Cleveland and Pittsburg Railroad Co. first mortgage 7 per cent bonds, due 1900, 118; 20 shares Farmers' Loan and Trust Co., $100 each, 727 3-4; 10 shares Continental National Bank, of $100 each, 140.

New-York, Tuesday, June 9.

The following sales were held at the Exchange and Auction Room to-day:

One 3-story dwelling, with lot, No. 462 West 144th-st, s s, 141 ft e of Amsterdam-ave, lot 17x99.11; Emma H Worcester, $13,000.

One 2-story building, with 2 lots, n s East 48th-st, 325 ft e of 1st-ave, lots 25X100.5 each; D E Sybel, $8,700.

One lot, n s West 137th-st, 300 ft e of 6th-ave, 25x99.11; S. Ely, $3,040.

Two lots adjoining above, 25x99.11 each, D E Sybel, $6,000.

Two lots, w s St. Nicholas-ave, 304.8 ft s of 141st-st, 25.4x about 140 each; John Bannon, $10,500.

Fifty-one acres of land, w s Weaver-st, n Forrest-ave, Larchmont, N. Y.; James F Black, $12,495.

RECORDED REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS, N. Y CITY.

Property known as s w port of plot 12, on map of Claremont; Richard Thall and wife to William F Fitschen	22,050
Property known as lots No 95 and 96, on map of property for sale at Fairmount; George Kilney to Christian P Roos	2,000
Lafayette Place, No 49; Charles A Bristed to Orlando B Potter	63,333
180th-st, n s, 100 ft w 11th-ave, 100x25; Pauline Simon to Lewis Landers	2,000
3d-ave, e s, 100.5 ft s 52d-st, 64.10x19.7; Fred P Forster, ref, to Clemens Muller	18,050
Columbia-st, Nos 116 and 118; Henry Evers and wife to Samuel Greenfield	26,000
104th-st, n s, 125 ft w 3d-ave, 100.11x25; John H Hahn and wife to Mayor, etc	11,000
138th-st, n s, 675 ft e Willis-ave, 200x25; Jacob A Walden to same	8,000
104th-st, n s, 150 ft w 3d-ave, 100.11x25; William T Lahey to same	8,000
67th-st, s s, 80 ft w Park-ave, 100.5x20; Claudine M Meeks and husband to Elex McSorley	4,500
10th-ave, w s, 100 ft n 24.8th-st; Eloise T Little, et al, to Conrad W Rockhart	10,000
136th-st, s s, 233.4 e 7th-ave, 99.11x16.8; Stephen J Wright and wife to William Tubridy	13,750
84th-st, n s, 500 ft e 9th-ave, 02.2x75; Alex McSorley and wife to Claudine M Weeks	1
Boulevard, e s, 24.11 ft s 149th-st, 100x50; William H Willis, ref, to Louis A Queen	11,600
148th-st, n s, 100 ft w Boulevard, 99.11x25; same to same	8,025
125th-st, s s, 249.6 ft w 1st-ave, 100x06 and other same property; Henry Grossman and wife to Henrietta Spiegel	1
Property known as lot No 49 on map of 87 choice lots at Bartlett Park; Harriett A Wardall to Harry E Cornwell	650
112th-st, s s, 182 ft w Pleasant-ave, 19.6x100.11; William Meiry and wife to William H McIntyre	5,750
Grove-st, No 61, 73 Christopher-st; John Goerlitz and wife to Louis M Jones	54,000
148th-st, n s, 200 ft e Boulevard, 99.11x450; W Willard Babcock and wife to Alex D Duff	1
Ave B, s e s, 23.8 n e 10th-st, 93x23.8; Adolph Faller and ano to Henry Gentalinger and ano	1
117th-st, No 314 West; Edward Cunningham and wife to Philip J Ryan	26,375
Barrow-st, e s, 180 ft s e of Bleecker-st, 21x40; Eliza M Demarest to Eliza A Michales	6,000
170th-st, n s, 75 ft w of Washington-ave, 74x50; Mary F Henry and others to Anna B Weller	4,350
Walton-ave, w s, 300 ft n of 150th-st, 92x100x irreg, and other property; Edward N Jackson and wife to Phoebe A Siddell	1
Nathalie-ave, w s, 250 ft n of Windham Place, 121x79; Perry P Williams and wife to Alfred Lawrie	1,000
Railroad-ave, e s, 108 ft s w of 175th-st, 150x54; J Bartlett to John Chapman	1
140th-st, s s, 200 ft e of Boulevard x99.11x200; Wm H Willis, referee, to Henry K C Watson	29,200
Julia-st, n s, 102 ft e of 3d-ave, 100x50; Edward A Bell and wife to Louis Paborsky	3,800
119th-st, No 538 East; Gilbert M Spier, referee, to Florence G Joseph	6,250
Broome-st, n w corner Essex-st, 88.6x43.3; the Eastern Dispensary to Good Samaritan Dispensary	7,000
10th-st, No 215 East; Ascher Weinstein and wife to M Fay and another	21,500
91st-st, n s, 204.5 ft e of 5th-ave, 100.8x25.6; R Benner 2nd wife to R Guggenheimer, et al	19,000
97th-st, n s, 231 ft e of 8th-ave, 100.3x19; Frank L O'Neill to John A Beall	25,000
Same property; K C Beall and husband to Frank L O'Neill	12,500
104th-st, n s, 275 ft w of Boulevard, 99.1x50; W T Willis, ref, to E McDonald	13,000
149th-st, s s, 125 ft w of Boulevard, 99.11x450; Sarah S H A Sohe	7,200
Columbia-st, Nos 117, 119, 120, 122 Sheriff-st; E L Richards, et al, to Jacob Kottek	28,000
West End-ave, w s, 75.8 ft s of 98th-st, 100x25.8; Eliza Jacobs to Aaron Jacobs	7,100
170th-st, No 719 East; Emil Wedding to Anna B Weller	160
Ernesella Place, w s, lot 492, 24th Ward, 25x107x25x103; Edmund H Veyer and wife to David Cunningham and another	575
Same property; Wm S and Chas H Oydyke to Edmund M Veyer	850
180th-st, n s, lot 23 and 24; Hester A and Robt A Shannon to Jacob Lyman	2,580
5th-ave, w s, 50.8 ft s 88th-st, 25x102; Harting I Phillips to David L Phillips	25,000
Avenue A, n corner Avenue A, 50x100; Kate M Ryan to Jno M Ryan	1
11th-ave, w s, 25.2 ft s 98th-st, 60.6x100; Eliza Jacobs executrix, to F R L Smith	16,000
112th-ave, s e corner 93d-st, 21.4x100x24.1x100; Edir Lauterbach et al to F K L Smith	2,000
Beaver-st, n e corner New-st, 62x17.8xirregular; Martha A Abom to Wm F Nisbet	26,500
Harrison-st, n s, 97.8 ft w Hudson-st; William F Nisbet and wife to Martha A Aborn	26,000

RECORDED MORTGAGES.

Allard, Triffie H, and ano, to James H Woolf, s s Howe-st, w Stebbins-ave, 4 months, $1,753.

Abel, Jacob, to Geo Ehret, No 312 West 42d-st, demand, lease, $2,500.

Boehmer, Arthur, to Thomas Auld, n s Mount Hope Place, w Fleetwood-ave, 3 months, $1,000.

Burns, Wm C, to the Goon Samaritan Dispensary, et al, s s 78th-st, w 3d-ave, &c, 3 years (10 mortgages), $113,899.

Consumer's Brewing Co, N Y, Limited, to the State Trust Co, w s Avenue A, s s 55th-st, 10 years, bonds, $100,000.

Cameron, Edward M, to the U S Trust Co, N Y, s s 47th-st, w 8th-ave, 3 years, $15,000.

Coleman, Meyer, and wife, to Anna T Kelly, n s 26th-st, w 7th-ave, 3 years, $8,000.

De Vivo, Constantino, to Rache Silverman, n s 23d-st, e 9th-ave, 1 year, $1,050.

Edson, Fanny C, and Franklin, to the Mutual Life Ins Co, N Y, Section 11, blocks 3,321, 3,222, 3,228 and 3,629, map lands city N Y, 1 year, $5,000.

Fitschen, Wm F, to August H Fitschen, lot 12, map Claremont, West Farms, 3 years, $550.

Foley, Ellen, to Joseph C Levi, trustee, No 749 Washington-st, 3 years, $7,000.

Flint, Annie S, to the Title Guarantee and Trust Co, w s 5th-ave, s 88th-st; 1 year; $7,500.

Greenfeld, Samuel, to the German-American Real Estate Title Guarantee Co, e s Columbia, n Stanton sts; 1 year (2 morts), $14,000.

Guggenheimer, Randolph et al, to Robt Benner, n s 91st-st, e 5th-ave; 1 year, $15,000.

Calrnato, Luigi et al, to the Bradley & Currier Co (ltd), s s 87th-st, e Lexingtonave, demand, $1,922.

Heemsath, Wilhelmina, to Emanuel Levy, n w boundary line, lots Nos 5 and 6, 172 s 161st-st, 25x100; 2 years, $300.

Jenkins, Thomas J et al, to Geo E Hyatt, s s 116th-st, e 8th-ave; 1 year (4 morts), $100,000.

Katzenberger, John W and wife, to Xavier Kern, n s 170th-st, e Webster-ave; 3 years, $5,500.

Kiwi, Ernestine and another, to Louisa Mandes, w s Suffolk-st, s Broome-st; 5 years, $15,000.

Lappe, Wm, and Christina, to Johanna W Lappe, w s Old Albany Post Road, n private road; 2 years, $1,000.

Levy, Carrie and Jacob, to Ferdinand Sulzberger, s s 85