

THE Freethinker

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Liberty sustains the same relation to all our virtues that the sun does to life.—R. G. INGERSOLL.

Freethought and the Army.

FROM the present extraordinary activity of the Churches, it is evident that they are using the War just as the newspaper proprietors and blanket manufacturers are doing—as a means to business. Even the poor soldier comes in for their attention. He is being supplied by them with a daily prayer, printed on a conveniently sized paper, to admit of its being carried “inside his cap.” There I’ll wager it will remain, unless Tommy wants a light for a “Woodbine.” Why on earth can’t these people leave the soldier alone? He doesn’t want parsons and prayers, and never did. The life and training of the soldier, notwithstanding that the Bible is part of his kit and the Church one of his parades, does not admit of religion in the definite, personal sense. The ordinary soldier usually enlists between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five, a period in life when the mind becomes finally clinched on most things. Of course, he brings with him whatever religious thought or feeling he received at home or at school, and this persists for a time, but gradually slackens before the all-absorbing forces of stern routine in official life and its sequential escapement—the utter freedom of his private life. Like the individual in the early *gens*, the soldier becomes part of the fabric. All that concerns him is his consent with the fabric, whilst his individual life is of small importance; hence its tendency to freedom. In short, the soldier is more concerned with his rifle than his soul. And yet he is none the worse for it. If ever you should visit Edinburgh Castle, just climb as far as the battery, and immediately below you will find a bastion, carefully laid out as a cemetery for soldiers’ dogs and other pets. On the slopes of Green Hill—not that one “far away, without a city wall,” but at Woolwich, near London—there is another such ground for soldiers’ horses. Read the tender, and sometimes affectionate, inscriptions on the slabs there, and you will understand the soul of the soldier better than these stiff-collared parsons. Tommy will probably swear or grumble at the intrusion of his chaplain, but for his horse or dog there is ever a kindly word and pat of the hand.

The soldier is a thorough Pagan. His religion (by the card) only belongs to him as his regimental number does. After his weekly church parade—which is simply a “parade” to him, since he shows no interest in the service—he takes no further view of religion, save that he may pull down his Bible for a dusting before he lays it out with his socks and shirts at “kit inspection.” The voluntary evening church service does not attract *one in a thousand*.* As for the chaplain, he is the soldier’s *bête noir*. Even when he comes in a social guise, with his free teas at the Soldiers’ Home or tickets for an entertainment, he is usually suspected of a tract up his sleeve.

From the same force of circumstances which I have already laid down, it would appear that the

soldier is no more open to Freethought than religion. But here it must be pointed out that the authorities take precious care to keep him in entire ignorance of the former whilst the latter is forced upon him by “King’s Regulations.” When Liberal papers are kept off the soldiers’ reading-room tables, there is small chance for Freethought papers. The lending libraries are just as bad, since the shelves teem with bad fiction, military history or text-books, and divinity. Yet in spite of this conservatism, Freethought has made a certain headway in the Army, although it has invariably met with stern opposition from the authorities. “A Colonel,” writing in a current Rationalist contemporary, says that “he has never met with anything approaching religious persecution” in the Army, and considers it improbable.

My own intimate knowledge of the Army, extending over many years, compels me to disagree with this. I could specify innumerable instances of religious persecution, but one case will serve. I remember a certain unit that had a number of well-educated young men who were Freethinkers, and openly professed their ideas, even to the extent of distributing literature on the subject. These young enthusiasts were systematically persecuted on account of their opinions, and one of their officers openly boasted that it was his intention to “root them out.” He and his bigoted subordinates were fairly successful, for under the most despicable tyranny many of these young men left the service, whilst others found employment in other units.

Yet I suppose one ought to be thankful that these military Freethinkers have only this “moral suasion” to contend with nowadays, for I remember coming across some curious laws on this point when I was collecting materials for my books on military music, one of which dealt with soldiers who wilfully absented themselves from divine service. For this offence the seventeenth century Articles of War punished them by boring the tongue through with red-hot irons!

Strange to say, I have just had placed in my hands the will and testament of a certain Private B—, of the Gordon Highlanders, who is “off to the front.” This Private B— belongs to the class of intellectual Freethinkers in the Army that I have spoken of. Although brought up a Christian, he had, by independent study, become a Freethinker. He served many years with the Gordon Highlanders in India, and throughout the South African War. Finally he left the service and settled down to civil life, taking an active interest in Secularist propaganda. A few weeks ago came the news of the British retreat from Mons, where the Gordon Highlanders suffered rather badly. This disaster to his old regiment and comrades immediately aroused in him the idea that it was his duty to be with them, regardless of cost, and in a few days he had re-enlisted in his old corps. Of course, the word “patriotism,” like “pluck,” is a very elastic term; but if this is not a case of genuine patriotism, I don’t know what is.

The final instructions in the will of Private B— read: “When I am reported killed, or dead, or if missing and I fail to turn up at the finish of the War, then I wish you (the executors) to enforce the provisions I have made in my will.” He further says: “I will have died a Secularist, as I have

* I made this computation some years ago in a garrison town.

lived." The provisions of his will include the gift of his books and papers to the local Branch of the N. S. S. or the *Freethinker*, at the executors' discretion.

This document makes interesting reading in comparison with an insolent article that recently appeared in the *Globe*, which stated that our Army's heroism at the front was the outcome of its Christian training, and challenged Atheism to show a similar result. Well, Mr. Hired Scribbler of the *Globe*, I present to you Private B—, of the Gordon Highlanders, just to go on with.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Christian Ideals.

IN the war with Russia, Japan for the first time demonstrated its right to stand on an equality with the Christian nations of the world. Previous to the war, all the Christian Powers were quite willing to bestow a qualified admiration on the Japanese as a clever, ingenious, and artistic people; but as to their being accepted as the equals of Christian nations, that was a thought that never dawned upon them. The Japanese were not white; they were not Christian; they had done nothing to prove their worth; and so, in the estimation of Europeans, they must content themselves with a subordinate position. The Japanese, not having, as is the case with China, to face the obstacle of an absence of militarist tradition, saw the general position with clear eyes, and took steps accordingly. They recognised that in certain branches of science the West was ahead of the East. They saw also that in the art of manufacturing weapons of destruction the Christian nations were far ahead of the rest of the world. They found themselves brought into contact with Christian peoples, who were ever on the lookout for "acquiring" new territory, and that the only way to make their own independence secure was to meet them with the same weapons of brute force. Finally, they saw that to learn all that could be acquired in the shape of using mechanical devices for killing human beings, no better teachers existed than the followers of the "Prince of Peace." Japan studied the West, and took from it all that was useful to it. It took all it knew about guns, and battleships, and commercial exploitation. The religion of the West and the morality of the West it left alone.

The war with Russia ensued, and "Heathen" Japan flung back the forces of "Holy" Muscovy beaten and demoralised. When it came to the art of killing, the Japanese showed they were pupils of whom any Christian nation might be proud. They could kill quickly and efficiently. And all the Christian nations were loud in their praise. At last, they said, Japan has shown its worth. What was impossible before is possible now; for now that Japan has shown that it can fight, that it can slaughter as readily and as efficiently as we do, now we admit that she is entitled to rank as one of the civilised Powers and become one of us. In every other respect save that of demonstrating efficiency in war, Japan was no better after the war than it was before—in some respects it was worse. It had demonstrated nothing save that it could conduct a war. And it was Christian nations that made efficiency in the art of warfare the supreme test of a nation's worth. Amongst some tribes of savages a man is never reckoned to have quite "arrived" until he has killed his man. How much higher was the test that was applied here!

Let us take another illustration of the same point. Certain of the nations of Europe are grouped as the "Great Powers." They claim, and are accorded, first place in the councils of Europe—even of the world. They call themselves the "Great Powers." On what do they rest their claim? They are all, be it observed, *Christian* nations. In virtue of what do they claim greatness? Is it because they are supreme in art or literature or science? Surely not. In each of these directions the small nations pro-

duce as good work as the larger ones. Is it because certain European nations are morally better than others that they claim greatness? No one would be foolish enough to make that claim. The morality of Sweden, of Denmark, of Norway, of Belgium, of Holland, is as good as that of England, of France, or of Germany. Why, then, do they call themselves the "Great Powers"? Examine carefully the basis upon which this claim rests, and it is found to be threefold. Certain nations have more money, they possess more territory, they can put in the field and on the sea larger armies and navies than other nations. Therefore they claim to be the "Great Powers" of Europe. They do not even trouble to make the claim that they are wiser and better than the other nations, and, therefore, ought to lead. No; they take it for granted that when they have exhibited their bank-balance and their brute strength, that is enough to convince the world that their claim is a valid one.

In any other sense than that of possessing most money and being able to command a greater measure of brute force, these nations have no valid claim to be called "Great Powers" at all. Apart from cash and carnage, the claim of national greatness would be so difficult to make good on behalf of any nation that it would probably never be made. Great men and good men are born everywhere, and flourish everywhere, more or less, and at various seasons. To-day one country leads, to-morrow another. In one country we have a great writer, in another a great musician, in another a great scientist. Who is there to definitely decide which is the greater nation? Clearly it is not on account of moral, intellectual, or artistic greatness that countries are reckoned as first class, second class, or third class powers. If Germany is decisively beaten in the present war, it will become, in all probability, a second class Power. If it is not so beaten, it will remain a first class Power. In either case, it will be the same Germany. Nay, there are few people, in this country at least, who will deny that a Germany in which Militarism was for ever crushed would be really a better nation than a Germany victorious and with militarism in the ascendant. Yet we should unhesitatingly class as a "Great Power" the worse Germany, and as second class a Germany purified and altogether better. Mark, it is not Germany beaten that would call herself a second class Power. It is the rest of Christian Europe that would insist upon her being so regarded, because she had shown herself unable to beat others, or to hold her own in a contest of brute strength.

Here, then, cleared of all disguise and cant phraseology, are the standards of value by which Christian government has taught the people of Europe to measure greatness. Plenty of trade—obviously a good thing given certain qualifying conditions, wealth, and fighting capacity. Individuals, of course, adopt other standards of value, but Christian nations know of no other as a rule of practice. In season and out of season they have been preached. Our statesmen have talked of England's greatness, when all they had in mind was the area of our territory, the volume of our trade, the strength of our armed forces, and the extent of our wealth. It has not dawned upon them, still less has it dawned upon the average man in the street, that we might rule over even more territory, possess greater wealth, and command still more powerful forces, and still be, in all essentials, a very little nation indeed. And yet the nations in which these notions of greatness flourish are *Christian* nations, and they have been, and are, governed by ideals as materialistic—in the vicious sense of the word—as any that ever dominated individuals.

No one could detest German militarism—or the militarism of any other nation, for that matter—or could long more heartily for its downfall than I do. But let us be fair even to Germany. Her sin lies not in the fact of her ideals being of a kind unknown to, and unhonored by, the rest of Christian Europe. Her sin lies in her having allowed these ideals to

govern her more completely, and to overcome competing ideals more thoroughly, than has been the case elsewhere. She has a more severe attack of a general disease; a more powerful faith in militarism than exists elsewhere. We are not witnessing, in reality, the influence of a Bernhardt, or a Treitschke, or, as ill-informed journalists write, of a Nietzsche. We are seeing in the Germany of to-day the power of a teaching and of ideals that has never ceased to exert a commanding influence on the Christian world. In that world wealth and brute force have been worshiped with a more or less whole-hearted devotion. The worship has been usually disguised, but it has been there. German Junkerism simply shows the hideous thing stripped of all its disguise.

The cant and the folly and the absurdity of it continue. People are writing and talking as though the triumph of the Allies will mean the end of all war. I only wish I could believe it to be so. But I am convinced that it will mean nothing of the kind. Already we have been warned by Earl Roberts that it is a delusion to imagine that we can do with a smaller Army or Navy when the war is over. And others are calculating as to the amount of increase that will be required. Win or lose, it is certain that the Militarist party in this country—and it must not be forgotten that we, too, have our Militarists—will find their hands strengthened for a time. Our success will be taken to justify their outlook on life; our failure would be used none the less cogently to point the same moral. Of course, wars on the scale of the present one simply cannot be waged at very short intervals, but preparations for war will continue—and that is an evil that is almost as bad.

War is not killed by war, any more than brutality is cured by brutality. It is strange that a Freethinker should have to dwell on this point to Christians, but the necessity for it is patent. What effect in the direction of ending war had the post-revolutionary wars at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries? In what way did the Franco-Prussian war make for the cessation of war? How did the Boer war or the Russo-Japanese war tend to teach the nations the folly of war? They simply utilised them as lessons to be applied in future wars. Each war has usually sowed the seeds of further conflicts. People become habituated to its horrors as they become habituated to other horrors. War may be ended in one way, and one way only, and that by the growth of intelligence and a genuine civilisation.

"It would clear up our ideas about many things," says Spencer, "if we distinctly recognised the truth that we have two religions." For "religions" substitute "ideals," and we have the position excellently described. As Spencer goes on to explain, there is the religion of enmity and the religion of amity. To the latter we give the place of honor, but the real homage—that of practice—is paid to the former. We have the ideals of honor, of truth, of justice, of progress that govern genuinely cultivated minds in all nations and classes. But far more powerful to the mass of people are the ideals of wealth and of mere power. It is the man who has "made his pile" who is generally admired; the nation that is strongest on the plane of brute strength that is given first place. Not admired, or willingly given, it will be said, rich and powerful nations simply take first place. Not altogether so. What individuals and nations work for is what men generally admire. If individuals strive to become millionaires or multimillionaires it is surely because they are living in a world where greatness is generally reckoned in terms of cash. If nations strive for more territory and still more territory, or aim at military supremacy, that, again, is because these things are accepted by the world as a certificate of worth. Nations aim at that which gives them a standing in the eyes of other nations of the world generally. The fault of to-day is that every nation which ranks as a "first class power," or has any reasonable likelihood of taking that position, is fighting for supremacy on the

lower, instead of the higher, plane. Viscount Bryce declares that "small peoples have done, and can do, as much for the common good of humanity as large peoples." I am inclined to the opinion that at present they are doing more.

G. COHEN.

Unreasoning and Irrational Faith.

IN Exodus xvii. 8-16 there is preserved an exceedingly interesting legend about Moses and the war with the Amalekites. Possibly the whole narrative is legendary, but the following portion of it most assuredly is:—

"And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed."

If such a statement were found in the Koran or in a Hindu Scripture, an orthodox Christian would not hesitate to pronounce it unbelievable. Because it occurs in the Hebrew Bible it is regarded as literally true. Indeed, the Rev. John A. Hutton, M.A., of Glasgow, tells us that "nothing could be more foolish than to dismiss a story like this with the objection that it savors of superstition, or that it belongs to a stage of human progress which lies now far behind in the useless background of history." Of course, nobody could expect that Mr. Hutton, a preacher of the Word, would express any other opinion; but we are greatly surprised at the manner in which he tries to justify that opinion in the *Christian World* for October 8. His article, which fills two columns, is simply an outburst of religious emotionalism of the most irresponsible character. He goes to the length of informing us that, if we argue with him and try to prove how unreasonable his feeling is, he will not listen to us, because no argument, however well-grounded, appeals to him. And yet the story, as it stands, is as silly as it can be. As long as Moses held up his hand, Israel won; but the moment he let it drop, Amalek prevailed. The preachers maintain that Moses uplifted his hand in prayer, though that is not stated; but even on the assumption that such is the meaning, the story becomes more absurd still. Is it conceivable that a God worth believing in would take one side while his servant prayed, and the opposite side when the prayer ceased? We are not told how long the battle lasted. All that is said is that "Moses' hands were heavy," or that, in other words, he got tired of praying for Israel, with the result that Amalek began to gain ground. The story proceeds thus:—

"Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

Such is the story which Mr. Hutton believes to be literally true, and such is the picture of God with which it concludes. To us the story is ludicrous, and its picture of God hideous. Naturally, the reverend gentleman makes no allusion to the unspeakably cruel and revengeful Deity therein described, nor to the multitudes of horrible atrocities and immoralities alleged to have been perpetrated at his command. But no matter what anybody may think of this or any other Bible story, "the fact is," Mr. Hutton assures us, "we will pray for those who are fighting our battles, and those who are fighting our battles will fight the better because we pray and knowing that we pray." Then he adds:—

"The question is, are we, out of respect to one side of our nature, and that a side which has only quite recently come into power, to thwart and deny another side of our nature, and one which has accompanied us all the way, lifting us up from impossible dungeons of failure, urging us to go on into darkness, and when we fall, to rise again—I mean the instinct to claim the help of God?"

Only a believer in the supernatural could have framed such a question. For us the supernatural is non-existent, as is also that side of our nature which is said to discern it. "The instinct to claim the help of God" is a pure myth. The Buddhists, of whom there are some five hundred millions, do not have it, and the same is true of tens of thousands of other Atheists scattered up and down the world. The fact is, that in the absence of a belief in God, no one ever dreams of seeking his aid in any emergency. The spiritual side of our nature is an invention of the metaphysicians, and no facts have ever been forthcoming to prove its reality. We are aware that Mr. Hutton is not listening, but others are, and the truth is dawning upon growing numbers of thinking men and women that the Christian God is as deaf and dumb as was Baal of old. Not only there is no instinct to claim Divine help in time of need, there is also no Divine Being to grant the help asked for.

To return to the story, we learn that Mr. Hutton believes it merely because the compilers of the Bible "passed" it as worthy to hold a permanent place in their collection; and they were men "who knew very well the difference between religious practices which were simply superstitious, irrational, ministering to low ways of living, and other practices which expressed and defended some instinct of the human race, so precious that it must not die." And yet the reverend gentleman knows, as well as we do, that the men who handed down the religious literature of the Jews were themselves profoundly superstitious. They believed that God had chosen their nation out of all the nations upon earth to be his own peculiar people, and that only through them was it possible for the rest of the world's inhabitants to receive any Divine favors. Now, ponder the following passage:—

"There was something in that story which seemed to those wise and altogether able men of a later time to be of such consequence to the general human well-being that they allowed it to stand. And one has only to listen to the beating of his own heart, one has only to attend to the private admonitions of his own conscience in days of suspense and fear, to confess that the story stands for something which no honorable man can gainsay."

At this stage, as is clear, Mr. Hutton turns interpreter, and the interpreter is always a dangerous, bewildering, and misleading individual. As it stands the story means, in the reverend gentleman's own words, "that once upon a time when Israel was hard pressed, the hands of Moses were held up in prayer for Israel, and that it so happened that so long as his hands were uplifted Israel prospered, and when his hands sank down Israel failed." In other words, God played with the two contending armies, now befriending the one and now the other, just as Moses prayed or did not pray. But as interpreted by this ingenious modern preacher, the story stands for something radically different, and "that precious thing" we must allow him to state in his own way:

"I cannot rid myself of the idea, or belief, or obsession, call it what you will, that *my* personal behavior during these days has a direct influence upon the conflict in Europe. I feel that I also am engaged in that conflict, though with ghostly arms. If to-day I were to fail morally, were to do something which I knew to be wrong, and were I to read to-morrow that this day our arms had suffered, I should feel invincibly that it was I, my personal moral failure, which turned the fortune of battle. I should feel that I had gone asleep at my post, that I had given ground, just as truly and decisively as though I had turned my back as a soldier in the actual field."

Can anyone recognise the simple old story in that elaborate modern guise? The interpretation embodies a great principle, though the expression of it is culpably extravagant. We are convinced that Mr. Hutton overestimates the influence of his own personal behavior, just as the Kaiser underestimated his British foe; but it is perfectly true that we are all members one of another. If the reverend gentleman were to fail morally, or to do what he knew to

be wrong, in the privacy of his Glasgow study, we can comfort him with the fullest assurance that his personal fall would have no direct influence whatever upon the fortunes of the War. We go even further, and assert that it would not exert even an indirect influence of any sort. As we have said, there lies a most important principle in the interpretation, but the interpretation is not contained, even germinally, in the original story. The unmistakable meaning of the story is not "that Moses on the mountain top and the Israelites in the plain are bound together in one spiritual fortune," but that God smiled on Israel when Moses' hand was up, and on Amalek when it was down; and that is a story which has no corroboration "in every uncorrupted conscience." That we are members one of another is by no means "the whole point of the story," and to maintain that it is, is to be guilty of wresting Scripture with a vengeance. "Let us live purely, with simplicity," is an excellent advice, and no one can do better than follow it to the highest possible extent; but purity and simplicity of life, truthfulness, honesty, honor, sympathy, and love are as much displayed by unbelievers as by believers; and by whomsoever exhibited they make for the uplifting and purification of society. But that there exists a God who hears and answers prayer is the vainest of all imaginings; and if there did, in what a deplorable quandary he would find himself just now. He would certainly not know what to do.

Does Mr. Hutton really think that battles are decided by the behavior of people who are themselves not engaged, or that battles are lost or won, not by the strong and striking arms of the fighters, but by the arms uplifted to God of those who are left behind? Then the history of war gives a flat contradiction to his belief. Germany smashed France in 1870 because she had a stronger and more efficient army. And in how many wars has might triumphed over right? Mr. Hutton admits that prayers may not be answered according to the asking, which necessarily means that they may not be answered at all. It is not prayer, but work, that tells. In war, piety does not count; it is the strongest and best-directed force that wins battles. It has always been so, and so it will be now.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Rose of Freethought.

"Look to the blowing Rose about us—'Lo, Laughing,' she says, 'into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassels of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.'"

—OMAB.

A HEAP of stones, crushed and shattered, moss-covered, lying amid a tangle of weeds and creeping plants; a crumbling cross—the mute evidence of the ruin.

Among the wreckage lies an old cannon, rustworn but still frowning grimly as in the days when it belched forth death and destruction, and human lives were sacrificed in the heat of the devilish passion.

Amidst the tangle of vegetation and sundered masonry grows a wild rose. It has obtained a foothold upon the demolished walls of the church and has thrown its protecting branches about the old cannon as though trying to conceal it, or soften its menacing aspect.

It makes a picture full of meaning.

Now let us take a glance backward—back into the pathless, tangled forests of an age when there lived in dismal caves, a manlike animal, sharing its shelter with bat and serpent, with wolf and hyena, and fighting for the bones and torn flesh with his fellows. Ages pass. The man-beast has groped his way from cave to hut. The ever-changing conditions of life, the resistless power of evolution, have caused a glimmer of reason to penetrate the stupid brain. Experience shall henceforth be his guide and teacher.

Gradually the brain develops; painfully and with many a backward stumble the man gropes his way. Communities form, nations are built up only to be disrupted in the conflict of ideas and ideals. Man is learning a little, forging slowly ahead; nature, always true to herself, sacrificing the unfit, be it individual, tribe, or race.

Let us now return to the ruin by the roadside.

In almost every country there are ruins of temples erected for the worship of some form of god, the propagation of some superstition. Each and all have had their history, which tells how they flourished and finally fell into decay, strife-blackened and blood-stained, and at last weed-grown, moss-covered masses of rubbish.

The ruin we have described was a Christian Church—the crumbling cross proclaimed the fact. Think, then, how that cross drips with human blood. Think of the torture and misery, murder and rapine the religion of the cross has caused.

And why?

Simply because an idea had entered the mind of man, and it had to be fought for, preserved or destroyed. Millions of men, women, and babes have been sacrificed in the triumph of the cross. Blood has flowed like water for the glory of the Prince of Peace, and the anguished cries of the innocent and helpless have echoed down the path of civilisation.

As we ponder upon these things, before our mental vision comes a picture of martyrs to what they consider right, and a reasonless mob determined to perpetuate the crazed imaginings of their ignorant brains.

We see scheming priests planning the enslavement of mankind, designing rulers degrading the people for their own selfish purposes—the people themselves trying to turn back the wheels of progress.

We see the battles, the carnage, the murders and assassinations, the banishments and tortures; we see the fagots lighted, the instruments of torture brought out, and we see the sombre winged vulture hovering over many a field of death.

Yet through all of this awful period, struggling for a foothold, there is a tangled plant which plunged its roots into the soil of human intelligence with the first glimmer of reason that filtered into the stupid brain.

It has struggled on and on, and in spite of being purposely trampled by deluded man, or ruthlessly torn by war and carnage, it has managed to gain a place among the crevices and rocks of human intelligence, and now spreads its green branches, drooping with the weight of the fair and fragrant blossoms of Truth and Wisdom, over the muzzle of the old spirit of murder and intolerance.

It is the Rose of Freethought, a noble plant which, rising above the ruins caused by persecution and superstition, gives to the world its delicate fragrance, and leads men's thoughts to higher and nobler things.

Freethought in its relation to natural phenomena is intellectual, but in its application of the results of investigation it is emotional—the purest impulses of the heart.

Freethought searches out the truth. It must know what and why, and when it has answered those questions it endeavors to raise man to a higher plane.

Freethought, seemingly so heartless and cold, is really pulsating with human sympathy. The Freethinker, if he is worthy the name, observing conditions of ignorance, poverty, or misery, seeks for a remedy; while Christianity, founded upon the murder of the innocent, leads logically to heartlessness and brutality.

Freedom, mental, moral, and physical, is man's birthright. It must sooner or later prevail. We may dam the stream or divert its course, but sooner or later the waters must find their way to the great ocean of Life.

GEO. H. LONG.

—*Truthseeker*, New York.

Correspondence.

THE EXPULSION OF UNCLEAN SPIRITS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Referring to the "Acid Drop" on p. 632 of the *Freethinker*, commenting on the former Anglican practice, during the baptism of infants, of driving out unclean spirits from them, I subjoin an extract from the service of Infant Baptism now in use in the Roman Catholic Church, which may be of interest to your readers:—

[Before entering the Baptistry the priest says:]

I exorcise thee, every unclean spirit in the name of God the Father †, Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ His Son †, our Lord and Judge, and in the power of the Holy † Ghost that thou depart from this creature of God, N, which our Lord hath vouchsafed to call unto His holy temple that it may be made the temple of the living God, and that the Holy Ghost may dwell therein.—Response: Amen.

[Then the Priest moistens the thumb of his right hand with saliva from his mouth, and therewith makes the sign of the Cross † on the right, and afterwards on the left, ear of the child that is to be baptised, and says, once only:]

Ephtheta † that is †, be thou opened.

[And then signing the nostrils, he adds:]

For an odor † of sweetness.

[Lastly, in a louder tone of voice, he says:]

But do thou depart, O devil; for the judgment of God will come.

[He then, by name, questions the person to be baptised, saying:]

N, dost thou renounce Satan?

Sponsors.—I do renounce him.

Pr.—And all his works?

Sp.—I do renounce.

Pr.—And all his pomps?

Sp.—I do renounce them.

[The priest then dips his thumb into the oil of Catechumens (B) and with it makes the sign of the Cross † on the breast, and between the shoulders, of the infant, saying:]

I anoint thee † with the oil of salvation in Christ † Jesus, our Lord, that thou mayest have life everlasting.

Response.—Amen.

[The priest now removes the oil from his thumb, etc.]

I may also remind your readers that by the Seventy-Second Canon Ecclesiastical of the Church of England it is decreed that:—

No minister shall, without the licence and direction of the Bishop.....attempt upon any pretence whatsoever, either by possession, or obsession, by fasting and prayer, to cast out any Devil, or Devils, under pain of imputation of imposture or cosenage, and deposition from the ministry.

It would appear from this that not only is the Devil officially recognised by the Church of England, but that if a bishop grants the formal licence any minister could enjoy the supreme satisfaction of exorcising Satan—a feat that any mortal might well be proud of.

E. B.

SOLDIERS' RIGHT OF AFFIRMATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Re Mr. H. G. Farmer's letter on the above in the *Freethinker* of October 11, I would like to mention that, having served a number of years in the Volunteers, and desiring—for certain reasons—to serve one in the Territorial Army, I informed my company officer of my intention to affirm when entering the new force. No difficulty was put in my way; in fact, while the orthodox fellows were sworn in in batches of ten and fifteen, I had a ceremony all to myself, much to the wonder of my comrades who stood by.

R. H. ROSETTI.

A contemporary tells a good story of clerical presence of mind. A curate entered the pulpit, and was about to preach one of the late Rev. Charles Bradley's homilies. He was for a moment horror-struck by the sight of the Rev. Charles Bradley himself in a pew beneath him. Immediately he recovered enough self-possession to be able to say: "The beautiful sermon I am about to preach is by the Rev. Charles Bradley, whom I am glad to see in good health among us assembled here."

Tompkins: "Do you believe in the immortality of souls?"
Jenkins: "Well, not in the case of my shoes."

There is a growing impression that Lot's wife was only going back for her gloves.

The President's Prayer.

OUR readers will like to see the full text of President Wilson's call to prayer for peace. It may be an historic document—the last of the kind. We are indebted for it to our contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*.

“By the President of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, Great nations of the world have taken up arms against one another and war now draws millions of men into battle whom the counsels of statesmen have not been able to save from the terrible sacrifice; and

Whereas, In this, as in all things, it is our privilege and duty to seek counsel and succor of Almighty God, humbling ourselves before him, confessing our weakness and our lack of any wisdom equal to these things; and

Whereas, It is the especial wish and longing of the people of the United States, in prayer and counsel and all friendliness, to serve the cause of peace;

Therefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, do designate Sunday, the fourth day of October next, a day of prayer and supplication, and do request all God-fearing persons to repair on that day to their places of worship, there to unite their petitions to Almighty God, that overruling the counsel of men, setting straight the things they cannot govern or alter, taking pity on the nations now in the throes of conflict, in his mercy and goodness showing a way where men can see none, he vouchsafe his children healing peace again and restore once more that concord among men and nations without which there can be neither happiness nor true friendship nor any wholesome fruit of toil and thought in the world; praying also to this end that he forgive us our sins, our ignorance of his holy will, our wilfulness and many errors, and lead us in the paths of obedience to places of vision and to thoughts and counsels that purge and make wise.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington this eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and fourteen and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and thirty-ninth.

WOODROW WILSON.

By the President:

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN, Secretary of State.”

President Wilson (the *Truthseeker* says) has “apparently forgotten that he is the official head of a secular country, in which Church and State are constitutionally separated.” That's a bull's-eye.

ANECDOTE OF DAVID HUME.

The Rev. Dr. Carlyle, in his “Autobiography,” tells the following story of Hume, with whom he was personally and intimately acquainted, and whom he declares to have been “of a social and benevolent temper, and truly the best natured man in the world”:—

“When Mr. Robert Adam, the celebrated architect, and his brother, lived in Edinburgh with their mother (an aunt of Dr. Robertson's and a very respectable woman), she said to her son, ‘I shall be glad to see any of your companions to dinner, but I hope you will never bring the old Atheist Hume here to disturb my peace.’ But Robert soon fell on a method to reconcile her to him, for he introduced him under another name, or concealed it from her.

When the company parted she said to her son, ‘I must confess that you bring very agreeable companions about you; but the large, jolly man who sat next to me is the most agreeable of them all.’ ‘This was the very Atheist,’ said he, ‘mother, that you were so much afraid of.’ ‘Well,’ says she, ‘you may bring him here as much as you please, for he is the most innocent, agreeable, facetious man I ever met with.’

This was truly the case with him; for, though he had much learning and fine taste, and was professedly a sceptic, he had the greatest simplicity of mind and manners, with the utmost facility and benevolence of temper, of any man I ever saw. His conversation was truly irresistible.”

The Earl of Carnarvon, at a banquet, in proposing “The Health of the Clergy,” said that “in these days clergymen were expected to have the wisdom and learning of a Jeremy Taylor.” His lordship was next day reported to have said: “In these days clergymen were expected to have the wisdom and learning of a journeyman tailor.” This seemed more natural to the newspaper men, for divines like Jeremy have long been extinct.

Acid Drops.

Dr. T. K. Cheyne has written a book entitled *Reconciliation of Races and Religions*, in which he contends that peace among the nations must be preceded by friendship among the Churches. The doctor will find this a very long way to Tipperary.

The late George W. Stevens's impression of the Kaiser was that of a man “who felt himself slowly turning into ice,” so impassive was the German monarch. The description sounds like futurist journalism, or an attempt to describe the feelings of Lot's salted wife—after a thunderstorm.

Mr. Holbrook Jackson says that “the Kaiser still goes about patting his God on the head”—“but Germany no longer believes in God.” “Angels and ministers of grace defend us!” Do not the German Catholics eat their God?

The Rev. D. Ewart James, of Southend-on-Sea, has been using adjectives about Germany's “hellish creed.” We do not quarrel with the reverend gentleman's description, but we must remind him that the religion of Germany is the religion of England.

The Bishop of Barking says the war will afford openings in commercial life for young men and women, such as there had never been in the past. There's commercial acumen! If the Bishop's creed be true, it will afford far more openings to the place “where there is no winter.”

The dear clergy are everywhere attributing the excesses of the German troops to culture. What has “culture” to do with militarism, even in our own army? A tale is told of an officer of a crack regiment, being examined, and being asked to write an order on his banker for funds. After half-an-hour's trouble the result was: “Dear Cox [the name of the bankers] I am stony. Will you please send me some oof.”

We are not surprised at the ignorance—real or assumed—of the ordinary newspaper writer concerning Nietzsche. It is his business to repeat the cant of the moment, whatever it may be. And as it has become fashionable to charge Nietzsche—mainly, we think, because of his hostility to Christianity—with responsibility for German misdeeds, every newspaper, from the editor downward, feels called upon to repeat the senseless slander. Still, we were surprised to find so eminently great a writer as Thomas Hardy lending his name to the superstition, and bracketing Nietzsche with Bernhardi and Treitschke. With these Nietzsche had little or nothing in common, and the merest intelligent dipping into his writings would show this to be the case. A very prompt correction to Mr. Hardy's statements came from the pen of Mr. C. M. S. McLellan, who conclude his letter to the *Daily Chronicle* with the pertinent remark that “if for no other reason than to stop the present generation of Berlin professors laughing at us, something ought to be done to prevent our literary men persisting in their unwarranted repetition of a senseless libel.”

Mr. Arnold White is a gentleman who has a strong liking for charging people in bulk. He does not seem to care much for particular charges against individuals, but he does enjoy going for a whole sect, or nation, or race. Some time ago his favorite object of attack was the Jews. Not certain bad Jews, or undesirable Jews, but the race; and at that time it was suggested—by Mr. Zangwill, we believe—that one object of the movement to get the Jews back to Jerusalem was to rob Mr. White of his material for a living. The War has now given Mr. White the opportunity to turn his attention to the Germans; and while the object of attack has changed, the method remains unaltered. In the *Sunday Chronicle*, Mr. Arnold White suggests that when the War is over all the Germans in this country should be at once deported, and, presumably, England should be a closed country so far as Germany is concerned. The proposal is, of course, an impossible one, and any country that adopted such a policy would forfeit all claim to be called civilised. It is only interesting as showing how people lose their heads, or what serves them as such, during a period of war.

Newspaper readers have their “ha'porth of horrors” just now. Nine-tenths of the reading matter is devoted to battle, murder, and sudden death, and the ordinary news paragraphs are sometimes as lively as the following: “There were 2,500 victims of the earthquake at Konia, Asia Minor.” Providence appears to be more paternal than usual.

Mr. Robert Blatchford, writing in the *Weekly Dispatch*, has a neat paragraph concerning the horses in the war. "The battle-horse in Job," he says, "whose neck was clothed with thunder," is described by the poet as "shouting ha, ha! with the captains, and laughing at the shaking of the spear. But I fancy it was the poet who laughed and not the charger."

Father Bernard Vaughan says the Allies are "struggling under a hail of bullets and shells for the Christianity of Christ." As there are many thousands of Freethinkers and Jews in the ranks of the Allies, we think the great St. Bernard is mistaken.

An English bishop was turned out of a German town on the ground that he was a "useless mouth." The phrase is as uncompromising as a bayonet thrust, but it applies to the black army generally.

The Organising Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society has just issued a little pamphlet on *Popular Attacks on Christianity*. His information concerning Freethought societies and Freethought advocates is extensive and peculiar. He says they are energetic, which we cheerfully admit; they are well organised, which is open to question; and they are pretty adequately financed, at which we are greatly surprised. So far as we are aware, an adequately financed Freethought advocate would be a bit of a curiosity. His fellow-advocates would probably want to meet him once a week. For our part, we are ready to swear that the incomes—from Freethought—of all the Freethought writers and speakers in Great Britain combined does not equal the salary of many a popular preacher.

Incidentally Mr. Drawbridge's pamphlet gives a curious insight into that gentleman's intellectual make-up. The object of open-air meetings, he says, is (a) To secure a crowd and to keep the audience from attending his opponent's meeting; and (b) to go on speaking hour after hour and to outlast his opponent, and thus, when the rival meeting closes, to secure his opponent's audience in addition to his own. We have italicised certain words here because they are what psychologists call test sentences. They indicate the writer's mind. They show that, in his view, public propaganda is a combination of the cheap-jack and the prize-fighter. The main object is to beat your opponent, tire him out, and then secure his audience. For our own part we are strongly of opinion that any speaker in any cause who is inspired by that policy is likely to do more harm than good. They can only serve to disgust decent and thoughtful people, and if the sentences above quoted truly indicate Mr. Drawbridge's mind, he must be quite an ornament to the church, and a useful recruiting agent—for Freethought.

Mr. Drawbridge says, incidentally, that "if the existence of a loving Heavenly Father and of a future life were felt to be at all certain, or even to be highly probable, the masses would find it almost, if not quite, impossible to treat these supremely important facts with calm indifference." Quite so; and it should strike Mr. Drawbridge as casting a strong doubt upon the veracity of both doctrines that so little certainty is felt concerning them. If there is a God, it is his plain business to make his existence clear—that is, if the belief is of importance to anybody. As he has not done so, and does not do so, it seems a safe conclusion that it does not matter—especially as no one seems a bit the worse for being without him. And we are afraid that Mr. Drawbridge's ideal of outtalking an opponent and stealing his audience will hardly carry conviction to the "masses." They may admire the power of his lungs, or the tenacity of his purpose, but they may be left questioning the strength of his intelligence.

"Special constables will parade to-night at ten o'clock, and armlets only are to be worn," says a provincial paper. It sounds like a report from the Garden of Eden.

"To hell with the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs," writes a Louisville (U.S.A.) editor. How discourteous Christians are! Some of the decent persons in that tropical place might object to the arrival of such psalm-smiting bigots.

The dear old *Guardian* recently had an article on "The Military Mind and Religion," in which it said "the old classification for Sunday parade was Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Fancy Religions." Just so! With the inclusion of Indian regiments, the list of the fancy religions should be extended considerably.

Sir Claude Macdonald, who, owing to his having been our Ambassador to Japan, speaks with authority, administers a sharp rap to the German theologians who protested against "Heathen" Japanese being brought against them. He writes as one who was in Japan during the whole time of the war with Russia, and says:—

"The whole world knows with what splendid valor our Allies fought, but it is not known as generally, as I think it ought to be, how straightforward, honest, and dignified, and how loyal to us was the conduct of these negotiations; it is not generally known how appreciative of the stubborn valor of their opponents and chivalrous to them in defeat, how cheery and patient in their own sufferings were the 'heathen' Japanese. It is not known perhaps, as I know it, that fullest information regarding wounded Russians in the hospitals of Japan, for transmission to their friends, was immediately obtainable, the nature and gravity of the wounds, and, in some cases, even the temperature of the patient being telegraphed. The present Viceroy of India, the Ambassador of St. Petersburg, can bear me out in this. I venture, therefore, to think that some Christian nations, not forgetting Germany, have too much to learn of the Christian virtues of chivalry, courtesy, and honesty from heathen Japan."

A deserved rebuke, excellently administered. And, as Sir Claude intimates, deserved by other nations beside Germany. The only room for cavil lies in labelling the virtues indicated "Christian." Certainly Japan owed nothing to Christian nations in this direction.

In their haste to be smart, some journalists fail to be complimentary. Thus the *London Mail*: "The Kaiser says that God is on his side. But he has the very devil in front of him." We wonder who that is meant for—the French, the British, the Belgians, or the Russians?

The *International Review of Missions* points out that one of our oldest missionary societies has, during the past eight years, largely increased its staff, and spent more than £250,000 in the previous eight years. In spite of this, there has been no increase in the number of native church members. We are not surprised. Still, if more money has been raised and more missionaries employed, some of the main aims of these societies have been realised.

In the same magazine another writer deals with the growth and decline of religions in India. He points out that there has been a marked increase in the number of native Christians in the Panjab. The cause of this does not seem difficult to find. The colonisation on some newly irrigated land was, through the action of missionary societies, confined to Christians. And when Christianity became the door to occupancy of the land, there was an immediate increase in the number of converts. The manufacture of "Rice Christians" in India has always been a favorite occupation of the missionary societies.

The Barmouth County School Governors have decided that German is no longer to be taught in the schools under their control. Presumably, these gentlemen consider this patriotism. We consider it downright stupidity—but the one often does duty for the other.

We are glad to see, on the other hand, that the Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire Association of Headmistresses have made a strong and much needed protest against a proposal that a "Children's Army" should be raised to collect for the National Relief Fund. Begging by children, for any purpose whatever, is wholly bad, and if a child is starving and begs, the law treats it as an offence. But some people, so soon as the blessed word "collection" is named, seem to think that any and every method is justifiable. If begging must be done, let it at least be done by adults.

It is quite evident that God has got something to do with the European War, although exactly what, and why he is doing it, no one seems quite sure. The latest view is that of the Vicar of Streatham, Rev. E. Jervis. He writes in *St. Peter's Magazine* that the war is one "against spiritual wickedness in high places. The sins of Russia, the persecution of the Church in France and Wales, and the general and growing forgetfulness of God cry aloud for vengeance, and we must, as a nation, see in our misfortunes and our sufferings the chastening hand of the Almighty." As Germany is not mentioned, we take it that Mr. Jervis believes that the Kaiser is right when he claims that God is on his side. He is evidently the instrument of God who is being used to chasten us. But what an instrument! What a chastening! And what a God!

Canon Scott Holland retorts on the German theologians and their manifesto by asking what they have done to

create and secure peace? He asks why have they allowed militarism to dominate Germany and make it a menace to Europe? These are very pertinent questions; but why limit their application to Germany? What have they done in other countries to make peace secure? There are enough of them in every country in Europe to make war almost impossible if they lent themselves to the task. Fifty thousand preachers in this country alone, genuinely determined to cultivate the temper of mind that makes for peace, might act as an educative force for the whole of Europe. It is not the German theologians alone who fail to justify their existence. The indictment is equally true of every clergy all over the civilised, and uncivilised, world.

The *Catholic Times* gives currency to a Press Association report that while in Rome eighty-five per cent. of the people are in favor of the Allies, the leading figures among the minority are "the cardinals and high dignitaries of the Church, who are pro-German simply because they would like republican and anti-clerical France to get a good beating." The *Catholic Times* explains this on the assumption that the cardinals believe "French hostility to religion is one of the main causes of the terrible chastisement Europe is undergoing." This may be so; but hostility to religion is not confined to France, and there seems no adequate reason why French hostility to religion should annoy God Almighty more than hostility elsewhere. And it is just like God's way of doing things to cause cathedrals and churches to be bombarded because people are hostile to religion!

The *Catholic Times* itself favors the view that the War is the result of man hurling "defiance at the Almighty." "The nations have merited punishment by their defiance of God and neglect of religion." "Printing presses in this country have been turning out millions of atheistic and anti-Christian publications for a number of years," etc., etc. Therefore, because France—and in a smaller measure England and Germany—have neglected God, Belgium is being devastated! That, we presume, is to show what we deserve. Now, if England will only suppress all these Atheistic and anti-Christian publications, re-endow the Catholic Church, and make any attack upon Christianity a criminal offence, God will forgive us, and we may once more enjoy the peace and security and happiness of—say, the Middle Ages.

It seems that a protest has been addressed to the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Daily Mail* against their issuing Sunday editions. However excusable this might be during war time, it is felt that these Sunday editions may go on even after the War is concluded. The *Church Times* says that it had hoped the War would have recalled the nation to the due observance of the Lord's Day, and the publication of newspapers on Sunday is a serious hindrance to religion. The *Church Times* might also call the attention of the Government to the fact that battles are being fought on Sunday, without the least regard to the demands of the Christian faith. Indeed, some of the most important engagements so far have taken place on the "Sawbath."

Mr. R. J. Campbell repeats, with approval, Ruskin's saying that "the soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain." That is the kind of thing that Mr. Campbell, with his taste for feebly forcible rhetoric, would endorse. But, with all due respect to Ruskin, it is quite false. The soldier's trade involves the risk of being slain, but his business is, obviously, not to be slain. That would involve the curious conclusion that the best soldier was the one who went and got himself killed as quickly as possible. A soldier's trade is to kill. He often risks his own life in the process, and must always be prepared to take the risk, but if he can do it without risk, so much the better. The whole art of war is to kill your opponent with as little loss to yourself as is possible. We are quite aware that there is always a danger in epigrams, as applied to practical matters. It is difficult to get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in a single sentence. We admit that a man does not join the army merely for the sake of killing somebody—at a price. The case is far more complicated than that. And the soldier's object is, perhaps, rather to disable and defeat than to destroy the enemy, but the steps that have to be taken for the one object are extremely likely to lead to the other. It would be interesting if some one like the late Sir Arthur Helps—a charming and by no means shallow writer—would write a Conversation on this subject, or submit it to some other form of analysis. Meanwhile, the pious "patriotism" of preachers like Mr. Campbell—which is only distended egoism after all—will help no man to form reasonable opinions on this (or any other) question. Nine

times in ten, at least, men of his profession are panders to the community that finds them bread—and the rest.

"With God for the King and Fatherland" is said to be inscribed on a missile belonging to the very latest big gun which may be called the Kasier's Mascot. The gun carries eight miles, and the shot weighs half a ton. And "with God" is a particularly appropriate inscription on the specimen exhibited in Berlin. No wonder William says God will stand by him. He leans on the Deity on one side, and his smash-all gun on the other.

We have been favored with a copy of *A Plain Talk With Girls* by the Rev. James L. Gordon, D.D., Pastor of the Central Congregational Church, Winnipeg—"published through the kindness of J. B." We hope J. B.'s kindness is a real one to the reverend gentleman; it is a very questionable one to anybody else. It is full of sickening gush; it represents nature falsely, and tells falsehoods to support the deception. The following story occurs on the last page:—

"The mother of David Hume, a simple-hearted Scotch woman, following the example of her son, became an unbeliever and an agnostic, but on her death-bed she penned a letter, in which were to be found these words: 'Oh, David, my son, give me back my religion, my Bible, my Christ, my God.'"

The word "agnostic" is a note of alarm to a well-informed reader. It was not known until its invention by Professor Huxley more than a hundred years afterwards. We have read pretty well everything that can claim the least authority regarding David Hume, and we are as sure as a non-infallible person can be that the only truth in this pious story which comes from Winnipeg is that there was a famous sceptic called David Hume, and that he had a mother whom he loved and respected. All the rest is, to the best of our knowledge, a pious invention. It proceeds from the great Christian factory of lies for the glory of God—and is a very poor one at that. We do not accuse the Rev. J. L. Gordon of having manufactured it himself—we should ascribe its production to a more original pen. We ask him to inform us on what authority he presents this remarkable story to the world? Or does a discourse to girls justify any nonsense and any untruth, in his estimation?

Rev. A. C. Spurr went out to the antipodes to save Christianity from "infidelity." Presumably he left it perfectly safe here. But it must have got into danger again, for the reverend gentleman has returned home, and is delivering a course of Bible lectures on Thursday evenings at Regent's Park Chapel. His second lecture should excite a good deal of interest. It is on "What is left of which we are certain?" It will be a clever feat to spread that minute substance over such a considerable area. An hour's lecture on nothing! Lord Rochester wrote a poem on it, and a very good one too; but Mr. Spurr is not Lord Rochester, and Lord Rochester's poem on "Nothing" is not an hour long.

According to the "puff" on the back of his syllabus, Mr. Spurr will make an endeavor to reach ROCK BOTTOM. (Thus in the original.) Is this a reference to what Moses saw on Mount Sinai?

The *Manchester Guardian* reports a sermon by the Rev. H. J. Barker, of local celebrity—if any—on "Germany's Atheism." She had lost her faith in God,—which, by the way, is a huge joke, for God and the Kaiser are constant companions, if the latter's word is good for anything—and the result was what we see in the newspapers. England had a more "simple faith" in God and the Bible, and the result was her comparative safety from war's alarms. But is not this a pulpit fallacy? Is not the reverend gentleman confusing Providence with the Straits of Dover?

A good story is welcome even from a battlefield. The following appeared in Tuesday's *Daily Chronicle*, as borrowed from an article by M. Georges Berthoulat in the *Liberté*:—"The army corps whose base he was visiting has two chaplains—a Catholic priest and a Jewish Rabbi. They seemed to be very good friends as well as the best of good fellows. One evening they were kept on the battlefield looking after some wounded, and found it impossible to get back to the lines. After looking round, they found an abandoned farm with a single ragged pallet. Here they spent the night side by side; and, as they went off to sleep, the priest remarked to the Rabbi: 'If there were only a photographer here!—the Old and the New Testament as bed-fellows.'"

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £217. Received since:—W. L. R., 8s. 3d.; Twenty-Five Years' Subscriber, 15s.; G. L. B., 10s.

G. L. B.—Glad that you both still find the *Freethinker* a "weekly treat." Thanks for the rest of your pleasant letter.

MILDRED WINTERS.—There were Atheists in the French Revolution, but no party of Atheists, unless calling them so backwards makes them so.

W. P. BALL.—Your batches of cuttings are always welcome.

J. BATESON.—Where and when did the sect you mention really have any power of persecuting?

W. L. R.—Our shop manager will try to get a second-hand copy of the book and send you. Thanks for your encouraging letter.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' SUBSCRIBER.—Pleased to have your appreciation and good wishes after all this time. Mr. Cohen's articles merit all your praise, but we fear you won't see one from his pen on the subject of prophecy, in which we don't think he is much interested.

X. Y. Z.—The lines are Wordsworth's. We cannot give you the precise reference at the moment. But if you care to read the poet right through (supposing you have not done so) to find them, you would be repaid.

JOHN MOSLEY.—Men of God are fond of charging Atheists with intellectual pride. Few would accuse them of such a crime; there must be something to work on in the beginning.

M. STEINBERGER.—You agree with us as to the greatness of Cæsar, who, by the way, was an avowed Freethinker. There is nothing in Atilla to be mentioned in the same breath.

HEBERT GARTHWALTE.—Glad to know your father regarded us with "great respect." You will understand that we had to shorten the obituary—especially in relation to the Omar Khayyam stanzas—beautiful as they are.

T. BARKER.—Dropping bombs on Paris in the German way seems sheer devilry. Killing a few girls in the streets cannot affect the main issue of the war, and injuring Notre Dame is injuring what technically belongs to France but, in reality, to the world.

J. HIGGINS.—Next week.

H. B. SAMUELS.—We could not possibly undertake the intermediate work of introduction. On the whole, we think it would be better, in such matters as that of the Belgian refugees, for Freethinkers to act in co-operation with their fellow-citizens.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

There is likely to be a paucity of "Sugar Plums" while this terrible war lasts. Fighting is always the most fascinating thing to human interest. Christianity would have made no more headway than a hundred other religions without the story of Calvary. "The blood of Christ" settled that struggle for existence. After a lapse of nineteen hundred years blood still has its old attraction. Prize-ring fights and suffragette arson are "off." The real thing has taken their place. And what can be expected with regard to a movement like Freethought? Its "glad tidings of good news" must wait for a more convenient season.

During the stormy and dangerous days of the French Revolution a good many people, who had nothing the matter with them physically, found it difficult, and even impossible, to keep out of heaven—or whatever was written in the Book of Fate or Providence as their place of destination. When the Revolution was over, and a matter of

memory, one old gentleman was asked what he had done in it, and he replied, "*J'ai vécu*"—"I have lived," or more idiomatically, "I pulled through it." It will be something the same with a good many advanced journals during the present war. Some have disappeared already, others are in a bad way, some will be able to say "*J'ai vécu*" at the end. They will have managed to "live," which is always the hardest thing to do in this world, and the one in which man always fails at the last.

We believe the *Freethinker* will be one of the "pull-throughs." But it will not be without its trials. It has not yet suffered as much as we expected, but a gradual continuous drop amounts to a good deal in time. We repeat our invitation to our friends, and *its* friends, to counteract the natural effect of the war by doing their very best to promote its circulation by introducing it to their friends and acquaintances. Many people would soon be regular readers of this journal if they only knew of its existence. We make an earnest appeal to our friends in this direction.

Another thing. Freethought lecturing is knocked on the head just now. People want to hear about nothing but the War. That is, *most* people. There is a "remnant"—though they are not enough. Obviously, therefore, we shall have to meet any deficit on the *Freethinker*, etc., out of the President's Honorarium Fund. Will our friends who mean to subscribe, but have not done so yet, take the hint?

A very distant correspondent writes to us that when visiting London seven years ago he called at 2 Newcastle-street, and was much surprised at what he saw there. He expected to find

"a big building served with lifts and lift boys, and clerks here and general johnnies there, and having to pass between big machines striking off books, leaflets, etc. But instead I found the cream of the English tongue managed and controlled in such humble circumstances. It was almost beyond belief. If ever I saw the miraculous it was at 2 Newcastle-street.....I hope to see you in better surroundings some day."

We have this correspondent's "sympathy in every direction."

The *English Review* for October reached us rather late. Perhaps the gem of it is Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham's prose pastoral. It is a very deep and delicate study of an old-fashioned English farmer. Mr. Austin Harrison writes powerfully on "The Kaiser's World War," and there are able and interesting articles by Mr. L. March Phillipps, Mr. Edward Thomas, Mr. Arthur Ransome, Mr. E. V. Lucas, and Mr. E. S. P. Haynes,—the latter, however, on "Christianity" not being all it might be. There are also some stanzas by a poet who publishes too seldom—Mr. Aleister Crowley.

The Testimonial to Mr. W. J. Ramsey will take place on the date of the actual publication of this week's *Freethinker*. We are sorry we could not attend. We hope, however, that some competent pen will be moved to send us an early report of the proceedings. We were present "in spirit," as the saying is.

We dropped our old friend, Mr. W. Heaford, a hasty post-card to assure him that we were thinking of him with much sympathy, and we are glad to receive a reply from him couched in a more cheerful and almost optimistic tone. He is looking forward to a more rapid recovery than was at first thought possible. He is looking forward to the time when he will be strong enough to move about and obtain the stimulus of change and fresh air.

WHITED SEPULCHRES.

The preacher prayed in woeful tone
For the thief in the felon's cell,
And told of his punishment here on earth
And his endless days in hell;
But the thief that sat in the best front pew
That he might be seen and heard—
Of the Shylock thief of the hopeless poor,
The priest never uttered a word!

And he told of the harlot steeped in sin,
And the rum-seller's awful doom;
And he said if they didn't cease to increase,
Hell would run short of room;
But the pirates that have stolen the earth,
And their brothers' blood have shed—
Oh! the parson smiled as he winked at them,
And never a word he said!

The Monk and the Woman.—III.

*A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian
to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.
(Concluded from p. 653.)*

It is regrettable to observe how this Bible prejudice against woman has tainted the thought of even the foremost of our poets and dramatists. Goethe's Faust, for example, starts with the intellectual mission to wrest from close-mouthed nature her secrets. But Gretchen strikes the pen from his hand and the thought from his brain, and he degenerates into an ordinary pleasure-seeker. Shakespeare creates a Hamlet whose thought has all the straightness and swiftness of the arrow, but a pretty girl, Ophelia, almost wrecks his reason. It is the Bible story of Samson—strong, free, unconquerable—shorn of his strength by a woman, over again. Delilah's lap becomes Samson's grave. Betrayed by a woman, his eyes are dug out, and the crowd that yesterday shuddered at the mention of his name, now makes of him a clown. The ancient Greeks were free, to a considerable extent, from this superstition about woman. Æschylus, for example, does not give to Prometheus, in his warfare against the gods, a woman to deviate him from his task. No Gretchen or Ophelia or Delilah stands between Prometheus and the fire he seeks to steal for the enlightenment of the world. Nor has Prometheus a wife like the wife of Job to approach him with the treacherous advice, "Curse God and die."

Yet, notwithstanding the mean rôle which the Oriental religion assigns to woman, she is the mainstay of that religion. This raises an interesting question: Why is woman more superstitious than man? It will be admitted that, generally speaking, women are more timid than men. This may be the result, to some extent, of her physical condition, but is more largely due to the manner of her education. The fact remains, however, be the cause what it may, that women are more easily frightened than men, and I believe that is why they are more superstitious. It is as true as any proposition in mathematics that where there is fear there is superstition, and where there is more fear there is more superstition. I will revise my statement if you can find me a brave woman or a brave man who is also superstitious; or, if you will find me an easily frightened person who is not also superstitious. Rutherford Alcock, in his work on Oriental Religions, says that the majority of worshipers in the temples of Japan are women and children. In India, nine-tenths of the pilgrims are women. Herbert Spencer writes that among certain primitive tribes the women believe in more gods than the men. That is quite true also of the Catholic women. They believe in more saints, in more divinities, than their Protestant sisters. Indeed, the Catholic Church could very justly be called the *female church par excellence*. The religiosity of women, then, may be explained by the fact that, being more exposed to perils, it is easier to excite their fears. They will pray and beg for help much quicker than men. This is also true of children. Tell little boys and girls that the lightning is after them, or that the thunder is looking for them, and they will bury their heads in their mother's or father's lap, sobbing and shaking with fear. The Church is anxious to have the children because, on account of this susceptibility to fear, they are very promising subjects for its teachings. To establish my point that fear is the food superstition thrives upon, let me call your attention to the example of the sick. As a rule, the majority of people send for a priest when they are sick. This further proof that it is fear which feeds and fattens superstition is furnished, I say, by the behavior of the majority of people when they fall sick and think that they are going to die. Do they not invariably send for the priest? And is it not fear that brings the sick and the priest together in the death-chamber? When well, strong, and prosperous, they

are brave, and feel no need for the priest. But when health and wealth are gone, and the terrors of the future, the terrors of the unknown are upon them, they begin to think of the priest. Superstition is nothing but the panicky state of the mind—it is the stampede of the faculties.

The more frightened we are the more exacting is the priest in the presence of some great danger. Our extremity is his opportunity.

No priest or preacher is ever so eloquent as when speaking at a funeral, or when summoned to the death-bed. The more frightened is the dying, the more eloquent is the divine. Even stout-hearted men and women have been known to succumb to the eloquence of the priest, when at death's door. "Wait until you come to die," is the stereotyped argument against healthy and robust unbelievers. And it sometimes happens that when a Rationalist is down on his back, the priest succeeds in converting him. If he fails to convert the dying, he rarely fails to capture his corpse if the deceased is a distinguished personage. When Mark Twain was alive, they could not get him into a church; as soon as he was dead, his body was taken to the Brick Presbyterian Church on Fifth-avenue, in New York City. Darwin was too large for any church during his lifetime; but no sooner was he dead, than he was given a church funeral in Westminster Abbey. Let us appreciate the brave struggle of those glorious infidels, who even in the valley of the shadow of death triumphed over fear and the priest, and fell asleep with the flag still in their hands. Blessed be the memory of those who even in death, with feeble pulse and sinking breath, remained loyal to reason—the only emancipator from fear!

While watching the performance this thought also came to me very forcibly, that religion and happiness do not as a rule go together. Religion, that is to say, the kind preached in the Churches, both Protestant and Catholic, will not permit us to enjoy ourselves in this world. Just when we feel that we ought to be happy, religion steps in with a reason why we should not be happy. The gods are jealous of human happiness, and they leave nothing undone to make this world "a vale of tears" for us. In fact, they know that their existence depends upon our being cast down and dejected. Not until we cry "out of the depths" will they hear us. These two people in *The Garden of Allah* had every reason to be happy; they were still young, they were both in splendid health, and they were in love. But religion would not permit them to enjoy one another. It stepped in and separated them. It robbed the man of all his hopes and sent him back to the desolation and gloom of the monastery; and it shattered the woman's rainbow completely, leaving her heart-broken and disconsolate for the rest of her life. It also made of the unborn infant an orphan, depriving it of the companionship and support of a father. The belief that happiness makes people forget God, or that it leads them to look upon this world as their heaven, is the basis of the prejudice against it. Then again, the idea that the love of God is very much better than the love of man, or woman, or child, or friend, makes one discontented with such pleasures as life can give. The real does not satisfy us because of the imaginary. The fanciful love of God makes the real love of man or woman seem commonplace and even sinful. Home is real, but the thought of an imaginary heaven in the clouds often makes a man or woman give it up for a convent. Wife and husband and child are real, but an imaginary Savior dearer than wife, husband, or child has made monks and nuns of many human beings. The present is like a red, red rose, fragrant and radiant, but the worry of the hereafter has plucked all of its petals, leaving only the thorns in our hands. Heaven, like some far away mirage, has blinded us to the humbler joys of life.

Yet still in another sense is the popular religion detrimental to human happiness. You have, for example, often heard the preacher say to his hearers, "Do not do anything which Christ would not approve

of," or, "Do not go where Jesus will not accompany you." But would not such advice keep one in a state of hopeless perplexity? Would it not make of life one long worry? Every time one is about to speak or act one must ask, "Will this please Jesus?" And, "What will he think of that, or the other thing?" Now, if it were a comparatively facile matter to find out the pleasure of Jesus on matters public or private, there would be some reason for wishing to consult him on every question that comes up. But how are we to ascertain what Jesus would have us do under a given circumstance? Does Jesus approve of the theatre? Would he go to the opera with us? Would he permit smoking? Does he believe in baseball, or cards? Would he take a little wine for his health's sake if he were living to-day? And what are his views on politics, the economic struggle, the trusts, the tariff, or the divorce question? Is there anybody who can supply this information to us? Jesus himself never left a line in writing, and he has not been heard from for the past twenty hundred years. The sphinx in the African wilderness is not less uncommunicative than Jesus. But "Consult the Bible," says the Protestant, and "Consult the church," says the Catholic. Ah, that means—consult *us*. For if each reader may consult the Bible for himself, why are there heresy trials in the Protestant, and excommunications in the Catholic Church?

Moreover, life is a much bigger thing to-day than it was when Jesus was living. New problems require new explanations. Life is too big a thing to be covered by the thought of one man or of one age. The Bible is a closed book; life, on the other hand, opens anew every day, and is still unfinished. To try to stretch or thrash the thought of a Galilean Jew of two thousand years ago to make it reach the heights and depths of modern life, with its ever-changing issues, cumulative and tremendous—would be enough to drive a man out of his wits. That more people do not go mad under the strain of theology is a compliment to the essential sanity of human nature.

Many years ago I found a young man, newly married, and with every prospect of a bright future, in great mental distress. I was his minister, and he came to tell me that he was afraid he had committed *the unpardonable sin*. Poor soul! He did not know what the unpardonable sin was, neither did I; but he had read in the Bible that there was such a sin and he imagined himself guilty of it, in consequence of which he suffered mental torture night and day. We have only to read the biographies of revivalists to come across just such pathetic cases. The example of the monk and his wife in the story of *The Garden of Allah* is an eloquent illustration of the power of the teaching of the Churches to destroy happiness. As already stated, these two soul-mates were just beginning to be serviceable to one another, and to enjoy the pleasure of each making the other happy. For happiness, to be enjoyed, must be shared. Besides, they were looking forward to the birth of their first child, and planning, no doubt, with many glimpses into the future, to give the visitor a sweet welcome. What could be a deeper joy than to watch over the gradual unfolding—the budding of the child mind. They were going to bend over its cradle, as the sun over the earth in the springtime. Yet with one stroke religion destroyed their happiness and turned their day into night. The apple was hardly lifted to their lips when the priest whispered in their ears, "Do not eat of it, there is a worm at its core," and he pointed their astonished gaze to the imaginary apple in the skies, so much better than any earthen apple. For the sake of that fictitious, heavenly apple, they allowed themselves to be robbed of the fruit that grew in their own yard.

When I saw the monk, under the influence of his misguided wife, re-enter his cell in the monastery, which is not much different from a living tomb—when I saw him part with the glorious world with all its joys of home and humanity—when I saw him turn his back upon the mother of his child soon

to arrive—I recalled to mind these words of Jesus, spoken nearly two thousand years ago, and still hanging upon the horizon like a menacing cloud: "If any man hate not father, mother, brother, sister, wife, husband, or children for my sake, he is not worthy of me." I will spend what life I have still left me to change that divine malediction into a human evangel: If anyone love father, mother, husband, wife, or children more than the far-away gods, he shall be deemed worthy of the best and the highest that life can give. Love *me*! cry the gods. But what can our love do for a god? Is he not perfect in himself? Or is he so short of help or of happiness that we should worry about him? But man's love for woman, and woman's love for man is indispensable each to the others completeness. Nothing can take the place of the love of man for woman, or woman for man. Ye men and women! Break not your hearts for the gods, nor lose your world for their heaven!

The Evolution of Flowers.—II.

(Concluded from p. 635.)

AS already indicated, several kinds of insects carry mouth-organs specially adapted for suction, and these have been developed through an adjustment to liquid food from the masticating organs of earlier insects whose descendants are still, in many orders, to be found in an unmodified state. It is a fair hypothesis that the Diptera (flies) may have slowly evolved the sucking organs which many of them now possess through their habit of feeding on soft material and liquid food. And more recently still, several families of flies have become adapted to a honey diet, and have, in consequence, evolved a lengthy proboscis which reaches the utmost extremity of the nectary which lies at the base of the deep corolla tubes of various flowers. Among other insects other adaptations to meet the numerous demands of life may be seen. These, however, need not detain us, and we will glance at a few of the more important instances of the rôle played by insect agency in the evolution of floral structures.

Among these phenomena the activities of the moths and butterflies (Lepidoptera) occupy a high place. The suctorial proboscis of this multitudinous insect order has been specially adapted to a honey diet, and modern biologists are constrained to conclude that these interesting and ornate creatures would cease to exist in the absence of the nectar-holding floral organs of plants. With reference to the ancestry of the moths and butterflies, Professor Weismann states that:—

"This large and diverse insect-group is probably descended from the ancestors of the modern caddis flies whose weakly developed jaws were chiefly used for licking up the sugary juices of plants. But as flowering plants evolved, the licking apparatus of the primitive butterflies developed more and more into a sucking organ, and was ultimately transformed into the long, spirally coiled suctorial proboscis as we see it in modern butterflies."

This is no mere conjecture, but a judgment based on a profound anatomical study of the whole Lepidopteron class in which several eminent men of science have co-operated. It was no easy task to trace the aborted organs, for nearly all the mouth-parts of diurnal and nocturnal Lepidoptera have dwindled to mere hints of their former existence. But sufficient of these organs yet remains to prove the affinity of the Lepidoptera with insects whose mandibles and other mouth-parts are still essential to their continued life. In the Lepidoptera the first maxillæ have undergone the most remarkable modifications; they are enormously strengthened and enlarged and are surprisingly dissimilar to the maxillæ of every other of the countless insect groups. These organs have, in this instance, become transformed into hollow,—

"probe-like half-tubes, which fit together exactly, and thus form a closed sucking-tube of most complex con-

struction, composed of many small joints, after the fashion of a chain-saw, which are all moved by little muscles, and are subject to the will through the nerves, and are furnished with tactile and taste papillæ."

The spiral tongue or proboscis of the butterflies is the only mouth appendage that has undergone any material development. It is essentially a flower-feeding adaptation. If we view the life of the insect as extending from the birth of the caterpillar to the death of the winged adult, the butterfly's career becomes a short if brilliant episode in the metamorphosis of the species. The mature butterfly has merely to maintain itself on its purloined nectar until the female mates with her partner and deposits the eggs from which the succeeding generation develops. As there was no necessity for further structural change none has taken place.

But with the bees these structural modifications are not confined to the mouth appendages. The bee's social activities are conducted on an ampler scale; not only does it attend to its own immediate and remote necessities, but it also provides for its offspring. The honey gathering bees are probably the descendants of insects akin to the burrowing wasps. These latter insects do not nourish their broods on nectar, but on caterpillars and other organisms which are stung to death or simply paralysed and are then placed in the wasp's nest for the larvæ to devour as soon as they emerge from the egg.

A brief reference to the feeding organs of the primitive insects from which the higher bees have been evolved may help us to more firmly grasp the meaning of their later transformations. The mouth organs of beetles are made up of three pairs of jaws. The mandibles are the seizing and masticating jaws. These have played no part in the evolution of flowers as they in no way contribute to the formation of the suctorial proboscis either in butterflies or bees. The first and second maxillæ, as the other two pairs of jaws are termed, are modelled on the same plan as the mandibles, and in the bee the inner jaws have developed into the long vermiform proboscis which enables the insect to suck up the nectar of flowers.

This transformation of jaws into a suctorial organ is well illustrated by the burrowing wasps, as in these predaceous insects the under-lip has varied in the direction of a licking organ. With *Prosopis*, one of the bees, an insect which, unlike the burrowing wasp, feeds its larvæ on honey and pollen, this development has proceeded a little further still. It is only in the hive-bee that the transformation is complete. Therefore, we find that "of the three pairs of jaws in insects, only the first pair, the mandibles, have remained unaltered, obviously because the bee requires a biting organ for eating pollen, for kneading wax, and for building cells."

It may be claimed then, that the evidence that flowers have become adapted to the requirements of insects, and that insects have undergone structural and functional modifications to meet the necessities of flowers is abundant and conclusive. Nay, the very existence of gaily colored and perfumed blooms is dependent upon the visits of insects, while pollen and nectar gathering insects have been transformed in a thousand ways to cross-fertilise their favorite flowers.

Science is now in a position to assert that the ancestral forms of the higher flora were all anemophilous, as many catkin-bearing trees, such as the oak, birch, beech, and hornbeam still are. The pollen was carried by the breeze through the air, and sometimes, by happy chance, settled on the stigma of the female flower. In past geological times, before modern blossoms were in being, insects doubtless visited the male inflorescences of wind fertilised plants to plunder their pollen, thus reducing the chances of reproduction in the plants they plundered. But, in flying from flower to flower, they must have occasionally alighted on a female blossom, and thus assisted in the act of fertilisation. Wind fertilisation obviously is dependent upon favorable atmospheric conditions, so that when the chance

insect pollination began to occur among ordinarily anemophilous plants, the foundations were established for that elaborate system of cross-fertilisation by organic activity which now so widely obtains.

Two ways at least were open to plants to turn the visits of insects to practical account. The male blossom was already the recipient of insect attention; the female flower might also offer an inducement to insect visitation, or bisexual blossoms could be evolved. As we are now aware, Nature adopted both devices. The former contrivance occurs in the willow, and insects are inveigled into the act of cross-pollination through the production in both male and female catkins of a primitive nectary in which honey is secreted. The insects roam to and fro among the male and female willow inflorescences and transfer the sticky pollen from the anthers to the stigma of the female bloom.

Cross fertilisation has, however, been more commonly secured by the development of hermaphrodite flowers. To the plant this method has greater advantages, as it is less likely to miscarry. All the earlier flowers were unisexual, although bisexual blossoms are now in the ascendant. As Professor Weismann writes:—

"The beginnings of the modification of the unisexual flowers in this direction may be seen in variations which occur even now, for we not infrequently find, in a male catkin, individual blossoms which, in addition to the stamens, possess also a pistil with a stigma."

With the advent of these hermaphrodite flowers the conditions were established which ultimately led to the marvellous adaptations which so many of the higher floral structures now display. From a uniform green the floral organs evolved those striking colors which enable insects to see them at a distance. It has been experimentally proved that flowers which are extremely conspicuous are more frequently visited by insects than those less readily observed; while these last, as a rule, mainly rely on self-fructification. Attempts have been made to prove that insects are indifferent to the colors of flowers; but these endeavors, in company with others of a kindred character, have been completely overthrown by more recent inquiries of a most thorough and critical nature. Not that it is contended that color is the sole guide to insects in search of honey and pollen; perfume also plays its part, and calls its visitors from afar. Nor is this all. With the permanent establishment of ornate floral organs the struggle for existence between contending plants was intensified, and it became necessary to discriminate between the value received by the plants from the presence of the various insects. When once the certainty of insect visitation had been gained, it became a matter of consequence that such insects as those that simply stole the nectar without giving compensation for their purloined sweets should be excluded from the feast. Before insect specialisation began, the nectaries would be at the mercy of all that chose to come. The nectary was then placed at a more concealed part of the flower. And so this protective adaptation proceeded until only such insects as possessed a lengthy proboscis—which developed step by step with the lengthening corolla-tube of the flower—could obtain access to the deeply entrenched nectar lying within.

Lest it be thought that there is ampler utility in the presence of a medley of insect life, it may be mentioned that flowers that restrict themselves to the ministrations of a select set of visitors economise their pollen and secure a larger number of cross-fertilisations. Insects habituated to attend the wants of special flowers are more likely to roam from bloom to bloom in the same species of plant. The famous Hermann Müller noted from personal observation that, "in four minutes, one of the humming-bird hawk-moths (*Macroglossa stellatarum*) visited 108 different flowers of the same species, the beautiful Alpine violet (*Viola calcarata*), one after the other, and it may have effected an equal number of pollinations in that short time."

Flower specialisation has, therefore, survival value, and it helps to elucidate the amazing adaptations of orchids and other floral organisms, as well as the remarkable elongation of the proboscis in butterflies and bees.

Those plants that proved most successful in attracting useful insects and, at the same time, managed to keep useless ones at a distance, furnished themselves with a powerful weapon for the preservation of their race. That these interesting and instructive phenomena cannot be explained by the design theory is frequently illustrated by their comparative imperfection. Innumerable flowers are deprived of their pollen and nectar by insects that render them nothing in return. Some of the most complex contrivances for assuring cross-fertilisation are completely nullified by wood-bees, bumble-bees, and other insects which pierce through the nectary from outside, rob the flower of its honey, and thus bring to nought the most elaborately prepared structures evolved for the purpose of promoting the production of its precious seeds. If these failures are ever to be overcome, they must be surmounted by further evolution. Protective devices developed by the play of natural forces will alone produce immunity to the wasteful pilferings of such insect marauders as these.

T. F. PALMER.

Belief and Knowledge.

MANY people make no distinction between knowledge and belief, but the distinction is one which it is important to bear in mind, especially in controversy. Some persons think they know a great deal because they believe a great deal, and such persons imagine others know less than they do, because such other persons only assert what they know, being reserved in regard to what they do not know.

One may believe much and know but little, and one may know much and have a very short creed. The man of large experience and knowledge is cautious and discriminating in accepting unverified statements. The ignorant man is less capable of calculating probabilities, and is easily imposed upon by false statements. It is easier to assent to an old creed, making the authority of a name or book serve in the place of proof, than it is to examine a subject, weigh evidence, and make that the basis of belief or disbelief. It is men accustomed, more or less, to the authority of creeds, and to the idea of the pre-eminent importance of believing this or that dogma, who pride themselves more on what they know, and more on the amount of the marvellous they can swallow, than on the amount of evidence they can adduce to sustain their views, or on the strength of the reasons they can give for adopting and adhering to them. Belief may exist without any real evidence, and in conflict with truth. But what one knows is always true.

A conviction is not to be treated as of no value simply because it is a belief. Beliefs move men to action, knowledge guides and corrects them. Theological teachers have prepared statements of what should be believed, declare disbelief, and even doubt, sinful in advance, and have then pronounced all who rejected their theological nostrum as deserving and destined to eternal suffering. How absurd! Men may be urged to examine, but to urge them to believe is to treat them like children. If the evidence of any claim is good, it will sooner or later be accepted by all rational minds. The man of science does not plead for converts. He does not demand belief. He invites investigation. He does not threaten men with damnation if they believe not. He assures them that they will be rewarded with possession of the truth if they will apply their minds to the study of his teachings.

Theology, by stereotyping old errors and antiquated methods, has become the enemy, not only of intellectual growth and material prosperity, but of

social progress and natural morality. Science is radical and progressive. Theology is "the Bourbon of the world of thought." Science is knowledge classified; theology is ignorance petrified. Science is the friend, the benefactor, the "savior" of mankind; its mission is to bless and benefit the race; it hath its "victories no less renowned than war."

Theology has persecuted and murdered reformers, strangled genius, reddened the earth with human blood, and covered it with a mantle of darkness. Science is gaining ground every day; theology is rapidly losing its influence over the minds of men. The realm of science is the region of natural law; the empire of theology is the region of the supernatural. The enlargement of the former corresponds with man's progress and enlightenment; the domain of the latter has for centuries, with the decay of superstition, been growing "small by degrees and beautifully less."

Theology claims to be able to give an explanation of this universe. Science, which deals with the observable and calculable, studies the order and sequences of the phenomena. The absolute nature of things is unknown, and the puzzle of existence man cannot solve. A mystery to ourselves, we are in the midst of mysteries we cannot unravel. We are all children in the dark, getting now and then a glimpse of the light.

The widest observation and experience in a lifetime, and the most complete familiarity with the results of all investigation past and present, will not remove the barriers to a solution of the problem of this universe; because no amount of knowledge possible to man can relieve him from the organically imposed limitations of human intelligence.

All our ideas of the external world are and must for ever be relative. We can know things only as they are related to us, as they are colored by our consciousness, and modified by the conditions of the human organism. So long as there is organism and environment, knowledge is possible only in the form of a relation—a relation between the subject, man, and the object, external nature.

We can know things only as they are related to the mind. By no power of thought, by no ingenuity of reasoning, by no effort of the will, can we scale or destroy the eternal wall which confines us to the region of the relative, and makes for ever impossible knowledge of the absolute, or of "the thing in itself."

—B. F. UNDERWOOD.

The Shadow of Buddha.

Adapted from Nietzsche.

WHEN Buddha died his shadow long was shown,
A spectral figure, fearful and immense,
Upon the wall of a vast cavern thrown,
Where worshipers still paid it reverence;
God, too, is dead; but ages yet will pass
Before his shadow fades and disappears,
When all men shall the vanished vision class
With the dim myths of man's barbaric years.

Long must we strive its influence to o'ercome,
And 'gainst its dull narcotic power contend,
Ere it shall cease the spirit of man to numb,
And warp his genius from its proper end:
Till man that shadow doth no more behold,
Never can he his better self unfold.

B. D.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Garthwaite, a veteran and well-known Freethinker, of Grimsby, at the age of seventy-two. He was a life-long abstainer, and one of the pioneers of temperance. He was respected by all who knew him, and beloved by all his family. His only regret in death was leaving "that pathetic figure"—a blind wife, to mourn his loss. He was conscious to the last moment of his life, and found an adequate support in his principles. The funeral was conducted by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, whom the mourners desire to thank for his sympathetic words and attitude.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.**OUTDOOR.**

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 3, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Miss Kough, a Lecture.



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