

# THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*You ask in what poets can be useful. Simply this—in permeating civilisation with light.*—VICTOR HUGO.

## Please God.

WE should have enough to do to please all our readers. As a matter of fact we never tried to please any of them. We have only tried to please ourselves. It does not surprise us that some readers like what we have written in regard to this war, that others do not like it, and that a few would have us executed for treason felony. The last belong to the Christian Evidence variety of our enemies. One of these blackguardly creatures told his audience last Sunday that Atheists ought to be turned out of England as German spies, and all he could say in support of this was that Mr. Foote had publicly stated that he had not given a penny to the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund and had not advised anyone else to give a penny. Even that person's audience wanted something more definite and satisfactory, and he saw he had better drop the subject. Other readers fancy we ought to support the Government through thick and thin, and devote all our time to aiding the recruiting sergeant,—as if that were our work in the world, when there are so many others who can do it better than we can, but cannot do some other things as well as we can, or, for that matter, do them at all. It doesn't require everybody to be on one job—not even a war. And the recruiting sergeant was never slack in England when soldiers were wanted for an early slap at our enemies. The third section of our readers who like what we have written are the great majority—the overwhelming majority; who love their own country without wishing ill to any other, who are prepared to defend the right when necessary without creating fresh wrongs, who are glad to hear the voice of calm-minded reason amidst the thunder-roar of infuriated if justified passion.

Patriotism was described by Dr. Johnson in the first edition of his Dictionary as “the last refuge of a scoundrel.” We do not endorse this unconditionally, but the word is one to be watched. The common use of it to-day is perfectly ridiculous. It cannot be a national virtue; from the nature of the case it must be personal; it is the submission of the individual citizen to what is necessary to the welfare of the nation. It might have no relation whatever to any other nation on earth. But we note that Mr. Blatchford actually makes it an offence for foreigners not to love England as he does. He remarks shudderingly of certain German publicists that they hate England. If that is not a crime, what is? Yet he allows one of the regular contributors in his own paper to explain “Why he hates Germans.” Then there is Mr. Bottomley, who almost uses the language of inspiration in denouncing the Kaiser and Germany for aspiring to the domination of the whole world. It is positively blasphemous on their part. But the blasphemy, after all, only lies in the selection. God has already assigned that supreme position to England. Mr. Bottomley quite agrees with the Kaiser in essentials; the difference is merely one of interpretation. But that has often been the case in the history of religious controversy.

Some people might incline to fancy that Mr. Blatchford's and Mr. Bottomley's patriotism—while sincere, passionate, disinterested, and so forth—has a good deal to do with the fact that they allowed England the honor of introducing them to the light of day. But that is a considerable element of most people's patriotism. Being born in this country rather than that decides one's speech—which is our instrument of thought, and perhaps the most important factor in our lives. It also decides several other important things, which need not be expatiated upon at present. And, after all, to love one country is better than to love none. But the Anglo-German problem lies a long way behind all that Mr. Blatchford and Mr. Bottomley have to say; and when the present war is ended by the decisive defeat of Germany, as we hope it will be, the old problem will still remain in the sympathies and antipathies, the friendships and rivalries, the co-operations and antagonisms, of two of the greatest nations of the world. The sword cannot settle that problem; nothing but reason, justice, and humanity can settle it; but their settlements are durable, they lay no foundations for the passing hour, but “build large bases for eternity.”

In all probability, it appears to us, this war will approach its termination next spring. The millions of able-bodied men withdrawn from their occupations to fight and kill each other must be largely returned to the land to prepare for the next harvest. Even the Kaiser's friend, “The One Above,” will hardly remove that necessity. Anyhow, the war is going on yet awhile, and the Allies, including Great Britain, should do their very best to get Germany soundly beaten by then or before. The tradition of German invincibility is rapidly melting away. Moreover, it seems, after all, that to raise human nature against you is the worst thing you can do in any war, let your army be ever so numerous, well-trained, and well-equipped. This is a phenomenon which we should like to consider closely on some future occasion.

This abominable war is a daily agony to many who do not shriek over it. They have found out, like the hero of *Sartor Resartus*, that there is very little use in crying over painful experiences. Danton's *de l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace* is a better road to success in human affairs. We are glad, therefore, to note the spirit which Mr. Churchill expressed on behalf of the Government after the fall of Antwerp. But he is a clever man of the new generation, and should have done with the old-fashioned shibboleths of decadent piety. The “please God” in his peroration may have sounded well in the ears of the more ignorant and thoughtless part of his audience, but it must have jarred on the ears of the rest. It is farcical, to begin with, for Christian nations, ranged in hostile camps, to be praying to the same God for the same victory. Besides, if there be a God, everything *will* be as he pleases; Mr. Churchill need not trouble himself, or other people, about that. We advise him to let “God” alone—and get on with the business. “God's” attitude towards us involves his expectation of a similar attitude on our part towards him. But it is only Freethinkers who act in this way. Secularism, as Holyoake used to say, is the only religion that gives God no trouble.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Religion and War.

I AM neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. I am also sadly lacking in what our sapient pulpiteers call the "mystical sense"—a quality which enables some people to see sense where others only see nonsense, and to observe things that are quite hidden to others of more normal vision. These shortcomings of mine may be responsible for my inability to see traces of the strengthening of religion that, it is alleged, has taken place as one of the consequences of the War. So far as one is able to observe, and so far as religion is concerned, people are just about where they were. The non-religious remain non-religious, the professedly religious continue to "profess," and the really religious go on in their old way, with, perhaps, a little stronger religious phraseology than usual. It must be admitted that the expression "Damn the Kaiser" is now very common, and as "Damn" is a religious expletive and implies some sort of a belief in a future life, may be counted as one of the indications that religion is reviving, but it may be nothing more than an exhibition of popular imagery, or may only illustrate the readiness of the religious man to use "cuss-words" if he can do so with any semblance of propriety.

Of course, in times of war the clergy must be fussing around, just as they fuss around at any other period of excitement and national interest. It is part of their business tactics. For their first business is to, somehow or other, persuade the public that they are essential to the situation. If, for example, they were to remain quiet until the War is over, no one would seriously miss them, although many might marvel at their unusual silence. But silence would never suit them. With them, out of sight or sound would soon be out of mind. Somehow or other they must keep themselves to the front. Their task is to persuade the public that, whatever happens, Christianity must be preserved; on that hangs the hope of the world. They must find a place in the sun for religion. And it is quite likely that their own continuous buzzing is taken by the clergy as an indication of the nation's interest in them and their wares. The old fable of the fly on the wheel is of perennial value and application.

Mr. R. J. Campbell, being a thorough-going "Mystic" of the modern variety, is always ready to find evidence for religion in anything that comes along. If the world is at peace, *that* is proof of the power of Christian love. If the world is at war, he is equally able to see how religion braces people up to great issues, and how much stronger religion will emerge from the conflict. People, he says, are asking "What had become of Christianity amid the clash of armies and the seeming impotence of all appeals to anything but brute force." Mr. Campbell is not at all dismayed. His mystical sense reveals to him that "people's thoughts are turning to Jesus in the instructive perception that when great events are toward them the world has to reckon with Him," and that "when the struggle is over the lordship of Jesus will be more firmly established than ever over the human race." How great is the value of faith! Ordinary people, looking at the world, quite fail to observe any increased manifestations of religion. Our soldiers march along singing "Tipperary" or some other music-hall ditty, and not hymns. In the trenches they laugh and joke—and swear—instead of saying prayers. They write home for papers and magazines, and make no application for tracts. None of them complain of the scarcity of parsons—although the parsons at home say that more ought to be with them. Many hundreds of soldier's letters have been published, and in none of them is religion more than mentioned. Yet Mr. Campbell discerns them turning to Jesus with greater eagerness than ever.

One cannot argue with faith, still less so with prophecy. But Mr. Campbell ventures on more definite ground, in which he points out *how* religion will profit through the coming struggle.

"Men's minds are turning to religion in a degree unprecedented in our time; they are thinking of God..... Contrast the present with the immediate past..... But a little while ago we were threatened with an industrial war on an unprecedented scale; we were told that this autumn would see us in the throes of a national strike of a magnitude hitherto undreamed of. A bitter class hatred was engendered and being sedulously fomented..... It was a spirit of truculence, of greed, of lawlessness, of ready resort to violence..... But see what has happened now. Under the stimulus of a great national need..... all ranks and classes have coalesced..... The spokesmen of the workers are standing on the same platform with peers and Cabinet Ministers to sound the call to arms. Young men are joining the colors in tens of thousands..... I say religion has never had such an opportunity, in my lifetime at any rate."

It is true that Mr. Campbell is only here saying what thousands of others are saying, but that does not make his inability to grasp the significance of the present situation less patent. To begin with, this cessation of internal strife is not peculiar to England, or to the Allies generally. It is equally true of Germany. There, too, the strife of parties within the State has ceased in order—as they say—to unite for the defence of the Fatherland. There is nothing unusual in this; it is quite in the common run of things. Attack from without—whether the attack be sought or unsought—has *always* the effect of uniting classes within the State to repel it. This phenomenon is met with in savage and civilised States alike. It is fundamentally the cohesion of the group against external shock, and a society would indeed be on the verge of dissolution that failed to exhibit this characteristic. That so many of our public teachers should express surprise at this occurring, simply shows their unfitness to lead the nation.

Everyone is rightly pleased that in the presence of a grave danger from without the first energies of the nation should be given to considerations of defence. This is as it should be, and one may recognise this without stupidly hailing the War as a great opportunity for religion or for anything of a progressive character. Mr. Campbell evidently counts it to the credit of the War that it stopped threatened labor troubles. So might we all if we felt that these labor troubles would not recur. But is this likely? Has there been any real indication of the establishment of permanently cordial relations between classes or between capital and labor? Has there been any marked inclination on the part of employers to pay better wages or to remove any of the things about which the labor war was threatened? Are merchants less ready to raise prices against the public, or financiers less desirous of pursuing their usual tactics? So far as one can observe, these things remain—when circumstances permit—as they were. There is a truce in the war within in order to pursue the war without; that is all.

Mr. Campbell must remember that this is not the first time the nation has presented a united front against a threatened attack. It was seen in the post-revolutionary wars. Then, as now, "all were for the State." And with what result on internal affairs? It is a mere commonplace of history that, instead of classes being brought closer together, retrogressive ideas were enormously strengthened by it. Four years after Waterloo men, women, and children were trampled on by cavalry at Peterloo for holding a political meeting. Men were transported or imprisoned for the offence of agitating for political reform or for attempting to form trades unions. All reform agitation was labelled "sedition" because, as it was said, it brought "the existing constitution of government into hatred and contempt."

And what of the South African War? Was there not the same call to patriotism? Did not men enlist then as cheerfully as now? Did not the army of clergy say of the influence of war then exactly what Mr. Campbell is saying now? And what are the facts? Well, we had railway strikes, coal strikes, transport strikes, and other strikes threatened. Instead of

the war bringing about a better state of affairs, Mr. Campbell himself complains that people have grown more lawless and a bitter class hatred has been engendered. Naturally, one does not gather grapes from thistles, and one does not pluck from war those fruits that are the outcome of peace and peaceful pursuits.

Our Christian preacher thinks that war has lifted the English people up to a higher level because it has stilled the discords of parties and of employers and employees. Well, assume that this party and class warfare were altogether a bad thing, what sort of a testimonial does it offer to the social value of religion? Consider that we are living in a society that is, and has been for centuries, permeated with Christian teaching. Mr. Campbell himself was once a keen advocate for what he called "Social Christianity." And yet the only condition on which this religion-soaked community can co-operate cordially in the work of social life is that of being called upon to deal out death to another people. No amount of pressure will make them unite on the field of religion or on that of social life. Nothing but the old brute instinct of fighting will suffice. For, on the face of it, the present unity is not wholly that of love of home. If it were it would express itself to the same extent in the absence of war. It is made up largely of hatred of others, and it is upon that feeling that Mr. Campbell is basing his plea.

But is it a good thing that political and social disputes should cease and the community satisfy itself with the uniform monotony of a hive of bees? And, if it is a good thing now, why not after the War? Or, if undesirable after the War, why not undesirable now? The reply to these queries is that the cessation of internal conflict is only desirable in the case of a temporary reversion to a lower state of things, and all war is essentially that. We revert at once to a lower state of civilisation. Put the outcome of the present War at its highest value, and it is that of the defeat of one nation bent on dominating others, or of the chance for a number of nations to pursue their own line of development unmolested. And there it ends. But the warfare that goes on *within* a society is altogether of a higher kind. It is mainly the strife of ideals, whether in politics, in ethics, or in sociology. It is warfare in behalf of this or that ideal of social organisation. It is the fighting instinct of man raised to a higher level—a level on which theories replace rifles and ideas great guns. Mr. Campbell's Christianity does not enable him to grasp the simple truth that the cessation of this warfare in favor of an appeal to armed force is essentially a reversion to a lower stage, however inescapable that reversion may be.

What has been said does not in the least affect the question of our justification in going to war with Germany; neither is it inconsistent with the support of a given war, once that is seen to be inevitable. When an assassin is at one's throat no one but a fool would hesitate at putting off other things in order to deal with the danger of the moment. But only a fool would argue that killing assassins led to a lifting of human life to a higher level. I am only pointing out that however justifiable war may be it is action on a lower stage of culture, and carries with it its inevitable consequences. I am only pointing out that warfare does not make a nation great, even though not to go to war may at times spell ruin. War—which is, after all, Militarism in action—inevitably strengthens the conservative and retrogressive forces of social life. Belgium was not made great by war, and even Germany is wasting, or has wasted, in war and preparations for war, those elements of real greatness that it acquired during peace. Speak of a man becoming healthy through disease, and you but repeat the fallacy involved in saying that nations become genuinely great through war. At the present time the nation is passing through an acute crisis. But we shall certainly emerge none the less quickly or less profitably for recognising its real nature.

C. COHEN.

## Christian Sophistry.

THE word "peace" occurs in the Bible upwards of two hundred times, but the term "war" is scarcely less frequently met with. Jehovah was "a man of war," "the Lord of Hosts," the God of Battles, and his chosen people Israel gloried in him as such, verily believing that he was on their side and against all their enemies. When Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem, Hezekiah set captains over the people, gathered them together, and addressed them thus—

"Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there is a greater with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8).

The historical portions of the Old Testament are mainly records of wars, and this was the reason why Treitschke loved the Book of God so much. The staggering fact, however, is that Israel, though Jehovah was its Almighty Ally, never became a predominant Power in the ancient world. In war it had as many defeats as victories, and was ultimately annihilated by the Romans.

But while the Historical Books abound in warlike annals, the Devotional and Prophetic Books give great prominence to the subject of peace. In Psalm xxix. 11 it is stated that "the Lord will bless his people with peace," while in Psalm lxxxv. 10 we are told that "righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Isaiah (ix. 6) speaks of the advent of a child whose name was "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." In the New Testament the Lord of Hosts has been renamed "the God of peace." In 2 Cor. xiii. 11 Paul exhorts his readers thus: "Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Christians maintain that Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is the real Prince of Peace, and that as such he is on the throne of the Universe. How often have we heard the expression, "Have faith in the all-conquering Christ who reigns supreme." Great stress is always set upon the alleged omnipotence of the Prince of Peace. Even the Kaiser is only his vassal, he being King of kings, Emperor of emperors. Such has always been the contention of Christian theology. And yet this omnipotent Prince of Peace has never succeeded in securing peace for the earth. As Professor Cramb says, "In Europe, which really governs the planet, every advance in politics or religion has been attended by war." "War," he continues, "is at the root of Roman history. The Romans are the great inventors in the art of war; they are the first scientists in war." Then comes this weighty passage:—

"This attitude of Rome persists down to the Middle Age—though then, in the Middle Age, war receives the added glamor of religion. To Mohammed and to his Arabs in the East war is not only in itself a heroism, it is the Divine act. And in the West, similarly, in the same period, you find the Roman Papacy adopting as the very central thought of its foreign policy a great religious war—the war of the Crusades. And if at that time you do find arising in Europe the notion of the 'Truce of God,' this Truce of God becomes simply the institution of a temporary peace between the feudal chiefs and barons; it is no repudiation of war in itself" (*Germany and England*, p. 54).

Much has been heard of late about the "Truce of God," for which we are said to be indebted to the Church; but in reality the "Truce of God" was merely a device to prevent war from interfering with the celebration of religious festivals, such as Sunday, Advent, and Lent, and to afford protection to monks and priests. At the Council of Clermont in 1095, a weekly truce was proclaimed for all Christendom; but at this very council Pope Urban II. acted as an eloquent and passionate advocate of war. He firmly supported the fiery appeal of Peter the Hermit, and effectually called upon Christendom to undertake what was called a holy war against the Saracens of Palestine, which lasted, off and on, for two hundred

years, resulting in the sacrifice of some nine million lives. No, the "Truce of God" was not a condemnation of war, but a measure to provide against the infliction of any injury upon the Church by means of war. Writing in his old age to Voltaire, Frederick the Great said:—

"Running over the pages of history, I see that ten years never pass without a war. This intermittent fever may have moments of respite, but cease, never."

Now, is not the inference inescapable that the Prince of Peace has been, and is, a mythic dream that possesses no reality at any point? This is virtually admitted in the utterance of eminent divines. In the *British Weekly* for October 8, Principal Whyte, of Edinburgh, delivers himself of the following extraordinary passage:—

"Germany, that truly great country, has allowed herself to fall so far below herself during these God-forsaken years as to make it possible for one ill-minded man, by the mere lifting of his finger, to let all this hell loose upon Christendom. Come to the word and to the testimony, and you will there find the whole truth that lies at the bottom of all this terrible time. 'Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' Only, alas, our Devil-tempted Kaiser did not have the grace to say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' And look at your newspapers every day for the fearful result to him and to the whole world of his covenant with Satan. The shining armor that the Devil put upon that miserable man has so dazzled his ambitious eyes that he cannot even yet see the yawning pit that the Devil has dug for him and for his domineering house. And, to all appearance, he will not humble himself, to see himself as both God and man see him, till his mailed fist has returned home on his own broken head."

We readily admit the exceeding eloquence and beauty of that extract, but we are bound to regard it as a tacit confession that the Prince of Peace is out of date. Had he really been King of Kings, the Devil would have had no chance whatever with the German Emperor. The Divine Prince of Peace would have so dominated his Imperial Majesty as to have made it impossible for Satan to get at him at all. Surely this is simple enough to be clearly seen by all sensible persons; but, alas, Christian ministers seem to be utterly blind to it. In one mood they assure us that the Lord sitteth as king for ever, that Christ is an irresistible force for good in society, and that we are living in a world redeemed by the blood of the Cross; but in another mood, confronted by powerful objections to such teaching, they aver that God does all his work through human instrumentality, that Christ, or Christianity, is only a leaven which necessarily works slowly. Jesus himself, they remind us, compared his kingdom to a mustard seed, "which is less than all seeds," and to leaven which is *hidden* in the meal of human nature, the tediousness and comparative ineffectiveness of whose working is characteristic of it. The feeling against war and for universal peace, with whatever check and set-back, has been growing stronger and stronger, and the result of this war will be to strengthen it still more. We are perfectly familiar with this plausible fallacy, which is resorted to merely as an excuse for what is described as the *apparent* failure of Christianity. The truth is that the majority of people still believe in the moral grandeur of war, and look upon it as the school of the heroic virtues. They do not wish to end it; and they laugh disdainfully at the comparatively small number of enthusiasts who dream of, and try to work for, universal peace. The love of battle is still in man's blood, nor is it going to be cast out by the present war, though the number of those who love and desire peace may be substantially increased as the result of it.

The Rev. Arthur Pringle, in an article in the *Christian World* for October 15, quotes these apostolic or semi-apostolic words: "We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus." Upon Mr. Pringle be the responsibility of wilfully wresting this Scripture (Hebrews ii. 8, 9) to make it convey a false

impression. We take it as quoted, and observe that to see Jesus, apart from his Conquest, is to behold a "phantom rising as the mists arise." The subjection of all things to Christ remains an unfulfilled prophecy because Christ himself is only a theologically constructed personality, possessing no objective reality whatever. We have seen Jesus a thousand times ourselves, and enjoyed blissful fellowship with him, but only in imagination. We have seen people go mad with joy at the vision of him; but if for any reason they stayed away from church or chapel for a couple of months they lost sight of him, and the sense of his reality weakened to such an extent that it would take them a long time to get to see him again. To the emotions, trained in religion, the Prince of Peace is altogether lovely, and people learn to love him passionately, especially those who wait on emotional ministers. But what on earth is the value of a Prince of Peace when there is no peace? He is serenely looking on while his disciples are slaughtering one another by the thousand daily in his name. He may be "a phantom of delight" to superstitious people, but a phantom for all that. We see myriads of men and women flocking every day to places of worship to intercede with a being who never takes the slightest notice. The exercise doubtless produces exceedingly agreeable sensations in many of those who engage in it; but of practical results there are, and can be, none.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Armed Peace of the Plants.

THE battle of life rages as it has ever raged since sentient things put in their first appearance on our planet. Offensive and defensive weapons have been developed in all departments of floral and faunal life. The keener the competition and the deadlier the strife, the more complex have the means become among organic forms for protection and attack. The titanic contest now proceeding between human animals on the European Continent is but an amplification and intensification of those defensive and aggressive phenomena which have enabled favored floral and faunal species to survive in Nature's ubiquitous slaughterhouse.

In one of the works of the great Russian writer, Targeneff, a sanguine character encounters Mother Nature deeply pondering in one of her chosen retreats. He asks her to tell him why she meditates so deeply, and she raises her stone-cold eyes to his face. She then informs her human questioner that she is considering how best to furnish fleas with more powerful muscles, as they are not adequately equipped for the exacting demands of existence. The inquirer is stupefied by her answer. But what of the race of man, great Nature's most peerless product? he stammers. What are her intentions concerning the coming happiness of humanity? She gazes at him with complete indifference as she calmly replies that she is alike the begetter and destroyer of all breathing things. In her eyes, not one of them has pre-eminence over another; all are created with the certainty of ultimate extinction.

In multitudinous ways animals of every order adapt themselves more or less successfully to their surroundings. Protective and aggressive coloration, mimicry, nauseous smell, and unpalatable taste are a few only of the countless devices adopted to temper or circumvent the hostile conditions of life in which organisms find themselves cast. In the light of these phenomena, as a famous biologist says, "we can scarcely avoid the impression that the forms of life are made of a plastic material, which, like the sculptor's clay, can be kneaded at will into almost any desired form."

The foregoing reflections are strengthened by a study of the armed adaptations evolved by vegetable organisms so as to secure immunity to the devouring activities of herbivorous animals. And when one calls to mind the endless array of zoological organisms whose life is entirely dependent upon its plant food,

one is almost astonished to find that the floral domain has managed so successfully to cope with its huge army of animal foes. Directly or indirectly, the whole animal world flourishes at the expense of the vegetable kingdom. Moreover, animals, whether herbivorous or carnivorous, could never have entered into being had not their advent been antedated by the appearance of plant life.

It therefore follows as a logical necessity that, had plants remained undefended against this horde of plants directly or indirectly destroying animal organisms, which wages a ceaseless war on the floral world, the latter, as its animal enemies multiplied, would soon have been swept from the surface of the earth. Hence we find that plants have evolved defensive devices to ward off these antagonistic influences, and many and various are the fortifications which have been erected by the flora during its struggle for its place in the sun on the continents and islands of the globe. That these botanical contrivances are truly astounding the following fully substantiated facts will prove beyond the possibility of doubt.

Various plants protect themselves from the ravages of herbivores through the secretion of poison in their leaf-sap, in roots, branches, stems, and fruits. Cattle and horses, elephants and deer, hares and rabbits, all avoid on pain of death the poisonous juices of one plant or other. The belladonna is studiously avoided by many herbivorous mammals, and the same is true of such deadly plants as the henbane, the spotted hemlock, the danewort, and various others. But the presence of poison is not a sufficient guarantee of safety, so these poisonous plants send forth a disgusting odor, which warns the grazing animals of their danger, with the result that the baleful plants are left severely alone.

There are many untoward plants, however, that have not yet evolved any warning sign to animals approaching them; at any rate, no such danger signal can be detected by the human sense of smell. Nevertheless, these plants, which include the meadow-saffron, several species of spurge and gentian, the black hellebore, and the blue aconite, are all shunned by the various forms of deer, the hares, and the marmots, while our domesticated goats, sheep, cattle, and horses rarely touch them. That this aversion is due to transmitted experience seems probable from the following circumstance, which occurred in the Rhine valley at Aur:—

"On the rocky grass slopes of the valley, the poisonous hellebore (*Helleborus viridis*) grows in great abundance, and the sheep of that region, which were wont to graze on the slopes, avoided these plants. But some sheep from another part were imported into the valley, and these ate the hellebore, with the result that many died."

Even if these plants emit a warning odor, or display any other danger sign, these sheep were too inexperienced to profit by it. Everything considered, the theory of an inherited tradition of the hellebore's poisonous nature most fully accounts for the facts.

Preparations produced from many seeds are of considerable economic importance to man, but such ethereal substances in their natural state appear to afford protection to the plants against the seed-stealing proclivities of many birds. It has been proved that a sparrow which swallowed a few cummin seeds quickly succumbed. This is very significant in so omnivorous a bird. Again, numerous plants, such as ferns, mosses, and others, prove extremely bitter to the taste, and are rarely molested save in circumstances of dire necessity. Various grasses, the bilberry, the rhododendron, and other flora render themselves immune to animal attack in a similar way; while, curiously enough, plants with cup-shaped leaves, which retain dew and rain-water long after the moisture has evaporated from the majority of plants, are in this manner afforded more than a modicum of protection. Grazing animals manifest a marked preference for dry herbage, possibly because of the disease germs which lurk in damp soil and vegetation.

Of world-wide distribution are those plants that proclaim an armed peace through their display of

spines and thorns. A deeply interesting description of the multitudinous devices of this form of floral armature is given by Kerner in that celebrated botanist's *Natural History of Plants*, a work splendidly adorned with figures and plates; and to some of these defences, so beautifully described by several eminent biologists, we venture to direct the attention of the botanically inclined.

The most casual observer must have noticed that spines and prickles appear only on those parts of the plant most vulnerable to herbivorous animals. Young plants bristle with these fortifications, as do the lower parts of those of more mature growth. "The holly, for instance," says Weismann,

"has crenate, spinose leaves only to the height to which grazing animals can reach; beyond that the leaves are smooth-edged and spineless, like those of the camelia. It is almost the same with some wild pear-trees, which are quite covered with thorns as long as they are low, but afterwards grow a thornless crown."

The rosebush, on the other hand, as it never attains any considerable altitude, is protected throughout by thorns. In those cases in which the leaves themselves bear spinous processes, these are so arranged as to best withstand the onslaught of grazing animals. Water-snails and other organisms are the enemies of the aquatic *Victoria regia*, and the immense floating leaves of this plant have adapted themselves to meet this danger through the development of long spines on their under-surface, which reach a length of several inches, particularly at the upturned margin, where the molluscs might break through and steal.

In many shrubs native to the Mediterranean coast, foliage leaves are altogether absent; their functions have been usurped and their place supplied by the verdant twigs and branches, which so arm the bushes at all points that herbivorous creatures are frightened off. Among our indigenous flora, the broom furnishes an example of this mode of defence.

Where the spines stand out on the leaves themselves, there is remarkable dissimilarity in their mode of arrangement. In such tropical flora as the yucca and the aloe, as in many of our own grasses, the reed-fashioned leaf is modified into a spine. Kerner refers to a species of Southern Alpine grass, which is quite common in the district, that wounds cattle so severely that they return from their pastures in a bleeding state. The herdsmen naturally wage war on these truculent plants, and in this they are assisted by the cattle, as they uproot the noxious herbage and cast it to the ground, so that it withers away. To quote Kerner:—

"I saw thousands of the tufts which had been rooted up by oxen, lying, dried and bleached, in the sun.....It must not be supposed that the animals accomplish this clearance deliberately; but it may indeed be admitted that they root up the patches of Mat-grass in order thus to obtain the enjoyment of the other plants growing between them, and avoid the risk in doing so of wounding their mouths."

The entire leaf-edge of many plants has been transformed into a spiny defence, as in the holly and the thistles. Others have evolved barbed hooks, which function in saw-like fashion, and some of these leaves are "made sharp by deposits of silicic acid, as in sedges, whose sharp edges are moved to and fro in the mouths of ruminants, and thus injure the mucous membrane."

The stinging hairs of the nettles are provided with an elastic base, but with easily broken rounded heads. These snap at the slightest touch, when the sharp point of the fractured hair pierces the skin of the animal that has brushed against it, and the poisonous secretions of the hair are poured into the wound. As everyone who has tenderly handled the nettle of the countryside is only too well aware, the "sting" produces a most unpleasant sensation, and may generate the nettle rash on the skin. There are tropical nettles, however, that are much more formidable than this. Several species, such as *Urtica stimulata* in Java, and others, bear hairs which cause

diseases similar to those which follow from snake bites, and may even induce lockjaw. Needless to add, the consequences are much more serious when these pain-creating hairs become embedded in the highly sensitive mouth organs of herbivorous animals than when merely thrust into the human skin. They may therefore be regarded as a fairly successful fortification against the encroachments of grass-feeding creatures. Truly enough, "we never find our nettle patches eaten away, and even the donkey, which eats thistles freely, turns away from the stinging-nettle." But such cunningly contrived defences fail to secure these plants from their insect foes; but insect depredations are not sufficiently serious to affect the general prosperity of the nettle family.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

## Acid Drops

Rev. R. J. Campbell appears to believe that German brutality can only be paralleled by going back before the advent of Jesus Christ. Has he never heard of the Crusades, of the Thirty Years' War, of the Expulsion of the Huguenots, of the butcheries of Alva in the Netherlands, of the awful cruelties and exterminations wrought by the Spaniards in America? We might add to the list tremendously, but these samples should be within everyone's knowledge. A large license of ignorance is allowed to the Christian preachers, but there is a limit even to their privileges in this respect. Mr. Campbell should be aware of the historic infamies just mentioned. He should also be aware that they were all perpetrated by Christians. There is no need to go back beyond the Christian era for instances of the most frightful cruelties. The history of Christianity is full of them. Pagan records are not nearly as bloody and barbarous. Mr. Campbell should be well acquainted with this fact, and if he is, he is simply indulging in a common vice of the clergy—playing on the ignorance of his hearers, and lying for the glory of Christ, and indirectly for the glory and profit of Christ's professional apostles.

People are asking, says Mr. R. J. Campbell, where is God in the present European conflict? Well, if we are to trust the Germans, and the Russians, and the British, he is right in the thick of it. All of them claim his aid, and all of them will say that they have got it. Mr. Campbell, however, asks the question from a slightly different point of view. He admits that it is useless playing fast and loose with the question of responsibility. "If God could prevent a thing happening and does not prevent it, he must be regarded as having, in a true sense, caused it..... Even if he is absolutely passive, he is causing the world-struggle by simply permitting it to go on." This is what we have often said ourselves, and we began to anticipate Mr. Campbell's answer. But having stated the question fairly enough, he says that he does not propose answering it, but by and by, when we meet Jesus face to face, "everything will be made clear." So we come back to the old religious hocus-pocus after all. It will all be cleared up in the next world. Meanwhile, we must go on believing it is all right. An excellent doctrine for fools and fanatics.

Now that St. Petersburg has been changed to Petrograd, the Continent suggests that Europe should be renamed "Abattoir."

Mr. Alexander, the one-time fellow-missioner with Dr. Torrey, says he knows of numbers of men in the British Army in France who used to indulge in rough talk, but "who now sit around, pass round a candle, and read the Word of God." Of course, we should not dream of doubting Mr. Alexander's word; but there are others who are more sceptical. And it is well that Mr. Alexander should have placed on record a fact that has escaped the notice of all the newspaper correspondents, and which the men in their letters home have forgotten to mention.

There has been a great deal of talk about the increase of religion since the War started, although none but the clergy seem to have observed it, and churches do not appear to have been overcrowded. A resident in a cathedral city writes to the *Church Times* in order to discover how far this is true. He asks whether church-goers have extended their attendances, have non-church-goers begun to attend, and have

infrequent attendants become more frequent? He says that, judging from his own experience and from what he can gather in other parishes, the answer to these questions would be, No. He adds that if parish priests would tell the bare plain facts, they would have to admit that the alleged increase of religion is quite mythical.

The curate of a church at Earlsfield writes to the *Church Times*, stating that they have been compelled to close the church, except when service is proceeding, owing to the many thefts that have taken place. He says there isn't very much to steal, yet lace is stolen from the altar. New Testaments, water-bottles and tumblers, money-boxes rifled, and sometimes the boxes taken as well. It is evidently a case of watch and prey.

The Germans are partial to repeating Napoleon's sneer at England as being a nation of shopkeepers. The Prussians overlook the fact that they might be called a nation of butchers.

The hymn-books used by Christians are popularly supposed to cheer up the pious folk, and it is a curious thing that the word "blood" appears on nearly every page.

What Secularists these Christians are! Prayer is very well in the pulpit and on the platform, but when the troops are to be comforted the pious folk don't leave it to "Gawd," but send the soldiers tobacco and cigarettes.

Christians have started a National Food Fund to prepare for the lean years. Have they forgotten the eminent person who fed five thousand people with two sardines and a few bath-buns?

The most absurd restrictions are imposed by the authorities upon lecturers just at present, for they are not allowed to refer to the War, but it seems that the Bishop of London, Pastor Russell, and other creatures of the same ilk, are permitted to say what they please. The authorities know that the clergy may be trusted to bleat in chorus with the majority.

It is a curious fact that the clergy is the only body of professional men whose incomes are unaffected by the war. They have always interpreted the "lord's" prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread—with a little butter."

A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* remarks that "War has certainly had a very beneficial effect on the social affairs of mankind." In support of this he instances the War of Liberation in America, and the defeat which "the tribesmen of Mahomet" met at the hands of Charles Martel, and but for which we might "be studying the pages of the Koran in our Universities." Neither illustration is very fortunate. With or without the war between North and South, slavery in America must have broken down. All economists know that it was ceasing to be profitable, and could only be made profitable by the acquisition of new territory. It was to get this that the South really threatened to secede. And it is certain that the economic and moral forces at work would have destroyed slavery in America just as they destroyed slavery in British possessions.

With regard to the defeat of the Mohammedan forces, it is quite a matter of speculation how far civilisation benefited by that. It by no means follows that had the reading of the Koran been general at our universities, the state of things would have been vitally different to what ensued from the reading of the Bible. Pretty much the same influences that have weakened the influence of the Bible and Christianity in the West, would have weakened the influence of the Koran and of Mohammedanism. And all students of Mohammedan history are aware that it was the very influence of the Christian nations that strengthened the power of the retrogressive party among the Mohammedans. Moreover, it must always be remembered that when "the tribesmen of Mahomet" conquered Egypt, instead of that proving injurious to civilisation, it led to the only civilisation worth talking about during the Middle Ages. For centuries the Mohammedans cultivated science and literature, and the arts of commerce, while they were being more or less neglected in Christendom. The two examples, as we have said, are singularly unfortunate. It is, indeed, one of the ironies of things that war seldom brings benefits that could not be acquired without it.

Rev. Dr. Len Broughton has opened a dispensary as an adjunct to Christ Church, Westminster, and says that in

time he hopes to realise his ideal of a Christian hospital. We should not think that this would be a very expensive institution. All that is required is the rent. The only physic recommended in the New Testament is faith and prayer, and there should be enough of that at Christ Church. We expect that, as usual, Dr. Broughton is mixing faith and physic in his new dispensary, and we know which he would regard as indispensable.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley is getting very familiar with the Christian vocabulary. After using the name of "God" freely for some weeks, he issues a poster with the alluring title, "Hell with the Lid Off," which, by the way, is borrowed from John Barnes's description of Chicago. It all sounds like the Christian child's first steps to religious knowledge.

Monsignor Barnes, a prominent Catholic, writing in the *Daily Mail*, says the Prussians are really Huns, and have never become Christians. This is unkind! Of course, the Kaiser's pious speeches are all concoctions, and the numerous churches in Prussia are as unsubstantial as the mansions in heaven.

In a leading article on the War in the *Daily Mail* entitled, "What the East End Thinks; Actual Conversation," it says, "The free librarian had just served the headmaster with *The Age of Reason*." We should like to know the name of that library, for Freethought works are not common in such institutions.

It is said that when Cardinal Merry del Val was a small boy his ambition was to become a tram conductor. As a man, he professes to conduct people to the gates of heaven.

That Christian gentleman, Prince Oscar, a son of the Kaiser, plays the lute. His brother, the Crown Prince, spells it "loot."

"The agnostic or the freethinker is really, unknown to himself, soaked in Christianity and Catholic ethics." This pearl of wisdom comes from Monsignor Barnes, who cannot be accused of being "soaked" in ethics. A lunatic-asylum attendant does not necessarily get "soaked" in the delusions of the patients.

"I am sending you the Bible which saved my life," writes a private soldier to his sweetheart at Godalming. He was wounded at Aisne, and the bullet went through the book and into his hip. Paine's *Age of Reason*, or a pack of cards, would have done as well.

Mr. Robert Blatchford's war articles in the *Weekly Dispatch* have been mutilated by the censor, but "Nunquam" has had his revenge by heading his communication "In the Town of Nowhere." This rather discounts his testimonial that he is "proud of the War Office," for in other and better-known towns that institution has not been inundated with unsolicited testimonials.

The Bishop of London, just returned from ten weeks amongst the troops (in a safe position, of course, and without a rifle), and addressing an audience of ladies on the old text about the meek inheriting the earth, which looks rather worn out nowadays, took a professional view of the present terrible conflict between the Christian nations of Europe. In spite of the fact that they *are* Christian, his Lordship asked "if the British Empire were to pass what would be the dominant religion of the world?" What is the Kaiser? A Christian. What is the religion of Germany? Christianity. We would back the Christian Churches to keep their end up, whatever happened on the European battlefields.

"I would rather die," Bishop Ingram says, "than see England become a province of the German Empire." We hope he will never have to face the alternative. But it is not the way of Church clergymen to be so particular. When the Church of England lurched to and fro between Catholicism and Protestantism under Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, only a hundred and twenty men of God showed the slightest independence. The rest of about twelve thousand obeyed the royal orders and changed every time they were told to. The Vicar of Bray has always been a common character. Even the Bishop of London, we fancy, would discover, in the words of Molière, that "there are always accommodations with heaven."

Dean Inge is a very able man (in his way) and he loves to drop a bombshell amongst his orthodox brethren. Sunday

last saw him performing this little game at Westminster Abbey. After remarking that since the beginning of August we have seen nothing in the newspapers but "triumphant and unpunished devilry," he went on to observe the change for the worse that has taken place in the rules of war in Christian practice since the days of Plato. Two thousand three hundred years ago that great Pagan philosopher laid these laws down in his *Republic* for the conduct of civilised warfare:—

"Non-combatants to be spared, no houses to be burnt, no farms to be devastated, the dead to be honorably buried, no trophies of war to be placed in the temples of the gods."

That was the humane teaching of Plato. Now look at the practice of "those who dare to claim the favor of the Christian God." Their spokesman (the Kaiser, to wit) utters the following "terrible words":—

"Cause the greatest possible amount of suffering. Leave to the non-combatants nothing but their own eyes to weep with."

What if this brutal gospel is brought to England, and Westminster Abbey is served like the Cathedral of Rheims, and Oxford like Louvain? Who knows? Christianity has not saved the world yet. That is clear enough. That it *will* save the world, as Dean Inge maintains, is only a prophecy, and a prophecy against the facts.

All sorts of good Christian people are looking after Tommy Atkins in the name of "charity." He would not require this charity if he were treated with justice by the Government. His women-folk are shamefully treated, but he will have a Christmas pudding (if he lives so long) and will eat it in celebration of the Birth of Christ—an event that never happened except in the imagination of the early believers—the same sort of people who recently supplied evidence of the 250,000 Russian soldiers brought from Archangel to Boulogne *via* England. The testimony was quite circumstantial in both cases—and perfectly false.

The Christianity of the Kaiser has now been placed beyond doubt. The Bishop of London said, during the course of a sermon at St. Paul's, that the German Emperor is in his personal life a consistent Christian, and one who seldom makes a speech without bringing in the name of God. We hardly think that British Christians will thank the Bishop for the information. They would prefer him to be held up as an Atheist masquerading as a Christian.

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, has been recently dealing with the old question of the "problem of evil"—and with the usual results. He says that the philosophical problem may be insoluble, but the religious one is most certainly not. This is quite a reversal of the facts. There is, indeed, no philosophical problem of evil. The fact of evil in the world is of no greater philosophical significance than the existence of anything else. It is only one of many facts that call for examination. The "problem of evil" is wholly a religious question, and only arises in an attempt to harmonise the existence of God with pain and wrong. Unsophisticated human nature has generally felt that if there is a God the world should be different to what it is. If there is not, it is idle to complain. And the task of theologians in all ages has been to harmonise the existence of God with a world which is either a negation of his providence or a condemnation of his character.

Canon Green fares no better than others at this task. It is, for example, a simple demand that pain and suffering should be proportionate to desert, that the guilty should suffer—if anyone—for their own sins, and the innocent should never be punished for the guilty. This is what all social organisation aims at, and common sense and ordinary morality endorses the ideal. Canon Green says this would not be a gain. Because, "first of all, it would rule out the Cross. And then it would rule out all the heroes and martyrs of humanity, those great souls with whom self-sacrifice for others has been a passion." As the "heroes and martyrs" are only called to redress the imperfections of the "plan of creation," one would imagine that even a clergyman would recognise that a condition of affairs that rendered them unnecessary would be preferable. Sacrifice is of no use in itself, otherwise the suicide would be the equal of the martyr. No one has anything to say against the man who exhibits self-sacrifice, or who plays the part of a martyr, it is against an arrangement that makes the sacrifice necessary that criticism is directed. A mother sacrificing herself for her child is a noble sight, but a contented and happy home where such sacrifice is needless is a far better one.

Canon Green is a most audacious and illogical defender of the faith. He quotes Huxley's famous saying that if God would make him always act perfectly at the cost of making him a machine he would welcome the change. The Canon challenges that view, because "if where there is no choice there can be no sin, equally where there is no choice there can be no virtue." But what about God and the orthodox Christ? Can they also sin if they choose, and if they cannot will to do wrong, which is the generally accepted view, is it beyond them to lead virtuous lives? Canon Green's doctrine of free will is at once inconsistent with known facts, and contrary to reason.

The chief characteristic of this dignitary of the Church is his cheap dogmatism. Can you fancy a sensible man saying that "God can do everything except force a sinful man to be good"? What, then, is the meaning of the Christian salvation? As sinful men we are said to be spiritually dead; but has a dead person ever *wished* to become alive again? The dead have not the power of choice, and if they are ever to become alive, it must be as the result of having life infused, or forced, into them from without. Even an earthly physician does not say to the sick, "Do you wish to be made whole?" but forthwith proceeds to fight the disease with all the might of his science. But at the back of all this lies a much deeper and more fatal question—Why are there sinful men if their Creator and preserver is a good and omnipotent being? This question the Canon cannot answer.

According to Rev. H. F. Mackay, of All Saints, Margaret-street, a number of clergymen have written to their Bishop asking whether it is advisable to have any harvest thanksgivings this year. We understand that the Bishops have replied in the affirmative. They point out that the harvest has been unusually good, and no doubt see in this a special dispensation of "Providence." So the harvest thanksgivings will be as usual, and we would suggest that special mention should be made of the harvest that King Death is reaping in Northern France. That, too, is the finest for many, many years, and it is as well not to ignore any of the things with which "Providence" is favoring us.

What a hopeless muddle Christendom has got itself into at last! It no longer knows where it is or what it stands for. The War has suddenly flung it into a state of perfect topsy-turveydom. Prior to its advent we thought we knew what civilisation meant, but now nobody knows, though everybody imagines he does. The famous French savant, M. Henri Bergson, says that the Allies are fighting for civilisation and against barbarism, while the equally distinguished German philosopher, Professor Eucken, whom Dr. Horton recently pronounced the greatest thinker of the age, is equally certain that it is Germany which is defending the cause of civilisation and culture, and wrestling against barbarism. Russia, too, believes the same about herself, while Dr. Clifford and Sir Robertson Nicoll declare that Great Britain has drawn the sword for Christianity against German Atheism and Materialism. The curious thing is that the official religion of all the countries concerned, except Japan, is Christianity. What a lovely religion Christianity is, and how beautifully it unites all who profess it! Professor Eucken is a zealous Christian, and yet sneers at England, calling it "a nation of shopkeepers."

A London morning paper—Liberal in politics and illiberal in nearly everything else—drops tears of pity over the ex-Empress Eugenie, who has "for the second time seen her country invaded by the Germans." Thus is history written for the orthodox mob by the orthodox journalist. In 1870 the French crowd in Paris shouted *à Berlin* and the French army set out *à Berlin*, which they never reached, any more than the German army has reached Paris in the present war. And that "Spanish woman," as the French Freethinkers and Republicans called her, contributed more to bringing about that terrible catastrophe than any other human being except Bismarck,—who, by the way, admitted in after years that he had forged a telegram to King William that made war inevitable. The "Spanish woman" had the Emperor under her thumb; she, in turn, was in the hands of the Jesuits, who had their own quarrel with Bismarck and the Germans. She acted as their tool. She called it her war—*C'est ma guerre, à moi*. She said it then; let it be so now. She shall not be robbed of the honor. She sent myriads of men to death. She sowed the seeds of bitter hatred between France and Germany. A natural want of sympathy was turned into an incurable antipathy. She lives to see Nature's logic in the course of human affairs. If she is a victim, she is a victim of her own mis-

deeds. "Poor royal lady!" the lickspittles say; but Truth cries, with sternly pointed finger, "*C'est ma guerre, à moi*."

A soldier's letter was published in the *News of the World*, in which the writer said that "the German prisoners considered the British soldiers almost supernatural in their ability to take cover." This is not a bad tribute, and if the French Catholics have any gratitude they will put a statue in Notre Dame to "Saint Thomas Atkins."

Bishop Baynes, Chaplain to the Notts and Derby Mounted Brigade, writing in the *Clarion* on "What is the Duty of the Christian Citizen?" says Christ's idea of non-resistance "is a very true and very potent method when adopted with wise discretion." Unfortunately, Christians have always believed it is more blessed to give black eyes than to receive them.

Secularism is better than Christianity. Gospel temperance at Southend, backed up by Omnipotence, produced an average of eight "drunks" per week. The closing of licensed premises has reduced this number to one weekly.

At a Theosophical Meeting at Westcliff-on-Sea a speaker said the thought-form of the Germans started in 1864, crystallised in 1870, and the later results are seen to-day. A schoolboy of fourteen could have informed that lecturer that there was a Prussian army in the days of Frederick the Great, and it was a formidable body then. Mahatmas appear to be as innocent as mermaids.

An Organists' Association has been mooted in several quarters lately. If this results in a practical organisation, the dear clergy will not be able to get their music for the price of a second-hand surplice.

The generals that will try the troops on the Continent will not be the German leaders, but Generals Cholera and Typhus, who have made their appearance on the scene of war. God's tender mercies are over all his works.

It is reported that the Kaiser issued the following address to his Eastern Army:—

"Remember who you are. The Holy Spirit has descended on me, because I am the Emperor of the Germans. I am the instrument of the Most High. I am His sword, His representative. Woe and death to those who resist my will! Woe and death to those who do not believe in my mission! Woe and death to cowards! Let all enemies of the Germans perish! God demands their destruction, God who through me commands you to fulfil His will."

On this *Public Opinion* remarks that the Kaiser has shown himself as "the supreme Atheist." We do not know on what ground the author of such an address can be called an Atheist—unless it is on the principle that when a man does anything you detest, give him a label that you dislike.

They rose in Freedom's rare sunrise,  
Like Giants roused from wine;  
And in their hearts and in their eyes  
The God leaped up divine!  
Their souls flashed out, naked as swords,  
Unsheathed for fiery fate:  
Strength went like battle with their words—  
The men of 'Forty-eight.

Hurrah

For the men of 'Forty-eight.

The Kings have got their Crown again,  
And blood-red revel cup;  
They've bound the Titan down again,  
And heaped his grave-mound up.  
But still he lives, though buried 'neath  
The mountain—lies in wait,  
Heart-stifed heaves and tries to breathe  
The breath of 'Forty eight.

Hurrah

For the men of 'Forty-eight.

—Gerald Massey.

Ho put a penny in the plate  
Each Sunday did this man,  
To buy a mansion in the skies  
On the instalment plan!



## To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.**—Previously acknowledged, £218 13s. 3d. Received since:—G. Britton, 2s.; A. H. Smith, 4s. 6d.; H. T. C., £1 1s.

**WELSH RATIONALIST.**—We have been saying the same thing ever since the War broke out. Christians are capable of anything as controversialists, and most things as propagandists and defenders of their faith. Nothing could be meaner or more fraudulent than their pretence that Atheism is responsible for German despotism and the infamous cruelty with which it has treated Belgium. They have been shown again and again that they are wrong, and it is obvious that the Kaiser and his friends are a queer set of Atheists; but they are used to telling every lie that suits, and while it suits, and in spite of correction, no retraction will ever be made. Lying for the glory of God is the most ancient of Christian virtues. Lying for the advantage of the Church comes close on its heels.

**CHRISTIAN PATRIOT.**—We don't publish our "charities," but we have published the fact that we have given nothing to the Prince of Wales's Fund. We have also given some, but not all of the reasons for our policy. On the other hand, we have not got our name advertised in the papers as a subscriber to a "Public Distress" fund and then made up for it (and more) by rearranging our business establishment—all at the cost of the employees, who should be the last and not the first to suffer from a national calamity. We don't know what we may be driven to in the end, if this war drags out a miserable old age, and dies eventually of inanition; but up to the present no one in our employ receives a penny less wages than he did before the war. You see there is patriotism and patriotism—and we prefer our own.

**J. C.**—The *Freethinker* has always avoided politics as politics, and devoted itself to Freethought in relation to philosophy and ethics. It is no part of our business to praise or blame Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, or other members of the Cabinet as politicians. We have said that England was forced into this war by Germany; and now we are in it we must make the best of it, and let the Kaiser know the real value of "General French's contemptible little Army." That goes without saying. But anybody who wants us to howl the patriotism of the Yellow Press, or the naive and pathetic patriotism of Mr. Blatchford and Mr. Bottomley, will be disappointed. We simply cannot regard every Englishman as a hero and a saint, and every German as a ruffian and a blackguard. If the world were built on that simple plan, all political and social questions would soon be settled. It is the childish theory of the sheep and goats over again. At the same time, we hate cruelty—especially personal, gratuitous, deliberate cruelty—with every drop of blood we possess, and we are filled with disgust at the brutal wickedness which the Germans have imported into this contest. We look upon the Kaiser as a criminal lunatic. We have said all this before; what is the use of going on saying it? Our special task is to fight Christianity, and if we don't show from recent and passing events what an utter failure it is in its boasted mission of bringing peace and goodwill on earth; if we don't do it, who will? Bear in mind, however, that matters are mixed in actual fact, and that it is impossible to deal with religion without referring occasionally to other subjects with which it happens to be associated. You will appreciate our policy better if you go on reading the paper, which you say you like already.

**A. B. MOSS.**—Pleased to see you are to preside at the Bradlaugh Fellowship Dinner at the Boulogne Restaurant, Gerard-street, W., on Wednesday, October 28. We note that the tickets are 2s. each.

**E. B.**—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

**G. S.**—We had to do a little shortening.

**H. BLACK.**—We have not heard anything about Freethought lecturing at Manchester this winter.

**C. W. MARSHALL.**—Thanks for the cutting, but the Kaiser and the Bishop of London are both getting bores.

**D. GRANT.**—The new-premises trouble is still before us. Alas!

**E. S.**—Glad you have read the *Freethinker* for twenty-seven years, think it the brainiest paper published, and hope it will go on at least another twenty-seven years. Not under the present editor, though, for goodness sake.

**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.

## Presentation to W. J. Ramsey.

AN interesting and pathetic ceremony took place at the Borough of Shoreditch Radical Club on Wednesday, Oct. 14, during a "Social Party" of the Bradlaugh Fellowship. This was the presentation of a sum of nearly £70 to W. J. Ramsey, subscribed and collected by his comrades and friends in the Secularist, club, and political movements. B. T. Hall, secretary of the Club and Institute Union, occupied the chair, and opened the proceedings in a brief speech of singular force and felicity. He was followed by George Standring, Arthur B. Moss, Edith M. Vance, and E. Garrity, all of whom dwelt upon various phases of Ramsey's work for progress during half-a-century. When the presentation had been made, "Bill" (as everybody called him) returned thanks in a very affecting little speech. He declared that while his brain continued to be unaffected he should always remain a Secularist; if he became an idiot he might also become a Christian; but in any case he asked his friends to remember him as he had been for fifty years, a willing worker in the cause of human progress and freedom. While he lived he would do what he could for the good old cause.

G. S.

## THE INFINITE UNIVERSE.

Revolving worlds, revolving systems, yea,  
Revolving firmaments, nor there we end:  
Systems of firmaments revolving, send  
Our thoughts across the Infinite astray,  
Gasping and lost, and terrified, the day  
Of life, the goodly interests of home  
Shrivelled to nothing; that unbounded dome  
Peeling still on, in blind futility.  
No rest is there for our souls' winged feet,  
She must return for shelter to her ark—  
The body, fair, frail, death-born incomplete,  
And let her bring this truth back from the dark,  
Life is self-centred, man is nature's god;  
Space, time, are but the walls of his abode.

—William Bell Scott.

## BELGIUM, 1914.

Oh, Thou art pitiless! They call Thee Light,  
Law, Justice, Love; but Thou art pitiless.  
What thing of earth is precious in thy sight,  
But weary waiting on and soul's distress?  
When dost Thou come with glorious hands to bless  
The good man that dies cold for lack of Thee?  
When bringst Thou garlands for our happiness?  
Whom dost Thou send but Death to set us free?  
Blood runs like wine—foul spirits sit and rule—  
The weak are crushed in every street and lane—  
He who is generous becomes the fool  
Of all the world, and gives his life in vain.  
Wert Thou as good as Thou art beautiful,  
Thou couldst not bear to look upon such pain.

—ROBERT BUCHANAN.

## SCRAP-IRONIES FROM INGERSOLL.

A man said to me the other day, "I am a Unitarian Universalist." "What do you mean by that?" said I. "Well," said he, "the Unitarian thinks he is too good to be damned, and the Universalist thinks God is too good to damn him; and I believe them both."

When a thing gets too idiotic to be preached in the pulpit, it is handed down to the Sunday-school superintendent and taught to the children. When it is too absurd for the children we give it to the missionaries, or send it down south for the colored brethren.

Nothing is so prolific, nothing can lay or hatch so many eggs as a good, healthy, religious lie.

I once happened to be in the company of some Baptist elders, and they wanted to know what I thought of baptism. I answered that I had not given the matter any attention. But they pressed me, and finally I told them that I thought, with soap, baptism was a good thing.

The Church has reduced Spain to a guitar, Italy to a hand-organ, and Ireland to exile.

Many people think they have got religion when they are troubled with dyspepsia. If there could be found an absolute specific for that disease, it would be the hardest blow the Church has received.

## Beneath the Silent Stars.

IT is now near the "witching hour" of midnight, September 13-14, 1914. I am writing this in a large astronomical observatory high on the summit of this mountain in the mighty Sierra Madre range in Southern California, that terrestrial paradise of fruit and flowers. I have been looking nearly all of the evening in the great 16-inch Alvan Clark and Sons magnificent telescope, at the Galaxy. As I now write, I turn my eyes toward the south and behold this supernal band and belt of stars. It is standing in majestic splendor above the Pacific Ocean. Its shimmer and sheen, its display of stars, adorn the Goddess of the Night in regal robes of cloth and pearl. And she drags the careless garments in the distant southern waves. So clear is the air that the stellar millions swing low and grace the sea by rotary motion of the earth. There are now known to be at least one billion suns in the Milky Way. I have been sweeping the lenses of the huge telescope from right to left, left to right, for hours. I have seen many millions of stars, each a giant sun, pass in review. Diamonds, by literal millions, have been seen in the blackness of the sky. And millions are rising over mighty peaks in the east; and more millions are vanishing in watery wastes in the remote west. A hundred sentinel peaks are standing around and about observatory peak; while deep canyons yawn on either side of the building. The great white dawn indeed contrasts with the utter blackness of the canyon's mouths and deep abysses—blackier than Egyptian night. And the stillness, silence, and absolute solitude, always on a summit at midnight, is so intense, so overpowering of all ordinary things, that the imagination goes racing, and one can almost imagine that he hears the very axis of the earth in its majestic turning. And it is here in this inconceivably majestic presence that I write my books. Peace, sweet peace, is always here. I look at the stars, and then upon our local wheeling planets. I have just been looking at a transit of a satellite of Jupiter. Soon Saturn will rise, when I must explore its giant rings and its system of ten moons. And thus I have looked and watched the stars by night during forty-four years, and studied their mathematical laws by day. Every motion of every moon, planet, and sun is governed by ironclad, mathematical laws. Every law has been proved over and over again by the most profound mathematicians, down to the minutest detail. And the laws of the spectroscope in analysis of the chemical elements of the stars are known. And all laws agree—so that the whole number now known—more than six hundred supernal laws of Nature have been discovered—fit together into a grand harmonic system. The chief work of the mind of man is their discovery. Then these men, all master mathematicians, strive to learn more of the simply amazing law-maker, the inconceivably mighty mathematical mind behind all of the sidereal universe, behind every motion from electrons to suns. Every effort is made by terrific concentration of mind in study of mathematics during ten, twelve, fourteen, eighteen and, at times, to twenty hours daily, to find more equations, more differentials, more splendid integrals, and more astonishing facts. These are they who know, admire, and stand in the true majesty of man, finite mathematician before infinite mathematician. Not one worships the Master Mind. It is too ridiculously absurd.

Every mathematician studies a mental process totally opposite to "worship." No mathematical researcher crawls along on his knees, or stomach, praying and worshiping; he rises, stands erect as a man, and with the mighty calculus in his hand, explores the infinite mind in search of more laws. With a horror beyond description one of these men of the master mind would look upon the murder of an animal, look upon its running blood; and then at the smoke of its burning flesh as a "sweet smelling

savor unto the Lord." That kind of a god or lord has no attractions for a real student of the Laws of Nature. Yet every religion (there are 1,024) is based in running blood, in hideous sacrifice.

Mentalists so well know each minute fraction of the total cause, that all is to them as clear as day. Two great fundamental causes exist, but these two have innumerable phases and branches. First, the original mark of the beast in man, fighting beast. Second, the appalling book commonly called the Hebrew Bible. But it was not written by Hebrews, but by priests in cities now buried in Arabia, all along the west bank of the Euphrates. Some are from twenty to thirty feet deep at present beneath river deposits. The writers were blood-soaked priests, totally ignorant of even one law of nature. These bloody sacrificers wrote the ritual of the book of blood—the Bible. I went to a fascinating lecture on Mesopotamian Archæology. Hundreds of pictures were shown on screens of excavated temples from sites of Nineveh, Babylon, and other cities of greater antiquity. In all cases of exhumed temples, there stood the hideous altars; places for cutting throats of animals, places for the blood to run, and places for fire. Same old bloody story from as far back as seven thousand years from now. One of the sickening facts revealed by excavation of vast temples of antiquity is the sculptures on the great buildings. Thus, grand buildings are everywhere marred by sculptures in marble of hideous hawk and serpent-headed gods; and gods with heads of birds, dogs, bulls, and apes. They mummified the Apis bulls in Egypt, and crocodiles, with cats and hawks.

Our river of sacrificial blood has steadily flowed from remote prehistoric times, and is still flowing: for animals are now being sacrificed in India, as I write here at midnight. Europe and America are at this minute dominated by horrible Asiatic books, breathing murder, war, and sacrifice. The horrible Hebrew-fighting god Jehovah, is the model for the Krupp cannon-makers, and for those monsters posing as human who order them to be turned upon other humans. Their text-book was written by men in an age when captured kings had their eyes gouged out by the hand of the king making the capture. The exhumed temples show the conquering king in the act of gouging with spears held in his own hand. Any other job would, naturally, be performed by slaves.

This dreadful book is still pouring its blood into modern times. It is one direct cause of the present war in Europe. Fighting, murdering gods, who sent out lying prophets, of course, require fighting, blood-drinking kings. The men responsible for the existing war in Europe are assassins of human welfare and civilisation.

The man able to control his emotions, and not allow one tear to fall when kissing his little girl good-bye, to meet death in war for his king, is ranked as the highest type of patriot by king and priest-ridden Europe. But actually the king is this man's arch-enemy. To serve blood-drinking monarchs is an insult to all that is good in humanity. Every monarch is not the protector and friend of a man suffering in the army, but an enemy. To be a patriot is to be taken away from family to drill for war. To drill is to be subjected to horrid, foal-mouthed oaths and vile abuse of brutal officers. The tiresome marches, drill, of body and the crushing of mind, self-respect, down into a slave-like being, is the military fact of fighting monarchies. The horrors of drills to men and horses are the curse of Europe.

The Armageddon is here all right, and the new dispensation—almost. Modern men are about to dispense with their arch-enemies—kings and priests. And advanced man is on the eve of dispensing with religion for all time. My wondrous series of letters from many parts of the world show that men are making ready to wipe out religion and substitute two things: morality and study, and the teaching everywhere the Laws of Nature. Within fifty years all men and women will stop teaching stuff they know

to be false, to their own children. This to-day is a curse beyond compare, lying to children, as bad as the making of women slaves, and their buying and selling into horrible, hated marriages. The day free from rule of putrid Asiatic and savage laws is beginning to dawn. This is the new dispensation. Let man now rise and destroy every arsenal and gun factory on earth. And melt up the metal in every battleship, for soon we will run out of iron, and have no more dynamos, motors, and electric machinery of any kind; for iron alone is magnetic, and it alone can be used to build the precious dynamo. Without iron, telegraphs and 'phones, electric lights and railways must go. And the mad dogs sink thousands of tons of man's most valuable metallic possession to the bottom of the sea in naval battles. Insane suicide is the order in Europe now. So well known are the workings of mind that a skilled mentalist can almost follow the very thoughts in the paranoic brain of a bloody king. The laws of that terrible disease, paranoia, have been explored in detail, and it is now known that the present war is directly due to paranoia induced by the Bible. Now that all those who think are disgusted with prayers of kings to their gods to give victory to their side—by wholesale murder of others—the time is ripe for final annihilation of all traces of religion from this planet.

And then I went up to a moving picture show and saw Russian priests pouring out hideous blessings upon thousands of men, arranged in regiments. When full of blessing, they took trains that hurried to the battle-field, to be torn to pieces by machinery. And had Jehovah been there he would doubtless have blessed the priests. Yes, kings can slay ten million men—thus committing the chief crime in human history—and then the red, crimson, black, and jet-black stain of crime can at once be made a little whiter than wool by mediators between Jehovah and man by "hired priests." And this terrific doctrine is under full sway here in the twentieth century, a century of science, and in the majestic presence of proven mathematical law. Go to, now; exterminate religion from this blood-soaked world; substitute rigid laws of nature, each shown to be true, and then obey them at any cost. For science demonstrates that a broken law carries its own consequences, without hope of escape.

"Paris, September 2, Midnight.—The text of the proclamation, issued by the Minister of the Interior, is as follows:—

"Frenchmen: For several days our heroic troops have been engaged in fierce combat with the enemy. The courage of our soldiers has won for them several marked advantages, but in the north the pressure of the German forces compelled us to retreat. This situation forces the President of the Republic and the Government to this sad decision. In order to safeguard the national interests, the duty of the public power is to go away from Paris for the moment. Under the command of its eminent chief the French army, full of courage and spirit, will defend against the invader the capital and its patriotic population.

"But the war must be pursued at the same time on the rest of French territory.

"The sacred struggle for the honor of the nation and the reparation of violated rights will continue without peace or truce, without a stop or a failure. None of our armies has been broken.

"If some of them have suffered only too evident losses, the gaps in the ranks have been filled up immediately from the waiting reserve forces, while the calling out of a new class of recruits brings us to-morrow new resources in men and energy.

"Endure, fight, such should be the motto of the allied armies, English, Belgians, Russians, and French.

"Endure, fight, while on the sea our allies aid us to cut our enemy's communications with the world.

"Endure, fight, while the Russians continue to carry a decisive blow to the heart of the German Empire.

"It is for the Government of this Republic to direct this resistance to the very end.....

"Frenchmen, all be worthy of these tragic circumstances. We will win final victory. We will obtain it by our unrelenting will, by our endurance, by our tenacity. The nation which does not desire to perish and which does not retreat before suffering or sacrifice is sure to conquer."

The Magna Charta in England and the Declaration of Independence in America, as great as they are, do not quite equal this majestic proclamation of the French minister. It does not contain the blood-distilled word "god." I have no words to express the majesty of this thing, this master production of the French statesman. After a hundred centuries of constant use of the word god in declarations of war by kings, and by priests, at the instant of hurling millions of men at each other's throats, here on September 2, 1914, the minister of a nation at time of removal of the Government from the capital, in distress, does not call on any god. So great is this event, that it marks the beginning of the end of religion. No tongue or pen can now hope to describe in centuries to come the far-reaching effect of this precious proclamation of the minister of France. No hideous cross or icon is mentioned. No flowing blood of a slain god, no putrid hypocrisy, no senseless mummary of long stereotyped words and formulæ of priests, no deadly superstition of the past, appears in this ever-to-be historic document. The attention of the reader is specially called, thus: a great, highly cultured nation, a great and beautiful city filled with magnificent works of science and art, with exquisite scientific instruments, telescopes, microscopes, spectrosopes, paintings, sculptures, inscriptions, all, everything that is in harmony with the Mind of the Universe, is threatened with destruction. The civilisation of centuries was on the eve of annihilation—the Government threatened, and slavery of all who survived murder, apparent. It is worthy of all admiration now and for all time to come, of all, that the minister of the threatened nation did not call on any god. He called on brave men.

This document is new in human history. Each word ought to be engraved on a stone slab; and this put into a fire and deluge-proof building, for future generations of liberated and free human beings. This priceless proclamation is a turning point in the entire career of man, the opening of an age of science and of the reign of nature's inexpressibly magnificent laws, pure and true; that is, the men of England will be killed off, and the women can just take the ballot and vote. Mentalists have known for years that this Armageddon ushering in a new dispensation—minus kings and priests—was coming. They knew mental laws, and were aware that the war must come. See this: We have Asiatic books, filled from lid to lid with ambiguities. Councils of the learned have often met to decide what the verses mean. Thousands of scholars have tried their hands in attempted explanation and have failed. Of course they failed to harmonise ravings of paranoiacs in writings that are directly opposite. Yet they pay out millions of dollars to send these useless, ambiguous productions that they do not understand to the heathen. And this starts up quarrels and disputations among them. The United States Government should rise to protect its own people, and prohibit another cent being sent out of this country for the purpose of carrying religion to any person whomsoever. Not one cent for outside religion—but millions for children's true science-schools here, and thousands of hospitals. Take care of our own little harassed and neglected slave-children, and let the heathen be free of theology. This is surely due to the fact that missionaries do not want the Chinese and Hindus in this country, but want to circulate around with them in heaven.

Now, this is a solemn and impressive moment—it is midnight here on this peak; and by curious laws of pure mountain air perspective, the glittering stars appear to be near—that is, the summit seems to be standing amid stars. No pen can write words of description of my beautiful and peaceful surroundings. It does appear impossible that men should fight in this beautiful world. Here is a midnight message from out the solitude and silence of a mountain far and away from all cities and struggling humans. If it must be that men must die to bring

great reforms to mankind, then the death of each French soldier dying under this proclamation of the minister of his nation is of the highest value to this and all generations so long as man shall inhabit the earth.

PROF. EDGAR L. LARKIN.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

### Who Saw Him Fly?

IT is alleged by Christians that a few days after the resurrection Jesus ascended bodily into heaven. But where is Heaven?—with a capital H, if you please. Nobody knows. All Christians are agreed, however, that it is somewhere “up above.” But where? When I was a boy I witnessed what was then considered a very extraordinary performance. I saw a “flying man.” He did not go up in a machine like the modern aeroplane; he had a special patent of his own. He manufactured a machine with wings, raised himself by the aid of a balloon, and, all of a sudden, cut himself free and flew for a minute or two in the air; when, one of the wings failing to act, he was precipitated headlong to the earth beneath and carried away a mangled and bleeding corpse.

I assert that I saw him fly, and thousands of people from all parts of London witnessed the spectacle. I have, in recent years, seen many airmen flying around London and at the seaside, but sometimes the most skilful of them come a “cropper,” as the saying goes. Flying Jesus was the only man who ever flew up and never came down again. He must have gone up and up through infinite space. If Jesus ascended into heaven his ascent must have been witnessed by thousands of spectators. Yet who saw him fly? “Profane” historians are silent about an occurrence which, if it happened, was one of the most extraordinary in all history. Why do they not mention it? Because it never took place. The story is pure fiction. A mere glance at the evidence produced by the Gospels will suffice to show that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, nor John was an eyewitness of the ascension. Indeed, Matthew says nothing about it. John is also silent, while Mark and Luke merely declare that, when Jesus had finished talking to his disciples, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God.

Now, if any of the evangelists had witnessed so important an event as the ascension, is it likely that they would have recorded it in a narrative of two or three lines? Moreover, if the miracle had really occurred, one would think that the testimony of thousands of independent witnesses would be forthcoming. Yet no such evidence is adduced. Most of the evidence we have for the extraordinary occurrences recorded in the Gospels is merely hearsay evidence—it is like the evidence that was adduced for the mythical Russian troops that passed from the north of Scotland to the south coast by train and then on to France—in every case somebody knew somebody who knew a friend who saw these Russians in a train with the blinds drawn down so that they could not be seen. That is the kind of evidence that Christians think is good enough to convince unbelievers that Jesus arose from the dead and ascended into heaven. If Jesus ascended, where did he go? Was he, in the flesh, able to defy the law of gravitation? Could he breathe in the attenuated atmosphere above the clouds? Did he shoot off in the direction of the nearest fixed star? And how long was he likely to travel before he reached his destination? The theologians have an easy method of dodging these difficulties. That eminent German divine, Dr. Bernhard Weiss, in his *Life of Christ*, vol. iii., ch. ix., says:—

“Although he [Christ] showed himself to the disciples in a form palpable to the senses, the risen one had not a material body which could only have been lifted up by the destruction of gravitation; his glorified body was, from the first, removed beyond the conditions of earthly life. The celestial world, whose order of life

Jesus adopted when he arose from the dead, is, according to the nature of things, exempt from the limiting conditions of earth.”

Very ingenious indeed! But we should like to know how Dr. Weiss found all this out. Had he private sources of information on the subject. Perhaps, however, in these days of international strife, English Christians would not accept Dr. Weiss as an authority on the subject—but can they find a better?

The Freethinkers' explanation is not so ingenious, but it is more straightforward. It is easy to understand how, years after Jesus—assuming such a person ever lived—had died and his ashes had mingled with the dust, his followers invented the story of his resurrection and ascension; how, expecting and desiring a Messiah who would save them from the Roman yoke, the early Jewish Christians manufactured these legends of a risen and ascended redeemer, who was soon to return and restore the kingdom of Israel. When it is further remembered that the world was already familiar with the legends of the sun-gods, who rose again from the death of winter to midsummer glory, it will be seen how easily the ignorant masses could be persuaded to exchange Osiris or Adonis for the glorified Savior—Jesus of Nazareth.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### The German Professor.

THE German Professor's

The mildest of men;  
He sits scribbling all day  
In his stuffy book-den.

To his masters, no man's  
More submissive than he;  
What they order, he straightway  
Performeth with glee.

Yet this mild Pedagogue  
Who dares none to withstand,  
Quite out-Herod's Herod  
When he takes pen in hand.

A good patriot, he  
Seas of lager will drink;  
For his country he'll shed  
The last drop of his ink.

He'll conclusively prove  
That the great German race  
In battle array  
Can the Universe face.

For his country save force  
There's no conscience or law;  
Such things were contrived  
Other nations to awe.

The Superman's State  
Need no treaties respect;  
And all scruples of honor  
Should promptly reject.

What are honor and justice?  
Names—nothing more;  
When they stand in our way,  
We must show them the door.

When you want to get *there*  
You must hack your way through,  
And behave like a run-a-muck  
Drunken Yahoo.

“Frightful examples”  
You must make as you go,  
And more freely than water  
Cause bloodshed to flow.

The buccaneer's ethics  
Your ethics must be;  
Necessity still  
Will suffice for your plea.

In short, these mild Germans  
Who reason so well,  
Would make the world German,  
Or make it a hell!

B. D.

## Salvation Soap.

THERE was a priest, and he was mad ;  
 He told all men, however bad,  
 That he could make them pure and good  
 By means of certain human blood,  
 That formed a soap which, strange to say,  
 Would wash all faults and crimes away  
 From guilty men, whilst those who fell  
 Unscaped with it went straight to hell.  
 All who used it would, he said,  
 Live merrily when they were dead,  
 And wings would sprout, and they should fly  
 To sweep the cobwebs off the sky.  
 And if they tired of this, then they  
 Should lounge on golden thrones all day,  
 Or strut about with lyres and crowns  
 And crimson robes and snow-white gowns.  
 Thus they should be, however vile,  
 Prime mashers in the heavenly style.  
 But they should wake where serpents hiss  
 If they used any soap but this.  
 Gulp'd down in pills, however crude,  
 'Twould serve as physic or as food.  
 One cake alone, if swallowed whole,  
 Cleansed Bill Sikes' coat or Borgias' soul.  
 For none but his was genuine;  
 All other soaps but deepened sin.  
 'Twas guaranteed by king and pope  
 As far surpassing Pears's soap.  
 E'en Lily Langtry's puffs were nought  
 To those that he received unsought.  
 More foolish was the written stuff  
 Than Cleaver's silly punning puff.  
 Use this soap once, and straight, one swore,  
 On heaven's fair strand you're "washed ashore."  
 Guiteau deposed that, for his part,  
 It cleansed the cockles of his heart ;  
 For in its cakes he saw full well  
 The Oily One of Israel.  
 Peace, too, proclaimed its virtues oft  
 Amidst well-lathered saints aloft ;  
 It soaped his conscience reconciled,  
 Made innocent as any child.  
 Thus martyrs many blessed that soap  
 That greased their path from the long rope  
 To heavenly washhouses where they  
 With blood-soap washed three times a day  
 Till made resplendent as the sun  
 In moral beauty every one.  
 Never such a boon was known  
 As this new soap that stood alone.  
 One trial bleached the blackest skins ;  
 Much more, it cleansed all petty sins.  
 It washed the tongue of fibs and libel ;  
 'Twas guaranteed so in the Bible.  
 Its precious cakes were bread and wine,  
 Its wafers flesh and blood divine ;  
 'Twas Elixir of Life, indeed ;  
 'Twas everything that man could need.  
 'Twas Heavenly Salve, Salvation Squills,  
 And Sinner's Soap, and Last Day Pills.  
 All these in one—'twas patented  
 To heal the quick and raise the dead.  
 Without it all would go to pot,  
 For such was all men's (s)'oapless lot.  
 Thus impudent old Soapy roams  
 And pesters women in their homes,  
 And works their feelings up to buying  
 By threats of swift and awful dying,  
 Mingled with dabs of his soft soap,  
 As samples of the greater hope.  
 'Twas vaunted with so bold an air,  
 It sold like wildfire everywhere.  
 And wise men wondered what could be  
 This patent blood-soap stamped J. C.,  
 With which the priest went up and down  
 The streets of that deluded town,  
 Till soap and sinners duly sold  
 Had filled his pockets full of gold ;  
 Which made some doubt, 'tis fair to add,  
 Whether that priest was really mad,  
 Or only artful, like the cheat  
 Who swindles clowns in every street.

W. P. BALL.

## The Dead Soldier.

CALM be thy slumbers, my soldier-boy sleeping,  
 Thy pillow of earth be as yielding as wool ;  
 Thou art safe in the harbor, the Lord thy soul keeping,  
 And the flow of God's tears laves the gash in thy  
 skull.  
 Thy soul in the cool of the eve is reclining,  
 By odorous trees in the groves of the Lord ;  
 And thy poor, battered body the furrow is lining  
 With the scarlet that oozes from wound torn and  
 gored.  
 They prayed in the homeland for God's good protection,  
 Thy mother, thy sweetheart, for their boy at the war ;  
 "If it please thee, good Lord," was their hearts' sad  
 porrection  
 That trailed after the prayer like the tail of a star.  
 If it please thee, good Lord ! And thy corpse is the  
 answer !  
 Thou hast gone through the gates to be passed by  
 us all ;  
 Thou hast died by the point of some fury-spiced lancer,  
 And we—we may die by a germ or a fall.  
 Bellona is rampant, her harvest is reaping :  
 The hosts of the slain cover valley and hill ;  
 And the God of the fireside in hiding goes creeping,  
 The God of the world is the God that can kill !  
 With the thunder of doomsday, thy flesh will awaken,  
 Thou corpse, poor corpse, stretched out stiffened and  
 cold ;  
 To the bosom of God will thy body be taken  
 And—thy blood will spurt out as his claws thee  
 unfold.

JAMES L. RAYMOND.

## ANOTHER EXPLANATION OF JONAH.

Everybody knows the Rationalist's interpretation of the Jonah story as that of the prophet putting up for three nights at a pub with the sign of the whale, and being eventually kicked out. Another interpretation, and one more in accordance with the thoughts of the early makers of myths, is suggested in Ignaz Goldziher's *Mythology among the Hebrews*. Goldziher says, "When in ancient times men, dwelling by the seashore, saw the heavenly fire-ball in the evening dip into the sea, and the next morning issue shining at the opposite point of the sea-line, what other idea could he conceive of this but that down in the sea the sun was swallowed by a monster, which spat out its prey again on the shore?" Isaiah says that Jahveh shall punish Leviathan and slay the dragon that is in the sea (xxvii. 1); and, Didst thou not kill the monster (rahabi) and wound the dragon (tannin)? This is the old combat of Bel and Tanit, or Bel and the Dragon, which we still have on our crown pieces as St. George and the Dragon (the victory of Light over Darkness), what I may venture to call the primæval myth. Goldziher says, "The most prominent mythical characteristic of the story of Jonah is his celebrated abode in the sea in the belly of the whale. This trait is eminently solar, and belongs to the group on which we are now engaged. As, on occasion of the storm, the storm-dragon or the storm-serpent swallows the sun; so when he sets he is swallowed by a mighty fish, waiting for him at the bottom of the sea. Then, when he appears again on the horizon, he is spit out on the shore by the sea-monster."—*Lucianus*.

"I shall be happy to answer the questions of anyone with religious difficulties," said the sky-pilot at the close of an *al fresco* discourse in Hawick Market-place. There appeared to be but one perplexed mind among the listeners, a gentleman of well-known sporting proclivities. He said: "I should like to ask by what means Samson caught the three hundred foxes whose tails he tied together, and sent them adrift among the Philistines' corn, when it took the Duke o' Buccleuch's hounds a hail day to catch ane?" The sky-pilot wilted. He either could not or would not answer, but simply said, "Let us pray!"

A clergyman, who recently called upon a young widow to condole with her upon the loss of her husband, placed considerable emphasis upon the proposition that the separation was merely temporal, and painted in vivid colors the happiness of friends reunited after death. When he stopped for breath, the sorrowing one heaved a deep sigh, and quietly remarked: "Well, I suppose his first wife has got him again, then."

**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, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, a Lecture.

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