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We are not allowed to grow up before choosing our religion. We as little choose our religion as we choose to be born. It is done for us without our having part in it.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

“God in History.”

THE Rev. Dr. Adams Brown is the Professor of Systematic Theology at the Union Theological Seminary, New York. It is his profession to elucidate and defend the Christian religion, to refute all arguments against it, and to remove obstacles to belief in it. The Drew Lectureship in connection with Hackney Congregational College was established for the purpose of dealing with the subject of immortality; but Professor Brown, the appointed lecturer for this year, felt that, important as the question of a future life is, there is a prior question which forces itself upon our attention in this hour of unparalleled struggle and sacrifice, and so chose as his subject, “God in History.” His discourse appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for October 28. The first proposition which he lays down is “that God is in history, and that through all the struggle and strife and sin of men and of nations he is in control”; but he does not even attempt to demonstrate its truth. What he offers us is not evidence of any kind, but a confession of faith, or a series of dogmatic assertions. Verses from the Bible are thrown at us in great abundance, but they are of no value whatever, except in so far as they show that their authors cherished the faith so proudly gloried in by our lecturer. If those Old Testament prophets, if Jesus and his apostles, and if the giants of the early Church believed that the march of contending armies, the rise of dynasties and the fall of cities took place by God’s decree and for the execution of his purpose, what is there to prevent us from sharing so confident a conviction? We will here quote Dr. Brown’s own words:—

“I have spoken of our experience as unparalleled in human history, but the statement needs qualification. It is unparalleled in magnitude, but not in quality. Hunger is hunger, and pain pain, and death death the world over; in Palestine as in Belgium, in Rome as in Austria and France. And the anguish of hope deferred, the shattering of ideals, the bitterness of the ‘I would, but ye would not,’ were as poignant to the patriarchs and saints of the first Christian century as they can be to us to-day. There is nothing, I repeat, that any man or woman or child is experiencing to-day which has not been experienced by others over and over and over again. There is no challenge to faith in what we see which has not been met by faith in the past and vanquished.”

We are surprised at the display of naivete which the erudite Professor makes in that passage. Is he not aware that the writers of the Bible and Christian theologians, down to very recent times, firmly believed in witchcraft? Is that any reason why we should regard it as true? Our forefathers held many views, the truth of which has now been fully disproved. The writers of the Bible and Christian divines for centuries were convinced that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the heavenly bodies had been created on purpose to supply it with

light and heat. Does Dr. Brown swear by that antiquated astronomy? We frankly admit that the belief in the Divine government of the world has been held by the majority of people in all ages; but our contention is that there is no better foundation for it than there was for the belief in witchcraft or the ptolemaic astronomy, and certainly the Professor does not succeed in showing any at all.

He opens the lecture by saying that “it is time for us to come to grips with facts.” We agree, but regret to report that Dr. Brown, though acknowledging the facts, never comes to grips with them. Indeed, he lets the facts severely alone, and talks theology for an hour. He alludes to the “mysteries” of God’s providence in history; and then proceeds to tell us what he sees as he contemplates them. The contemplation of “mysteries” can never be a profitable occupation. But Dr. Brown mentions the “mysteries” of Divine providence only to treat them as non-existent. He talks about God’s providence in history as if he knew all about it. He pretends to be able to see three things in it: God at work for a moral purpose; God at work for a social purpose; and God at work for a religious purpose. Not one of those three things can we see, though we have looked our hardest for them. Does Dr. Brown see them? Let us try to find out. He says:—

“When I say that God is in history for a moral purpose, I mean that his chief concern is the making and training of character. Not happiness, but discipline is his primary interest, and happiness, when it comes, is only the seal that the discipline is complete.”

What is Germany? The rod of God’s anger against Belgium, France, Russia, Great Britain, and Portugal, the razor with which he is shaving the heads and beards of these Powers. The Kaiser was perfectly justified in saying that he is the instrument of the Almighty, his sword, his weapon, his vicegerent; but will Dr. Brown inform us what the countries thus smitten had done to deserve so drastic a chastisement? Can he explain to us God’s moral purpose towards Belgium in permitting the ruthless destruction of her towns and villages and the cruel slaughter of her people? Are the Belgians likely to improve morally by being robbed of their possessions, driven away from their homes, and compelled to roam as exiles in lands not their own? Are such chastisements worthy of an all-loving Heavenly Father? Dr. Brown refers us back to the history of Israel, whose misfortunes, he assures us, so far from “proving that God had abandoned them, were rather warnings which he had sent them for their good, stages which they must pass on their way to salvation.” We have carefully studied the Old Testament, especially the Books of the Prophets, and we remember quite well how Amos (iii. 2) represents Jehovah as saying: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.” Does not Dr. Brown realise how infinitely absurd it is to depict the Father of the human race as choosing one little tribe in an out-of-the-way corner and lavishing upon it all the wealth of his affection, while having absolutely nothing to do with the rest except in so far as they could be employed as executors of his will towards Israel? Now, what became of Jehovah’s chosen, peculiar people, whose misfortunes, however terrible, are said to have been but the proof of Jehovah’s love? He

often gave them cleanness of teeth in all their cities and want of bread in all their places; he withheld the rain when most wanted, and sent it when it meant disaster; he smote them with blasting and mildew, and directed the palmerworm to devour the multitudes of their gardens and their vineyards and their fig-trees and their olive-trees; he sent among them the pestilence after the manner of Egypt, slew their young men with the sword, and carried away their horses. These and worse calamities befell them as tokens of God's love and care. They were undergoing moral discipline, God's chief concern being the making and training of their character. Well, what happened to these people who were loved, chastised, and disciplined on so terrific a scale? They were lost to history forever. In their captivity they ceased to be a nation. What Dr. Brown calls God's moral purpose concerning them resulted in their complete destruction. Their misfortunes, so far from being stages in their journey to salvation, ultimately conveyed them to their national tomb.

It is impossible to conceive of a God of love permitting the present War and using it as a moral discipline to those engaged in it. The God of Amos and Dr. Brown is to us an intolerable monster in whom thinking people cannot bring themselves to believe. Suffering and sorrow are not blessings in disguise, but evils that require to be uprooted and cast off. The Christian teaching on this point is essentially immoral. This is how Professor Brown puts it:—

"Suffering is God's means of training character. Far from its being a sign of his forgetfulness, the proof of his weakness or of his indifference, it is through suffering that God teaches his most important lessons and opens the way for the impartation of his choicest blessings.....Where other religions have shrunk from pain as the supreme evil, or turned aside from it as the supreme mystery, Christianity looks it full in the face and finds in it the price of salvation."

That is a damnable doctrine, and its prevalence in Christendom has resulted in the present painful crisis. It is the quintessence of folly to imagine that the unspeakable and unjust sufferings inflicted upon the Belgians are the price of their salvation, or that France's sorrows are the means of purging her moral character. All our sufferings and sorrows are of an exclusively human origin, and must be looked upon as signs of the imperfection and immaturity of our social life. Had Dr. Brown's God existed, such a state of things would have been inconceivable. He would have made a perfect man, who would have done right on every occasion, whose life would have been an exact copy, on a small scale, of his Creator's. There would have been no disputes between individuals or between nations, and war would never have been heard of. But if we come to grips with facts, we shall learn that mankind has not yet completely emerged from the savage state, and that every now and then it slips back into it, and acts as if it had never left it. Once our animal passions are roused, our intelligence becomes their slave, and we fight on a scale of brutality beyond the reach of lower animals, and the stronger, better-equipped party invariably comes out on top. It is a fundamental error to imagine that the right always wins. It is might, skilfully applied, that generally carries the day; and might is not always at the disposal of right.

The only rational conclusion is that God is not and never has been in history. The facts are not on speaking terms with him. Neither he nor his purposes can reasonably be declared to be a factor in the progress of humanity.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Churches and the War.—II.

(Concluded from p. 690.)

IN considering the nature of the "Christian Message to a Nation at War," Sir Robertson Nicoll naturally finds himself confronted with those New Testament precepts that enjoin non-resistance. His method of

dealing with them is neither new nor courageous. It consists in denying that they mean what they say—or perhaps one ought to put it—they do not say what they mean. When the New Testament says "Resist not evil," or "Give to him that asketh of thee," etc., it does not really mean what a plain and literal interpretation would imply. And, of course, by this rule of interpretation one can make the New Testament, or any other book, mean exactly what one pleases. Indeed, if only the Powers would have allowed the German Government to apply that rule of interpretation to the treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium, there could have been no talk of its violation. Treaties are only binding, with honorable people, so long as their terms are taken in a plain and literal sense. And unless the New Testament means what it says, or says what it means, it might as well be written in an utterly unknown language.

There is something exceedingly ingenuous in Sir Robertson Nicoll's defence of the New Testament teaching, and in his use of it as an aid for the recruiting sergeant. People, he says, are "in difficulty because they believe that all war is forbidden by Christ." Some of these he declines to bother with because they are not friendly towards Christianity, and, therefore, not worth bothering about. But there are others "whose conscience is tender," and they must be considered. A rather curious rule which decides that objections are not worth considering unless put forward by people who are eager to snatch at any apology that will excuse their swallowing the teachings to which objection is taken! So to these people with a tender conscience Sir Robertson Nicoll points out, that if we take "I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn him the other also," literally, then, it does forbid all resistance to evil. But are we meant to take it literally? To this the answer is, no; and the reason for the answer is, that if we take it literally it becomes foolish and impracticable. Quite so; but observe the simplicity of the argument. It is urged that such a precept is impracticable. Sir Robertson does not deny this, if we take it to mean what it says; so, therefore, it must mean something else. Charming! You strike the plain meaning of the text out because to admit it destroys its value. *That is the sole reason for not accepting the clear sense of it.* No other is given or is even possible.

Sir Robertson supports his position by pointing out that earnest Christians do not take the text enjoining indiscriminate almsgiving literally; and if not this text, why others? Quite so; if one may twist the meaning of one passage, one may twist the meaning of other passages. But this is clearly no answer to the man who denies the right to twist any passage. The editor of the *British Weekly* appears to be under the impression that no one believes that the New Testament means what it says. He is quite mistaken. There are many thousands who take that view of the New Testament, and for that very reason do not believe in it. Sir Robertson Nicoll says that when he discovers a man who will give to everyone that asks, he will "discuss with that man the meaning of the precept, 'Resist not evil.'" Meanwhile, he intends to go on expounding. This is very simple—and safe. You do not argue, you simply tell people. Those who do not agree with you will soon give you up as a bad job; those who do agree will gather round and hail you as an inspired teacher. It is an illustration of the principle of selection—the selected being the unthinking and the uncritical.

In last week's article I indicated that Sir Robertson Nicoll had a reply to the Quaker position. Here it is. He turns on the Quaker with the question:—

"We put to ourselves the question whether a Christian could stand passive and see outrage done on mother, wife, sister, or child, and we say with a great certainty that he could not."

One sincerely hopes that Sir Robertson is right, and that no Christian would stand passively by in

such circumstances. But it is not a question of what Christians *do*. In practice the matter adjusts itself easily enough. A man, whether he calls himself a Christian or not, placed in such circumstances, would act exactly as his instincts prompt him. He would not stop to consider what he should do as a Christian, or as anything else, he would simply *act*. But that is not the question. It is not a question of *what* Christians do, it is a question of what their sacred book says they *should* do. All that Sir Robertson succeeds in showing is that Christians do not carry out a number of New Testament precepts. There is nothing new in this. The *Freethinker* has been pointing it out for a generation. Christians do not turn the other cheek when one is smitten, they do not meet evil unresistingly, they do not give to everyone that asks them, they do not refrain from laying up treasures on earth, they do not trust to faith to cure disease. Everyone is familiar with these facts—too familiar, perhaps—for if they were less common their significance might be better appreciated. The curious thing is, that Sir Robertson Nicoll appears to have convinced himself that because Christian conduct does not square with Christian precept, therefore, Christian precept cannot mean what it says. Less sophisticated students of social phenomena would conclude, that if Christians have so universally ignored the plain meaning of Christian teachings, it must be because there is something radically faulty in the teachings themselves.

Mr. R. J. Campbell said, lately, while acting as chairman for Sir Robertson Nicoll, that teaching of non-resistance applied to individuals only. He said:—

"As to the words of our Lord concerning non-resistance, I would submit that they apply to the individual, and to the resentment of personal injuries. I ask you to observe what the form of those aphorisms is. 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.' He did not say, Whosoever shall smite thy wife or thy child let him hit again. Our Master's words relate all the time to the resenting of our personal injuries."

So that while Sir Robertson Nicoll denies that the text means what it says, Mr. Campbell believes it is to be read quite literally, only its application is limited to individuals. The editor of the *British Weekly* evades the question, and ends by being ridiculous. Mr. Campbell faces it, and ends by being amusing. If a man may not resist an injury directed towards himself, why should he resist an injury directed towards others? And if each one is to be engaged in resisting injury directed towards someone else, and the someone else is willing to reap the advantages of that resistance, are people not all the time doing what the text prohibits? Moreover, the argument always urged in favor of non-resistance has been that you overcome hatred by love, violence by gentleness, abuse by meekness. And what real difference does it make to the wrong-doer if the hand that knocks him down is not that of the person injured, but only of his friend? Finally, if individuals are not warranted in resisting evil, how does a nation—a collection of individuals—become warranted in doing so?

The truth is that Mr. Campbell's explanation is one invented to suit the circumstances of the moment. The nation is at war, and many Christians are puzzled to square a war in which the names of Christianity and God are so freely invoked with New Testament teaching. If, therefore, Mr. Campbell says that the New Testament does not admit the appeal to force, he injures his standing in the country. If he admits the right to use force, he weakens the value of the New Testament as an ethical guide. There is a *via media*, if Mr. Campbell had but the wit to see it and the courage to proclaim it. But, lacking these, like a true theologian, he invents an interpretation to suit the needs of the moment. No one is allowed to resist evil toward themselves; everyone is warranted in resisting evil towards someone else. It is resistance by substitute,

with the effect on the evil-doer the same in either case.

And yet I believe that Mr. Campbell is nearer the truth than Sir Robertson Nicoll. Both are anxious just at present—although they may wish to reverse it later—to prove that the New Testament does not forbid war. Sir Robertson's method is to deny that the New Testament means what it says. Mr. Campbell's plan is to accept the meaning, but to give it a narrower range. It only applies to individuals. And that, I think, is nearer the truth. The precepts attributed to Jesus are counsels of perfection for individuals only. They were intended for those individuals who desired the higher religious life. There was nothing new in this being so. It is a very common aspect of Eastern religious life. It was not intended to apply to social life, or to international relations, because these are practically outside the New Testament purview. There is no social gospel in the New Testament; there is no theory of the State there; and, consequently, there is no teaching as to the relations between States. It is a gospel addressed to the individual; and it has broken down everywhere for the reason that, in ignoring the fundamental character of the social relationships, it necessarily remained ignorant of the nature of the individual.

The editor of the *British Weekly* and the oracle of the City Temple are merely playing the customary game of theological opportunism. Their real purpose is not to find out what the New Testament means, but what they can make it mean, so as to suit the present situation. The nation is now in a warlike mood, and so it must be shown that Christianity does not forbid war. When that mood passes, and if a peace-wave sweeps over the country, we shall be told, with equal assurance, that war in any form is decidedly anti-Christian. The Churches are at their old game. They do not lead, they follow public opinion. They do not educate, they distort. War and peace, slavery and freedom, anarchism, socialism, and conservatism, autocracy and democracy, anything and everything has been justified by an appeal to the fetish of the Churches. And the Churches are now what they always were—useless in times of peace, and a nuisance in times of war. Their chief, almost their sole, interest is to conserve their position, and retain a place of power that is justified by neither experience nor common sense.

C. COHEN.

The Man in the Moon.

"Truly, the moon shines with a good grace."

—SHAKESPEARE.

"THE lesser light which rules the night" has always been a favorite subject of contemplation. The more glorious sun had also, and has still, his worshipers; but, apparently, the moon has the greater importance assigned to her in the public mind. The superstitions to which her supposed influence has given rise are almost inexhaustible. She is supposed not only to determine weather, but to influence a number of other things. Our own immortal Zadkiel seems to think that there are few things, from pitch and toss to manslaughter, in which Phœbe has not a finger. His evergreen rival, Old Moore,

"With the moon was more familiar
Than almost any other fellow;
Her secrets understood so clear
That some believed he had been there."

It cannot, however, be said of either of these eminent men, as of the Rosicrucian in *Hudibras*, that, with all their knowledge, they are aware

"Who first found out the man i' th' moon,
That to the ancients was unknown."

Indeed, the ancients were so chivalrous that they identified the beautiful goddess Artemis and the chaste Diana with the moon. To them she was a virgin deity attended by her maidens, and her temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the

world. Other times, other faiths. Byron poked fun at the older beliefs:—

"The ocean's tides and mortals' brains she sways,
And also hearts, if there be truth in lays."

The Heathen Chinese have a legend that a rabbit lives in the moon, and makes those shadows on its face which have so often attracted the attention of the curious and the amorous. This legend is transformed by the creed of the pious Buddhist into an equally pious hare, which met Gotama one day when he had wandered astray in a forest. The polite hare offered assistance, and Gotama replied that he was poor and hungry, and could give no reward for his kindness. The legendary hare replied in a manner worthy of a courtier of Le Grand Monarque: "If you are hungry, I am at your service; make a fire, kill, roast, and eat me." Buddha tested the animal's devotion by kindling a fire, into which the hare jumped. The hare was, however, not sacrificed; for the Teacher pitied it, plucked it from the flames, and hurled it to the moon, where it remains for ever, an awful warning of the danger of politeness in a wicked world.

The fancy of the American Indian shapes the marks on the moon into human form:—

"At the door on summer evenings
Sat the little Hiawatha.
Saw the moon rise from the water,
Rippling, rounding from the water.
Saw the flecks and shadows on it;
Whispered, 'What is that, Nokamis?'
And the good Nokamis answered:
'Once a warrior, very angry,
Seized his grandmother, and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight;
Right against the moon he threw her.
'Tis her body that you see her.'"

Some of the Pacific Islanders likewise believe in a woman in the moon. To the Scandinavian the shadows appear to be made by two children whom the moon kidnapped as they were returning from the well with a bucket of water slung on a stick between them. The Poles call the man in the moon Paul Twardowski, and have a long legend to account for his whereabouts.

The majority of civilised nations have delighted in sending Biblical characters to the lunar asylum. The Jews have placed Jacob there. Others have seen Isaac bearing the faggots for the sacrifice on Horeb. Italian imagination "bodies forth the forms" of Cain and a load of thorns, said to be "the fruits of the ground" mentioned in Genesis. One wonders what freak of human fancy procured Cain his admission to the moon and transformed his fruit offerings into thorns. It is certain that the legend was current before the time of Dante, who, in his *Inferno*, says:—

"Onward now,
For now doth Cain, with fork of thorns, confine
On either hemisphere, touching the wave,
Beneath the tower of Seville."

When the poet and Beatrice enter the moon, he asks anxiously:—

"Tell, I pray thee, whence the gloomy spots
Upon this body, which below on earth,
Give rise to talk of Cain in fabling quaint."

Milton makes the celestial Raphael the sponsor of his views on the subject. The spots, he thought, were—

"Unpurged
Vapors not yet into her substance turned."

Neither the gifted Florentine of the fourteenth century nor the educated Englishman of the seventeenth knew anything of the mountains of the moon. Mediæval writers refer to the man in the moon as carrying a burden of stolen sticks, with his dog going on before him. Chaucer supports the same tradition in his *Testament of Cressid*, when he says the moon had—

"On her breast a chorle painted full even,
Bearing a bush of thorns on his backe,
Which, for his theft, might clime no ner the heaven."

The man in the moon is sometimes used as a synonym for Mr. Nobody. Shakespeare makes Stephano

mystify the monster Caliban in *The Tempest* on their first meeting:—

C.—"Hast thou not dropped from heaven?"
S.—"Out of the moon I do assure thee; I was the man in the moon when time was."
C.—"I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee. My mistress showed me thee, and thy dog and thy bush."

Quince's idea in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of sending an actor with a bush of thorns and a lantern to say that he came:—

"To disfigure or present the person of moonshine" is full of interest.

We cannot help regretting that Theseus and his companions interrupted the rustic, and irritated him into changing the blank verse in which he was about to explain himself, for:—

"All that I have to say is to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush my thorn-bush, and this dog my dog."

What people meant to see, of course they saw, such an effect has the mind upon the senses. A lady and a clergyman viewed the moon through the same glass, and saw in it, as they thought, two figures. "May be," says the lady, "they are lovers meeting to pour forth their vows by earth light." "Not at all," says the clergyman, "they are the steeples of two neighboring churches."

The "glimpses of the moon" have moved men from the beginning of history. If the universality of any belief be a test of its truth, there is much to be said for this faith in moonshine. As Shakespeare says, "Truly the moon shines with a good grace."

MIMNERMUS.

Invisible Helpers and Adversaries.

MICRO-ORGANISMS almost everywhere abound, and were human creatures endowed with higher powers of vision the world would then appear a very different place. Still, the presence of microbes is indirectly, though none the less positively, made known to us through the aid of the microscope. Not that all may be made visible, for although modern microscopes magnify more than ten thousand times, innumerable microbes still elude their greatest power.

The minuteness of these organisms is so extraordinary that their tininess cannot be realised in any ordinary mode of measurement. A fair average length of these microbes is about one-twenty-thousandth of an inch. This statement, however, conveys very little in the way of definite impression. But we begin to grasp their infinitesimal dimensions when we picture them as Professor Frankland does when he assures us:—

"That no less than four hundred millions of these organisms can be spread over one square inch in a single layer. Thus we could have a population one hundred times as great as (inner) London settled on an area of a single square inch, without any complaint of overcrowding, and giving to each individual organism, not three acres.....but one-four-hundred millionth of a square inch, which is quite adequate for a citizen in the commonwealth of micro-organisms."

Microbes are usually very simple in form; the micrococci are more or less circular, while the bacilli are rod-like. The spirilla are spiral or corkscrew in shape, the yeasts are larger and oval in outline, and the moulds are made up of long threads which produce the nasty patches which arise on foodstuffs too long exposed to the microbe-laden atmosphere.

The bacilli and spirilla are mostly capable of movement, but the moulds and yeasts are stationary. Some of these motile organisms execute such fantastic movements across the field of the microscope that they create "an irrepressible impression upon the observer that each individual microbe is assisting in, and conscientiously performing, its part in a highly complex and thoroughly organised Scotch reel, conducted at express speed."

Although the majority of microbes readily respond to staining with bright colors which serves to facilitate their easier observation, their spores are much more resistant to coloring matter. This difficulty has, however, been surmounted, with the result that the coloring processes complete, the spores, which play a very sinister part in the lives of disease germs, may be made to appear in one color, while the fully developed microbe is adorned with another. The differently stained microbes and their attendant spores can now be studied with greater ease.

It is a noteworthy fact that some microbes are as irresponsive to the action of colors as spores usually show themselves to be. The tubercle bacillus, one of the deadliest enemies of the human race, is one of these, but even this baleful organism has been compelled to respond to the gentle art of the dyer.

But the refinements of microscopic inquiry do not end here. More delicate and detailed devices are required to render visible the organs of locomotion with which motile microbes propel themselves with almost unbelievable velocity through their liquid environment. These locomotive organs refuse to respond to aniline dyes. But as linen and cotton cannot be directly dyed with basic aniline colors, this obstacle is overcome through the prior impregnation of their fibres with what are termed "mordants." By the application of this self-same process the bacteriologist is able to demonstrate the existence, and render visible the form, of these locomotive organs, the flagella, as they are called.

Many microbes multiply by simple division, but others develop spores, and these innocent-looking spores are the seeds of the microbes. They are the toughest and most death-resisting living matter so far discovered by science.

Among the multitudinous micro-organisms which float through the air, one there is which is responsible for all the alcoholic beverages which cheer and depress the world. And not only yeast, but several disease-generating microbes are borne through the atmosphere. Long ago, Pasteur proved that the invisible germs of the air were usually far more numerous in low-lying areas than on the heights. Other investigators carried the inquiry a step further, and Robert Koch elaborated a most interesting arrangement which consisted in a plan for exposing vessels filled with cultivating materials, and as the micro-organisms settled upon these they reproduced themselves so rapidly that the colonies formed in the experimental dishes soon became quite visible to the unaided eye. When such colonies are scrutinised it is ascertained that they are almost invariably of one kind, which supports the conclusion that aerial microbes exist in special groups and are not indiscriminately mingled in the air.

Professor Frankland's researches are both interesting and instructive. He placed sterilised gelatine peptone, which forms an excellent culture-medium, on the roof of the South Kensington Museum, at a height of some seventy feet. The tests were undertaken in order to determine the number of microbes in the air under different weather conditions. It was discovered that when the wind was high the numbers increased considerably:—

"In one case, during the month of March, the wind rising during a succession of experiments, the numbers increased from 851 falling on one square foot in one minute at the outset, to 1,302 at the finish."

On the other hand, after the atmosphere had been cleansed by rain, the numbers deposited fell to about 66 per square foot per minute. The numbers declined still further during a dense white fog, when 32 only settled on the experimental dish. At a festive gathering of the Royal Society at Burlington House, experiments again furnished remarkable results. "At the commencement of the reception," states the experimenter, Dr. Frankland,

"there were 240 microbes falling on a square foot in one minute, but, as the rooms became more crowded, the numbers rose to 318, whilst the following morning, when there were only three persons in the room, and everything was covered with dust, the number was reduced to 109."

Inquiries conducted in the Central Hall of the Natural History Museum yielded the following facts: On a morning in May the number obtained was 30, but in the afternoon of the same day the microbes collected in the dishes increased to 293. Moreover, on a Bank Holiday, when many more people were present, the very large number of 1,755 micro-organisms, fell on one square foot each minute. Various other experiments, both at thinly attended and crowded functions, point without exception to the fact that the larger the human concourse in a given space, the vaster the descent of the germs. Nevertheless, no one appears to have been a penny the worse.

Tyndall's researches on the floating matter of the air demonstrated that in a calm atmosphere the germs fall to the ground in a comparatively short space of time. And the more the ordinary air is agitated, the faster the microbes fall. Frankland was travelling by rail from Norwich to London, and shortly after the train started, when four passengers were in the carriage, he tested the microbic contents of the air. One of the windows was open, and the experimental dish was placed near it, and 395 organisms were found to fall per square foot per minute. On reaching Cambridge, the carriage became crowded with passengers returning from Newmarket Heath. Ten passengers now occupied the apartment during the remainder of the journey to London. Almost half-way between Cambridge and the Metropolis another experiment was made, one window remaining closed, while the other was let down about four inches at the top. The germ-laden air now showed itself capable of depositing no less than 3,120 microbes per square foot in a single minute. But an examination of the air in a barn during flail-thrashing produced the most astonishing result of all. The atmosphere was choked with dust, and when tested with the gelatine dish it was ascertained that over 8,000 microbes were descending over one square foot in the course of a minute.

Pasteur's proofs of the greater purity of air on mountains in comparison with that of the plains have been completely confirmed by Frankland's more recent researches. By means of the tube method, this scientist has shown that at a height of 300 feet, just below the spire of Norwich Cathedral, the air is far freer from microbes than in the underlying air. His "dish" experiments were equally conclusive, for while 49 germs were deposited in a given space per minute at the elevation of the spire, there were 107 at the tower, and as many as 354 near the ground. Tests conducted at St. Paul's Cathedral revealed the same striking differences. Even at the apex of that proud eminence, Primrose Hill, the air was found to be three times purer than at its base.

Dr. Fischer's sea-air studies have furnished very interesting information to the bacteriologist. These tend to prove that the nearer the land the larger the microbial population of the air, and the distance out at sea, where they are to be met with in any material quantity, is largely dependent upon the direction of the wind. From Dr. Fischer's researches there emerges another significant fact. The vast microbial population of the ocean leads a life that seems quite independent of the invisible motes of the air. Very few microbes, indeed, appear to exist in the atmosphere that covers the deep blue sea.

Whether viewed microscopically, or when artificially cultivated, one of the aerial micro-organisms presents a very striking appearance. This microbe, *Bacillus prodigiosus*, is only one-twenty-thousandth of an inch in length, but as one individual soon multiplies into millions in any suitable medium it then displays a magnificent mass of color. It is intensely blood-red in appearance, and has probably been the occasion of more than one priestly imposture. For this bacillus,—

"finds a suitable soil for its growth and multiplication on bread and other farinaceous articles of food; thus it has not unfrequently taken up its abode on the sacred wafer, and by there producing this marvellous color has

given rise to the appearance of the 'bleeding host,' causing supernatural terror among the ignorant."*

Although the number of micro-organisms suspended in the atmosphere varies from day to day throughout the year, yet the number usually increases with the rise of temperature, so that during the hottest months of the summer—July and August—the air is most plentifully charged with germs.

As the years roll by, more and more microbes are added to the extensive list previously discovered. One curious circumstance in connection with aerial microbes—and Dr. Frankland and others have kept these organisms under practically constant observation for several years—is the almost unvarying regularity they present. Each kind appears to breed true to type. Also, many possess forms of wonderful beauty, while others are distinguished by splendid coloration. Lest it be thought that bacteriological studies are merely curious, it may be mentioned that they have already led to most amazing discoveries in connection with the prevention and cure of disease, and that they likewise play a large and rapidly increasing part in the evolution of that scientific agriculture which is intimately associated with the happiness and prosperity of the entire human race.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Living by Faith.

WHAT is Faith? Faith, said Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is a faith that sensible men avoid. The man of reason may have faith, but it will be a faith according to knowledge, and not a faith that dispenses with knowledge. He believes that the sun will rise tomorrow, that the ground will remain firm under his feet, that the seasons will succeed each other in due course, and that if he tills the ground he will reap the harvest. But his belief in these things is based upon experience; his imagination extends the past into the future, and his expectations are determined by his knowledge. The future cannot indeed be demonstrated; it can only be predicted, and prediction can never amount to an absolute certitude; yet it may amount to a height of probability which is practically the same thing. Religious faith, however, is something very different. It is not belief based on evidence, but the evidence and the belief in one. The result is that persons who are full of faith always regard a demand for evidence as at once a heresy and an insult. Their faith seems to them, in the language of Paul, the very *substance* of their hopes; and they often talk of the existence of God and the divinity of Christ as being no less certain than their own existence.

Properly speaking, faith is trust. This involves a wide latitude beyond our knowledge. If we trust a friend, we have faith in him, and we act upon that sentiment. But we are sometimes deceived, and this shows that our faith was in excess of our knowledge. Sometimes, indeed, it is quite independent of knowledge. We trust people because we like them, or because they like us. This infirmity is well known to sharpers and adventurers, who invariably cultivate a pleasing manner, and generally practise the arts of flattery.

The same principle holds good in religion. It was sagaciously remarked by Hume that we ought to suspect every agreeable belief. The mass of mankind, however, are not so fastidious or discriminating. On the contrary, they frequently believe a thing because it is pleasant, and for no other reason. How often have we heard Christian advocates prove the immortality of the soul to the complete satisfaction of their auditors by simply harping on man's desire to live for ever! Nay, there have been many great "philosophers" who have demonstrated the same doctrine by exactly the same means.

* Frankland, *Our Secret Friends and Foes*, p. 56.

Living by faith is an easy profession. Living on faith, however, is more arduous and precarious. Elijah is said to have subsisted on food which was brought him by inspired ravens, but there are few of God's ministers willing to follow his example. They ask God to give them their daily bread, yet they would all shrink with horror from depending on what he sends them.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE MESSIANIC DREAM.

Did Jesus give himself out, or allow his disciples to designate him, as the Messiah? It is impossible to tell. All that we can say is that his disciples, and not only those whose traditions are embodied in the first gospel, desired to identify him with the hope of Israel, and applied or wrested passages of the Old Testament to that intent. With that object evidently were produced, by two different hands, the two genealogies, which hopelessly diverge from each other; while one of them, by arbitrary erasion, forces the pedigree into three mystic sections of fourteen each—a clear proof that it was not taken from any public record, even if we could suppose it possible that, amid all the convulsions of Judea, the record of a peasant's pedigree had been preserved. One of the genealogies, moreover, includes the mythical line of patriarchs between Adam and Abraham. The Messiahship of Jesus is a question with which we need practically concern ourselves no more. The Messiah is a dream of the tribal pride of the Jew, to which, as to other creations of tribal or national pride or fancy, we may bid a long farewell. That it should be necessary for the redeemer of the Jewish race to trace his pedigree to a hero so dear to the national heart, though morally so questionable, as David, was natural enough; but who can believe that this was necessary for the redeemer of mankind? It is rather lamentable to think how much study and thought have been wasted in the attempt to establish the fulfilment of a Hebrew vision, devoid of importance or interest for the rest of the human race.—*Goldwin Smith.*

Oh, young men, young men! remember, I entreat, the great work which awaits you. You are the workmen of the future; it is you who will determine the character of the twentieth century; it is you who, we earnestly hope, will solve the problems of truth and equity that the dying century propounds. We, the old, the elder men, hand on to you the formidable results of our investigations, many contradictions, much, perhaps, which is obscure, but certainly the most strenuous effort which ever century made to reach the light, the most faithful and solidly based documents, and the very foundations of the vast edifice of science, which you must continue to build up for your own honor and happiness. All we ask of you is to be more generous, more emancipated of mind than were we; to leave us behind in your love of a wholesome life, in your ardor for work, in the fecundity through which man and the earth will produce at length an overflowing harvest of joy beneath the glorious sunshine. And we should make way for you, fraternally glad to go and take our rest after the day's toil in the sound sleep of death, if we knew that you would carry on our work and realise our dreams.—*Emile Zola.*

HELL-FIRE.

It was only in a cruel age that the doctrine of hell-fire could have acquired that hold upon men's minds which it had acquired in the Middle Ages. In recent times the doctrine has almost become universally discredited throughout the more enlightened portions of Christendom. Even those who maintain a belief in some kind of endless punishment no longer insist literally upon the lake of brimstone and fire that is never quenched. Now the doctrine of hell-fire has become thus universally discredited, not because it has been scientifically disproved, for science has neither data nor methods whereby to disprove such a doctrine; nor because it has been exegetically shown to be unsupported by Scripture, for the ingenuity of orthodox exegesis has always been equal to the task of making Scripture mean whatever is required; it has been discredited simply because people have become milder in their manners, and less used to enduring and inflicting physical pain. The doctrine shocks people's feelings, and so they refuse to believe it, no matter how the logic of the case may stand.—*Professor John Fiske.*

AS HOT AS THE BIBLE.

Remember that Professor Max Müller, when he published the *Sacred Books of the East* in England, explained that there were whole sections that he dared not publish in English lest he should lay himself open to a criminal prosecution.—"*The Beliefs of Unbelief*," Dr. Fitchett.

Acid Drops

The Bishop of London would rather die than see England a German province. The alternative is too remote for much value to be attached to the Bishop's choice. He is like people who would give the world for this or that, or wouldn't for the world do this or that. The offer and the boast are both safe.

The Bishop of London is at last coming out in his true colors as a representative of the God of Battles. Speaking at the eighth anniversary of the Anglican and Eastern-Orthodox Churches Union, he called the present time of war "this great day of the Lord," while a week later, speaking at the Guildhall, he surpassed even himself by saying: "In spite of all the suffering and bloodshed involved in the war, it is a glorious thing to be alive in this great day of the Lord." No one will now doubt his lordship's orthodoxy and loyalty to Scripture. This is indeed the greatest day of the Lord of Hosts the world has ever seen. On this point the Bishop of London is in agreement with the Kaiser, who says, "With me are God and the Holy Virgin."

Now, if we judge the Lord, whose day is said to be upon us, by his history, we shall be obliged to characterise him as the biggest and cruellest monster ever heard of, whose "only excuse," as Stendhal puts it, "is that he does not exist." Nietzsche deeply regretted that Stendhal had robbed him of "the best Atheistic joke," which he "of all people could have perpetrated"; but the Basel professor himself gave utterance to the following: "What has been the greatest objection to Life hitherto?—God."

There is nothing like a good conceit of yourself, and Germany, which is *not* an Atheistic country, but very far from it, doesn't look like running short of that virtue. According to Privy Councillor, Dr. Lassore, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Berlin, the German State and people are "the most perfect creatures that history has produced up to now." "We are morally and intellectually superior," he says, "beyond all comparison." William II. is "the darling of the human race." The German Army is an epitome of all the excellences of the German nation—not like the "Russian beasts, English mercenaries, and Belgian fanatics." "We do good deeds to all people." That statement takes the cake! "God is with us" follows naturally. Finally, the learned professor assures us that the Germans are humane, conscientious, gentle, and truthful. There you are! Everybody recognises the portrait. It is so life-like.

Dean Inge, the "gloomy Dean," has been receiving a share of newspaper abuse because he has been pointing out a few obvious truths. Preaching in Westminster Abbey, he said, the outlook for democracy and liberty is not bright. With that, at any rate, we are inclined to agree. We have pointed out over and over again that for some years Europe has been passing through a period of reaction—and this in spite of much talk, and some indications of progress. The growth of militarism is in itself an indication of this. And now that we are actually in the midst of one of the most murderous wars in all history we do not see how Europe is to come out of it except as a heavy loser in all directions. For some years, at least, the militarist party in all countries will find their hands enormously strengthened. Already there is talk of all countries requiring larger armies after the war than they had before it. The mere task of clearing up the consequences of the war will take many years. And during that time we may take it that advanced ideas on all subjects will have to struggle hard for existence. This, we believe, is indisputable. But, we must add, that this is no reason for relaxation of effort. It is only a further justification for renewed and continuous effort.

We do not follow Dean Inge when he says that England has lost her place as a first-class Power. That is decidedly premature. As standards of value go, that has not occurred, and is not likely to occur. But we should like to see these standards of value altered. We should like to see nations classified as first, second, and third-class Powers, not in terms of extent of territory, or trade, or fighting capacity, but in terms of a people's contribution to the intellectual and moral welfare of the race. There is something radically wrong with our standards of measurement when Germany ranks as a first-class Power and Belgium is placed a long way down on the list. In this respect we quite agree with the New York *Independent* that "When the Great War is

over the world will be staggered to discover how much has been destroyed besides life and property."

Mr. Robert Blatchford has been admonishing Dean Inge for his pessimistic utterances on the War. One of his retorts is as follows, "I should advise Dean Inge to give Deuteronomy a rest, and put in five minutes with a war map and an hour with the dispatches of Sir John French."

Sandwiched with the police-court cases and sporting news in the *Weekly Dispatch* is a prayer for Sunday reading. It begins, "Loving Father, our extremity is Thine opportunity." What robust faith remains in Newspaperland! An ordinary pietist would hesitate to see evidences of a "loving father" in the spectacle of 21,000,000 men ready to disembowel one another.

It is the opinion of Dr. Orchard, an eminent Nonconformist divine, that "if there is no good and just God at the helm, but only a blind force, then we are caught like little wild creatures in an iron trap," which, he assures us, "is an alternation too terrible to contemplate"; but, unless the reverend gentleman deliberately and completely blinks the facts, there is no other alternative for him or for us to contemplate. Are we not at this moment like little wild creatures caught in an iron trap? All Europe is ablaze; men, women, and children are being butchered by the thousand daily; the Belgian nation has been cruelly robbed of its homes, and is scattered abroad to live on charity; the whole of Christendom is overwhelmed with fear and trembling; and yet Dr. Orchard has the audacity to stand up and assert that a good and just God sits on the throne of the universe. It is the blackest and most pernicious lie that can be told. Then this preacher urges his hearers to "enthroned the God within"; but there is no God within, except the one invented by a diseased and polluted imagination, and the sooner we get rid of *him* the better for all concerned.

Having the War specially in mind, Dr. Orchard alleges that we must choose between a good and just God and a blind force. Nothing of the kind. The nations now at war have each a well-defined goal in view, which they are resolved to reach at whatever cost. The forces at work are *not* blind, but fully intelligent and easily intelligible. The European Powers now at mortal grips know exactly what they want; but to imagine that a good and just God is at the helm, while all this savage conflict is in progress, is to be guilty of harboring the sheerest nonsense conceivable.

It must not be forgotten that the editor of the *British Weekly*, Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, is an ordained minister of the Gospel, though the "Rev." has been dropped in favor of the more aristocratic "Sir"; and, occasionally, he still preaches. One of his most recent discourses is entitled, "A Call from the Battlefield," though, as a matter of fact, the "call" comes from the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is a call to prayer, and Sir William interprets it as an invitation from the front to pray for our soldiers, that they may be "restored to us the sooner." Does the reverend knight verily believe that the daily prayer-meetings held at the City Temple and other churches throughout the country will have the effect of shortening the war by a single day? If the Lord can bring the war to an end, great beyond measure is his guilt for not having prevented it from taking place at all. If he exists, he sees these hundreds of thousands of his own children being brutally murdered, and does nothing.

Sir William urges people to instruct the Almighty as to what he ought to do. "We are to put will into our prayers," he says. "What I mean is that we should pray with all our might for a speedy victory." If there is a just and loving God, will he not give us a speedy victory, if we deserve it, without our asking for it? To ask is to cast suspicion upon his justice and goodness; it is to insult him in the most offensive manner possible. Besides, the Germans believe in the rightness of their cause, and are praying with all might for a speedy victory; and it is a piece of self-righteousness on our part to ask God to favor us rather than them. Will not the Judge of all the earth do right without being prompted thereto by the creatures of his own hand? All this shows the infinite absurdity and uselessness of prayer!

The Theatres Committee of the London County Council is seeking to restrict the building of picture theatres because "cinemas have been built next to churches and chapels." This looks as if the public prefer the cinema to the place of

worship, although the audience pays to see the one, and pays to get out of the other.

Two inmates of Bath Workhouse for some years past have been Messrs. Pickwick and Sam Weller. The Dickensian association is now dissolved, for Sam Weller has just died, and Mr. Pickwick is seriously ill. Curiously, it is the shadow-figures of the great novelist who live for ever, and not their human prototypes.

The London County Council deserves congratulating on its latest decision with regard to civil marriages. It seems that there are still within the London area two districts in which people have to pass through workhouses in order to be married before the registrar, and there are eleven others where people desirous of getting married must attend at buildings that are part of workhouses. The Council has therefore informed the Registrar-General that in its opinion provision should be made so that the marriage ceremony may be performed in buildings that have no connection with poor law institutions. Last year 26 per cent. of the total number of marriages were of a civil character, and it is high time that the State did away with what is a real scandal. Marriage is essentially a social ceremony; it is the religious proceedings that are incidental; and it is the plain duty of the Government to surround marriage—wherever performed—with all possible solemnity and dignity.

The County Council met with a failure in its attempt to enforce the closing of cinema palaces in the Tottenham district on Sundays. It was pointed out that the same Council allowed the Alexandra Palace to be open on Sundays for concerts, and it was rank hypocrisy to open that and to attempt to close picture theatres. The Bench held that the defendants were within their rights in opening on Sundays, and the summons was dismissed. There were other cases waiting to be heard, but these were not proceeded with, pending an appeal.

Writing in the *Weekly Dispatch* on the Czar's prohibition of vodka traffic, Mr. J. F. Fraser says, "Getting drunk has been the favorite Sunday amusement" of the Russians. The Greek Church appears to be as impotent as the Roman Catholic Church or the fancy religions in other parts of Europe.

Temperance papers are jubilant concerning the Czar's prohibition of alcohol in Russia, but the Cocoa Press outdoes them all in fulsome adulation. Perhaps the latter foresees a chance of selling the firm's staple article instead of the vile vodka.

Rev. F. B. Meyer regrets that the National Free Church Council has been unable to obtain official representation on the Prince of Wales' Relief Fund. But why on earth should they expect it? Clergymen may be trusted to work the Fund for their own advancement—so far as is possible—in any case. It is sheer impudence for them to expect official representation. And it is characteristic of Nonconformists, who are always talking of religion being a private matter, to demand official and public recognition of their Churches at every possible opportunity.

Dr. Clifford says that the message that has "come to him" is that, whatever happens, we should keep on praying. That is the kind of message one would expect a clergyman to receive. It sounds like another of the now numerous trade advertisements—"The way to beat the Germans is to buy British goods—our goods."

A correspondent of the *Church Times* writes inquiring "Why should England expect victory?" His reason for asking the question is that England has "done her best to turn God out of the schools, and has practically ignored his existence in Parliament." Also, England has been plotting and planning to rob "His Church" in Wales, and we have Sunday trading, Sunday travelling, and Sunday entertaining. These things together, it is evident we deserve a good "whopping," and it is like our cheek asking God to help us after we have robbed his church, etc.

Rev. D. Maclean, of St. Peter's Rectory, Wilts, is yet more emphatic. He points out that "the Church of Christ still considers the rights of man an infidel basis for human society." Afflicted Belgium has had to choose between her and God; and the French Government has persecuted the faith, and supplies her sick and dying soldiers with no ministrations of religion. Finally, England began the war by despoiling the Welsh Church. Evidently the Allies

are a bad lot, and we should not be surprised to find that Mr. Maclean believes the war to ensue from their wickedness. In that case, we may take it that the Kaiser really is an instrument of God.

A well known Baptist minister, the Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke, has just returned from Berlin. He says that in Germany eminent theologians, whether pastors or professors, "have been the foremost in influencing public opinion on the side of the Government." He also says that at the beginning of the war the churches were crowded on the occasion of public worship, and ever since the attendances have been large. From which it would seem that the Germans are really more Christian in their war than we are. Another thing that Mr. Rushbrooke found most painful was to hear the Germans praying for victory. We should have thought that to be too natural and too common for anyone to be praised about. Everybody does it—who is religious—and its absurdity never troubles any of them. And really no one places any dependence upon these prayers. It is the quality of arms and men that is thought about, not the power of the prayers. German and English officially pray for victory; the French fight without any prayers, and with or without each seems to do as well. So Mr. Rushbrooke may console himself, when thinking of these Germans praying to his God for victory, with the thought that it really doesn't matter. In this war guns are greater than gods, and pluck more powerful than prayers.

The Kaiser has ordered all the Protestant churches in Berlin and throughout Brandenburg to be opened to the public all day, in order that his subjects may have the comfort of prayer whenever they feel they would like a dose. We guess, however, that free "cinemas" would be better appreciated.

Mr. Alan Bott, another *Daily Chronicle* correspondent, writing from Geneva, gives a lively account of a German paper published there for the benefit of refugees. Here is an extract from Mr. Bott's letter:—

"The religious department of the lie factory makes it clear that God is attached to the Great German General Staff. A priest named Hein, who is also a member of the Reichstag, is quoted as making in the *Vossische Zeitung* the stupefying declaration: 'It is true that our soldiers have shot in France and Belgium many brigands, men, women, and children, and have destroyed their homes. But whoever considers this as being contrary to the teachings of the Christian doctrine only shows that he has not the least comprehension of the true spirit of Christ!'"

We congratulate this priest on his candor.

"The late Bishop Wilkinson encountered many difficulties in translating 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' into the Zulu tongue, but his task was not so bad as that of a missionary who attempted to render 'Sankey' into Congolese. Among primitive peoples many words have double meanings, and the translator marvelled at the heartiness with which the natives sang 'Wonderful Words of Life,' until he discovered that by a slip in translation he had made it 'Wonderful Words of Stomach.' To another well-known hymn, 'Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing,' the people seemed to have a strange aversion. At first he thought they enjoyed the service so much that they regretted its close. After a while he found that his version had altered the meaning to 'Lord, kick us out softly!'"—*Daily Chronicle* (Nov. 2).

Writing in *John Bull*, Mr. George R. Sims says, "It is part of our Christian faith that the ways of the Almighty are inscrutable." Gadzooks! They are not nearly so inscrutable as those of our beloved "Dagonet," when he writes on "serious" subjects.

At a harvest festival at St. Peter's Church, Rochester, Sunday-school children brought thousands of cigarettes, which were afterwards given to the soldiers in the Chatham military hospital. It was a suitable feature of a service connected with a religion ending in smoke.

The Queen has sent a parcel of copies of Mr. Blatchford's pamphlet, *Germany and England*, for distribution in the Young Men's Christian Association's tents at the Military Training Camps. Mr. Blatchford might emulate the august example of "the first lady in the land" and send "the unconverted" some copies of his freethought writings.

A children's prize-volume has been issued with the title of *The Wonder Book*. It is not half so wonderful as the book which narrates Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, Elisha and the Bears, and other "fairy tales" of faith.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, November 8, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30, "Religion, War, and Humanity."

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £227 2s. 9d. Received since:—W. Milroy, 5s.; J. Milroy, 5s.; G. W. Wright, 5s.; John Deacon, 5s. 3d.; J. B. Palphreyman, 10s. 6d.

G. W. WRIGHT says: "At this critical juncture, I hope all readers of the *Freethinker* will do their utmost to keep the flag of 'the best of causes' flying."

G. F. H. McCLOSKEY.—We remember Mr. Searle very well, although we had not seen him for many years. We are sorry to hear he had much suffering before death brought its anodyne.

J. DRAGON.—To be "quite well" at our age a man must recall his youth. Suppose we say, "As well as can be expected in the circumstances."

EDNA WELLS.—Who told you that Othello was a negro? He is called a "Moor" in the very title of the play, and the Moors are one of the finest races on earth. Their civilisation in Spain eclipsed anything existing at that time in all Europe.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Nov. 8)—the first time for many months—at the Secular Hall, Leicester, his subject being "Religion, War, and Humanity." The chair will be taken at 6.30 p.m., with all seats free, and a collection in aid of the expenses.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, will take place at Frascati's Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 12, 1915. There is no reason why the war should interfere with this particular function.

Mr. Cohen lectures for the N. S. S. Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch on Sunday, November 22. The Co-operative Hall, in which the lectures are to be delivered, is not the most accessible hall in the town, but that is a reason why the local "saints" should do their utmost to secure good audiences. Anyone wishing to help in this way should communicate with Mr. J. G. Bartram, 107 Morley-street, Heaton.

Mr. Foote's article on legal and other matters depending on the death of the late Mrs. Bowman, mentioned in our last issue, has to be postponed a little, for sufficient reasons. We think it may be expected next week.

We are very glad to state that Mr. W. Heaford, whose bad breakdown we reported several weeks ago, is making satisfactory improvement in health and strength, and is able to do a little travelling. He is looking forward to meeting his old friends again before very long.

There was a beautiful "war" story in Monday's *Daily Chronicle* from the pen of Mr. Harold Ashton. It relates the experience of an English lady at Bruges:—"On my way out of the town I met a German soldier with his hand

dreadfully shattered. His bandages had slipped and he was trying vainly to replace them with his left hand. I took pity on him and helped him, redressed the nasty wounds, and rebandaged them with a pocket bandage I happened to have with me. The soldier fumbled in his pocket and at last produced a crumpled five franc note, which he offered me. Of course, I refused it. 'Why do you refuse good money for a good action, madame?' he said. 'Because I am an Englishwoman,' I replied, 'and Englishwomen do not take payment for good deeds, however small or great they may be.' 'I cannot believe you are English,' he said; 'but you are an angel, and angels have no nationality. May I kiss your hand?' I held out my hand, and he bent low over it and kissed it. There were tears in his eyes. And—I rather wish now that I had accepted that five-franc note to keep as a souvenir of Prussian gratitude!" A touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

It is difficult for the clearest and most careful writer to make himself plain to everybody. It has been said by some people that we are for "peace at any price." We have repudiated this absurd idea since the present awful War broke out, and that repudiation should have guarded us against misunderstanding. But as it hasn't, we will go back to our *Shadow of the Sword*, which was first published some thirty years ago, and invite attention to the following passage, which we meant when we wrote it, have meant ever since, and mean it now:—

"War is just in self-defence, or in defence of a neighbor unjustly attacked. We are not of those who believe in the refusal of aid between nations in all circumstances. The sword may be, for some time yet, as necessary as the lancet, but it should never be drawn except against the enemies of mankind. 'The blood of man,' said Burke, 'should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our friends, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity; the rest is crime.'

When any of these great duties call us we should be ready to defend them; and if ever England were menaced by a brutal invader, the most peaceful citizen might well wish her to be animated by the same brave spirit that whipped the pride of the Armada and drove the hectoring Dutch fleets from the English seas. Nay, to defend the nation's liberties in the dark hour of extreme peril, one might hope that her sons would make ramparts of their bodies, and if they could not make a pact with victory, make a pact with death; that her daughters would gladly resign their dearest in the spirit of the Spartan mothers of old; and that the very children might, like Hannibal, be dedicated to a righteous revenge.

We are then far from loving peace at any price. But there is little need to denounce such an impossible doctrine. It is not that way our danger lies. Our fighting instincts, inherited from savage ancestors, are too strong for us to submit tamely to aggression, even if the law of self-preservation did not prompt us to defend our own."

In the light of the present situation this passage reads almost like a prophecy.

Spending the winter as invalids at Aiken, S.C., the Hon Thurlow Weed and Mr. Thomas C. Acton whiled away one Sabbath afternoon by attending a negro church. When they entered the primitive temple, the preacher, who was a pure African, was grappling, with all the fervor of his race, with the old, old subject of the fall of man. Sketching that day in the Garden, with its terrible results, he excoriated Adam in this fashion: "Now, brederen, when de Lord calls Adam to 'count, did he stan' up like a man, confess his sin, and ask forgiveness? He didn't do nuffin ob de sort, brederen, but he say, 'Lord, de woman dat Dou gubest me gub me for to eat.'" Pausing a moment, he repeated: "'De woman dat Dou gubest me gub me for to eat.'" Then again: "'De woman dat Dou gubest me gub me for to eat.' Dar, brederen, you see dat mean, skulkin' Adam was at trying to sneak out of it by frowin' all de blame on de Lord hisself!"

LONGFELLOW REVERSED.

He goes on Sunday to his church,
He sits among his boys,
He hears the parson pray. And preach?
No! No! a snoring noise
From his nostrils shows that some sweet repose
He in sermon time enjoys.

Elias Ryepin.

"All the talk about the artist's vocation and the artist's mission.....strike me as being very empty and hollow and meaningless at bottom."

"Then what would you put in its place?"

"Life, Maia."

—IBSEN'S *When We Dead Awaken*.

WAR reaps a full harvest of maimed minds as well as bodies. Just look at the ordinary press and its present state of topsy-turveydom! With all its palaver of "Business as Usual," could it possibly make its business more "unusual" than it is doing now? John Morley rightly gauged the worth of the ordinary press when he relegated it as food for the "common crowd," which is made up of Carlyle's "fools" and Voltaire's *canaille*. Yet, as Morley says, the "newspaper must live, and to live it must please," and to please at the present time, we may add, it must tune itself to the *gamut* of the "maimed minds" of the crowd. Take, for instance, the case of Nietzsche.

What had the press to say of Nietzsche before the War? Nothing! It didn't pay then; but it pays now, and it gives them as well an opportunity of revenging themselves for his ruthless denunciation of their smug ideals. Before the war, what had Russia been to the press but "barbarism"? Would they have allowed such a heresy to be preached as an enlightened Russia? But to-day Russia is our Ally, and as we Britons could only ally ourselves with an enlightened and cultured nation, the press has suddenly discovered that there is an enlightened Russia. The other day a contemporary gave among its illustrations *The Moujik's Departure for His Regiment*, described as "One of the most famous paintings of Ryepin, the great Russian artist." I held my breath in astonishment at this superscription, for it is the first I have heard of it from the British press. The way these people talk, with an elevated air of "We've always said so," is simply disgusting. I think, without exaggeration, if we looked at every journal in Britain for the past ten years, and found the name of Ryepin a dozen times, it would be a fair estimate of our recognition of the "great Russian artist." Of course, it must be admitted that even in Russia, Elias Ryepin is known better by name than by work; but that is explained by the fact that his paintings, for the most part, are confined to private collections, on account of their revolutionary tendencies, and even reproductions are only permitted to people of high official standing; yet the art world of Britain knows that Ryepin's work and "tendencies" are but the old story over again—the public must only know what their "betters" think is good for them; and an enlightened Russia was not good for them. Above all, a unit of an enlightened Russia—"a great artist"—who is an avowed Nihilist and Freethinker was certainly not good for them. But adversity brings strange bed-fellows, and the War has thrown the Russian in our midst, so the glorious free press of our country finds that an enlightened Russia pays.

Elias Ryepin was born in 1850. At the age of twenty-two his *Jairus' Daughter* won for him a scholarship that took him to Paris and Berlin for study. These were impressionable times. The intellectual ferment which followed the reforms of Alexander II. infested all byeways of art and literature, as well as political life. Young Ryepin, straight from the free Paris *ateliers*, was ripe for the "new spirit" which was saying, "Away with artistic convention: Art must serve humanity," and soon he was enrolled under the banner of a social art.

To the art purists, this was very wrong of him; for if you ask these devotees of "Art for art's sake" what relation art has to the social polity, they will tell you that art neither teaches nor persuades, and merely comes in contact with the social polity in so far as is necessary for the purpose of representation. For instance, if you find an artist depicting the denizens of the Black Country, such as Zola describes

in *Germinal*, you must not immediately conclude that his art has a purpose, which is a sympathy with these people. To the artist they are mere subjects for representation. Thus far the aesthetician. Yet when we find in this artist that these subjects constantly recur, and that outside of his art the artist shows his social sympathies with this class, we may surely assume that there is a sounder basis for "art with a purpose" than the aesthetician would have us believe. Havelock Ellis, in a very fine essay on Eugene Carrière, has argued against purpose in art. He says that with the painter "his philosophy, his morality, his religion, are the outcome of his painter's vision of life, and not the source of it." That may be true enough; but the point is that he still has his philosophy, his morality, and his religion, whatever the means may be by which he arrived at them. It appears to me that Havelock Ellis's inversion of the process simply strengthens the argument for art with a purpose. However, to draw an absolute line between art and life, as the aesthetician does, would be to treat man as something apart from himself.

In Elias Ryepin we have an artist who reveals his social sympathies in his art; and since we have evidence of these sympathies outside his art, coupled with the fact that he has derided the idea of "Art for art's sake," we may safely assume that here, at any rate, is an artist with a purpose. Ryepin has always been a fervent admirer of Tolstoy, and has depicted the saint of Yasnaya Polyana in many a canvas. He has also lent his pen to Tolstoy's movement in educating the masses to a better class of literature. Yet it must not be too readily assumed that he holds to Tolstoyan philosophy. They are possibly as far removed from one another as Dives and Lazarus. Primarily, it is a question of temperament; but, on the other hand, culture conditions account for much. The conditions that produced a Tolstoy in literature produced a Tachaykovsky in music, and a Verestchagin in painting. Whilst it was the process that gave us Turgenev that brought Mussorgsky and Ryepin. Indeed, when surveying the various types in Ryepin's art, one cannot help recognising their "affinities" in Turgenev and Mussorgsky. His dull priests and haughty officials have the same air about them as Mussorgsky's musical puppets in *The Peep Show*; whilst his fine young Nihilists seem to have stepped out of the pages of *Smoke or Fathers and Sons*.

Like the two with whom I have grouped him, Ryepin has always loved "the people," and despised the Church and State as its oppressors. From his earliest years his revolt, not only from conventional art, but from conventional society, was clearly shown. In 1878 the Vienna Exposition had his *Bargetowers*. No greater plea for the proletariat is there than this! Millet's *Cleumers* or Courbet's *Stonebreakers* are of its kin, yet far removed. After all, there is a certain liberty of action attached to those gleaners and stonebreakers; but with Ryepin, his bargetowers are like the machines in those terrible fantasies of H. G. Wells. Twelve barefooted men yoked like oxen to the harness of a barge, pulling against the stream; such is *Bargetowers* on the surface. But what a world of sadness and protest pervades the scene. The very sky seems to cry out at the monotonous tramp of those human machines. It is not the sort of work that carries pleasure with it, such as Ford Madox Brown has shown us, but slavery in its vilest form. *Bargetowers* tells us, more than any worded testament, where Ryepin's social sympathies are.

In the *Village Procession* we see the forces operating that permit, if not produce, the evils of the bargetowers. How masterly he selects his types, so as to give you question and answer. You look at the poor brutalised Slavs, and, if you wonder why, just turn to those arrogant soldiers and officials, and you will understand. Look at the horrible, gaping, ignorant crowd, with its halt and lame, and then see the hale and well-fed priests and acolytes. Mark well that Cossack wielding his knout, to make way

for the priest with crucifix and icon, for there you have Ryepin's indictment of the dual forces of Russian oppression—the cross and knout—cheek by jowl!

Ryepin has even confessed his sympathy with those who would rid Russia of the cross and knout. In the Tretyakov Gallery at Moscow there is a cycle by Ryepin which depicts the life-story of one of the countless martyrs of the Russian democracy. Those who are familiar with the works of Turgenev will recall the type of Nihilist that he portrays. It is one of these young *revoltés* that Ryepin depicts in the first of his cycle. Here we find him at a secret gathering, discussing with his fellow-students. The interior is poor, and the smoky lamp throws but a dim light. Yet on the faces of these young dreamers there is a light that one might think would never dim, if we did not see the story in full. Next we have the young Nihilist as a *Trimardeur*, a sort of social missionary among the toiling peasantry, trying to awaken them to a sense of their wrongs. At last the emissaries of the knout have laid their hands upon him. The police ransack his room, and the miserable informer confronts him with the incriminating books and papers. Then we find him in the hands of soldiers, on his way to Siberia. Years pass by, and finally we see his return. It is no longer the bright young student, but an old and broken man, who is scarcely recognised by his family.

This final scene would seem to show that Ryepin wished to emphasise the futility of revolt, which brings him into assent with the Tolstoyans. Indeed, there is a very fine enigmatical canvas of his which has been interpreted this way. It depicts a young Russian student and a companion stepping from a rock into a roaring sea, which will assuredly engulf them. At any rate, for every one soul that the cross and knout breaks into submission after revolt, as in Dostoyevsky and in Ryepin's Nihilist, a hundred remain true as steel. One of these Ryepin has even portrayed, perhaps as a foil to the *coda* of his Nihilist cycle. It is also in the Tretyakov Gallery, and shows the Nihilist, on his way to the scaffold, contemptuously waving aside a priest who has offered him the consolations of religion.

It seems strange that such an uncompromising critic of the cross and knout should not have trodden that weary road to Siberia long ago. But artists and musicians, like the court fool of olden times, seem to have liberties denied to others. The Anarchist Goya was petted by kings, and the Republican Beethoven was "at court and yet no courtier." And so with the Nihilist Ryepin; we not only find him a professor at St. Petersburg Academy, but a court painter. Yet, even when his brush plies for the Imperial galleries, Ryepin's stolid independence remains the same. What are these great ancestors of the great White Czar that we see? There is *Ivan the Terrible* and *Peter the Great*, but they are not monarchs clothed in ermined purple under canopied thrones, nor are they decked in martial pomp in the pose of victors. Ryepin has limned them as human beings, and bad ones at that. Ivan is delineated in the horrible episode of his murder of his son. Peter is depicted in the scene where he compelled his own sister, Sophia, to witness the execution of her faithful guards.

Such are Ryepin's court paintings! which, like the rest of his art work, make bold for "truth before everything." Great art does not deal in types or caricatures. Its world, as Robert Ingersoll says, is peopled with individuals, natural people, who have the contradictions and inconsistencies inseparable from humanity. Art has too long been untruthful. Even when the impossible gods and their friends were banished from art, an equally false and unthinkable Romanticism held sway. Religion and idealism may be very good in their way, but they are not true; and, above all, they are certainly outside the province of "seeing and feeling creatures," which Ruskin demanded first of all from artists. At any rate, posterity will be with the realists, since

all vital and enduring art must be based upon that which is vital and enduring, which is—Life, Maïa!

H. GEORGE FARMER.

The Design Argument.—II.

IN THE LIGHT OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

(Continued from p. 701.)

THIS relates to the quantity of milk. I shall now speak something of its quality. If God, the merciful, the wise and the just parent, produces milk for the proper nourishment and development of the child—the means of his future glorification and praise—with all the ingredients necessary for its well-being, how is it that he allows germs of scrofula and consumption, the syphilitic taint, and other seeds of filthy, horrible, and dangerous diseases to pass through the very source—the milk—which he has intended, out of his special, merciful providence, for the proper nutrition and development of the innocent babe, who is brought into the world to sing the praises and the glory of the Lord? Why does not God, the all-powerful and all-loving Father, who so carefully manages to manufacture milk, having water and solids, containing casein, serum, albumen, lactose (*i.e.*, milk-sugar), fats, or butter, and salts, all in necessary proportions, from the mother's blood, by means of the great and wonderful laboratory in her breasts—why does not God, the greatest wonder-worker and the world-renowned miracle-maker of mysterious powers in heaven above and earth below; why, I say, does not that great chemist, by some process of filtration, like those which so plentifully abound in the animal organism, prevent these poisonous germs from passing into the helpless child's food—the very source and the only means of its subsistence? Why does he poison the innocent child? The child's mother, who is only finite in knowledge, and finite in wisdom, and finite in loving kindness, will, I am perfectly sure, carefully extract and strain away any rubbish or anything injurious that she happens to see from the milk she gives to her child. Why, even a hired nurse who has eyes to see, heart to feel, brain to reason, and right conscience to guide, will do the same. It is strange to think, and shocking indeed even to conceive, that God, said to be so loving and so everything, should not care a straw for these very highly important things concerned in the well-being of the child.

Well, again, taking for granted for a moment, for the sake of argument, that God, through his great loving providence, creates milk in the mother for the support of the child before even the child is born, how is it there is milk in the breasts when there is no child at all in the womb—when there is a false pregnancy, when there is only a mole in the womb, or only a disease called tumor, instead of a child? For whom, I ask, is the milk secreted—secreted in some cases even in greater abundance than in real pregnancies, by the loving Providence? For whom is this milk secreted? I again ask, for whom? The truth is that no God, no Providence, secretes milk through his infinite kindness with the object of nourishing the child or anyone else. It is only the outcome or sequence of cause and effect. Milk is the effect of some blind and unconscious animal function which goes on in the body without any object in view of doing either good or evil to anyone. To understand how true it is, we must understand the physiology of the secretion of milk.

Milk is secreted or produced by the mammary glands, or milk glands, as they are also called. The mammary glands are composed of large divisions or lobes, and these lobes are made up of lobules, which are composed of the convoluted subdivision of ducts, which are composed of milk cells. All these lobes and lobules are supplied with blood-vessels. These blood-vessels supply blood to these lobes and lobules in a larger or smaller quantity, according to the more or less stimulus given to them by the nerves that

control them and supply them. You all know, I suppose, that the various functions of our bodies are under the control of the nervous system. The nerves exert their influence on the secretion of milk by increasing or diminishing the quantity of blood supplied to the secreting glands—the milk glands—while the nerves make the blood-vessels carry more or less blood to the secreting glands according to the stimulus they (the nerves) receive, or irritation produced in them from certain causes or substances.

There is great sympathy established between the uterus and the breasts of females through the nervous system. Whenever there is any irritation produced or stimulus given to the nerves in the uterus, reflex action is produced; *i.e.*, the impression produced upon the nervous centres by the contact of foreign substance, say, for instance, in case of pregnancy, the foetus in the uterus is reflected upon the nerves supplying the mammary glands, which, in consequence, get an increased blood supply and, consequently, the milk cells become more active, and produce milk. Now, it must be remembered here that the stimulus or the irritation in the nerves of the uterus need not necessarily be caused only by the actual child in the womb to produce milk; but it may be produced by any stimulus or irritation of the uterine nerves caused by anything else, such as by false pregnancy, like moles, by tumors, and other uterine diseases. The secretion of milk may also be caused even by irregular menstruation. Because milk may be secreted from various causes other than pregnancy, the secretion of milk is looked upon by accoucheurs as one of the most uncertain signs of the state of pregnancy.

Thus, you can clearly see that to attribute the secretion of milk to the special, benevolent, and kind providence of God is an idle fancy and a physiological blunder.

Now, the third point urged on behalf of the special and kind providence of God for the good and welfare of children is that they can suck the milk out of the mother's breasts without teaching on the part of man. I say that even lower orders of animals do the same. And all this is done by mere instinct. And an instinct is nothing more than an inherited habit. Instinct is an inherited quality carried from parents to children. It is the result of evolution of animals rather than of the special design of God for the good of man. However, if theologians are bent upon believing that it proves God's special providence for the good and welfare of the infants, why, I ask, does he produce the most fatal diseases, like diphtheria, and choke them to death when they are not yet out of their teens? Diphtheria is a very malignant and fatal disease of the throat. It causes a very large amount of mortality amongst children. It is characterised by a peculiar inflammation of the mucous membrane of the throat or pharynx, accompanied by the production of a false membrane. At first, this membrane appears in the form of a white spot on the pharynx or tonsils, from which it gradually extends forward to the soft palate and into the nostrils, and backward into the oesophagus, sometimes into the larynx, producing at length suffocation and death, as if by strangulation of the throat. Look, what unbounded wickedness there is on the part of God if it is believed at all that here is his special providence working for the welfare of children. God, out of infinite love, teaches the innocent and the helpless baby to suck the milk, and, all of a sudden, without any cause for provocation to him by the sweet baby at the breast, he strangles it to death—which the most heartless human murderer would shun to do. The disease is, besides, epidemic and contagious. And yet this is only one of the many diseases, such as tetanus, convulsions, croup, whooping-cough, and others too numerous to name, which kill the very infants whom God, out of his infinite mercy, has taught the principle of suction and the art of sucking. Thanks to the inventors and promoters of medical and hygienic arts and sciences; thanks to those who suffered, fought and won for suffering humanity the battle of truth and right against the so-called agents

of God! Had it not been for them, the world would have been but thinly populated, and, moreover, it would not have been worth living in. At a time when these and other sciences were not known, there was naturally greater faith in God, and, as a consequence, there was a higher death-rate among children. The ever-infallible rule that the greater the faith in the special providence of God, the less of health, the less of remedies for disease (the so-called whip of God), and the greater mortality amongst the people, and the less of population, has always been true in all countries and climes from time immemorial up to now.

The fourth point which the Design of Argument supporters bring forth is about the thickness and strength of the skull in which the brain is lodged—that the skull is formed of twenty-two bones instead of one, which are arranged like the stones of an arch to make it strong, that it may be able to bear even a severe blow.

In answer to this, I say that the skull is not able to bear a severe blow on all its sides. On the temples, as also on the orbital plate of the frontal bone, or the orbital plate of the ethmoid bone, even a moderately severe blow will easily cause serious injury to the brain. So, also, the walls of the orbit are very thin and delicate. The brain can be easily hurt through them. The superior, inferior, and internal walls which separate the orbit from the cerebral maxillary and nasal cavities are formed by thin osseous lamellae (plates) which may be easily broken down. This anatomical disposition explains the facility with which a wound of the orbit may affect the brain, and how tumors, papylus, or others which take origin in one of the neighboring cavities, may break through the walls, and even destroy them, and, invading the orbital cavity, lead to the projection of the eye—that is to say, to exophthalmus.

Well, again, suppose, for the sake of argument, that the skull is made strong with the object of protecting the brain within, how is it that in infancy the bones are not even joined and ossified, and, consequently, the brain is easily hurt, though the bones are not so easily broken? So also, in old age, all these different bones are ossified more than they ought to be, are turned brittle and formed into one bone in contravention to the object of God and defeating his special providence. In infancy it is one extreme, in old age it is the other. This proves that the skull only follows the natural process of primary growth, successive development and decay, like all other organisms, without any special providence for anybody's good or ill.

Now, before I leave this point, let me remark something about the massiveness of the skull. The functions of the brain are very important, but, as it is locked up in the bony safe, it has as yet become almost impossible to know even one hundredth part of the functions of the brain, properly and positively, with any certainty. And in the absence of knowledge of these functions, most of the diseases of the brain and the nervous system are required to be treated almost empirically, merely as quacks would treat them. Many of the diseases are considered incurable, and so human misery is not relieved. And, again, what a number of false, fearful, and misleading spiritualistic views, and how many superstitious ideas about reincarnation, life after death, and hell and heaven, are promulgated amongst the people and inculcated in their minds! What false notions about mesmerism, hypnotism, clairvoyance, somnambulism, and many other phenomena lie before the scientists and philosophers of the present century! These, as the hardest problems of the future, would have been solved long since and human kind made a thousand times happier if God, instead of shutting up the brain in the unventilated cage of the massive and compact skull, had managed to house it in some such wise way as that, while secure there, it would also be accessible to the scientists for the study of its functions.

Look at the organs in the chest—the heart and the lungs. Because their movements can be felt through the chest, a simple, trivial instrument like the stetho-

scope has revealed a new world, as it were, of knowledge to the stethoscopists. Such a vast field of knowledge it has revealed, and such a great interest it has aroused amongst the medical faculty, that many of them have thought it worth their while to labor for the good of humanity all their life in that direction. And they have not labored in vain, but with great success. That tube, insignificant as it is to all appearances, has revealed the functions of these two important and vital organs, in health and disease, and enabled the practitioner to diagnose and remedy a large number of the most serious diseases, and thus to relieve humanity of its pains and pangs, sorrows and tears, by preventing untimely deaths.

But God, through his special providence, has prevented the scientist from acquiring and improving his knowledge of the functions of that most important organ of all, the governor of the functions and activities of the organs and limbs of the whole body—the brain—by shutting up and securing it close within that hard shell, the skull.

The fifth point is about the articulations or joints of our body. Out of his infinite wisdom and mercy, God has made these joints more or less firm, and bound them together with more or less ligaments, according to their greater or lesser importance, and supplied them with more or less strength, according to the functions they have to perform and the purposes they have to fulfil.

(To be continued)

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON OCT. 29.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Barry, Brandes, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Judge, Lazarnick, Moss, Neate, Nicholls, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Camberwell and West Ham.

The Secretary reported that the Annual Dinner had been fixed for Tuesday, January 12, 1915, at the Restaurant Frascati.

The President, in answer to inquiries, reported that no useful halls were at present available for indoor lectures, proprietors being afraid to risk the probability of references being made to the War, and, referring to the attitude of Professor Haeckel in relation to the War, said that Freethinkers should be on their guard against a narrow patriotism that would confuse their judgment on some of the greatest men of other nations.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Correspondence.

NIETZSCHE AGAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The other day I looked up some of my old *Freethinkers*, and I came across Wheeler's article on "Nietzsche" (July 7, 1895). Note that J. M. W. found Nietzsche long before he was known in English or in England. One point that he emphasises in his penultimate paragraph seems to show that the dear old *Freethinker* always did see clearly when others were clouded by mists. Wheeler says rightly that Nietzsche's doctrine of the elimination of the unfit, through the erection of a military aristocracy, was simply the expression of the *existing* militarism of Germany. Yet these scribblers for the Jingo Press would have us believe that Germany's militarism is the outcome of Nietzsche.

As you say, war is not a question merely of intelligence, but perhaps more strongly a question of character.

Perhaps, with a few judicious "touches" (to suit chronology), you might reprint Wheeler's article.

In the *Freethinker* (March 9, 1890) there is a translation of a fine poetic onslaught by Jean Richepin, one of the greatest living French poets. Will you please consider it for reproduction in an early issue?

H. GEORGE FARMER

The Better Land.

Suggested by Mrs. Hemans's Popular Poem.

"I HEAR priests speak of a better land,
And a rest for every laboring hand;
Tell me, dear mother, where is that shore—
Where shall I find it and work no more?
Is it at home, this delightful ground,
Where the golden harps and angels are found?
Is it where Kaiser Bill on his motor-car speeds,
Or in Rome where the Pope is counting his beads?
Is it at Shepherd's Bush, so fine and grand,
I shall find this adorable land?"
"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Is it far away on the Rio Grande?
In Ecuador or Basutoland?
Is it far away on Biblical shores,
Where unicorns fight and the dragon roars?
Or, will it in drear Belgium be found,
Where soldiers' bones manure the ground?
Or, on the banks of the sacred Nile?
Perhaps 'tis away on some coral isle,
With dusky groves and silver strand?
Is it there, dear mother, that beauteous land?"
"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Eye hath not seen that fair land, my child,
Ear hath but heard an echo wild—
The nightmare of an excited brain,
That dreamers have, ever again.
Far away, beyond the ken
Of men whose heads are screwed on tight.
Where the turrets of Colney Hatch do stand,
See the golden streets of that lovely land!
'Tis there, 'tis there, my child!"

MIMNERMUS.

LILY'S ANSWER.

As on my cosy couch I lay
Methought I heard an angel say:
"Dear little child, come up above;
Here all is peace, and all is love!"

But I replied: "Good angel, no!
I cannot leave my parents so;
And brother Frank and sister May
Would weep if I should go away."

He answered: "Here we live in joy;
Grief comes not, nor does pain annoy;
Care from our realm has taken flight;
There's nothing here but pure delight."

I pleaded: "Let me stay awhile
To see mamma's proud, loving smile;
Should I your realm of bliss attain,
I think she'd never smile again!"

The pains and griefs I have to bear
My parents, brother, sister share;
So all my cares and troubles pass
Like shadows over waving grass.

Indeed, I'm very happy here,
With home so pleasant, friends so dear:
Earth's warm and comfy; in your sky
I'd be a stranger—so Good-bye!"

—B. D.

Obituary.

I have to record the death, in his 78th year, of Thomas Searle, of Devonport, on the 26th ult. He was a sturdy Freethinker of the old school, always ready and able to give a good account of his principles, and never better pleased than when discussing some knotty theological question with his Christian friends. For a considerable number of years his health was a constant source of anxiety to his friends and relatives, but he bore his sufferings with patience and fortitude. The present writer read a Secular Burial Service at the graveside last Sunday (Nov. 1), in fulfilment of a promise given to the deceased many years ago, and in accordance with the latter's strong desire expressed only a few days before his death.—G. F. HUGH McCLUSKEY.

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.**INDOOR.**

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Davey's, 32 Crossway, Stoke Newington): Monday, Nov. 9, at 8.30, Business Meeting—To receive the Auditor's Report, etc.

OUTDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity in a Funk."

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

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