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PRICE TWOPENCE

*Thou art a man. God is no more.
Thine own humanity learn to adore.*

—WILLIAM BLAKE.

The Note Prophetic.

TWO distinguished Anglican divines have just preached remarkable sermons on the subject of peace in this sad hour of war. They are both well-known dignitaries of their Church, the one the Dean and the other a Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. Both are prophets, but with a well-marked difference. Dean Inge is an exceedingly cautious prophet. Unlike the Rev. F. B. Meyer, he never makes startlingly large promises, never predicts a stupendous revival in a few months, or a supernatural reorganisation of society within a year. For a man of God, the Dean is a surprisingly scrupulous economiser of the miraculous. If he did not tell you in so many words that he believes in it, you would not dream of drawing such an inference from his ordinary speech. In his sermon entitled "The Prince of Peace," delivered at St. Paul's on Christmas morning, he indulges in no wild and reckless forecasts, but frankly admits that "the Prince of Peace has not yet come into his kingdom." Amazingly modest is his language:—

"He came to earth in the fullness of time, but the fullness of time meant the earliest possible moment for sowing the good seed in the stony ground of the human heart. The harvest has not yet come. We can see the tender blades sprouting up here and there, and we know what they mean for the future; but long ages must pass before the harvest of the earth is fully ripe."

The only fault that we can find with that extract is its assumption that the sowing of the good seed involved an act of Divine intervention at the commencement. After this initial intrusion of the supernatural, everything has seemingly been proceeding on exclusively natural lines. After two thousand years, the harvest is yet to come. If the Dean would but drop all allusion to the initial miracle, and his theological nomenclature generally, he might easily pass for a first-class advocate of Secularism. He regards a war between the United States and the British Empire as "almost unthinkable," because of the subtle tie of consanguinity that exists between the two powers. They have learned to understand and sympathise with each other. Equally improbable is it, and on the same ground, that a war should ever break out between America and Canada.

At this point the Dean makes a curious reference to what he calls the "Christ of the Andes." He tells us that, according to the testimony of travellers, on the summit of the Pass of the Andes, which connects Chili and Argentina, there stands a colossal statue of the Prince of Peace with hand uplifted to bless those two countries. He tells us further that this gigantic statue was moulded out of melted cannon, and that it was set up for the purpose of commemorating the triumph of peaceful arbitration over the spirit of war. Now, it was after a long and serious dispute about their frontiers that the Republics of Chili and Argentina resolved to submit the whole question to the arbitration of Great

Britain, the result of which was acceptable to the two quarreling nations. But we fail to see that Jesus Christ had anything to do with securing so desirable an issue to the controversy. The points in dispute between them were decided by British lawyers alone, and their decision was arrived at on lines of justice and fair play. And now, that question finally settled by arbitration, they have nothing more to disagree upon, as each has ample elbow-room. The influential journalist, Herr Harden, informs us that Germany has entered upon the present War because she had not sufficient elbow-room, or because she was in clamant need of more land and free access to the ocean. Chili and Argentina refrain from fighting because they lack any plausible motive, whereas Germany has most powerful inducements to fight, whether they are right or wrong. On the basis of existing relations between English-speaking countries, and between the aforesaid South American Republics, Dean Inge jumps to the conclusion that "the modern State, the State of the future, is pacific." Germany is a modern State, whether it is the State of the future or not, but it is anything but a pacific State; and we are convinced that under historical Christianity such a State is impracticable.

Canon Newbolt's discourse, also, was delivered at St. Paul's, but in character and tone it differs materially from the Dean's. There is one respect, however, in which both are in agreement, and it is thus stated by the Dean:—

"We must not allow ourselves to talk of the bankruptcy of Christianity and civilisation because one nation seems for a time to have reverted to moral savagery."

How frequently have Christian countries lapsed into "moral savagery," into internecine conflicts, with most disastrous consequences. Dean Inge accounts for this distressing fact by asserting that Jesus neither expected nor intended that his religion should ever get universally accepted in this world. Canon Newbolt, however, being a sentimentalist of the first water, has the audacity to give reason a slap in the face thus:—

"Some have lost their way to Bethlehem, and have silently withdrawn from the pilgrim group who seek that shrine. 'Prince of Peace' seems to be but an ironical title to-day to those who have lost home and friends and all they held dear, to those who must nerve themselves to meet every post, and whom the telegraphic messenger may suddenly rob of the light of their eyes and the joy of their life.....But we must not sing dirges at Christmas time. Let us have our *Te Deum* even if it be on the battlefield. No man may enter the King's Gate clothed with sackcloth. Christ reigns, Christ is still the Prince of Peace, Christ is still unconquered—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Such an emotional outburst cannot be justified upon any ground whatever. No sane person can honestly declare that the Prince of Peace reigns whilst savage war is rampant everywhere. Under existing conditions the excited shout, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men," is, from a Christian point of view, the most blasphemous utterance conceivable.

Besides, the conception of peace was in existence centuries before Christianity was ever heard of. Two plays of Aristophanes deal with this subject,

the direct object of which was to strengthen the hands of the peace party at Athens. In the *Acharnians* and the *Knights* he shows how passionately he loved peace and hated the Peloponnesian war. Against that wicked conflict he inveighed with irresistible eloquence. We see Trygaeus, a sorrowful Athenian, soaring skyward on a beetle's back, and upon arriving at his destination finding the Gods in the process of pounding the Greek States in a mortar. To put an end to this humiliating operation he releases the Goddess Peace from the well in which she is imprisoned. The Gods lay their pestle and mortar aside, and Trygaeus becomes the husband of one of the handmaids of Peace. Janus was an Italian divinity who had a temple in the Roman Forum with two doors, closed in time of peace, open in time of war. Canon Newbolt alludes to the fact that about the time when Jesus is alleged to have been born "the temple of Janus by a curious coincidence was shut at Rome, proclaiming that the Empire was at peace." Our knowledge of this God and his Temple is extremely limited. In times of war he was with the Roman warrior, as Jehovah used to be with Israel, and the doors of the sanctuary were left open; but in times of peace the doors were shut, indicating that the God was within to safeguard the city. But on three separate occasions the sacred doors were closed, the last time under Augustus. Canon Newbolt is somewhat sarcastic in his allusion to this last closing of the doors, hinting that it was only a theatrical display and a bid for popularity on the part of Augustus; but the fact remains that under this ruler Rome enjoyed one of its longest periods of peace and prosperity. Does not the reverend gentleman know that the majority of Roman philosophers were champions of peace? In their estimation war was a crime. Plutarch, Cicero, and Seneca were pre-eminently peace men. The Canon admits that "Christianity proclaimed peace, and everywhere unsheathed the sword"; and to justify that admission he wants us to hold the view that "war—this War, every war—from the distress of nations to the weary conflict of a guilty heart, is but the stern discipline smiting down and pacifying the infinite disorder of the world, to emerge into the active tranquillity of a sustained order, where right and not peace has been the goal, to which all the disorder, regulated by a guiding hand, has tended." Granting that this view of war is in itself true, it is yet utterly inconsistent with any intelligible conception of the Prince of Peace to imagine that the race should have been subjected to two thousand years of such harrowing and torturing experience under his reign. No apologist can reconcile these two views, however diligently he may try. They are in the Nature of Things absolutely irreconcilable.

Canon Newbolt falls into the common error of singling out German militarism and calling it "godless." There is no such thing as godless militarism. Militarism is and has always been the godliest of all "isms." Was not Jehovah "a man of war," and did he not continually pride himself upon being known and adored as "the Lord of Hosts"? Are not all Christians spoken of as soldiers of the Cross? Did not Paul say to Timothy, "Endure hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"? The truth is that Christianity is rooted in militarism, and that without its militarism it would have perished long ago. The same is true of Mohammedanism, though perhaps not to the same extent. The only great religion that opposed war was Buddhism, and Buddhism was nothing but Atheism writ large. We are convinced that Christianity and militarism in Europe are doomed to live and die together. Had Buddhism been the religion or philosophy of Europe, as once it was of India, the present horrible War would have been a literal impossibility; and Buddhism simply signifies life under the dominion of reason, illumined by a heart brimful of noble love, and love is nothing but justice "with seeing eyes."

J. T. LLOYD.

A Fallacy in Seven Chapters.—II.

(Concluded from p. 19.)

I SAID in my last article that the lectures delivered at Browning Hall were not in any legitimate sense of the word *scientific* testimony in favor of religion; they were no more than so many confessions of faith from men engaged in scientific pursuits. But the peculiarity of genuine scientific evidence is that it eliminates altogether the personal factor. A *scientific* statement is absolutely independent of the person who makes it. He is a mere accident, so to speak. A scientific generalisation is the same whether it is uttered by a brilliant scientist or a ploughboy. The law of gravitation is true, not because Sir Isaac Newton propounded it, but because, once it is understood, it appeals to all alike, and the personality of Newton may be dismissed altogether. Consequently, nothing whatever is added to the essential truthfulness of a statement by its being supported by a number of scientific men. It all depends whether they are speaking on a subject on which they possess information, and whether what they say admits of verification by normal intelligence.

Now, the whole purpose of the Browning Hall lectures was to dazzle unreflective people with a display of scientific men who were really giving evidence in favor of a—well, call it non-scientific position. The public was to get the impression that these men were speaking in the name of science; as the editor says, science was to speak "through the lips of her chief exponents." This was not true, and Dr. Harker unknowingly corrected the editor when he said:—

"The world of Science acknowledges no Pope to speak 'ex cathedra' on its behalf, but I think I am not wrong in saying that if British Science could constitute, as its college of cardinals, say, the Councils of the Royal Society and the British Association, when they proceeded to elect their Pope no one would obtain more votes than Sir Oliver Lodge."

Of course, if the British Association *had* to elect a representative, its choice might well fall upon Sir Oliver Lodge; but that would not be because of his services to science. But if the Royal Society and the British Association were called upon to select representatives of the prevailing scientific *conception* of the cosmos, then I feel sure that Sir Oliver Lodge would stand a good chance of being outvoted. For he has himself pointed out that he is one of a very small minority in the scientific world. In all probability the Councils of these two societies would decline to select any one person as representing them. They would point out that while one man might represent the scientific world in physics, another in chemistry, another in biology, etc., no one could really represent the whole of science. And, above all, they would decline altogether to elect representatives on the question of religion. That, they would say, lies outside their purview. It is a purely individual affair, and no person or group of persons would have a right to speak in the name of science on that subject. Some men of science are religious; others, as Professor Fleming admitted, "of notable eminence have failed to see in this physical universe evidence of a supreme and guiding Intelligence." The surprising thing is that not one of these eminent unbelievers was asked to give *his* opinion on the relation between science and religion. One such speaker would have quite spoilt the elaborate "bluff" engineered by the Browning Hall authorities.

Professor Bottomley said, rightly enough, that the greatest difficulties and perplexities came from people arguing about science and religion without their having any clear meaning of the terms. This is quite true; but, unfortunately, Professor Bottomley does not greatly help in the definition he advances. For example, he adopts Carlyle's definition that "The thing a man does practically believe (and this often without asserting it to himself, much less to others), the thing a man does practically lay to heart and know for certain concerning his vital relations

to this mysterious universe, and his duty and destiny there—that is his religion." Now, it is certain that however good a description this may be of something, it is no definition of religion. For this description will fit almost anyone of a serious and reflective character. It will fit the Atheist no less than the Theist. An Atheist has of necessity some conception of his relations to the universe, and of his duty and "destiny" in the world. And what on earth is the use of a definition that includes everyone? If everyone has a religion, there can be no question of religion *versus* non-religion; it is only a question of which religion is the best. And so we have the old question back again, and are as far off as ever from a definition that will serve to settle the controversy.

The truth is that it would have been very dangerous for any one of these seven scientists to have ventured on a definition of religion that would have approached exactitude. If they had defined it in terms of anthropology they would have let the cat out of the bag, and their unscientific attitude would have been evident. And if they had defined it in terms of doctrine, so as to have brought them into line with any of the Churches—or even with the Christian Church—there would probably have been a split in this scientific "forlorn hope." The seven could only agree to believe in religion so long as (a) religion remained undefined; or (b) it was defined in such a vague manner that no one could say exactly what it meant, and anyone could make it mean what they chose.

What, after all, is the issue between science and religion? The work of science, says Professor Silvanus Thompson, is "a search for truth, ascertainable, verifiable truth." And he adds that "such ascertainment of truth is independent of religion." Further, it may be pointed out, the entire world of fact is the legitimate sphere of scientific operations. Not merely physical facts, but mental facts likewise. So far, then, the whole of the known world, as well as the world of unknown but possibly known facts, belong to science. What, then, is there left for religion, and how does a conflict arise between the two? There is not, and there cannot be, any controversy concerning facts. They are the common property of all. There can only be controversy on one point, and that is on the *interpretation* of facts. And it is here, and at no other point, that the issue between science and religion arises. The "facts" of the religious life are as much the property of the scientist as the "facts" of the scientific life are the property of the religionist. There is no monopoly in facts, there is no copyright in them. That is why, while we may have religious systems depending on Mohammed, or Jesus, or Mrs. Eddy, there is no scientific teaching that depends on Newton, or Dalton, or Lyell, or Darwin.

The religionist does not dispute the scientists' facts—that is an impossibility. And the scientist does not dispute the religionists' "facts"—that would be stupid. What each disputes is the other's interpretation of a class of "facts" that both may hold in common. For example, here is Professor Fleming introducing, in the name of science, a special interpretation of a certain class of facts which does not, and cannot, receive the least support from science. He occupied the whole of his lecture in introducing the familiar argument from design in nature, although its familiarity may have been disguised from him by its being stated in terms of modern discoveries. But he is quite certain that the "order" in nature cannot be a self-produced thing. It implies thought in its production, "and thought implies a thinker." Certainly; if natural order is something imposed on natural forces, and if it implies thought, then there must be a thinker somewhere. The reasoning is childish in its simplicity—too childish, as a matter of fact—and it did not need a scientific man to make this portentous announcement. Every religionist—no matter how ignorant—has been making that statement since the days of ancient Athens. Only it is not science.

For a scientific worker who happened to be at the same time a scientific thinker—the two are by no means always synonymous—would point out to Professor Fleming that "order" is not something that is "produced," nor even self-produced, because that implies that it was at one time absent; it is not something that is impressed on natural forces; it is no more than a universal quality of existence. One cannot have two forces, or two manifestations of a single force, without "order." Existence involves "order." It does not imply thought in its production; that is an absolute, logical certainty. Thought is involved in the recognition of "order," because it requires an intelligent observer to recognise that the same conditions repeat the same phenomena. The facts are common to both parties, but here we have a religious interpretation as opposed to a scientific one. Professor Fleming is championing the former.

And as the religionist need not dispute the scientist's "facts," so the scientist admits the "facts" brought forward by the religionist. It is almost amusing to observe the time and trouble taken by religious writers to prove the reality of certain visions, feelings, or "experiences." In reality no one disputes them. No one need dispute, for instance, that a peasant girl at Lourdes saw a vision of the Virgin, heard a voice speaking to her, and was conscious of a feeling of ecstasy, or that numerous other Christians experience what they call a sense of communion with God. It is not whether these things are experienced, but their interpretation, that constitutes the vital question. The scientist admits the voice, the vision, the experience. But he sees no need for God or the supernatural to explain them. That is the real and only point at issue. The facts of the world and of life are common to all. It is entirely a question of how we shall interpret the facts. The genuinely scientific interpretation is in terms of current knowledge and of invariable causation. The religious explanation—no matter how disguised it may be—is ultimately in terms of primitive animism. That is the real conflict between science and religion. There is no middle term, and there is no room for logical compromise. The gallant seven of Browning Hall were not speaking in the name of modern science. They were merely championing the primitive explanation of nature against the later and scientific one.

C. COHEN.

Stevenson Under the Searchlight.

R. L. Stevenson. By Frank Swinnerton. 1914.

THE over-insistence upon the aspect of Robert Louis Stevenson as a master of style is mainly responsible for the reaction against his genuine claims as a writer. He has been seized upon by a band of votaries whose doctrines he would have been the first to condemn, and he has suffered much at the hands of his self-styled disciples. Stevenson was not a believer in art for art's sake. If he protested against the vulgarity which is indifferent to form, he was no less contemptuous of the stupidity which is dead to substance. He never believed that form was everything and idea was inessential. Now the critics are in flat rebellion against Stevenson, and Mr. Frank Swinnerton has published a volume of conscientious depreciation, which runs to two hundred pages, and which is a frontal attack on the whole Stevensonian tradition. The main charges are insincerity and superficiality, and he even contends that Stevenson did irreparable damage to the art of romance writing. In a caustic phrase, Mr. Swinnerton says that Stevenson "created a school which has brought romance to be the sweepings of an old costume chest." Further, he accuses Stevenson of being a second-class writer, with ephemeral ideals; one who made the novel a toy when George Eliot had made it a treatise.

This is not fair to a fine artist who has given the reading public so much unmixed delight. From the time we adventured together in search of "Treasure

Island" to the noble defence of Father Damien, how many pages were read with eager pleasure. Stevenson raised the standard of excellence. After the florid incontinence of so many writers, we owe fealty to the man who restrained our noble tongue to its lawful store, and found the well of English undefiled large enough for the greatest thoughts. It is curious how often small ideas need big adjectives, whereas thoughts as great as humanity can be expressed in a few words, as, for instance, Shakespeare's "Conscience is born of love"—the quintessence of ethics in a breath. To require simplicity is to ask for the greatest, and to demand appreciation in the audience.

"The Child's Garden of Verse" and "Underwoods" are evidence of a poet's heart and an artist's expression. The quiet dignity of Matthew Arnold is often paralleled in Stevenson's verse. The exquisite sense of sound and the sequence of such a crescendo as "I, on the lintel of this cot, inscribe the name of a strong tower," is only possible to a master. "The Requiem," with every word the only possible one for its place, and the whole as frank as a Border ballad, is the work of a real poet. So, again, the most beautiful thing he ever wrote was his epitaph:—

"Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly die;
And I laid me down with a will!
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be:
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

But Stevenson's poems are "caviare to the general." To the public he was better known as the author of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Treasure Island*, and to a large section, but only to a section, as the writer of *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Memories and Portraits*. To the select few the fabulist of the *New Arabian Nights* and *Island Nights' Entertainments*, and the romancer who gave us *A Lodging for the Night*, that perfect little story of Villon, proved that the oldest of the arts was still in the hands of a master.

Stevenson was a little master, not a great creative artist. He cannot be set with the giants. He has given us some delightful work, but he has done little that is new. Except in the short story, Stevenson's influence will not be lasting. His method is dangerously near perfection, but it is devoid of personality. To quote his own words, he played "the sedulous ape" to Scott and Defoe. He says countless things which are the very echo of Lamb, Montaigne, and Rochefoucauld. Sometimes they are as good as an imitation can be, but it is all like the attempt of a man to make a rose. He makes something that looks like a rose, but it takes mightier forces to finish and sweeten that blossom which glorifies the garden. Stevenson was a born writer, but in no sense was he a *Dumas* or a *Dickens*, although he had his share of genius. He can present a blind old "Pugh," or a "John Silver," or an "Alan Breck." But most of his best work was in his short stories, such as *The Bottle Imp* and *The Pavilion on the Links*.

The latest critic of Stevenson considers that ill-health exerted a malign influence on his work. Lombroso went much further, for he held that all genius is a form of disease, either of body or mind. It is highly probable that the man of genius is often produced from abnormal stocks. And there lies the quandary. Shall we be all very healthy and dull, or shall we go on bearing geniuses under pathological conditions? For most of us life is only made tolerable by the existence of men of genius. It is their work that makes life worth living; it is they who cover our intellectual nakedness with the robes of their splendors. It is they who fill our empty coffers with their inexhaustible riches and pour into our cups the magical wine of their genius.

Despite Mr. Swinnerton's astringent criticisms, there is magic in Stevenson's personality, which is reflected in his writings. Not this time an excellent taxpayer and irreproachable citizen who does things in print he would blush to do in real life, but a literary artist living an unconventional life in a

world made more wonderful by his genius. It is good to have a writer who breaks away from convention, and who exploits anew the old open-air life face to face with Nature. The style is the man, and we cannot have our Stevenson in any other guise. Instead of grumbling because he wears so curious and unusual a coat, in which some find it hard to embrace him, the best is to be thankful that we have a Stevenson at all. If I were a Scotsman, I would cock my hat, with a thistle in it, at the sight of Mr. Swinnerton.

MIMNERMUS.

The Loves of the Birds.—II.

(Concluded from p. 22.)

THE game-birds are all handsome creatures, and probably excel all the other avifauna in their dances and displays. Even the barnyard cock struts hither and thither before his harem, and his favorite hens are those that manifest the greatest interest and pleasure in his performances. The turkey is a far more elaborate actor, and as he sweeps in his stately manner, he spreads his train and trails his wings, or gobbles at a passing stranger with the fullest consciousness of his own importance. But the turkey is, in his turn, completely eclipsed by the peacock, whose magnificent train is one of the glories of the world. The peacock makes love to the peahen in a curious manner. Stationing himself at a short distance from the female, he spreads his train into a gorgeous fan, and awaiting his first opportunity, he proceeds towards her *backwards* until he stands quite near her, when he immediately swings round and endeavors to overwhelm her with the splendor of his plumage. This powerful display is, however, greeted with exasperating coolness, even when the majestic cock accompanies his parade with his loudest scream. But it is more than probable that the hen's seeming reserve is a merely conventional sign of her inward satisfaction and delight.

The wooing of Reinhardt's ptarmigan—a native of Greenland and Labrador—is almost grotesque. When the cock has settled on his choice, he commences to run round her with hindward feathers and lateral wings thrust forth, and as his passion rises he ruffles all his remaining feathers, and with craned neck urges his body forward, while uttering the most singular sounds. The bird appears insane as he contorts his body into the most fantastic shapes, until at last, in a state of frenzy, he carries on the most amazing antics, makes astonishing leaps into the air, and then rolls over and over.

That birds are well aware of their beauty is evidenced by their eagerness to display their charms in the presence of a female or of a rival. Both the turkey and the peacock are anxious to parade their plumage before any chance observer, and are obviously gratified by the admiration they excite. As Mr. John Lea puts it in his *Romance of Bird Life*:—

"Crests and plumes are raised, wings or tails spread, and various other means adopted to make any striking feature as conspicuous as possible. The result sometimes appears to us ridiculous in the extreme, but there is little doubt that the female is, as a rule, much impressed by the display of so much finery."

The case of the Argus pheasant instanced by Darwin furnishes strong evidence of the fact that the decorative plumage of the male exercises a powerful sexual influence over the female bird. Speaking of this bird's appendages, the coryphens of naturalists says:—

"These beautiful ornaments are hidden until the male shows himself off before the female. He then erects his tail, and expands his wing-feathers into a great, almost upright, circular fan or shield, which is carried in front of his body."

And after dwelling on the delicate coloring of the pheasant's expanded plumage and the ingenuous manner in which he thrusts his head through his wing-feathers, in order to see whether the hen is

properly observant of his appearance. Darwin then proceeds:—

"The case of the male Argus pheasant is eminently interesting, because it affords good evidence that the most refined beauty may serve as a sexual charm, and for no other purpose. We must conclude that this is the case, as the secondary and primary wing-feathers are not at all displaced until the male assumes the attitude of courtship..... Many will declare that it is utterly incredible that a female bird should be able to appreciate fine shading and exquisite patterns. It is, undoubtedly, a marvellous fact that she should possess this almost human degree of taste. He who thinks he can safely gauge the discriminations and tastes of the lower animals may deny that the female Argus pheasant can appreciate such refined beauty; but he will then be compelled to admit that the extraordinary attitudes assumed by the male during the act of courtship, by which the wonderful beauty of his plumage is fully displayed, are purposeless; and this is a conclusion which I, for one, will never admit."

Even in its glass case in the Bird Gallery at South Kensington, the bird of paradise is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. How supremely lovely must be its appearance in its tropical home! These splendid birds are proud of their beautiful plumage; at least their actions must lead any impartial onlooker to think so. Wallace witnessed one of the dancing displays of these wondrous birds during his sojourn in the Aru Islands. He tells us that the trees chosen for these dances have an "immense head of spreading branches and large but scattered leaves, giving a clear space for the birds to play and exhibit their plumes." On one of these forest trees, from twelve to twenty male birds raise their plumes and elevate their wings while maintaining them in constant motion. At intervals they sweep from branch to branch joyously exultant, so that the tree appears alive with nodding plumes that wave in every direction. These plumes are so expanded that they—

"form two magnificent golden fans, striped with deep red at the base, and fading off into the pale brown tint of the body, and softly waving points. The whole bird is then overshadowed by them, the crouching body, yellow head, and emerald green throat forming but the foundation and setting to the golden glory which waves above. When seen in this attitude, the bird of paradise really deserves its name, and must be ranked as one of the most beautiful and most wonderful of living things."

Unfortunately for the birds, they are, on these occasions, so intently occupied with their pastimes, that a hunter hidden under a small shelter of palm leaves amid the branches of the trees, may approach within shooting distance, and destroy them one by one.

Another feathered miracle is the Australian lyre bird with its supremely beautiful tail. The two outer feathers of this appendage are curved, thus giving it the form of a lyre, and from this circumstance the bird derives its name. The playground of the lyre bird is usually a little hillock, which the animal wears smooth with its powerful feet, and on this eminence he stands sweeping his tail and lowering his wings to the sound of his song. His natural song is sweet, but like the mocking bird, he is an accomplished mimic. The lyre bird easily imitates the most various noises, from the cock's shrill clarion and the howling of dogs to the harsh sound produced by the filing of a saw.

The polyplectron, like his near kinsman the Argus pheasant, prepares and preserves a small clearing in the jungle, in which he displays himself in all his feathered glory. In company with the Argus, the polyplectron is an Eastern bird, and although much smaller than the former, the latter is no less splendidly adorned. When the peacock desires to captivate his lady love, he faces her so as to set off his resistless blue throat and breast, as well as his azure, green, and gold train feathers. But with the polyplectron the breast is dull-colored, so he shows his partner his expanded tail and drooping wings. And whenever she moves to a position from which her lord's splendors appear at a disadvantage, he at once restores himself

to a point of vantage from which his spouse cannot fail to observe him at his best.

The bower birds must on no account be forgotten, as they are in many respects the most remarkable of all the feathered fauna. There is nothing particularly striking in the appearance of these birds, as their attire is usually plain. They are about the size of the jackdaw, to which they are related. Their interest chiefly consists in their surprising custom of erecting arbors and pavilions, which are sometimes surrounded by cleverly contrived pleasure haunts, and are without question the most wonderful of all the many strange examples of avian architecture. These pretty structures are in no way concerned with nidification, for the bower bird's nest is a quite commonplace affair when contrasted with the beautiful nurseries constructed by the chaffinch, hedge-sparrow, or wren. There are several species of bower birds, and each species has evolved its own special style of pleasure house. Some of these are simple; others are extremely ornate, and these last have not inaptly been compared to the habitation of a bountiful fairy.

The satin bower bird is in residence in the "Zoo," where the male bird may, at the proper season, be seen occupied in building his arcade. Naturally enough, these birds are at their best in their native home, where they construct their bowers in secluded spots, to which they carry parrots' feathers and leaves for the embellishment of their playgrounds. Their fondness for shells and bones is also very marked, and these ornaments are occasionally accumulated in considerable numbers at the openings of their avenue of bent twigs. The birds are as pleased in collecting objects that attract their fancy as any magpie or daw, and it is even asserted that the flowers, cones, and other trifles that the birds gather are not only used as ornaments for their bower, but also for the adornment of the male at the period of courtship.

But the spotted bower bird aims at still higher architectural achievements than this:—

"Its arbor, like that of the satin bird, has the form of an avenue, but it is two or three feet long, and is built on a different principle. In the first place, instead of making a platform of sticks to support the walls, these birds, like ourselves, prefer underground foundations, and dig a trench on each side, in which they plant the ends of their sticks, so as to form an arched walk. Then they line the walls with tall grasses, so disposed that their heads nearly meet, and cleverly kept in their places by stones placed at the ends of the stems along the floor of the avenue."

The spotted bower birds are more partial to accumulated treasures than the satins, and half a bushel of stones, shells, and bones may be found adorning the two entrances to their bower. These ornaments they gather from the deserted camp fires of the natives, from the streams, and the sea shore, and are frequently brought from a distance of several miles to their destination. Nor are these collections regarded as decorations only; the birds treat them as children do toys. They play with them for hours, and the great bower bird will convey a shell from one opening of its tunnel to the other, and then select a sample from the second heap and hurry back with it to the first.

The regent bower bird beautifies its playground with green leaves and bright berries. Other species build no bower, but satisfy themselves by arranging a pleasure resort, which they carpet with fresh foliage and grass. As the herbage withers they gather fresh greenery, and play and sing merrily over their labors. All these birds display a keen delight in beauty, and in none is this faculty so pronounced as in the gardener bower birds, whose edifices are justly considered by Mr. Lea as "perhaps the most marvellous examples of animal art."

The playing-houses and gardens of these remarkable birds are distinguished by their striking individuality; each species has struck out independent paths of development. Wallace was sceptical concerning the appreciation of color which many observers attributed to feathered things, and he argued

that avian appreciation of bright berries was confined to their edible qualities. But later inquiries demonstrate that he was mistaken. We now know that bower birds gather berries, blossoms, and other pretty things simply to play with, and to arrange and rearrange as ornaments to their bowers, and that the particular species which has evolved the highest sense of beauty is unquestionably the gardener bird. This species is indigenous in New Guinea, and is termed *Amblyornis inornata*. When first discovered by European naturalists, the only birds observed were either hens or immature males, whose raiment is truly unadorned, as its Latin name implies. It has since been ascertained that the mature male is the proud wearer of a fine crest of brilliant orange, which is precisely what is demanded by the theory of sexual selection.

In addition to a fairy-like dwelling, the *Amblyornis* lays out a dainty garden, which is thus described by the Italian traveller, Dr. Beccari:—

"Before the cottage there is a meadow of moss; this is brought to the spot and kept free from grass, stones, or anything that would offend the eye. On this green turf flowers and fruits of bright colors are so placed as to form a pretty little garden.....The objects are very various, but always of a vivid color. There were some fruits like a small-sized apple; others were of a deep yellow color in the interior. I saw also small rosy fruits and beautiful rosy flowers of a splendid new *Vaccinium*. There were also fungi and mottled insects placed on the turf. As soon as the objects are faded, they are moved to the back of the hut."

In South-East New Guinea other species or sub-species of gardener birds have been recorded, and with these also the females are plainly feathered, while the males carry splendid crests. Mr. Goodwin has given us a fine pen-picture of their playing-bowers, which the birds maintain in a state of spotless beauty, and, judging from his description, these habitations are among the most romantic pleasure-palaces of the animal world.

Finally, there is the golden bower bird of Australia which lives in Queensland. This bird is both handsome and clever. "He is clothed from head to tail in golden colored feathers, and bears on his head a broad crest of the same bright hue; but his wife is garbed in sober plumage of olive brown." This species has nothing to learn in its sense of beauty even from the gardener birds of New Guinea, and its gay pleasure-grounds are as dainty in their art as any yet discovered. The birds begin their building by placing large piles of sticks around two trees, stacking them in pyramid form to a height of over five feet. These pyramids are a few feet apart, and one is made much taller than the other. The birds then connect these pyramids by interlacing them with long flexible creeper stems, which so unite them that the two tall pillars are transformed into a long archway. The structure completed, the builders now attend to their decorations. The pillars and roofs of the edifice are now covered with tufts of moss, and, as a further decoration, bunches of green berries are suspended from the apex. More, however, remains to be accomplished, and the builders erect miniature houses under the main dwelling by bending the growing grass into arcades, and covering them over "with a flat thatch of slender twigs, until at last the pleasure-ground looks exactly like a miniature model of a native camp, with a beautiful triumphant arch in the middle."

Bower birds of each sex, and of all ages, frequent this palace of pleasure, and chase one another in and about the tiny huts, and under and over the archway, enjoying their little lives as the children of men are fabled to have done in the days when the earth was young.

T. F. PALMER.

According to the clergy, Christianity can reform a few drunkards and save a proportion of girls taking the wrong turning. Will they kindly explain, without hysteria, why the Christian religion is powerless to prevent twenty-one millions of Christians trying to murder one another?

Acid Drops.

The Day of Intercession has come and gone. All the clergy have had their innings—and things have gone on much as before. Some of the religious papers profess to find an improved religious tone as a consequence of the "spiritual" orgy of January 3, but we fancy that is only to be detected by the eye of faith. One of the Church of England weeklies says that while our life is outwardly the same, "we looked deeper," and so found "a new growth." Perhaps it depends how deeply one looks, and in that case the looking of most people must have been horribly superficial. The Church of England prayed for victory, as an official church was bound to do. The Free Churches omitted the prayer for victory, and hoped that God would teach us to act rightly and bring about the conquest of Christianity. But as they meant by this the triumph of the Allies, the two prayers amounted to the same thing in the end. And they were all agreed that God would do what was best. We presume that good Christians believe that he would do this in any case. That being so, the prayers seem waste of time. Or, did they believe that God would not do what was best unless they jogged his memory, and reminded him that his followers were on the look out?

At Manchester, Canon Peter Green's contribution to the Day of Intercession was that the War was a "national judgment." "All nations were suffering, and God was judging the nations, and calling them through trial and affliction to return to him in repentance and humiliation." Perhaps Canon Green will explain how the slain thousands of soldiers, the murdered hundreds of civilians, the dead children, and outraged women can be called to repentance by the War. The dead are dead, and their opportunity for repentance is passed. If anyone benefits by the War—and that is very highly problematical—it can only be those who are left when the War is over. So that, once again, we have God's beautiful method of instruction. A whole nation is devastated; thousands of people are killed and maimed, and all because an Almighty God wishes to call the survivors to repentance! It is the ethical parallel to burning down a house in order to get a relic of roast pig—without the certainty of getting the cooked meat.

The Bishop of Manchester said that God had brought about the most wonderful alliance of nations that had ever been seen. "We had the sight of multitudes of people who could not converse one with the other, people of all sorts of governments and opinions and faiths, brought together in a common brotherhood." "Common brotherhood" is good. For observe that God could only bring them together to kill. He could not bring them together to the end of peaceful co-operation. That has to be done, apparently, without God's help. And it is not the first time that God has shown his peculiar power in this fashion. He brought English and Germans together to fight the French a century ago. He brought the French and English together sixty years ago to fight the Russians. He has now brought the French and English and Russians together to fight the Germans. A little while ago he brought the Servians and Bulgarians and Greeks together to fight the Turks. And immediately after he set the Bulgarians and Servians fighting each other. As a combining force for fighting, God's power must be admitted. Perhaps it would have been better had he left things alone. Hardly anyone could have managed matters worse.

Rev. A. C. Dixon, the Yankee evangelist, who told so many libellous lies about Ingersoll in America, which he refused to retract and was unable to prove, officiated at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, on the late Day of Intercession, but we should hardly imagine that any god would pay attention to such a person's prayers. Jehovah himself, at this time of day, might well prefer a gentleman's voice to a—leave him to fill in the description himself.

Last week's gale injured a large number of churches, and demolished a Y. M. C. A. building at Chatham. Yet the hatters and umbrella makers described the gale as a "godsend."

The song "Tipperary" suggests to the British soldier "places that he himself knows well—not Westminster Abbey, but Piccadilly, the Strand, and Leicester-square." This frank admission is made by the *Times*. Maybe that is the reason the clergy are making such a fuss over the late Lord Roberts and his family prayers.

Mr. Robert Blatchford recommends a certain pamphlet as an antidote to "the unscrupulous vaporings of Mr. George

Bernard Shaw." Doesn't Mr. Blatchford interpret the idea of brotherhood too literally?

Horseradish is a favorite addition to roast beef, which is a standing dish at the Christmas festivities. Maybe followers of the Man of Sorrows like it because it brings as many tears to the eyes as the onion.

According to the *Weekly Dispatch*, Mdlle. Gaby Deslys often prays at a Catholic Church for the success of her countrymen. That should settle the matter. Even the Kaiser's prayers cannot count against so charming a devotee.

The fault of the German people, says Mr. R. J. Campbell, is that they imagine themselves to be the salt of the earth, and are entitled by their qualities and attainments to give laws to all the rest of mankind. We fancy this is true, not only of Germany, but of other nations as well—even of our own. Mr. Campbell says that this temper of mind is utterly opposed to religion. So far as the Christian religion is concerned, this is simply untrue. Thousands of clergymen have been telling us year after year that *we* are divinely selected by Providence to control this or that nation or race. *We* have spread over the earth in obedience to this "divine call." And nearly all the trouble amongst native races—so far as the missionary movement is concerned—is due to the attempt to force the ideals of British Christianity upon unwilling people. So far from the desire to dominate being opposed to religion, in modern times it receives its strongest encouragement from religion. The greatest difficulty in this country is to get Christians to recognise that their ideals are not necessarily the ideals of other people, and to prevent Christians forcing them upon others by means of social boycott and legal enactment.

We agree with Mr. Campbell that nothing can be settled by our resolving—when the War is over—to put our foot on Germany's neck and keep it there. That way means more war sooner or later. Germans and English, and all the rest of the world's peoples, have got to live together somehow, and the problem will be, when the guns are silent, how to get them to live together peaceably and profitably. That problem remains when the soldier has done his work, and it will still be there no matter how long the soldier is kept at his task. The great thing is to crush the spirit of militarism and aggression in Germany—and elsewhere—and so give opportunity for saner and more civilised feelings to find expression. Mr. Campbell thinks, of course, that only the Christian faith can subdue the war spirit; which faith, considering how Christianity has for centuries fed the war spirit, is certainly robust. The function of religion lies far more in the direction of strengthening feelings of antagonism than in inducing a desire for peace.

Mr. Campbell's proposal is that there shall be called a Council of the Christian Churches of the world to discuss the question. But the immediate question is, Who would call the Council together? It is certain that the Roman Catholic Church would not heed any summons issued by a Protestant Church. And even if the Roman Church could be brought to the point of recognising the other bodies or Churches, many of them would treat a summons from that quarter with contempt. And even if called and accomplished, a peace council so constituted would provide as fine a series of fights as one could wish. Soldiers would probably be needed to keep the delegates from murdering each other. Mr. Campbell's suggestion only serves to make plain the truth that religion is the greatest divisive force in the world, and therefore one of the most powerful agencies in the maintenance of conditions that make war inevitable.

The Catholic Church is the most important of the Christian sects. Even the Ultra-Protestant London *Times* has to admit this. In a Boxing Day leader it says, "After the failure of the Pope's attempted intervention, in the name of the common religion of Europe, no cessation of hostilities, either total or partial, was to be expected." Won't the leather-lunged lecturers of Kensit be pleased?

Kipling has told us that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," but the remark does not apply to religions. Archbishop Demetrius, Metropolitan of Serbia, has been obtruding the alms-dish in the *Times*, and in his appeal says, "Even the smallest contribution will be an act most pleasing to God." The phrasing is familiar in English tin tabernacles and mission tents.

The methods of the distinguished scientific gentlemen who have been "killing the Germans with their mouths" in the columns of the *Times* are decidedly amusing, for many of them seem disposed to disavow any intellectual debt to Germany. Facts are stubborn things, and it ought to be impossible to think of Newton without also thinking of Kepler; or of Pasteur without remembering Koch. Euler, too, is as important as Laplace. It will be a sad day for scientists if they begin to emulate the chicanery of clerical propaganda.

"To them [the Germans] belong the honor of destroying, as far as possible, the religious illusions of two thousand years and of substituting the superman and the super-Dreadnought." This is an effort of the *Sunday Times*. It is not altogether accurate, for it ignores French sceptics from Abelard to Anatole France, and overlooks the British Navy. Neither are trifles light as air.

One of the best-known figures in the Belvoir Hunt was the Rev. Jeremiah Pledger Scarbrook, of Walton-on-the-Wolds, Leicestershire. He left some £18,000. He couldn't stay here and he couldn't take the money with him. And he a good Christian, too! Hard lines! Very!

Rev. John Ormond, aged 85, of 12 the Paragon, Blackheath, left £19,639. Poor old Christian! "For they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." But not the cash.

A recent issue of *Lloyd's Weekly News* contains a leading article suggesting that the German people are Anarchists, and that their culture is superficial. In the same issue seven columns are devoted to an account of the Crippen Murder Case and other notorious criminal trials, which are considered suitable reading for Christians on the "Lord's Day."

The death of Carl Goldmark, the famous composer, reminds us that the finest of his operas, "The Queen of Sheba," was kept from the English stage for many years because it dealt with Biblical subjects, although it had filled the largest and most distinguished Continental opera-houses. This suppression of a musical masterpiece is another proof of the harmfulness of orthodoxy, which is still more opposed to scientific progress.

Citizen Nicholas Baroff, the Canadian "Oat" King, is no more. Monarchs are cheap to-day, with "oil," "nitrate," "copper," and "coal" kings everywhere. The title of "King of Kings" will soon be an insult instead of a compliment.

Intellectual honesty is a rare plant. Several gentlemen, distinguished in various fields of activity, have been adversely criticising in the *Times* the German claims to scholarship, science, art, and music, and finding them unworthy of admiration. Had there been no war, there would have been no hyper-criticism. Kant and Goethe, Beethoven and Handel, Euler and Haeckel, do not need puffing from professorial pens.

London Opinion has an amusing drawing of a poor Irish-woman addressing a priest, with the inscription, "Shure, yer riv'rance, it's all very well to say 'love yer inimies,' but it's as much as yer life is worth to say a word for the Kaysar down our court." This is appropriately headed, "Theory and Practice."

A correspondent of the *Challenge* points out the great need in the country for Christian Evidence. We quite agree. We have been pointing out for years that the great need of Christianity is just evidence. That is all we have ever asked for ourselves, and all Freethinkers have asked for the same. Only it has never been forthcoming. *Apropos* of this point, it may not be generally known that a Christian Evidence Society—we believe it was the forerunner of the present one—was started by the Rev. Robert Taylor, of the *Devil's Pulpit*. It was intended for the genuine study of Christian evidences, but by some means its character was changed, and it became a society for the production of evidence in favor of Christianity, and that in practice soon became the circulation of slander and misrepresentation of everything that was non-Christian.

The *Challenge* advertises manuscript sermons on the War. Any clergyman can procure a ready-made, original sermon without, as Jack Point would say, disclosing the source from whence it is derived. A parson may be patriotic or pathetic, denunciatory or declamatory, pathetic or *bathetic*, at so much

per thousand words. It is a case of inspiration to order. And terms, with specimen, may be had for one shilling! We were almost tempted to invest in a "bob's"-worth.

The Rev. Canon Jephson has been writing on "Old Barbarism as New Culture." The article refers to a fanciful comparison of the German and British ideals; but much might be said of the clergy's claims on behalf of the barbarous ideas embodied in the Bible.

"The original dispenser of gifts to children was the Christ child himself," says a writer in the *Evening News*. Yet his Divine Papa (who was also himself) was not so kind. Witness the destruction of the firstborn in Egypt and the slaughter of the innocents in Palestine.

The Rev. Lord William Gascoyne-Cecil says that "if German Christianity were a fifth as strong as German patriotism, Rheims Cathedral would still be intact; Louvain would not have been burnt." It is possible, also, that if Christianity were as powerful as militarism that "intellectuals" would be burnt instead of towns.

Spirits were prohibited in Berlin during Christmas. There was no chance of Yuletide ghosts squeaking and gibbering in the German streets.

"If the war lasts long enough people will be sobered, and a new and more solemn view-point on life will be taken; butterfly existence will be killed off." This is quoted from *T. P.'s Weekly*. If the worship of the Man of Sorrows for twenty centuries has not sobered Christians, they had better take to non-alcoholic beverages.

"Nothing would be easier than to draw a poignant contrast between the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace and the spectacle of half the world at war," says the *Daily Mail*. Of course, the editor spares the feelings of the halfpenny Christians.

The *Weekly Dispatch*, in a Christmas article, says, "we are waging war against hell itself." If this be true, the clergy will soon be unemployed, and, like their Master, have not where to lay their heads.

The clergy are always telling us that children love the Bible; but the little ones do not choose that volume themselves. The London County Council Education Committee states that *Andersen's Fairy Tales* and *Robinson Crusoe* hold the two first places in the affections of the young people. In poetry, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Scott are favorites. We would rather trust the educationalists than the superstitionists.

Mr. Coulson Kernahan quoted a conversation with the late Mr. Grant Allen in the *Daily Mail* recently, in which Allen said that one of his books had been "translated into every civilised language—and into German." This is not so smart as the saying of Mark Twain, that he could not understand a German saying his prayers, for not even God could understand such a language.

Professedly Christian papers have been hard put to it to explain the meaning of the peaceful priestly pretensions concerning Christmas and the shambles of the European battlefields, where 21,000,000 men, mostly Christians, are trying to murder one another. The *Weekly Dispatch* says that the old Gospel text should be translated "On earth peace to men of good will," and not "good will to men." This is ingenious, if not ingenuous. Perhaps the text, "Our Father which art in heaven" is another mistake.

The *Times* is not often guilty of humor, but in a recent issue it referred to the religion of the stonemason of the Middle Ages, "which was not a formal call in a high hat on a superior whom he believes to be out." A similar jest in the *Freethinker* would have been described as vulgar.

A Holloway chapel has been burnt down. Let us hope that the deacons have disregarded the divine injunction to "Take no thought for the morrow."

At the Watch-Night service at an East Dulwich, London, church a woman called out "O God, end this War!" The

congregation was startled. But that was what they met to say.

Mr. Dan Crawford, the African Missionary, says that the Australian is dying to thank God for the break up of the recent drought, but they are afraid to. Perhaps they are wondering why on earth he permitted it? Or it maybe they are afraid of reminding him that there is such a place as Australia, for fear he will favor them with his attentions once again.

"The Messiah at the Royal Albert Hall" was a headline in the *Press*. This must be good news to Christians, who might have imagined he was on the Continent.

There is a Home of Rest for aged and infirm horses, ponies, and donkeys at Cricklewood, and the animals were regaled with a New Year's banquet consisting of carrots, apples, biscuits, and sugar. What a pity Balaam's ass was not present. He might have sung the National Anthem.

In a Sunday newspaper a paragraph is headed "A Happy Bald-Headed Man." It does not refer to the prophet Elisha, who would have been prosecuted by the N. S. P. C. C., had he lived in our time.

A new song has been published by Miss Marie Corelli, entitled "The Voice in the Cathedral." It ought to be a self-satisfied voice, for the owner should be a well-paid cleric.

Messrs. William Le Queux, Max Pemberton, and H. G. Wells, are writing accounts of the European War for the *Press*. Maybe the editors consider that best critics of fiction are expert romancers.

A report was recently circulated that two Zeppelins had been seen at Chelmsford. It was only a report, and without foundation in fact, but that circumstance was not allowed to stand in the way of a little religious advertising. So Canon Thornton-Duesbery informed a congregation in the Leyton Parish Church that two Zeppelins had encircled the Cathedral, and the Church had only escaped destruction because of the prayers that had been offered for the preservation of the Churches and Cathedrals of the country. What a pity it is that Scarborough was not included in the prayers. It would, perhaps, be too much to pray that only men of sense should be appointed as clergymen. That would be considered, by even the most devout, as too great a miracle to expect.

The *Christian World* is anxious to stop the "nonsense" that the evils of the War are due to "robbing God" in dis-establishing the Church of England in Wales. We quite fail to see any substantial difference between Churchmen saying this, and Christians in general saying that, the evils of the War are due to our contempt of God, or our neglect of God, or rejection of Christianity, or that it is God's way of bringing the nations to repentance. Christians seem only able to appreciate the nonsense talked about religion when it affects their own particular sectarian stupidity.

The Bishop of Oxford declines to sanction the use of prayers for animals. This is quite in accord with Christian tradition and the spirit of the New Testament's "Doth God care for oxen?" And yet, if prayers were of any value, we would much rather pray for some of the animals we have known than for some of the human beings we have come across. The faithfulness of the dog is proverbial. The faithfulness of a human being is often a doubtful quantity.

A part of the premises of the Young Men's Christian Association, Tottenham Court-road, London, has been opened as a rendezvous for soldiers. There are twelve rooms, including a gymnasium and hot baths. How times change! Once Christians gave their opponents a "hot time"; now they have to bribe their own followers.

Mons. Henri Bergson says that "history was a school of immorality." Just so! And in the top form of that school were the Old Testament heroes, who anticipated all the crimes of the Newgate Calendar.

The War is costing this country alone £1,000,000 daily, and the total cost to all countries engaged is about £7,000,000 per day, the whole of which is used for purely destructive work. The Panama Canal, one of the wonders of the world, represents an outlay of ten days' cost of the War.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—F. C. L. and R. B. Harrison (per Miss Vance)—Next week's list.

WARR (JUNIOR).—We did not see it, and it is too late now. But thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your well-selected batches of cuttings.

E. B.—Ah! what a different world it would be if the men of good sense and good will could only realise their good wishes for each other! Omar Khayyam says the rest—or his interpreter says it for him.

W. GADDNER.—Mr. Mangasarian's lecture is, indeed, as you say, one of the best things yet published on the War. It is the work of a philosopher and an idealist; one who understands what is and yearns for what should, without pedantry and without namby-pambyism.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.—Thanks for your pretty little brochure, with its clever epigrams, which often show the eye of a keen observer and a real thinker.

F. W. HALL.—Thanks. Will be acknowledged.

J. M. GIMSON.—We begin the 1915 list as soon as possible. Meanwhile the journal subscription is duly credited.

W. H. LEE.—Whether we consider Nature as advancing or receding is entirely a question of point of view. Strictly speaking, Nature does neither one nor the other, and whether man grows wiser or stupider, better or worse, is a matter of indifference to the "cosmic machine." But man creates a standard of value, and measures things by that standard. It is thus quite permissible to hold to the strictly Determinist position, and speak of affairs as getting a "set-back." We only mean that, judged by an ideal standard, things are a little farther off perfection than they were.

G. YATES.—We do not see how declining to accept the view that the Kaiser is responsible for the War, relieves him from his share of the responsibility for its occurrence. Our view is that one man cannot force a thing upon a nation unless the nation, by its habits, or temperament, or training, has been prepared for it. He then becomes a symbol of a national tendency. The truth is that war has been "in the air" for many years. And when that is the case, war comes sooner or later. It does not require a genius to fire a train once it is prepared. A fool and a lighted match is all that is necessary.

H. FOXSTER.—Thanks for birthday congratulations and good wishes.

ISABELLA J. ROBERTS.—Acknowledgment in due course. Thanks meanwhile for your encouraging letter. We get less and pay more, of course; but the *Freethinker* is not so heavy a loss as we expected. It has a sort of bed-rock circulation, which defies the heaviest storms. Attrition is the deadliest enemy.

E. LE QUESNE.—Very pleased to receive the congratulations of a new subscriber on the quality of this journal. We have always aimed at keeping the *Freethinker* up to a high standard, and those who do not confuse dulness with profundity have generally recognised its value.

J. FLOOD (Pittsburgh, U.S.A.).—As you say, "every little bit helps," and we are delighted to receive your list of subscribers, with remittance for same. We wish all Freethinkers at home were equally energetic. "Mr. Foote and his associates" appreciate your kind wishes for the new year, which they reciprocate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The *Freethinker* is lucky to have three men like Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, and "Mimnermus" writing for it almost regularly, beside more than occasional contributors like Mr. W. Mann, whose pen has been taking a longish rest lately, and "Abracadabra," whose critical articles on the Bible are of

great value and interest to most of our readers. Mr. Cohen has been helping Mr. Foote a good deal editorially too lately, going up to the office on Tuesday's and doing what is necessary, besides reading and otherwise preparing the pages. Mr. Foote, however, generally calls in, for the *Freethinker* is not like an ordinary paper, but is largely personally conducted, and requires at times something which only age and experience can give.

In spite of all Mr. Cohen's faithful help, Mr. Foote had a heavy task to undertake on press-day (Tuesday) this week. First, an hour's journey to London; then a long interview with the solicitors about the Bowman Bequest; then some hours at the *Freethinker* office; then a Board Meeting of the Directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., to consider an emergency, which is by no means of a simple character; then the Freethinkers' Annual Dinner at Frascati's, which is a more responsible job than most people imagine; finally, a journey home again by the midnight train, arriving at one o'clock in the morning, with the pure air all around, and the steel-blue sky and the bright eternal stars overhead. A man, a million men, are nothing to them; yet it may be hoped that one—no longer young—man's long day's labor for his kind will do a grain of good in this mighty world.

An old friend of ours, and of other good causes, writes: "I earnestly hope that 1915 may prove a prosperous and satisfactory year to our grand cause, and that your [our] health may be maintained so that you will be able to direct its operations with your [our] usual energy and wisdom."

Mr. W. W. Collins, of Christchurch, New Zealand, seems to be quite recovered from his recent illness, and at work again on the *Examiner*. We see that he reprints an article by "Mimnermus" from our columns. We reprinted an article of his by anticipation last week. Mr. Collins is, of course, a young man, and we hope he will husband his strength as far as possible.

We were afraid that our old friend the *Humanitarian* was going to drop altogether, but we are glad to see it is to be published at least quarterly until the arrival of better days,—that is, until this terrible War and its worst consequences are over. Mr. Salt, the devoted editor of this valiant little paper, takes a pessimistic view of affairs—which is often another word for an honest view. Any fool can "hope for the best," as the saying goes. Mr. Salt hopes and fears on the facts of the case. He may be right or he may be wrong, but his conclusions are always "attempts at truth." Not of him would the Master say "the wish was father to the thought." Yet he is full of good wishes for mankind, though his thoughts are based upon and bounded by the facts. One is much reminded in Mr. Salt's case of Adam Smith's description of David Hume—with a vein of poetry added to the composition. We are very sorry, therefore, to see a thinker and observer as Mr. Salt take a pessimistic view of this War, because it is most likely to be correct: "When the semi-civilised modern man is permitted and exhorted to take a deep draught of aboriginal savagery, it is idle to pretend that our advocacy of a humaner conduct of life in all its bearings—that is, in regard to all sentient beings, human and subhuman alike—has not been for the time and probably for a very long time, most seriously, if not entirely, arrested." The action of the Labor parties has caused the social movement to "wreck itself for many years to come." Such is Mr. Salt's reading of the great problem suddenly presented to "civilised Europe."

Mr. Salt quits the Secretaryship of the Humanitarian League which he has occupied so efficiently for twenty-four years, but he continues the editorship of the *Humanitarian*—and of the League's publications generally. So we shall still have him at his best. "For this relief much thanks!"

We are sorry but not surprised that the Humanitarian League has been "bitten" by the War, and is obliged to make a special appeal for assistance. Every advanced movement has suffered more or less; as was inevitable during a time when "aboriginal savagery" is having its innings. We hope funds will reach the League, to maintain its efficiency, at 53 Chancery-lane, London, W.C. Perhaps some advanced reformer, who thinks enough has been done already, as far as he is concerned, to the various wise or foolish funds for "the absent-minded beggar," will plank down £1,000 and ease the minds of some unostentatious good people, connected with one of the best of journals, and one of the best of Leagues.

The Great War.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 27.)

I HAVE refrained from speaking of the religious split which has kept the nations at strife for long centuries. But religion has played as great, if not even a greater role in arming the nations, than politics. Supernaturalism is militarist. It was Catholic Austria that provoked the Thirty Years War against Protestant Germany, from the dire effects of which it took the Fatherland two hundred years to recover. At present, Catholic Austria is trying to Romanise the Balkan States; that is to say, she is doing in the twentieth century, in Eastern Europe, what she tried to do in Germany during the Protestant Reformation. The present War could easily be traced, as one of its causes, to the endless squabble between the priests of the Greek and those of the Roman Churches. Russia believes it to be her duty to make the orthodox Greek faith supreme in the Balkans; Austria is equally ambitious to conquer the Balkans for the Catholic Church. A few years ago there was a movement in Austria to break away from Rome. Its motto was "Loss von Rome" ("Away from Rome"), but the late Archduke Francis Ferdinand gave the movement its quietus with one remark, "Away from Rome," he said, "is away from Austria." Such are a few of the remote causes of the monstrous War which is costing Europe from forty to fifty million dollars a day in money alone. But when we think of the loss of men—the youngest, bravest, and best—and the loss to our ideals, I can only say that it is staggering.

Let us look at a few of the nearer causes of the present European conflict. In 1908, Catholic Austria startled Europe by forcibly annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite the provisions of the Berlin Treaty, which Austria herself had signed and agreed to observe. I say the provinces were forcibly annexed, because no plebiscite was taken; the inhabitants of these provinces were not consulted. The Holy Father, Pius X., did not raise a finger to protest against this act of Catholic Austria, which was a direct challenge to Russia, to Turkey, and to the balance of power of Europe—the only guarantee of its peace. Having just emerged from the Japanese War, Russia was not in a position to offer more than a diplomatic protest against this extension of Austrian influence in the Balkan provinces. The only European State to support the conduct of the Hapsburg Emperor in the annexation of Balkan territory was Germany, which came to the assistance of her ally, and the question was closed for the time being. This political manoeuvre was greatly resented by the annexed population, and secret societies sprang into existence to avenge the "outrage," as they called it. Francis Ferdinand, who was assassinated in the month of July, 1914, in Serajevo, the capital of the annexed provinces, was the principal actor in this *coup d'etat*, this stroke of Catholic diplomacy. From that day a price was placed upon his head.

In this connection I might say that Austrian diplomacy has always been of that bungling and *mala-droit* variety which makes for schism and discord. From being a leader in the German Empire, she has, through a number of blunders, swung into second place. Bismarck's remark, "Austria did my work," refers to the Austrian knack of doing the wrong thing. "The history of the House of Hapsburg, from Charles V. onwards," writes Bismarck, "is a whole series of lost opportunities." Frederick the Great's opinion of the Austrians was even less flattering: "The Austrian," he says, "always takes the second step before he has taken the first." In view of the ultimatum hurriedly dispatched to Serbia, a few months ago, this comment of the great Frederick is very apropos.

Then came the war waged by Italy against Turkey over a strip of land in Africa. Again it is a presumably Catholic State, and this time with the open support of the Vatican, that disturbs the world's peace. Italy's attempt to grab his weaker neighbor's

property, Tripoli, had the cordial sanction of the Holy Father. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Roman hierarchy had made heavy investments in Tripoli, and therefore it desired a war of aggression against the Turks. The Pope gave his blessing to the Italian soldiers, and prayed for their victory, and when the War was over he shared the booty with the State. That terrible war hurt us all. The prosperity of Europe and America, and the concert of the Powers were jeopardised by that quasi-papal war. I have explained before how the weakened condition of Turkey as a result of that War encouraged the Balkan States to attack the prostrate Turk. That gave us the terrible first Balkan War, followed by a second war of the Balkan nations among themselves. The success of the Servian Armies in the second Balkan War aroused the suspicions of Austria on the one hand, and the ambitions of Serbia on the other. Austria and Serbia clashed; Germany and Russia stepped in, dragging France and England after them; and we have to-day the most shameful situation Europe has ever witnessed.

One of the remarks attributed to the late Pope on his death-bed, is the answer he is supposed to have given to the aged Austrian Emperor, when the latter asked for the Pope's blessing on the war with Serbia: "I give my blessing to peace." Indeed! Why did you not say that when the Italian soldiers asked for your blessing against the Turks? Why did you not denounce the seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Tripoli by Catholic governments? "I give my blessing to peace." What is it worth if it cannot preserve the sanity of nations; if it cannot restrain the passions or the greed of States? "I give my blessing to peace"; but peace is already blessed, and does not need your or my blessing. Canst thou bless war into a speedy termination—bless the fighters into fraternal relations—intolerance into justice—hatred into mutual respect? Hast thou that magic power, that charm, that sweetness, and light which can convert madness into moderation? But is it flattering to the Holy Father to think that the most Catholic country, Austria, and his own home country, Italy, more than any others, contributed to break the peace of Europe?

It is claimed that the ultimatum sent to Serbia by the Austrian Government—an ultimatum imposing upon an independent and victorious State such humiliation as would under no circumstances be tolerated except by an ignoble and cowardly people, an ultimatum allowing Serbia forty-eight hours in which to kiss the dust or be bombarded—had the support of the German Kaiser. It also claimed that if he had tightened the screws on Austria even after this boisterous fulmination against a neighbor State had been issued, a diplomatic solution of the difficulty could have been effected. It is a great compliment to the German Emperor to think that he was considered able and resourceful enough to have prevented the Russian mobilisation by urging moderation upon everyone concerned in the unfortunate affair. Of course, it was not to be supposed that the Slav Empire which tolerated, apparently, at least, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, would also stand by and see Serbia crushed by a Germanic power. For the German Empire to have supposed that there was no limit to the humiliation which Russia would accept rather than fight, was a diplomatic blunder. It is true that the assassination of the Crown Prince of Austria was a dastardly act. We have never in the past, and will never in the future, endorse violence as a reform measure, but is it not madness to risk driving civilisation into the gutter for the purpose of punishing an assassin, or even a whole society of assassins? If Austria had been more temperate, though not less determined, she would have commanded the sympathy and support of all Europe.

What, then, is Europe fighting for? Germany is fighting against the Slav peril, as well as for elbow-room—for a larger place in the sun; France is fighting to prevent German expansion from taking place as in 1870, at her expense; England is fighting to get

rid of the German Navy, which is a permanent menace to her Empire; Belgium is fighting that she may not become another Alsace-Lorraine; Serbia is fighting to avoid the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which went down the throat of the Austrian Empire; Russia is fighting to prevent the Romanisation of the Balkans, which would mean the eventual fall, of course, of Constantinople and the Turkish Empire into the hands of the enemies of the Slavs.

Whichever side wins, we can tell in advance that the War will not settle any important question. When the boom of the cannon ceases we will have to call upon reason to lead us. Why not reason before fighting? Are there not sensible diplomats enough in the world to bring about a peaceful redistribution of the globe? Let the debatable provinces be permitted to express their political preferences by a plebiscite—after the matter has been carefully presented to them by the ablest teachers and statesmen. Let Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ireland and Bohemia, Poland, Galicia, and Armenia choose the States they would like to belong to. If India wishes to be independent rather than English or German, let her try the experiment. The world's peace would be on a surer basis if the pent up ambitions of these races were given scope under the kindly guidance of the elder States. That this plan will also have flaws, goes without saying, since nothing is perfect; but is not freedom safer than force? England is practically freeing every country she has conquered, Canada, Australia, South America, and soon Ireland's name will be added to the list. Would a war between the North and South of Ireland be better than a Parliamentary solution of the Home Rule question? Why should men who can reason resort to killing? Why go on using a means, enormously costly, degrading, and, at the same time, futile?

Swing toward reason! We have swung away from it too long. Away from reason, religion becomes bigotry. Away from reason, politics becomes brutality. Swing toward reason, and even as the speculations of yesterday are the statistics of to-day—the hopes of to-day will become the harvests of tomorrow!

Let not the European spectacle depress us over much. Despite our many failures, humanity is gaining. There is still a great deal of happiness in store for afflicted Europe—for even broken down, battered, yet brave Belgium. Whatever the issue of the War may be, there will still be a France, the laughter of Europe; there will still be an England, the cradle of political liberty; there will still be a *Germania mater*, mother of learning. There will always be Teuton and Slav, Saxon and Celt—each contributing his musical note to the symphony of nations—each his bright hue to the rainbow of civilisation. When the supernatural steps out of the way, which it now blocks, reason will build the palace of peace, and it will be the human heart. And then something wonderful will happen; the sword will become a pen. New dynasties will arise in Europe. Goethe will be the Emperor of Germany, Shakespeare the Emperor of Great Britain, and Voltaire, with his incomparable smile, the Emperor of the French. I know this is only a hope—but I would rather hope than fear.

Christian Apologetics.

THE REV. HENRY WACE.

PALEY tells us in his "Evidences" that "the New Testament contains a number of distinct writings, the genuineness of any one of which is almost sufficient to prove the truth of the Christian religion," and that there are "four distinct histories, the genuineness of any one of which is perfectly sufficient." The latter statement, if applied to the first three Gospels, may perhaps, under certain conditions, be received as correct; for the whole of the Gospel of Mark and a large portion of the other two Synoptics

are but slightly varied versions of the same alleged events. But these narratives must be shown to have been written by apostolic men, and in apostolic times—neither of which conditions has yet been established.

Some years back, the Rev. Henry Wace, B.D., D.D., etc., published a small work, entitled *The Authenticity of the Four Gospels*, in which he undertook to prove the genuineness of those four books by means of one of them—that according to Luke. His first step was to show that the "Gospel of Luke" and the "Acts of the Apostles" were written by the same hand—a fact upon which all critics are agreed—after which he elected to prove that the Acts of the Apostles was composed by Luke, a companion of Paul, who accompanied that apostle on some of his travels. This task satisfactorily accomplished, he returned to Luke's Gospel, and from that to the other three. It will thus be perceived that the authenticity of the Third Gospel is dependent upon the alleged fact that Luke was a companion of Paul in some of the journeys recorded in "the Acts." We will now see how this crucial point is arrived at. The learned Dr. Wace says:—

"Now, the authorship of the Acts of the Apostles is revealed by one of those pieces of incidental evidence which, in a matter of this kind, are sometimes more convincing than direct statements. In the 16th chapter the writer is describing one of the journeys of St. Paul, and at first he speaks of St. Paul and his companions in the third person—'they' and 'them.'"

Dr. Wace then refers to the narratives written in the first person, in which the writer employs the pronouns "we" and "us," thereby showing that he had accompanied Paul on those journeys—as in the following examples:—

Acts xvi. 10.—"And when Paul had seen the vision we sought to go forth into Macedonia."

Acts xx. 5.—"But these [i.e., seven of Paul's companions] had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas."

It is quite evident, as our reverend apologist points out, that none of the companions of Paul, who are named in the last passage as having "gone before," could have been the writer of that portion of the Acts. Then, after further observations, he says:—

"Now, from some references in St. Paul's Epistles there remains no practical doubt who was the person thus associated with St. Paul. In Col. iv. 14, St Paul sends a salutation from 'Luke, the beloved physician'; in 2 Tim. iv. 11, he says, 'Only Luke is with me'; and at the end of the letter to Philemon, the salutation of Luke is added, amongst others, to that of St. Paul. St. Luke, therefore, was an intimate companion of the Apostle; and there is no other known companion to whom the circumstances mentioned in the Acts are appropriate. Thus the internal evidence which is furnished by the Third Gospel, by the Acts of the Apostles, and by St. Paul's Epistles, is in complete harmony with the tradition that St. Luke was the author of both the Gospel and the Acts."

Here our great Church dignitary, not seeing his way to demonstrate that Luke was a companion of Paul during the journeys in question, or that the last-named apostle was not accompanied on those journeys by another colleague who might possibly have been the writer, finds it very much easier to make a most unwarrantable assumption. Moreover, the epistles from which he has quoted Luke's name as a fellow-worker are not amongst those which critics generally consider authentic. In the admittedly Pauline Epistles, Luke's name is not once mentioned; though some other colleagues are named—e.g., Titus, Stephanus, Epaphroditus, etc.—one of whom might possibly have been the writer.

Furthermore, if Dr. Wace had looked at the Preface to Luke's Gospel he would have perceived that that writer did not live in apostolic times, and could not, therefore, have been Paul's colleague. In that introduction Luke says that he was about to "draw up a narrative concerning those things which are surely believed among us, even as they, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, delivered them unto us." Here "the beginning"

refers to the period when the gospel was first preached, the "eye-witnesses" being the apostles, and the "ministers of the word" being other teachers (including Paul and his colleagues) who were not witnesses. Had Luke been a fellow-worker with Paul, he would have been one of the "ministers of the word" at "the beginning"; but he was not. He says, in effect, that the written Gospel narratives which he was about to revise and re-write had been "delivered unto us"; that is to say, had been written in apostolic times and handed down to the Christians of his day—he himself being one of them.

Luke, no doubt, really believed that the original accounts from which he compiled his revised Gospel were written by Nazarenes and others who had witnessed the miracles and heard the discourses recorded in the primitive Gospel; hence his statement.

It must not, however, be forgotten that the first mention of Luke as an evangelist is made by Irenæus (A. D. 185), who, after naming Matthew and Mark as writers of a Gospel, says:—

"Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him" (*i.e.*, preached by Paul).

This absurd statement is received by all orthodox critics as historical fact. Paul is credited with a knowledge of all the alleged sayings and doings of Jesus related in the Third Gospel, and is said to have gone about through Asia Minor and Greece—with Luke as his fellow-worker—narrating them. Luke, therefore, had not drawn from a written source, but from what he remembered of Paul's preaching. And so retentive was Luke's memory that many of the discourses in his Gospel, which are stated to have been uttered by Jesus, agree word for word with the same discourses given in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels. But this silly apologetic assumption as to the subject-matter of Paul's preaching is at once disproved by the fact that that apostle had no knowledge of any Gospel sayings or doings of Jesus, these fictions not having been excogitated in his day. This is conclusively proved by the generally admitted Pauline Epistles, which are the best samples anyone can have of Paul's preaching. Save for two or three well-known interpolations, they show no knowledge whatever of any of the Gospel sayings or doings of the Christian Savior. It should also be borne in mind that the Paul of the Book of the Acts was drawn up from apocryphal writings, and is, of course, unhistorical. There is, however, something more to be said on this subject which completely cuts the ground from under Dr. Wace's feet. This I must leave to the next paper.

ABRACADABRA.

The Bible Kaiser.—II.

(Continued from p. 28.)

DAVID'S slaying of Goliath is a pretty story, only it occurs more than once in Scripture. Giants appear to have turned up conveniently, in order that heroes might dispatch them. Abishai slew one who nearly overcame David (2 Samuel xxi. 16, 17), and two others are polished off in the same chapter; one of them being a twenty-four fingered and toed giant, who was slain in a single combat by David's nephew Jonathan. Goliath himself was twice killed; first by David, and secondly by Elhanan. The Authorised Version calls the second victim *the brother of Goliath*, but the words are in italics, showing them to be an addition. They are properly omitted in the Revised Version. Consequently, "Who killed Goliath?" is a question like "Who killed Cook Robin?" and David's heroism is as real as that of Jack the Giant-killer.

According to the story in Samuel, the giant Goliath was about ten feet high, yet he exhibited himself for nothing. He was accoutred in brass mail, his coat weighed a hundred and fifty pounds, his spear was like a weaver's beam, and its head weighed twenty-eight pounds. This ridiculous guy strutted in front

of the Philistine army, defying the hosts of Israel, who were all terrified. Even Saul and Jonathan shared the universal fright! Whereupon it was proclaimed that whoever slew the braggart should marry the king's daughter.

David seized the opportunity. Armed with a sling and stones, he advanced to the combat. The stones were five in number, and selected for their smoothness. Scripture says they were taken from a brook, but the Rabbis give them a curious history. With the first Abraham drove away Satan, when he tempted him from sacrificing Isaac; on the second Gabriel's foot rested when he opened the fountain in the desert for Hagar and Ishmael; the third was used by Jacob in his wrestling match with Jehovah; and the two others were flung by Moses and Aaron at God's enemies. No doubt this is as true as Gospel.

Presuming David to be a good slinger, the odds were greatly in his favor. By keeping at a distance from Goliath, and watching his opportunity, he could send a stone at the giant's head, and if that missed he had four other chances; nay, if they all missed, he could still take to his heels. The courage in this case was on the part of Goliath, who made himself a target for David's missiles. Rare old Ben Jonson showed more bravery than Saint David. When the English were fighting the Spaniards in the Netherlands, a Spanish champion strutted forward, flourishing his weapon, and defying the whole enemy. "Ben stept forth," says Carlyle, "fenced that braggart Spaniard, since no other would do it; and ended by soon slitting him in two, and so silencing him."

Goliath was settled with the first shot. It pierced his forehead, and he fell on his stomach. David ran up, drew the giant's sword, and cut off his head with it. This dismayed the Philistines. They fled, the Jews pursued them, slaughtered them wholesale, and captured large quantities of spoil.

According to his own account, David had eclipsed this feat. While he watched his father's sheep "there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock." Lions and bears do not usually hunt together, and if the ill-matched couple seized on the same lamb, at different ends, their subsequent division of the plunder would have been an interesting problem. But David spared them the trouble. He ran after them and recovered the lamb. "And when," said David, "he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him." David confuses the two animals. Perhaps, like certain people in the proverb, he needed a better memory; or perhaps he clutched both the lion and the bear by the beard, and knocked their heads together. On the whole, the story is mixed, and whoever wishes to get at the actual truth must seek the Lord in prayer.

The prowess of David is extolled by the Rabbis, who allege that he had transfixed eight hundred Philistines with one arrow. Had this incident been recorded in the Bible, David's arrow would have ranked with Shamgar's goad and Samson's jawbone.

David's praises being in the mouths of the women of Israel, Saul eyed him with jealousy. He gave him Michal to wife, but exacted a dowry of a hundred Philistine foreskins. David brought two hundred in "full tale." Voltaire suggests that Michal wore them as a necklace. Josephus politely substitutes six hundred heads for two hundred foreskins. But the Septuagint, like the Syriac and the Arabic, agrees with the Hebrew. Let us hope the Jewish manners were not, like David himself, after God's own heart. Jehovah did not lift his chosen people above the bestial mutilation of their enemies, nor did he guard the Bible from the pollution of this disgusting story. With what expectations do the clergy place such obscenity in the hands of children?

Michal loved David, and saved his life. Saul cast his javelin at the harpist one day when the music had lost its charm; but David slipped aside, and the weapon pierced the wall. Messengers were sent to his house to kill him. Michal heard of this, and

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warned him to flee. When the messengers came she took them to his bed, where she had placed an image, and covered it with the clothes. The word translated image is *teraphim*, a plural term, used here in the singular. It was a household god. "These great wooden *penates*," says Renan, "were found, as we see, in the houses one might suppose the most devoted to pure Jahvehism. No one yet regarded them as objects of blame, or saw in these sculptured gods any insult to Jahveh."

Tradition gives this story a ridiculous turn. David invented chain-armor, and made himself a complete suit. Saul stabbed him in the night, but the weapon did not penetrate. After this a big leather wine-bottle was put in David's bed. Saul crept in and stabbed with his knife, and the wine ran out. Smelling it, the royal assassin exclaimed, "How much wine the fellow drank for his supper!"

David fled to Samuel at Ramah. After a pathetic interview with Jonathan, who "loved him as he loved his own soul," he fled to Nob, where the priests fed him and his followers with hallowed bread, only edible by the Levites, and gave him the sword of Goliath. From Nob he fled to the court of Achish, King of Gath—that is, he sought refuge among the deadliest enemies and hereditary oppressors of his country. Here he feigned madness to avoid danger; scrambling on the gate-doors and dribbling on his beard.

From Gath he escaped to the cave of Adullam, where he led the life of a bandit. His brothers joined him, as well as every unfortunate, bankrupt, and malcontent in Israel. Four hundred of these worthies soon owned him as captain.

Saul hunted David, and he was often in peril. Once the king entered alone to sleep in a cave where the rebel and his followers were secreted. They wished to kill the monarch, but David would not let them touch "the Lord's anointed," though he himself was the real "anointed." Cutting off Saul's skirt, and leaving him insufficiently clothed at the rear, David showed it when the king awoke in proof that he did not seek his life. Saul acknowledged himself in the wrong, recognised the rebel as the future king, and made him swear not to cut off his seed; an oath which David, if he took it, grossly violated many years afterwards.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

God.

I sought thee in the crimson of the morning of my life,
 In the flash that marks the breaking of the day;
 And I found thee, yes I found thee, in the centre of the strife
 If thy name means both destruction and decay.

I sought thee on the wind-swept moors amongst the silent
 In the cool of eve and heat of middle day; [dead,
 And I found thee, yes I found thee, in the heavens overhead
 If thy heart beats with the hawk that kills its prey.

I sought thee where the branches kiss the brooklet's placid
 Where the fishes dart among the mossy stones; [face,
 And I found thee, yes I found thee, in the heron's rigid grace
 If thou helpst him to pick the fishes' bones.

I sought thee in the ocean 'midst its legion wondrous forms,
 From its surface to its deepest lightless caves;
 And I found thee, yes I found thee, in its hell-begotten storms,
 And the brutes that lurk beneath its restless waves.

I sought thee in the grime and filth of narrow city lanes,
 Where lives are purchased low and food sold high;
 And I found thee, yes I found thee, in the hungry wage-slaves'
 That thy love has made them carry till they die. [chains,

I sought thee in the morning, and the night rolls up apace,
 And my life I cannot waste in search of thee;
 But I found thee, yes I found thee, and have stared thee in
 If thy name, O God, means pain and misery. [thy face,

JAMES L. RAYMOND.

Facers for "Bible Punchers."

"BLASPHEMY."

"Blasphemy" is a term which Christian professors have invented to prevent full discussion and unfavorable criticism of their absurd superstition. Being unable to answer to his damning ridicule of their gross and stupid creed, they put the Freethinker into prison for "Blasphemy."

BELIEF, RELIGION, AND THE FEAR OF DEATH.

People want to live not so much because they love life as because they fear death; and men, in their fear of death, often clutch at religion for succor as a drowning man grasps at a straw. This is no compliment to religion, for fear obnubilates reason and reduces us to insanity. The drowning wretch who thinks that a straw can float him is insane; so, too, is the dying man who flies to religion in his last moments. For religion has as much power to save a man from eternal oblivion as has a straw to save a man from drowning. Most people are in fear and trembling at the prospect of falling into absolute oblivion, of being completely blotted out, of losing themselves, so to speak, at the end of their natural existence; and rather than face this prospect they force themselves to cultivate any theory, however absurd, which offers an alternative to that dread oblivion which constitutes their *bête noir*.

So they begin to wish that they had an immortal, eternal existence to look forward to. This wish evolves into hope, and from hope into belief; then, finally, in many cases, from belief into fanatical certainty. It is a case of semi-voluntary self-delusion; of the wish being the father to the thought. They believe or are certain, not because they see any good reasons to substantiate their belief or certainty, but simply because they *wish* to believe and be certain.

Now, if with some occult object I was intent upon believing that the earth is long, like a banana, flat at the east and west, I should disregard all scientific data which disproved my idea, and simply go on believing.

Then, by concentration and exertion of will-power, that belief would develop into certainty, until no amount of reason or scientific proof could dispel my absurd delusion. I should be a maniac, an analogy of a sincere Christian.

Much the same process of auto-deceit sometimes occurs with a criminal pleading "Not guilty" on trial. Although he has committed the crime, he "kicks" himself that he has not, and the effort of assuming an innocent presentation, the vehemency of his protestations of guiltlessness, and the one-sided aspect which he takes of the case, are such that he may eventually believe that he really *is* innocent.

Perhaps a Christian will retort that Freethinkers are in the same boat—that they wish to believe that Christianity is false, and by concentration, etc., of will-power they ultimately are sure of its falsity.

The answer to this is simple. Freethinkers do not *wish* to believe anything; they merely accept the obvious, and are guided by facts automatically, as the result of the healthy condition of their brains. They do not bend their beliefs in a certain direction by the power of their wills, but they let truth bend them for them. In habitually accepting the obvious and inevitable, they find no necessity for self-delusion.

All this notwithstanding, I fail to see upon what grounds Christians look with confidence towards their superstition to provide succor and protection from the death bogey. There is not a line in the Bible which definitely promises man eternal, immortal life hereafter. On the contrary, if we turn up the ninth chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes we learn that "There is one event unto all.....and after that they go to the dead.....For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward: for the memory of them is forgotten," and "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart.....Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest.....for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Whilst in Job vii. 9, we learn that "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more."

Now, this is Rationalism in an advanced form. The advice is that we should live our lives as natural beings, and not trouble about what is going to happen to us after death. The policy of the parson is to keep our minds on death, and, by constant thunderings about the "cold grave," "hell-fire," and the "wrath to come," terrify us into such a state of funk that we fill his bag with pennies, in hopes that he will ask "God" to let us off lightly.

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