

# THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*The Sword sang on the barren heath,  
The Sickle in the fruitful field:  
The Sword he sang a song of death,  
But could not make the Sickle yield.*

—WILLIAM BLAKE.

## The Cant of Moral Discipline.

JUDGING from the newspaper output of the last five months, the present is a glorious time for fools. And for those who are not fools there has been, apparently, irresistible temptations for generally sensible men to say something silly. Folly is in the air. The War itself is a colossal act of folly—one that serves as a Q.E.D. of the incapacity of European statesmen; and in such times foolishness comes into its own. Folly sits enthroned, not the less so because, instead of the customary cap and bells, he wears a soldier's helmet and brandishes a rifle in place of a harmless baton. Few men are level-headed enough to withstand the contagious folly of such a period; and, if they happen to be religious, surrender is almost inevitable. Indeed, this is the germ of fact that underlies the claim that the War has brought about a revival of religion. This does not mean that people have become religious who were definitely non-religious—Freethinkers are made of sterner stuff. It only means that those who are religious have become more assertive in their religion. The environment of the moment has invited it. Where folly is general, wisdom seems out of place, and is apt to express itself as though some apology were needed for its presence. And even men who are both capable and religious, since the War began, seem to express whatever folly is in their nature with a greater air of freedom.

The Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell is not a great writer, but he is usually a very shrewd and pleasant one, and his views on life are often marked by sound common sense. Still, he is religious—a Christian of a kind—and so must find a religious moral in things when it can possibly be managed. And in writing about the War, with piety pulling one way and reason the other, his task is not an easy one. A parson, of course, does not hesitate. If reason says one thing and piety another, so much the worse for reason. He can talk about "God's purpose" in permitting the War, and the moral and religious benefits that will come from it, without apparent misgivings. Mr. Russell does not find the moral benefit quite so apparent, although, in an article in the *Daily News* of January 21 on the "Moral Discipline of War," he tries hard to make out a case for religion without an obvious sacrifice of common sense. To the ordinary religionist who writes of the "great blessings," both religious and moral, that are to result from the War, he replies:—

"Alas! We have heard that language before, and bitterly has it been falsified by the event. I am thinking, of course, of the South African war, which Christian ministers, of all confessions, welcomed with effusion, and on which even such pacifists as Bishop Westcott poured 'an oil of unclean consecration.' It began with drunkenness—who that was present on the platforms can ever forget the departure of the troops? It ended

with drunkenness—do we not remember the nights of 'mafficking'? Then, as now, generous and innocent blood was shed like water; hearts were broken; homes were desolated. And who emerged the better for it all.....but of moral betterment—of ethical and social improvement—there was not the faintest sign. Rather the contrary. There was a vehement reaction from the discipline of war, and it expressed itself in unbounded self-indulgence. Various influences, social and personal and economic, combined to produce the result; and it pervaded, from the highest to the lowest, all the grades of society, except those which have nothing to spend. ....As a nation, we had refused to learn the lessons which war was designed to teach us, and to-day we are learning them in a harder school. God grant that, this time, we may profit by the discipline."

Mr. Russell notes the after effects of the South African war only, and at the same time professes to discern certain valuable lessons that war "was designed to teach." Well, what are these lessons? We are not told. And when did any nation get from war a helpful lesson that could not have been better gained without it? We are not told that either. The truth is that a period of demoralisation and disorganisation follows every war. Nations do not flourish by war, but by peace. Man is more or less of a pugnacious animal, but his natural state is to be found not in war but in society, and the gratification of his pugnacity is found in the peaceful strife and beneficial competition of social life. The only lesson that really comes from war is that of sacrificing everything else to the one end of killing or conquering the enemy. And the only discipline that war teaches is the discipline which secures that end. Every other lesson which is supposed to be drawn from war is really derived from peace. If a man grows tired of the waste, the fatality, and the brutality of war, it is not because war has taught him this, but because peace has taught him to recognise war in its true nature. Wars end in demoralisation because they are a direct negation of the peaceful and cultural life of mankind.

"War," says Mr. Russell, "is a scourge, a chastisement," or we may prefer more ecclesiastical language, and may call it a "judgment." And, consequently, "if we are to profit by the discipline, we must inquire into the causes which brought it on us. They are not, I think, very far to seek. Some are national offences; such as gambling, drunkenness, commercial immorality, disregard of Sunday, interference with the divine law of population, and these are too obvious to need more than mention." Unfortunately, Mr. Russell does not tell us what the other offences are that have brought upon us this "divine" scourge or "punishment" or "discipline," and so we are left with those that are so obvious as to need no more than a bare mention.

Now, let us look seriously at Mr. Russell's case for a moral discipline that may come from war, always bearing in mind that but for his religion there would be no need for his finding any good from it at all. And the tone of his article leads one to infer that but for his religion he would not find any good in it or from it. But war being here, he must, in terms of his religion, prove either that God has nothing to do with it—which accuses him of negligence in permitting it—or that he permits it with a view to disciplining us for our ultimate benefit.

War is, we learn, at once a scourge and a discipline, in religious language it is a "scourge of God." But



who is it that is responsible for the War? Clearly it is not the *people* of Europe. They have little to do with it until war is declared, and then their share is mostly that of suffering. In every country in Europe the destinies of the people rest immediately in the hands of a small group of "statesmen." These manage affairs, negotiate treaties, and between them determine what shall or shall not be done in this or that crisis. The War is not a people's war; no war ever is a people's war. A war is always a war between statesmen, who drag the people into the conflict. I do not say that these statesmen may not think that they are acting for the best, and acting in the interests of their people. But it is obvious that if these several groups of statesmen cannot manage affairs better than by appealing to war, that alone is evidence of their failure and incapacity.

Whom, then, does war scourge or discipline? Is it the statesmen in England and Russia and France and Germany? Will they be very much worse off when the War is over than when it began? Some may be forced to retire from office, but that may have happened without war, and as a consequence of ordinary political fluctuations. Some will actually find their positions improved by the War. The nation that conquers will hail its statesmen as saviors—forgetful of the blundering that produced the War—and even the loser will only replace one set of statesmen by another of a similar type. The real and ultimate sufferers will be the mass of the people in every country that is engaged in the War. They will suffer by loss of life, suspension of progressive social legislation, by being made the prey of all those sinister financial interests that bleed them through making the necessaries of life dearer and more difficult to obtain. God will scourge those that have played the least possible part in bringing the War about.

What sort of moral discipline will the War exert on Germans? Will being conquered make them love their conquerors? Will it crush German national aspirations? Look at the history of Poland, Finland, and Ireland and then see whether national aspirations are likely to be crushed, or even altered, because superior brute force is brought bear upon them. In all probability, no other country in Europe has been so often invaded and conquered as Germany has been. Bismarck once said that the French had occupied Berlin quite a score of times. Did that prevent Prussian militarism developing? On the contrary; it served to create it. The one certain historic fact is that the application of military force to an alien country either involves a constant dose of foreign militarism or the creation of a native militarism. The defeat of German militarism by the Allies is well within the bounds of probability. To crush it—to kill it—is quite a different question.

And what kind of moral discipline will England—leaving on one side France and Russia—get from the War? Hundreds of thousands of men are volunteering for the Army. But that in itself is a common feature in every country that is threatened with danger. It is a phenomenon that is repeated in Russia, France, Germany, and Turkey. But look elsewhere. Look at the thousands ready to squeeze the last possible halfpenny out of the Government by way of commission, contracts, or inflated prices for goods supplied. Look at the general readiness to raise the price of foodstuffs and necessaries under the pretence of scarcity. Is it not probable that, should the War bid fair to last much longer, the Government may be compelled to step in to prevent extravagant profits being made by the merchants at the cost of the general population? What, in these circumstances, becomes of the moral discipline of War?

And after the War? Will it teach the people the folly of war? Not a bit of it. The certain thing is that there will be a great cry for a larger Army and Navy. England will claim the control of the seas of the world. On what ground? Because, it is said, it is necessary for our protection. Well, granted.

But in that case what becomes of the moral discipline of war? The only reason for this huge Navy is that we cannot trust other countries—neither Germany nor Russia, nor France—sufficiently to do away with our Navy, and they cannot, they say, abandon their forces for a similar reason. The general population is, meanwhile, encouraged with elaborate plans for the complete boycotting of Germans and Germany for ever and ever—the notion being to make something like a huge leper-camp of German territory, from which entrance to, and exit from, is forbidden. Mr. Arnold White suggests their total ostracism from England. Mr. Victor Grayson says, "We are now done with German philosophy for ever." Manufacturers suggest prohibitive tariffs that will keep German goods out. And this welter of suspicion, hatred, ignorance, and bigotry are all the outcome of the moral discipline of war, brought upon us as a punishment because we have, among other things, shown a "disregard of Sunday"! The depressing feature is, that it is only Mr. Russell's religious prejudice that prevents his recognising that these things are the natural outcome of war. Without this he would probably be the first to recognise that war will never be ended by dwelling upon its disciplinary consequences, and upon the virtues called forth by war, but only by making clear its brutality, futility, and innate stupidity.

C. COHEN.

### The Impotence of the Church.

It is an incontrovertible fact, as this journal has repeatedly declared, that the Christian Church, throughout its history, has completely belied all its own claims. It has uniformly proved itself to be the falsest institution the world has ever seen. Its Divine origin and its Divine character have never been verified. The *Manchester Guardian* for Jan. 14 contained a remarkable article by "Artifex," entitled "The Total Failure of the Church," which "has roused keen controversy by its unmeasured assault on the whole body of practising Christians in England." "Artifex" boldly affirms that the Church is powerless "because it has no message for the world that the world really needs." "No one can possibly deny," he says, "that this War marks the failure of the Church in Europe." Such an indictment is bitterly resented by the clergy and their followers, many of whom accuse "Artifex" of having made it in ignorance of the real facts. The *Christian World* charitably declares that "he wholly ignores that behind the physical force there is a moral force, and that it is this moral force that will in the end win." But the *Christian World* is entirely mistaken, "Artifex" having supplied no ground whatever for such a charge. The sole object of his article is to emphasise the fact that "this War is the Church's failure," "the collapse of our Christianity in Europe." The only clergyman who seems to agree with "Artifex" is the Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel. As reported in the *British Weekly*, he expresses the opinion that "the Churches ought to have stepped in and made this War impossible." As a matter of fact the Catholic Church did step in and utter its warning voice, but no heed whatever was paid to its cry. By stepping in it only manifested its total lack of power. There have been times when the Church resorted to physical force and made the sword its servant; but it can no longer do even that.

Now that the War is ravaging Europe, what is the Church doing? "Artifex" answers thus:—

"Her time is wholly taken up in assuring her children that they have nothing to reproach themselves with. The *Church Times*, writing of the Primate's sermon on the Day of Intercession, says that it struck exactly the right note, a note of confidence, and was a splendid vindication of the righteousness of our cause. I confess this seems to me exactly the wrong note."

With very few exceptions, ministers have become preachers of war and recruiting agents, and so



anomalous they feel their position to be that they avail themselves of every opportunity to justify their occupancy of it. The War is something for which they are in duty bound to apologise, with the result that almost every sermon is devoted to that object. Christianity did not, because it could not, prevent it; and therefore Christianity is busily engaged in the impossible task of explaining and defending it. "Artifex" says:—

"The Church might have been expected to declare that this War was a judgment on all Europe. Of course, the idea of Divine judgments may be out of date, and inconsistent with the teachings of science. But in that case the Church had better discard the Bible and hasten on the revision of the Prayer-book. For their witness seems all in favor of the idea of a judgment.....Let anyone read the introductory address of the Form for the Day of Intercession. The writer seems moved by two main objects—one to avoid saying that the War is a judgment lest he should wound the feelings of many, and the other to avoid not saying that it is a judgment lest he should wound the consciences of a few. Candor compels one to admit that he has succeeded in both these contradictory objects with great cleverness."

Individual clergymen, however, do not hesitate to assert that the War is a judgment on all Europe, and particularly on this country, for its neglect of the Church and its ordinances, and its secularisation of the Lord's Day. The curious thing is that they who make this assertion also maintain that the War is of Satanic origin. The Devil caused it, but God exploits it in furtherance of his own purposes. Sir Oliver Lodge says: "It is essentially—I mean it very seriously—a revolt against Christianity that we are witnessing. It is the deification of force and Materialism." And yet, being such, God is using it as a judgment on Christendom for its rejection of Christ, and on the Church for its lukewarmness.

Now, though the Church was powerless to prevent the War, God has ordained that it shall derive enormous benefit from it. Sir Oliver Lodge oracularly declares that "the result of this War will be more and more to carry the world back to Christ, the greatest revelation of God we have had on this earth." Sir William Robertson Nicoll is quite sure that multitudes who were living on the surface of existence have already "come to realise in human affairs a presence and power more than human"; or that, there has been a new birth in the souls of many "of that elemental type of religion which the Old Testament calls the fear of God." We are strongly convinced that Sir Oliver and Sir William are wrong. The Rev. Thomas Phillips says:—

"After six months of war England is no nearer to God than it was in August. I have been ten years in London, and in the last three months I have seen more drunkenness than during the whole of the previous period. I mean open drunkenness in the streets, and in the morning. I know of one house, not a mile from this place, which contains fifty young girls who have been outraged in the last four or five months."

The report of Mr. Phillips's sermon in the *British Weekly* for January 21, informs us that the reverend gentleman "deplored the fact that the War had not brought any rush to the Churches." "Artifex" admits that at the beginning of the War people crowded into the Churches, and assigns a reason for the fact that they have already ceased to do so. A few days ago the intercessory service at the City Temple was attended only by twenty-five persons. The "Come to Church Campaign" is now in full progress, and Dr. F. B. Meyer, who, upwards of a year ago, prophesied that long ere now all the inhabitants of this land would have come to Christ, confessed the other day that religion is at a very low ebb indeed. "Church statistics are declining," he said, "denominations are losing members, scholars, and local preachers," and these to him lamentable facts rendered the campaign a necessity. The truth is, that the War, which is the outcome of the impotence of the Church, is destined to increase that impotence, and to utterly discredit the Church's creed. To say that it is opening our eyes to see what life is like without Christ, what life ought to be

and what it must be if the Cross vanishes from it, is unspeakably absurd. A man of God may believingly say that faith in Christ is "an absolute necessity if human existence is to remain human," but if he were to pause and think he would soon learn how fundamentally false such a saying is. Who has a stronger and more genuine faith in Christ than the German Emperor? We, too, believe that the War is a wonderful eye-opener; but what it enables us to see is the supreme uselessness and folly of cherishing supernatural beliefs, the utter emptiness and futility of all Christian professions, and the obvious unreality of all the Church's claims. The Church is not, never has been, and never can be, what it pretends to be. "Artifex" well says:—

"Now, if ever, was the time for the Church to show that she is the salt of the world. In a time when hatred and malice are sure to overflow, she should have been a force steadily making for charity in judgment, temperance in language, and love in all things. But not at all. We owe some of the most effective terms of abuse used of the Germans to the episcopal bench, and the *Church Guardian* finds the three simple rules of believing no evil till it is proved, putting the best interpretation possible on what is proved, and dwelling, in thought and speech, on atrocities too bad for extenuation as little as possible as proof of 'simple wrong-headedness' and of 'an attitude not easily to be distinguished from cynical complaisance.' And scores of correspondents assure me that to-day is not the time for love, but for righteous indignation. Our Christianity seems like the jam the White Queen promised to Alice—'jam every other day, jam yesterday, and jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day.' But it seems to me that the time to practise what one has been preaching for years is always to-day. I have no use for looking-glass Christianity."

The *Christian World* avers that, "on the whole, the Church has been, and is, a force making for" the virtues named, and declares that "Artifex" "simply does not know the extent to which preachers have been urging these points." What "Artifex" insists upon is, that an ounce of practice is worth more than a peck of preaching; and no fact can be more fully attested than that the British pulpit has been constantly denouncing the Germans, calling them Atheists, Materialists, and Nietzscheans, ever since the War began. In practice, Christianity has never been what it theoretically claims to be, and the Church has never exerted the beneficent influence which it is supposed to possess. J. T. LLOYD.

### An Atheist's Half Holiday.

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

—SHAKESPEARE, *Twelfth Night*.

JOHN STUART MILL, in his "Autobiography," says that "the world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments, of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue, are complete sceptics in religion." This sentiment flashed through my mind on a recent visit to the National Portrait Gallery, whither I had gone for a couple of hours' recreation. Unlike the more stately establishment next door in Trafalgar-square, the interest at the Portrait Gallery is centred on the sitters rather than on the art. There are hundreds of portraits of men and women who have played their part on life's stage, and who played it in a sufficiently remarkable manner to give their names a distinct interest to their descendants. Here under one roof is the Temple of Liberty and the House of Wisdom, compared with which the abbeys and cathedrals, churches and mosques, of the superstitions are but charnel-houses full of bones.

We swing back the doors and encounter a drawing of "George Eliot," the Sibylline genius of the nineteenth century, and a smaller picture of George Henry Lewes, which contains no hint of his intellectual power. Watts's portrait of Thomas Carlyle shows the "old lion" well, but it is not nearly so



effective as Millais's brilliant painting. The poets, too, are commemorated irregularly. Shelley's portrait by Clint is not satisfying, save for the eyes, which redeem it from commonplace. It is, however, a miracle of art compared with Byron's portrait by Thomas Phillips, which, with its turban and theatrical moustache, suggests an artistic embellishment to the lid of a cigar-box. Joseph Severn's painting of Keats, too, lacks insight. Curiously, Richard Rothwell's "Mary Shelley" conveys far more charm and intelligence than the portrait of her husband. The shadowy "Coleridge" by Washington Allston conveys nothing of the poet's intellectuality, and that surprising genius, Emily Bronte, who gave us *Wuthering Heights*, is represented by a mere sketch drawn by her ill-fated brother.

The philosophers and scientists make a much braver show. The kingliest intellect of our time, Herbert Spencer, is admirably portrayed by Burgess, the Royal Academician; whilst the Hon. John Collier's "Darwin" is brilliantly painted; and the same artist's portrait of doubting Thomas Huxley is lifelike and valuable. There is a fine picture of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, and Professor John Tyndall is also adequately represented. John Locke is very fortunate in being limned by the brush of Sir Godfrey Kneller, who, being a great artist, could interpret genius.

The trouble is that great men are not all millionaires, and cannot afford to employ eminent artists, who command very high fees. Monarchs, often persons of little worth, are over-represented in this gallery, together with their mistresses and relations; whilst the uncrowned king, Shakespeare, is misrepresented by a replica of a journeyman's art. Milton, too, fares nearly as badly; the great poet being painted without an illuminative touch.

A never-to-be-forgotten service was rendered to the nation by George F. Watts, Royal Academician, who, himself a man of genius, painted so many of his gifted contemporaries. His "Tennyson," "George Meredith," "Swinnburne," "Dante Rossetti," "Matthew Arnold," and "William Morris" show what a real artist could do when he had fitting subjects. Leigh Hunt was far more fortunate than his friends Byron and Shelley, for his portrait was painted by the gifted Haydon. Thomas Hobbes is happiest in a superb portrait by John Michael Wright, in which the philosopher lives upon the canvas. The fiery eyes, the adventurous features, and the omnipresent look of intellectual power are reproduced with sure fidelity, and both the artist and the sitter share in the honors.

There are huge gaps in this national collection. Democratic leaders are conspicuous by their absence; and actors and actresses are not numerous. Military men are more honored than sailors. Many of the finest portraits are of the persons who least have the right to be represented. This recalls Goldsmith's witty remark concerning Westminster Abbey: "I find memorials erected to several great men. The names of these great men I forget, but I remember that little Roubilliac was the sculptor who carved them." Some of the inscriptions, too, are totally inadequate. Under the portrait of Wordsworth, the spectator is informed that one of its greatest poets was the "Author of 'The Excursion' and numerous poems of great merit." An auctioneer's catalogue might have done better.

One leaves with a mind filled with haunting memories of the past. The very names are signposts to meet the sightseer and direct him towards the wonderful universality of Freethought. And, mind you, there are hundreds of such signposts. "Wonderful" is the only adjective which will serve for this gallery of wonders, these pictorial representations of the men and women who have cared for intellectual freedom. The bare records of their doings thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity. From Shakespeare, the uncrowned king of literature, to the puissant Herbert Spencer, who took all knowledge for his province, they strike our imaginations and hold our wonder in thrall. And

the lonely student, Charles Darwin, who drove the gods from High Olympus, not with a sword but with a steel pen, was, in his own way, a knight-errant of the evangel of liberty, no less than the sweet singer, Swinnburne, whose golden trumpet rallied the soldiers of Freethought with incomparable music. What is the sunburnt face of Dampier, the pirate; the sly, voluptuous eyes of his Most Sacred Majesty, Charles the Second; or the simpering smile of Nell Gwynn, or other frail beauties, compared with the look of intellectual power on the portraits of the real lords of humankind? As one leaves the hospitable doors of the portrait gallery the faces of the illustrious-obscure fade like the "insubstantial pageant" of a dream, whilst the other proud faces conjure up the calling bugles of the Army of Liberty

MIMNERMUS.

### The Dark.

SHADOWS were gathering over the valley, long dim shades that grouped themselves under the bare trees and around the blackthorn bushes to converse a little ere they lazily merged into the deepening greyness. A bird, flying eastward into the night, dropped a tentative, eerie spring song through the dusk. From the heart of the wood came the stifled gurgling of a burn; and the cloud-laden starless sky, the very essence of ponderous nothingness, was heavy with oppression. At least so he thought; for his mind, influenced by the gloom of the environment and by what he was reading, could find nothing there to appease the longings of his soul.

The writer was a realist, and his theme a battlefield. All the savagery was depicted in detail. From the faces of the fighters to the winter-sodden face of nature, from the shriek of shrapnel to the yell of man, from the unconscious cruelty of nature as she suddenly loosed her banks and swept human beings into river death to the deliberate cruelty of man as he heated his steel in warm blood, from the pains of a horse slowly sinking in mud to the tortures of a wounded soldier lying lonely on a neglected frost-bound hillside, the writer passed, emotionlessly observing everything, remarking upon nothing, showing naught but the hardness and horror.

No conclusions were drawn from the picture, no moral was there, no lesson, no teaching or justification to soften a little the bitterness of it all; and as the reader's eyes covered the cold words the shadows deepened over his heart; for the writer had only expressed in powerful language the thoughts that had been in his own mind for weeks. Never had he been able to rid himself of them. Always, like sleuth-hounds hot on the trail, had they followed just at his heels, until it seemed as if a fear of them were being born in him; but a fear full of unyielding hate, a fear in which enmity displaced cowardice, in which there was no room for weakness.

Did anyone speak enthusiastically about a battle, at once the shadows sprang from their recesses. The tramp of armed men was their mournful music. The sound of bugle or drum or pipe was but the prelude of their woe. They stole from scenes of garish splendor, and rushed from clamorous print. They turned the sweet sour, and the beautiful ugly. They had risen up in warm words and frozen friendship. Everywhere they gathered, and he could find no happiness even in watching the children marching, with their mothers' old belts around their waists and sticks for swords, along the streets.

And so they followed him, these shadows of the horrors of fearful crime, followed him in disguises that ranged from childish innocence to the power of the brute struggling for survival. There were times when the dim outline of them but accentuated the sharp stark barbarism of their nearly tangible bodies; for often he imagined the shadows had become palpable things throbbing with vitality. There were times when their silence only made the ugliness the



more terrible, the evil the more repellant. The immensity of them seemed to fill the heavens, to pierce the earth.

All seemed, at these times, so dark and foreboding that he wondered if his mind were at fault. Were his opinions, his beliefs, his principles, the abnormal offspring of a distorted spirit? Were his outlooks but the yellow-tinged prospects of a decaying vision? Had he left life alone too much in his musings? Was human life really the hard, cold, callous, savage thing it seemed so recently to have become?

People had spoken of the venter of civilisation, and he had laughed as he proved how the good, the true, and the just lay nearest the heart of everyone. People had spoken of our proximity to the savage; and he remembered the presumed brilliancy of his denials; for had he not hugged himself at the tameness of their response?

But now, what was wrong? Men, and even women, spoke joyfully of murder. They laughed in the face of death. They grinned as they prophesied wholesale slaughter. They gloated over a bloody revenge ever coming nearer. They glued memory to stories of men who went out into the night to slice off the ears of their fellow-men, and returned triumphantly to relate the exploit. They spoke gladly of thousands of dead and wounded men. Information was too lean for them; they desired sackfuls of the horrors; they agitated for more and more details; and they wished what they called *reliable* news.

Something was wrong, either with himself or with them. He was a Humanist. Was a thing good for Humanity or bad for Humanity? To realise the good for Humanity was the crown of endeavor. A rotten root, he considered, was more disastrous to the welfare of the tree than a blighted branch. He gathered his principles, he imagined, from the roots, not the twigs; and the richest earth that garmented the roots was reason. If that were strong, the life of the tree would be strong with endurance. Circumstances, limitations, restrictions, varieties of opinion, were the gateways to confusion. It were better to neglect them. It were better to emphasise the truth that reason taught than to twist and distort it with circumstantial evidence to the contrary. It were better to teach that a habit, a mode of thought, a characteristic of society, if it were fundamentally wrong, was wrong all the time; and not right according to superficial considerations and the ephemeral needs of the moment. Compromise was the selling of the soul of Humanity for a mess of pottage.

Thus had he thought and spoken, his mind seeing Humanity above and beyond Nationality; and in the keenness of his spirit he had found means of escape through the thousand obstacles placed on his path. Moreover, the way had always been bright with the rays of a summer sun. Health and quick life had always mentally surrounded him. The blood of his body had rejoiced in the throb of his heart. He had committed the unpardonable folly of living the lie of youth.

But now he was not just so sure he had been right; for the shadows were gathered where once the sunshine gladdened; darkness was dimming the dream; the light was failing in the eyes of what he deemed Truth. Enthusiasm was rapidly cooling. For the first time he felt old and pessimistic. But he hated the shadows, hated them with an ardor that astonished him, with a passionateness that often unnerved him. He was foolish, of course; but he was young.

ROBERT MORELAND.

### Time's Whirligig.

NOT the least interesting portion of Mr. H. G. Wells' fine novel, *The New Machiavelli*, is his slashing indictment of the mid-Victorian type of religious periodical. Mr. Wells writes with great vigor and feeling on those demoralising sheets which regularly delivered

their insidious attacks upon every healthy human instinct. It is, naturally, impossible to assess the amount of spiritual damage humanity has sustained in this way, but if all mental and moral virility were not then crushed out of existence, it was not because the effort was not made. It is an inspiring fact that the human spirit contains elements that have up to now effectually resisted such systematic attempts at wholesale perversion.

Everything, we are told, is now in the melting-pot, and religious journalism, like the rest, is obeying the laws of development. We do not wish to suggest that development has gone on here so quickly that perfection has been reached—that might lead to a charge of extravagance—but we do think that signs of contrition can be detected even in the parish magazine. Consequently, to a new generation it is possible that Mr. Wells' strictures may appear strained and unfair. The same people read Mark Twain's brilliant satires on the religious "improving" story, and, whilst they laugh, think the facts were greatly distorted to lend additional point. Take, for example, the following Twain extract:—

"Once, when he was on his way to Sunday-school, he saw some bad boys starting off pleasuring in a sail-boat. He was filled with consternation, because he knew from his reading that boys who went sailing on Sunday invariably got drowned. So he ran out on a raft to warn them, but a log turned with him and slid him into the river. A man got him out pretty soon, and the doctor pumped the water out of him, and gave him a fresh start with his bellows, but he caught cold and lay sick a-bed nine weeks. But the most unaccountable thing about it was, that the boys in the boat had a good time all day, and then reached home alive and well in the most surprising manner. Jacob Blivens said there was nothing like these things in the books. He was perfectly dumbfounded."

Whether this is a typical American exaggeration or not can be put to the test. The proof can always be dislodged, after a few minutes rummaging, from the penny box, the widow's cuse of theological misfits. We invite comparison with the following, taken verbatim from the *Churchman's Penny Magazine*, December, 1853:—

"SUNDAY PENCE.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—I have something to say to you about a penny spent on a Sunday, and when you have heard what I shall tell you, I think you will be more careful than ever about what you do with your Sunday pence.

One Sunday afternoon a little boy received a penny from his father, and quickly put on his cap and ran out to spend it. As he went down the street he saw people nicely dressed quietly walking to church; boys and girls were on their way to the Sunday-school; shops were shut; and all the street looked Sunday-like. He passed a Sunday-school where the children were singing:

'Lord, how delightful 'tis to see  
A whole assembly worship thee.'

His heart grew uneasy as he thought of his penny, and he almost wished he was in school too. But his penny, he thought, he must spend that, father gave it to him, and told him to go and spend it; then he remembered something out of the Bible, which said we must not buy or sell on the Lord's day, and when he had got to the sweet-shop—which alas! is always to be seen open on Sabbath days—he scarcely knew what to do. He stood at the window; there he saw oranges, nuts, cakes, comfits, and such like. He peeped in at the door, there he saw one or two boys spending money. He felt his penny, he looked round to see if anyone was near (he forgot 'Thou, God, seest me'), he went into the shop, and in a few minutes he was running home with his pockets full of nuts and an orange. He had spent his penny and broken the Sabbath.

As he ran home he slipped into a little pool of water, wetting himself very much. His nuts were soon cracked, and his orange eaten (while father was reading the Sunday newspaper). And, now, what was left of his penny? Only some nutshells and the skin of an orange! It was gone, all but this. The rest of his Sunday evening he spent playing with a kitten and tying its tail to a chair—while father had smoked himself fast to sleep, while others were praising God in churches and chapels, and hearing about the blessed Jesus and his love to sinners. When he went to bed, his mother,



who had been scouring out the room and cleaning the windows all the morning, and cooking the dinner and washing the plates all the afternoon, and sitting by the fire all the evening, found that his feet were wet and cold, so she soon covered him with clothes and tried to warm him, and bade him go to sleep.

But he could not sleep. He grew very hot and feverish, his head pained him, and he was very sick. After a time he fell asleep. In his sleep he said, 'Sabbath day—Fourth Commandment—what's that to me?—I will spend my penny—father gave it me—mother buys on Sundays!' Poor boy, his mind was wandering, and he did not know what he said.

Not long after that a little coffin was quietly carried down the street, and the father and mother of that little boy were walking after it. It was on a Sunday, too! and the little Sabbath-breaker was carried on a Sunday to his long home.

Children, will you spend your pennies as he did?

Parents, will you let them?—Yours affectionately,

THE SUPERINTENDENT."

The most confirmed optimist likes to have an occasional sign that the world moves. Surely it is a matter for congratulation that this could only be published nowadays as burlesque, and that if it did happen to get printed at the author's expense, *au sérieux*, most of its readers would be tempted to interview the affectionate author with a horse-whip. It is good, too, to note how once again the weapon of ridicule has justified itself. To array against such literature the heavier artillery of the mind would have been plainly ineffective. In this particular campaign Mark Twain was a pioneer. He flung at them the hearty laugh of a healthy man, and now the world laughs with him. We who love the author of *The Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, are conscious of other debts besides this, but this work alone entitles him to rank as one of the world's progressive forces.

T. H. ELSTON.

### A Church War Hymn: A Satire.

JESUS, the Prince of Peace and War,  
Thy martial glory beams from far;  
This is a time of thy display,  
When Christian warriors fight and pray.

They are thy children, Lord, we know,  
Constrained to render blow for blow,  
And in the order of thy will  
Are called each other's blood to spill.

Lord, make them strong and bold and brave,  
That they like heroes may behave,  
And show the world with one accord  
They are the followers of the Lord.

We thank thee for the grace that leads  
Our warrior hosts to sacred deeds,  
And that each other they can slay  
To bring about a better day.

And, Lord, may we who cannot fight  
Uphold by prayer the power of might,  
And proudly think this brutal force  
In thy intentions has its source.

'Tis under thy control we are,  
In thee we trust, O God of War,  
Glad that thy Church "Amen" can say  
To all the deeds of blood to-day.

S. HOLDEN.

### HONOR AS UNDERSTOOD BY GERMAN PARSONS.

We have had abundant evidence that the German's word of honor is not to be trusted when the interests of his country are likely to be served by a breach of it. The latest example of this sad truth has been given by two men named Bach and Schmidt, the managers of the Basle Evangelical Mission Orphanage, at Ahmutty, Coorg [South India]. They were clergymen, they had given their parole to observe neutrality, and they were officials of an institution bearing a Swiss name. They were thus trebly bound to behave properly. Yet it was found that they were teaching the children in their charge to regard the English as enemies. They are now interned at Ahmednagar.—*The Indiaman* (Dec. 25, 1914).

### Acid Drops

Canon Simpson, of St. Paul's, has discovered quite a new proof of God's care for Great Britain. He discerns two facts about the present War. The first is that honor called upon us to act on behalf of Belgium. But he thinks that had that stood alone, the "high passion for righteousness" would not have impelled us to interference. God, he thinks, could not "have relied upon England simply to vindicate his honor." And so another motive—that of self-interest—was joined to it. He arranged matters so that our own interests compelled us to go to war. It was "the goodness and forbearance of God which shielded us from this supreme test by uniting what we are convinced is the cause of truth and freedom with the preservation of national interests." Now, that is what we call kind and considerate of God. He evidently thought, "Here is my favorite people—the British—whom I want to interfere and help beat the Germans, who only think they are my favorites. But godly as the British are, it is no use trusting to their sense of honor alone. They won't do anything without moral warranty, but neither will they act on moral considerations without they are joined to more material ones." And so God joined the two to save us from the offence of hypocrisy and still maintain our places as first favorites of Deity. It is not we who say so; it is Canon Simpson who thus explains the situation.

We have had our Day of Intercession, and the Germans have had theirs—just a week later. So far as the official documents summoning the people of both nations to prayer, they appear to be fairly interchangeable. The English Bishops blamed "Materialism" and "Infidelity" for the War, and so do the German Bishops. They, too, talk of the "evil vapors of infidelity and scepticism" which has fallen upon Germany, and which has caused God to send war as a purge. They also speak of the great revival of religion that has followed upon the War, and rejoice that "following the attractions of grace, following the voice of their pastors, and the exhortations of their God-fearing Kaiser, the people entered the churches, and found there the Savior." Lastly, they also say, "We are innocent of the War. It has been forced upon us. That we can testify before God and the world." The appeals of both the English and German Bishops might have been written by the same person. They are practically identical. They both voice the professional jargon of the professional pietist.

For two or three weeks the Lord is to be given a rest from official implications. Then, on February 7, another start is to be made. This time it is the Catholic Church, the Pope having decreed that prayers "for deliverance from the horrors of war and for the restoration of peace shall be said in all Catholic Churches." If this is kept up, first by one Church and then by another, it will be a pretty thing to speculate as to which will be able to claim that their prayers brought about peace. For, obviously, one of them is certain to be in at the death—unless they agree to "pool" their prayers, and so share the profit.

After all the talk of the revival of religion following on the War, the Rev. T. Phillips, preaching at Bloomsbury Chapel, laments that "England was no nearer God to-day than it was six months ago. If peace were signed to-morrow, the majority of our people would return to their self-indulgence and luxury as a dog returns to its vomit." He says that "If the Roman Church in Austria and the Greek Church in Russia and the Lutheran Church in Germany and the Protestant Church in England had said, 'In the name of God, brother must not shed the blood of brother,' this welter of blood and immorality would have been avoided." Quite so. If Christians had been in favor of peace, war could easily have been avoided. But the only thing that Christians are united about is war of some kind or another. Protestants are only united in hatred of Catholics. Dissenters are only united in hatred of Churchmen. Christians are only united in hatred of non-Christians. And the only thing that has brought all Christians together in this country is hatred of Germany. Christian love is a delightful thing! Many find it impossible to differentiate it from Christian hate.

There is no "h" in the Russian alphabet, so the *Daily Mail* informs us. Do the Russians spell heaven, "caven"; and hell, "ell"; like our cultured Christian Evidence friends.

During the past ten years of the Kaiser's reign he inflicted more than a thousand years imprisonment on men who criti-



cised him, under the lese-majesty law. His Freethinking ancestor, Frederick the Great, allowed perfect freedom, and once, seeing a crowd reading a libellous placard high up on a wall, ordered it to be put lower down.

The Young Men's Christian Association has been erecting a number of buildings for the use of the soldiers, and has advertised the fact extensively. The organisers believe, evidently, that bread cast upon the waters comes back buttered.

The intrusion of the Turks into the European War will cause the cup of human misery to be filled to overflowing. For the dead Turkish soldier leaves so many widows behind him.

"The sufferings occasioned by the War would be unendurable unless we felt that they were the birth-pangs of a new and better order of civilisation," said the Archbishop of York. There's £10,000 worth of wisdom for Christians.

One cannot help admiring the manner in which "Providential wisdom" arranges things. On January 22 we had in London what was almost a record snowstorm. This was followed later by a keen frost. But, before the frost, and so soon as the ground was thickly coated with snow, "Providence" so arranged it that a drizzling rain, mixed with snow, followed. Then came the frost. One could not but admire the ingenuity of the arrangement. Had the frost followed immediately, the ground would have presented a hard, frozen surface, comparatively safe and easy to walk on. Had the rain and drizzle kept on, the snow would have been washed away. But by following the snowfall with a few hours' drizzle, the snow was rendered nice and slushy, and then the quick frost made it just sufficiently glassy for everybody to stand a fair chance of breaking one of their limbs in their endeavors to get about. It was quite an inspiring example of design in Nature.

Just before the War broke out the Nonconformists in the country were shrieking about their interest in the welfare of "Labor." Since the War commenced they have been equally clamant about their love of liberty. A recent incident casts a strong light on both cries. In Russia the Government, both before and since the War, has been doing its best—through the usual Russian methods—to suppress Trades Unions and Labor Organisations. Leaders have been imprisoned for what in this country is now treated as an unquestionable right. A meeting of protest was arranged to take place some time during the week ending January 30. Application was made for the use of the Memorial Hall, which, we learn, was refused so soon as the object of the meeting was known. The Memorial Hall is owned by Free Church Organisations. It is practically their headquarters in London. Yet its use is refused for the purpose of raising a word of protest against the punishment and imprisonment of men for the sole "crime" of trade organisation. So much for the reality of Nonconformist sympathy with "Labor."

On the north side of St. Peter's-road, Great Yarmouth, stands St. Nicholas Church; on the south side, right opposite, stands Normandy House, the residence of our old friend J. W. de Caux, J.P. Both seem to have been struck by the German pirates the other day. Impartial, anyhow! Our old friend de Caux was happily insured, and his house was freehold.

Mr. Victor Grayson writes in the *Evening News* that the fact of there being nearly 200 peers, or sons of peers, or relations of peers, at the front, makes him reconsider his attitude towards the aristocracy. We do not think that many will be seriously concerned whether Mr. Grayson changes his attitude or not. The comparison is only interesting in showing upon what curious foundations some people's opinions rest. No genuine democrat ever doubted that there were quite as good men in the aristocracy as out of it. And if Mr. Grayson does not know that in every war the aristocracy has played its part, it is about time he gave up writing and lecturing, and devoted more time to study. The objection to an hereditary peerage is not that its members are all cowards or scoundrels, these, but a fool ever thought they were, even mainly, upon birth or mere social position. For our own part we do not hesitate to say that the House of Lords is at least the equal of the House of Commons in intelligence and ability, but that does not in the least affect our attitude towards an hereditary chamber.

Miss Marie Corelli, the novelist, writing in the *Evening News*, says that the fraternal relations of the British and German troops at the front at Christmas was a reproach to the Christian Emperor and his flatterers, who brought about this "unchristian warfare." But for them the troops would be friends and brothers. Just so. But Miss Corelli overlooks the fact that the priests of the "Prince of Peace" have blessed the Colors of all the armies engaged, except the Turks, who do not profess to be peacemakers.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling says modestly that "we are the only genuinely humorous race on earth." Myes! But why do so many people worship the "man of sorrows"?

According to the papers, one of the effects of the War has been to prohibit the use of alcohol in Russia, France, and Switzerland. We wonder if the prohibition extends to the use of "communion port" by the clergy.

Dr. Mackinnon, formerly head of the Anglo-American Mission in Damascus, says all the holy places are now in the hands of the Turks, and no desecrations have taken place. Perhaps the terrible Turks make the usual charges for admission.

Referring to a recent piece of invective verse by Mr. William Watson, the *Evening News* says that Byron was the latest of the line of invective writers before Mr. Watson. Has the *Evening News* never heard of Algernon Swinburne?

Gravediggers have been on strike at Birkenhead for higher wages. This is a grave matter, but happily it is "the winter of our discontent."

A writer in the *Bystander* says that the soldiers love their fur coats so much that they wear them in the mildest weather. God's chosen people do so here.

"That the Father of Lies has acquired a Teutonic domicile has become obvious enough of late." This intellectual statement is made by the *Guardian*, the well-known organ of the Government religion. But why do the clergy only fight the Devil at home, and leave their flocks to tread the thorny paths abroad?

"The most wonderful thing I have seen was a German aeroplane afire—like a blazing bird." So a soldier writes in a daily paper. It must have been like poor, old Elijah's excursion in a fiery chariot.

The Kaiser's speech on the celebration of his own birthday (January 27), which he appears to consider as important a date as Christmas Day, contained this bombastic passage: "Forward, with God, who is with us, as he was with our fathers." Great preparations were made, and it was expected that the Lord would enable "William" to kill a lot of his enemies on that auspicious day. But the Lord edged off in the midst of a naval battle, and left the poor Kaiser naked to his enemies. A British fleet caught him attempting another raid on defenceless East Coast towns; they sank his biggest battleship, badly injured several cruisers, and chased them and the rest back to their own mine-protected waters. "William's" birthday was not a very lucky one this year.

Don't pray so much against England, "William." We've got a "God," as well as you; and churches and priests, and all the holy outfit. And we'll back ours against yours any day you like.

The Church Army wants £40,000 at once. So do we. And we would put it to a better use.

Six clergymen (Dr. Andrews, Hackney College; Dr. Bennett, Lancashire College; Dr. Moulton, Manchester; Bishop Ryle; Dr. Smith, Manchester; and Dr. White, King's College; have signed a circular on behalf of the Christian Evidence Society protesting against the statement that to take part in war is "inconsistent with Christian principles." We do not believe that the circular was drawn up by either of the signatories individually or by all of them collectively. The tone is too much like the ordinary Christian Evidence production. And it concludes with an appeal for funds to carry out the work of the Christian Evidence Society in the London parks. We hardly think funds are necessary to prove that Christianity has always in practice been found to be consistent with war, but it is worth bearing in mind that six prominent English clergymen joined together to publicly



deny that war was contrary to Christian principles. When the War is over we fancy the tendency will be to try to prove the contrary.

It is evident that some Christians perceive the danger of such a public protest. Rev. W. E. Orchard wrote soon after the appearance of the circular that it would give "the greatest pain and concern" to many who are convinced that Christianity and war are antagonistic. He thinks that such a circular "will make the presentation of Christianity immensely more difficult in the future." We think it may; but it is not at all necessary that it should. Christianity has gone through the same phase many times before. In the South African War practically all the preachers in England were preaching war for all they were worth. And soon after they were preaching peace quite as fervently. And we expect to see exactly the same thing over again.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron, who presided at the recent patriotic meeting at the Albert Hall, at which Mr. Horatio Bottomley was the principal speaker, described the present war as "a holy crusade," and a well-known actress recited, "Why is the Red Blood Flowing?" It was as pathetic and as religious as a Down South camp meeting.

The Rev. J. Struthers, a Presbyterian minister at Greenock, collapsed in the pulpit while conducting a service, and died soon after. Had he been a Secularist lecturer, there would have been a beautiful moral.

*The Woman Who Looked Back* is the title of a new novel exhibited at the booksellers. If the story relates to Lot's wife, it should be taken with a grain of salt.

The British Rainfall Organisation states that December was the wettest month of last year. Londoners had 6.34 ins. of rain, but Styne, Cumberland, heads the list with 27 ins., whilst Inverness had 20.4 ins. People who have painful recollections of these rain-figures, will remember poor, old Captain Noah's watery experiences, and imagine that their fate might have been worse.

As is well known, Mr. Hilaire Belloc is a Catholic, and as such he confidently predicts that the time is coming when Protestantism shall have ceased to be. Ever since the Protestant Reformation, Europe has been in hopeless ignorance of the truth of things. Speaking at Birmingham the other day, Mr. Belloc asserted that "the history put before European people was fundamentally untrue, because it was history written with a bias against the traditions of Catholicism." In other words, no history is reliable unless its authors are loyal Catholics. We both agree and disagree with that contention. It is perfectly true that a zealous Protestant cannot write an unprejudiced, truthful account of the Catholic Church; but it is equally true that a whole-hearted Catholic is incapable of painting a true picture of Protestantism. It is impossible for a partisan to be absolutely veracious. This applies to Mr. Belloc himself, as his pamphlet, *Anti-Catholic History: How it is Written*, abundantly shows. A true history of Christendom has not yet been written, nor can it ever be composed by any sectary.

It has been pointed out more than once that the hatred at present felt towards Germany, with the general surge of retrogressive forces incident to war time, is being used by many to discredit advanced ideas or to advance false ones. In the *North American Review*, Sir Oliver Lodge points out what he conceives to be a "German misreading of Darwinism." We do not know why it is called a German misreading; and what Sir Oliver appears to have done is to misstate the views of some Germans on the nature of Darwinism, and to end in a misunderstanding of Darwinism in the very act of making a correction.

The German blunder, says Sir Oliver, consists in a "misunderstanding of the phrase 'struggle for existence' as conducive to evolution, so that slaughter and conflict seem the highest good." Now, the reading that Sir Oliver has in mind is not specially German—it is quite as much British; but even in German hands it is not that slaughter and conflict are the highest good, but that by slaughter and conflict a higher good or a higher type is reached. "The Darwinian struggle is not of this order at all." We beg to enter a very decided objection. The Darwinian struggle is of this kind, and none other. So far as unadulterated natural selection is concerned, there is no selection without elimination; and

what is elimination in nature but death? Pure, natural selection is not—to put it paradoxically—selection at all. It proceeds by elimination, which is only another name for slaughter. In the case of disease this is seen by the fact that the only diseases against which immunity are gained are those that kill. And when the disease assumes a form that weakens without killing, selection in relation to that disease ceases. There is no selection of the fittest; if that were so, the process would continue indefinitely. What there is, is an elimination of the weakest. Darwin saw this, and knew that the word "selection" was no more than a symbol. Others try to make it an expression of exact fact in the interests of religious prepossessions.

Sir Oliver Lodge may be quite correct when he says that this struggle ought not to apply to civilised humanity; but that is a very different thing to calling the principle of slaughter a misreading of Darwinism. It is Sir Oliver who is guilty of the misreading. In human society selection still operates, but it assumes a new form. "Fitness" is expressed in terms of group-fitness instead of individual fitness. The individual is selected—more or less consciously—so far as he fits in with the requirements of the social structure. But the same fact of elimination remains. In truth, "selection" without elimination is a sheer impossibility. To select the fittest would be impossible without elimination; and that is the real distinction between selection as practised in nature and selection as practised in human society. In the first case it is a pouncing upon and destruction of the weaker. The survival is not contemplated by the process. In the latter, it is the fittest that is really the object of the process. In a larger view, both are part of a general cosmic process; but that has no direct bearing upon Sir Oliver's misreading of Darwinism.

English miners dig, dig, dig, night and day, to rescue an entombed comrade. English soldiers dig trenches to shield themselves while they try to kill an enemy. Which is the finer digging of the two?

Those gallant miners would do no other work until they got their comrade out of his peril—and it is a pleasure to relate that they succeeded. For the purpose of verification hereafter, it may be added that the man's name is William Park, and the place was Yarlside Pit, Barrow-in-Furness. He was entombed for six days.

Jahveh beats the Kaiser when he means business. He kills some 30,000 people, besides the injured, in a few minutes, when he goes to work with one of his patent earthquakes; and eighteen towns, besides villages, all with churches in them, are wiped off the map at the same time.

An old friend, writing to us about the havoc of the War, says that his income, which was reduced £70 by it last year, is likely to be reduced £170 by it this year. What a profitable business war is to the bulk of honest and industrious people!

Providence's latest earthquake in Italy, according to the *London Times*, was the most destructive of its kind. At Avezzano 10,000 were killed out of 11,000, in Case 470 out of 500, in Lapelle 870 out of 900. In previous earthquakes the death-rate was not nearly so high. It almost recalls the playfulness of Providence in the Old Testament days.

After dwelling upon the intense patriotism, high moral feeling, etc., etc., evoked by war, the *Times* says, apropos of the increased prices of food, that shipowners and others have a perfect right to make the most profit they can out of the War, to take the highest prices that are offered them. So much for the patriotism and moral earnestness evoked by war. Everybody is justified in making all they can, irrespective of the distress and misery caused by their so doing. That is patriotism and morality as understood in a Christian country to-day.

The pious *Guardian* must have its little fling at German culture, and this is how it does it: "We prefer a chapter of *Pickwick* to the entire Kantian philosophy, and a single *Roundabout Paper* to the whole of the Hegelianism which nobody ever understood." This is cant about Kant and hysterics about Hegel; but no one seriously expects the *Guardian* staff to understand philosophy.

The brave British manufacturers have sworn on their day-books that they will capture the toy trade from the hated Germans. Perhaps this will mean that toy Noah's Arks will be made by God's chosen people in East London.



**To Correspondents.**

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.**—A number of subscriptions to this Fund have been received, and these will all be acknowledged in detail when the Fund is formally opened.

**WARWICKSHIRE MINER.**—We can well understand the clerical gentleman preferring to leave your question unanswered. Their talk during the present War is chiefly illustrative of their utter ineptitude in any national crisis requiring coolness and common sense.

**W. P. BALL.**—That for cuttings and New Year's good wishes.

**T. C.**—It is a characteristic request of the men of God, and means "Come to our Gospel-shops and see if you want anything." Besides, if God doesn't answer their prayers, how is he to answer ours?

**B. BOWLER.**—Mr. John Glendenning's play is good of its sort. We don't see any reason for crusading against it. He himself is certainly a powerful actor, and we wish we could see him in a better play—as we daresay *he* does.

**P. P. WHARF.**—Thanks for New Year's good wishes.

**A. B. MOSS.**—We hope you will be no less pleased by this week's article. We might have made it longer, and still kept it interesting.

**A. MILLAR.**—Please write in ink. Pencil may suit you, but not us or our compositors.

**W. VINE.**—We are not sure if we have your name correctly, but it is doubtless near enough for identification. We quite agree with you as to the necessity for resisting aggression, and Mr. Cohen's article did not question that in the least. But does the subjecting of schoolboys to military drill and the use of the rifle come properly under that head? Surely it is time enough for that when the boy has left school. At any rate, it seems certain that to fill the minds of boys with ideals of militarism is not a very effective way of beating down "Prussianism." It is true they will be taught that their drill is for the defence of their country only; but that is exactly what all the Germans have been taught, and its consequences are before the world. If we are ever to bring about a cessation of war, it can only be done by letting loose on the world a strong peace-loving force, and the school would seem to be one of the best places for its creation. If we must have armies, there is time for their creation when school life is over.

**R. BOURTON.**—We note you read the *Freethinker* "for the first time last week," but have now ordered it to be delivered regularly. We hope you will have many imitators. As says a popular advertisement, "Once known, always bought."

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

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

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

**Sugar Plums.**

There is one thing the Kaiser has not been able to do after all. He hasn't been able to cut down the President's Honorarium Fund. An American friend has generously made up the £300 for 1914 to the last penny. This only arrives just in time to be mentioned. It necessitates some change in the 1915 circular, and Mr. Foote will, naturally, have something to say about it himself next week.

Mr. H. S. Salt, in acknowledging our recent reference to himself and the *Humanitarian*, says: "I rejoice that the *Freethinker* still weathers the storm. It is one of the very few papers that, in these days, I read with interest and agreement."

There seems a demand in some quarters for a Branch of the N. S. S. in the neighborhood of Hornsey or Highbury—at least it would seem so from letters received at this office. If there are any considerable number of Freethinkers who are desirous of assisting in the formation of such a Branch, and they will send their names and addresses to Miss Vance, steps might be taken in time to start work during the forthcoming summer season. There should be plenty of room in this locality for a strong organisation.

The *Labor Leader* publishes an interesting letter from Mr. S. P. Bunting, editor of a little paper called *War Against War*, and published in South Africa. After running for a few weeks, the hard hand of the Censor descended on the paper, and articles, mostly reprinted from English and American papers, were censored wholesale. Finally, says Mr. Bunting, to be on the safe side, we submitted to the Censor for publication, without comment, a number of quotations from the Bible. The Censor was not to be

placated, and he thus declined to allow the publication of the following passages: Ecclesiastes x. 20, Isaiah i. 5, 7, Deuteronomy xx. 10-14, Isaiah i. 15, 1 Chronicles xx. 52, Matthew xxvi. 52, Isaiah ix. 16, Proverbs i. 19, 20, 22, Proverbs iii. 30, Exodus xx. 13. We refrain from reprinting the verses in full from consideration of space. An interview was secured with the Chief Censor, the Hon. Hugh Wyndham, on the absurdity of censoring passages from the Bible while the Bible itself was allowed to be sold unchecked. The Censor, however, declined to be moved. The British and Foreign Bible Society was appealed to, but it declined to interfere. It continues to appeal to the public for cash to distribute the Bible, but remains silent when publication of selections from it are declared to be subversive of the welfare of the Empire. Local clergymen also declined to interfere. The position is really an interesting one—quite Gilbertian in fact.

The Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society has resolved to have an Annual Dinner. The first will be held at the Market Hotel, Station-street, on Sunday, Feb. 6, at 6 o'clock. Tickets, 2s. 6d. each, can be obtained of the Secretary, Jas. Partridge, 245 Shenstone-road. It is to be hoped there will be a good company in spite of the War and (probably) the weather.

Text: A Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin. Sermon: A Letter from the Front, printed in a recent *Manchester Guardian*.

"I stopped for a few seconds by the side of a German who was dying. He was in great pain, and when I asked what I could do for him he said, in a pathetic tone that went to my heart, 'Nothing, unless you would be so good as to hold my hand till all is over.' I gave him my hand and stayed to the end. It seemed to comfort that poor chap a lot. He was able to speak good English, and we had quite a pleasant chat, considering the circumstances."

An enemy comforts an enemy in the presence of death.

Several of the religious weeklies were rather gushing in the evidence of the power of Christian faith as furnished by the fraternising of German and English soldiers on Christmas Day. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett writes as follows in the *Daily Telegraph* of January 26 of some of these followers of Jesus:—

"These Bavarian soldiers have been guilty, according to French opinion, of by far the worst work of destruction, especially those rude peasant soldiers coming from the highlands of Bavaria. They apparently take a fiendish delight in the mere act of breaking anything breakable into its original elements. For instance, even when they may have to stay a considerable time in a particular village or town, they will start by smashing up everything which spells comfort during the period of their occupation. Furniture they despise, works of art arouse their peculiar hatred, books excite their derision, the sight of themselves in valuable mirrors causes them both pain and dismay, whilst a beautifully laid-out garden blooming with flowers apparently drives them to a frenzy of fury and disgust. The furniture is smashed up into firewood, the books are thrown out of the window, the mirrors are smashed, and the flower gardens trampled under foot. Only the bare walls remain to shelter these barbarians from the heat or the cold, and when the hour of departure, which is generally retreat, arrives, kerosene is poured on the accumulated rubbish and the last of another French home disappears in smoke and flame. In Lorraine this has been the work of the same men who, on Christmas Day, insisted on stopping fighting, and who came out of their trenches to greet our own troops with messages of peace and goodwill."

The power of Christian faith is, truly, *very* apparent.

Mr. Bertram Theobald contributes a remarkable article to the *Quest*, entitled "The World-Soul and the War," in which he confidently informs us that Mother Earth is in travail with a new type of life and consciousness, and that the War is one of the ways in which *we* experience the tension and constriction of that prodigious process. Poor Mother Earth, if we, who are but spectators, suffer so much, how unspeakably excruciating her sufferings must be! What infinite nonsense we do read about this horrible War!

According to a Central News telegram, the statue of Ferrer in Brussels was "disgracefully defiled" the other evening. There was great excitement in consequence of this, with some rioting. The Governor-General, to prevent a renewal of the rioting, requested the City Council to remove the statue, which, he said, "was not regarded with favor by Catholics." From this we gather the author of the outrage to be a fervent Christian. The Catholic Church neither forgets nor forgives its enemies, and it hates Ferrer none the less heartily for having itself been the cause of his death.



## When I saw the King of Belgium.

IT is difficult to realise the Belgian King's new position in the world. To-day I cannot connect him with that exceedingly tall young man with a quiet, bordering on grave, bearing, I saw at Antwerp during a week of festivities taking place there.

Antwerp was packed with people from all over Belgium, and on this day the king was to unveil a monument; in addition to which, it was the day of the grand pageant.

The staging of these events, from an English point of view, was loose in the extreme. Between midday and six in the evening, I found myself within speaking distance of the king and queen three times.

First it was at the unveiling of a monument of unimaginable beauty in a square. Emblematical of progress, the structure took the form of a boat in a large basin. Motion was effected by sunken jets of water, which caused a flowing stream to run right and left of the prow; and inside the boat sat passengers of an allegorical character. Half an hour before the king arrived, there were but two rows of people present. But the simplicity of the arrangements, the demeanor of the chief actors, and the really brilliant address (which I enjoyed afterwards) by a civic functionary, were in favorable contrast to similar ceremonies in England.

I again met the king and queen in the afternoon, close to the quay. Their motor could only just move along, owing to the pressure of the crowd; and there was not a vestige of escort, beyond the chauffeur. The reception the people gave them lacked nothing in warmth on that account.

At the end of the day's program I was fortunate to be in a train standing at the same platform as the royal train, just opposite to it. To an Englishman the scene was amazing. The station—a terminus—had a tremendous area. A score of trains at least, packed with people, were waiting to start. Thousands more were waiting for other trains to come in, and officialism in charge of the head of the State, monopolised only a single siding and the platform abutting on to it.

The memory of this day, when the Belgian characteristics could be observed under exceptional conditions, is now vividly impressed upon me. The vast concourse in the squares and streets, on the quayside, in the numerous cafés, in the churches and public buildings of every description, resembled a large family gathering, and it behaved itself in a way that no English crowd can behave.

I dread crowds on account of the inconvenience they cause, but here did not experience the slightest discomfort. The magic word "Complét," time after time restrained one more person than the seating accommodation of a railway carriage allowed, from entering. The catering was on altogether different lines to the English system. The streets were full of cafés—often several appearing in succession, and there were chairs and tables in rows on the pavements outside. Towards midday, brisk waiters, serviette in hand, spread white cloths and a full service of plate on every table. Six or seven courses, with bottle of wine or beer, for a franc and a quarter, was the popular menu.

What struck me most was the utter absence of boredom and ill manners. Unlike English people on a holiday, everybody seemed to have an end in view. Before and after *déjeuner*, through the open doors of dozens of cafés came the sound of barrel-organs or pianos, and the youth of the country could be seen whirling to their hearts' content. But the class distinctions, the "side," and the mannerisms of the English on a holiday were entirely absent. A hard-wearing black suit or dress struck the dominant note; while the starched peasant's cap frequently reminded one of that humble constancy to an appreciable social state which no amount of culture can improve on. Again, this great Belgian crowd was not divided into groups of adults, young people, and children, as in England. English parents are such stay-at-homes

that their children from an early age acquire a habit of not permitting them the pleasure of their company in public. It is a fact that family association out of doors here in England is "dead off."

I begin to give credit to our Free Church ideas of interfering with drinking facilities for the growing practice of seeking excitement in the streets. The conduct of the young people, especially in the streets, is a reproach to nearly every town in England. During my stay in Belgium I found the reverse held good. Candidly, when the educational system of Belgium makes for good manners, and the early retirement in the evening of the children, when sobriety and good order can become the rule without the State's interference and the restriction of drinking customs, and when Sunday is a general holiday, during which drinking-places are open the whole of the day, then it follows that the Catholic authorities in Belgium know a vast deal more about the moral and human element in society than the English kill-joys of the Church of England and Nonconformist Churches do.

I have many times compared the joyful scenes on the day I saw King Albert with the depression I experienced when King George visited Nottingham last spring. At Antwerp everybody appeared to have some end in view, right to the close of the day. At Nottingham everybody struggled or paid—some fabulously—to get a glimpse of the King, who to all intents and purposes was being taken round like a lion, escorted by a mob of functionaries, military, police, and all the gentry of the neighborhood. Having seen his Majesty, the good people, according to their several domestic arrangements, went home to partake of a meal, or walked aimlessly up and down the inhospitable streets until bedtime. A few appeared to enjoy the holiday—namely, those who succeeded in getting inside a public-house. The usual proportion of these soon set about convincing the rest that the King did not come every day.

A. S. VICKERS.

## Christian Apologetics.

LORD A. C. HERVEY, D.D.

IN an apologetic work, entitled *The Authenticity of the Gospel of Luke*, the author, Lord A. C. Hervey, Bishop of Bath and Wells, has endeavored to prove the authenticity of the Third Gospel by proving that of the *Acts of the Apostles*—thus following the same easy method of Dr. Wace. In his introductory chapter Lord Hervey says (p. 8):—

"An enormous mass of learning and ingenuity has been expended, mainly by German scholars, in endeavoring to prove that the Gospels were not written or compiled by the persons whose names they bear—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—but are the production of unknown writers in the second century."

This statement is quite true; but the critics referred to have never tried to prove that the books named were not compiled by "the persons whose names they bear," but only that the compilers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—all lived in the second century. The names were used, from their first appearance, to distinguish one Gospel from another. It was Irenæus (A. D. 185), and after him later Christian writers, who ascribed the four Gospels to apostolic men of the same name in the first century. The books can therefore be accepted only as legends, not history.

Commencing his historical evidence, our worthy Bishop quotes from the "Muratori fragment" (which he assigns to A. D. 170) the statement that the Third Gospel and "the Acts" were written by Luke, a companion of Paul. Next, he says that the New Testament was translated into Syriac "before the year A. D. 150," and since that version contained the Gospel of Luke and the Acts, this fact proved that they must have existed "in the early part of the second century." Furthermore, he states that the Old Latin Version of the New Testament (which also contained those two books) was made "certainly

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early as the middle of the second century, probably much earlier"—which again proves the early existence of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts. Coming to the earliest of "the fathers," our Bishop shows that Tertullian (A.D. 200), Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 198), and Irenæus were all acquainted with the Third Gospel and the Acts; as was also Justin (A.D. 150), without naming either. Our apologist further states that Papias (A.D. 140) refers to "Bar-sabbas surnamed Justus" and to "the daughters of Philip the evangelist," who are named in Acts i. and xxi.; that Polycarp (A.D. 150) uses in his Epistle words found in Acts ii. 24; and that Clement of Rome (A.D. 140) employs words found in Acts xx. 35—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

This evidence of the use of the Acts, Lord Hervey says, "is conclusive, absolutely conclusive." It should, however, here be mentioned that our reverend apologist has given apologetic dates for the last three writers—Papias A.D. 116, Polycarp A.D. 108, Clement of Rome A.D. 96—which, if correct, would place back the existence of the Acts into the first century.

I will now deal with the foregoing "historical evidence." (1) The date of the "Muratori fragment" in which the Acts is named is unknown, but it is generally "assigned" to a decade or two later than A.D. 170. (2) The Peshito or Syriac Version of the New Testament, and the Old Latin Version, were both produced by translation from the Greek; but it is not known when this translation was first made. This was certainly not done until after the time of Irenæus (A.D. 185), who is the first to name Luke's Gospel and the Acts as existing in the Greek. (3) The fact that the "Acts of the Apostles" was known to Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Irenæus proves only that the book was written some years before their time. (4) Luke compiled his Gospel and the Acts from pre-existing documents, those from which the latter was drawn being apocryphal writings which were in existence and in circulation in the time of Justin, Papias, Polycarp, and Clement of Rome. It was these admittedly spurious writings, not the Acts of the Apostles, from which the writers named quoted. Take, for instance, the words quoted by Clement. In Acts xx. 35, Paul, who had never heard a word spoken by Jesus, is represented as saying to the elders of Ephesus:—

"Ye ought.....to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

There was no written Gospel in Paul's day from which that preacher could have learnt the saying, which, though given in an apocryphal writing many years after his time, is not found in any of the canonical Gospels.

Our apologetic Bishop had no idea how "the Acts" came to be compiled. He says (p. 89):—

"In reading the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles everybody must be struck with the prominent place given to St. Peter."

Just so; but even if Luke had been a fellow-laborer of Paul, he would know nothing about the sayings or doings of Peter. But the second century Luke took those chapters from the apocryphal "Acts of Peter" and "Travels of Peter," which works of fiction he carefully revised, adding or omitting as he thought fit, and re-writing the whole in better Greek, until he succeeded in transforming two crude and obviously fictitious "histories" into one that was deemed in that superstitious and credulous age a highly credible statement of fact (Acts i.—xii).

Neither, again, has our clerical apologist noticed that Luke, in the Preface to his revised Gospel, as good as says that he did not live in the time of Paul or the first preachers of Christianity, but that the Gospel narratives which he was re-writing had been handed down from apostolic times to his own day. That Luke was in error as regards the latter statement does not affect the question; such was, no doubt, the claim made for all the primitive Gospel writings in existence in his time. Though some of them may have been recently fabricated, they were all referred back to apostolic times.

Lord Hervey's next argument is much more to the point. He says (p. 96):—

"Consider the number of historical persons with whom the narrative in the Acts is connected. There are the high priests, *Annas and Caiaphas*; Gamaliel the famous rabbi, and *Judas of Galilee* the turbulent patriot; Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians; the emperor *Claudius*; *Herod Agrippa*; *Sergius Paulus*, the pro-consul of Cyprus; *Annæus Gallio*, the pro-consul of Achaia; *Felix and Festus*, the Roman governors of Judea; *king Agrippa* and *Bernice*; *Drusilla the Jewess*, the wife of *Felix*; and the emperor *Nero*. .....The least mistake in chronology, or in general statement, concerning any of these personages would be detected at once in the light of profane history."

Now, since the apocryphal writings from which the Book of the Acts was compiled have not come down to us, we cannot say whether the foregoing names were in those writings, or were added by Luke. But we do know that the long speeches placed in the mouths of Peter, Stephen, and Paul were so altered and revised by that compiler as to be practically his own composition. We know, also, that in his own Gospel, Luke inserted the names of *Cæsar Augustus*, *Quirinius*, *Tiberius Cæsar*, *Pontius Pilate*, *Herod the tetrarch*, *Philip the tetrarch*, *Lysanias the tetrarch*, and *Annas and Caiaphas* high priests (Luke ii. 1, 2; iii. 1, 2). These names were not in the primitive Gospel from which he took the main portion of the narratives now in his own Gospel. They were suggested to him by reading the *Antiquities* of Josephus, and were inserted by him in order to make the Gospel fictions look more like history. But Luke made two mistakes in his Gospel notwithstanding. *Lysanias* was not tetrarch at that time, nor was *Annas* high priest. The probability is that Luke inserted most of the names in the Acts himself. *Theophilus* of Antioch, for whom he wrote, has in his extant work quoted from Josephus; Luke had therefore the works of the latter historian at his disposal. Information respecting the names of those I have placed in italics (in the foregoing paragraphs) is given in Josephus, as well as of *Theudas*, an Egyptian false prophet, *Simon of Samaria*, and the high priest *Ananias*—who are also mentioned in the Acts, but whom our reverend apologist has omitted. As to the persons not italicised, nothing certain is known, save that one of them, *Gamaliel*—who was a historical figure—did not utter the words put in his mouth (Acts v. 35—39). But there are "mistakes in chronology or general statement," of which the following are examples:—

1. Luke's account of the death of *Agrippa I.*, whom he calls "Herod the king," is incorrect. *Agrippa* was not smitten by "an angel of the Lord," and he was not "eaten of worms" (Acts xii. 21—23).

2. Three or four years after the Crucifixion (A.D. 33 or 34), *Gamaliel*, in the speech put in his mouth, is represented as saying:—

"For before these days rose up *Theudas*.....After this man rose up *Judas of Galilee* in the days of the enrolment," etc. (Acts v. 36, 37).

The false prophet *Theudas* appeared in Palestine in A.D. 45. *Fadus*, who was the Roman procurator at that time, cut short his prophetic career by sending "horsemen and footmen" against him. *Judas of Galilee* arose "in the days of the enrolment" (A.D. 6). Luke, looking back through more than a century, misplaced the two insurrectionists, and made *Gamaliel*, speaking in A.D. 33, say that "before these days" there arose *Theudas* (A.D. 45)—who "was slain"—and after him there arose *Judas of Galilee* (A.D. 6)—who "also perished." We know that this *Gamaliel* could not have uttered the words placed in his mouth; for *Theudas* did not appear on the scene until twelve years after the speech is said to have been made.

3. The chief priests and Sanhedrim are represented as trying to stop the street preaching of the apostles by threats and imprisonment (Acts iv. 1—6; v. 17, 18; etc.) This was the duty of the Roman governor—at that time *Pilate*—who would have suppressed any such innovations, had they occurred, with "horsemen and footmen." There was, however, no such apostolic preaching.



4. In Acts xxiv. "the high priest Ananias" is placed about the year A.D. 58 of the governorship of Felix. Ananias was high priest in A.D. 47, when Tiberius Alexander was the procurator. The high priests in the time of Felix (A.D. 52-60) were: Jonathan (A.D. 52-55) and Ismail (A.D. 55-60).

The foregoing are not the whole of Luke's "mistakes in chronology or general statement," but they are sufficient to show that he had not read the *Antiquities* so carefully as he might have done. The remainder of Lord Hervey's book I must leave to the next paper.

ABRACADABRA.

### The Bible Kaiser.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 60.)

GOD punished David by killing Bathsheba's child. The poor creature was not even despatched quickly; it was "very sick" for seven days, and died to show the vicarious justice of its Maker. David then "comforted" Bathsheba. In the expressive, if inelegant, language of the Holy Ghost, he "went in unto her, and lay with her." Solomon was born of this intercourse, and "the Lord loved him."

Being in Jahveh's good books again, and knowing that "the Lord is a man of war," David prosecuted the siege of Rabbah. Having captured the city, he "brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln." All the Ammonite cities were served in the same way. Justly does Bayle ask whether Turks and Tartars are not more humane than Saint David. Josephus omits these barbarities, but he says the Ammonites were "tormented, and then destroyed." Whiston, in a footnote to that author, argues that David must have put them to work with saws, harrows, and axes, and at brick-making, without taking away their lives; for such cruel methods of putting men to death are not found elsewhere in the Bible, or in any other ancient history. But Whiston must have been very ignorant or very shameless to advance such a statement. Many Fathers allege that Isaiah was sawn in two by Manasseh; and Paul, in his panegyric of the ancient martyrs, distinctly says that some "were sawn asunder." The punishment is alluded to in other parts of Scripture. It was also known to the Greeks and Romans. According to Suetonius, it was inflicted on several persons in the reign of Caligula. Calmet alleges that, not many years before he wrote, a Swiss criminal was put into a coffin, and sawed in two from head to foot.

Violent disorders now broke out in David's kingdom. Amnon, one of his sons, ravished his own half-sister; an act which Milman and others ignorantly designate as "incest," although this idea is plainly refuted by Tamar's own language. Her brother Absalom avenged the insult in the violator's blood; but, like a true son of David, he consulted his own safety by letting his servants assassinate Amnon while drunk. After three years' banishment Absalom was pardoned, for he was his father's darling. He was the handsomest man in Israel, with a magnificent head of hair, which was cut once a year, and yielded a crop of nearly seven pounds!

Absalom fomented the popular discontent, headed a rebellion, drove David out of Jerusalem, and, according to the oriental custom, signified his own accession to the throne by appropriating his father's harem. With the exquisite taste of his age and country, he spread a tent on the roof of the palace, and "went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel."

General Joab sided with David and saved his throne. Absalom's army was routed in a pitched battle; and the gay pretender, being caught by his hair in an oak tree, was righteously slain by Joab's own hand. David never forgave his general for this offence. His fond old heart doted on his wicked son,

and all he could think of was that Absalom was dead. Joab reproached him for mourning his domestic loss, when so many loyal subjects had perished in defending his crown, and threatened to leave him if he did not rise and act like a king.

Another formidable rebellion under Sheba was likewise suppressed by the valor of Joab, who once more preserved David's throne. How the saintly king rewarded him for these services will be seen presently.

The ten concubines whom Absalom had abused were imprisoned for life. Agreeable as it is to the policy of oriental despotisms, such an act is grossly unjust, for the women were victims and not offenders. But men after God's own heart have peculiar views of right and wrong.

Saint David soon committed a worse crime. There was a famine for three years, and when Jahveh was asked the reason of the visitation he answered, "It is for Saul." Saul's two sons by Rizpah were therefore hung, with the five sons of his daughter Michal. And "after that the Lord was entreated for the land." A just God requires the murder of seven innocent men to stop a famine! Such is the morality of this atrocious story. Perhaps the Lord had no share in the business; it may be that David followed the oriental custom of extinguishing his rivals, and disguised his bloody crime with a veneer of piety.

The tragedy has one redeeming feature: a mother's love shines through the darkness of superstition and the mists of blood. Rizpah sat under the corpses of her two sons, through the long sunny days and lonely nights, guarding them from birds and beasts, until their bones were allowed to be buried. Readers of Tennyson will remember that this pathetic episode furnishes the *motif* of his divine poem *Rizpah*, which more than merits all Swinburne's praises.

Peace and plenty being restored, David determined to take a census. The Lord moved him to do this, according to the earlier account; but, according to the later account, it was Satan. Whichever it was, the consequences were dreadful. Jahveh told David to take his choice between seven years' famine, three days' pestilence, or three months' flight before his enemies. David chose the pestilence, and Jahveh slew seventy thousand Jews because their king counted them like a flock of sheep. Fortunately the Lord is now used to the census, or every ten years there would be the Devil to pay.

Josephus throws a little light on this story. According to the Jewish law, when the people were numbered, half a shekel was to be paid to God, that is to the priests, for every head. Otherwise there would be a plague. Evidently, then, the priests invented this story to illustrate the law and enforce the necessity of "shelling out."

David was now getting old. "They covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat," and the courtiers prescribed a novel remedy.

'Tis written in the Hebrew Chronicle,  
How the physicians, leaving pill and potion,  
Prescrib'd, by way of blister, a young belle,  
When old King David's blood grew dull in motion,  
And that the medicine answered very well.

They sought him out "a young virgin," to cherish him and lie in his bosom, and "the damsel was very fair." David had many wives and concubines, but none of them would do for the purpose. Dr. Gilchrist says that young virgins have more natural heat than women who have had children, and that Galen prescribed this remedy in a similar case. David "knew her not," but this was because of his impotence. He argues that David married the damsel to make everything square, and she "enlivened his spirits by her amiable countenance, her graceful behavior, especially by bedding with him." Adam Clarke refers to Friar Bacon's enigmatical work on "The Cure of Old Age."

Abishag's cherishing could not render David immortal. He died at the age of seventy. His last words were full of cursing and hypocrisy. He had sworn not to injure Shemei, who had railed at him, and afterwards apologised; but he enjoined Solomon, who was under no vow, to bring down this man.



"hoar head to the grave with blood." A similar injunction was laid on Solomon with respect to Joab, who had grown grey in David's service, and been the mainstay of his throne. David feared and hated him, and, not daring to kill Joab himself, he left the legacy of murder to Solomon. Instead of dying at peace with the world, and letting his son ascend the throne in justice and benignity, he breathes out slaughter from his pallid lips, and, under the most hypocritical pretexts, enjoins his successor to pollute his early reign with lawless bloodshed.

Renan justly remarks that David had as little as possible of the sense of justice, while his religion was only a pious pursuit of self-interest. "We shall see," he says, "the brigand of Adullam and Ziklag assume the airs of a saint. He will be the author of the Psalms, the sacred choragus, the type of the future Savior. Jesus must be the son of David! The evangelical biography will be falsified in a multitude of points by the idea that the life of the Messiah should reproduce the traits of David's. Pious souls, while enjoying the sentiments, full of resignation and tender melancholy, of the finest of liturgical books, will fancy themselves in communion with this bandit. Humanity will believe in a final justice on the testimony of David, who never thought of it, and of the Sibyl, who never existed. *Teste David cum Sibylla!* O the divine comedy!"

G. W. FOOTE.

The Arraignment of God.

*Nous sommes aussi vieux qu' au jour de ta naissance.  
Nous attendons autant, nous avons plus perdu.  
Plus livide et plus froid, dans son cercueil immense  
Pour la seconde fois Lazare est étendu.  
Ou donc est le Sauveur pour entr'ouvrir nos tombes?*

The sickly close to a long, languid eve  
Paled, pined and dwindled, down Whitechapel way.  
Over the grim, grey labyrinth of streets,  
Alleys and courts, brooded a doubtful mist,  
Half vapor and half smoke-wreath, with the wafts  
Of rancid cook-shops steaming unctuous clouds;  
With sweaty reek of jostling unwashed throngs;  
And stinky silt, from where the river crawled  
Low in his ebb-tide channel. And a square,  
Of sapless leafage and tall, dingy fronts,  
From which the opaque windows, like black pools,  
Darkly reflected the unswaying boughs,  
Exhaled an atmosphere wheremin the Spring  
Stirred such a squalid echo of desire,  
It seemed the whimpering ghost of ancient lust,  
Fled from old rinceous brothels.

The long roar

Of ceaseless traffic came but slumbrously.  
Only, a keener sound at moments cleft  
The sullen undersong—woman or child  
Screaming in pain and outrage, or the brawl  
Of drunken revellers. In a high room  
That faintly caught the lingering sunset gleam  
Shot wistfully athwart these leagues of roofs,  
Kneled a young priest. A carven crucifix—  
The sole adornment of four white-washed walls—  
Displayed the tortured Christ, whose pain-wrung brow  
Looked down upon the suppliant at his feet.

And now the pent-in agony of prayer  
Broke from pale, writhen lips: "Oh Christ, how long?  
Jesu, the race, for whom thy life was given,  
Perish, and put thee to a second shame.  
Thy sacrifice is made a mockery,  
And what thy promises but crafty snares?"

From the still-gathering shadows of that room  
The figure on the cross stood out: a slant  
Beam still incarnadined that crown of thorns.  
Thereat the fury of a murdered love,  
Faith whelmed in frenzy, hurled despitful words.

"Bleed, bleed, forever bleed! Yet all thy blood—  
Oceans of blood—can never wash away  
The sin that leaves the purest human soul  
More hideous than the leper's bale-blotched flesh.  
It is a lie, a lie—a false, foul lie,  
That by thy blood thou savest man from death;  
Nay, but thou damnest to a deeper hell!

Who, but for God made manifest in vain,  
Had lived the blameless life of happy brute,  
Not knowing good from evil, now—oh woe!—  
Drink their damnation in thy sacrament.  
Is God so weak, so purblind, that he planned  
And wrought for man's salvation at such cost,  
Thus to be foiled and baffled in the end?  
Not so! I see the ghastly truth too well.  
'Twas the last act and climax of a gross  
Comedy played upon the worthy stage  
Of this ridiculous world.

First, he inspired

His wild-eyed prophets with an exultant dream:  
'In his own image God created man,  
A little lower than those bright ministers  
Of the Inexpugnable Will'; that so, when Time  
And feverous quest of knowledge brought to light  
The secret of man's primal birth, more vile  
Than those obscene and excremental things  
Which in the abysmal womb of chaos stir  
And hanker and grope, abasement more profound  
For that proud confidence might overwhelm,  
Annihilate all aspiration.—Next,  
The elemental instincts he transfused,  
Of natural man, with supra-sensual heats,  
Bidding oblations of adoring love  
Upon perennial lewdness' altars fume;  
So who would beauty's mysteries unveil  
Must blench not from the satyr's shagginess,  
But highest, lowest, basest, best, confound.  
Then on the native fierceness of the brute  
He shed a glamor, invoking chivalry,  
The patriot's pride, glory's illusion, all  
Strange blazonings of a fiery, emulous brain,  
To keep the lust of battle ever aflame,  
And make of carnage a religious rite.  
And, with an infinite subtlety to prepare  
His grand *dénouement*, he bemused men's minds  
In endless maze of spiritual questionings,  
Where phantoms of an over-ruling good  
Lured them to seek one indefectible aim  
Still self-achieving through the perplexed woof  
Of the world's destiny—till, at the last,  
Lighting in naught but blind and bestial force,  
They might, with desperate eagerness, embrace  
The rank and palpable cheat he engineered;  
Juggling presentment! vulgar showman's art,  
Mumming from Bethlehem to Calvary!  
The peace on earth—peace!  
The holy zeal, that, to the glory of God,  
Out-Moloched Moloch's rage a thousandfold;  
The new-born hope, envenoming death's sting;  
The life beyond the grave, aïre with hell.  
Fools, fools and blind! who in their hearts have said  
'There is no God,' when, even as they speak,  
They feel the arch-tempter—God. Nay, let them cry,  
'There is no Devil!' for is not God enough?"

But the tense silence, falling on the close  
Of that wild rhapsody of anguish, seemed  
To the spent brain, a lamentable voice  
Struggling with an unutterable pain.

"Father, thou hearest how in blasphemy  
Foams out the last surge of expiring faith!  
When thou didst brim my cup of agony,  
Was it for this, Oh God, was it for this?  
When in the death-hour day was turned to night,  
Was it the blackness of thy bitter scorn?  
And was the Temple's veil rent to disclose  
The naked irony of thy mercy-seat?  
And didst thou give thy first-born up to death  
That all thy children might be taught despair?  
Was it for this, oh God, was it for this?  
My God, my God, thou *hast* forsaken me!"  
Far off the menacing thunder clanged and knolled,  
But when its hollow murmurs died away,  
A little breeze out of the darkness sighed,  
A still, small voice, dimly oracular.

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