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# THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*Liberty is the RIGHT to be in the wrong.*  
—MARBEAU.

## The Soldier in Literature.

"Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."  
—SHAKESPEARE, *Othello*.

ALTHOUGH life has been called a battlefield, and all histories are filled with records of wars, the soldier has not had more than his share of attention at the hands of authors. Homer's *Iliad* contains incomparable passages on the warriors of the old world, which lift the mind as mountain air refreshes the body. Plutarch, in his famous *Lives*, writes of ancient heroes in such noble language that his record has been taken to the hearts of countless thousands of strenuous men through many centuries. Shakespeare, too, has reproduced with the happiest effect "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," and his "so-potent art" filled his plays with unforgettable portraits. Recall the awestruck recognition by Brutus of great Cæsar's ghost:—

"O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords  
In our own proper entrails."

But Shakespeare's military interest is not by any means confined to classic times. He introduces "the vasty fields of France" and "the casques that did affright the air at Agincourt." Prince Hal is one of his finest soldier-characters. It is the call to duty and his ready response that first shows Hal's quality to an incredulous world. Not a vestige of the midnight carouses with Falstaff and his boon companions impairs his efficiency when "young Harry" leaps into the saddle fully armed "like feathered Mercury." Sir John Falstaff, too, is not a criminal nor a coward, but he is a good-natured giant who fights for pence and solid pudding. Abstract virtues have no attraction to him, and he bolsters his position with irresistible wit and fun, which make him easily the greatest humorous figure in the world's literature.

Othello is a soldier of heroic grandeur and simplicity, nobly generous and unsuspecting; and Macbeth is a warrior, honored by his fellows, who, when he stands at bay against overwhelming odds, breaks out, with undying courage:—

"Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,  
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,  
Yet I will try the last."

But Shakespeare's soldiers deserve a volume to themselves. Unfailing, unrivalled, they stand the test of the populous centuries; for of their great author it might be said:—

"A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman,  
Framed in the prodigality of nature,  
The spacious world cannot again afford."

The soldiers in the pages of Defoe and Smollett are noteworthy; but they are excelled by the magnificent portrait of the veteran warrior which Laurence Sterne has given us. Sentimentalist that he was, Sterne eclipsed all his rivals with his superb characterization of "Uncle Toby." Thackeray did well with his "Colonel Newcome" and "Henry Esmond," and many of his sketches of half-pay veterans are exquisite. Charles Lever, too, filled his pages with warriors of the Peninsular War; and Henry Kingsley, especially in *Ravenshoe*, tried hard to cap-

ture the soldierly heroes of the Crimea. But Dickens, "George Eliot," Charles Reade, Anthony Trollope, and other Victorian writers were all more attracted by the "black army" than the red; and, while their books are filled with brilliant portraits of clergymen, there are few military men worthy of remembrance. That very great novelist, George Meredith, restored the balance, and has given us a splendid gallery of military portraits; his *Vittoria*, containing some superb battle-scenes, written in that incomparable prose which he alone had the secret of. The last of the literary giants, Thomas Hardy, has introduced many soldiers in his novels and poems, from "Sergeant Troy" in *Far from the Madding Crowd* to the titanic figures in *The Dynasts*.

Among present-day authors, Rudyard Kipling has contributed some brilliant soldier studies, and since Dickens no one has roused so much laughter. "The Taking of Luntingpen" and "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney" recall the open-air humor of Marryatt and the high spirits of Fielding and Smollett. Despite the small canvases he has chosen, Kipling has achieved wonders, and his "Drums of the Fore and Aft," and other masterpieces, are among the best short stories in the language. In quite another vein is the fascinating *Barlasch of the Guard*, by Henry Seton Merriman, who only just missed being a great novelist. In this clever study of one of Napoleon's fighting-men he came dangerously near perfection. Few more uncompromising criticisms of the effect of continuous war upon the quality of manhood has been penned.

The prose and poetry of the nineteenth century is full of romantic militarism. From the days of Byron, who died like a soldier, to the time when Swinburne rolled his richest thunders against the despots of Europe, the great English writers were veritable knight-errants. Liberty knows no frontiers, and the liberation of Italy roused the English poets to some of their noblest efforts. Byron declared that Italy's dream was "the very poetry of politics." Shelley's sympathy gave us the immortal lines on the "Euganean Hills" and the "Ode to Naples." A later and a greater writer, George Meredith, in *Vittoria* and "Sandra Belloni," hailed Mazzini and his colleagues as soldiers of freedom. Arthur Clough's "Amours de Voyage" depicts the adventures of an Englishman in Rome in 1849, when the red-shirted Garibaldians were defending the Republic against Oudinot's French bayonets. From her Casa Guidi windows Mrs. Browning watched the struggle, and her muse was inspired by the same theme. Swinburne, however, surpassed them all in the ardor of his devotion and in the rapture of his praise:—

"The very thought in us how much we love thee  
Makes the throat sob with love and blinds the eyes."

Indeed, "Songs Before Sunrise" are unique in the whole range of the world's poetry. More enduring than marble are the noble lyrics of which Mazzini and the cause to which he dedicated his life were the inspiration:—

"Of God nor man was ever this thing said,  
That he might give  
Life back to her who gave him, whence his dead  
Mother might live.  
But this man found his mother dead and slain,  
With fast sealed eyes.  
And bade the dead rise up and live again,  
And she did rise."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in a poem on the refusal of

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military aid between nations, said that by this he was certain,—

"That the world falls asunder, being old."

This love of liberty was a common possession of the nineteenth century writers, and the nobility of the cause always inspired nobility of utterance. John Ruskin was at his fiercest in his denunciation of the desertion of insulted Denmark. One of the lesser-known poems of James Thomson portrays a Pole ready to die for his native country, although he realises that his country must be defeated:—

"Must a man have hope to fight?  
Can a man not fight in despair?  
Must the soul cower down for the body's weakness,  
And slaver the Devil's hoof with meekness,  
Nor care nor dare to share  
Certain defeat with the right?"

Whitman, in scores of pages, wrote himself a citizen of the world, but his thoughts were enriched and purified by the awful experiences of the American Civil War. There is no false rhetoric or brazen bravado in his "Dirge for Two Veterans":—

"The moon gives you light,  
And the bugles and the drums give you music;  
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,  
My heart gives you love."

With quieter eyes the veteran of the Victorian intellectuals, Thomas Hardy, has achieved the masterpiece of *The Dynasts*, a magnificent work without a rival. The subject is the titanic struggle of the Napoleonic wars. It begins with the preparations of England to repel an expected French invasion, and it ends with the carnage of Waterloo. The death of Nelson inspires the author, and his tribute is lyrical:—

"Who in simplicity and sheer good faith  
Strove but to serve his country."

Nor was it a mere atmosphere of spirit that this doctrine of military intervention in the cause of liberty all over the world was taught by these great writers. William Watson, in his forceful *Purple East*, was quite explicit in his desire to have the Turk driven out, bag and baggage, and Swinburne's denunciation of the White Czar for the persecution of the Jews has re-echoed ever since. During the nineteenth century the wheel of time had come round full circle, and the lighted torch of Liberty, which had been held by Byron, had passed through hands of inspired poets during succeeding generations. Whilst millions of men face each other, desolating countries and destroying life, we need an inspiration for our faith in human destiny. Such a message is sounded in the following lines from Swinburne. They are from the speech of England in the chorus of the nations crying out to their mother, Liberty:—

"I am she that was and was not of thy chosen,  
Free and not free;  
I fed the streams till mine own streams were frozen,  
Yet I am she  
By the star that Milton's soul for Shelley lighted,  
Whose rays ensphere us,  
By the beacon-bright Republic far off sighted,  
O, mother, hear us."

MIMNERMUS.

## The Lesson of China.—II.

(Concluded from p. 82.)

IT is a very comforting theory—for Europeans—that wherever they go they carry with them the blessings of civilisation. And by civilisation, Europeans, whether English, French, or German, mean the customs, manners, and institutions of their own country. This is peculiarly a feature of British Christian human nature. If clocks may be set by the meridian of Greenwich, why may not manners be regulated by the meridian of Clapham? To the British Christian one thing seems as easy as the other, and whatever evils may accompany the forcing of foreign customs upon a people, is held to be amply

compensated by the presence of "civilisation." In truth, it is open to grave doubt whether any race of people has ever really benefited in this way. Peaceful penetration and friendly communication, which allows a people to assimilate as much of a foreign culture as they are fitted to receive, is another matter. The introduction by force of alien institutions generally does more harm than good.

Certainly, if one were to ask whether the Chinese were a better people because of their intercourse with the Christian nations of the world, the answer would have to be in the negative. The Chinese had, unquestionably, much to learn from the West in the shape of scientific discoveries, mechanical invention, commercial development, and the like; but these things, either separately or collectively, do not make a people better or happier. They may be used for evil or for good. They make for power, but not necessarily for greatness; it is the confusion of the two that is responsible for the false ideals that are enthroned in Europe to-day, and which is ultimately responsible for the War now in being. And, in truth, neither the Chinese nor the Japanese have learned from Europe anything that would make them either a better or a happier people. Both have learned much that is evil, and in China the clearest indications of European influence are those of an undesirable character.

For nations, as for individuals, the primary condition of real development is self-respect. But the whole intercourse of the Christian nations with China has been based upon a policy of humiliation, which lowered her in her own estimation and in that of other nations. At the mouth of the cannon opium was forced upon her to benefit Indian growers, and the consequential growth of the opium habit led to large tracts of land in China being given over to the growth of the poppy. The story is a deplorable one, and is too long to be dealt with in detail now. A point worth noticing is this: China's liberation from the drug has come, not from outside, not from those Christian nations represented there, ostensibly in the interests of "civilisation," but from herself. The chief help from Great Britain was to see that the Indian growers were not injured by the sudden closing of the Chinese market. Great Britain negotiated a ten years' agreement with China, which arranged for a reduction of ten per cent. per year. In this way the traffic was to finish in ten years. Within China, whole districts were cleared of opium in the space of two or three years. But the revenue accruing to Indian growers has been kept up owing to the increased price of the drug, and, as was pointed out in these pages a few weeks ago, the traffic is largest in those portions of China that are under direct European influence.

That is one way in which the European Powers have helped to "civilise" China. Here is another. In all European countries foreigners are rightly subject to the laws of whatever country they happen to be in. All that their own nation will do is to see that they receive a fair trial. In substance, this is no more than recognition of the right of a nation to govern its own internal affairs in its own fashion. In 1842, the British, after defeating China in battle, secured Hong Kong. There were also secured a number of treaty ports, and also a recognition of the extra-territoriality of all foreigners. This means that no matter what crime a foreigner may commit, he cannot be tried by a Chinese court. They must be tried by a court of their own countrymen; and one can easily see the small chance a native stands of getting justice under these conditions. The ordinary European who, in his ignorance and arrogance, persists in regarding the Chinese as an "inferior" race, believes it only right to avoid doing anything that will lower his fellow countrymen in the eyes of natives, and fails to see that, with a people like the Chinese, he is doing that and little else. The Chinese have protested against this extra-territoriality over and over again, but without avail. Its maintenance has formed the real and only ground of the Chinese refusal to permit foreigners to

travel where they like in the Empire. The whole history of China proves that its people are neither inhospitable nor bigoted. And wherever either quality is displayed one should see how much its presence is due to an attack on the nation's sense of self-respect.

There is another aspect of this subject to which Messrs. Cantlie and Jones might well have devoted a little space. This is in connection with the missionary movement in China. In 1859, a treaty was drawn up between Great Britain and China giving British missionaries the right to settle in certain places. There was also a French treaty giving the same right to French missionaries. But a year later a supplementary treaty was drawn up by the French, and a clause inserted without the knowledge of the Chinese Government, giving missionaries the right to settle anywhere. Against this clause the Chinese Government protested, but it was powerless. Thus the French claim for missionaries to travel anywhere in China is based upon a deliberate act of fraud. The English claim to do the same as the French. And both are there for the moral improvement of the Chinese!

The missionaries not only travel anywhere, and at the same time hold themselves as above the Chinese law and the Chinese Government, but have claimed to endow their converts with the same privilege. A few years back, the Church Missionary Society had, in its Annual Report, the following enlightening comment:—

"It is now a very common practice for men whose sole object is to plunder, to avoid paying their debts, and, to escape punishment by the authorities, to place their names as Romanists on the register of the Roman Catholic Church. They are then entitled to the protection of the Roman priest, and bishop, and of the French Consul, and can, and do, commit acts of violence with impunity."

The same Society also assured the British Public that churches were organised by natives for the purpose of affording protection in law cases. The Church Missionary Society brought this charge against Roman Catholics only; but it seems true, more or less, of all, as the following from a Parliamentary Paper shows:—

"There seems sufficient reason to believe that converts assume, and have acted on, the assumption that by embracing Christianity they released themselves from the obligations of obedience to the local authorities, and from the discharge of their duties as subjects of the Emperor, and acquired a right to be protected by the European Power whose religious tenets they had adopted."

The Chinese Government has repeatedly protested against this defiance of the law by missionaries and their converts. It was compelled to submit to see its own laws outraged and defied by its own subjects, aided and abetted by foreign missionaries. Not only did this affect the Government, but it also affected the general population, which saw in the missionary societies a shelter for the wrong-doer and a danger to its own interests. There is no wonder that the general tolerance of the Chinese towards foreign religions has been replaced by acts of hostility towards Christianity. The position was well put in a paragraph from the Parliamentary Paper already cited, that if "certain pretensions of the missionaries to supersede the civil power would either cease to exist, or be less boldly pushed..... [They] would no longer provoke the hostility of surrounding populations."

It has been noted of the Chinese laborer in both Australia and America, that he is disliked more for his virtues than for his vices. Of China as a nation it may be truly said, that in her dealings with Christian countries she has suffered most because of the virtues that should have aroused admiration. The Chinese are not by nature or training a military people. The influence of their great teachers, Confucius, Lao-Tse, and Buddha has been on the side of peace. To the Chinaman, the soldier was, at best, a necessary evil. A Chinese writer, quoted by

the authors of *Sun Yat Sen*, puts the matter thus:—

"First comes the scholar; because his mind is superior to wealth, and it is intellect that distinguishes man above the lower order of beings.....Second, the farmer; because the mind cannot act without the body, and the body cannot exist without food.....Third, the mechanic; because next to food shelter is a necessity, and the man who builds a house comes next in honor to the man who provides food.....Fourth, the tradesman.....Fifth, the soldier stands last and lowest in the list because his business is to destroy, and not to build up society. He consumes what others produce, but produces nothing himself that can benefit mankind. He is, perhaps, a necessary evil."

Dr. Cantlie and Mr. Jones have, apparently, little sympathy with this view, since they remark "China has had hammered into her the old lesson that a country can know nothing of real dignity, let alone peace and security, unless she is prepared to fight for them with her own right arm, and that scholar, farmer, tradesman, merchant alike are all dependent on the soldier for freedom to follow their avocation." It is significant of the influence of the Christian nations upon China that the two who pass this judgment upon the Chinese standard of value should both be Christians. They do not realise that judged from the standpoint of a civilised ethic, the soldier is an evil—maybe a "necessary evil," but none the less an evil. He wastes what others produce. It may be necessary for him to waste in order to preserve what remains; but the judgment remains true for all that. And what is equally true is that the nation which fails to realise this is going the right way to commit suicide. Its consequences are seen in the militarism of Germany and other parts of Europe.

Moreover, if it is urged that the Chinese ideal has been falsified by facts, and that no country is secure which is not prepared to *fight* for its possessions, the reply is, it is the rapacity and ferocity of Christian nations that necessitates its falsity. Humiliation after humiliation has been heaped upon China by the Christian Powers. Its territory has been seized, its laws flouted. China is in reality being taught that it must lead a part of its national strength into military channels if it is to preserve its existence as an independent nation. And there is evidence that in the new Republic this lesson is not being overlooked. It is the Christian nations who have taught China that wealth and military strength are the only things that they really respect. As with Japan so it may be with China. The Western nations declined to recognise the equality of Japan with themselves until the Japanese had shown their ability on the field of battle. And what Japan has done it is possible for China to do. If these nations insist that the soldier must be the first consideration in the life of a nation, then, sooner or later, the Chinese will place him there. And if the four hundred millions of Chinese, with an Army such as that number can create, ever becomes a genuine "Yellow Peril," it will be the West that has itself called it into being.

C. COHEN.

### Christian Subterfuge.

ORTHODOX believers are generally distinguished for their consistency and courage. They are never daunted by the apparent irrationality of any dogma. At the beginning of the War, Dr. Campbell Morgan delivered a series of sermons in which the central, dominant note was, "The Lord sitteth as king for ever." The preacher assured his hearers that the Lord's sovereignty in the Universe is a Divinely given truth, the belief in which must on no account be surrendered. Be the facts what they may, Christians are bound to be loyal to this dogma. Dr. Morgan admitted that the War owed its origin to the temporary predominance of some malign forces, which the King, for a purpose not yet known to us, permitted to have their own way up to a certain

point. In other words, God allowed men to develop and put to the test their own wicked devices in order to show them the infinite folly as well as sinfulness of rebellion against Heaven. God *permitted* such manifestations of Godless selfishness that he might emphasise the supreme truth that "he sitteth as king for ever." You can interpret the facts to fit any theory; and one admires Dr. Morgan's ingenuity as an interpreter, while pitying his superstitious credulity. He takes the Bible as he finds it, and stands by it in defiance of all history. Mr. T. Rhondda Williams, of Brighton, is not an orthodox believer in any sense whatever. To Mr. Williams the Bible is very largely a collection of legendary stories. He boldly declares that "the religious history of the world no doubt contains many legendary stories concerning the result of intercession." He lays down the following great principle, and applies it to the Bible:—

"Legends have grown up around men who were great and noble, and others who, without being great, exercised priestly or prophetic or kingly functions. Samuel prayed for a thunderstorm in the time of the wheat harvest to convince the people of their wickedness, and obtained it. Similar stories are believed concerning leaders among all primitive tribes. In ancient Israel the nation was the unit, not the individual. The nation would stand or fall together. Very often the good men could gain the favor of God for the whole people. Abraham's intercession for Sodom and the prayer of Moses for the staying of the pestilence are instances."

As Mr. Williams points out, the prophet Ezekiel was not a believer in national intercession. That stern, great man was convinced that, even if such righteous men as Noah, Daniel, and Job were to intercede in the time of pestilence or war, their intervention would be fruitless: "they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God" (xiv. 14). Ezekiel, however, stands practically alone. The Old Testament, the Apocrypha, the New Testament, and the traditions of the Christian Church are full of instances of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. The apostle James asserts that "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working," and that "the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." James speaks confidently:—

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (v. 16-18).

To Dr. Campbell Morgan such teaching is literally true, but to Mr. Rhondda Williams it is purely legendary. We agree with the latter; but we find ourselves in direct opposition to Mr. Williams when he proceeds thus:—

"When we find among all peoples and in all stages of religion the belief in mediators, behind such belief there must lie a great truth. Whatever superstitions may attach to the belief, there must be truth somewhere at the back of it. Even legends and superstitions are a part of real human life that must be accounted for."

The fallacy underlying that reasoning is patent to all. Until recently, the belief in witchcraft was to be found among all peoples, and in all stages of religion; but, surely, Mr. Williams is not prepared to affirm that a great truth lay behind it. Witchcraft was a total falsehood, an error, with no truth whatever at the back of it. We wish to know what truth lies behind the Biblical and other legends about answers to prayer. Mr. Williams informs us that it is not difficult to get at it, but we must declare that the reasoning by which he pretends to find it is at once hopelessly intricate and hopelessly vague. What he calls "the religious consciousness" is a wholly misleading phrase. In reality, there is no such thing. It is true that when a man pretended to know much about God and to have superior influence with him, legends naturally grew up around his history; but that does not prove that he did know God, or had the least influence with him. Mr. Williams makes the naive admission that we "can-

not allow that Moses induced God to change his mind towards Israel"; but to maintain that such a story is but a childish way of telling the great truth that "whenever there is a great and good man, he is constantly standing more or less between the people and the consequences of their ignorance and folly," is to betray religious prejudice and bigotry of the deepest dye. It may be perfectly true that "according to his goodness, greatness, and zeal," a man is affecting the destiny of mankind; but where on earth does God come in? We can fully understand Dr. Morgan's position, while ridiculing it, but that of Mr. Williams is wholly unintelligible. There is no miracle of any kind, no magical performance whatever, Mr. Williams avers, "but by the natural spiritual order the consequences of goodness are always interfering with the consequences of badness, just as the results of knowledge arrest the results of ignorance." Emerson knew what he meant when he said that "every thought which genius and piety throw into the world alters the world"; but Mr. Williams does not know what he means when he says that prayer addressed to an imaginary supernatural being changes the order of the Kosmos. It is marvellous how this divine's humanism colors his theology, and his theology vitiates his humanism. "The soul of intercession," he tells us, "is a care for others, and this is the divinest life in man"; but that is a false definition. Intercession is mediation between parties at variance. Jesus is the heavenly mediator, who ever liveth to make intercession for lost sinners, while Christians are earthly mediators, whose business it is to add their intercession to that of the Savior. To intercede is not to care for others, but to plead with God to come to the help of those in whom we are interested. Take any of the intercessory services that are being held just now, and what we see is not a company of great and good people standing between the people named and the consequences of their ignorance and folly, but a gathering of more or less superstitious believers, pleading with God to grant their side a speedy victory, and to be the guide and inspirer of the soldiers at the front.

Now, we maintain that in its only legitimate significance, intercession is a complete waste of time and breath, and, in reality, Mr. Williams agrees with us. If it really meant a care for others, and took any practical shape, we might endorse the contention that there is no doubt of its value and power; but in the only form in which the Churches employ it, we have no hesitation whatever in characterising it as utterly valueless and impotent. Mr. Williams is guilty of recklessly playing with words, and of resorting to subterfuge of the worst kind, in the attempt to justify his theology at the bar of reason. He undertakes a wholly impossible task. There can be no harmony between supernaturalism and humanism. You can never reduce intercession into a natural performance. All that Mr. Williams says about the lamentable failure of the Church is profoundly true; but his condemnation of the Church involves that of Christianity, because, apart from the Church, Christianity is non-existent. He tells us that he saw it "cynically suggested the other day that for the present Christianity had been withdrawn for reconstruction and repairs"; but we beg to differ from him, and to express the conviction that the Church is as full of Christianity to-day as it ever was, and that Christians of Mr. Williams's spirit have ever been few and far between. And there is no escape from the fact that, being what he is, the reverend gentleman could not possibly be an orthodox believer. Christians of Dr. Campbell Morgan's type believe that God does change his mind and action in answer to faithful prayer. Their one contention is that he both hears and answers the petitions of his people, and that his government of the world is, in consequence, modified. It never occurs to them to inquire whether such a doctrine implies a serious detraction from the wisdom of the World-Ruler or not, or whether it makes them out to be wiser than he. We are firmly of opinion that the

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very idea of prayer is an intolerable insult to the Supreme Being, because it represents him as something less than a Supreme Being. Mr. Williams is quite right when he represents prayer as effecting no change in God's mind towards the persons or causes concerned, but, such being the case, what is the conceivable use of praying? The reverend gentleman tells us that Jesus knew that the will of God operated for the good of the whole world; but if that is true, why deafen his Divine ears with passionate appeals that his will may be done? If it is not done, it is because the world is stronger than he, in which case prayer is useless; but if it is, how offensive and aggravating such appeals must be to him.

We approve of Mr. Williams's humanism *minus* his theology, which he retains only at the expense of making himself ridiculous. If we could adopt any theology, it would be that of the Catholic Church and Dr. Campbell Morgan. This is accepted, not because it is transparently true, but because it rests on what is regarded as adequate authority. Any attempted compromise with reason is fatal to faith. It was this that drove Newman to Rome, and it is the consciousness of this that sustains every orthodox believer. Verbal quibbles and logical subterfuges never really served any cause yet.

J. T. LLOYD.

### To Various Friends.

From F. J. Gould, who will close his service for the Moral Education League on April 30, 1915.

A MARKED decline in income has compelled the Executive Committee, as the Treasurer informed me with kind expressions of regret, to remove my name from the League's staff, after I had acted as Demonstrator and Lecturer for five years. During that time I have given some 600 public demonstration-lessons to children in the presence of adult audiences, frequently students and teachers, in (1) Very many towns of Great Britain, from Devonport in the south to Dundee in the north; (2) Nearly forty cities of the United States, in the course of tours in 1911 and 1913-14; (3) Eight cities of the Bombay Presidency, and Baroda. Since 1899 I have issued a long series of books illustrative of moral teaching, and I have advocated progressive principles of education on the Leicester School Board and the Leicester Town Council.

The one simple object of this activity has been to persuade teachers, and the public in general, of the possibility of giving moral instruction on a basis acceptable to all creeds and schools of thought. No claim is made to the presentation of any new system. I have tried to adapt, for the modern child, the grand old traditional method of the story as a revelation of moral life and history; the method embodied in the creations of poets, dramatists, legend makers; in inspiring biographies and histories; and in the great religious literatures.

It would seem common-sense to seek a field in which I could continue the work with which I have been associated in various forms for twenty years. If openings occur in this country, I shall be glad; and I also know, from happy experience, that the American educational public extends a welcome to such efforts.

I have no desire to establish any organisation, but I merely want to labor as a personal servant of a good cause. Amicably separating from the Moral Education League, both as to membership and auspices, I wish to offer myself to this enterprise as an entirely independent worker.

To most readers of this circular, what I have said will only be tendered as an item of news, which, I trust, may have a passing interest. A friend here or there may be moved to propose some utilisation of such energies as I am able to devote to constructive educational ideals with a view to the supreme end of character-training. This ideal, though it is but one

among many factors of social order and progress, may have some modest influence in an age of world-crisis and trial.

Armored, Woodfield-avenue, Ealing,  
London, W.

### A Nietzschean Tone Poet.

"There is no God for Strauss.....There was no God for Nietzsche."—JAMES HUNERER, *Overtures*.

#### I.

"EVERYTHING which I have created as a poet," said Ibsen, "had its origin in a frame of mind and a situation in life; I never wrote because I had, as they say, found a good subject." This might be said of most men of genius, and of Richard Strauss, the foremost of living composers, it is especially true. Almost from the first glimpse we have of him we find him possessed of certain frames of mind and world ideas which finally are realised, as it were, in his music. I do not mean by this that his music *per se* reflects these tendencies. I refer, of course, to his program types and *libretti*. Far too much has been said already by pseudo musical critics on the point of Strauss' music being the outcome of his philosophy, and that this piece of unusual harmonic structure or that piece of inordinate instrumentation is the sheer reflex of this or that world philosophy. As I have said, Strauss has reflected certain tendencies in his music, but they are only to be seen in his choice of types and characters. As a confessed disciple of Nietzsche, it does not require much search to locate his favorite type. Like Beethoven and Wagner, he is certainly prone to the heroic, but his heroes always carry the additional pose of the *übermensch* and rebel.

The *Don Juan* (1888) of Strauss is not the sensualist and braggard of the Romanticist school, but a sort of sexual "overman." The scene of *Tod und Verklärung* (1889) tells us of the "joy of conflict." *Guntram* (1892-3) is concerned with the exploits of two rebels who seek to lead mankind to universal brotherhood, and end by throwing in their lot with the people in rebellion against a tyrant. *Till Eulenspiegel* (1894-5) tells us of the type of rebellious roving minstrel of the Middle Ages, who was denounced by Church and State as a "rogue and vagabond." The merry Till told the Church and State what he thought of them, and laughed to boot, and went to the gallows for it. Strauss' great Nietzschean work, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, was meant to convey musically (says the composer) "an idea of the development of the human race from its origin through the various phases of development (religions as well as scientific) up to Nietzsche's idea of the *übermensch*, the Beyond-Man of Goethe." In *Don Quixote* (1897) and in *Heldenleben* (1898) we see the forces of conflict at work. In the latter, Strauss shows the hero and overman combatting the conventional world's ideas, and, after a long struggle with the "crowd" (Nietzsche's pet aversion—the *pöbel*), he finally gives way and seeks retirement from the fight. In *Don Quixote* it would seem that Strauss again emphasises the futility of conflict, and, although Freethinkers are not likely to agree with its philosophy of non-resistance, I commend it to their notice. To this end I give an idea of its 'program' (to which not the composer, but only *myself*, is committed). Strauss follows Cervantes' story with fidelity of characterisation. After an introduction, the work leads to the *Theme*, which depicts the misguided knight-errant, who is going to rid the world of some of its abuses. Then comes the first variation—*The Conflict with the Windmills*. What are these? Why, the "Giants," the lords of the land, says the Don. But, says Strauss, don't fight them, or they will crush you as certain and ruthlessly as the windmills. The second variation follows—*The Pagan Host of Alifanfaron*. They are the "crowd"; don't attempt to fight them, for they are, after all,

only the bleating sheep that rushed our hero. Next we have the *Discourse of Sancho with Don Quixote*. But, says Strauss, discourse and argument on ways and means are waste of time. Variation iv. brings the *Adventure with the Disciplinants*. They are the Churches. The Don opposes them, and gets a broken head for his trouble. The next two variations need not concern us. It is *The Ride through Space* (var. vii.) and *The Enchanted Bark* (var. viii.) that claim our attention more. The Don mounts the magic horse for a ride through space, and embarks on the magic bark for a wondrous adventure. And what is the moral? Don't! Philosophy and idealism are of little use, says Strauss (or at least I say it for him), for those journeys on the "magic horse" and "enchanted bark" never really start. The Don finally admits his mistakes and retires from the fight, confessing, "Whilom, I was a fool, but now I am wise."

As a Secularist, I do not agree with Strauss' apparent view of the futility of combatting "the powers that be," but I really enjoy his music, and I am sure that Secularists who may not be conversant with this great tone-poem ought to make its acquaintance.

## II.

Wagner warned us years ago that art could never be what it should be until it was freed from the influence of religion and the State. The progress of Freethought of recent years has contributed no small amount towards the freedom of art from their strictures, although musicians and artists, especially in England, where they are so utterly *bourgeois* and respectable, are apt to ignore its influence. For society to arrive at a stage of progress when a purely æsthetic discussion upon art is permissible reveals a certain progress, and the principle leads ultimately to the acceptance of what had once been considered æsthetic heresies. It would, for instance, permit the harmonic heresies of a Beethoven or the color heresies of a Manet; but unless there was a corresponding progress in the discussion of religion and morality, neither the *Mass in D* of the former nor the *Olympia* of the latter could have "arrived," as the French say, for the simple reason that they would have been antagonistic to the conventional views on religion and morality.

This point is well illustrated in the works of Richard Strauss. Look at the battles which, a decade ago, raged around his music, *quâ* music, to say nothing of the conflict aroused by its literary, religious, and philosophic content. Æsthetic discussion had, however, reached a stage that his harmonic heresies finally won a hearing. But not so where his music touched upon social or religious heresies. When his *Salome* first came, England said No! as it had previously said to Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah*, because Freethought had not sufficiently overcome that stupid opposition of the religionists, who prescribed the treatment of Biblical subjects on the stage.

1918 brought the first stage-play licensed and performed—*Joseph and his Brethren*. The following year Strauss was announced to give us a "music drama without words," *The Legend of Joseph*. This latter, coming so soon upon the heels of Sir Herbert Tree's production, did not seem at first sight to break any fresh ground. But let us look for a moment at the title of Strauss' work—*The Legend of Joseph*! Why legend? Then, again, Alfred Kalisch, Strauss' English biographer, writing in the *World*, said that the *scena* was purposely changed from the Egypt of the Bible to Italy of the Renaissance, so as to emphasise the "purely human" aspects of the story, and for pictorial reasons, since the Italian Renaissance period gave a more artistic background.

To speak of Bible history as "legend," to insist on "purely human" aspects of a divinely revealed episode, and to prefer the dressing of the infidel renaissance to Carlyle's "Hebrew old clothes," is scarcely complimentary to the Holy Writ nor to British orthodoxy. Of course, one cannot expect a disciple of the anti-Christian Nietzsche, and one

whom James Huneker thinks an Atheist, to look upon the Bible from any but a literary standpoint, as he did in his *Salome* controversy. But this state of things only serves to show how we have progressed under the efforts of militant Freethought; for not only can Strauss produce a stage-work on a Biblical subject, and treat it as a Rationalist, but he can blazon the reason of his Rationalism in his title—an act which, not many years ago, would have landed him in prison for Blasphemy.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

## Acid Drops

The ridiculous threat of the German Admiralty to blockade the English coast is said by the *Daily Telegraph* to be contrary to the laws of man and the laws of God. Contrary to the laws of man, maybe; but we cannot recall any part of the Bible in which blockading by submarines is forbidden. Nor do we remember any subsequent revelation to that effect. We have looked up the Church of England Articles and the Westminster Confession, but these leave us equally in the dark. On the whole, there seems too much "God" about the business. What with the German and the British claims to have the Deity with them, God might be excused if he declined to have anything further to do with either, and told both parties to go to the Devil.

The doctrine of force can be conquered by the superior power of prayer, says the *Church Times*. Well, if that is so, it seems that our need is for more parsons not more soldiers. Lord Kitchener appears to be under a different impression. He asks for men, and doesn't stipulate for praying-men either. And in the training camps, among the tests of efficiency, we have not observed that the ability to pray ranks very high. Prayer *plus* force may do something against the German Army. Prayer *minus* force is a very doubtful quantity.

The *Church Times* quotes Bergson's saying that "the Prussian ideal of force had been triumphantly met by force of ideal." This is just a striking way of saying nothing, although the habit of saying these things in this fashion has brought Bergson fame. The ideal of force dominates the nations of the Allies as well as Prussia. What is the British demand of a two-keel-to-one Navy but the ideal of force? And France's Army? Or Russia's Army? The appeal to battle is an appeal to force, and nothing else. People simply fool themselves who say it is not. Or, if it is argued that behind the Allies there is an ideal, that is equally true of Germany. You may disagree with the German ideal, you may think the German people misled or deceived; but the same truth remains. The German people are nerved to the sacrifices for which war calls because they believe that in some way they are promoting national life and development. So are the French, so are the British, so are the Russians. It would be impossible to move masses of men except under the impulsion of an ideal. And the really instructive thing about the present situation is that each country professes devotion to the same ideal. Each is battling for freedom, for culture, for civilisation. M. Bergson simply repeats the same catch-words without troubling to ascertain either their absolute or relative value.

"Churches seem to catch it most," writes a soldier from the fighting lines, "Why not? Priests are always invoking 'the God of Battles.'"

*Lloyd's Weekly News* estimates the number of soldiers likely to be permanently disabled through the present War at 75,000. What a pity Saint Peter is not alive, for he replaced a man's ear after it was cut off with a sword.

*London Opinion* has a good joke on the German air-raid. It says that the enemy airmen "are offered cash prizes ranging from £25 to £125. A sliding scale presumably—£25 for a Sunday-school and £125 for a cathedral."

The *Cambridge Review* states that 7,237 past and present members of the University are serving with the Colors. The list includes 385 from Jesus College and 359 from Christ's College. Jesus Christ, by the way, is known as the "Prince of Peace."

The American press has christened the German Kaiser

"the Butcher of Belgium." We should like to see some newspaper comment on the Biblical stories of the slaughter of the innocents and the destruction of the first-born.

"The man who has heard the voice of God amid the din of the battle-field, surrounded by carnage, and with his own life hanging on a thread, will not treat the Church with indifference," says Canon Carnegie, Rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster. Presumably, the Church which chortles of the blood of the Lamb will be in the fashion.

There is one movement at least which intends to make all its can out of the War. That is the Salvation Army which, in spite of the death of William "Barnum" Booth, has not lost its old genius for advertising. Very early in the War it announced how many people had left its "shelters" in order to join the Army. As these people entered the shelters under the stress of poverty, paid for whatever they got there, while the Salvation Army made a profit out of them, one is puzzled to see what credit was due to the Army on account of their enlistment. Since this announcement was made, and particularly of late, we have come across a number of paragraphs in various papers, all pointing out what the Army is doing, and how much its work is appreciated. The family likeness about these paragraphs, added to what we know of Salvationist methods, leads us to believe that they are supplied by the Army itself. It is part of the old game. The Army supplies the news to the press, the press publishes the information, and then the Army republishes the paragraphs as independent testimony to the value of its work.

It must be very cheering to the dwellers in the poorer parts of our cities to know that while they are being charged two shillings for a hundredweight of coals and eightpence for a quarter loaf, diamonds and pearls are much cheaper than they were. Perhaps the economies effected in this direction may help them to pay the increased charges for food and clothing.

The War—as is the case with all wars—has been productive of a mass of rumors and reports utterly devoid of foundation, and amongst the most deplorable, were the attacks made on soldiers' wives by—perhaps well-meaning, but quite irresponsible busybodies. We were all the more pleased to see the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children meeting these stories with a flat denial. The Society, in its report, says:—

"From the Society's point of view it can be said, without the slightest hesitation, that no greater slander has ever been circulated concerning the habits of any body of people than the assertion that soldiers' wives, as a class, were lacking in the spirit of self-restraint, or that they were given to neglecting their children. It is true that in the reports of police court proceedings, it was found that some mothers had spent their separation allowances in drink, and that their children had been, in consequence, neglected. In every case that has been tested, it was found that the habit of drinking had extended over a long period."

This is substantially what we said ourselves on more than one occasion, and we are glad to see it endorsed by a Society that is in a position to test the truth of the extravagant statements made. The idiocy of relying upon the statements of a number of fussy females of narrow views and ill-balanced judgment was only equalled by the infamy of the attempt to place soldiers' wives under police surveillance, as though they were, *prima facie*, members of the criminal class.

A writer in the *Westminster Gazette* seems to imagine that Frenchmen are turning Christians again. "To whatever faith we may belong," he says, "it is impossible to fail to be deeply touched by the wave of religious devotion that is at present sweeping over this country and the ranks of the French Army." What nonsense is this! Priests have to enter the French Army, like laymen under the modern Conscription. The State only knows men as citizens. But a good deal of generosity is shown in providing clerical soldiers with posts that do not involve the actual shedding of blood.

Religion, says the Rev. Father Figgis, is a fact; no argument can destroy it. The first half of the statement is perfectly true; the second half is only true in a sense that quite destroys its value for Father Figgis. No one disputes that religion is a fact—least of all Freethinkers. It is not alone a fact, but a very powerful one. But fact is not synonymous with truth, and power is not synonymous with goodness. A delusion is a fact; murder is a fact; theft is a fact; even a lie is a fact. What Father Figgis implies, and

what he wishes his hearers to believe, is that religion is true because it is a fact. And that is a different proposition entirely. The Freethinker recognises the *fact* of religion; hence his fight against it. And his attack takes the form of, not denying its existence, but of explaining its nature. And the Freethought explanation covers the ground. It makes plain the nature of religion; and when that is done, everything is done. If Father Figgis would address himself to that explanation he would be facing the real enemy. Until he does that he is, like the rest of the preaching world, merely beating the air.

And, of course, mere argument will not destroy religion always and everywhere. Argument is only of avail against minds that are open to its reception. With vast numbers of people argument is simply so much waste time; and, at best, to remove one absurdity only makes room for another. Just consider the use of arguing with certain types of religionists with whom everybody is more or less acquainted. Its value is almost infinitesimal. Their religion is proof against argument because their minds are not receptive to the principle upon which the argument rests. Doubt must have already commenced before argument can gain a fair hearing. In the main, we may say that argument explains a position rather than annihilates one; and its value lies in the fact that it puts into exact form feelings and tendencies that have developed as a consequence of the general advance of human civilisation. And that is also the reason why, while a Church may *reply* to an argument against its teachings, it is powerless to stifle the forces that, in modern times, gives Freethought its real strength.

Christian tradesmen are very busy exploiting their less fortunate Christian neighbors, and almost every article of ordinary use has been advanced in price, milk being the latest commodity to be raised. In Christian countries the one thing that never advances in value is the milk of human kindness.

Miss Marie Corelli, the novelist, is writing on "Lonely Soldiers" in the *Evening News*. Other famous military critics include Messrs. William Le Queux, Max Pemberton, and other writers of fiction. Although the censorship is very severe, histories of the War are already being published. The latter should be as truthful as the Bible.

"New Hymn Tune" is a heading in a pious periodical. It will be welcomed, for "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood," and similar humane topics, must be a little wearisome at the present moment.

The *Daily Telegraph* informs its readers that "sing-songs take place every week-evening" in the Young Men's Christian Association's huts for soldiers. We wonder if the song, "Do You See any Green in My Eye?" is included in the programs?

A good story is going the rounds concerning the visit of some Belgians to Kensington Gardens, when they espied the statue to "Albert the Good." "Ah, how generous you English are!" exclaimed one of the party, who mistook the memorial for an expression of admiration for the Belgian monarch. And no one in the party had the courage to mention that the statue commemorated a German.

There is a society called the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, its object being, we gather, to attend to the needs of the families of men while they are from home. Up to the time of the War the help given was only to those families the male and female heads of which had been properly, and we presume religiously, married. But now the Society has taken what the *Church Times* regards as a false step; for "since the war began the Executive Council has departed from the principle hitherto followed, and has administered relief to unmarried mothers and their children in a certain number of instances." A special general meeting of the Society was demanded by a number of members to stop this practice, and their spokesman was Father Wainwright, who protested against this abuse of the Society's funds. In the end, his resolution condemning the Executive's conduct was outvoted, and the *Church Times* now declares that the dissentient members ought to consider the formation of a new Society which will see that this practice does not recur.

This attitude of the *Church Times* is very religious, but that is all there can be said for it. No one will argue that these people ought not to be married; they ought—the ultimate interests of the children demand it. But in the

long run society punishes them, and the women too, usually, quite severely enough without that punishment being deliberately and consciously increased. A soldier who is away from this country fighting, and who has a woman and children depending upon him, has a moral claim upon both the Government and the public. Whether he has gone through a form of marriage or not has nothing to do with the case. Presumably it suited him and the woman not to be married, and if the British public take away the man to do something for them they are morally bound to see that those dependent upon him do not suffer. Unmarried men with families are not rejected in the Army; and until the British public declines to be protected by men who are living with unmarried women, it is mean and cowardly to permit little children to suffer unnecessarily in his absence. If the father of illegitimate children is good enough to fight Britain's battles, the children of an unmarried soldier should be worthy of support. The incident serves as one more illustration of the lovely thing religion is in practice.

Two parsons, the Revs. Albert Willan and Frederick Charles Marshall, have disobeyed the Master's injunction concerning the laying up of earthly treasure, and their wills have been proved at £20,167 and £10,853 respectively. They should be having a lively time in the warm place they so often preached of.

Canon Lucan (Roman Catholic) was recently fined £2 and costs for assaulting a school girl aged 14. Canon Lucan is manager of a Roman Catholic school at Dowlais, and claimed that he had the right to remove any child from the school during religious instruction. In this case, he was accused of prodding the girl in the chest with a stick, dragging her across two class-rooms, and turning her into the street. The Canon said that he often used the stick on the boys, and they loved him for it. Probably the reverend gentleman was quite astonished that the stick did not awaken affection on the part of the girls. We hope the lesson will be an effective one for the Canon, otherwise he may one day find a parent ready to discuss the subject with him—with his own favorite weapon.

According to the *Daily Call*, a proposition is on foot for washing the statues adorning the public thoroughfares of London. Fancy British workmen washing the pious General Gordon's face and combing out the sooty whiskers of the lions in Trafalgar-square!

The great increase in the price of coal has caused much dissatisfaction. If prices go much higher, orthodox folk will wonder what they are doing in the place so often mentioned in sermons.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at the dedication of the Church Missionary Society's new premises at Salisbury-square, Fleet-street, London, said that years ago the Carmelites had a place in Whitefriars, and the Dominicans in Blackfriars. Just so! We prefer, however, the old Carmelites to their present-day descendants who write for the yellow press.

Sir William Barrett is as energetic as Sir Oliver Lodge in trying to find some use for God somewhere, but we can't say that he is any more successful. And like Sir Oliver Lodge, he says many things before religious assemblies that he would not care to say before a scientific one. This, we think, is quite the wrong way to go to work. It would be far more healthy all round if both of them placed the religious view before scientific assemblies and *vice versa*. Then each class would hear the views they were least inclined to accept, and criticism would be instantly forthcoming. This would be good for both lecturer and audience.

In an address before the City Temple Literary Society, Sir William Barrett said:—

"I cannot conceive any process whatever of blind evolution that would enable a lenticular eye to be formed by the survival of the fittest without any intelligence behind. Some directive creative intelligence must be behind the processes of evolution, adapting these processes to a pre-determined end. Therefore, I maintain with any biologist, that no chance modification of structure, without intelligence guiding it, can possibly explain the lenticular eye."

To a City Temple audience this, doubtless, sounds very convincing, but there is really little in it. Presumably, Sir William can conceive other organs being developed through unaided evolutionary processes, but God had to be brought in for the eye. Which, on the face of it, is absurd. And, note, God must be there because Sir William cannot see how it could be done without. "Cannot see" is, after all, no

more than an expression of ignorance, and what we would like to know is whether he can see *how God did it*? Then we should have something positive on which to build. But you cannot establish a scientific hypothesis on an "I cannot see." It is only the argument of ignorance over again. And when Sir William claims "with any biologist," he can only mean with any biologist that agrees with him. A great many would disagree with him very strongly indeed.

The majority of cork legs are manufactured in Germany; hence if British soldiers lose their legs they have to wear artificial limbs "made in Germany." Evidently "Christian" science is not equal to the task of replacing the original limbs.

The *Daily Mail* has been reproaching the German Kaiser with invoking "the mere barbaric God of Hosts." Wilhelm is not alone in this failing, for all the monarchs concerned in the War do the same thing.

An account of the famous Christy Minstrels appeared recently in a weekly newspaper. This reminds us of the joke that a French newspaper once, in its London Letter, referred to the celebrated troupe as "The Minstrels of Jesus."

Mr. R. J. Campbell says that he might have been in the Church of England but for the fact that he could never believe anyone would be damned everlastingly for "not being able to understand the exceedingly complicated and metaphysical clauses of the Athanasian Creed." Mr. Campbell's alarm was quite groundless. No one is expected to understand the Athanasian Creed. All you are called upon to do is to believe it. The trouble has usually arisen when people have tried to understand what it was all about.

We like to see the clergy in their true colors. Archdeacon Wilberforce, for instance, has been telling a Westminster Abbey congregation that if Kitchener's Army cannot be raised satisfactorily, conscription will have to be applied. We suppose this is what old Queen Elizabeth called "tuning the pulpit." She made good use of that sort of concert. Most of the clergy agreed with her, and as long as their salaries were paid regularly, they accepted her assurance that God was with her and took the same side. Archdeacon Wilberforce preaches "the stern reality of the present crisis." Soldiers must go out to the front. He remains at home; running no risks, and sure of a salary which would make a soldier's mouth water. The Archdeacon's soldiership has hitherto been confined to a few weeks at the rear.

"Three bishops of the Church of England have been at the front, ministering to our troops," says a daily paper. A smart sub-editor might have headed this paragraph "The Trinity Among the Troops."

### A Prayer.

Good Rabelais, when wilt thou come again  
To cleanse this world of every cock-eyed stain,  
Or burst our sides, and split our waistcoats up,  
That surgeons, tailors, ne'er can mend again?

Full is the cup, brim full of stupid cant,  
But priestly spouters, still with war-like rant,  
Stoke up Hell's fire, or paint sick Heaven's dome,  
But still uphill with fatty heart they pant.

The leaky ship of Spooft now rolls at sea,  
Manned by a crew who hornpipe in their glee,  
Or rub their hands in nobbly lumps of gold,  
Or pass their time in game at "Catch the Flee."

O, catch the Flee; O, catch the fleeting hour;  
The night is dark, the clouds are thick and dour;  
O, catch the Flee, you shiny beetles try,  
To do ought else you ne'er can have the power.

O, Rabelais, for Christ's sake come again,  
We love thee well, we love with might and main;  
Thou friend of man, thou jolly chanticleer;  
O, Rabelais, come down to this refrain;  
O, Rabelais, for Christ's sake come again.

CHRISTOPHER GAY.



## To Correspondents.

**RAVENSPUR.**—Hardly up to the mark. You should study some little book on the subject before you write any more verse. Your technical knowledge seems almost nil, and your ear doesn't tell you that "fields" doesn't rhyme with "reveal." Our advice to all budding poets is don't write verse unless you must. If you have a "call," well and good; if you haven't such a "call" stick to plain, honest prose.

**HARRY SHAW.**—Some merit, but not enough.

**G. WATT.**—We would rather say nothing about the subject of your inquiries. What was said at the time was said, but we cannot undertake to turn up references in back numbers of the *Freethinker*. That would, in most cases, look more like malice than correction. We are glad to hear you can say what few can, that you possess a complete set of our journal.

**J. M. GIMSON.**—Both remittances placed to account. Thanks for your good wishes for the new year.

**G. R. WILLIAMS.**—The two best books which you may find accessible are Buchner's *Force and Matter* and Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. There is a very expensive *History of Materialism* by Lange.

**G. B. L.**—Your letter is too long for an answer to a casual remark in a leading article. Life is not long enough to discuss small problems at this length.

**E. B.**—Your congratulations are very welcome, whether the battle is won or lost. We believe the Secular Society, Ltd., was laid on a "firm foundation," owing to the skill and design on which it was laid out. Every move has tended to show this, and we are pleased to see that a man of your intelligence and standing is a believer in its legality and stability. The greatest joke of hostile critics is that they overlook all the thousands of pounds that it has already received.

**RICHARD ALLEN.**—The question of new premises has given us tremendous trouble. The search has been interminable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's visit to the Law Courts, *re* the Bowman bequest, was referred to in last week's paragraphs. The Tuesday morning following, and before the date of this week's *Freethinker*, Mr. Foote is again in consultation with the Secular Society, Ltd.'s, solicitors. Nothing further can be said definitely until he has met the official Board meeting that had been called for that evening, except to say that the decision taken, whatever it is, must be of the highest importance.

Some people have been asking Mr. Foote when he is going to begin the work of Secular reorganisation, which he sketched at the last N. S. S. Conference. One thinks it is dead, because nobody talks about it now; another professes to know who killed it. The satire is not too keen. The War killed it; but it may be found in a state of resurrection when the War is ended, and little people lose a grand opportunity of talking about their betters. "Wait and see," said Mr. Asquith on a famous occasion. It was a wise word. To strike when the iron is cold is like a famous charge at Balaclava. It was splendid, but it was not war—as the French general said. The man who would attempt to reorganise Secularism while the present war-fever was running its course would be the most asinine optimist that ever flourished outside a lunatic asylum or a church.

William Henry Morrish, the veteran Bristol Freethinker, whose name was very familiar to more than Bristolians in former years, and who was long a pillar of Freethought in that district, writes to us as follows: "As an admirer of yours for more years than I desire to count, I have pleasure in sending you a guinea for your Honorary Fund." Mr. Foote is obliged to defer for a week—or maybe two—the promised statement concerning the Honorary Fund, but that is a matter which, under present circumstances, will

probably not suffer by delay. For reasons already stated, the subscriptions that are already to hand will be acknowledged together. Meanwhile subscribers will receive acknowledgments through the post.

We commented, a week or two ago, on the action of the German authorities in removing the Ferrer monument at Brussels. At a public meeting of Spanish Radical-Republican Deputies and newspaper editors it has been decided to send a protest to the Brussels Municipality, and to ask that it should be restored after the War. This is all that could be done in the circumstances, and we hope that Ferrer's fellow-countrymen will not allow the matter to be forgotten. It is naturally their place to move first. Reformers in other countries, they may rest assured, will not be backward in giving assistance.

Mr. Lloyd's health, we are happy to say, is being restored; but it comes in slowly, and we fear it will be some time before his friends see him himself again. We are glad to say he is able to write his weekly article for the *Freethinker*.

We draw attention to a circular from Mr. F. J. Gould on another page of this week's *Freethinker*. We should be glad if Secular Societies here and there, who have the means and convenience, could avail themselves of Mr. Gould's services. It would be a pity that such talent as his should be idle even for a time.

The author of that fine book, *The Churches and Modern Thought*, in the course of a letter recently received from him, "congratulates" us on the "eminently sensible way" we have dealt with the burning questions of the day—War and Peace. How many editors will receive, or deserve, such a tribute?

We have often said there are many things which Mr. G. B. Shaw does not understand. When their object was to claim as much of him as they could, the clergy called him a Theist who had not yet found Christ. The Rev. R. J. Campbell described him as a Christian who had not yet found God. Mr. Shaw never ended this difference by any positive declaration. He let anybody invest in him who chose to do so. Whatever they lost he stood to gain; for the danger of a public writer is in being treated with silence. "Never mind," said Dr. Johnson to Boswell, "who abuses you. It is like playing shuttlecock. Never mind who keeps you in the air, so long as you are not dropped in the mud." Shaw understands that motto as well as any man in the world. So, although he has promised, he has never published that book on religion. But Shaw does not understand one thing. Now that he takes a certain stand against the war party and the war spirit, the very clergy are calling him Atheist. Mr. Shaw has forgotten that the clergy always will be on the side of the powers that be. Somehow or other they preach maudlin sentimentalities to the poor, and serve the interests of the rich. Mr. Shaw has failed to serve either rich or poor, and has often made himself extremely disagreeable to both merely for the love of the thing, or an inability to study the question. He knows whether he is an Atheist or not. It would have been better to confess the fact than to have the label thrown at him in a treacherous state by all sorts and conditions of the public he used to stigmatise as thieves and robbers.

The Annual Dinner of the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society was held on Saturday at the Market Hotel, Mr. R. G. Fathers being in the chair. Forty-two members sat down to the dinner, and many others came afterwards. The toast of "The N. S. S. and its President" was drunk with much enthusiasm, and an enjoyable musical program was carried out. The indefatigable Mr. J. Partridge undertook the secretarial duties, and the function passed off very successfully.

The *English Review* for February has a number of interesting articles, but none of them of great interest. And do they not turn too much upon the War, which is not quite so fascinating a theme as it was some months ago. Mr. H. M. Hyndman writes already on "The Coming Triumph of Marx's Socialism"; yet who can see except the prophet that either Socialism or Socialists are counting for much in the present catastrophe? But, there! Prophesied things so seldom come to pass, and the prophets so seldom arrive. Mr. Harrison contributes two vigorous articles relating to the War, a subject, however, on which there is little fresh to be said. By the way, Mr. Harrison figures as "Cad" at the top of an article in the *New Age*. We do not intend to take part in any personal controversy. At the same time, is not the title somewhat caddish in itself?

## The Distribution of Animal Life.—II.

(Continued from p. 92.)

ACCORDING to the scheme evolved by Solater, and subsequently adopted and developed by Wallace, the earth is arranged into six zoological regions, which are as follows:—

The Palæarctic Region, which embraces Europe, Northern and Central Asia, and Northern Africa, to the district bordered by the Sahara Desert.

The Ethiopian Region, which consists of all tropical and South Africa, together with Madagascar and the Mascarene Islands.

The Indian, or as renamed by Wallace, the Oriental Region, comprising India, South-Eastern Asia, as well as the Malay Islands as far as the Philippines, Borneo, and Java.

The Australian Region, which includes the continent of Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, and the entire group of Malayan and Pacific Islands to the east of the deep channel which divides Bali from Lombok—the zoological significance of which we have already indicated, and which is known as Wallace's Line.

These four regions make up the Old World. The New World is divided into the Nearctic and Neotropical Regions. The Nearctic includes all temperate and arctic North America, as well as Greenland, and extends in a southerly direction as far as Mexico, while the Neotropical embraces the whole of the American continent still further south, together with the West Indian Islands.

This arrangement has one important advantage over all others put forward. It coincides as Dr. Lydekker himself allows, very closely with the main geographical divisions of the globe. Under the foregoing scheme, Madagascar is included in the Ethiopian Region, but as that large island possesses a fauna in many ways distinct from that of the neighboring African continent, Lydekker prefers a system which places the Madagascar and Mascarene areas in a special province, under the name of the Malagasy Region. Professor Angelo Heilprin, however, was inclined to lessen the number of regions adopted by Wallace, and carried out the suggestion of the late Professor Alfred Newton, by uniting the Palæarctic and Nearctic Regions into the Holarctic. But the scheme set forth above seems, on the whole, the best, and we will now proceed to our task of outlining the various groups of higher organisms which distinguish the six regions in question.

The Palæarctic or Old World temperate and frigid region can claim no families of animals as special to it. But several genera of moles, an otter, a badger, roe and fallow deer, antelopes, goats, the dormouse, rodents, and the yak are confined to this immense land area. Many birds also are thus confined, among them the chough, some jays, three finches, and others. The Palæarctic is, likewise, the leading habitat of a large array of animal organisms, which occasionally extend beyond its boundaries. Many pheasants distinguish this region, and it may be said that the genus Phasianus is almost confined to it, although other related forms such as the Golden Pheasant and the Ipeyan Pheasant, which are distinctly Palæarctic, have successfully established themselves in the Oriental Region.

Numerous members of the Mammalia, again, are closely related to the Nearctic or North American forms. It has been shown that the Aurochs and the Wapiti are near kinsmen of Lubdorf's deer and the American bison. The grizzly bear, though it bears a different name, is scarcely distinguishable from the European brown bear, while those boreal mammals, the arctic fox, the reindeer, the elk, and glutton are distributed through the northern districts of the Palæarctic and Nearctic alike. Overlapping is also seen in the lynx, marmot, wolf, and marten, organisms which display the smallest modifications, although they abound in both regions. All these mammals are markedly Palæarctic. And it is now

demonstrable that down to a few thousand years ago there were numerous faunal affinities between the European and the African areas. The Maltese elephants, the hippopotamus, the lion, and various other Ethiopian organisms, have only recently become extinct in Europe. The musk-deer and other animals that are characteristically Palæarctic are, likewise, to be reckoned with as leading Oriental forms. That terrible carnivore, the tiger, is not the strictly tropical beast he is popularly supposed to be. This creature is by no means a rare dweller in the temperate Palæarctic region, and has even been slain as far north as the Amur. Moreover,—

"the mammoth of Siberia and elsewhere is held by some to be the actual progenitor of the Indian elephant, which is thought by them to hardly rank as a different species, but to be rather a variety which has lost its hairy covering on becoming an inhabitant of a hot climate. The hairy rhinoceros of Europe is another case in point."

It is of great convenience to the student that the various grand zoological regions have been subdivided into smaller tracts. The sub-regions of the Palæarctic are the European, Mediterranean, Siberian, and Manchurian.

The European division comprises North and Central Europe. There is one genus, the Desman, which is special to it, and this animal lives in the streams of Southern Russia and the Pyrenees. The wolf, the mole, the hedgehog, and the dormouse are salient features of the European fauna, but, unlike the Desman, they are occasionally encountered beyond its frontiers. This sub-region is unable to claim the sole possession of any genus of birds, but several genera are far more abundant within it than in any other area.

The richest province of the Palæarctic is the Mediterranean, and this is largely the result of its genial climate. This area is made up of the European countries along the Mediterranean Sea, in company with Northern Africa to the Sahara, Beluchistan, and Persia. Two genera of rodents and the fallow deer (*Dama*) are special to this sub-region. Among other organisms, the Civet of Southern France and Mediterranean Europe as a whole, and the porcupine may be regarded as characteristic genera which sometimes range beyond it. These and other animals are held to indicate the African affinities of this sub-region. The lion and the hyæna are further examples of the transitional character of the Mediterranean fauna, while two warblers are the only birds absolutely restricted to this area.

The Siberian sub-region comprises all Northern Asia. Two antelopes and the yak are mammals peculiar to it. There is also a mole which never migrates outside it. The musk-deer, *Moschus*, however, very seldom strays from the Siberian sub-region, while several arctic animals, such as the sable, the reindeer, and the glutton are much more numerous within it than elsewhere. There are a few birds special to this territory, which includes one genus of starlings never seen beyond it.

The Manchurian division is well stocked with animal life, in fact, considerably more so than many other parts of the Palæarctic. The Manchurian embraces Japan, Corea, and a portion of China. Certain deer are special to it, and other animals are nearly so. One genus is confined to it, and some other genera dwell in this sub-region, which are entirely absent throughout the remainder of the Palæarctic. Also, some of these genera occupy parts of the Oriental Region. Birds are handsomely represented, but so many of these extend to the neighboring Oriental, that they are of little consequence from the standpoint of zoogeography. Splendidly plumaged pheasants of several genera flourish in this area, but these birds also range throughout the greater part of the Palæarctic region.

The entire land surface of North America and Greenland, which is termed the Nearctic Region, is much wider in its more arctic areas than in its temperate territory, and Wallace contended that

the comparative poverty of its fauna finds its explanation in this fact. Salient representatives of the Nearctic mammalia are, or were, the bison and the grizzly bear. *Bassaris*, a carnivorous animal related to the Raccoons, is dispersed through both the Nearctic and the Neotropical regions. The skunk and the puma also occupy both regions, while the same conditions govern the distribution of various birds. But the majority of these are really southern organisms which have advanced into the Northern Continent.

From the general arrangement of land and sea, apart from other considerations, one naturally anticipates a closer resemblance between the faunas of the Nearctic and of the Palæarctic, than between those of the Neotropical and the Ethiopian. And when we take into account the similarity of the climatal conditions of the two northern regions, the general resemblances that exist seem naturally accounted for, without invoking the theory of the polar genesis of life. Be that as it may, however, these animal similarities are so close that Professor Alfred Newton, and his disciple, Professor Heilprin, were anxious to unite the Palæarctic and Nearctic Regions into the Holarctic Region. Wallace strongly opposed this suggested change for the following cogent reasons. There are 43 genera of Palæarctic mammals which are absent in the North American or Nearctic Region. Then there are 39 genera special to the latter area, while 31 remain which dwell in both regions. It is conceded by advocates of the Holarctic arrangement that after legitimate deductions have been made from Wallace's enumeration, a very respectable percentage of mammals still remain, which are special to each of the regions originally chosen by Solater. The distinctive mammalian faunas of the Palæarctic and Nearctic would probably prove to be larger than they are were it not for the circumstance that mammals are more poorly represented in the temperate than in the tropical zone. Beddard urges that of the 39 genera claimed as peculiar to the Nearctic, seven extend to the Central or South American tracts. But, even if this be admitted, it scarcely furnishes an argument for the unification of the two Northern regions into one. This, and other critical considerations, rather point to the necessity for further rearrangement within the American Continent itself.

Dr. Lydekker, in his valuable *Geographical Distribution of Mammals*, admits that "there is, undoubtedly, a marked distinction between the mammals of North America as a whole and those of Europe and Northern Asia." But this he seeks to minimise by pointing to "the number of genera and species common to the two areas, and unknown elsewhere." The distribution of the Lepidoptera is advanced by Mr. W. F. Kirby as a reason for uniting the Palæarctic and Nearctic into the Holarctic, as these insect genera which predominate in the two former regions possess so much in common. But against this may be set the pronounced differences which separate the land molluscs of the two regions. Writing of North America, the Rev. A. H. Cooke states that:—

"No district in the world of equal extent is so poor in genera, while those which occur are generally of small size, with scarcely anything remarkable in coloring or form. The elongated land-shells of Europe are entirely wanting."\*

The Nearctic is very conveniently mapped out into the following four sub-regions:—

The Californian, to which is annexed a portion of British Columbia. This sub-region contains several peculiar organisms. Among these are two bats, a sea otter, a mole, and a shrew. Some of its birds are confined, and others are nearly confined, to this sub-region.

The Central or Rocky Mountain sub-region is the sole possessor of a big horned sheep (*Ovis montana*); two goats are also special to it. It is for all practical purposes the last refuge of the expiring bison;

the prairie dog does not range beyond it, and several genera of birds are unknown beyond its borders.

The Eastern or Alleghany area contains a varied and characteristic Nearctic fauna; but among mammals, one genus only is entirely restricted to it. This animal is *Condylura*, the star-nosed mole; but thirty birds are apparently peculiar to this territory.

The fourth sub-region is the Sub-arctic or Canadian. Many of its fauna merge into those of the boreal districts of the Palæarctic. As previously stated, its elk, reindeer, and other mammals are met with in both the far northern sub-regions. The Canadian contains an extensive avian population, but this has few peculiar characteristics, although it is surprising to discover that one of those beautiful creatures, the humming-bird, is now known to breed in sub-arctic Alaska.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

**"Pastors Call the War Cause for Gratitude."**

THE above quotation is from the Rev. W. B. Norton's report of the pulpit utterances of his colleagues. In last Sunday's program, comment was made on Pastor Milburn's claim that God had permitted the War for the purpose of "blotting out mediæval militarism," which fact, he thought, should make us grateful for the War. Another clergyman, the Rev. Victor W. Thrall, pastor of the Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church, says: "We traced the guidance of Providence in our Civil War; why should not the nations of Europe trace a like Providential guidance in the present conflict?" That is to say, We saw God's hand in our war; why cannot the European nations see the same hand in their war? But the Czar and the Kaiser see God's hand in the present War as clearly as the Methodist "divine" saw the same hand in our Civil War. How can their majesties, who rule "by the grace of God," afford not to see his hand in everything? And has it ever occurred to the clergy that they, too, must see God's hand in everything, or lose their occupations?

And why was the Civil War permitted? The clerical answer is, To abolish human slavery. Just as the present War is to blot out "mediæval militarism," the Civil War blotted out slavery, the pastors argue. But our question, Why, if these evils could be blotted out, were they permitted in the first place? remains to be answered. Is it creditable to the Deity to say that he winked at the worst kind of human bondage for thousands of years, until, finally, it got so degrading that he had to resort to a fratricidal war to put an end to it; and that now he has been compelled to provoke a world-war to put an end to another overlooked evil—"mediæval militarism"?

To be sure, the theologian's God is a most expensive reformer. And, it is we who pay the full cost of his reforms. We give our sons and husbands to die, our cities to be destroyed, our savings to be wasted; it is our little ones that are orphaned, our women that are made widows, and our President that is assassinated. It is the nation's heart that is torn and its blood that is shed; yet it is the Deity to whom the clergy give the credit of abolishing both slavery and "mediæval militarism"! We pay the preachers their salaries, but it is God whom they serve.

Once more: If the Deity makes war "his minister" and carnage "his daughter," it must be because he considers these better or more effective than education or moral suasion. Why, then, should not we follow the example of the Supreme Ruler, and put our trust in the sword rather than in the pen? If an Infinite Being must resort to force to maintain the right, how much more should we who have neither his wisdom nor his goodness! As long as we have a warlike God, we will have warlike kings and peoples. Before trying to convert us to the doc-

\* "Cambridge Natural History," Mollusca, p. 339.

trine of peace, the preachers must try to stop the Deity from going to war to "blot out militarism," or to abolish slavery.

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

## Religion and Crime.

"In fact, religion has much less influence on morals—at least, on that portion of morals which falls under the jurisdiction of the police—than we are in the habit of believing, and our confidence in the ethical benefits derived from Christian teaching is unfortunately not justified by facts." H. C. LEA, *History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, vol. ii., p. 341; 1896.

No objection to Freethought is more common than the assertion that its adoption will withdraw the restraints upon crime. How simply standing for truth, instead of for hypocrisy, can effect this is never clearly made out; but, most people having been trained to suppose that religion and right conduct are inseparable, it is taken for granted that any departure from the one must be attended by disastrous consequence to the other. This despite the evidence that some of the noblest-minded men and women—such as Bentham, the two Mills, Grote, Darwin, Clifford, Huxley, "George Eliot," and Harriet Martineau—have been entirely free from religion.

Now, I contend that men and women become Freethinkers, not because they have less concern for the wellbeing of society, but because they have more. In devoting themselves to the actual needed service of mankind, instead of to the worship of a god who cannot need our praises, they have reached a higher platform than that called religious. Crime and religion, in fact, are both atavistic, being the survival of earlier and more savage states in the midst of civilised life. This is the conclusion to which anthropologists are being forced by a study of the facts.

Garofalo, in his profound study, *La Criminalite*, points out that usually brigands and assassins are devoted to the virgin and the saints. He says, too (p. 162): "*Des dames très croyantes peuvent passer toute leur vie dans l'adultère, et à l'église pleurer agenouillées au pied de la croix. Car la luxure est un péché mortel, comme le haine et la colère, mais la bénédiction d'un prêtre peut également les absoudre tous.*" Absolution can wipe out all sins. Ferri, in *La Sociologie Criminelle* (p. 240), is of the same opinion as to the influence of religion. He says: "The common psychological illusion, that the religious sentiment can by itself be a preventive of crime, must be renounced. It happens, on the contrary, that the immense majority of criminals are sincere believers." The following table, showing the proportion of murders to every 100,000 inhabitants, is suggestive:—Italy, 12.67; Spain, 8.59; Austria, 3.11; Belgium, 2.52; France, 2.18; Ireland, 1.93; Germany, 1.14; England, 1.08; Scotland, 0.94.

Joly, in *La France Criminelle*, gives affirmative evidence. He points out (p. 274) that Lozère is the department which gives the highest percentage of criminals, and yet where the people are especially religious. There is a popular saying in the vicinity: "*Lozèreen! le chapelet d'une main, le couteau de l'autre.*" The rosary in one hand and the knife in the other is a good description of many of the most pious people of southern Europe.

Mr. Henry Havelock Ellis, in his excellent study of *The Criminal*, says (p. 156): "In all countries religion or superstition is closely related with crime. The Sansya dacoits, in the Highlands of Central India, would spill a little liquor on the ground before starting on an expedition, in order to propitiate Devi." Among 200 Italian murderers Ferri did not find one who was irreligious. "A Russian peasant," remarks Mr. Kennan, "may be a highway robber or a murderer, but he continues, nevertheless, to cross himself and say his prayers." Dostoeffsky also notes the religious ardor with which the convicts gave candles and gifts to the Church. All those who live by unlawful methods, said Cassanova, "confide in the help of God." Naples is the worst city in

Europe for crimes against the person. It is also the most religious city in Europe. "No other city," observes Garofalo, "can boast of such frequent processions; no other, perhaps, is so zealous an observer of the practices of the Church. But, unfortunately, as an illustrious historian [Sismondi], speaking of the Italians of his day, wrote: 'The murderer, still stained with the blood he has just shed, devoutly fasts, even while he is meditating a fresh assassination; the prostitute places the image of the Virgin near her bed, and recites her rosary devoutly before it; the priest, convicted of perjury, is never inadvertently guilty of drinking a glass of water before mass.'" Those words of Sismondi's, Garofalo adds, "are as true to-day as when they were written."

Lombroso found 248 tattooed prisoners, out of 2,480, bearing religious symbols; while the slang of criminals witnesses to a faith in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in the Church. Mr. H. H. Ellis, says (p. 159): "It seems extremely rare to find intelligent irreligious men in prison. The sublime criminals whom we meet with in Elizabethan dramas, arguing haughtily concerning divine things and performing unheard-of atrocities, are not found in our prisons. Freethinkers are rarely found."

In the sixteenth century, says Mr. Lea, Bishop Guevara felt obliged to admit that the morality of the Spanish Moors was higher than that of the Christians. It is the same to-day where the rival faiths of Christianity and Islam are brought into competition. In Algeria the arrests for all offences of European foreigners average 111 per annum for every 10,000; of Frenchmen 71; of Arabs, only 34.

Still more striking are the carefully-kept statistics of India, where the dense population and dire poverty might seem to form a breeding ground for crime, but where there are fewer offences against either person or property, relative to the population, than in any Christian country. India has scarce one-fifth of the crime of England, the least being among the adherents of Brahmanism, and the most among the adherents of Christianity. But even here this comparative immunity is attributed by those best able to judge, not to the tenets of Brahmanism, but to the caste system under which every individual is a member of a body, exercising close supervision over his every act, and inflicting penalties for transgression, culminating in expulsion, which destroys his career for life.

A comparison between Judaism and Christianity is not flattering to the latter. Jews have fewer criminals in proportion than either Protestants or Catholics. Even in the matter of legitimate births they stand ahead. In Vienna the proportion of illegitimate to legitimate births among the Jews is only between a third and a fourth of that among the Catholics; in Prussia it is between a third and a half of that among Christians. And the Jews are the nearest to Secularists among all the religionists. In Liverpool, and other towns of mixed Catholic and Protestant population, it is found that a larger proportion of criminal offences takes place among the Catholics, the most strictly religious portion of the population. Facts, then, do not countenance the theory that the rejection of religion removes any of the real restraints upon crime.

As human nature is constituted, imminent temporal earthly penalties will always outweigh, and have a more restraining influence than contingent post-mortem ones, which may be averted by timely repentance, for—

"While the lamp holds out to burn  
The vilest sinner may return."

Religion veils the natural consequences of wrongdoing, and promises immunity to sinners because Jesus paid for all. It very rarely happens that a criminal condemned to death fails to avail himself of the ministrations of the chaplain. Convicts at their last hour usually die as piously as any christom child. This is the error of religion. It provides a safe conduct to glory for the murderer, and none for the victim. It substitutes a confession at death for

right conduct in life, and confounds ceremonial observances with real duties.

The attitude of religion to crime is either one of denunciation, or of wiping out offences by confession and absolution, or by faith in the blood of the Lamb. Secularism has no such easy method. It teaches that all actions must have their consequences. It looks rather to prevention than punishment. Much crime arises from social conditions, which may be improved. The Secularist trusts rather in the school than in the prison. Instead of teaching children from a barbarous book, full of bloodshed, lust, and all forms of criminality, it would inculcate practical knowledge of what tends to social wellbeing in our own day—in short, give to every child the sound physical, mental, and moral training that constitutes true education.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

### Facers for "Bible Punchers."

#### CHRISTIANITY, FREETHOUGHT, AND WAR.

It is indeed remarkable that because some of the best German scientists and philosophers are Freethinkers, certain Christian professors are telling us that Atheism and war go hand-in-hand. It would be well if they explained exactly how long Freethought has consorted the policy of international violence.

These honest, fair-minded Christian gentlemen cajole the foolish and biassed by saying that the Germans are a nation of Atheists, and that their present ruthless, devastating war on Europe is the natural result of their Atheism.

In the first place, only the best brains of Germany entertain Freethought; the Germans as a nation are as pious as any Christian race on earth, with the possible exception of the Russians. We have it on the best authority that a great religious wave has swept over Germany since the War; the churches there are packed; whilst the Kaiser himself sees visions of the Virgin, and claims that the Almighty is a partner in the concern of Kaiser, Kronprinz & Co.

Ever since this planet was cursed with that ugly superstition, Christianity, the pages of its history have begun and ended in war and persecution. Richard Cœur-de-lion, Robert of Normandy, and a few others drenched Palestine in blood in the name of the Lord. The history of the chosen race of the Bible-God itself is a long record of bloodshed and atrocities which had the sanction of "God." Everywhere and every time that Christians have warred, they each and all have firmly believed that their acts of wholesale murder and plunder and rapine are not inconsistent with their religion. They have called on "God" to increase their strength, so that the havoc which they are causing might be intensified; and they have given "him" thanks when they have won, or gone to "him" for consolation when they have lost.

According to the book, "the Lord is a man of war"—and so it seems. But this admission does not deter sundry gentle and brotherly Christians from casting a base, lying, cowardly calumny on Freethinkers, by asserting that war is the fruit of Freethought.

#### THE FINGER OF GOD.

We are told by Christians of authoritative standing that this great World-War is sent by "God" to manifest "his" reality, and to convince the people of the earth that they need "him." If "God," who, it must not be forgotten, loves the world, wishes to manifest "his" reality, and to convince us of our need for "him," why in the name of reason and humanity does "he" always choose a method which causes rivers of blood to flow, and which brings terrible misery and suffering to "his" creatures? If calamity carried conviction of "God's" greatness and goodness, we should all have been convinced long ago, for this unfortunate planet of ours, from time immemorial, has again and again been afflicted with various kinds of disaster.

Why does not "God" adopt a gentle, peaceful method of bringing "his good works" to our recognisance? Why does "he" not send a prophet-messiah whose radiant personality and unparalleled eloquence would convert the whole world? Put this question to a Christian, and it will be dodged by a vain repetition of that hoary parrot-cry, "The ways of the Lord passeth all understanding." True, they do pass all understanding; and in such a way as to provoke nothing but anger and disgust from sane men, and cause the thoughtful to at least strongly doubt, if not absolutely reject, the idea of an almighty benevolent Being who watches graciously over us and works all things for our benefit.

#### CHRISTIANS, THREE.

There are three kinds of Christians, and all three are contemptible in their different ways. The first sort is repre-

sented by the professional Christian, who, although he very likely does not believe in the doctrines which he preaches, gets what is very often a huge sum of money from the community, by posing as the prophet and disciple of a deity which does not exist.

Secondly, there is the creature who professes Christianity, not because he really believes in it—he may disregard its ethics and be ignorant of its dogma—but simply because it is "respectable" to be a Christian. An Atheist is, in the eyes of a foolish and servile multitude, an abnormality, an unnatural being; therefore, to avoid attracting scorn and uncomplimentary attention, this second kind of Christian professes belief in a religion of which he really knows and cares nothing.

Then, lastly, there is the sincere Christian. Reckless of nothing of reason, science or experience, turning a deaf ear to the protestations of sane men, and looking with a blind eye at the manifold lies, absurdities, and immoralities in the Christian Bible, this wretch stumbles blindly on, guessing, wishing, believing, hoping; devoting his whole life to a ghastly superstition which takes his all and returns him nothing but hysteria and insanity.

The first Christian mentioned is contemptible for his greed and dishonesty; the second for his moral cowardice; and the third for his stupidity and fanaticism.

#### PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.

The following are a few of the Bible precepts which Christians, practically unanimously, have rejected as impossible, inconvenient, or unpalatable; which shows conclusively either that Christian ethics play no real part in Christian lives, or that the Bible is too highfalutin to be of any value as a guide to conduct.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you."

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

"Give to him that ask it of thee."

"Resist not evil."

"Lay not up treasure upon earth."

"Take no thought for the morrow."

H. C. W.

### Correspondence.

#### THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A number of the galleries in the above are at present closed to the public, and the portion of "Mimnermus" article calling attention to the unrepresentative character of the collection may be in part, if not wholly, accounted for by this fact. It cannot in fairness be said of the complete Gallery that "Democratic leaders are conspicuous by their absence" when paintings of Thomas Paine, Richard Carlile, William Hone, Horne Tooke, William Godwin, and William Cobbett are to be seen on its walls.

In these circumstances I am sure "Mimnermus" will be willing to give some credit to the trustees of the institution for endeavoring to faithfully carry out their rule that "they will attempt to estimate that celebrity without any bias to any political or religious party." Criticism can be directed against some of the descriptive notices in the official catalogue, notably that of Paine, where no mention is made of his anti-Christian writings. Fancy a Paine without the *Age of Reason*! But this can be forgiven when we read, for instance, of Swinburne that his *Poems and Ballads* "were much criticised for their free opinions on theology and morality, but they established the author's reputation as a writer of marvellous verse, and are now accepted and admired." And of the atheistic W. K. Clifford they say, briefly but magnificently, "One of the most remarkable and luminous thinkers and writers of his day."

DEFINITE ARTICLE.

### Obituary.

It is with regret that I have to record the decease of one more of the old Freethought stalwarts—Mrs. Hannah Netherwood. She was one of the founders of the old Huddersfield Secular Society, over sixty years ago, and ever afterwards lived and died steadfast to the true principles of the Secularist faith. During the serious and strenuous times of thirty years ago, when our late and present Presidents of the N. S. S. were being both persecuted and persecuted, she was ever ready with moral and tangible support for the welfare of our chiefs and the cause, and Messrs. Bradlaugh and Foote had no more enthusiastic admirer than Mrs. Netherwood. She died at York at the ripe old age of 87 years, and was interred at Huddersfield Cemetery on Saturday, January 30, when a number of Freethought friends followed her remains to the grave.—W. H. SPIVEX.

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