

THE Freethinker

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Liberty can neither be got, nor kept, but by so much more that mankind generally are unwilling to give the price for it.—HALIFAX.

On the Brink.

FREETHINKERS, as Freethinkers, do not meddle with party politics. But you cannot regard as party politics the question of universal peace or war. That is every man's concern—and every woman's too; ay, children's also as far as they are old enough to treat it with understanding. It is a question for the whole human race.

One would imagine that more reason, and less passion, would be called forth by such an important problem, and one so fraught with the present and future welfare of mankind. But this is not the case. Plenty of science is devoted to it, but comparatively little reason; and plenty of emotion, but very little justice and self-control. There is nothing on which people of both sides, or all sides, feel themselves so much in the right. The distortion of the moral view is nearly complete. That is why it is so difficult, if not impossible, to stop a war when it has once begun. All citizens are then of one nation; patriotism is the only virtue; it is the honor of the country that is at stake.

I have had something to say myself on the present War, leaving a great deal more to be said at the proper time and occasion. I want now to say something—or, rather, to let my readers hear something—about what may, to a great extent, be called the American Freethinker's view of the War; by which I do not mean the view of American Freethought, but the view of a good American who is also a good Freethinker.

I am writing this on Tuesday, February 16, the day the *Freethinker* goes to press. This very morning I received from Chicago a printed address by my friend and far-off comrade, Mr. M. Mangasarian, on the question which looks like becoming a burning one—"Should America Prepare for War?"

Mr. Mangasarian's pamphlet is written with his usual force, ability, and individuality. He thinks as a man, bears himself as a man, and addresses you as a man.

Mr. Mangasarian's view of the American pacifists is as follows:—

"The pacifists, or those who say we should not prepare for war, are certainly not the only people who prefer peace to war. We all most earnestly do that; but the pacifists believe that the best way to secure peace is by not making any preparations for war. The contrary position is that the best way to secure peace is to be sufficiently prepared to compel the would-be invader to sue for peace. The Civic Federation, at a recent meeting in New York, passed a resolution to establish a Council of National Defence. This quite harmless resolution was denounced by the pacifists as a

warlike measure. 'Substitute arbitration for war,' is the slogan of the peace party. Instead of trying to arm this nation, they argue, we should direct our efforts toward disarming the nations which might attack us. When a traveller sees an armed highway robber approaching him, instead of arming himself against his possible assailant, he should try to disarm him! That is the kind of advice that is much easier to give than to follow.

"President Eliot of Harvard, who also advocates disarmament as the only means of international peace, is of the opinion that there can be no peace in Europe, or security against sudden invasion, so long as all the able-bodied men are trained to be soldiers, and the best possible armies are kept constantly ready for instant use. This is in consonance with the doctrine of the peace party, that to prepare for war is not the way to prevent, but to provoke war. In passing, let me comment that the fact that able-bodied men are trained as soldiers can affect only the manner of fighting, but could have very little effect upon the fighting propensity. If men were not trained to fight, it would not follow that there would be no fighting. We read sometimes of washerwomen fighting. They are not trained to fight, but that does not prevent them from fighting. The causes of clash and conflict are very much deeper and more general than Dr. Eliot supposes."

"Andrew Carnegie, who has given lavishly of his money to promote the peace movement, is of course on the side of the pacifists. In a recent contribution to the *New York Times*, Mr. Carnegie says that 'Armament must mean the use of armament, and that is war. If we are to prevent war, we must prevent preparing for war.' He illustrates his point by saying that the best way to prevent burglary is by prohibiting the carrying of the instruments of burglary. Mr. Carnegie makes the same mistake that Dr. Eliot makes: The tools of the burglar are not the cause of burglary. It is the burglar who invents the tools, not the tools that invent the burglar. Symptoms must not be mistaken for the disease. To think that if we had no pockets, there would be no pickpockets, would be a very superficial conclusion. Mr. Carnegie also says that he would meet an invading army with a speech instead of a gun, and that after they had heard his speech, they would cheer him instead of firing at him. Let this amiable Scotch-American try the effect of his speeches on one of the battlefields of Europe. A practical demonstration of his claim would win many converts. He also relates how, on one occasion, he met the Kaiser, and how he told him that the Almighty himself had appointed Emperor William to be the preserver of the peace of Europe; and that he (Carnegie) was sure the emperor would fulfil heaven's mission—all of which shows that our multi-millionaire, with all the good intentions in the world, is not an expert in the prophetic profession. But you see how earnest and uncompromising the pacifists are in their opposition to defensive measures. Let us compare their arguments with those of the advocates of preparedness."

Evidently the Gospel of Pacifism no more pleases Mr. Mangasarian than the Gospel of Militarism.

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

Freethought and Religion.

IN one way or another the question of Religion and Freethought is eternally forcing its way to the front. There are plenty who profess to be of opinion that the whole subject is old-fashioned, if not obsolete. It belongs, they say, to a bye-gone generation and, at any rate, the question has now undergone a complete transformation owing to a newer science and the rise of a more rational religion. So far as outward semblance is concerned this may be true; but in its essentials the dispute is unchanged. Science is not, in any genuine sense of the word, becoming more religious, nor is religion becoming more scientific. The study of religion is becoming more scientific, but that does not mean a gain to religion; quite the contrary. It affords ground for the strongest and deadliest attacks on religion that have ever been made. It does not remove the issue, it only sharpens it. The issue remains; it lies at the root of many of our controversies, whether we are aware of it or not. And that is why the dispute between religion and science cannot be suppressed. You may ignore it for a time, but, sooner or later, we find ourselves compelled to face it.

I am indebted to a recent issue of *Public Opinion* for what looks like a very full report of a lecture by Mr. John Buchan before the Selkirk Brotherhood on "The Religious Value of Freethought." The title is in the nature of a challenge, and it is symptomatic of a certain prevalent frame of mind. Time was when the very name of Freethought or Freethinker was shunned by Christians as something accursed. For Christianity this meant—as it still means to a much larger number than we always remember actually exists—a body of doctrines taught by a Church, or a set of teachings derived from the Bible. Then a man's duty might have been to understand one, or to find out what was the other, but further than this was not permissible. To be a Freethinker was to claim not only the right to examine these doctrines or teachings, but also the right to reject them. And not merely the right to reject them, but the duty of doing so should they fail to commend themselves to one's reason. And this, of course, no Church could admit. More, no Church does admit that to-day. There is not a Church in Christendom to-day, whether orthodox or heterodox, that would insist upon the duty of man or woman openly giving up religion once they are convinced of its unreasonableness. On the contrary, they would all point out that, in such circumstances, a man should humble himself in prayer, wait trustfully for enlightenment, and then, one day, peace and belief would come. In plain words, he is to stultify his reason and, by a steady course of discipline, reduce himself to a frame of mind that will fit him for membership of a church—or an asylum.

Then came a change. Freethought became too strong to be either ignored or to be silenced by mere condemnation. The habit of freethinking had so much to commend it, that the Churches could no longer deny its value. So the usual transformation ensued. Freethought in itself was admitted to be a good thing. Not only a good thing, but a *religious* thing. It was consonant with the most intense religious convictions; and it was not from this a very difficult step to the further discovery that *true* religion and genuine freethinking were identical. It was only another phase of the game that religion has always played with antagonistic teachings and principles. Denunciation, reconciliation, identification. The game is old, but it is ever fresh and attractive—to some people.

Mr. Buchan does not say that Freethought—by which he means "the exercise of the mind freely and honestly"—is identical with religion, he simply says that "religion and thought, religion and science, are eternally bound together." In a passage which contains much truth and error, he says that Freethought:—

"Is not the opposite of religion—very far from it. The opposite of religion is irreligion, apathy, careless-

ness. The foe of the Church is not science or thought, but the world. The kind of man over whom religion has no power is the frivolous man, the man who does not care much about anything. Your street-corner Atheist who spends his days abusing Christianity is in his way religious. He has an intense religious interest. If he hadn't do you suppose he would waste his time when he might be enjoying himself elsewhere? It is because he is so fundamentally concerned with the topics with which religion deals that he labors to destroy a creed which he thinks deals with them wrongly.....The Roman Catholic Church burned Bruno and imprisoned Galileo. Why? Because it was not interested in thought and science? No, on the contrary, because it was intensely interested in its own thought and science and hated what it considered a false rival. If it had not been interested, do you think it would have bothered to burn scientists and philosophers?"

Mr. Buchan is here within sight of the truth, but he does not quite get there. In the first place, apathy and carelessness are only the opposite of religion in the sense that they are the opposite of anything earnest and serious. They are equally the opposite of Conservatism and Liberalism in politics, of Socialism and Anarchism in sociology, of anything, in short, that calls for earnestness or serious thinking. Religion does not appeal to the apathetic or the careless, not because they represent religion's opposite, but only because they are apathetic and careless.

Second, when Mr. Buchan says the "street-corner Atheist" (Why street-corner?) is religious because he has "an intense religious interest," he is not saying quite what he means. What he means is, that the Atheist takes an interest in religions. But that is not a *religious* interest; it may be an anti-religious interest. He is interested in religion as a sociologist, as a psychologist, or as an anthropologist. He is interested in religion because it has dominated the minds of masses of men even to-day. His interest may be either theoretical or practical, or both. It may arise from the mere perception of religious belief as one of the facts of life, and a fact which a complete philosophy of existence must find a place for, as it must find a place for fairy tales or the belief in witchcraft. That is what one may call a purely philosophical interest. Or his interest may be of a more practical kind. He sees what an enormous amount of time and energy are spent on religion. He finds that in all stages of human society men have diverted no small part of their energies to the empty service of the gods and to the maintenance of a parasitic priesthood. Whatever else may have been neglected that has received attention. He sees all sorts of sinister interests sheltering themselves behind religion and using it as a means for perpetuating its existence. He sees it everywhere obstructing the reformer and the thinker, and consequently, he attacks religion; not because he has a religious interest in religion, but because he has a reformer's interest in clearing away anything and everything that appears to obstruct human development.

The truth that Mr. Buchan has grasped is, that whether a man be an Atheist or a religious man, it is his sincerity or conviction that makes him do things. Of course, if the Churches had not been deeply interested in their own thought they would never have bothered to burn or imprison scientists and philosophers. Buckle put this well when he pointed out that power, allied with ignorance and good intentions, form the most dangerous triad on the face of the earth. But Mr. Buchan would have saved himself a deal of confusion had he set himself to explain why it was that the burning or imprisoning or persecuting of advanced thinkers is so uniformly an accompaniment of religion in all ages and countries. It was not because they were more interested in their thought than Freethinkers were in theirs. On Mr. Buchan's own reading of life, the intensity of conviction were in both cases equal. It was really because all religion involves a principle that is favorable to persecution, while all Freethought involves a principle that is ultimately fatal to its practice.

What is the vital principle of religion in relation to human society? It is really the principle of exclusive salvation. It is mere historic truth that polytheistic religions are the most and monotheistic religions the least tolerant. The more gods a man believes in, the more hospitable he is to other deities. The fewer gods he has, the more he resents others' existence. And when he gets to one God, his intolerance becomes pronounced. Every monotheistic religion has been a persecuting religion because it has felt the supremacy of its own deity threatened by the presence of others. And the same principle of exclusion applies to teaching. Every religion, every Church even, is convinced that it possesses not only the substance of truth, but its form. Outside its borders there is little or nothing but error. And given this conviction, held with intense earnestness, almost the possession of power to force these convictions upon others, and persecution becomes almost a mathematical certainty.

On the other hand, the more intensely a man holds the principles of Freethought, the more he is protected against the crime of persecuting others for a difference of opinion. The Freethinker, as such, is not really concerned with a particular opinion or teaching. He is primarily and vitally concerned with the right of examination, criticism, and rejection of any and every opinion. With the religious man, at his best and broadest, the question is, Is an opinion true or false?—if false, there is reason for suppressing it. With the Freethinker the question of truth and falsity is really subordinate, since every opinion may be false to someone. With him it is the right of every opinion—even wrong ones—to existence and expression. Genuine freedom means the freedom to be wrong—otherwise it is not freedom at all, for no one has ever seriously questioned whether one should be permitted to be right. And the cure for wrong opinion is not coercion, nor repression, nor boycott, but the free play of all shades of opinion. The only cure for wrong thought is more thought. And that is what no Church in the world has ever realized. You cannot stop people thinking; you can only, at most, keep them thinking wrongly. Wrong thinking, loose thinking, is productive of infinite harm; but in spite of that the free play of opinion remains the only protection against oppression, and the only guarantee of orderly and profitable progress.

C. COHEN.

Maudlin Eloquence.

It is admitted by all, while many boast, that religion is an affair of the emotions rather than of the intellect. As a matter of fact, religion and reason are sworn enemies, and no attempts to establish harmonious relations between them have ever been wholly successful. As Professor Flinders Petrie says, "religious matters are not a subject of argument but of belief." It follows from this that the strongest religious emotions are no evidence whatever of the truth of religion, because truth is an intellectual perception, not an imaginative vision. Now, religious emotion or experience is an artificially induced mental condition to which no human being is by nature heir. How absurd is it, then, to affirm that "man is as distinctively a religious as he is a social being." That is a saying of Dr. John Hunter, able of Glasgow, in a sermon entitled "Our Inextinguishable Need of God," which may be seen in the *Christian World Pulpit* for February 10. Dr. Hunter declares that religion has not been instructed into existence, but is "here because it is at once the life of God in man and the unfolding and expression of his own soul, and because all human experience has attested its truth." Such a dogmatic assertion is insupportable of verification, as the reverend gentleman well knows. If Dr. Hunter's doctrine were true, Dr. Hunter's preaching would be a culpable waste of time and energy. Clergymen exist simply

because man is not naturally a religious being, but must be coaxed in all conceivable ways, not only to adopt the religious life, but to continue the practice of it; and there is no getting away from the fact that, despite the arduous exertions of hundreds of thousands of ordained ministers, and of hosts of other Christian workers, in Christendom, the majority of the inhabitants are openly non-religious. How can any sane person aver, in the face of that fact, that "by the whole make and strain of his being and by the deeper necessities of his life, man is moved, yea, forced to cry" out for God. Of course, by religion Dr. Hunter means supernaturalism, for God, of whom, according to him we have such an inexorable need, is a supernatural being; but he must be aware that Buddhists, who are fully as numerous as Christians, lead noble and useful lives, and enjoy great happiness, without either belief in or help from any supernatural realm. Consequently, what Dr. Hunter says of the whole make and strain of man's being and the deeper necessities of his life, is obviously false and calculated to mislead ignorant and credulous people.

Dr. Hunter affects the omniscience so characteristic of the occupiers of the pulpit. He tells us that "the late Charles Darwin gave utterance to the strange opinion that religion is unnecessary to those who are surrounded by domestic affection," and that "a learned judge of our day also made a similar statement—that a man who cannot occupy his mind with science, art, politics, trade, home, and friends, must be a poor kind of creature." Now, the opinion held by Darwin and the judge is shared by tens of thousands of men and women in our land to-day; but the reverend gentleman assures us, on his own authority alone and unsupported by the least evidence, that "the exact opposite of this teaching is the real truth." Then comes this wild rhapsody of words:—

"It is the men who are wholly absorbed and satisfied with earthly things, however fair and good, and feel no interest in and no need for experiences of another kind, who are the most imperfect creatures—living on the surface of life, with their finest powers still latent, or wasted and worn away. There is in no human being an actual or potential self-sufficiency. The wisest and best of men without any conscious relation to the Divine Power are incomplete and needy, though they have no sense of need. Sooner or later they will be taught the lesson of their insufficiency, of a need of a strength which they do not find in themselves, and of a support which their fellows cannot give and no earthly interest or object can be made to yield."

Has Dr. Hunter forgotten the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"? The men he describes are purely imaginary. We have witnessed the death of several thoroughgoing Atheists, and we have heard all the details about that of many more, and can honestly testify that neither sooner nor later did they confess any disappointment or dissatisfaction with the creed in which they had lived. Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll lived and died as unswerving advocates of their Freethought principles. But Dr. Hunter not only woefully misrepresents unbelievers in general, but is guilty of calumniating Auguste Comte in particular. Here are his own words:—

"It is a curious and instructive fact that the prophet of one of the best known and most relentless forms of modern unbelief recognised toward the close of his life the craving of the human heart for something higher than itself to which it can look up; and while forbidding the worship of the Eternal Goodness, compiled an ecclesiastical calendar, in which every day in the year is dedicated to the remembrance and honor of someone distinguished for genius or nobility of character. Comte saw clearly enough that man can never outgrow religion, and that religion must have an object, so he raised an image in the air which he called Humanity."

We are by no means a champion of the Religion of Humanity, but a sense of simple justice compels us to condemn Dr. Hunter's allusion to it as positively misleading. Comte rejected supernatural religion, root and branch, and his Religion of Humanity,

whether we approve of it or not, runs on exclusively naturalistic lines, while our personal knowledge of several of its apostles in this country enables us to announce that they have no sympathy whatever with any form of supernaturalism.

We are in complete agreement with George Eliot's saying that "the human heart finds shelter nowhere but in human kind." Dr. Hunter sneers at it, declaring it "would be the sorrow of sorrows if we had no other shelter and support save in men and women like ourselves, no Rock rising above our fellows, no Rock of Ages, no refuge and no rest in God who is the source and sum of all human perfection." The reverend gentleman imagines that he is ever so much wiser than George Eliot and all others who share her views, whereas, in reality, he is talking sheer nonsense concerning a being and a sphere the very existence of which is unsupported by a single evidence. His knowledge of Nature is extremely limited, while of anything other and higher than Nature he has no knowledge at all. His beliefs may be firm enough; but he has absolutely nothing else. It is true that they give rise to what he calls religious experiences; but the latter, so far from attesting the truth of the former, merely prove that he has them, true or false. We frankly admit that human wisdom, at its best, is "sorely limited," but we flatly deny that "we need a wisdom higher than our own, and a direction surer than any which the wisest human counsellors can give." We are but learners in the school of life, and our growth in knowledge and wisdom is often discouragingly slow, with the result that we make numerous very serious mistakes; but, in this respect, we are by no means alone. Both experience and observation disclose the fact that many most fervent believers, not excepting Dr. Hunter himself, are as weak, fallible, and foolish as ourselves, and sometimes more so, their God and their guardian angels leaving them, morally, on a level, to say the least, with those who have neither God nor guardian angels. This is a fact which no pulpit eloquence can set aside.

Dr. Hunter admits that the God in whom he believes withholds his help from the most needy until he is asked for it. Listen:—

"Oh, it is easy for people in the hour of their pride and self-sufficiency, when life is going smoothly and merrily with them, to find reasons for not praying; but let them so fall and fail that all further struggle seems of no avail, then as they feel that they are needy and know that they are weak, the cry will come trembling from their long-prayerless lips, 'Help, Lord, or I perish.' And blessed is that experience, however sorrowful and humiliating, which makes one cry for the heavenly help, and drives one to seek the shelter of the Rock of Ages—even the eternal mercy of God."

That extract is a wicked libel on thousands who neither believe in nor practice prayer either in prosperity or in adversity. We are acquainted with several people over whom the strong, bitter waves of affliction are mercilessly flowing; but the idea of appealing for deliverance or consolation to someone other and higher than Nature has never occurred to them. Their suffering and sorrow are wonderfully relieved by the friendship of great books and the active sympathy and service of loved ones round about them, and our conviction is that theirs is the highest and most substantial consolation obtainable. We are fully aware that the sense of sin and guilt is a terrible experience, but we are equally sure that such a sense is confined to those who are superstitious enough to heed the teaching of the pulpiters. Unbelievers are perfect strangers to it. The sense of sin and guilt is the preacher's chief asset, without which he would lack all power and influence. Unbelievers know themselves only as members of society, and, only as such, are they innocent or guilty. What is the cause of the War, to which Dr. Hunter refers in closing? Imperfect, immature human relationship, or the absence of international brotherliness, after nineteen hundred years of the falsest of all religions.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Secret of Burns.

"For the ordinary reading Englishman Burns is at least as difficult as Chaucer, and very nearly as foreign as Victor Hugo."—"Times" *Literary Supplement*.

ROBERT BURNS has been dead over a century, and his fame is far wider and more secure than when he passed away. His life is now celebrated as an important event, and his poetry is rightly regarded as a glorious contribution to the world's literature. Admittedly, Scotland's greatest poet, he has been subjected to extreme adulation from his countrymen. Had he been a lesser genius than he is, this fulsome praise would have exposed him to derision.

The quotation from the foremost literary journal at the head of this article suggests that Burns depends upon dialect, and that when he tried to write English he fell into mediocrity, fettered by the difficulties of the English tongue. This is part only of the truth, and shows that Burns, like many another classic, is more talked of than read. One or two brief quotations taken at random from his works will modify this idea effectually. Take this from a love song:—

"O my luv'e's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June!
O my luv'e's like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune!"

Here is another from a battle-hymn, one of the best ever written:—

"By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free.
Lay the proud usurper low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die."

How much do these two quotations depend on dialect? Or does this?—

"A fig for those by law protected.
Liberty's a glorious feast.
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest."

Then, turn to those lines which are admitted to be among the very finest that Burns ever wrote:—

"Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Do those superb lines derive their force from their one solitary word of dialect? Burns has suffered grievously at the hands of hiccoughing Highlanders and mandlin ministers, but professed critics might well give the corpses of defunct heresies decent burial.

Cant was to be expected from Christians with regard to this great poet and Freethinker. Oliver Wendell Holmes, indeed, expressed surprise that puritanical Caledonia could take Robert Burns to her straight-laced bosom without breaking her steps. For Burns, like Paine and Voltaire, was a Deist. Of other religion, save what flowed from a mild Theism, he scarcely showed a trace. In truth, one can scarcely call it a creed. It was mainly a name for a particular mood of sentimentalism, the expression of a state of indefinite aspiration. The Holy Willies of Orthodoxy have made the basest uses of this emotionalism; but Christians cannot read Burns without unloosening the shackles of their faith. David Hume's young freethinking contemporary did not merely express his dissent from Calvinism. He struck at the core of the Christian superstition. Seeing plainly that priests trade on fear, he sounded a true note when he said scornfully:—

"The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order."

How he lashes the rigidly righteous:—

"Sae pious and sae holy,
Y've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebor's fauts and folly."

And again:—

"Learn three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, and lang, wry faces,

Grunt up a solemn lengthened groan,
And damn all parties but your own;
I'll warrant then ye'er nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer."

Burns never hesitated to make a frontal attack on religion:—

"D'rymple mild, D'rymple mild, tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snow,
Yet that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye
For preaching that three's ane an' twa."

The "Meroiful Great God" of the Christians excites his derision and indignation:—

"O Thou wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thyself,
Sends ane to Heaven and ten to Hell,
A' for Thy glory,
And no for any guid or ill
They've done afore Thees!"

The real Burns is not the popular Burns. When the peasant poet was received by the "unco' guid" aristocracy of Edinburgh, he was afloat on a treacherous sea. The company that admired him stood on the land, and drank the poet's health, and Burns raised his glass and bowed his acknowledgments on his frail raft. In spite of the glib phrase-making of the critics, Burns belonged to a different world to that which his patrons inhabited. Clergymen, nourished on the Bible, pretend that poverty has no real disadvantages, but the insuperable barriers between Burns's position and that of his patrons is not got rid of by pretending that they do not exist.

Like all pioneers, Burns was so much alone. So early was he in the field that he could do little more than anticipate Carlyle's bitter "Exodus from Honnadeditch," or his caustic apostrophe to Christ, "Eh, man, ye've had your day!" But what he did was sufficient. The noblest quality in Burns's poetry is the eternal quality of honest indignation. It comes always with no veil of invention. It is blunt, simple as daily speech, the man talking before us.

It is this quality that makes his "Jolly Beggars," a poem which stands alone in literature, not only unmatched, but unmatchable. The beggars are not merely rebels. For them the laws and conventions of society have no existence. And so with Robert Burns himself. He rises above the network of clerical authority like a skylark. Every Freethinker will say of him what Burns himself said in his epitaph on his friend:—

"With such a he, where'er he be,
May I be saved or damned."

MIMNERMUS.

A Still, Small Voice.

COMMONPLACE nature studies surrounded the picture as if, in envy and petty malice, they would dim its radiance. They seemed, at the first glance, to crowd upon and hide it. At the next they became non-existent. No title had been given it by the artist; nor had he thought his signature an adornment. These things did not matter; for the picture had a name of its own, and a voice of its own, a still, small voice, whose every word was sincere, whose every tone rang true.

It was a snow-scene; and the snow, brilliantly smiling in the joy of a million sun kisses, looked into the pale, amethystine sky, and laughed merrily at its own reflection there. The haze that hid the horizon echoed the ringing laughter, and shot glimmerings of light back to tell of its happiness. Merriment sparkled in the air. Vitality, quick and swift, eager and restless, glanced and gleamed, till it seemed as if king winter were excelling himself in the art of merrymaking, as if here there should be great enjoyment of the opportunities he prepared for men. But such is often nature's manner of framing tragedy.

In the foreground, at the right, were the ruins of a cottar's house. A few shrubs, and the serried ranks of a small vegetable garden, lifted their white loads above the snow-mantled earth and amongst the fallen bricks and boards. Across the threshold

lay a woman's body, and, at her side, in the snow, an unexploded shell.

Had it not been for these, the scene would have been idyllically perfect; but her face robbed the picture of its poetry, her eyes turned the brightness into blackness, her lips made the beauty repulsive. The unhumanness of horror had fastened hard every line of her face. The staring eyes were full of dark grief, even in death. Her hands were clenched at her thin, white cheeks. The parted lips were crusted with black blood; and the snow around her mouth was tinged with red.

There was no shattered breast, no lacerated and bloody flesh protruding from torn garments, no gruesome to show how well a projectile can do its deadly work. There was no sickening exhibition of the inconsiderateness of modern savagery. There was no hint that she had been deprived of life's joy by a materialistic bullet or by a spiritualistic exponent of the craft of human butchery with a copy of the Lamb's Book of Life in his pocket. She lay in the snow with the red around her mouth and the horror in her dead, staring eyes; and no man would say what she had felt or what she had seen.

The young tree and its flower and fruit had been cruelly destroyed. Into the roots of her life had been poured an all-consuming poison. She had tottered through hell ere she found the sleep that is stronger than gods. And no one could have looked into those grief-stricken eyes, and upon that horrid, rigid face without feeling a sudden numbness of heart and a quick clouding of the vision. From the stoniest soul and the thickest head they would have drawn the tears of pity. From the most rabid patriot they would have drawn the sympathy that is closer to the heart of justice than the hate that is crystallised in a big gun. And one felt that all the delights of a fabulous paradise could not assuage the pain; nor all the divine love of the Man of Sorrows remove the woe; nor all the purifying powers of the waters of everlasting life cleanse the stains on the snow and on her black lips, or release her features from their prison of torture.

But why is this irredeemable grief? Why this irrecompensable sorrow, this suffering unasked, unmerited, unjustified, that can never be rewarded, that can never be made fair by a tenfold happiness?

Were you to parry the question by asking the woman's nationality, I should be silent. Were you to speak to me in platitudinous phrases of war, I should remain wordless. Were you to ask from whose guns the shells were fired, I should not answer. Were you to plead extenuating circumstances; were you to justify murder by murder, dishonor by dishonor, savagery by savagery, brutality by brutality; were you to lecture by the hour upon the thousand and one tributary causes to this end; were you to lead me back to the known past, and, showing me the springs of this inevitable river of red, give me proofs of the necessity of her torture and murder; I should let the picture tell its own story. When everything is said and done, when every circumstance is weighed, and every justification is balanced nicely and properly, there still remains the broken life of that woman. Murder is murder, whether it be done by a beetle-browed man for lust of lucre, with the twitch of the coward in his hands and the fire of the brute in his eyes, or by half-a-dozen smart, young soldiers behind a gun, with daredevil bravery in their set faces and grim resolution in their God-loving hearts.

So the picture said; and perhaps, if you listened to its quiet voice, it would tell you, as it told me, that a hundred glorious victories were as naught compared to her death. Perhaps you would learn that her suffering lingered longer in the social heart of humanity than military rejoicing rang in the ears of history. Perhaps you would learn that the evil fumes arising from the quagmire of such crushed hearts sent a pestilence floating through the social life-blood that the labors of many centuries could not subdue. Perhaps the picture would tell you, as it told me, that the life of one poor woman was of more importance in the estimation of the rights and

wrongs of any matter than the most serious statesman's most serious lie; and that only unreason placed it last and the lie first. The picture might tell you, as it whispered to me, that all the good achievements of such a war could never counter-balance that woman's woe. It might tell you that the heaping up of sorrows on a sorrow-laden head never made the heart lighter, nor the path clearer, nor the steps less faltering. It might tell you that the men of most worth, whose labors deserved most admiration, were the men who recognised that her happiness or unhappiness was of more social and ethical significance than all the intricacies of a diplomacy founded upon Mammon-worship, and who, recognising that, sought to relieve the burden and clear the road. And it might say that, despite every limitation, every restrictive opinion, their teachings never lost their truth.

Although admitting all these things, you might not see what the picture meant; but if it suggested to you, as it did to me, that, had people acted in accordance with the beliefs they cherished nearest their hearts, they would not have been led to the hateful shambles by men in the pull of abstract social forces, but would have rebelled, and the picture would never have been painted; what would you say? Then, perhaps, you would see the folly and crime overshadowing all the justifications and necessities to which you had previously given prominence and allegiance. Then, perhaps, you might long for the leaven of reason and be unsatisfied.

So did the picture think confused thoughts for me, as my eyes looked into hers, and the grief came into my soul. And after a little the picture became blurred, and a mist gathered around it; and there loomed from the mist a great canvas. The dim outline of a woman shone from it. She was standing amidst a mass of dying and dead men. As the mist cleared I saw tears steal from her closed eyelids, and run down her white cheeks, and fall on her bosom. Her arms were outstretched in supplication. Her body and limbs writhed in pain. And on the band around her hair was written the word, Reason.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Harold Begbie sings in the *Daily Chronicle* that he is "Going off to Wipe the Kaiser's Eye." We shall be glad to know the result.

We knew the Kaiser had but one valid arm, but we thought he had the regulation number of eyes. Mr. Begbie appears to think he has but one. Two or one, however, we hope they will both show good form when they meet, but we fancy it's two to one on the German this time.

Here is a sample of Mr. Harold Begbie's poetry:—

"The fight may take a little time—little time,
We've got to punish William's crime—William's crime,
But his ships shall never sweep the British sea,
And Belgium, Belgium shall be free!
There's a cruel wrong, etc."

Mr. Begbie should be the next Poet-Laureate.

What a number of oracles this War has produced—from the Kaiser down to Mr. Harold Begbie. One of the most energetic of them is Mr. Bottomley, whose latest "solemn warning" is worth reading, if only as a sample of what personal journalism comes to under semi-religious inspiration. Mr. Bottomley speaks of "our unique position," which, a hundred years ago, would have suited any man going to be hanged. The fact is, unique positions are very few; some people gain them by getting born without fathers; others by getting born with impossible fathers. There is nothing unique about any position into which Mr. Bottomley has made his way. For the life of us we can see nothing unique in a member of Parliament. There are hundreds of them. There have been and will be thousands of them. Nor is there anything unique in being the editor of a society and commercial paper. But that does not hinder Mr. Bottomley from issuing his solemn warning to the

British public. He is in a state in which he *must* speak, and if he will excuse us for saying so, his bosom always swells oracularly when he takes himself quite seriously. He—

"Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the sphere."

Old John Dryden understood the phenomenon, and would have smiled knowingly at Mr. Bottomley's "unique position."

There is a good deal of commonsense in Mr. Bottomley's article, and a good deal of useful information. "Pigs," for instance, "have gone up in Germany from seven to twenty-two millions." Such information is very useful, and we dare say Mr. Bottomley's readers are duly grateful. It appears, too, that there are fewer pigs in England, which also may carry balm to some readers. Besides, the pig is an interesting animal, for, as Charles Lamb said, you can do something with every part of him. But it is a puzzle to see what all these stock economics have to do with Mr. Bottomley's pronouncement, that advertises the Business Government once again, which we suspect is a Government with floating principles and Mr. Bottomley at the top.

"In the name of the people we have spoken," Mr. Bottomley says. We don't know where he got his commission, but neither do we care so long as he refrains from talking the pious nonsense he has lately been indulging in, and which, to all appearance, he finds to be less profitable than he expected. After all, Mr. Bottomley is a man of business.

That poor old man, the Pope, is doing all he can for peace. He has been praying for it. There seems, however, to be little result. War is still popular in the higher circles.

The Church of England has been officially dealing with the question of what is called the "unmarried wives," and the children of soldiers, especially in relation to the question of allowances. But surely these allowances are a physical and social fact, and should have no reference to such "spiritual matters" as the Archbishop of Canterbury is paid to deal with. That gentleman has been easing his mind on the subject at the late meeting of both Houses of Convocation. He said he had pointed out to the Prime Minister how dangerous it was to break down the distinction between married and unmarried wives. But the question of marriage is not at issue in this matter at all. If the soldier has been living with a woman as his wife, and they have children together, the calculation of damage by taking him from them is a purely material one. A baby that comes into the world one way costs the same as a baby coming in any other way. It seems to us that Jesus himself might have been caught in this archiepiscopal trap.

Militarism doesn't argue; it orders. Like religion, it assumes infallibility. Hear, it says, and obey. "Theirs," Tennyson sang of the soldiers who fell in the mad, mistaken charge of Balaclava—"Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die." Which is all very well and inevitable on the battlefield, but not elsewhere, and in matters that do not affect soldiers at all as soldiers, or their officers as officers. One of these matters is religion. Officers try to worry freethinking soldiers into professing some creed and attending "divine service," even inflicting odious insults upon them in the attempt. All this, of course, is unlawful as well as disgusting. The soldier has a right to his own religion or no religion, and his officers have no right to interfere. It is the same with the medical dogma of inoculation against typhoid and other maladies. Some soldiers decline to subject themselves to it. They enlisted to fight their country's enemies, and not to play the part of objects for medical experiment. And their independence is causing the authorities a great deal of trouble. Lord Kitchener is said to be very angry with them, and is reported to be determined to break their independence down. He will punish them in some way; probably by giving them less "leave" than their inoculated comrades. But who is Lord Kitchener that he should do this thing? He is a great soldier, but he is no doctor, and no more authority upon typhoid or any other disease than the humblest soldier in his Army. We hope his lordship will mind his own business exclusively in future. "Stick to your last" is a good motto, even for Field-Marshal.

Lord Kitchener's logic, backed up by Mr. H. J. Tennant (Under Secretary for War), in the House of Commons, strikes us as very feeble. Mr. Tennant evidently spoke for him in the debate on Mr. Chancellor's speech on the subject:—

"He did not disguise the fact that he felt strongly that these uninoculated men were a danger to their comrades."

and that they might carry infection. Lord Kitchener had felt very strongly on the question, and was about to issue instructions that leave must be sparingly granted to men who declined to be inoculated."

Inoculation is a preservative! Those who are not inoculated are a danger to others! Therefore, they must be punished by being kept as much as possible in the company of others!

Mr. Chancellor asked if inoculation was a military law that knew no law. Mr. Tennant replied that it was—and added that "military necessity has never known any law." This statement was loudly cheered. Yet the same men are always ragging the Kaiser for acting on that very policy!

There is a town councillor at Inverness who appears to possess a pretty—we suppose we ought to say "pawky" humor. We do not see his name in the report that lies before us, so cannot particularise the gentleman further. The other evening someone suggested that the picture-houses should be closed as there was an epidemic of measles in the town. Whereupon our "pawky" friend suggested that the Churches should also be closed, and for the same reason. The report says "the subject dropped." We should imagine so.

A number of men were discussing who was the most wicked man. Some favored the Kaiser, and others suggested the German Crown Prince, but a quick-witted fellow mentioned Moses. "How's that?" queried the others. "Why," promptly replied the critic, "He broke all the Ten Commandments at once!"

So many German soldiers have been decorated with the Iron Cross after the pillage and plunder of towns and villages. In olden times they hung the thief upon the cross; but now, alack, they hang the cross upon the thief.

The employees of the London City Mission appear to be risking their lives in the front of the European battlefields. An advertisement in the *Times* informs us that two missionaries are with the Naval Reserves at Sydenham, another is at the White City, and other dangerous centres include Islington Cattle Market, Holloway, Woolwich, Hounslow, and Chelsea; whilst some very heroic men have even reached Wood Green and Edmonton.

A pious contemporary denies that the cost of living has increased. Maybe the editor remembers that Bibles are still sold under cost.

The celebrated Chinese porcelain collection of the late Mr. J. Pierpoint Morgan has been purchased by Messrs. Duveen Brothers, of New York, for £800,000. The crockery used at the "last supper" would hardly fetch more money.

There are, probably, few people outside Government circles who have not been more or less dissatisfied with the proceedings of the Government Press Bureau. Everybody recognises that during a state of war ordinary information cannot remain untouched. But the absurdity of our press censorship in keeping from the British public information that must have been well-known outside the British Isles has been pointed out over and over again by nearly every one of our newspapers. Moreover, there have been hints—and sometimes more than hints—that the censorship has been used to protect Ministers of the Government from perfectly legitimate criticism. Now, the *Abolitionist*, in its issue for February 1, publishes absolute proof of the underhand methods of the Press Bureau. For some time the British Anti-Vivisection Society has been publishing an advertisement dealing with inoculation against typhoid. Some papers had already refused the advertisement, whether upon the advice of the Press Bureau or not, we do not know. At any rate, on January 19 the Press Bureau issued a circular letter to editors of papers asking them to refuse insertion of the advertisement, as the military authorities think it "very desirable that it should not be published," and that its publication "serves only to embarrass the authorities." This communication is marked "private and confidential (not for publication)." We quite agree with the *Abolitionist* that this is decidedly "hitting below the belt." It is not a question of the goodness or badness of inoculation, but of fair play and honest dealing. If the Censor wishes to prohibit, let him do so openly and boldly. We shall then know where we are. But this "private and confidential" method of stabbing in the back threatens the very foundations of freedom. While we are busy fighting for freedom abroad, it is as well to keep an eye on that

article at home. Otherwise, we may one day experience a very rude awakening.

Usually men of God tell us that woman owes every right and privilege she now enjoys to Jesus Christ. Until he came she was man's slave and toy, but he has given her glorious freedom and independence. As a matter of indubitable fact, that is the direct opposite of the truth. Jesus himself never uttered his voice on the subject; but his chief apostle, Paul, did his utmost to narrow woman's sphere, and to deprive her of many liberties ordinarily granted to her in the Gentile world. Theoretically, he was an advocate of equality between the sexes (Gal. iii. 28), but in practice he flatly denied it (1 Cor. xi. 3, 8-10; xiv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii. 11). He held that woman was created to be man's drudge. Her Divinely appointed state was to be one of entire subjection to man's will.

Now, it is very amusing to read Professor David Smith's comment on Paul's insistence on woman's state of bondage to man, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for February 4. Dr. Smith agrees with the apostle, but endeavors to explain away some of his harshest statements. For example, he asserts that the requirement that women should keep silence in the churches is merely "a local restriction" for Corinthian women, "not a universal law"; but the assertion is utterly groundless. There is no trace of any "local restriction" whatever in the famous passage (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35). The same prohibition is repeated in 1 Tim. ii. 11-14; and in both passages woman's slavery is declared to be in accordance with the law. In Asia Minor, where Timothy lived, women served as magistrates, physicians, lawyers, presidents at games, and the like; but Paul maintained that it was wrong for women to hold a status of such exceptional prominence, saying to Timothy, "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection." Professor Smith's comment is, "And, to my thinking at all events, he was absolutely right." Christianity is woman's worst enemy.

The Bible Society is making an appeal for £ s. d. "to meet the special responsibilities imposed on the Society by the War." Do they intend to distribute the Gospel of the Prince of Peace to the Oriental warriors with the long knives?

Sceptics would have been clamorous, says the *Naval and Military Record*, "if it had been suggested a year ago that British ships could hit an enemy at 18,000 yards." And other sceptics are still more doubtful about Captain Noah's old boat, the "Ark." By the way, if Old Nick had torpedoed Noah he would have settled the human race.

The Church Army is appealing for funds to buy a motor-ambulance for its war hospital in France. How jingoistic these Christians are.

That holiday-soldier, the Bishop of London, has had a fit of heroics. He says he would rather be shot in the garden in front of Fulham Palace than see England a German province. A very cheap boast.

A new thing in Bible Kultur is an edition in Braille for the Welsh people. We hardly thought there were so many blind and religious people in that little principality. We must ask Mr. Lloyd-George.

War news from France! *Le Matin* says that Lord Kitchener's family motto is "Thorough." This was the motto before him of Charles Bradlaugh. And it was the motto before both of them of the great Lord Strafford. So a little news may be picked up in England.

The Prince of Wales went off to the front. We hear nothing of the Prince of Peace.

The Archbishop of Cologne assures the Germans that God is with them and they are bound to win. And for a very curious reason. It is unthinkable, he says, that Almighty God could let "atheistic, freemasonic France" to trample down free religious Germany. As a matter of fact, however, Almighty God did let this happen. What about Napoleon? Germany was under his feet less than a hundred years ago. And she was released mainly by British troops and a British general—of some fame, by the way. His name was Wellington.

Leaving Turkey out of the question as Mohammedan, and really Asiatic, seven European Christian nations have been

fighting each other for several months, praying to the same God for the same victory, and killing each other wholesale to save him from having too much to do. By this means they do not fall out with their God, nor he with them. Each is pretty well satisfied, and all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Jehovah and his worshipers seem worthy of each other, but the logic on both sides seems worthy of Colney Hatch.

A charwoman charged at a London police-court with stealing some cooked meat, sausages, a haddock, two bloaters, a bar of soap, and a box of matches, pleaded that as she did not eat her dinner she was entitled to take these articles away with her. She is to be congratulated on her appetite and digestion. Soap as a *hors d'œuvre*, and matches as a savory, make us think that the lady was a lineal descendant of the prophet Ezekiel.

"Fearful, devilish, and calamitous as a great war must be," said the Archbishop of Canterbury, "to stand selfishly aside while vile wrong is perpetrated" is "something yet worse." Unfortunately, the lookers-on include so many of the clergy of all denominations.

Dr. Len Broughton is retiring from the pastorate of Christ Church, Westminster, owing to ill health. South Londoners who wish to hear the American language spoken properly will have to attend Dr. Dixon's services at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

From Sir Oliver Lodge:—

"The result of this War will be more and more to carry the world back to Christ, the greatest revelation of God we have had on this earth."

This is not as strange as it looks, for Christ himself promised to bring not peace but a sword.

Rev. Dr. Hunter gives what he considers a very remarkable "confession" of Heinrich Heine concerning his personal experience at the bedside of his dying mother. Here it is:—

"I thought over," said Heine, "all the great and little inventions of man, but nothing would answer. Then I commended her to God, and composed a prayer that she might read it. She was my mother and had always loved me dearly, and she was going away from me, and this was all that I could do for her. We are not great, and our happiness is when we can believe in something greater and better than ourselves."

Dr. Hunter cites this as an example of the human need for religion, and as a confession from a Freethinker that at the last nothing can take the place of religion. The circumstances are not quite correctly given by Dr. Hunter, since Heine was not at his dying mother's bedside. He was ill in Paris, lying on the bed that he never left but for the grave. But the passage is really more of a revelation of Dr. Hunter's nature than proof of the need for religion. Heine's mother was religious—a Jewess. Heine had become a very pronounced Freethinker. What should a Freethinker do to a dying mother whom he loved? Heine did what we hope every decent man would do under similar circumstances. He provided her with what gave her comfort. A Christian with a freethinking mother might have insisted on forcing his views on a dying parent. Heine was not built that way. One of the most touching incidents in his life is connected with the *falsehoods* he told his mother. She never knew how ill he was. Heine took care of that. All the time she lived, and while he suffered the pains of a terrible disease, he wrote her letters describing his walks and rides, and the joyous time he was having. And a son who could feign this to save a mother the pain of knowing that her son was suffering from an incurable malady was not likely to fail in providing her with a prayer—in which he did not believe—if he thought it would soothe her last hours. We should have a poorer opinion of Heine had he acted otherwise. Less theology, and more humanity, might have enabled Dr. Hunter to give a truer picture of Heine's nature and motives.

Catholic churches in Irish towns are recruited from the country districts. "Cut off the immigration from country districts to this city," said a Dublin priest to the writer of an article in the *Literary Digest*, "for twenty-five years, and our churches would be empty."

Rev. James Whittam, Vicar of Sherburn, near Malton, Yorkshire, is charged with having converted to his own use a cheque for £185, given to the Church Organ Fund by the late Sir Tatton Sykes. The magistrate granted

bail, the prisoner in £200, and two sureties of £100 each. There are too many of these cases in the Church of England.

At a men's own meeting at Southend-on-Sea, a speaker said that "although Nietzsche attacked Christianity, it was that religion which made men noble, courageous, and strong, such as Nietzsche wanted." Nietzsche wrote of supermen, not supernumeraries.

In the *Times* "Agony Column" recently, an advertisement was published commencing, "Those interested in the resurrection of the dead are invited to read....." Then followed the name of a pamphlet. Perhaps some other theologian will advertise a pamphlet on the immortality of the soul.

America seems a first-class country for producing religious cranks, but England, apparently, provides a happy hunting-ground for them. Sooner or later they come here, they have a fairly good time—which usually means a profitable time—and then they depart. The curious, but in its way significant, feature about these propagandists is that no matter what their character, the Christian leaders here do nothing to discourage them. If they do not patronise them with their presence, they encourage them by their silence. Our readers will perhaps remember that this was the policy carried out in relation to the notorious Dr. Torrey. Our exposure of him was complete, no one defended him, but, on the other hand, no preacher in England denounced him. The game was kept up to the end.

A month ago *Truth* published an *exposé* of Pastor Russell, who has for some time been exploiting the credulous British public. The charges brought forward are taken from American papers, and are summarised as follows in the issue of *Truth* for February 3:—

"(1) Pastor Russell was divorced by his wife; (2) in an action brought by the wife for alimony a United States court declared that the purpose of a transference of property worth \$20,000 for \$300 was to deprive her of her due, and 'was a fraud on her'; (3) funds 'given to the Lord' for the purpose of Pastor Russell's work are paid into limited liability companies under the complete domination of Pastor Russell himself; (4) the Pastor has engaged in company flotation; (5) Pastor Russell sued the *Brooklyn Eagle* for libel, for associating him in a cartoon with a number of notorious rascals, and lost the action, the *Eagle* pleading justification; (6) Pastor Russell brought an action for criminal libel against the Rev. J. J. Ross, of Hamilton, Ontario, for publishing a defamatory pamphlet, this action being brought to an end by the grand jury throwing out the bill after reading the evidence given by the Pastor himself."

The really instructive thing is, not that these things should occur, but that it should always be left for a non-religious paper to make them public.

The pious lady who composed "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" has just died at a great age. Neither seems to have been much in a hurry. And the popularity of the song is greatly diminished now. We have heard that servant girls preferred "Safe in the Arms of a Policeman." The blue coat was supposed to cover something more substantial.

Admiral Sir J. R. Jellicoe has just broken his silence to pay a compliment to the Salvation Army, which he says has "done an immense amount of good in our country, and in the world generally." Suppose we drop the word "generally" and ask the Admiral to show us what good the Salvation Army has really done in England. It is always in this vague way that the Boothite organisation receives its praise. We should like to hear something more definite. And a start might be made with the Hadleigh Colony and the Belgian Refugees.

The late Lord Londonderry was not a great man, either as a politician or in any other direction, that we are aware of. But there is one saying of his in the House of Lords that deserves remembering. It occurred in a discussion of religious education in the schools, and Lord Londonderry was all in favor of compulsion. "Some religious teaching must be given," he said, "I care not what." Now, there was a fine catholicity about this that deserves recognition. Any kind of a god would do at a pinch, but some god was indispensable. He was not very anxious what kind of religion was in the schools so long as some sort of religion was there. Evidently Lord Londonderry, as a very large land and mine owner, knew how well religion served its turn and that of his class. Hence his readiness to notice it.

To Correspondents.

R. STEVENSON writes: "I am still reading and enjoying my *Freethinker* after sixteen years, and wish you many years of health to make life better for us all." This correspondent is thanked for cuttings.

H. SILVERSTEIN writes: "I have much pleasure in enclosing herewith my annual subscription of ten shillings to your Honorarium Fund. It was indeed gratifying to see the Fund so liberally supported during the disastrous year just ended, and this should encourage you to continue on your good work on behalf of our party. After all, practical support is what you require." With regard to the rest of Mr. Silverstein's letter, we may note that Mr. Foote has had a long schooling in patience, and once waited twelve months for a door to open.

STONEY SMITH.—Glad you look forward to being able to help the "good old *Freethinker*, the best of papers."

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. THEOBALDS.—Glad to hear the *Freethinkers* are found so useful. They are a change from the pious literature with which the Army is drenched.

E. B.—Cuttings very useful. Much obliged.

C. T. S.—Sorry we cannot oblige you.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

R. T. W.—A *Freethinker* serving on one of his Majesty's ships, being on a short visit to England, would be glad to make the acquaintance of any brother *Freethinker* in or near Canterbury, Ramsgate, Margate, Deal, Sandwich, or Ash. Letters bearing these initials, c/o Miss Vance, will be forwarded to him.

W. SIDNEY WATT.—We are not at all surprised to hear of religious cranks giving soldiers tracts telling them they may soon be dead, and that, if they die unconverted, may go to hell—although Flanders at present appears a good substitute. We have not seen the tract you name, but we will take your word for it. It is quite in line with the usual impertinent fussiness of missionaries.

R. H. SHEWAN (Guatemala).—Your opinion of this paper is very flattering; we can only say that we will try and deserve some of the kind things you say. The *Freethinker* does, in a way, place a "girdle round the earth," for its readers are scattered all over the globe, and it exercises an influence out of all proportion to its actual circulation.

J. F. FLOOD (Pittsburgh).—Your order came safely to hand, and is being executed by our shop manager. We are obliged to you for efforts to establish a "chain of news dealers" who keep the *Freethinker* on sale. From the circular enclosed, we judge the Pittsburgh Rationalist Society to be a "live" body. We hope that Mr. Marshall J. Gauvin's course of lectures met with the success they doubtless deserved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The *Times* noted recently that the War has given a fresh vogue to the pamphlet. People have found it a convenient method both for dispensing and receiving information. We are not at all surprised at this. In times of crisis, and as an instrument of propaganda, the pamphlet takes an easy first place. It ensures—as well as anything can ensure it—brevity in expression. It economises the energy and attention of the reader, who is able to get in an hour the essence of all the writer has to say. And to terseness on the one side and economy on the other, there is a freshness, a spontaneity about a pamphlet that can seldom be felt in a book. These are the main reasons why the pamphlet has played so great a part in critical periods of the world's history. The Civil War in England, for example, was carried on for years as a war of pamphlets. Thousands were issued on one side or the other. Milton's immortal *Areopagitica* was no more than a pamphlet. The pre-revolutionary period in France saw another war of pamphlets. Swift and Defoe were great pamphleteers. In England, in the

late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the war against orthodox Christianity was mainly carried on by means of pamphlets. The pamphlet appears in a time of crisis because it manages to combine a great deal of the permanence of the book and the freshness of the newspaper, without the bulk of the one or the evanescence of the other.

But, alas, the poor pamphleteer! If he lives in times of crisis, he is soon forgotten when the crisis is past. Of course, this is not true of the men whose positions are assured apart from their pamphleteering; but it is true of the great host of smaller men who play an important part in the affairs of their time. People are generally imposed upon by size—just as they call the present War the *greatest* in history, when all they mean is that it is the *largest*—and the bulk of a book impresses them. Five or six hundred pages may be too many to read, the matter may be too windy to be interesting, or the subject too obscure to be mastered; but it is a solid block of paper, and that is something. A pamphlet is soon read, easily cast aside, and its services quickly forgotten. And the pamphleteer is so often a fighter in an unpopular cause, with neither the influence nor the money to secure the limited measure of immortality that might otherwise be his. On the other side, the vested interests of a country, the powers that be, are not at all interested in the preservation of his work; quite the contrary. The world knows nothing of the thousand and one pamphleteers who fought for the abolition of slavery, for a free press, and against the hideous orthodoxy of the eighteenth century. They were unpopular in their day—hence their value to the race—and contemporary writers "of repute" say as little as possible about them. Later writers go to these contemporary respectabilities for information, and so the game goes on. Defeated error generally has one revenge at hand—it buries its conquerors. If history could only be written with omniscience and absolute fairness, many a great reputation and many an epoch-marking movement would be seen to be really the work of unknown and unhonored pamphleteers.

There will be no more catalogues of books to sell by Bertram Dobell. It is no use complaining. We must accept the fact. But the name of Dobell does not pass out from the world of books. His sons, Percy and Arthur, have just issued their first catalogue. They intend to carry on his business, and we wish them every success. Their address is 77 and 54 Charing Cross-road, London, W.C.

A fine photogravure portrait of Bertram Dobell can be obtained from the same address: octavo size, 6d.; quarto size, 1s. They are really works of art.

"Business as Usual" is evidently the motto of the Bradlaugh Fellowship. A "Social Party" has been arranged for Wednesday, February 24, at the Borough of Shoreditch Radical Club, New North-road, N. There are to be brief addresses by "Well-known Freethinkers," also vocal and instrumental music, and dancing. It commences at 8 o'clock, and admission is free.

The Germans have removed the Ferrer Monument in Brussels. It was placed there by the Progressives of all Europe, and will be put back there by the same hands—unless the Germans have basely destroyed it to gratify the monarchical and military party in Spain.

The Japanese have been engaged in drawing up a list of twenty-nine of the world's heroes. Dr. Tokutaro Ito has now written to Lady Hooker, informing her that her late husband, Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, has been selected as one of that number. In the present state of the world, the selection of the great botanist does Japan infinite credit. If the public of this country were asked to select twenty-nine heroes, we expect the list would be made up of generals and admirals. Heroic, to the Western mind, seldom conveys more than an idea of physical fighting. It is good to find the Japanese giving the word a wider and a higher meaning.

Calvinism may be fatalistic, but Scotsmen do not take any chances. A North-Britisher took poison, cut his throat, and jumped out of a top window. The drop from the third floor settled him, and the outlay on the poison was mere extravagance. A more canny countryman would have joined the Army, and been paid for his trouble.

The Distribution of Animal Life.—III.

(Concluded from p. 107.)

IN the Ethiopian Region, which comprises all South and tropical Africa, the most striking representatives of the mammalian fauna are the elephant, lion, panther, and rhinoceros. The last-named animal is represented by three species. The zebras and the recently defunct quagga are restricted to this region. It contains at least two species of chimpanzee. The antelopes are more numerous here than anywhere else, but, singularly enough, the Ethiopian does not possess one single species of deer. Another surprising feature is the total absence of bears. The hippopotamus, however, is a native of this region, but the lemurs, which are so extremely numerous in Madagascar, are very few and far between. Curiously enough, the fauna of Ethiopia more closely approaches that of the Oriental Region than that of the adjoining island of Madagascar. Various birds abound both in the Oriental and Ethiopian. The same is true of the lion and panther, while the elephant and rhinoceros are distinctly special to these two, now widely separated, regions.

The four minor divisions of the Ethiopian Region are the East, West, and South African, and the Mascarene. The first of these includes the larger part of Central Africa, as well as the Eastern area itself. Abyssinia, Arabia, and Southern Egypt are all embraced by it. To the south of the Sahara it traverses Africa to the Atlantic, while its lower territory is limited by the river Gambia, and where it extends beneath the West African, this Eastern sub-region again stretches across the continent. This tract of land is the home of the Gelada baboon, and a couple of rodents are peculiar to it. The giraffe and the rhinoceros rarely range beyond it, but this to some degree is due to the encroachments of man. Among birds, a shrike and boatbill are special to it, but there are few striking features in its animals as a whole.

The West African division is bounded on the south by the Congo. Among its animals are the gorilla and the chimpanzee, while two lemurs are confined to this area. There are a few other mammals, but scarcely any of special note. Its birds are of a common African character. The West African is, however, the dwelling-place of a species of *Pitta*, the only representative of this Oriental genus that is met with in Africa.

The South African sub-region has among its population a hyæna and a dog, as well as the golden mole. Altogether, eighteen genera of mammals are restricted to this area.

A far more interesting and puzzling province is the Mascarene or Malagasy sub-region. This division, in the words of Dr. Wallace, "comprises besides Madagascar, the islands of Mauritius, Bourbon, and Rodriguez, the Seychelles and Comoro Islands." Many naturalists, Haeckel among them, regard Madagascar—a large island about three times the size of England, which lies 250 miles from the east coast of Africa—as a relic of a vast continent which, in a past geological period, reached across the Indian Ocean. This submerged continent is the famous Lemuria. According to this view, in addition to Madagascar, the other islands just named represent surviving fragments of the same land mass. This hypothesis is supported by several considerations. The geological strata of the Seychelles islets furnish striking evidences of continental origin, while the deposits of Madagascar yield even stronger testimony of the continental character of that island. Yet its animal life is quite dissimilar to that of the Ethiopian Region, which is remarkable, considering its nearness to Africa.

Madagascar contains, or has recently contained, twenty-eight distinct genera of mammals, three only of which are represented in adjacent Africa. As Dr. Lydekker testifies:—

"This is by no means all, for out of these three genera, two [*Hippopotamus* and *Sus*] are such as have probably crossed the intervening channel, although at a time when it was narrower than at present, while it is

just possible that the third [*Crocidura*] may have been introduced by human agency."

Moreover, not only are many genera of Madagascar's mammals utterly unknown in Africa, but they are quite foreign to all the world besides. The wealth of mammalian life in the Ethiopian Region, its huge cats, baboons, man-like apes, its ostriches, and many other organisms would, naturally, presuppose their existence on a neighboring island. But, with the exception of the just mentioned bush-pig and an extinct hippopotamus, not one is found in Madagascar, while the absence of sanguinary beasts of prey has permitted the evolution of an army of lemurs, whose species greatly outnumber all the other non-volant mammalia of the island. The Lemuridae are of some special interest to us as they lie in the line of human descent, and it is worth noting that, apart from Madagascar, these animals are now restricted to the Ethiopian and Oriental Regions, although they have left their remains in the Oligocene deposits of Western Europe and, probably, elsewhere.

We must now rapidly review the leading distributional phenomena of the remaining regions. Before man decimated its animal population, Ethiopia, in all likelihood, contained the richest mammalian fauna which our earth, with one or two exceptions, has ever known since these higher organisms came into being. The Indian, or better, the Oriental Region, is also abundantly opulent in animal life. The sub-regions of the Oriental are the Indian, Ceylonese, Indo-Chinese, and Malayan. The tailless apes are represented by the gibbon and the orang of Borneo and Sumatra. A common animal is the tiger, although this creature sometimes wanders into the boreal areas of the Palearctic. Bears, various pigs, many deer, a strange lemur (*Tarsius*), the Indian elephant, the Malayan tapir, and three species of rhinoceros are natives of this region. The porcupine, flying squirrels, the scaly ant-eater, and other mammals reside within it, although these forms may sometimes range outside it. The Oriental avifauna is particularly rich; the extensive family of babbling thrushes is nearly confined to it; while some of the most brilliantly plumaged of the pheasant group are entirely or mainly restricted to it. Cuckoos, parrots, and bee-eaters abound among the multitudinous bird population of the Oriental realm.

The Neotropical Region consists of South America with the West Indian Islands, and the larger part of Central America. From its geographical position we are entitled to anticipate a particularly peculiar fauna, and numerous indeed are the families of birds and mammals special to this region. In addition to an imposing list of animal families restricted to it, the Neotropical shares with the neighboring Nearctic the sole possession of the humming-birds, the American vultures, and various other families of feathered bipeds. Several species of tapirs, the carnivorous puma and jaguar, opossums, the skunk, *Bassariscus*—a form related to the bears—are amongst the mammals either confined to the Neotropical or just ranging beyond it.

The Neotropical is split up into four sub-regions: the Chilean, Brazilian, Mexican, and West Indian. The Chilean includes Patagonia and most of Chili, and is strikingly distinguished by various faunal groups. Among these characteristic organisms is a family of rodents. There are two genera of *Armadillos*, some other peculiar rodents, and the *Alpacas*, *Huanaco*, *Vicuna*, and *Llama* of the genus *Lama*. Among the Aves, one family, and several genera of birds, including *Rhea*, are all limited to this sub-region.

The Brazilian area is practically the same as the country of Brazil itself, and contains the great forest-land of South America. It is the abode of almost all the arboreal organisms of the Southern Continent. Three monkeys are unknown elsewhere, and the Tapirs of the genus *Tapirus* are to be numbered with its other isolated animals, such as the great ant-eater, some *Armadillos*, a sloth, and a great host of generic birds.

The Mexican sub-region, as its central position would suggest, is to some extent intermediate in character to the more southern Neotropical and the more northern Nearctic. Compared with these areas, it is a poverty stricken land. Nevertheless, it too has its peculiar animal types. It has its own special mountain Tapir, but its *Bassaris* is now known to roam into the Nearctic. There is, however, a genus of mice which never strays beyond the Mexican boundaries. And although no families of birds can be reckoned among its specific fauna, Dr. Wallace informs us that 37 genera of terrestrial birds are confined to it, every one of which may be regarded as modified descendants of Nearctic and Neotropical ancestors.

The Neotropical Region is completed by the West Indian sub-region. It is looked upon by some scientists as an anomalous area, and with reason. The Edentates of the American continent are completely wanting; not one of the West Indies contains a single monkey or carnivorous mammal. But the more primitive mammals, the rodents and insectivora, are represented by special forms. The birds are highly specialised also; one genus (*Todus*) occurs nowhere else in the world. Yet this bird genus is widely distributed throughout the West Indian Islands, and has evolved various curious forms. The remaining members of the avian order are not so singular, as they are distinguished by pronounced Neotropical affinities.

The Australian Region must now be surveyed. This zoological region is the most remarkable of all. It forms the last refuge ground for many animals which have been eliminated in the fierce life struggle which obtains elsewhere. There are two remarkable bird families nearly special to it, a few species only extending beyond its borders. The Australian area is distinguished by the impressive fact that it is the habitat of almost all the Marsupials. One family only of these pouched mammals elsewhere exists, and that in Central America. As the Australian Region consists not only of the Island Continent itself, but includes its encircling isles, the evolutionist fully expects to find marked isolation and variation in the marsupial forms inhabiting each zoological province. And this expectation is completely realised. Many of the earlier naturalists were so deeply impressed by the strikingly novel forms of mammalian life which prevail in this region, that the really wonderful peculiarities of its avifauna were to some extent unnoticed. It is now realised, however, that Australia and its enviroing islands form the habitat of a large population of strange birds. The parrots of this region are a remarkably rich and diverse group. Its pigeons have increased to an extraordinary extent, and their immense numbers are doubtless due to the entire absence of predatory mammals. Most of these birds are protectively colored, as their green plumage harmonises with the leafy forests they frequent.

Four sub-divisions are allotted to the Australian Region. The Papuan, or Austro-Malayan, consists of the extreme northern parts of Australia itself, New Guinea, and the islands to the west of Australia, right up to the boundaries of the Oriental. Apart from the northern strip of Australia, this sub-region is strictly composed of islands whose fauna is in many ways peculiar. It is true that here the Marsupials become scarce, but there are a few curious genera. The singular *Dorcopsis* dwells in New Guinea. The tree kangaroo is special to this island and North Queensland. Other strange animals there are which either exclusively occupy this area or very seldom wander outside it.

The Polynesian sub-region has few outstanding features, but the Australian tract is distinctly noteworthy. This is the great centre of the Marsupials and Monotremes, that remarkable creature, the duck-billed Platypus, being found here only. Those pouched mammals, the Wombats, Koala, and others, are limited to it. And as regards the birds of this area, Wallace discovered a larger proportion of

peculiar forms than in any other sub-region in the world.

The faunal phenomena of New Zealand—a province of the same region—are extensive and peculiar. Its animal life has been exhaustively studied by Hutton and others, and their researches lead to the conclusion that the two islands known as New Zealand are zoologically a thing apart. An examination of their rocks proves that these islands are continental in character. Nevertheless, New Zealand has few mammals, and not one of any size. It has two bats, a dog, and a rat, but these last were introduced by the Polynesian immigrants. But the birds of New Zealand were wonderful. The amazing development of huge flightless or "wingless" avifauna which the island witnessed would have been impossible but for the total absence of carnivorous mammals. Their only indigenous enemies were great birds of prey, considerably larger than the golden eagle, and related to the kites and falcons which, doubtless, took terrible toll of the young of the larger, and decimated the ranks of the smaller birds, both old and young. All, or nearly all, of the giant birds are now extinct, but the quaint little *Apteryx* still survives, and is found in New Zealand alone. The effects of the disuse of organs are well illustrated in the avifauna of this sub-region as a whole. In addition to the before-mentioned birds, an ancient parrot and the New Zealand rails, among others, are either flightless or very weak of wing. Of this sub-region's reptiles, the stranded *Hatteria*, that strange survivor of long, past times, is the most striking. But New Zealand stands forth as, perhaps, the greatest natural aviary the world has ever known. Dr. Lydekker's Catalogue of the Fossil Birds of New Zealand contains an astonishingly copious list of feathered fauna. And these birds still remain, for all practical purposes, as a part of the living population of the island, as their disappearance from their isolated habitat is of such very recent date.

We have now concluded our outline of the leading faunal features of our globe. The subject is a vast one, which has many bearings on various branches of scientific study. Those that pursue this really fascinating subject beyond the limits imposed by these articles will be amply rewarded for their pains.

T. F. PALMER.

The Bible and Common Sense.

A GOOD many years ago the late Professor Huxley, who was a very careful writer and speaker as a rule, went out of his way to extol the Bible as the most wonderful book in English literature—a book worthy alike of admiration and reverence. In his panegyric, however, he did not point out that the Bible in its teaching was opposed to modern science, and was not only unhistoric, but that many of its chapters were distinctly immoral. Such a statement I rejoice to know, was made many years before by an honest old gentleman, who was also a bishop of the Church of England—I mean the late Bishop of Natal—Bishop Colenso.

It is a matter of congratulation to me, however, that Mr. Bottomley, in his *New Religion*, does not claim the Bible as a book of Divine revelation. He is content with saying that the Bible must be put into its proper place "as the best and grandest of all the old Eastern allegories and poems, owing much of its imagery to the Bibles of earlier religions, but full of glorious wisdom and inspiration." But even Mr. Bottomley does not mention the fact that the Bible, as it stands, is not quite the book to be put into the hands of children—indeed, it contains, as he must be aware, many passages that could not be read before a promiscuous audience of ladies and gentlemen without shocking their tender susceptibilities. Many conscientious Christians have urged that for Secondary Schools, at least, an expurgated edition of the Bible should be used; but for ordinary

use in Sunday Schools, the present Authorised Version is considered quite good enough. Why is this? Are the children attending Secondary Schools more sensitive in matters of sexual morality than the children attending ordinary schools? Why this distinction?

But why is Mr. Bottomley so infatuated with a book of Eastern legends and allegories? Simply because he was taught in his childhood to regard the Bible as a sacred book containing the beginning and end of wisdom on almost every subject; and though he has lived long enough and learned enough of science and history to modify his view on the subject, he still regards it as "the best and grandest of all the old Eastern allegories and poems"—and "full of glorious wisdom and inspiration."

Now, I should be the last person in the world to deny that the Bible contains some very noble passages and some exquisite gems of wisdom, some beautiful sentiments poetically expressed; and yet it may be doubted whether a book of Eastern allegories is the best book upon which to found a modern religion that is to meet and satisfy the requirements of the growing intelligence of a free and enlightened people.

It must be remembered that these fine passages to which I have referred are to be found in a book, after diligent search, mixed up with incredible stories of the creation of the world and the manufacture of the first man out of the dust of the earth, the story of the Flood, the confusion of tongues during the building of the Tower of Babel, the narration of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the stories of the plagues of Egypt, and many other stories that are neither good Eastern allegories nor poems, and are utterly devoid of wisdom or inspiration.

Æsop's Fables and the *Arabian Nights* tales contain some very fine allegories, but I am not quite sure that the words of wisdom they contain would be good enough, in Mr. Bottomley's estimation, upon which to found a new religion. Nor am I sure that the Bible contains the best or grandest poems to be found in the literature of the world. It contains some poetry that no doubt is very good in its way, but it is doubtful whether the poetry of the Bible will bear comparison with the best poetry of the more modern poets.

Some excellent poetry, for example, may be found in such books as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and several of the minor prophets; but who would be bold enough to say that the poetry of the Bible out-rivalled in beauty of expression or depth of thought some of the best poetry of Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, Shelley, or Byron? The poetry of the Bible at best only expresses the mental state of evolution of the poet; it is always very human; sometimes it is very faulty in character, both in expression and sentiment, notwithstanding the fact that it has been altered and improved by successive generations of revisers. Even the plays of Shakespeare have undergone frequent revision to bring certain expressions in them more in unison with modern ideas; and who can doubt that many of the poetical expressions of the Bible have been modified and altered from time to time by the learned revisers, to the same end, so that we cannot be sure that they represent the exact state of mind of the writers at the time of writing.

But though we can still find some fine poetry and lofty sentiments in the Bible, it is equally true that we can find some very bad poetry and demoralising teachings in that so-called Holy Book.

The moral of the whole thing is obviously this: not to limit the scope of our reading if we want to be free from all narrowness of thought and feeling; let us seek for the good and true in every direction. We can find sound philosophy and noble sentiments among the writings and sayings of Greek and Roman philosophers and thinkers. We can find lofty sentiments and profound wisdom among the ancient Egyptians and the religious literature of the pious Chinese; and we can find fine poetry among the Pagans as well as among the Christians. Why

should we go in ecstasy over an old book of Eastern allegories when there are so many books of far more value to the world in their scientific, ethical, and social ideas than the Bible? Or, if there is no single book of greater value, there are certainly books from which, if we select the best from each one of them, contain more poetry, better philosophy, and more rational ideas on religion than is to be found in all the books of the Bible put together. Let Mr. Bottomley consider this point, and then perhaps he will talk less of the wonderful book of Eastern allegories and poems that are a source of wisdom and inspiration to mankind.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Christian Apologetics.

MR. JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

IN a booklet which professes to give "A scientific basis of belief in a future life," the author, Mr. John Page Hopps, states towards the end of the demonstration: "I do not at all profess that it is more than a *basis*, but I do think that it is more than a theory or a hypothesis, grounded as it is on solid, though as yet, little comprehended facts and laws." Just so; if we can find a "basis" grounded on solid facts, that will be something to start with; though I was not aware that we possessed any such facts. In commencing his scientific elucidation, Mr. Page Hopps says:—

"We have too long been accustomed to talk of the dead in a vague, dreamy, unreal way.....as though, if they really existed at all, they existed in a sacred, solemn, and stately way, in a condition of being so unlike ours that we should feel it would be almost shocking to talk of them, for instance, as laughing."

This view, Mr. Page Hopps thinks, reveals the fact "that we have been making up for a want of reality by an exuberance of solemnity," and that underneath all our poetry and sentiment there is very little solid reality or clear thought. In his desire to effect some alteration, he says:—

"I want to get myself and others accustomed to the thought that if people exist in another world they exist as people, not as fantastic, stately, solemn, or dreamy spectres; that if a man exists beyond the change called death, he is still a man, unchanged except that he has put off his body, and glided behind the veil; for a Future Life can mean only one thing, if it is to be a reality, and not a mere sentiment and solemn self-delusion,—it can only mean the actual going-on of the human being in spite of the incident called 'death.' If it is not that it is nothing."

Just so. Why, certainly—And if not, why not? But the very natural question arises, "if a man exists beyond the change called death" after "he has put off his body" as he might his overcoat, how much of him will there be left? What is a man without his body? His brain, which, everyone allows, was in some way connected with consciousness and thought during his lifetime, remains in the body after death. What is there, then, when the body is dead, that can truly be said to live and exist? Here I can imagine hearing someone say, the "soul" is "spirit." But what is meant by those terms? Is it something that dwelt within the man's body during life, which, after death, has the power to exist apart from the body. If so, it looks very much like the old demoniacal possession—with a difference. Proceeding with his "scientific basis," Mr. Hopps says:—

"In our study of the unseen Universe from the standpoint of Science, and in appealing to Science for evidence, it must ever be borne in mind that the difference between Matter and Spirit, whatever that difference may be, is not the difference between the known and the unknown, the conceivable and the inconceivable. To the unscientific mind, indeed, this is so; but the really scientific mind knows perfectly well that it is absolutely ignorant as to the real nature and basis of Matter."

Now here, at the outset, I must confess to possessing "an unscientific mind"; for to me "the difference

between Matter and Spirit" is that of the known to the unknown—the known being Matter and the unknown Spirit. And if I do not exactly know "the real nature" of Matter, I am positively certain that I know a great deal more about the latter than I do of "the real nature" of Spirit. And here I should like to ask Mr. Hopps what he knows about "the real nature" of Spirit, which, we are told, is immaterial, and not cognisable to any of the five senses—a fact which calls for some explanation, both as to the extent and the mysterious source of his knowledge. Continuing, Mr. Page Hopps says:—

"It is confessedly true that the ideal world, or world of Conscience, is immeasurably more vital than what is usually called the world of Matter.....It is the mind that controls the body.....Spirit, or whatever we call that unit of vital power and volition, vivifies and employs it.....Schools of Science also admit that *Life and Conscience and Thought are more demonstrable than the existence of matter itself.* Even the scientific materialist has to admit it.....States of mind are more real to us than states of Matter, and what we really know is, not the actual condition of what affects us, but only how we are affected."

All this, in a metaphysical sense, is of course perfectly true; sensations are produced in the mind by what we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell in "the world of Matter" around us. Of these sensations we are absolutely certain. It is, however, asserted that the existence of the objects which produced the sensations in the mind is not so certain. This we know to be the case with very young children when beginning to distinguish external objects, and learning to calculate their relative distances; but Mr. Hopps is addressing adults who know that the existence of "the world of Matter" is quite as certain as that of the sensations produced on the mind.

Now, as a simple matter of fact, consciousness and thought are not "more demonstrable than the existence of Matter itself." To Mr. Hopps himself his consciousness and thoughts require no demonstration; but if he attempts to make his sensations "more demonstrable than the existence of Matter." As an example, let us imagine Mr. Page Hopps, one fine Sunday evening, standing in the neighborhood of the Drinking Fountain in Victoria Park, with his arm outstretched pointing towards it. In less than two minutes he is surrounded by a big crowd. "My friends," he says to the audience gathered around him, "I have come here to demonstrate to you that a sensation of pain which I now experience from an aching tooth is far more real than the existence of the material object at which I am pointing." How is Mr. Page Hopps going to demonstrate to his auditors what he came to demonstrate? He cannot do it. They all know that the Fountain is there without any demonstration. They can see it, they can go up the steps and feel it, they can take a drink from it; but they cannot feel his toothache. Some of the crowd may take his word that he actually has that unpleasant sensation; but they will all consider him a crank, if not an imbecile. Of course, if Mr. Hopps were the only person in the world, the matter would be different. He would himself be more certain of the sensation of pain which he felt than of the existence of any material objects which surrounded him. But he is not the only person in the world; there are others. And this fact indicates where the fallacy comes in. Continuing his "scientific basis," Mr. Page Hopps says:—

"The inner world of Consciousness is the only one we know at firsthand—the external world is only an inference from our sensations. But our sensations are purely mental: they are in fact, states of Consciousness; and not one of them resembles the object that excited it.....Light, color, sound, taste, smell, are all states of consciousness: what they are beyond consciousness, as existences, *per se*, we cannot know, we cannot imagine, because we can only conceive them as we know them."

This view of the matter is, of course, true in a certain sense—more especially in the case of very young children—and were there but one person in the

world, say Mr. Page Hopps himself, it might be fully admitted; but, as already stated, there are others. Let us take, for instance, a sensation produced by sight. Waves of light from the object enter the pupil of the eye, and impinge upon the retina at the back; the picture there formed is transmitted along the optic nerve to the brain, and, becoming known to Consciousness, the object is said to be "seen." Now, a thousand different persons, who in this way "saw" the same object, have all precisely the same picture of it in their minds. How do I know this? Well, let us suppose that a photograph of the material object is taken, and passed round to all who had seen it. What would be the result? Why, every one of the thousand, Mr. Page Hopps included, would immediately recognise the picture, and could give it a name—"That is a photo of the Marble Arch" would be repeated by one and all. From the latter fact, also, we have proof that the image pictured in the mind *does* resemble "the object that excited it"—that is to say, in a general view of the whole. How else could the photograph be recognised by everyone who had seen the original? Of course, if small portions of the object were examined piecemeal under a microscope, it would be seen that what had appeared in a general view to be smooth and solid, was really rough, jagged, and full of indentations, etc.; but this fact does not affect the question. What material things are *in themselves*, beyond what they appear to the naked eye, does not matter a scrap; we do know them—at least, sufficiently well—by means of the five senses.

After giving illustrations through three or four pages of "the limitations of our senses," Mr. Page Hopps says:—

"I do not profess to have demonstrated anything thus far; but I think it has been shown that the world of Mind is the world of realities and explanations, and that all conditions and movements of Matter are to that world what the tool is to the craftsman or the instrument to the musician. Matter affects us; waves impinge upon the senses; thought under physical limitations is accompanied by physical phenomena..... The mind might be compared to an Arabian escort attending a caravan, which, with its cumbrous bales and its sick and infirm, drags its weary length a stage or so daily; but only release this escort from its charge, and it starts off, nor can hardly the winds overtake it."

We thus arrive at the grand conclusion that "the world of Mind is the world of realities": Mind is the workman, Matter the tool; Mind is the musician, Matter the instrument. The body, which is a mere form of Matter, is the instrument and tool of the Mind. The Mind is hampered in its action by the body; but when at death it "puts off the body," it becomes as free as the wind, and is then able to soar to unknown heights. Is this happy result a real, undoubted, scientific fact? or is it a colossal mare's nest? Have we sufficient evidence to prove conclusively either alternative? This question I must leave to the next paper, which will, of course, deal with all the evidence adduced.

ABRACADABRA.

Theosophists and other occult folk may take heart of grace. A recent *Times* "Agony" reads as follows: "Buddha, my beloved, my heart feels your misery; courage, patience; sixth message.—Mizpah Milady." This looks as if Buddha has forgotten the "path" and taken the wrong turning.

The pious *Daily Mail* says that "the new and popular greeting when two Germans meet in the street is "God punish England." Yet Mr. Hilaire Belloc and so many courteous clergymen are constantly asserting that the Germans are Atheists.

There is a new book called *The Conquering Jew*. We have not read it, but we wonder if it means the Kaiser. He is evidently related to the God of Israel, and the Old Testament is his favorite book. Then, too, that nose of his. But we must beware, or our own will not be safe. German spies are everywhere. Ask Mr. Blatchford.

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