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PRICE TWOPENCE

I will destroy the order of things that turns millions into the slaves of a few, and these few into the slaves of their own might, their own riches.—WAGNER.

Gant About the War.

GIVEN a number of clergymen invited to express an opinion as to the influence of the War on Christianity, and it would not be difficult to forecast their reply. Their fixed policy of falling into line with every burst of popular passion would induce them to find some sort of national good resulting from the conflict. There would be much said as to the virtues encouraged by war, the benefits derived from breaking down habits of luxury and idleness, and from the appeal to man's deepest and nobler feelings, together with the usual assurance that our cause was a just one, and that we could ask for the assistance of God with a perfectly clear conscience. On the religious side, one would expect to be told that the War would mean a deepening of the religious consciousness, and that when man is brought face to face with the stern realities of life and death, scepticism and unbelief lose their attractiveness, and the power of religious faith once more asserts its claims. All this would be expected, not because the clergy have been saying these things since the War began, but because they are the things the clergy say whenever war is raging. They are the stock apologies of a popularity-hunting priesthood.

Probably with a view to assist the circulation of the paper, the *Standard* invited a number of representative clergymen to express their opinion on the question of "Christianity and the War." The articles were published daily, most of them saying the same thing in slightly varying language. The two articles that offered the greatest contrast were those by a Roman Catholic, Cardinal Grosch, and a Church of England clergyman, Prebendary Webb-Peploe. Of the two, that of the Roman Catholic is, from the Christian point of view, the most commendable, because it says least about religion. We are told that the British Empire has never risen to such heights of self-sacrifice, although the rush for con- tracts at enhanced prices, the endeavor to raise the price of commodities as much as possible, and the evident determination to keep them up as long as possible, makes one realise that this self-sacrifice is not without its limitations. Of course, there has been a splendid response so far as recruiting is concerned, but then it is never very difficult to enlist soldiers when a nation feels its security threatened or its honor questioned. There is also the assurance that the War is "cutting deeply into the notion of the natural equality of man," mainly, it seems, because the "upper" and "lower" classes are fighting side by side. Cardinal Grosch overlooks the fact that this has always been the case in every war throughout the whole of human history. It was certainly the case during the recent South African War, and it would puzzle anyone to point to any influence that it had in strengthening or deepening our notion of the natural equality of man. When a war is over, class distinctions go on much as before, and the fact of the two classes fighting side by side is, at best, two-sided in its influence.

If it makes the "upper" think more kindly of the "lower" class, it is just as likely to make the "lower" class submit more cheerfully to the domination of the "upper." Witness Mr. Victor Grayson, who confesses to a weakening of his opposition to an hereditary aristocracy because it has representatives with the expeditionary force.

Cardinal Grosch's contribution on the influence of the War on Christianity is contained in the closing paragraph of his article. He says it requires "deep thought" to see how the War will affect religion; and as that is all we are told on that head, one must assume that the Cardinal is still deeply thinking. He says that:—

"Perhaps our spiritual sin as a nation has been that we have left God out of the country in our national affairs, or we have tried so to fashion God that He should be made to agree with our preconceived notions of national greatness.....The War, like all great calamities, should turn the nations thoughts to God as the source of all and the end of all. There are indications that this effect is being produced upon the people of the Empire. If this is so in truth, all the sorrows and sacrifices which the War has demanded will not have been too big a price to pay for so big a blessing."

This is quite what one might expect from one of the princes of a Church that has never hesitated—given the opportunity—to put thousands to death for a difference in belief, and has, in the course of its career, devastated whole nations to secure uniformity in religion. The butchery of war may—to use a colloquialism—send many people, with small thinking capacity, to God; but if they think at all, it is not likely to breed a lively faith in either God's wisdom or providence. The only gain to religion will be that which comes to all retrogressive ideas during a period of reaction.

Prebendary Webb-Peploe's article strikes a different note to that of Cardinal Grosch's. He says less about the virtues called forth by the War, and is more concerned about the position of religion. The outlook here is, to him, black. There are one or two bright spots. For instance, the Scripture Gift Mission sent 1,100,000 portions of Scripture (probably tracts) to our troops—they would most probably have preferred chocolates or cigarettes—300,000 to the French, and are sending 1,000,000 copies to the Russians. Also a "special request" has come from America for 1,000,000 copies of the Khaki New Testament. The Americans do not ask for this million copies as a gift. They offer to pay twopence-halfpenny per copy for them. But as the New Testament costs fivepence per copy to produce, it looks as though American Bible distribution is not quite divorced from a shrewd business instinct.

Many of the clergy are still keeping up the old pretence that the War has meant a great increase in the power of religion. Mr. Webb-Peploe tells a different story. He is rather surprised to find the French are more serious than the English—which is not very surprising, as the French usually are more serious than the English. Only those who think wit and grace incompatible with seriousness of aim and disposition ever doubt this. But of the English he says:—

"There is still the same old story of dinners and suppers, music and frivolity in the hotels on Sunday nights. The newspapers tell the story weekly, just as they did three or four years ago. Sunday is no more observed than it was two years ago, and one really fails

to see any effect in the least noticeable on the people on the whole. A few fashionable churches are crowded, as they always have been, for the music or the preaching; but I hear from everyone competent to judge that there is no more real devotion than before the War..... Again, I have visited Oxford and Cambridge for forty years, and I have kept in touch with both Universities.....The progress of rationalistic teaching there is alarming, and utterly destructive of the reverent study of the Scriptures and what we call the acceptancy of the Gospel. The result is in later years a sad decay of national devotion, or acceptance of Gospel revelation and truth. Though this may have been checked at the outset by the War, it has again asserted its power and force to an alarming extent."

Of course, all the talk about a revival of religion as a consequence of the War was mere empty talk. When the outbreak came it did not make the non-religious religious; it only made the religious more assertive in their religion. Those who had previously whispered to God began to shout at him. They went to church more punctually, for a time. They organised days of Universal Prayer, days of Intercession, and some of the Churches started daily Intercession Services. The religious world imagined that it was making more headway because it made more noise. This is quite a common form of delusion, but it is a delusion nevertheless. Naturally, some of the clergy have not yet realised the emptiness of their claims or their prophecies. It is as difficult to get the clergy to stop as to get them to move. And once they start moving along a certain line, sheer inertia prevents them striking out in a new direction.

Personally, I do not see that the War can have any serious effect on the position of Christianity in relation to unbelief. We are told often enough of how the sight of Christians doing their duty on the field has affected avowed Freethinkers. Unfortunately, one is never able to verify the stories. Their latitude and longitude are even more hazy than the geographical details of a report from our official "eyewitness." And one may be excused taking them with a very large pinch of salt. For, after all, Christians are not rarities to Freethinkers. We have them in all walks of life, and it is not unusual to find a man calling himself a Christian and doing his duty with commendable thoroughness. Whether this is due to Christianity or not may be a disputed point, but the fact remains. The influence of Freethinker and Christian fighting side by side is far more likely to have an adverse influence on religion. For it will be a revelation to some Christians to discover that a man can play a man's part without his having any religious belief. It is not the Freethinker who will marvel at the Christian being able to do his duty and face death fearlessly. It is the Christian who will have all his preconceived notions rudely upset by finding the Freethinker facing death as fearlessly as himself, and, in the end, going into the unknown without a tremor or a fear. It is not what we have but what we can do without that tells in the final test.

And when all is said and done, the great and damning fact is that the War has occurred. No amount of apologising can alter that. And it is a Christian War if ever there was one. The seeds of it were sown by Christians in Christian countries. The belligerents have used the names of God and Christ until they have become even more expressive of cant than usual. And much as we may blame the bungling of statesmen who could not avert the War, the responsibility of the Christian Churches is still greater. They have had the training of the people for generations. They could have so developed the European mind that such a war as the present one would have been a sheer impossibility. Whatever other conclusion one draws from the War, it should be clear that every shot fired adds to the proof of Christianity's moral and intellectual bankruptcy. And when the War is over that is the great and damning fact with which the Christian Churches will be faced.

C. COHEN.

Providence and the War.

ETYMOLOGICALLY providence means foresight, particularly the foresight that inspires care and preparation for a problematic future. Bacon says that "providence for war is the best prevention of it," providence in such a connection clearly signifying readiness. To provide is to procure beforehand, to exercise wise care to-day that to-morrow's need may not take one by surprise. Usually, however, providence denotes what the divines describe as "the care, control, and guidance exercised by the Supreme Being over the universe in all its parts and contents." And thus applied to God, it includes three things, namely, "foreknowledge, foreordination, and efficacious administration, including preservation and continued government." Now, naturally, the question that thrusts itself upon the divines is, how to reconcile such an atrocious calamity as the War, or the existence of evil generally, with Divine providence as just defined. The problem is extremely difficult, as the most thoughtful Christian teachers readily admit. It is well-known that the late Professor James was not a believer in Christianity, and he went so far as to characterise the belief that "the God with whom we come into commerce should be the absolute world-ruler as a very considerable over-belief." A writer in a recent number of the *Hibbert Journal* does not hesitate to define God as the Common Will, and, as everybody is aware, the Common Will is as yet only in the making. A perfect Deity there has never been, and, probably, never shall be. "The God of the world is a growing God." A distinguished Congregationalist, Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett, is quoted to the effect that "a personal God cannot be absolutely powerful." This remarkable statement is made in the interest of the doctrine of human free-will. The Divine omnipotence has its limits, with the result that man is wholly responsible for his own thoughts and actions. Sir Joseph further quoted thus:—

"As he [God] is a great outcome of first cause, but not that cause in himself, we must attribute not to him but to other sources in the unknowable, the presence of the universe of that evil which conflicts with his benevolence, and runs counter to his goodness."

It should be borne in mind that Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett is the President of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, which has just held its annual meetings in Manchester, and that, consequently, his book entitled *Origins and Faith* is bound to exert considerable influence upon Free Church people. The object of that work is to relieve God of all responsibility for the evil that is so rampant in the world. We are assured from Sir Joseph's point of view, the War presents no problem of providence, God himself being a product of evolution. But, surely, such a view contradicts the teaching of the orthodox Church in all ages. An all-good Deity, who is not also all-powerful, is a contradiction in terms, in whom it is not worth while to believe at all. As the Rev. Bertram Smith, of Leeds, well says:—

"Like ourselves, he is striving to bring a cosmos out of the chaos from which all life has sprung. That a better result has been achieved is not owing to any lack in his benevolence, but to deficiency in his power..... there not a real danger of the reaction against absolute idealism carrying us too far in the opposite direction and robbing the Christian faith of all intellectual sanction, and Christian peace and courage of all adequate support? If it be possible to conceive of God as standing to the universe, as Belgium stood to Germany at the beginning of the War, what guarantee have we of progress?"

From the orthodox standpoint that is a perfectly fair criticism. A God that is weaker than the creature of his own hands, however benevolent he may be, is morally worthless, the sport of his own handiwork. But if orthodox Theism be accepted, the problem of evil, in all its forms, stares the believer in the face, defying all his ingenuity to solve it. Is it not a fact that Nature, "red in tooth and claw,"

shrieks against the creed? How can an all-good and all-powerful God permit or overlook the unspeakable horrors of the War? Mr. Smith tries hard not to allow his thoughts to be obsessed by the blood-curdling brutalities of which we read almost daily; but to follow that course is to imitate the folly popularly attributed to the ostrich. The horrors are there, whether we are obsessed by them or not. To remind us that there are other strokes of calamity than that of the War is to beg the whole question. There are, doubtless, hundreds of poverty-stricken homes in the land, several poor women may be dying of cancer or some other painful disease, while their dissolute husbands are lying down, helplessly drunk, devoid of the least spark of sympathy; but does Mr. Smith imagine that, by lengthening the list of frightful scenes in the world, he minimises the difficulty of harmonising the War with the infinite goodness of God? "I find it helpful, then," he exclaims to our amazement, "to link the War on to those pitiful and perennial evils that are at once a burden and a challenge to the Christian conscience. It helps one to view it in truer perspective." We did not need to be told that war is by no means the only evil on our planet; but it staggers us to be told that to multiply evils simplifies the problem with which they comfort believers, and we fail to understand what the preacher really means by saying so.

At this point Mr. Smith waxes movingly eloquent in extravagant praise of Jesus. Listen:—

"I try to make myself familiar with what I conceive to be the Divine purpose in the creation of a world like this. Why all the incessant pain and travail of life? I only know of one answer—the evolution of human souls after the pattern of Jesus. Jesus is the crown of evolution. Jesus on the Cross, praying for his enemies, and committing his spirit into the hands of his Father, is the supreme hour of history. It reveals the final purpose of creation, and Jesus is the first-born of many brethren."

That is rhetoric run wild—not "the sweet, silent rhetoric of persuading eyes," but the inflated, noisy rhetoric of empty, idle words! Had Mr. Smith forgotten that what he called "the supreme hour of history" on the cross was preceded by an hour of shuddering, shrinking, funking, and whimpering in Gethsemane? Is he not aware that his eulogy of the Crucified Jesus is laughably absurd, without a word of truth in it? For one thing, the narrative of the crucifixion was written by men who did not witness it, and that many years after it was supposed to have occurred; and, for another, the theological interpretation of the alleged event was the work of a man who had never seen Jesus at all. Mr. Smith speaks of the transcendent goodness of Jesus, and assures us that "it was only possible against the dark background of malignant sin." Then comes this extraordinary sentiment:—

"You cannot have the cross without the crowd in the shadow. The hypocrisy of Judas, the weakness of Pilate, the bitter class-hatred of the Pharisees, the fickleness of the multitude, were all necessary—or Jesus could not have been. And men of the Jesus temper can only be evolved as over against an unfinished cosmos, a world of hostile microbes, of earthquake, lightning, and storm, and in a society of fellow-men inheriting the savage instincts of a prehistoric past. It is the presence of the ape and tiger in man that makes the rise of Jesus possible."

We now see the Divine purpose quite clearly. In a world created by himself God could not have produced transcendent goodness except against the dark background of malignant sin. If it were not for hideous vice, splendid virtue could never shine. Joy is impossible without sorrow, and happiness is conditioned on suffering. Such are the conditions of life in a world made by the God who is love. Did ever greater nonsense drop from the lips of a son of man? The fact is that Mr. Smith has committed the huge blunder of adopting the findings of modern science without renouncing the dogmas of ancient theology, with the result that he expresses the views of the one in terms of the other, and thereby stultifies both himself and his hearers. The theory of

evolution explains the present state of the world. It informs us that society is what it is simply because it has been evolved from a much cruder and more savage stage, and that its progress towards peace and refinement is of necessity exceedingly slow. Endorsing this scientific discovery, Mr. Smith renders it ridiculous by linking it on to dogmatic theology thus: "An unfinished world and men with animal ancestry on one side, and spiritual yearnings after truth and goodness and God on the other, is the efficient cause of all the sin and sorrow of life." If so, then God ought to be profoundly ashamed of himself. The God of Nature is a fiend, and the God of Grace a stupendous failure, which, being interpreted, signifies that there is no God at all.

We agree with the preacher when he says that "the causes of the War lie deep in the evils of European civilisation"; but we hold that "the evils of European civilisation" belie the Christian idea of Providence. Europe under the care, control, and guidance of an omnipotent and all-loving Father would have been the habitation of peace, righteousness, and joy. No evils would have eaten into its vitals and caused its inhabitants to cruelly slaughter one another by the million. The evils of civilisation only show that its evolution has never had intelligence at the back of it. Society has always been its own providence, and a painfully blind and stumbling providence it has often proved to be. Lust of gold, lust of power, lust of pleasure are defects that still require millenniums to be worked out of the human constitution. They are defects incident to the process of evolution under mechanical and chemical forces, but would be utterly inexcusable and inexplicable if a God of goodness and love were in command of the process.

J. T. LLOYD.

Mr. Bottomley's Defence of his "New Religion."

MR. BOTTOMLEY'S reply to my article in the *Freethinker* of February 7, entitled, "How Many More Religions?" appeared in *John Bull*, of February 27, under the rather taking title of "The Cry of the Soul." After paying a well-deserved compliment to the Editor of this journal, who, Mr. Bottomley says, might, like the late Charles Bradlaugh, "have been anything in public life if he had chosen a less fashionable sphere for his great gifts," he at once comes to grips with the matter in dispute by objecting that I am somewhat loose in my terminology, and that I "do not, apparently, appreciate the distinction between religion and creed and between faith and dogma." In that, however, Mr. Bottomley is wrong; I understand the distinction very well; but when I attack any form of religious faith I must do so through its creed or dogmas, otherwise, each section of believers would claim that I was not attacking their faith at all, but only some special dogmas of a church to which they did not belong. When I attack Mr. Bottomley's "religion" I do it through the form of belief set out in his article, "Wanted: a New Religion." In that article he said he believed in the "Great Architect of the Universe"; but when I pointed out to him, through a quotation from George Jacob Holyoake, that an architect who designed the universe would himself require to be designed, and that this would lead to a long series of architects, each designing the other, he dropped the "Architect," and, in his latest article, falls back upon a "Great Controlling Power"—which being only a *power*, may not be a personal God at all.

Mr. Bottomley wishes it to be distinctly understood that he does not scoff at religion, either when it takes the form of the naked savage appealing to imaginary spirits or gods behind phenomena to shield him from the perils of the destructive forces of nature, or of the civilised man who blindly worships the unknown forces of nature as God, and makes his ignorance of these forces the basis of his

religion. On the contrary, he thinks it a good thing that the "poor, ignorant savage" should be so "profoundly impressed with the solemn grandeur of the great forces of nature and should believe—as almost every scientist in the world does [?]"—that behind them all, is some Great Controlling Power." That is unquestionably a very fine sentence as it stands; but, unfortunately, it does not express the truth.

It is extremely doubtful whether the "poor, ignorant savage" is impressed in the least by the solemn grandeur of the great forces of nature; he is more likely to be moved by his fear that he will be injured by them, and he appeals for help to the unknown spirits or gods to save him from destruction. As for the cultivated man, who knows the scientific explanation of lightning and thunder, but who, nevertheless, worships the unknown forces of nature as God, Mr. Bottomley has equal respect, and he asks, "Why not call these forces God? Can Mr. Moss, or any other pundit, suggest a better name?" I take it that the "Great Controlling Power" that Mr. Bottomley now refers to as his God, is supposed to be good as well as powerful. If so, let us see what John Stuart Mill says concerning the performances of the known and unknown forces of nature that Mr. Bottomley thinks might fittingly be described by the name of "God." Says Mr. Mill:—

"In sober truth nearly all the things for which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing, are nature's everyday performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognised by human law, nature does once to every thing that lives, and in a large proportion of cases after protracted torture such as only the greatest monster whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on his living fellow creatures. Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them with the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in store for them, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy or of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst, upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequence of the noblest acts, and it might be imagined as a punishment for them" (Essay on Nature, p. 28).

This is one of the finest passages in the whole history of philosophy and it is true in every detail.

Well, if the known and unknown forces of nature in combination produce such results, does any sensible person think they are proper objects of worship? Mr. Bottomley thinks that God is a suitable name for them; but I know some people who think that Devil would be more appropriate.

Mr. Bottomley asks me if I can suggest a better name than God for them, but I respectfully suggest to him that it is no part of my duty to find a fanciful name for the object of his worship. And then he refers me to a speech of his at one of the Bradlaugh Fellowship dinners. I was present on that occasion and heard it, and while I thought at the time that it was a splendid effort from a rhetorical point of view, I must confess that since I have seen it in cold print, I think the passage referring to religion and the mysteries of the universe is very unconvincing.

With regard to the question of the efficacy of prayer, Mr. Bottomley quotes a sporting friend who said, "On book form, prayer is no good"; but, says Mr. Bottomley, a great deal depends on what one means by "efficacy." He asks, "Who shall judge its efficacy in the case of the bereaved mother, the widowed wife—aye, and the dying soldier in the trenches?" Hamlet said, "There is nothing good nor bad, but thinking makes it so." Subjectively I admit that prayer may have its value; it may soothe the mind of the man who believes in it, as it may comfort the Kaiser when he prays for the destruction of the British, just as it may please Tommy Atkins when he prays for victory over the Germans. But does any sane man believe that all the prayers of the Kaiser and all the prayers of the soldiers, or all the

prayers of the people, will have any influence on the well observed order of natural phenomena? From the practical point of view Mr. Bottomley so little believes in the efficacy of prayer that every week he asks his readers to insure against Zeppelin raids. If he believed in the efficacy of prayer he would advise his readers to pray earnestly, without ceasing, and never mind about insurance.

I acknowledge at once that I have not sat at the bedside of a mortally wounded young soldier, while the kindly priest has prayed with him and spoken to him of the life to come, where he and those he loved would meet. And then, says Mr. Bottomley, with dramatic action, and, I can imagine, tears in his voice, "Think you that the Army would be better without such faith—never mind its dogma or its creed?"

In other words, Mr. Bottomley says any religion will do in time of death, so long as the sufferer believes in a future life. The Buddhist, the Brahmin, the Mohammedan, the Catholic, the Protestant—all alike can die comfortably enough if they only believe in a life hereafter. But I can tell Mr. Bottomley that I have sat at the bedside of a dying Freethinker, who has died quite calmly and peacefully, without any belief in a future life—as did Mr. Bottomley's uncle—Mr. Austin Holyoake, after many weeks of suffering.

Finally, Mr. Bottomley says that Secularism has had its day; that, after all, it is only a gospel of negation.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, Mr. Bradlaugh, and Mr. Foots have done a noble work, and written their names on the scroll of fame. But there is no work for the rising generation of Freethinkers; the old superstitions have been destroyed, and all that remains can be easily demolished by Mr. Bottomley in *John Bull*.

Let me tell Mr. Bottomley this—that the work of Freethought has only just begun. We have got to secularise all our institutions. Mr. Bradlaugh did something by making it possible for all Freethinkers to make affirmation, instead of going through the degrading performance of taking an oath in which they did not believe. We have got to make our education purely secular, so that teachers may teach what they believe, and may not be coerced into teaching religious dogmas which many of them despise.

And, lastly, we want our men of science to be free, our literary men to be free to express what they believe without the fear of the priest or the parson or the prejudices of the ignorant, and to proclaim the truth for the benefit of an enlightened humanity.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Artifices in Defence of Home and Offspring.—II.

(Concluded from p. 155.)

WE will now relate the story of the subterfuges and stratagems to which birds resort for the purpose of baffling their human and other antagonists. It is a commonplace of the countryside that various birds will entice an intruder away from their nests and young by pretending lameness of leg or wing. In such circumstances, the attention of a trespasser is at once arrested by the spectacle of a fully grown bird limping or fluttering near the earth, as if it were injured and incapable of flight. The almost invariable consequence of this is that the onlooker at once prepares to capture this apparently easy prey. The bird struggles along almost within reach of the hand, but somehow it always manages to maintain a safe distance between itself and its pursuer until at last, when it seems completely exhausted by its efforts to escape, and the would-be captor rushes forward to secure his trophy, to his utter bewilderment, the bird suddenly recovers and flies swiftly away.

It is almost superfluous to state that by the time this avian comedy is over, the eggs or young of this artful bird are reasonably safe from molestation, as the intruder has been beguiled further and further from the breeding spot. It now requires considerable ingenuity to discover the eggs, or, if young are involved, these have been granted ample time to hide themselves in some place of security. Several Gallinaceous birds are clever performers of this trick, but others practice this justifiable deception, from the little warbler to the huge ostrich, while the lapwings, plovers, ducks, buntings, etc., are all experts in this artful manoeuvre. Even experienced sportsmen are apt to be deceived by this artifice, while dogs are almost certain to be deluded by it.

The innocent-looking partridge is a past master in this art. A ground-nesting bird, it sits so closely that one may brush it with the hand before it flies from its eggs. As soon as the chicks are hatched, they leave the nest accompanied by their parents, and the manner in which the old partridges will simulate lameness when their young are in jeopardy is almost human in its guile. The upshot usually is that while the enemy's interest becomes centred on the apparently helpless adults, the young scatter in all directions, and skulk in the long grass or other available cover until the danger is past.

Strange as it seems, some birds carry this deceptiveness to still greater lengths, and simulate death itself. This feint, however, is more frequently utilised in the interests of self-preservation than for the protection of offspring. Nevertheless, this device is sometimes employed for the latter purpose, as the naturalist Audubon bears witness in the case of the American woodcock. Audubon saw the hen of this species "lay herself down in the middle of a road as if she were dead, while her little ones, five in number, were endeavoring on feeble legs to escape from a pack of naughty boys." Incredible as this may appear to those non-conversant with the ways of Nature's feathered things, it remains, for all that, entirely in accordance with scores of other instances of a similar character. As a matter of fact, the writer has had ocular proof of several examples of avian resourcefulness in trying circumstances, most of which would be dismissed as quite incredible by the average urban man.

No farmer or field naturalist disputes that the wiles of the lapwing or pewit—so called from its cry—are ingenious to a degree. An inhabitant of barren pastures, ploughed fields, and waste lands, this immensely useful bird is unfortunately the victim of the agriculturist's fowling-piece and the egg-gatherer alike. The flesh of the pewit is accounted a delicacy, and its eggs are collected in thousands and retailed at threepence or fourpence each. As a consequence, this faithful friend of the farmer—the birds feed entirely on insects which destroy the crops—experiences the utmost difficulty in holding its own. The lapwing's nest consists of a few withered sticks or straws laid on the bare ground, and its dark mottled eggs are so protectively colored that the average bird-nesting boy has to keep his eyes open in order to discover them. This obstacle is increased by the male bird's habit of luring away any intruder from his partner's treasures. At a fair distance from the nest the bird utters a mournful cry, and the novice approaches expecting to see the eggs lying near. The closer he goes, the more grievous the bird's cry becomes, and then the nest-hunter discovers that the lapwing's distressful note is caused by a broken wing. The bird attempts to fly, but stumbles, as he fails, along the earth. The excitement of the chase is now fully aroused, and although the lapwing still eludes its enemy, its struggles prove that it will soon succumb. Thus the game proceeds until the bird has enticed his antagonist over an acre or two of ground, when, without the slightest warning, it becomes its own wild self again, and flies scornfully through the air.

Unfortunately, these ingenious birds have been outwitted by the professional egg-stealer. He, in his higher wisdom or superior cunning, pays no

attention to the wailing cry of the cock-bird, but confines his observation to those other birds that silently rise from the soil, and at once proceed to the spot where their treasures lie exposed.

The avoset is a member of the large bird group which includes the woodcock and the pewit, and this bird and the allied stilt also simulate lameness in order to draw away the enemy from their broods. The avoset was once common on our eastern and south-eastern coasts, but persecution has driven it to more hospitable shores. With this bird, the female pretends to be wounded when startled from her nest, but her well-meant efforts to save her nursery are rarely crowned with success.

The case of the stilt is similar. This bird is about as big as the snipe, and enjoys the distinction of being probably the longest-legged bird, in proportion to the size of its body, of the whole ornithological realm. For this reason it is frequently termed "Longshanks" or long-legged plover, and, as might be inferred, its habitation is in the muddy fringes of ponds and lakes, but it is only a very infrequent visitor to our islands. The stilts are extremely affectionate and apprehensive parents, and when the females are engrossed with their domestic cares, the males are busy wading and feeding in the water. But as soon as their solitude is disturbed by an alien intruder the cocks crowd together and cry continuously. They also leave their breeding-pool for the encircling soil, where they affect helplessness and appear scarcely capable of standing on their trembling legs. In this way the birds turn the attention of hostile strangers from their eggs and fledgelings to themselves.

If doubtful concerning the safety of their ducklings when leading them to the water, the shield ducks suddenly become lame and lag in the rear until the young ones have reached the pool. Should this little stratagem prove successful, the old birds waddle as fast as they can to rejoin their children, and appear to congratulate them on their escape.

The common wild duck also indulges in this brood-preserving artifice. Mr. Cornish saw a couple of these birds that were surprised in a ditch adjoining the lake in Richmond Park, and a moment or so later a disabled duck limped painfully from the same spot and turned slowly and distressfully towards the friendly water. Her acting was so life-like that no suspicion would have arisen had not a tiny duckling been noticed as it started into the neighboring marsh:—

"Meanwhile, the old bird invited pursuit, lying down, as if unable to move further; and, resolved to see the end of so finished and courageous a piece of acting, we accepted the invitation and gave chase. For twenty yards or more the bird shuffled and stumbled through the rhododendron bushes, until she made for the lakeside, where the ground was more open. There, running fast, with her head up, and discarding all pretence of lameness for another twenty yards, she took wing and flew slowly just before us, at about three feet from the ground, until she reached the limit of the enclosure, when, uttering a derisive quack, she rose quickly above the trees and flew out over the lake."

The ostrich is usually devoid of strong maternal affection, and in presence of danger will readily desert her young. But with this bird such callous conduct is by no means unvariable. There are many variations of emotional display among the same animal species, and this fact alone seems fatal to the theory that lower animal activities are purely instinctive. A striking example of ostrich affection has the weighty authority of Anderson and Galton. These travellers overtook two adult ostriches with their family, and on their approach the whole group of birds sought safety in flight. The female led, the young followed, and the male bird lingered behind. Finding that the chicks were being beaten in the race, the male covered their retreat by slackening his speed and by deliberately turning aside. When this device proved unavailing, he stopped and rushed round and round his mounted enemies in ever decreasing circles. A shot seemed to have disabled him, as he had fallen and appeared unable to rise again. Under the impression that the ostrich was seriously wounded, Mr. Anderson advanced towards

the bird. But, to his amazement, the apparently disabled ostrich now stood up and darted away as fast as his legs would carry him, while his wife and family, profiting by the delay, were by this time well beyond the reach of danger.

An animated discussion has arisen among naturalists as to the real significance of the death-feint which obtains in various organic groups. A well-known instance of this deceptive characteristic occurs in that common British bird the landrail or corn-crake. When caught by a dog, the bird appears quite lifeless, and it continues in this state so long as its life is menaced. But no sooner does an opportunity for escape present itself, than the corn-crake almost miraculously recovers consciousness and avails itself of its first chance to regain its liberty. The water rail will practice a similar trick, and sometimes successfully. It has, however, been argued that these birds do in reality succumb to fright, and that their seeming insensibility is not merely a ruse to escape the penalty of death at the hands of their enemies. This may be so. But how are we to explain the circumstance that this alleged swooning presents such methodical phenomena? Why, when completely overcome with fright, does the cunning corn-crake keep its weather eye open to the first opportunity for escape? It certainly does seem remarkable that these attacks of insensibility should so closely coincide with the moment of danger, and that the bird's sudden restoration to watchful consciousness should be so timed that it derives every available advantage in its endeavors to escape. On the whole, it appears reasonable to assume that the laws that govern conduct are substantially identical throughout the higher organic realm, and that truly instinctive actions have been very materially conditioned by the experiences which the organism and its ancestors—immediate and remote—have encountered in the course of evolution. No one need dispute that birds and other animals succumb to shock, but this is an entirely different phenomenon to the seemingly deliberate simulation of death which occurs in the corn-crake, as well as in those instances earlier advanced of birds which assume the attitude and appearance of death in order to distract the attention of their foes from their highly prized progeny.

There can be but little doubt that instinct and reason both blend to establish these complex responses to unfavorable circumstances. Animals that have thus adapted themselves to their environment, consequently derive advantages to selves and offspring. In the main, they thereby secure a longer lease of life for themselves, and bequeath in terms of heredity their habits, instincts, and mental powers to their descendants, who profit by them in turn. And not only do the descendants profit by their inherited aptitudes; they also tend to render them more perfect than they were before. Along these lines have been developed those wondrous wiles and devices which astonish even the naturalist, accustomed as he is to the marvels of organic Nature.

T. F. PALMER.

Mark Twain's War Prayer.

MARK TWAIN was known the world over as a humorist and a Freethinker, but few of his readers knew the extent of his Freethought. Owing to the opposition of his pious wife, who was a formidable critic on the hearth, many of his iconoclastic jests were suppressed, and his most clearly expressed heresies remained unpublished, or were issued in privately printed volumes of limited numbers. However, through the sincerity of his friend and biographer, Mr. Bigelow Paine, a clear account of Mark Twain's opinions was issued.

Probably we shall never know how far Twain's writings were edited and blue-pencilled in the interests of Mrs. Grundy. Some of his jokes have

disappeared from late editions of his books, notably the jest on Joseph and his brethren, in which Joseph says, "Pity me"; and Twain adds, "his brethren pitted him." Even the great humorist's serious attempt at philosophical writing, *What is Man?* was circulated only among his friends during his lifetime, and its wider publication prevented after the author's death.

A suppressed article by Mark Twain was recalled recently by Dr. Henry Newmann in a lecture delivered before the Ethical Society of St. Louis, U.S.A. The article entitled, "The War Prayer," recounts how a regiment, on its way to the fighting line, goes into a place of worship and prays for victory. At the conclusion of the invocation, a white-robed stranger enters the church, and tells the troops that their appeal will be answered favorably if they will repeat it realising its actual meaning. He then repeats the prayer, filling in the blanks in the original appeal:—

"O Lord, we go forth to smite the foe. Help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of the patriotic dead; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief. For our sakes, who adore thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears."

M.

Acid Drops.

Prophecy is an occupation that appears to have a strong attraction for many people. It is, at all events, an easy one to follow. Prophecies are seldom dated, and, even if they are, by the time the given date arrives the prophecy is forgotten, and the prophet only reminds the public of its existence in the rare instance of his having stumbled on the truth. Since this War began we have been deluged by all kinds of forecasts as to what will happen when peace arrives, and, as these have covered almost every possible contingency, someone is bound to be able to say, "I told you so." The curious thing is that merely because there is a much larger number of men engaged in this War than in previous conflicts, it is expected to produce totally different consequences. As though the psychological and social consequences of war are likely to be different because the number of men fighting happens to be twenty millions instead of five millions, and because there are half-a-dozen nations involved instead of two or three.

One prophet—"A. G. G.," of the *Daily News*—says that after the War this will be a "profoundly serious world." People will be concerned about the vital affairs of life, instead of about its decorations. And in the end he supplies a complete refutation of himself by saying:—

"The individual life is being changed too. A young man, writing home from the Front to his parents this week, concluded thus, 'No more office work for me.' He spoke the thought that is shaping itself in many minds. There has been a breach with the past; new tastes have been acquired, new ideas of life and its values have come to birth, new demands for self-expression will issue from thousands of lips. What are we doing to prepare to meet those demands—the demands of those, for example, who say, 'No more office work for me,' and who will insist either here or elsewhere on the life of the open air and fruitful labor? The land question has been blanketed just when it is more urgent than ever—just when we are realising how true was the dictum of Froude that 'that State is strongest which has the largest proportion of its people with a direct interest in the soil.'"

Now, how is it possible, if "many minds" are experiencing the feeling, "No more office work for me"—which is, after all, only another way of saying "No more workshop or civil occupation for me"—for this to make for a more serious ordering of life. If it means anything at all, it means that these men have felt the glamor of military life, and—we use the expression deliberately—the charm of its irresponsibility. It is simply foolish to assume that the man who spoke thus was demanding open-air life and fruitful labor. For our own part, we know of many who have thrown up posts, and who have said that if they can secure a commission, when the War is over, they will not return to their old occupations. But this is not evidence of a change for the better, but a change in the direction of social demoralisation. It means that the military life, in a large number of cases, unfits people for the occupations of peaceful times.

Why on earth should anyone imagine that this outbreak will disgust people with war, any more than previous wars have done? The sight and knowledge of comrades, friends, and fellow-countrymen dying saddens people naturally, but does it make them less ready to risk their own lives and kill in their turn. Everyone knows that it does not; and when the present War is over there remains as a national residuum the military spirit awakened by a long war, and either the feeling of aggrandisement that comes from victory, or the desire for revenge that is born of defeat. And the stupidity of thinking that fighting will end war is seen in the fact of the people who talk thus, pointing out that the sweeping victory of Germany in 1870 gave an enormous impetus to its demoralising militarism of later years. Not the lesson of this War, but the lesson of life is, that peace alone can destroy war. For peace spells education, humanisation, enlightenment, and genuine civilisation. And war spells the ruin of these, as of most other things that are worth possessing.

We are not at all surprised at this "no more office work for me" frame of mind. It is only what one might expect. Thousands of young men who have enlisted find themselves petted and praised and made much of in papers, and in domestic and social circles. For the first time in their lives they are made to feel that they are of some consequence to the nation. They might have slaved away all their lives in office, or warehouse, or workshop, without anyone but those in their immediate circle feeling any concern whether they were ill-paid or well-paid, alive or dead. They are needed now, and a military life has made them of consequence both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Naturally, there is a disinclination to sink back into the obscurity of private life, with its greater cares and responsibilities. And this is precisely one of the dangerous consequences of the War that we shall have to face. But the cure for this lies in our own hands. It involves a recasting of our standard of values, and giving to the virtues of peace and the heroisms of civil life their proper place in the ethical scale. To cease to exalt the virtues of militarism over those of peaceful pursuits is to make a greater stride towards the destruction of war than all the warships that were ever built or the cannon that were ever cast.

The *Evening News* says that "the Bishop of London hopes the drink question will soon be dealt with drastically." Does his lordship intend to banish port wine from the communion services?

At a confirmation service at Newhaven some of the candidates were soldiers in khaki. As a rule, the candidates are white-robed flappers.

Johnny, a young Indian elephant at the Zoo, has succumbed to an attack of pneumonia. "His end was peaceful," say the newspapers. Why not? He was not pestered in his last moments by Christians anxious to know where he would spend eternity.

It looks almost as if the Rev. F. B. Meyer has been reading Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *Bible and Beer*, for, writing on "Short Cuts to Sobriety," in the *Daily Chronicle*, he says the Church is leaving to organisations and societies what she ought to be doing herself. But in many cases she is handicapped by the large investments in breweries and so forth held by Christian people, and by the subsidies which are furnished by the trade for Christian and philanthropic work.

A superstitious Highlander, who had lost his mascot, appealed recently, through a London newspaper, to be allowed to supply him with a substitute. No one sent him any relics of the saints, but a Hither Green girl forwarded him a little black puppy. This looks as if religion was going to the dogs.

"The War-God must be pleased with us," says a writer in the *Evening News*. Yet pious people give their threepenny bits to support the religion of the Prince of Peace.

"A real coffee-stall is to have the blessing of the Bishop of London," says a newspaper, alluding to the Church Army bar-cars for the use of soldiers. Will the waitresses participate in the episcopal blessing.

Writing in the *Daily News*, Mr. H. G. Wells says that he "cannot understand what devil has got into the Liberal consciousness at the present time to make us a jarring rabble instead of a united force for pacific reconstruction." Why does Mr. Wells adopt the vocabulary and demonology

of colored gentlemen on the Gold Coast? And has Mr. Wells ever heard of the juryman who "damned" the obstinacy of the other eleven?

In a sermon preached at St. Paul's, Bishop Joscelyne told the following story:—

"I heard the other day of a captain to whom was entrusted the duty of censoring the letters written home by his men. The officer had laid aside his faith, and had long been known as an Agnostic; but as he read letter after letter full of the comfort and hope a man's religion gives him in moments of such terrible strain, his heart was melted, and he has since that time become a convinced Christian."

This is very convincing, but for the sake of others more sceptical than ourselves, it would have been well to have given the name of the ship or the captain. It is quite clear that *all* sailors are Christians, and that both their letters and conversation are full of the hope and comfort derived from religion. And we can quite realise that the captain of a battleship, quite unaware of the fact that the men under him were Christians, and that being Christians, their letters contain references to religion, would be converted when he made the discovery. Still, not for our sake, but for that of others, we wish that Bishop Joscelyne had given the name of this remarkable captain.

That ardent temperance reformer, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, writing in the *Daily Chronicle*, says that Christians should take a solemn vow to abstain from alcohol while the War lasts. If this advice is followed, we may see lemon-squash or ginger-beer used in the Communion Services.

Mr. Frederic Harrison has been recommending the classics and the Bible as a solace during war-time. We fear that Mr. Thomas Atkins will not take kindly to Catullus or Theocritus, but the Kaiser might read the stories of Daniel in the Lion's Den, and Jonah and the Whale, in order to see what some Jewish gentlemen did when they were in tight places.

The *Daily Mail* has offered £5,000 for the best War photographs. They ought to get a picture of deceased soldiers entering heaven for that money.

"A tune that brings tears to the eyes is a great possession," says a writer in a daily paper in regard to "The Men of Harlech." Just so! But sometimes, as in the case of mission bands, the tears may be caused by rage.

The Rev. J. M. Thompson, who is the Dean of Divinity at Magdalen College, Oxford, justifies the War on the ground that "the death of Christ was an act of war, being a blow struck as well as accepted." One would naturally infer that he could not object to the application of the title Prince of Strife to his Lord and Master, for he does by implication say that it is "a Christian thing to fight in this War." For this view the reverend gentleman has the authority of the well-known hymn, "The Son of God goes forth to war," and, of course, the Son of God can only go forth as leader or general. So profoundly convinced of this is Mr. Thompson that he finds fault with "those Bishops who are prohibiting their younger clergy from fighting." He even believes that, being Christian in character, the War will result in much good all round. It will "create not only a new Europe, but a new Church." After this, who will not say that the supreme War-Lord is not the Kaiser, but Jesus Christ, the Prince, not of Peace, but of Strife? No wonder Christianity is said to be "a progressive religion," and that its Founder's teaching stands in need of "constant re-editing and re-translation."

A popular Presbyterian minister, the Rev. J. Stephens Roose, of Upper Tooting, admits that the Churches are no better attended now than they were before the War. In August and September "neglectful members turned up regularly in all our churches; but it soon broke down," with the result that religious indifference is, to say the least, as pronounced as ever. It was a fundamental mistake to declare that the War was driving the people back to their God. The men of God who did so with great confidence are now silent on the point.

Dr. Horton is a dogmatist of the first water. He always speaks *ex cathedra*, and woe be to them who have the audacity to differ from him. He has just preached a sermon on the Person of Jesus, in which he asserted that Jesus "still remained before us a Fact," and this is admitted by "all candid minds," the simple truth being that "the greatest men admired Jesus most." Those who attempt to "show that Jesus never lived at all" are dismissed

as unworthy of any notice; and yet no historical fact is more undeniable than the fact that the Gospel Jesus is not an historical character. He is a wholly unnatural and purely fictitious being, who never existed except as a literary creation. The Gospels are clearly works of an imagination dominated by superstition. Dr. Horton claims Goethe and Carlyle as believers in Jesus; but, surely, he cannot be ignorant of the fact that the Jesus admired by those two great men was essentially different from the one whom the reverend gentleman urges his fellow-men to worship and trust for the salvation of their souls.

The imaginative flights of London schoolchildren have astonished the County Council examiners, whose report has just been issued. Candidates were asked to write a letter to the sun, and some of the addresses given were: "Hot Street, Sunland; Solar System Road, Space Street, Nowhere; Blue Sky House, The Heavens." This reminds us of the little girl who addressed a letter, "God, Heaven," and received the envelope back from the Post Office officials endorsed, "Addressee not known."

American Christians have started a movement to supply soldiers at the European battle-fronts with Bibles printed in their own languages. We trust that the Oriental troops will not be supplied; for if they do read the Bible they will see that the Christian soldiers treat the divine commands with high-sniffing contempt.

Rev. Campbell Morgan quoted one of W. S. Gilbert's witty lines the other day, and said that while it contained an important truth, it did not strike the author as being of much consequence. We are afraid that Mr. Campbell Morgan is not equal to the task of judging W. S. Gilbert. Genuine humor always has an undercurrent of gravity about it, otherwise it runs the danger of being mere clowning. The smile of the real humorist is often on the borderland of tears, and beneath much of Gilbert's wit there lay a very shrewd judgment and a very serious purpose. He himself expressed it well when he made the Jester in *The Yeoman of the Guard* say that the way to make one's fellow-creatures wise was to always "gild the philosophic pill." Dr. Campbell Morgan's method is to give an absurdity a covering of gravity, and then to imagine that he is talking philosophy. And there are always enough people who mistake obscurity for depth to supply him with an appreciative audience.

The story of a gardener's claim to a peerage was recalled in an action before Mr. Justice Avory recently, and the newspaper editors used large-type headlines in reporting the case. There was nothing very startling in the lawsuit, when one remembered that Englishmen profess to worship a carpenter-god.

The Belgian Minister of Marine has stated that the Government will erect monuments to perpetuate the memories of German acts of cruelty on the spots where atrocities have taken place. They will be sermons in stones.

The official report which has been issued concerning the Transvaal rebellion shows that it was largely due to the prophecies of the notorious Van Rensburg, who saw visions which impressed the Biblical minds of the Dutchmen. It is a startling coincidence that the European trouble was caused by the God-intoxicated Kaiser.

During the singing of the opening hymn at the Primitive Methodist Church, Ramsbottom, recently, Mrs. Sarah Cardwell fell down dead. As the lady was not attending a Free-thought meeting, there is no moral.

Dr. A. C. Dixon, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, is evidently faced with a declining congregation. At the annual meeting of the Tabernacle he advised members to close the associated missions in order to attend the Sunday morning service—in other words, to supply him with a larger congregation. Dr. Dixon plaintively explained that conditions are very different to what they were. People do not now take religion for granted; you must "begin with the alphabet of religion, and convince men that sin is real, that the Bible is inspired, and that Christ is divine." This is very sad, and we wonder how many such people Dr. Dixon has brought over since his arrival in England? It is possible that he may have kept some few more or less benighted individuals from giving up Christianity, but we cannot conceive anyone with even the brains of a domesticated rabbit being brought over to Christianity by a preacher of Dr. Dixon's calibre.

It looks as if Mr. H. G. Wells, the well-known novelist, were a Spiritualist. He says: "I met and killed George Bernard Shaw in the *Daily Chronicle* some weeks ago; it had become a duty; but his spirit, I regret to see, still lives." We do not believe in ghosts, but we hope that Mr. Wells will be haunted by this phantom for many years.

Mdme. Sarah Bernhardt, the world's greatest actress, who has undergone a serious operation, has a brilliant wit. When visiting America, Talmage, the revivalist, made an attack on her from the pulpit. The great actress sent the preacher a note: "It is not customary for persons in our profession to insult one another."

"The earth is the Lord's," we used to be told, but according to Billy Sunday, the American evangelist, the Devil owns a very large part of it—at least in America. Here is that gentleman's summary of the ownership of part of the United States, as given by the *Truthseeker* (New York):—

"Boston is a hell-hole."

"San Francisco is a cesspool of hell."

"Philadelphia may be one of the most religious cities of its size in the world, all right, but it is one of the rottenest politically."

"Cincinnati and St. Louis, in the vilest and rot of their proclivities that damn and rot this country to-day."

"There's rotten, stinking, corroding, corrupt, hell-ridden, God-defying, devil-ridden New York."

We do not suppose that this list exhausts Satan's ownership, but it is enough to go on with. It should, however, be counted to his credit that he doesn't own Billy Sunday. He belongs to the Lord.

There appears to be some decent things in Billy Sunday's speeches, and some folk have been wondering where they came from. In a Memorial Day speech—commemorating the soldiers who fell in the war between North and South—Sunday said:—

"This is a day for memory and for tears. A mighty nation bends before its honored graves and pays to noble dust the tearful tribute of its love. Gratitude is the fairest flower that sheds its perfume in the human heart."

Thirty-five years ago someone else said on a similar occasion:—

"This is a day for memory and tears. A mighty nation bends above its honored graves, and pays to noble dust the tribute of its love. Gratitude is the fairest flower that sheds its perfume in the heart."

This "someone else" was Colonel Ingersoll. A local paper in reporting Sunday's speech, said that it was "tipped with the fire of God," it might have added, and stolen from a great Freethinker by the audacity of an evangelistic ruffian.

What a pity that Private Lowe, at present in the Military Hospital at Millbank, did not have a number of pious persons praying for his recovery. It would have been such a fine example of an answer to prayer. Private Lowe, it should be explained, has been dumb for over six months, owing to the bursting of a shell. Quite accidentally the other day, he placed his hand on a very hot water pipe. Result, a blister and the exclamation, "Gosh, it's—hot!" The blister did it quite as well as a prayer-meeting could have managed the job, perhaps better. Anyway, pietists have lost a splendid opportunity. All they can now do is to discover that someone was praying all the time. We should not be surprised if this turns out to be the case.

Unselfishness ought to be above advertisement, and self-sacrifice should bring its own reward. This is a lesson that Rev. J. H. Shakespeare ought to take to heart. As President-elect of the Free Church Council, he assures the world that the Free Churches are "not thinking so much of their own outlook, as of the service which they can render the nation." Yet he does not hesitate to advertise the number of recruits who belonged to Nonconformist Churches, and asserts that the young men who swing past us in the streets, khaki-clad and ready for anything, "have been trained in Puritan traditions." Of course, the inference is that this is the cause of their readiness to volunteer. And if that is not advertisement, it is a rather close imitation. Mr. Shakespeare ought to remember that there never is much trouble in getting people anywhere to volunteer for fighting. Look at France, Germany, Russia, Serbia, or anywhere else. In addition to the numbers raised by conscription, millions have volunteered for service. We wonder what the Puritan tradition has had to do with them. Really, the one outstanding feature of the Puritan tradition is—cant.

NOTICE.

On and after March 25, the business of THE PIONEER PRESS, will be transferred to 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

To Correspondents.

H. R. WRIGHT.—We should have thought that the matter was self-evident. The success of an army in the field depends upon the maintenance of supplies. This in turn depends upon the continuance of the social and industrial life of the country to which the Army belongs. Consequently, to throw every fit and able-bodied man into the Army would be to give away to the enemy the whole influence of our national resources and leave the Army unsupported. As a matter of fact, Lord Kitchener has actually advised able-bodied men in various occupations that they are serving their country better by remaining where they are than by enlisting. And even conscription does not put every able-bodied man into the fighting line. That would be sheer suicide.

S. CLOWES.—Received. See "Sugar Plums." We appreciate the good wishes that accompany your subscription. To know that we have deserved a kindly thought from friends of the "good old cause" has always been gratifying. For the opinions of others we have never been greatly concerned.

J. F. FLOOD (Pittsburgh, U.S.A.)—We note your continued appreciation of the *Freethinker*, and your efforts to increase its circulation. With regard to the other matter in your letter, it is really a question of spending one's energies in this or that direction. And you seem to us to take the wiser view that the more important work should always take precedence of the less important.

J. G. DOBSON.—Letter with enclosure for Honorarium Fund to hand. We hope to publish a complete list of subscriptions shortly.

Mrs. J. RENDLE (Uganda).—Carlyle's position in religion is a very doubtful one. He was certainly not a Christian. You would probably find much information in the late J. M. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. We do not envy your position, being, as you say, surrounded by missionaries. From what you say, their religion has evidently failed to teach them ordinary courtesy. You have, very obviously, far more reason to suspect the genuineness of their belief, than they have to suspect your unbelief.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We are pleased to be in a position to state that there is a marked improvement in Mr. Foote's health at the time of writing (March 9). But he is still forbidden by his doctor to do any work, and, disagreeable to him as are such orders, he must, perforce, obey them. Mr. Foote has passed through a very trying time, but all danger has now passed, and he writes that next week he hopes to be again fit for work. In such matters, however, it is the wisest policy to avoid rushing nature, and we feel sure that all his friends would rather he worked hard at getting better than risk a relapse by returning to duty too early. As one correspondent writes, Mr. Foote's health is of more than local interest; it is really more than a personal concern. The movement needs him; and it is much better, at present, to live for Freethought than to die for it.

Mr. Foote has been subject to a deal of harassing labor of late—which may have been contributory to his breakdown. The Bowman case has involved a lot of correspondence, constant thought, and many legal consultations. Happily, that matter is now proceeding in quite a satisfactory manner, although legal processes cannot be hurried. There has also been the trouble of securing new premises, which, as will be seen by the notice at the top of this page, has now been settled—so far as arrangements for occupancy are concerned. The bother of the actual removal still remains to be faced, but when that is over it is hoped to make headway with a number of things of importance to the future of the *Freethinker* and the Freethought movement generally.

The removal of the Pioneer Press involves the removal of the N. S. S. and the Secular Society, Ltd. It was found impossible to acquire suitable premises that would accommodate both the *Freethinker* and the Secular Society, Ltd., but offices have been obtained at 62 Farringdon-street, next door to the Pioneer Press, so that, short of being under the same roof, the two branches of the movement will still be in contact. The date of the Society's removal will be on March 25. Until that date, letters on the Society's business will be addressed as hitherto.

After the announcement in last week's "Personal" with reference to the Honorarium Fund, we had hoped to have given this week a complete list of subscriptions to date. This list is, however, among Mr. Foote's papers, and he is still too unwell to look it up and prepare it for the press. In these circumstances, those who have already sent will excuse a little longer delay in receiving public acknowledgement of their subscriptions. A number have already been acknowledged through the medium of the Correspondence Column, and others by post. And all subscribers may depend upon seeing a full public recognition of what has been received, so soon as circumstances admit of its publication.

Mr. W. Davidson writes, in the *Tottenham Herald*, a very useful letter which contains an effective reply to one of the stock slanders on Thomas Paine. This is a form of propaganda of which we should be pleased to see Freethinkers more readily avail themselves. Very frequently these slanders on Freethinkers and misrepresentations of Freethought are due to deliberate malice, but they are sometimes set down in all innocence, due to the writers following some Christian tract or pamphlet that lies before them. In such cases, a brief, temperate letter stands a fair chance of admission to the columns of a newspaper, and the result is all to the good. We repeat we should like to see individual Freethinkers busy themselves in this direction, and one day we hope to see the work of the National Secular Society so organised that keeping an eye on the press—particularly the provincial press—is made a part of its regular work. Most societies do a great deal of work in this direction, and their existence and objects are thus brought before many who would otherwise remain in ignorance of them and their work. Of course, there would always be the religious boycott to fight, but it is not nearly so strong in the provincial press as is commonly imagined, and, at any rate, pegging away has an effect on this as well as on other things.

In May next Mr. Arthur B. Moss will be sixty years of age, and will have completed forty years' service for Freethought as a lecturer and writer. By a happy coincidence, Mr. W. Heaford will also celebrate his sixtieth birthday, and will have served a similar period. Our congratulations are heartily given to the two veterans.

A chatty leaderette in a recent issue of the *Times* dealt with the question of "Being Hard Up," and pointed out that since the War commenced people are less diffident about admitting the fact. It suggests that greater frankness on this subject would be advisable at all times. For our own part, we quite fail to see why a man should any more be ashamed of not having as much money as he could spend than he should be ashamed of having less inches than his neighbor. There are many things more valuable in the world than making money, and, conversely, there are many worse states than being without it. And, after all, "hard-pressedness" is a relative condition. The man with a thousand a year is hard up at the side of the man with ten, and he in turn is a pauper compared with the multi-millionaire.

It is all a question of the current standard of worth. And the truth is that in this—and other—Christian countries the estimation in which people are held does depend largely upon their banker's balance. When a man dies there is a far wider interest in how much money he left than in what he did during his career. One's social position is made to turn largely upon the district in which one lives, the house in which one dwells, the number of servants one keeps—all entirely a question of money. When a man's daughters are spoken of as having "married well," all that is usually implied by the expression is that they have married a man with a large income. Because a man has a large income, it is assumed that he is in some unspecified way the superior of the one with a small income; just as the fact of a country having vast "possessions" and an enormous trade entitles it to be called a "great" nation. The worship of wealth is to-day carried to greater lengths than at any other period in the world's history, and it is significant that it is most pronounced in countries that make the greatest display of their Christian belief.

A Book of Pity and of Death.

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam; A variorum edition of FitzGerald's rendering by F. H. Evans. 1914.

THE publication of a new and handsome variorum edition of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is a further proof that Edward FitzGerald has taken his place definitely as an English classic. It is only a few years ago that his book reached the larger public, and so great was the appreciation, that hundreds of thousands of copies were sold, and an edition even produced at a penny. Yet when FitzGerald died in 1883, he was almost unknown, and only a few discriminating judges of fine literature knew his name. Indeed, the general public had very little chance of hearing it. Of a shy disposition, he took more pains to avoid fame, than others do to seek it. He wrote about remote subjects, which appealed only to cultured people. When his friend Tennyson dedicated "Tiresias" to FitzGerald, the tribute seemed merely the outcome of friendship, and the average reader discounted the praise of that:—

"—golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well."

A man is known by his friends, and FitzGerald's friendships were notable. At school he made acquaintance with James Spedding, the editor of Lord Bacon's works, and at Cambridge with Thackeray. The years that followed united him to Alfred and Frederick Tennyson, Carlyle, Bernard Barton the poet, Lawrence the artist, and others.

FitzGerald's biographer, like the immortal knife-grinder, has no story to tell. Edward FitzGerald was born at Bredfield in 1809, the same year as Darwin and Tennyson. Educated at Bury St. Edmunds and at Cambridge, he followed no profession; but lived a life of leisured ease. Till 1853 he lived mainly in a thatched cottage at Boulge, near his brother's house, Boulge Hall. He was in lodgings in Woodbridge from 1860 to 1874, when he settled down in a house of his own, named Little Grange. And "Laird of Little Grange," as he liked to sign himself, he remained till his death, at the age of seventy-four, in June, 1883. He is buried in Boulge Churchyard, and a rose, transplanted from the tomb of Omar Khayyam, was planted on his grave.

Carlyle saw in it only a "peaceable, affectionate, ultra-modest man," and an "innocent far-niente life." Like Shelley, FitzGerald was fond of the sea, and had an affection for fishermen and sailors. One old Viking, the fishermen of Lowestoft, whom we know as "Posh," he numbered among his personal friends. The Viking succumbed to an undue devotion to Bacchus, but FitzGerald was no harsh judge of human frailties. As a fact, the great poet who gave us *The Rubaiyat*, that rhapsody of wine, woman, and song, was very abstemious. A vegetarian, he once nearly killed his friend, Tennyson, by persuading him to try the simple life for six weeks.

The little that FitzGerald wrote was all published anonymously, except "Six Dramas of Calderon" in 1853. He wrote a memoir to an edition of the poems of his friend, Bernard Barton, in 1849. Two years later he printed his remarkable dialogue, "Euphranor." "Polonius" appeared in 1852, a rendering of the "Agamemnon" in 1876, and four editions of his masterpiece, *The Rubaiyat*, came out before his death, the first appearing the same year as Darwin's *Origin of Species*, without gaining immediate recognition. FitzGerald wrote many letters, and they are among the most readable in the language. Addressed to intellectual giants, they are full of piquant reading. His taste was all for old books and old friends, familiar jests and familiar places. His special literary favorites were Cervantes, Scott, Montaigne, and Mdme. de Sevigne, she herself a lover of Montaigne; and with a spice of his Freethought in her. Of course, he loved Omar Khayyam, and that old-world Freethinker, Lucretius. He hated London, chiefly for hiding nature. Like Thoreau, he knew the life that suited him, and refused to be turned aside

from it. If any justification were needed, his version of Omar's wonderful "Rose of the Hundred-and-One Petals" would be enough.

The new edition of the poem reveals FitzGerald as a deliberate artist. Like Gray, with his magnificent "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," he polished and arranged his diamonds of verse till he had formed a splendid coronal, which time cannot dim. Here we can follow the editions, verse by verse, as FitzGerald improved upon them, and there is no question that the last is, far and away, the best, both imaginatively and verbally.

Some translations are finer than the originals. Witness the New Testament, written in canine Greek and rendered into divine English. What a translation of Omar was FitzGerald's! "A planet larger than the sun that cast it," said his friend Tennyson, and could there be a finer judge? The magnificent opening is pure, unadulterated FitzGerald; and throughout the poem the mere Oriental fancies of the old Persian are transmuted into symbols of world-wide significance. There is always an enlargement of vision, a progress from mere fancy to puissant imagination, from pretty decoration to all universal beauty. The pity is deepened and the scepticism heightened. In one of the later quatrains, by the addition of two simple words, FitzGerald has turned a commonplace idea into a fearful indictment of Orthodox belief:—

"O Thou, who man of baser earth didst make,
And even with Paradise devise the snake,
For all the sin wherewith the face of man
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take!"

How apposite, too, is the directness of the attack on Orthodoxy. Omar had in his mind the Mohammedan religion; but FitzGerald was addressing Christian readers. With what grim pleasure must he have penned the lines, written by the old astronomer-poet in the tenth century:—

"Oh, threats of hell and hopes of paradise!
One thing at least is certain—This life flies.
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies,
The flower that once has blown for ever dies."

FitzGerald's masterly version is, doubtless, the finest Epicurean poem in the English language. It is the old, old protest of humanity against the wickedness of Orthodoxy, expressed as it was never expressed before in English verse. The nightingales of old-world Persia sing of wine and roses; but it is against a background of pity and of death. In this poem, this shy dreamer of dreams evolved a vision more lasting than we ourselves, or he, or the very Suffolk coast he lived on. Oh, immortals of literature! The old Persian poet writes his poem and dies, and a thousand years after the tired merchant, forgetting for a little space his counting-house and his ledgers, lives a freer life in the wonderland of the poet's genius. Here are nymphs and roses, grotesque imaginings and human memories; a sense of "tears in human things." This is immortality, indeed! Under the poet's opiate wand he dreams the self-same dream for one little hour—and is refreshed:—

"What good is like to this,
To do worthy the writing, and to write,
Worthy the reading and the world's delight?"

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Apologetics.

THE REV. A. MOORHOUSE (No. 2).
THE Rev. Arthur Moorhouse, Professor of Old Testament languages and literature, who claims for the ancient Hebrew scriptures a high degree of "inspiration," in his further prosecution of that claim makes the following remarkable statements:—

"The Old Testament was not given to the scientist or to the historian, as such, but to the man of God. Inspiration does not guarantee its accuracy in matters which concern physical science, nor the correctness of its historical details. The Bible is not concerned with these things, as such.....The first two chapters of Genesis were not designed to give an account of the

creation of the world after the method of our modern scientific writers.....The writer's aim was religious. His science was defective from our point of view; but that does not disqualify him as a God-inspired teacher of religion.....The first three chapters of Genesis do not profess to be history in our sense of the word..... Nor is there any valid reason for thinking that this is history miraculously dictated. Our fathers may have thought so; but the Bible does not say so."

After these apologetic admissions the alleged inspiration of the Old Testament has not a leg to stand upon. It is pure nonsense to say that the writers were "not concerned" with the accuracy or otherwise of their accounts. In the chapters referred to they certainly thought they were recording facts. Josephus thought so, when paraphrasing the Creation accounts for his *Antiquities*; the Jews and Christians thought so in the apostolic age; so did the Christian Church through all past ages; so did "our fathers." It was only when Science and historical research proved the Hebrew sacred accounts to be ancient fables that Christian advocates began to admit the fact, though illogically maintaining, at the same time, that the ignorant Biblical writers were "inspired." No wonder our reverend apologist did not care to define "inspiration"; for that word, when applied to fiction, can mean nothing less than dense ignorance or fabrication—one or the other.

The writers of the fabulous stories in Gen. i.—iii., we are told, were "God-inspired teachers of religion"; that is to say, they were incited by their tribal god, Yahweh, to write what that deity knew to be untrue. How else can the "inspiration" come in? Assuming for a moment this kind of inspiration, the question arises, Why did not the god Yahweh impart to his writers some knowledge of the truth? It would be just as easy for the Bible scribes, if they really wrote under the influence of inspiration, to give a record of historical or scientific facts, as to narrate a mass of silly fiction. Since, then, their writings prove them to have had no knowledge of the truth, it logically follows either that they were *not* inspired, or that their tribal deity, who inspired them to write, was ignorant as themselves.

Continuing his special pleading, our great Hebrew scholar goes on to say:—

"Well, then, if the stories in Gen. i.—iii. are not history, but picture and allegory, are their spiritual teachings less true?.....What man among us can read the story of the Temptation [of Eve] and the Fall without great searching of heart? Who can deny that it quickens the conscience and stirs the soul to its depths?.....It is the spiritual teaching about sin, and punishment for it, that concerns us."

These apologetic statements are truly astonishing. The stories in Gen. i.—iii. are *not* "picture and allegory"; they possess no spiritual meaning whatever. The narratives of the Temptation and the Fall are absurd and misleading, besides being purely fictitious. There was no "temptation" and no "fall," therefore no sin: man has not fallen, he has risen. To talk of punishment for sin that was never committed is the supreme of the ridiculous. Neither, again, did the writers record these stories as allegories: they narrated them as what they believed them to be—undoubted historical facts. No one, save Christian advocates or apologists, calls them allegories. There are, it is true, some allegorical stories in the Old Testament, but they are easily recognised. The following are examples:—

- Judg. ix. 7—20.—Jotham's parable of the Trees.
- 2 Sam. xii. 1—14.—Nathan's story of the Ewe lamb.
- Isaiah v. 1—7.—The Lord's Vineyard (Israel).
- Isaiah lii. 13—liii. 12.—The Lord's Servant (Israel).

No one who has read the foregoing would call the first three chapters of Genesis "picture and allegory" which chapters, or the alleged events recorded in them, are spoken of in other parts of the Bible as historical. Thus, the Genesis accounts of the Creation are referred to in Exod. xx. 11, Job. xxxviii. 4—11, Prov. viii. 22—30, Psalm civ. 5—9, cxxxvi. 5—9, etc. The story of the Fall is alluded to in Job xxxi. 33, Rom. v. 14, 2 Cor. xi. 3, 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14, etc. And in every case in which events narrated in Gen.

i.—iii. are referred to, they are cited as historical records of facts. The Gospel Jesus is also represented as saying (Matt. xix. 4): "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female." This is clearly a reference to Gen. i. 27: from which it would appear that either the Christian Savior, or the Gospel-writer who placed those words in his Savior's mouth, believed the first chapter of Genesis to be a divine record of fact.

Our learned Professor next goes on to say:—

"The facts of history and physical science can be discovered by diligent search. But.....the feelings and purposes of God towards us, and our true destiny in the light of our relation to Him: these things the Bible tells us, and the Bible alone." —"It is asserted, however, that the critics have discovered *un-truths* in the Old Testament.....To that assertion I must give an unhesitating and emphatic denial." —"The Old Testament still speaks from God straight to the heart of man. It still bears witness to Christ."

The three foregoing extracts indicate the character of the remaining portion of the book, and, as an apologetic argument, the statements are unique. Narratives which are found to be nothing but mis-statements from beginning to end are asserted to be "God-inspired." We are asked to believe that the Hebrew god inspired some of his worshipers to write a series of narratives, the whole of which were nothing but a mass of falsehoods, and that these tarradiddles were believed to be undoubted historical fact through all succeeding generations by Jews and Christians until comparatively recent times, and were only then discovered to be false by a diligent research of a few sceptics whose common sense rejected them. And, with one important exception, these statements are true: the Hebrew deity had no part in the matter. As everyone knows, the ancient Hebrew writers had no knowledge of the Universe or of natural phenomena, and had no means of getting any—not even from their tribal god, who, like all the local deities of Old Testament times, was purely imaginary. Every nation, in the earliest of those times, took its idea of the cosmos, in the first instance, from some other nation: the Jews took a great deal of theirs from Babylonia and Assyria, and having done so, remodelled them, rejecting or altering as they thought fit. Among these were the two Creation stories, which are given separately, and two Deluge stories, which they cleverly dovetailed into one. Our Professor admits that the Babylonian Creation stories were more ancient than the Hebrew narratives, and that the latter might in some way have been derived from them; but he claims that the rejection of portions of the older stories by the Jews, and their recasting the remainder into a more orderly and sensible narrative, must be set down as the result of inspiration. No one can, of course, deny that the Genesis story in chapter i. is a very great improvement on the Babylonian story, and that it was composed, apparently, by a priestly writer, who represented the god as acting in a rational and dignified manner: but that is all that can be said for it. In the superstitious times of the Old Testament history every nation had a god of its own, and every people offered the same kind of animal sacrifices to their national deity. There were no Atheists in those days; for Atheism is a philosophy born of knowledge, and the whole world was in dense ignorance throughout the whole period recorded.

But, says our orthodox Hebrew Professor, "it is asserted that critics have discovered *un-truths* in the Old Testament"—by which, probably, he means fictions that cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called allegorical. The existence of a very large portion of Hebrew literature of this character, in the Old Testament, appears to have slipped his memory. He must know, however, that the Book of Jonah and the Book of Daniel are both pure fiction, as is also the Book of Job. By calling the last-named book a "poem" does not alter its character one jot, and, apart from the speeches, it contains an alleged historical framework. We know, too, that the writers of "Ezekiel" and of the "Epistle of James" both believed Job to have been an historical person (Ezek.

xiv. 14, 20; James v. 11). Next, our learned Professor should know that the accounts of the Israelites in Egypt, of the Ten Plagues, of the Exodus from Egypt, of the construction of a grand Tabernacle with an army of Levites in attendance on it, and of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites under Joshua—that these alleged events are also pure fiction. The history of Israel commences at Judg. iii. 5, 6; the tribes of Israel named in Judg. v. were Canaanites—a fact referred to by Ezekiel as well known in his days. The temple service, as described in the Chronicles, is another fiction, as is also the destruction of the army of Sennacherib, and many other Bible events too numerous to mention.

Lastly, the apologetic statement that the Old Testament "bears witness to Christ" is one which is not in agreement with fact: no such witness can be found by rational and unprejudiced readers.

ABRACADABRA.

What it Means to be a Catholic.—II.

A Lecture delivered in Chicago by
M. M. MANGASARIAN.

(Continued from p. 157.)

THE important contribution of Petrarch to his times was his discovery of the present. He made the present more real than the far away future in some other world, which had quite monopolised everybody's interest. He led men from the other world to this, from the city of God to the city of man. He said to them, "Instead of begging to be made immortal *there*, make yourselves immortal *here*, and instead of looking for gods in the infinite waste of space, turn and meet them at your elbows." Petrarch was pre-eminently practical. He was perhaps the first realist of modern times. At his word ghosts and shadows vanished to make room for flesh and blood. Alchemy, astrology, and theology, the three barren sisters, were dethroned and exiled to prepare for the coming of science. What ignorance had bound was liberated by science. The winter of darkness ended, the world entered joyously into the bloom and beauty of the Renaissance.

You see on the platform the bust of the man who awakened Europe out of a long sleep—who charmed the mind into the pursuit of truth. The flowers he wears this morning are becoming to him. If we knew how, we would make our tribute to his memory as delicate and sweet-scented as these fragrant flowers; if the flowers themselves could speak, they would tell us how happy they are to twine about the brow of the man who discovered their beauty to a blind world. Petrarch! Across the centuries we gratefully press thy hand.

Dante, whose portrait appears on our program, is as good a Renaissance text as Petrarch. He was one of the earliest to open his windows to the new day. Both Dante and Petrarch helped to re-establish the interrupted connection between the modern and the classical worlds. Dante and Petrarch were the electric wires, so to speak, which linked us once more with the glorious antiquity of Greece and Rome. Across these human wires flows into our world to-day the high tide of light and power.

Dante, too, responded to the call of the hour in masterpieces. He was the Titan of the new era. We find in him the beginnings of the intellectual revolution. With one foot in the Middle Ages, Dante crossed the frontier with the other. Though still a Catholic, he is also a critic of Catholicism. One of the arrows from his quiver went straight to the heart of the Catholic creed, and it still sticks there. Dante regrets that Christianity had to resort to miracles to gain converts. It would have been a greater miracle than any of those recorded in the Bible, he suggests, if Christianity had conquered the world solely by the charm and beauty of its teachings. That was a superb comment. It was a Renaissance argument—an argument of sweetness

and light. With one wave of his pen he demolished the supernatural. He made the religion that resorted to talking serpents, man-swallowing fishes, and gods flying in the air to gain converts, look pitiable. Dante hopelessly crippled the great Catholic Church. Thought and faith grappled, and the latter has been limping ever since.

But neither Dante, Petrarch, nor their equally distinguished Renaissance comrades, fully realised how revolutionary their teachings were. For they had discovered the Prometheus in man.

And Prometheus robbed the gods!

Let me explain: the Renaissance turned people's gaze, as already intimated, from the other to this world. To that change of direction we are indebted for modern civilisation. The Renaissance brought about a change of front of the universe. From that day on, humanity, notwithstanding numerous oscillations, has been steadily moving forward.

The radical difference between the Pagan and the Christian, or the European and the Asiatic points of view, will be made clear by a comparison of the guiding motives of the Middle Ages with those which the Renaissance brought to bear upon human life and thought. The Middle Ages solved every problem by sacrificing the present to the hereafter. It was admitted that there were many evils in the world at that day, but what was the use of trying to mend a world which would soon be destroyed? The medieval Christians considered it a waste of effort to save a perishing world. Moreover, if things were imperfect here, *there* everything would be perfect. If things were deformed here, *there* everything would be straight. If conditions were wretched here, *there* everything would be heavenly. The best that the Middle Ages could offer was a promise. "Sacrifice this world for the next," was their one answer to the problems of life. Reforms here were considered superfluous, since, as intimated, the present was doomed, and the beyond was already perfect. There was nothing left for man to do but wait for the hereafter.

(To be continued.)

Critical Chat.

A very interesting and important question was raised in a recent lecture by Viscount Bryce on "Race Sentiment and Factor in History." There is, of course, no question as to the power of this factor in influencing men's opinions and actions, but the vital question is that of the power of *versus* the influence of environment. A careful study of a number of writers on this subject would be enough to show that with the majority—as with ordinary folk—"race" is a good deal of a "blessed" word dragged in to gloss over a difficulty whenever one presents itself. At one moment we read that the Latins are a decadent race, and the Chinese stagnant one. At the next we are informed of the dash and virility of the one, and tremendous strides in reform made by the other. Notwithstanding the very mixed origin of the people of this country, we have Anglo-Saxon qualities opposed to French or Latin ones, Russian "racial" qualities opposed to German "racial" qualities, all implying the existence of something that has been, so to speak, isolated from other qualities, and of the workings of which we possess absolutely reliable information.

The truth is, that all this is more or less guesswork and often guesswork of a most mischievous character. To begin with, such a thing as a "pure race" is nowhere to be found. Intermixture is the invariable rule, and nowhere has the adulteration of the primitive stock—whatever that may have been—been more pronounced than in this country. The successive waves of conquest, with practically no ceasing peaceful penetration, have prevented anything like the existence of a "pure" race. And the story of the country is the story of all countries to a greater or lesser degree. Or, still keeping to the purely biological aspect of the matter, has anyone ever been able to point to any quality possessed by either a member of the Latin, the Teutonic, the Celtic, the Slavonic, or the Anglo-Saxon "race" that is not possessed by all the rest? We do not mean that there are no differences in the development of certain qualities, but that they may be freely granted. But are there any differences

profound that they are to be put down to "race," or "stock," or "blood," rather than to other influences? We see no reason to reply in the affirmative, and there exists no clear proof of any such distinction. All that anyone has ever been able to show is that Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, Irishmen, and Englishmen do exhibit differences, and that these differences are repeated generation after generation. The truth of this is obvious, but between the admitted truth and the professed explanation there is a very wide gap indeed.

But if the differences are there, and if these differences repeat themselves, to what are they due, if not to race? Why do we say—all of us—that one man looks like a Frenchman, another like a Russian, and so on? Well, we say so, and we are justified in saying so; but these differences are better explainable in terms of a common social environment than in terms of stock or race. Given a people living under the same political institutions, and surrounded by the same general social environment, generation after generation, and there will be perpetuated the same general type of character. Their habits (mental and physical), their likes and dislikes, their general outlook on life, will maintain a certain uniformity that cannot fail to impress the observer from the outside. And, curiously enough, the truth of this is witnessed by scores of writers who emphasise "race" as the dominant factor in life. The French Huguenots, brought up under an absolutist government, after a generation or so of settlement in England, lose their assumed racial (Latin) qualities, and are indistinguishable from Englishmen. English settlers in Ireland, in the same way, soon display all those characteristics that have been classed as specifically Celtic. So, also, with the Danish, Norman, Dutch, and German settlements in England. So, also, in America, where the influence of a common environment tends to develop a common type, and so eliminate the dominance of assumed racial qualities. The whole matter may, in short, be summarised by saying that while human qualities are everywhere fundamentally identical, the degree of development attained by certain qualities, the emphasis placed on some qualities over others, and the relative moral worth of qualities, remains entirely a question of social environment in the shape of institutions, customs, traditions, and beliefs. It is this that gives the members of a group a character in common, as it supplies them with a sentiment in common. Change these social influences, and, as history demonstrates over and over again, you will inevitably modify the "racial" character of the whole people.

There is, of course, the case of the Jew—that useful fall-back for pseudo-scientific sociologists and cranky theologians, and which is supposed to be a decisive disproof of what has been said above. But really, apart from the question of whether the Jew represents a "pure" race or not, it is a fact that his existence, and the existence of marked resemblances among Jews, furnishes additional proof of the general argument. For while the Jews have lived in many nations throughout many generations, they have been generally living under the same environmental influences. They have been herded together in one quarter of a city, have been driven together by persecution, and an identity of mode of living secured by the very means taken for their oppression. The consequence is, that while amongst Jews there is a very wide physiological variation, there exists a psychological resemblance sufficiently clear to stamp them as members of the group. In brief, the conditions under which Jews have lived in all countries have been sufficiently similar to create a group likeness. And just as in the case of French emigrants to England, Dutch emigrants to America, or English settlers in Ireland, so soon as the Jew is allowed to mix freely with the surrounding population, the group likeness grows faint and the "racial" type disappears.

Biological illustrations in relation to human society are illuminating, but, slavishly followed, they are very likely to mislead. We see that in the sub-human world animals are bred in this or in that direction, and that, under the guidance of skilful breeders, a "chance" variation may become a characteristic of a whole group. So we are apt to apply the same principle to man, and to conclude that "stock" being everything, groups of human beings will act in accordance with "racial" characteristics, much as breeds of dogs or horses or birds repeat the characteristics of their immediate progenitors. But this reasoning overlooks a very important consideration. The superiority of the collie over the wild dog (or perhaps one ought to say the *difference* between the two) represents a distinct physiological difference. The superiority of the most civilised race of men to-day, the ancient Babylonians or Egyptians, is not a difference of physiology at all. There is no evidence that

the brain of man to-day is bigger or better than it was four or five thousand years ago. There is no evidence that he is better from a physiological or biological point of view. In other words, as a biological fact the human race does not improve. And yet improvement is there, and improvement that is so patent it would be sheer lunacy to deny it.

What is the secret of the apparent paradox? The explanation is to be found in the simple fact that the human animal, in addition to that physical environment which he shares with other animals, inherits a social or psychological environment which soon dominates the lower one. It is probably true that the experience of the animal dies with it. The tiger of to-day acts as did the tiger of ten thousand years ago. The experience of man does not die with him. It is preserved in language, in custom, in tradition. It is handed on from generation to generation. One generation repeats the thoughts of a preceding generation; not only repeats them, but re-thinks them and adds to them. The result of that thinking is perpetuated in institutions and conventions. An animal commences at the point that its parents did; a man often commences where they left off. It is thus that the man of to-day is greater than the man of ten thousand years ago; not because he is a better animal than his ancestor, but because he is heir to a larger, richer, social inheritance. There is nothing about a modern battleship that the sailor of ancient Tyre could not have mastered. The soldier of old Egypt was as good a soldier as any fighting in Flanders to-day. But the sailor or soldier of to-day, because of the accumulated knowledge of centuries, and without being a better man physically or mentally, can perform feats which to the men of old would have seemed little short of miraculous.

To gather up these reflections, so far as they bear upon the question of "race." You have on the one side natural capacity, which does not appear to vary very greatly with the various "races" inhabiting Europe; and, on the other hand, you have social or group environment, which does show great and continuous variations. This environment may encourage the development of one quality here and another there, or it may give a different expression to the same quality under different conditions. If the social environment places great emphasis on a particular quality it will be developed out of proportion to other qualities, and will then be labelled as a "racial" characteristic. We speak of the thoroughness of the German, the artistic sense of the Frenchman, the bulldoggedness of the Englishman, etc., etc. What does all this mean but that the German, the Frenchman, and Englishman are members of a particular society in which certain things have become traditional. Import a thousand German infants to England, and when they arrive at maturity, it would puzzle anyone to tell from their habits or mental characteristics that they were not born of English stock. Transport a thousand English infants to Germany, and you would have the same result. Capacity is a natural, a physiological fact. Nothing can create it, education can only direct it. And whether it is directed in this way or in that, is a question of the traditions, the customs, and the institutions that form the essential features of a human society.

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A certain false psychology, a certain kind of imaginative interpretation of motives and experiences, is the necessary preliminary for one to become a Christian, and to feel the need of redemption. When this error of reason and imagination is recognised, one ceases to be a Christian.—*Nietzsche*

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. William James Palmer, of Hypatia House, Haughley, Stowmarket, which occurred on March 2, in the seventy-ninth year of his age. Mr. Palmer was noted for his honesty, straightforwardness, kindheartedness, and courage. He was an ardent admirer and personal friend of Mr. Bradlaugh, to hear whose lectures he travelled scores of miles. For his loyalty to Freethought he suffered much persecution for many years; but even those who differed most from him gave him credit for sincerity and love of truth. He was a zealous lover of liberty, and the liberty he claimed for himself he generously granted to others. He was buried at Thetford on Saturday afternoon, when a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside.

—J. T. LLOYD.

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