

# THE Freethinker

Founded 1881 by G. W. FOOTE.

Edited by CHAPMAN COHEN.

VOL. XXXVI.—No. 2

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 1916

PRICE TWOPENCE

*Give me liberty to know, to think, to believe, and to utter freely, according to conscience, above all other liberties.*—MILTON.

## Views and Opinions.

### THE DAY OF INTERCESSION.

The last day of the Old, and the first two days of the New Year, were solemnly consecrated to a religious purpose. December 31 was set on one side as a Day of Penitence, January 1 as a Day of Preparation, and January 2 as a Day of Prayer. Penitence, Preparation, and Prayer—for what? Obviously, for the immediate purpose of winning the War. The millions of Christians in this country are called upon by the Archbishops, Bishops, and Nonconformist leaders to solemnly “humble themselves before Almighty God,” in order that he will enable them to effectively put out of existence a few millions of his creatures who are in arms against us. Our enemies are petitioning him to the same end, and there is no question that—judging by results—God is, in some measure, answering both sides. The casualty lists show this. And judging from the *impasse* reached at the seat of war, the Deity is occupying a quite neutral attitude. If our casualty lists show that he gives heed to the prayers of the Germans, their casualty lists show that our prayers are not quite ignored. And that is all the gospel of Christian love and brotherhood amounts to in practice. “Oh God, we pray that thou wilt blast into unrecognizable fragments all those who are opposed to us.” That is the gospel of Christianity in the year of grace 1916. It is not put in this plain fashion, but it is there in substance.

\* \* \*

### LAST YEAR'S PERFORMANCE.

Last January was also ushered in with a Day of Intercession. Pious souls doubtless expected then, as a consequence, all that they anticipate will follow from this new performance. We have seen what kind of answer that Day of Prayer produced, and I do not think anyone in this country is overjoyed with all we have done with the help of God. We could have done quite as well off our own bat. The *Church Times* hints that things did not turn out better because we omitted a Day of National Humiliation, and approached “the Throne of Grace in a spirit of cheerful optimism.” So there is hope yet if we go sufficiently flat on our stomachs. The Bishop of London follows this up in a New Year Message by saying that this is “God’s war,” “God himself, through the War, is speaking to the whole world”; the lesson of the War is that we must come back to God, and “it is not the least likely that God will let it end until it has done its work.” Meanwhile, “His work” is to be seen in the ever growing casualty lists, in the ruined villages and towns, in disorganized industries, in the restricted liberties of the civilian population, and in the application of conscription. That is the way in which God speaks to the world! The honour of such conversation is truly overpowering.

1,799

### THE PROCESS OF BARBARIZATION.

Compulsory military service by means of a formal Act of Parliament is only putting into law what already exists in practice. Genuine voluntary military service ended months ago. We have had for some time compulsion by means of bribery, intimidation, and various forms of coercion. I am not now discussing whether compulsion is a good or a bad thing, whether it is necessary or unnecessary. I merely record it as one more step backward as a consequence of “God’s war.” Already freedom of speech and of the press is seriously curtailed. Workmen have lost a deal of their freedom of action. The War which was to end Prussianism has, so far, succeeded in spreading it over the whole of Europe, with a prospect of its remaining for some time, at least, after the German form of it has been weakened or destroyed. It is all part of the process of barbarization that is the normal consequence of war, even though it receives the sanction and the blessing of God’s representatives on earth.

\* \* \*

### THE SAVAGE IN OUR MIDST.

To return to our Day of Intercession. Presumably, a large number of people believe in the efficacy of such functions. And yet I find it hard to realize the frame of mind indicated by such a belief. If it is said that a Day of Intercession is no more than the conscious dedication of a people to a given purpose, then the appeal to God, with the talk of repentance and humiliation is no more than an act of self-deception. God becomes a mere make-believe. And it is very hard to realize those who take this view, gaining any benefit from their invocation of deity. But if people really believe that this War is “God’s war,” that God is speaking to the world through the War, and that their prayers will in any way deflect the purpose of God, or induce him to help where he would not otherwise have helped, in that case wherein lies the difference between the Archbishops decreeing a Day of Intercession and the mediæval carrying of a sacred image through the streets to avert a plague, or a tribe of savages carrying their fetish before them when going out to battle? The ritual is more elaborate in the one case than in the other. The language is more refined in the one case than in the other. In the one instance the image that is to work the miracle is seen and handled; in the other case it is unseen and unhandled. But there is no real, no essential difference between the two. In other respects our Archbishops and Bishops and Nonconformist leaders may be vitally different from the savage or the primitive medicine-man. So far as this particular case of prayer and intercession is concerned they are at one with him. For it is not the clothing a man wears, the language a man speaks, or the house he lives in, that gives him a genuine claim to be called civilized. It is the mental outlook on life that can alone give him this. It is the savage who is exalted by the Day of Intercession—the primitive medicine-man voicing his old-age superstitions in the language of Shakespeare, and in a costly cathedral, instead of in the midst of primæval forests.

\* \* \*

### A QUESTION OF IDEALS.

The Bishop of London justifies God’s not allowing

the War to end on the ground that this is a war to kill war. We have had that dinned into our ears ever since the War commenced, and by those who have clamoured for conscription and are looking forward to compulsory military service as a settled policy when this War is over. It is all absolute nonsense. War never has ended war, and it never will. The German Empire itself might never have been heard of but for the Napoleonic Wars which brought about a greater measure of military co-operation between the different Germanic States. The militarism of even Prussia was strengthened, not weakened, by its crushing defeat by Napoleon. The defeat of France in 1870, of necessity involved a greater probability of war in the future between that country and Germany. War between nations is essentially a question of ideals—and not necessarily a conflict of ideals. It is more often due to a cherishing of the same ideal by different countries in such a way that its realization by one means its frustration in the case of the other. Thus, given nations in which the ideal of power, or domination, obtains, and conflict is certain sooner or later. One nation cannot dominate except at the expense of another, and domination invites, and sooner or later receives, challenge. If you hold up the successful millionaire as an ideal, it is useless blaming people seeking wealth. If the power of one nation to dominate another is the principal test of national greatness, one must not be surprised if each nation longs for, and occasionally seeks to exercise domination.

\* \* \*

#### WAR AGAINST WAR.

That is why war can never kill war. A greater force can, of course, hold a lesser force in check, but it cannot destroy the ideal of force, because it is itself its living embodiment. War can only cease by a change in the nature of national ideals. Study the national European ideals of the last hundred years, and you will know more of the causes of the present conflict than can be gained by a study of all the official reports published since the War began. People fight for what they believe in, and, given the slightest possibility, they will fight so long as they believe in it. If you wish them to cease fighting for it, you must prove to them that it is not worth fighting for. In other words, ideals can only be killed by ideals. Religious wars like the Crusades became impossible when the ideal of a militant religion lost power. And war in general will only cease when the ideals that at present govern nations are replaced by others of a worthier kind. It is one of life's ironies that a Freethinker should have to thus point out to a Christian world at war that force and hatred can never provide a final, or even a satisfactory, relation between human beings.

\* \* \*

#### THE FALLACY OF FORCE.

And this brings me to the truth, and also the fallacy, involved in the teaching of militarists—German, French, British, and others—that struggle and contest are required to keep a nation healthy. This is quite true; progress is achieved by co-operation, and the condition of progressive co-operation is by conflict and competition. The valuable citizen is always a good fighter, and, paradoxical though it may sound, there are no more energetic fighters in the country than those who have spent their best endeavours in fighting militarism. The fallacy of the religio-militarist lies in his identification of all conflict with the use of brute force, and that in human society proves nothing. The German did not prove himself a better man than the Belgian because there were more of him, and because his guns were of larger calibre. Who is the better and more serviceable man must be settled quite apart from considerations of this kind. And what is true of the German is true of everyone else engaged in the War. Superior force proves nothing—save that it is a superior force, and it decides nothing that is of real or permanent value.

#### THE HUMAN STRUGGLE.

The fallacy, I repeat, lies in thinking of contest in terms of brute strength only. And so long as we do this, we are restricting the human ideal to its lowest expression. The true human contest, the struggle that keeps human effort up to its highest level, which makes for progress, and which does decide things, belongs to the world of ideas and of ideals. It is the clash of theories, of beliefs, of ideas, in the intellectual and moral worlds, that provides room and opportunity for the exercise of our pugnacious qualities, which are themselves of a fundamentally healthy character. And for their exercise in the moral and intellectual worlds there is illimitable opportunities. There is the whole world of nature to fight and subdue; and that is a contest much grimmer and more deadly than even the present War. And within every healthy human group there is the competition of rival beliefs and ideas. All this makes for a sane, profitable social life—in a word, for progress. Contest in the plane of mere physical force makes for nothing but stagnation and degradation.

\* \* \*

#### THE FINAL CHOICE.

This is what I have had in mind when I have pointed out, as against those clergymen who have praised the unity brought by the War, that the suspension of our internal conflicts concerning Capital and Labour, the Franchise, Home Rule, etc., was not a symptom of progress, but of retrogression. We suspend the conflict that makes for construction in favour of that which makes for destruction. And that is also the fundamental reason why religious control makes for retrogression and favours the growth of militarism. It enforces uniformity of belief; and whatever the belief enforced, it makes for social decay so long as it is protected from the free play of criticism and the incidence of rival beliefs. And it favours militarism because man's combative qualities are indestructible, and must find an outlet. Give them expression in the clash of intellectual and social variations, and we have a conflict that makes for development and general health. Restrict these outlets, divert them into the channel of military competition, and you have reaction and social ill-health. With human qualities it is always a question of direction. It is for the immediate future to say which of these ideals shall be paramount.

C. COHEN.

#### Mischievous Optimism.

As rival philosophies, there is perhaps very little choice between optimism and pessimism; but as representing opposite temperaments, there is an exceedingly heavy balance on the side of the former, though it must be frankly admitted that it is largely his temperament which determines to which school of philosophy a man shall belong. The natural man, the type to which Freethinkers claim the right to belong, repudiates both optimism and pessimism as fundamentally fallacious theories. Optimism undertakes to show that the world is the work of a supernatural Being of infinite goodness and wisdom; but such a theory breaks down the moment it is seriously looked at. Out of it naturally grew the silly notion, once so popular, that this is the best of all possible worlds, upon which Voltaire poured floods of annihilating contempt in his inimitable *Candide*. Equally absurd, on the other hand, is the pessimistic theory as expressed, for example, by Byron:—

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,  
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,  
And know, whatever thou hast been,  
'Tis something better not to be.

Byron may have been perfectly sincere in the expression of that sentiment, for his life had been exceptionally dark and stormy; but as a philosophy it is simply ridiculous. As philosophies, therefore, both

optimism and pessimism are utterly untenable. When he contemplated optimism, in its intellectual form, Nietzsche advocated pessimism; but as soon as he was confronted by pessimism in its Schopenhauerian and Leopardian dress, he turned optimist of a vigorous character, only he hated the word so much that he christened himself Dionysean. As interpreted by Dr. Mügge (*His Life and Work*, p. 383), he says:—

Animal men first became Dionyseans. Upon a great marble pedestal they erected the statue of their God, around which they danced a frenzied tarantella, or drank to his honour foaming wine out of gleaming crystal goblets.

Dr. Clifford, in a sermon entitled "The Abiding Reign of Christ," which was published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for December 24, draws a heartbreakingly gloomy picture of Christendom at the present time. Topsy-turvyism reigns supreme on every side. All things are being shaken; even the stable earth itself is trembling. "Dark forebodings crowd the bravest hearts." And this state of things prevails, mark you, after two thousand years of "the abiding reign of Christ." Yes, but to-day we have reached the most tremendous turning point in history, and to-morrow there will begin a radically new era, in which truth shall magically spring out of the earth and righteousness shall smilingly look down from heaven, resulting in a peace that shall never be broken. Hold those two pictures side by side, let the searchlight of history play upon them, and you will see how false they are. Dr. Clifford is only struck by the wonderful contrast between them: To-day midnight darkness covers the earth, but to-morrow the sun will shine in the plenitude of its glory, and all lands shall respond, in infinite gladness of heart, to the sweet music of the spheres. In this "Baphometic Fire baptism" of war, Belgium, France, Russia, Italy, Serbia, and even Germany herself, are to experience their Material and Spiritual New Birth. Then also will happen this miracle of miracles—

And Christianity, thrust into a furnace, heated seven times more than has ever been recorded in the history of the world, will come out purer than she has been for fifteen centuries, freed from the hindering accretions of the ages, delivered from the stifling burden of tradition and convention, breathing the pure air of God, and equipped for rendering finer services to humanity than any it has yet given. I have no doubt about that! I believe in God; I believe in his great redeeming work in the world; in his love of man, in his essential and intrinsic righteousness, and in his absolute and invincible sovereignty, and therefore I expect all this and more and better.

That rhetorical outburst reminds us of the old woman, who, when asked, "Do you believe that the whale swallowed Jonah?" enthusiastically answered, "Oh, yes, I do; and I would as readily believe that Jonah swallowed the whale, if God's Word said so." Dr. Clifford is certainly an equally bold and brilliant believer, though he confessed a few years ago that believing was the most difficult of all acts. His optimism lacks all historical background. It is merely a castle in the air. He cannot say, "See how Christianity transformed the world in the past, how it reorganized society; how it prevented nation from lifting up sword against nation, inspiring each to beat its swords into ploughshares and its spears into pruning-hooks; and how peace, goodwill, and love held sway over everything." The ministers of Christ have no such encouraging record to back up their rosy predictions. Dr. Clifford does not even pretend that they have. He naively says, "I cherish such and such beliefs, and I am confident that the results I describe are sure to follow." The reverend gentleman maintains that God exercises an "absolute and invincible sovereignty" in the world, but in which country is that "absolute and invincible sovereignty" to be seen at work? In what kingdom is righteousness the law from which there can be no departure? In which land have righteousness and peace kissed each other, got married, and settled down to a happy life ever since? Dr. Clifford wages emotional and

still more emotional, exclaiming, in total disregard of all facts: "Yes, He [Christ] is an ever-abiding King of a kingdom based on love, and working by love; therefore a kingdom that remains. He is seated—seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High—in perfect peace, assured that his enemies shall become his footstool." This is most familiar stuff, and as unreal as it is well known. What safe distance from the earth in which to set up the Redeemer's throne, and what a romantic situation for a kingdom is the realm on High! No monarch on earth will ever dream of leading an army to invade it. And it is so delightfully easy for its alleged ambassadors to represent it and its King down here without fear of ever getting into trouble!

Dr. Clifford takes pains to impress upon our minds the idea that in the East by kingdom is understood personal sovereignty, kingship, legislative and administrative authority, not a geographical realm, not even any kind of organization or institution—"a personality governing men, an individual like Alexander or Julius Cæsar, who in his person has a kingdom." Well, such an individual, we are informed, is Christ, who sits on the right hand of the Majesty on High, from which statement it follows that there are two Majesties on High, governing men. How do they administer the affairs of their kingdom? There's the rub; the Churches are the instruments and organs of the King and the kingdom, and the Churches, which have been in active existence for fifteen centuries, have only succeeded in setting people together by the ears. Such is the work hitherto accomplished by the Divinely appointed instruments of "a kingdom based on love and working by love." So heartless is the irony of indisputable facts, to which Dr. Clifford and his like are hopelessly blind. Listen to the following ridiculous prattle:—

The rule lasts, for the King endures. He reigns for ever and ever, and of his kingdom there is no end. He is appointed heir of all things. He upholds the Universe by his powerful word, he brightly reflects God's glory.

Such a wild, irresponsible utterance as that helps us to evaluate aright the equally wild and irresponsible optimism indulged in by the same gentleman, to which we have already alluded. He who ignores, or employs false colours in painting, the past, cannot be a reliable foreteller for the future. We, too, believe that to-morrow will be a slight improvement upon to-day. Professor Hugh Black says, in a letter published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for December 29, that all he means by religion is just now at stake, and that if Germany were to win the War, the world would not be worth living in for men of his creed. It stands to reason that if religion is at present in danger, its future cannot be secure. In Dr. Clifford's opinion, however, nothing is or ever has been at stake, God's absolute and invincible sovereignty rendering the complete triumph of Christianity an indubitable certainty. We, on the other hand, firmly believe that religion is at stake whether Germany wins or loses. The War is slowly opening people's eyes to the utter stupidity as well as futility of the whole Christian faith. It is showing us what a dismal failure Christian diplomacy has been and what ghastly hypocrisy has always lain at the roots of all Christian professions. It is laying bare to us all the incontestable fact that the hope of the world should be fixed upon neither God nor Christ, nor upon any supernatural religion whatsoever, but upon the latent resources of humanity itself. Before humanity, freed from superstition and the domination of false authority, there lies, in our opinion, an increasingly radiant future of alternate peace and war, the latter, however, becoming more and more an intellectual and esthetic conflict between higher and lower ideals. This is the only optimism that has the power of an endless life within it—the optimism that is fed by reason and kindled into enthusiasm by chastened emotion. J. T. LLOYD.

## Doubting Thomas Huxley.

What scientific question, what philosophic problem, is there which did not interest Huxley's luminous intellect—one of the broadest and most comprehensive that Nineteenth Century England produced, fertile in great intellects as it was.—M. HENRI BERGSON.

Him not the tales of all the gods in heaven,  
Nor the heaven's lightnings, nor the menacing roar  
Of thunder daunted. —LUCRETIUS.

"THE impregnable position of Science," said one of our most celebrated thinkers, "may be stated in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest, from theology the entire domain of cosmological theory." It would be difficult to name a scientist who did more for the realization of this ideal than Thomas Henry Huxley. It is from this point of view, as the Freethinker, the man of unfettered intellect, many-sided, with keen interest in contemporary problems, that we prefer to write about him. His popularization of Darwinism, his advocacy of Agnosticism, his numerous controversies—which sent the monthly reviews through many editions—all these we can only allude to. They are to be found in his collected writings, the perfect lucidity and beautiful English of which might make many a successful man of letters envious. We shall discuss him not as a mere scientist, but as a teacher who had for his great object the liberation of the human intellect.

When Huxley was a boy his great ambition was to be a parson. Think of that! A later desire of his was to be an engineer. He often wished to be what the fates denied. Both he and his friend, John Tyndall, were at one and the same time candidates for professorships in Toronto University, but both were defeated. At an early stage in Huxley's career some of his friends thought he might probably spend his days as a navy-surgeon. For, like the illustrious Charles Darwin, he served on board a British man-of-war, and collected knowledge from remote seas and lands.

All his early education was acquired in London. He never imbibed wisdom from Cambridge dons nor from "the monks of Oxford sunk in prejudice and port," as Gibbon sarcastically called the Fellows by Isis. It was Huxley's work of discovery in the Southern Seas that won for him the proud distinction of a Fellowship of the Royal Society. His extraordinary versatility was in part due to the variety of his early experiences. His most successful and satisfactory work was that as an apostle of science. The "Saint Paul of Darwinism" someone dubbed him, and certainly his power of expounding and popularizing Darwin's teaching was very remarkable. It is to his lasting credit that he was one of the first to apply seriously the evolutionary theories to the current religious beliefs. He has told us that when he was a young man, "Geologists and biologists could hardly follow to the end any path of enquiry without finding the way blocked by Noah and his ark, or by the first chapter of Genesis; and it was a serious matter in this country, at any rate, for a man to be suspected of doubting the literal truth of the Diluvial or any other Pentateuchal history," whereas now, "it is difficult to persuade serious scientific inquirers to occupy themselves in any way with the Noachian deluge. They look at you with a smile, and say they have more important matters to attend to than mere antiquarianism."

One consequence among many of this superstitious belief in Genesis is worthy of note. Sir James Simpson, with whose name the use of chloroform will always be associated, had an enormous amount of prejudice to overcome before women in childbirth were allowed the alleviation of anaesthetics. Humane Christians alleged that medical science had no right to interfere with a curse laid by Our Heavenly Father upon all women, because of the backsliding of Adam and Eve. This strange Biblical legend has been productive of infinite evil; but the vogue of that fatal fiction is wellnigh ended. Not Gabriel with a flaming sword, but the Freethinkers with pens of steel, have banished Eve and her paramour from their empire over deluded mankind.

Theologians picture Professor Huxley as a matter-of-fact, dry-as-dust scientist. They were never more mistaken. Few men have written more eloquently than Thomas Huxley on the supreme importance of the cultivation of a sense of beauty. The loss of the power of seeing beauty, he told us was enormous. Let us quote a sentence:—

The man who is all morality and intellect, although he may be good and even great, is, after all, only half a man. There is beauty in the moral world, and in the intellectual world; but there is also a beauty which is neither moral nor intellectual—the beauty of the world of art

"I should like," he said in his rectorial address to the students of a Northern University, "to see professors of the Fine Arts in every university; and instruction in some branch of their art made a part of the ordinary curriculum."

Huxley's *Lay Sermons* literally teem with aphoristic sayings and brilliant epigrams, which range from grave to gay, from lively to severe. Two opposite illustrations are well worth quotation. His fine jest that public opinion sometimes means publicans' opinion, fittingly precedes his emendation of Kant's statement that the three main questions for a man are, "What can I do? What ought I to do? What may I hope for?" Huxley's characteristic reply was, "Do what you can, do what you ought, and leave hoping and fearing alone."

Huxley turned the handles of many doors. His mind was receptive of impressions in art, science, history, literature, and, above all, life itself. Listen to this beautiful passage on the Renaissance, as attractive as anything that has ever been written on that immortal subject. "They were," he says, writing of the effect of the classical revival upon the men of mediæval and Papal Europe, "as men who had kissed the fairy-queen, and, wandering with her in the dim loveliness of the underworld, cared not to return to the familiar ways of home and fatherland, though they lay at arm's length overhead. Cardinals were more conversant with Virgil than Isaiah, and popes laboured with great success to repaganize Rome." Unhappily, to the Renaissance succeeded the nightmare of Calvinism; but science came, and, with its numerous votaries, working in the plastic clay of matter, producing dawn from darkness, order from disorder, cosmos from chaos, has dispelled so many of the credulous dreams of priest-ridden humanity.

It is here that we find Huxley's ultimate claim upon the grateful recollection of democracy. If honest men and women to-day can speak their minds and write their thoughts in comparative security from popular abuse and clerical persecution, it is Huxley and the Freethinkers that they have to thank. Huxley was in a difficult position with regard to Freethought, for he held Government appointments. It is to his credit that he did not dissemble his love. He subscribed to the Leicester Secular Society, "in evidence of his full sympathy with the objects." To a request for permission to publish his letter, he replied, "You are quite at liberty to publish my note, and I shall be glad if it is of any service."

Huxley's work, like that of the Freethinkers, will endure. When the Darwinian controversy is half forgotten, and when other theological controversies have faded into semi-obscurity, it will be remembered that he fought for Liberty.

For the schoolchildren of the future, hell will have vanished, and paradise have become a name. The cross will survive no more than the ark. The Garden of Eden will have gone, and Gethsemane will have gone with it. The menagerie of the Apocalypse will be no more frightful than the genii of the *Arabian Nights*. The New Jerusalem, with its many mansions, will be classed, smilingly, with the house that Jack built. Children, trained in the school of real knowledge, will be wiser than the pupils of ignorance, and will no longer grow up to enhance the profit and power of priests.

MIMNERMUS.

## Talks With Young Listeners.

THE WORKMAN.—II.

*(Concluded from p. 12.)*

THE Chinaman has not much to tell us about the Worker who made the world. Out of the darkness the God Ti brought the heaven and the earth; and set the sun and moon and five planets in the heaven, and on the square earth all sorts of creatures lived happy, and music was born at the same time. All strong things are "Yang," like this unbroken line —; and the other things, less strong, are "Yin," like this broken line — —; so light is —, and darkness is — —.

An egg of gold, so say the Hindus, was the beginning, or germ, of the world, and this egg of golden fire, or fiery gold, floated on the wide, wide waters. In this golden egg, a germ of life lay hid for a year, wanting very much to come out, and to be something, and to do something; and when it did burst out, it split the egg into two parts, and one part was heaven, and one was earth, and the sky-roof came between, and space was divided into north, south, east, and west, and north-east, south-east, north-west, south-west.

The old Persians thought that two Twin-gods divided the world, that is, Light, and his brother, Darkness. For 3,000 years, Light ruled in peace; then for 3,000 years, Light, the good Worker, makes the starry heaven, and water, and earth, and plants, and animals, and man. And then the evil Darkness rushes in and spreads sickness, famine, reptiles, poison, and war. But Light will win at last.

Once the earth was a sort of mud island floating on the waters, and there came a tender plant, like the young shoot of a reed, and out of this were born the Gods, and afterwards men were born. So the Japanese say; and they tell how the island of Yezo was made by a God, and his wife, who hammered the rocks all night with a noise like rolling drums, and in the morning the Japanese island had risen out of the water. But the west coast was rocky and rough and unfinished, while the east was smooth; and the reason was that the husband did the east coast, but his wife talked so much that she had not time to knock the cliffs into better shape, so the west coast is rugged.

Many were the myths among the American Indians. The Pawnee Redskins said the Master-God lived in heaven, and sent sun, moon, and stars spinning along their paths in the sky. From a darkness underground, there climbed up into the light an old man carrying fire, and a pipe, and a drum; and his wife followed, bearing corn-seed and pumpkin-seed.

The Maori people, who are the natives of New Zealand, relate that heaven and earth were once clasped so tightly together that the Gods resolved to part them, and make space in which people could live and work could be done. So, though it was very dark, they tried, one after the other, to rend the huge mass in twain, and, at length, the strongest of the Gods succeeded, and lifted the sky up, and pressed the earth down, and then light appeared, and little men and women were seen on the earth. These people knew not death, but they knew pain, and hard toil, and hail-storms. Wild tempests burst upon the earth, and much of the land sank beneath the sea. One of the Gods had love for man in his heart, and did many things to help poor humanity; and this God was Maui.

The New Zealand folk used to say that this Maui, when a babe, was laid by his mother among the tangled seaweed on the seashore, and waves and foam splashed over the wee child, and jellyfish twisted their soft bodies round him, and fierce birds tried to peck him to pieces. But a good old God saw the child's peril, and dragged the jellyfish away, and carried him to a house, and kept him safe and warm, and so young Maui grew, and was able to walk, and he ran to a house where the Gods were dancing, and found his mother, and his four brothers; and at first

the mother did not know her own son, for she had not seen him since she left him wrapped in weed amid the white foam.

When Maui's mother one day fled and none could tell where she had gone, the brothers cared naught. But Maui, who was become a brave youth, could not forget the mother in whose house he had lain, and he found the hole in the earth into which she had crept with her husband, and he changed himself into a pigeon, and flew through the underground till he reached a pleasant land where trees grew, and there he beheld his parents. Perched in a tree, he dropped berries upon their heads, till a stone was thrown at him, and he fell, and suddenly took the form of a man, and revealed to his mother and father who he was, and they received him gladly. Thus had he proved his love for his parents. He also felt love for the men who lived on earth, beaten by storms, and having no fire to warm them, or to cook food.

Maui had observed that the sun showed itself only a few hours each day, and then sank below the waters, so that mankind had very little light by which to labour, and to see one another. So he got his brothers to help him in the plot, and they watched for the sun's rising one dawn, and then flung a flaxen rope over it, and, though the sun roared and screamed, it was obliged to yield, and it agreed to travel more slowly across the sky; and this was a great convenience to mankind.

Maui, with his magic fish-hook, brought up a large mass of land from the depths of the ocean, and you can discover it on the map, where it is called the North Island of New Zealand, and the fish-hook was turned into a rocky cape at the corner of Hawke's Bay. As men had no fire, Maui visited the Goddess in whose fingernails and toenails the wonderful sparks were hidden; and the fire she gave him was so furious that he nearly lost his life. But the rain kindly fell and put out most of the flames, and just left enough of the fire-power in various trees, the wood of which, when rubbed, yielded the fire without which life is not worth living. Maui even thought of a clever plan for shielding men from death, so that they would live for ever. He crept into the gloomy body of the sleeping monster, Night, hoping to work his way through the pitch-darkness towards the light, and so conquer death. But the monster awoke, and slew Maui, and as the noble God died, so must men, for whom he did so much, die also.\*

A thousand pages could be filled with tales of creation. I began with a Bible story, and I must end with a Greek.

A very dark pit was Chaos (*Kay-os*) and out of it were unfolded Heaven and Earth. But Heaven and Earth were places of riot and war, and enormous Titans and hundred-handed giants shook the world with their battles. One of the Titans was Cronus, whose wife was the Great Mother. She rode on a lion, and was resolved to live in a world in which wild passions should be tamed as her lions were. Her husband swallowed five of his children, but the sixth she hid in a cave, and this child, named Zeus, grew strong and valiant, and flung the ancient Titan from his seat, and took the throne himself. His head was crowned with curly locks, his bearded face was kingly; the eagle was his favourite bird; in his hands he wielded the sceptre, or rod, of heavenly law, and the sheaf of awful lightnings. In a pair of golden scales he weighed the fates of all living things, saying who should die or who should be spared. He sometimes spoke through the dreadful thunder, and sometimes in the rustling of leaves; and his will was that men should follow justice and truth.

The Great Mother taught men to plough fields, and grow vines, and build cities; and on her head she wore a diadem of towers, as a sign of the strength of city walls and city law.

Some poets said that men were first made by the God Prometheus out of clay and water; and he instructed men in the arts of star-gazing, taming

\* The story of Maui is told at length in Sir George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology*.

animals, using plants, making fire, curing sickness, reckoning numbers, and writing by means of the alphabet. But though the fierce and lawless Giants were swept out of the world, Prometheus found that pain was not, and that it was the lot of the Worker to bear sorrow and woe. He had, for man's sake, stolen fire from heaven, and he paid the penalty for thirty years. During all those years he lay chained to the rocks of Mount Caucasus, and an eagle tore at his liver every day, yet left his heart alone. Fearless heart! It beat on and on in the prisoner's breast, until Hercules passed that way, and killed the eagle with a shaft from his powerful bow.

And now, having told you these myths from the poets of old, I will tell you a great secret, and it is this—that the Worker is all the time Man himself; for though man cannot wield the thunder, or fix stars in the sky, he can work wonders, and create gardens, and create harvests of golden grain, and create herds and flocks of tame and useful beasts, and create houses out of raw wood and stone, and create garments from wool and silk and flax and cotton, and create ships that sail the broad waters, and create cars that roll over thousands of miles of rails, and create light for his cities, and create poetry, and myths, and music, and pictures; and he can create the idea of a world from which the dark chaos of poverty and war will be swept out, and where men will dwell in health and fellowship.

F. J. GOULD.

### More of Omar.

"MIMNERMUS," in likening Omar to Voltaire, chose an analogy in many ways singularly appropriate. Rather unfortunately, Omar is known to the West almost entirely through Fitzgerald's collection of quatrains, and, although these established his—as well as his translator's—reputation as a true poet, they by no means exhaust his capacities as a philosopher. For this reason a few more examples of Omar may not be out of place.

As an Agnostic philosopher of the first order, he put some posers to the religionists of his time which, perhaps, no one before or since has presented with more telling force and directness. Like Voltaire, he did not appear altogether to repudiate the theistic hypothesis, although he certainly went further in that direction than the French sage. As with the latter, it is difficult to determine exactly to what extent the theistic attitude adopted in some of his work is feigned—in order to throw into deeper relief the absurdity of his opponents' contentions. Whatever may have been the nature and extent of his religious sentiments, there are a fortiori reasons for pronouncing him at heart an uncompromising Agnostic. What more crushing indictments could be hurled at the enemies of reason than such verses as these afford?—

If grace be grace, and Allah gracious be,  
Adam from paradise, why banished he?  
Grace to poor sinners shown is grace indeed,  
In grace hard earned by works no grace I see.

Who framed the lots of quick and dead? But thou,  
Who turns the troublous wheel of heaven? But thou.  
If we are sinful slaves, is it for thee  
To blame us? Who created us? But thou.

Thou, who man of baser clay didst make,  
Who, with Eden didst devise the snake,  
For all the sins with which the face of man  
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take.

It would be hard to imagine in such small compass a more complete and conclusive arraignment of the Semitic mythologies (Moslem, Christian, and Hebrew) than this last, which occurs as a sort of climax in Fitzgerald's version.

His resemblance to Voltaire is perhaps strongest when exposing the hypocrisy of the period. Although in Persia religious hypocrisy was not cultivated as a fine art to such an extent as in "Victorian" England, it was evidently by no means lacking, as

the following verses testify:—

They who of prayer-mats make such great display,  
Are fools to bear hypocrisy's hard sway.  
Strange; under cover of this saintly show,  
They live like heathen and their faith betray.

A Shaikh beheld a harlot, and, quoth he:  
"You seem a slave to drink and lechery."  
And she made answer: "What I seem, I am;  
But, Master, are you all you seem to be?"

These fools by dint of ignorance most crass  
Think they in wisdom all mankind surpass,  
And glibly do they damn as infidel  
Whoever is not, like themselves, an ass.

Who would deny that "these fools" are still at large, answering exactly to the description here given of them?

The sublime candour and delicately poised satire with which Omar disposes of the ubiquitous army of religious quacks and sophists finds a genial reflex when he sets forth his own philosophy of life. Little disposed to follow the will-o'-the-wisp of religious and metaphysical speculations, he exposes the futility of such pursuits with charming *desinvolture*:—

We shall not stay here long; but while we do  
'Tis folly wine and sweethearts to eschew;  
Why ask if earth etern or transient be?  
Since you must go, it matters not to you.

Alas! for that cold heart which never glows  
With love, nor e'er that charming madness;  
The days misspent with no redeeming love—  
No days are wasted half as much as these.

He was little troubled with apprehensions of posthumous pains or pleasures, which weigh so heavily on men of baser stamp:—

In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,  
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule;  
But they who master Allah's myteries,  
Sow not this empty chaff their hearts to fool.

I am not one whom death doth much dismay,  
Life's terrors all death's terrors far outweigh;  
This life, that heaven hath lent me for awhile,  
I will pay back when it is time to pay.

Moreover, he was no mere Hedonist; but, like all true Freethinkers, was deeply imbued with sound social and moral principles:—

Sooner with half a loaf contented be,  
And water from a broken crock; like me;  
Than lord it over one poor fellow man,  
Or to another bow the vassal's knee.

It would indeed be hard to adequately illustrate the great wealth of pure wisdom embedded in the long series of quatrains attributed to this versatile thinker—and which appear to have been his habitual mode of expression. What Fitzgerald did was to construct an epic out of a number of these apparently unrelated utterances. In doing this he probably succeeded better than Omar himself could have done. But, in order to obtain the effect which has been so much admired, he had to follow some sort of design, which involved the inclusion of some, and the rejection of others—not necessarily of lesser intrinsic value. Such treatment, in this case, favoured the inclusion of more than a representative number of those of the *carpe diem* order. But some of the rejected are by no means unworthy to supplement the "Authorized Version"—if only to afford a fuller view of the many-sided genius of their author, and to establish his claim as a philosopher, a pioneer thinker, in an age when such were rare. C. R. P.

In these dreadful days when streets and places are changing their names owing to the patriotism of local authorities, what about Saint German's in Cornwall? This country also possesses a Prussia Cove. The "Cove" might have to go; but no respectable Town Council would attack a saint.

A weekly paper says "the magnificent effort of the Young Men's Christian Association to provide amusements at Christmas were never more successful." Just so! But the price is that they have made a pantomime of religion.

"Christianity rebukes excessive patriotism," says Dean Inge. Yet so many of his brethren imagine that the Union Jack is one of the sacred emblems of religion.

## Acid Drops.

The Bishop of London, in a letter to the *Times*, calls attention to the need for economy. He points out that in six months £88 000 000 was spent on drink. We might remind the Bishop that this represents little more than a tenth part of the money spent during that time on religion. We quite agree that a large part of the money spent on drink might be saved; but so might the larger sum spent on religion. Far from this being advocated by the clergy, they are all issuing appeals for money for religious work, and threatening terrible consequences to the country if it is not forthcoming. Why not advise people to leave off spending on religion, at least until the War is over? And when will the higher-paid clergy forgo some of their salary in order to help the nation pay for the War? Up to the present, all they appear to have done is to invest their "savings" in the Five per Cent. War Loan.

Through the kindness of a Barbadoes correspondent we learn that much capital is being made by local Christians over a recent suicide. A man was found drowned near the pier, and among his belongings there was a letter which bore strong evidence that the deceased had been of unsound mind. The writer confessed to being tortured with the thought of having committed a number of crimes, which he quite recognized were purely imaginary. He complained of pains in the head, of being "so tired," and appears to have suffered in this way for years. The only unusual feature about the case is that the deceased says "as a lad I lost faith in Christianity." It is upon this that local Christians have seized, and of which they are making capital. Had he been a member of a church or chapel, and died committing his soul to God, no one would have taken any special notice. The case would have been too common to call for mention. The unusual thing is that he should have been a non-Christian. That is the only special feature about the case. And even Christians must be allowed to rejoice now and again.

We are able, unfortunately, to match this Barbadoes incident with another. Lieut.-Col. Greenwood, who committed suicide at the Horse Guards the other day, left on his desk a short prayer addressed to "Lord God Almighty," and asking "Thou Jesus Christ and Master give thou to me a quick and peaceful death." Christians will not, of course, find any moral in this case; nor do we, other than the very obvious one that a man's beliefs concerning theology really have very little to do with such an act as suicide. It is not the Freethinker who is anxious to hold up to publicity a case of suicide. It is the Christian who sets the example, and strains decency to breaking point in his anxiety to "score" against an opponent. The Freethinker's retort is no more than an act of self-defence.

Mr. Ford has sailed for home again, and the newspaper men are distressed to find adjectives to express their feelings without upsetting the clergy. The *Daily Telegraph* says, discreetly, that the Norwegians regard Mr. Ford "as an idealist of the Tolstoi type." The *Detroit Saturday Night* dots the i's in this sentence by telling us that Mr. Ford possesses an "almost boundless ignorance on almost every subject of human knowledge outside of his mechanical specialties." If Brother Ford reads the newspapers, he will appreciate how blessed are the peacemakers.

Dean Inge, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, said "he did not think we were being called to actual martyrdom as a nation." Think, indeed! Thirty-nine archbishops and bishops received £180 700 between them last year. That cannot be considered the mildest of martyrdoms.

The following cutting has been going the rounds of the Press:—

Sir Frederick Bridge, organist of Westminster Abbey, relates this story (says the "Church Family Newspaper"). He was approached while playing at the Abbey by a soldier, who begged to him to play a certain piece of music.

Sir Frederick felt unable to comply at a moment's notice, but consented to play the piece at some future time—on condition that the soldier returned when he had killed ten Germans.

The man did return, but Sir Frederick was away, and the sub-organist was installed in his place.

The soldier explained about the task imposed upon him, and the organist played the Fugue, and then asked whether the soldier had carried out his part of the contract. "Well," said the warrior, "I don't know how many he killed, but the King gave me this to-day."

It was the V.C.!

The strange thing about this incident is that nobody seems

to have perceived the incongruity of this blood-thirsty demand proceeding, first of all, from a Church organist, and then being joyfully trumpeted in a *Church Family* newspaper. Why should an organist ask anybody to kill ten Germans, and why should the *Church Family* newspaper see nothing un-Churchy or un-Christian in the demand, but rather something worthy of being passed on, possibly for emulation in other parishes up and down the land? It reminds us of the story of John the Baptist's head being asked for on a charger, and various other blood-curdling requests to be found in Holy Writ. Evidently Church folk mean to live up to the reputation of the *worst* inspirations of their sacred tonic. And yet folk wonder that the war-spirit survives!

Mr. R. J. Campbell, having surrendered the post of Oracle at the City Temple, now plays the part of War Oracle for the *Sunday Herald*. Some of the things he is saying appear very ill-advised—for him. We are afraid he will find it convenient to swallow them later, as he swallowed his famous "New Theology" when he found the "respectable" Christian public didn't want it. Thus, he says:—

There is small doubt that one great reason why the Kaiser and the privileged orders wished for war was because they foresaw that within the next ten years Social Democracy in the Reichstag and in the Empire would be strong enough to dispossess them and seize the reins of power.

This is rather a dangerous preaching. Some people may feel inclined to apply the same principle to the whole system of foreign wars, and to other countries beside Germany.

Here is another rather rash saying:—

If Germany could be made a Republic, there would be no more fear of the violation of treaties and the menace of militarism. That is one real way of escape from a renewal of this wicked strife.

Our masters and pastors in the days of the Great French Revolution were wiser. They saw the danger of contagion, and did their best to restore the Church and the Monarchy. When one goes, the other has a tendency to follow. And when the abolition of kingcraft is seen to be good in one country, other countries are apt to ask why not good elsewhere?

Canon Carnegie, preaching at St. Margaret's, Westminster, said that "the modern democratic movement can claim to be of Christian origin." It can also claim Satanic origin; but it is very unlikely to do either.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer's Christmas message at Christ Church, Westminster, was not pessimistic. "The sea of humanity," he said, "was heaving with passion, and laden with wreckage, but there was no need for alarm." This looks as if the Church at Westminster was out of the wet, anyhow.

The business of the prophet is always a flourishing one, and since the War we have been deluged with them in the guise of unofficial military advisers and experts. And now, with the opening of the New Year, they seem to have all made up their minds to tell the public of the many things they prophesied and which have come to pass. And seeing that they foretold and recommended from time to time every conceivable occurrence, it is quite easy to point out how accurate they were—by the simple policy of saying nothing at all about their forecasts that were quite wrong. And the poor addle-headed public continue to read and admire them as oracles. What a different world this would be if the public only possessed common sense—and a good memory.

The Vicar of Banbury, according to an appeal from the reverend gentleman himself which appeared in the *Banbury Guardian*, arranged what he called a "chain prayer" in connection with the latest thing in intercessions. Devotees were asked to devote a quarter of an hour to prayer, and to fill up, in a roll provided for the purpose, in the church, which particular quarter of an hour best suited them to get to work. In this way the vicar hoped to "keep the pot a-bilin'" from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the Saturday before the Sunday when the actual "intercession," the concentrated mass attack as against the independent firing, took place. Coming from Banbury, this, as the Lord himself might say, "takes the cake." Whatever else the War has done, it has shown to what amazing depths the puerility of serious parsons and persons descends.

Rev. W. Cuff, of Shoreditch, who was a butcher before he became a parson, resumes his trade for awhile every Christmas. The beef that is bought for distribution amongst the poor of Shoreditch is cut up by Mr. Cuff himself for distribution. We congratulate him on performing at least one useful job during the year.

Rev. A. J. Waldron thinks that after the War, "On the side of women who have lost their husbands, sons, and sweethearts, you will find a great deal of agnosticism; not atheism—a religious agnosticism. It will not be anti-Christian, but it will be a kind of passive rebellion." Poor man! It is hard for him to face the truth, and quite as difficult for him to quite ignore it without making himself obviously ridiculous. A great many people will have their faith disturbed, but it would never do to admit that this disturbance would take the form of deliberate disbelief. It will be a "religic agnosticism"—whatever that may be. Presumably, the kind of religion that will be left will be the sort Mr. Waldron would agree with. They are all the same—Catholics, High Church, Low Church, and popularity-hunting parsons like the late Vicar of Brixton. Each depicts the future as they would like it to be, and each covers his professional egotism with the mantle of prophecy.

"If we can spend millions in killing people," says Mr. Waldron, "surely we ought to spend millions in saving people." Certainly; but then we are a Christian people, and so things do not quite work out in that way. Would our Government, for example, which can find five millions a day for war, find half-a-million a year for scientific research? Consider the outcry raised against providing the comparatively beggarly amount needful for the Old Age Pension scheme. Consider another fact. A few months ago a hospital ship was wrecked off the Yorkshire coast. Every person on board might have been drowned, owing to there not being an apparatus on board that would carry a lifeline for nearly a mile. That was to save people. To kill people, we have guns that will carry over a ton of explosives nearly twenty miles. It is the same lesson whichever way we turn. Christian civilization is such that nations which haggle over every sixpence when it is a matter of saving life, or promoting human happiness, will cheerfully pour out money like water when it is to be spent in pure destruction.

At a meeting presided over by the Bishop of Ripon, one of the speakers told a remarkable story of a man whose sight was given up as hopeless, and recommended him to go to an Asylum for the Blind. So one night some Sisters who had been nursing him, prayed to God to restore his sight, and the next day his sight had greatly improved. Then the Sisters prayed again that God would complete the cure, and the soldier is now able to read small print in the Prayer Book. There should be plenty of work for these Sisters up and down the country, and it is a pity their names were not made public. Their business-like pertinacity is, too, beyond reproach. Some people would have been content with seeing an improvement in their patient. Not so these sisters. They reminded God of his half-finished task, and it was promptly completed. The fact of the story being told in the presence of a Bishop is added evidence to its credibility.

"Superstition and infidelity usually go together," says the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell in an article on "Ghosts," and, in a later paragraph, he adds, "whenever I listen to tales of the occult, the exclamation which rises instinctively to my lips is 'Rats!' We wonder if the gentleman ever reads the Bible.

Who sends the press messages? One "special correspondent," whose message was printed in a Nonconformist daily, said "Paris has become a City of Prayer." If the readers believe that, they will believe anything.

Baron von Bissing, the German Governor of Brussels, who gained a very unenviable notoriety over the brutal execution of Nurse Cavell, has had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Theology by the University of Munster. One more illustration of the reign of Atheism in Germany, and fresh proof of the public rejection of religion.

On a recent Sunday morning, when the faithful were assembling for "divine service" in the Parish Church of Trowbridge, Wilts, a heavy marble monument, which had for eighty years adorned the wall fell with a crash like the dropping of a bolt from Olympus or a trifle from a Zeppelin. A lady happened to be sitting underneath, but, by a miracle which doubtless has an excellent moral, the monument in its fall caught on another memorial hanging a few feet lower down. This diverted it from vertibility into obliquity over the lady's bonnet and into a pew just in front of her, and so saved her life. The attendance in this church is no better than it is elsewhere, and to this fortunate circumstance—which has no moral significance whatever—is due the fact that the usual vacant seats yawned where the marble actually fell, and so nobody was hurt there either. A Wiltshire contemporary which reports the incident suggests that

churchwardens should make it their duty to see that these memorials are safe. 'Tis a shrewd suggestion. The possibility of being buried under somebody else's monument will hardly rank as an attraction to non-churchgoers, or a comfort to regular attendants. Alike for mental and physical reasons, the safe side of a church is the outside.

How these Christians love one another! The Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, preaching at Westminster, said "the War is not a judgment on Britain's sin, as some croaking pessimists believe." The croakers are his fellow Christians.

At Doncaster—and we daresay elsewhere—every soldier received with his Christmas dinner a card bearing the inscription: "God measures life by love, not days, nor months, nor years." This is a very poor paraphrase of Bryant's well known lines, but no one appears to have observed the satire of issuing such a card under present conditions. It reminds us of our once seeing in a hospital ward the text, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

A nice little clerical scandal has been brought to light in Kent. The isolation hospital of the Faversham Rural District Council is situated in the parish of Bickland, whose rector, the Rev. James May, lives in Cambridge, and for years has done no work in the parish, although he has pocketed the tithes. The Council has decided to complain to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the matter to see if a part of the unearned emoluments can be diverted from the absentee rector and given to the chaplain of the hospital. It should be said, perhaps, that there are only twenty-four houses in the parish, and about one hundred "souls," and that the church is in ruins. Nevertheless, it is a reflection on the Church authorities that they should have allowed this state of things to continue until their attention has been called to it by a secular organization. And even their calling attention to it by no means insures that the required reform will be carried out, for Mother Church has a kindly eye on the temporalities of these offices.

What restrained language ministers use! The Rev. R. J. Campbell, writing in the *Sunday Herald*, asks: "Are you the same person who longed for a particular gratification so much that you were almost prepared to cut your throat because you couldn't get it?" What exquisite courtesy! We wouldn't go so far as that for Mr. Campbell's best motor-car.

The great Winter festival of the Christian Church is associated with feeding. It was thoughtful of the editor of a popular Sunday paper to include a lengthy article on "Christmas and Digestion," by a doctor.

Bishop Ryle says that "the peace that Christ gave was not the peace of a large balance at the bank, and bodily security." The clergy do not appear to ignore these extra comforts.

The clergy live in balloons, as our French neighbours say gaily. Dean Inge has just told us "we have most of us known families which have been suddenly reduced from wealth to poverty. I think such homes are often very happy." "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" The poor dean must be thinking of the nobleman in the novellette, who is reduced by poverty from fourteen servants to two. There isn't much happiness in the casual wards and on the Embankments.

### "Heaven is Hell."

"HEAVEN is Hell"  
Chimes the mournful bell,  
And Hell is a lie.  
"Heaven is Hell,"  
So the Angel's tell  
Oft' as they fly.  
"Heaven is Hell"—  
A myth—a sell  
Where the holy chant,  
"Heaven is Hell";  
Hell is—well—  
The home of cant.  
"Heaven is Hell,"  
Moans the sad bell—  
Hope of all parasites.  
"Heaven is Hell,"  
Where liars revel—  
Home of all hypocrites.

C. B. W.



## To Correspondents.

A. M.—Rather complimentary, isn't it? When Rev. John McNeil told a man he was not an Atheist, but an ass, because he had not read anything, and could not recommend any books dealing with Atheism, the inference was that the parson expected an Atheist to have read much and thought more. Had this one done so, he would have been not an ass but an Atheist.

H. P.—A Secularist is one who bases his theory of life on considerations drawn from this world alone. An Atheist is one who is without belief in a God, and his rule of life must of necessity be secularistic. Freethought implies a mental attitude. It is that of one who is prepared to test every question by reason, and who strives to eliminate the distorting influence of prejudice and tradition.

S. H. LAYCOCK.—Thanks for good wishes to editor and staff.

E. ROBERTSHAM.—We think we have given the Rev. Docker all the attention he deserves. There is always the danger of taking some people too seriously. He was useful only so far as he served to point a moral, and that being accomplished, his opinion about us is a matter of complete indifference. Thanks all the same for your courtesy and trouble.

R. GREEN.—Pleased to have the appreciation of one who has read the *Freethinker* for over thirty years. You will now see what we are aiming at, and we have other things in store, all of which, we hope, will make this paper more useful and more interesting than ever.

M. D. CORRACK sends subscription for *Freethinker*, and thinks it "the finest tonic for Sunday that can be obtained." Of course, we agree; but what's the matter with the rest of the week?

J. STANWAY.—We hope that what we have said—and done—will reassure you as to the future of the *Freethinker*. We must go cautiously until the War is over; then we hope to see things.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings, also for good wishes to *Freethinker* staff, which we cordially reciprocate.

F. F. SMITH (Melbourne).—Thanks for subscription to *Freethinker*, and to your efforts in securing new readers. The subscriptions have been handed to our Business Manager. We await instructions concerning other matter.

C. S.—Our sincere condolence on the death of your son, whom, as you say, has shared the fate of many thousands of others during this ghastly War.—The true Freethinker declines to dogmatise about the question of a future life. It is enough for him that this life presents sufficient scope for the exercise of human faculty and for the cultivation of human happiness.—Will bear your other suggestion in mind.

W. KENSSET.—Sorry we have no space this week for your letter. We fancy, however, that your disagreement with Mr. Heaford is more of a verbal one than anything else.

A. D. CORRICK.—There is no intention of using a smaller type for the *Freethinker* than is being used at present. Our new type—when it arrives—will be even easier reading than that now in use.

J. F. ADST.—We can hardly say with certainty, but some of it may appear in the *Freethinker* one day.

H. BLACK.—We note your good wishes. Certainly we could very well do with a "millionaire Freethinker" just now. Perhaps he will arrive one day.

R. TABRUM.—We have no printed statements of the objects of the G. W. Foote Memorial Fund save the one in the *Freethinker* for December 5.

S. G. HARRIS.—We did not receive your communication, or would have replied. There is no Branch of the N.S.S. at Abertillery.

V. WHITTY.—You could only obtain the works named second-hand.

J. HUDSON.—There is, as the Yankee would say, "horse sense" in what you suggest, and we may carry some of your suggestions into practice when opportunities allow. But we must go carefully. The times are difficult, and the financial burden, as you rightly suppose, is not a light one. Thanks for your interest, anyway. Your cuttings are always most welcome.

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

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., and not to the Editor.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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.

## "The Roll of Honour."—Fifth List.

Previously acknowledged, £240 13s.—Fiona Billington Greig, £1 1s.; R. Taylor, 10s.; M. A. P., 10s.; J. P., 10s.; S. H. Laycock, 6s. 6d.; R. M., 5s.; F. E. Murrills, Mr. and Mrs. Thirtle, F. High, and R. H. Ponder, 10s.; Juliet and Julian, 5s.; R. Green, £1; R. S. Pengelly, £1 1s.; M. M., £1 1s.; J. Ratcliffe, £5; S. Elliot, 2s. 6d.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; A. Harvey, £1 1s.; W. Allan, £1 1s.; J. Hammond, £1 1s.; A. J. Channon, £5; J. Stanway, 5s.; Four Toupen-treites, £1; J. Duclos, £1; Two Stocktonians, 7s. 6d.; R. Wood, £1; H. Jessop, £10; W. M., 10s.; E. W. Cox, £1; K. J., 2s. 6d.; A. Gottschling, 10s.; W. K., £2 2s.; A. and H. Unthink, £1; F. R. A., 5s.; H. Black, 10s.; R. Tabrum, £1; J. F. Aust, 5s.; Vincent Whitty, 5s.; A. J. Wilbraham, 2s. 6d.; A. Millar, 5s.; J. Milroy, 5s.; W. Milroy, 5s.

Per Miss Vance: E. Oliver, £3.

Per H. Thomson: Friend, 3s.; G. Hill, 2s.; B. Macdonald, 1s.; J. Thomson, sen., 5s.; W. Robertson, 1s.; J. King, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. J. King, 2s. 6d.; W. Macintyre, 1s.; H. Thomson, 10s.; A. Hamilton, 1s.

## G. W. Foote Memorial Fund.

(To take the form of a Presentation to Mrs. Foote.)

I OMITTED last week all comments on this Fund, leaving the published list of subscriptions to speak for itself. So far, the response has been very gratifying, and the spirit of the subscribers even more than their subscriptions. It makes one realize that if Freethought is a financially poor cause, it is a hearty one. In the nature of the case, no pressure can be brought to bear upon potential subscribers. Everything is entirely dependent upon their sense of duty and their capacity for appreciating good work in a great cause.

The Fund has now been established just over a month, and, up to the present, over 220 persons have subscribed, but I should like to see that number increased to over 2,000 before it is closed. As I have before said, the Fund should represent a national testimonial to the life and work of G. W. Foote. It is too early yet to say when the Fund will be closed, but I should like it to be closed at as early a date as possible. Circumstances beyond my control must determine when that date shall be. At its close, subscribers will be informed of the way in which the Fund is to be used for Mrs. Foote's benefit.

From the letters received, the place of honour must be given to an unusually young subscriber. Our oldest subscriber is, we believe, that sturdy veteran, Mr. R. H. Side, aged ninety-one. Our youngest falls just ninety years and 854 days short of that age, as the following will explain:—

My wife and I think the baby could not celebrate her entry to this world in a better way than by subscribing to the G. W. Foote Memorial Fund. Please, therefore, enter the enclosed small cheque against her name. And may she learn in after years with pleasure that the first public action she did (if only by proxy) was to honour the memory of a brave man whom both her parents respected and admired.—Yours very truly,

F. BILLINGTON GRIEG.

We sincerely wish Miss Fiona Billington Greig an easy journey over all those troubles which may threaten her infantile career, and hope that her first public action will become an earnest of a useful and happy life. Our congratulations also to her—we have no doubt—proud parents.

Mr. R. Wood hopes that the response to the appeal will show that:—

Long and disinterested service for the good of humanity is not met with ingratitude, at least, on the part of those who are in some measure conscious of the debt

owing to such a devoted, courageous, and able champion of the cause of Truth and Duty.

Mr. H. Organ writes, that while pleased to see so prompt a response to our appeal he "would like to see a larger list." So would I. As I have already said, the Fund should be a genuine national tribute, and this can only become so in virtue of the length of the list, and not by the total subscribed, however large. Still, there is time for the Fund to realize all that is desired in that direction.

Mr. John Grange writes—we omit his flattering personal tribute:—

I have great pleasure in sending you one guinea for the "Foote Memorial Fund." Though somewhat late, I yield to none in my appreciation of the solid and lasting work of our late leader. His ability was rare indeed, and in a more "fashionable" cause, would have placed him and his family in a position of affluence. But Mr. Foote's greatness could not be measured by a material standard, no more than the delicate tints of a majestic sunset. His superb mental qualities illumined the path of true progress, and will remain long aglow to aid us in the destruction of superstition's last strongholds.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Sugar Plums.

Our best thanks are due to those who have already commenced raking in that 1,000 new subscribers, and also to those who have promised their assistance. A thousand looks a lot on paper, and yet it would be easy for *Freethinker* readers to secure that number if enough set to work. If 500 readers make up their minds to secure a couple of new readers, the thing is done, and the *Freethinker* will be in a position such as it has never before occupied. And always remember that what readers we get, we keep.

There has been quite a rush for Mr. Foote's portrait this last week or so, with the result that we have run, temporarily, out of stock. There has also been some difficulty in getting a supply of cards for mounting. Nowadays one orders things, and they arrive when they will. In a few days, however, we hope to have another good supply on hand.

Dr. R. F. Licorish contributes to the *Advocate* (Barbadoes) a memorial notice of our late Editor. He says:—

I have his portrait before me as I write this, and, to me, the most striking features are the eyes and the mouth, which clearly show kindness and humour to a very high degree. As regards his kindness of heart, the special number of *The Freethinker* devoted to his memory, gives abundant evidence. As regards his humour, I have learned much of it from the pages of *The Freethinker*. A bitter opponent of all cant and hypocrisy, his humour was often of that caustic type against which even some of his most devoted friends would raise their hands in protest, but often would conclude any remarks by "it is true and just nevertheless." A great lover of truth and freedom and justice he took always the side of those maligned through prejudice, as when together with the late W. T. Stead he exposed the calumnies of the Revd. Dr. Torrey the Evangelist, against the lives of Ingersoll and Tom Paine. He was a scholar, a great student of Shakespeare and well read, he was a personal friend of George Meredith and corresponded with him for thirty years. His memory was marvellous and was said to be equal to that of Macaulay.....If to love truth, humanity, freedom and justice and to fight for them, we may well say, in season and out of season, renders a man great—and this all thinkers must concede, then George W. Foote was a great man, and posterity will recognise the truth of that verdict more and more as knowledge increases and truth is more highly valued.

From Barbadoes, also, we have received a letter of condolence on the death of G. W. Foote, with an appreciation of his work. The address bears a number of signatures, and we regret that want of space prevents our doing more, for the moment, than merely acknowledge its receipt.

We have received a number of replies to our request for the names and addresses of newsagents who supply the *Freethinker*. We thank those who have written, and are filing the information for future use. But we observe an absence of addresses from the West of England, and these we are specially desirous of obtaining. Perhaps they will

reach us later. Postcards are the best medium of information, as they admit of easier preservation and reference.

We regret to learn, from a notice in the *Rand Daily Mail*, of the death of Mr. Miguel Torrente, of Doornfontein, S. A. Mr. Torrente was Vice-Consul for Spain, and a well-known Freethinker. Neither he nor his wife made any secret of their heretical opinions, and both stood high in the public estimation. The funeral was of an entirely Secular character, and the gathering of mourners was of a large and representative character. The Consulates of France, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Greece, etc., were represented, as well as the mining and commercial associations. An address was delivered at the graveside by Mr. B. Jenkins, Vice-President of South African Rationalist Association.

### Birth.

BILLINGTON GREIG.—At a Nursing Home, Glasgow, on December 24, 1915, to Teresa and Fred. L. Billington Greig, a daughter (Fiona).

### Religion, Science, and the War.

These people [preachers] declaim against vices. They prove, in three points and by antithesis, that ladies who lay a little carmine upon their cheeks will be the eternal objects of the eternal vengeance of the Eternal;.....in all these discourses, you will scarcely find two in which the orator dares to say a word against the scourge and crime of war, which contains all other scourges and crimes.....All the united vices of all the ages and places will never equal the evils produced by a single campaign. Miserable physicians of souls! you exclaim, for five quarters of an hour, on some pricks of a pin, and say nothing on the malady which tears us into a thousand pieces. Philosophers, moralists, burn all your books. While the caprice of a few men makes that part of mankind consecrated to heroism, to murder loyally millions of our brethren, can there be anything more horrible throughout nature?

What becomes of, and what signifies to me, humanity, beneficence, modesty, temperance, mildness, wisdom, and piety, whilst half a pound of lead, sent from an hundred steps, pierces my body, and I die at twenty years of age, in inexpressible torments, in the midst of five or six thousand dying men, whilst my eyes, which open for the last time, see the town in which I was born destroyed by fire and sword, and the last sounds which reach my ears are the cries of women and children expiring under the ruins, all for the pretended interests of a man I know not.—VOLTAIRE, *Philosophical Dictionary*, article "War," vol. ii., p. 580.

THE clergy of all denominations have exploited the great War in their own interests. Innumerable sermons have been preached upon the subject. Some of them declare that the War has been sent, or allowed, by God in order to punish unbelief and the neglect of the Churches. If this is true, then we can only say, with the French philosopher Diderot, "No good father would wish to resemble our Heavenly Father," and take the advice of Job's wife to "curse God and die."

Others unscrupulously attribute the cause of the War to the growth of scientific Materialism and Freethought, which has undermined Christianity. They point especially to the teachings of Nietzsche in this connection, although the ordinary pulpiteer has not even a nodding acquaintance with Nietzsche's works, but bases his accusation upon extracts torn from their context and compiled by his bitterest enemies.

It is true that there has been a great slump in religion during recent years. In this country, in spite of the strenuous exertions of the clergy, there is a yearly falling-off in the membership of the churches, which are mainly attended by women. In France, the Government has disestablished the Church and adopted Secular Education. In Germany, or at any rate in Berlin, the churches, before the War, were practically deserted.

We are not aware that anyone has charged the French with having caused the War—even the Germans have not done that; they throw the blame on England and Russia. And it should be noticed

that the French Government is the only secular Government—if the Government of Japan can be called such—involved in the War. It is notorious that the French were taken quite unprepared at the outbreak of the War.

We know that Sir Edward Grey did all that was possible to avert the War, on behalf of this country. We are not of those who believe that Germany had settled long ago that war was to be declared in August, 1914; but there are many indications that she was preparing for another leap, similar to the one engineered in 1870. Her positive refusal to entertain our repeated proposals for a mutual limitation of battleships; the secret construction of the enormous guns, useless for defence, but especially constructed for the express purpose of battering down the forts on the road to Paris, to say nothing of her extraordinary secret spy service, all point in the same direction. The Serbian affair merely precipitated the outbreak of the War by a few years, by which time, perhaps, the German Navy would have been ready with as great a surprise for us as the German Army had for the Belgian forts.

However that may be, and it is merely a personal opinion which we have no wish to impose upon anyone else, it is certain that the Materialists and Atheists of Germany are not responsible for the War. Upon this point we have definite and reliable evidence. In Germany, as on the Continent generally, the Socialist is also a Freethinker. Now, the German Social Democratic Party, which controls 4,000,000 votes, made the most strenuous efforts to prevent the War. During those last fatal days of July, when Europe was gradually sliding down into the abyss, says Chesnais,—

They organised a regular series of public meetings to protest against the war. They thus warned the people of the approaching danger, and they sought to counter-balance the action of the Chauvinist [Jingo] press. Throughout the whole of Germany, and often in localities of little importance, the meetings appear to have been frequently held. At Berlin, on Tuesday, 28th July, a procession was formed in the Unter den Linden, singing the "International" and crying "Down with war!" It required a considerable force of police to disperse it. It was met by a patriotic counter-demonstration, and blood was shed.\*

Chesnais also cites the following from the Manifesto of the German Labour Party:—

The proletariat of Germany, in the name of civilization and humanity, records its impassioned protest against the criminal intrigues of the instigators of war. It firmly demands that the German Government shall use its influence with the Austrian Government with a view to the preservation of peace.....Comrades, we call upon you to give voice in vast meetings to the unshaken desire for peace on the part of the proletariat. This is a critical moment, the most critical since scores of years. The danger is drawing near. We are threatened with a general war. The ruling classes who, in times of peace, hold you in bondage, despise you, and make use of you for their own ends, now think to employ you as food for cannon. Let the governing classes hear, on every side, your cry: "We won't have war! Down with war! Long live international brotherhood!"

*Vorwärts*, the official organ of the Social Democrats in Germany, in an editorial article (July 28), observes:—

Happily, England has taken the initiative in the attempt to bring about a peaceful arrangement of the dispute. The four neutral Powers—England, France, Germany, and Italy—according to the English proposal, would assume the part of mediators. It is a proposal equitable alike to all.....It follows that if Austria does not desire war at all hazards, and only seeks to obtain what is her right and guarantees for the future, she cannot possibly refuse the arbitration.†

Right up to the very day of the ultimatum, the freethinking German Socialists strove to avert the War. Chesnais says that their journal, *Vorwärts*,

very soon saw that a European War was developing.

It hoped at first that Germany would intervene in favour of peace, and pointed out what she had to do. By degrees, the journal recognized that German diplomacy was acting in a directly opposite sense. It then exposed the responsibility of Germany, in terms less energetic than those applied to Austria, but quite as definite. During all that time the *Vorwärts* had affirmed the pacific intentions of England and France, and applauded the diplomatic initiative of England, and, in spite of its extreme disgust of the Russian Government, it had declared that nothing could be laid to its charge, and that even its mobilization, having regard to the delay in carrying it out, could not justify the display of irritable apprehensions in the subsequent diplomatic discussions with that Government.\*

It is true that, after war was declared, the national spirit proved to be stronger than the international, except for a small minority, headed by their great leader, Karl Liebknecht—who was promptly called to the Colours in consequence; but, then, so it did in all the countries concerned. In palliation of their vote for the War credits, it may be pointed out that the German Government, finding it essential to secure the democratic vote, allowed no scruples to stand in the way of securing it. As Chesnais remarks, we are in the dark as to a great deal which took place, but what facts we have go to show that there were secret interviews between the Government and the Socialist deputies, in which faked documents were used; for instance, Chesnais gives good reasons for believing that two of the most important telegrams of the Tsar of Russia were omitted. And probably the deputies were told that France had already crossed the frontier and invaded Belgium. However that may be, the fact remains that the freethinking democracy of Germany was opposed to the War, and did all in its power to prevent its outbreak.

As a matter of fact, the historian of the future will have to record that Freethinkers, to their eternal honour, have always opposed the war-spirit. From Voltaire down to Charles Bradlaugh and our late leader, G. W. Foote, the strength of the Rationalist movement was uniformly on the side of peace. "Voltaire," says John Morley, "was nowhere more veritably modern or better entitled to our veneration than by reason of his steady hatred of war."†

When the Jingoists tried to drag this country into the Russo-Turkish War, in 1878, Charles Bradlaugh was one of the organizers of a great demonstration, held in Hyde Park, which was brutally set upon by the "gentlemanly party." The medical students from all the London hospitals had been "whipped up," says Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "to turn out in aid of the Tory and the Turk."‡ Armed with sticks, they broke up the meeting and smashed the platform; whereupon another demonstration was arranged, which was also attacked, and Bradlaugh severely injured. Many of these gentlemen roughs must be alive now. What do they think now of their violent attempt to rush this country into war with Russia on behalf of Turkey? And how many demonstrations did the Churches organise against the War? None at all.

Mr. G. W. Foote was also inspired with the same hatred of the war-spirit, and has often lectured upon the subject. His pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*, is the most eloquent and convincing plea for the abolition of war ever penned. Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., Bradlaugh's successor in the editorial chair of the *National Reformer*, is president of the Rationalist Peace Society, of which Bradlaugh's daughter, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, is chairman.

On the other hand, the military party, which has dragged the German Empire into the present inferno, is predominantly religious. The Kaiser would tolerate no infidelity near his august person. Mr. Austin Harrison, who has lived nine years of his life

\* La Chesnais, *The Socialist Party in the Reichstag and the Declaration of War*, p. 36.

† Chesnais, pp. 20-21.

‡ Chesnais, p. 23.

\* Chesnais, pp. 99-100.

† Morley, *Voltaire*; 1872; p. 84.

‡ Bradlaugh Bonner, *Life of Bradlaugh*, vol. ii., p. 83.

in Berlin, observes: "Bismarck himself was a full-mouthed Protestant. He quaffed huge flagons of ale, and never made a speech without quoting the Divinity. The aged Emperor, 'my master' (as Bismarck called him), always spoke of God and Germany." The Kaiser is still more religious than his fore-runners. To quote Mr. Harrison again:—

He always "talked scripture." Among his people he was spoken of as having been sent to the Germans to lead them "from on high." No Emperor ever took the name of God so much in vain before. There never was such a devout-speaking Kaiser. It was always God. Everything that Germany did happened "through God."

And he did all this "for purely military reasons," says Mr. Harrison, which he gives as follows:—

If people object, please skip this paragraph; but this I must say: religion makes a man fight better than any other incentive. Though we have got over the epoch of religious wars, the Kaiser (who is no fool) knew what a power he would have over his people if (1) he could mesmerize them into mistaking him for an inspiration, (2) if he could saturate them with the Kaiser-idea that God watched over the Teutonic destinies, and was quite prepared, provided the Germans fought well, to give them of the best of the terrestrial fruits through the ages which were to come. And he succeeded.\*

As Mr. Harrison further remarks:—

The old German virtues did not make for Imperial aggrandisement, the old simplicities did not encourage the possession of sea power. The old Particularism did not goad the people to unite for greater wealth and greater possessions. But God would, and so the Emperor gave them God.

The press of this country—both religious and ordinary—seeks to evade this phase of the subject by describing the Kaiser as "a blasphemous hypocrite." But we cannot see how it can be any more blasphemous for the Kaiser to claim that God is on the German side than it is for the Tsar to claim that God is on the side of Russia, or for the same claim made on behalf of England. Neither do we believe that the Kaiser is a hypocrite. The history of religious persecution shows that the most cruel and the most ruthless persecutors have been the most devout, and have regarded themselves as instruments of God, carrying out his decrees.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

### G. W. Foote.

SOME fifteen years ago Mr. G. W. Foote wrote privately to us: "I can hardly imagine myself refusing a request of yours. Anything I ever wrote—or ever shall write—is at your disposal for the humanitarian cause. You are at liberty to use it in any way you please." Both before and after this promise was made, the Humanitarian League availed itself on many occasions of Mr. Foote's services; indeed, looking back over the whole period covered by the League's work, we can think of no one who gave more constant proofs of friendship. Busy as he himself was, in another cause, as President of the National Secular Society, and editor of the *Freethinker*, he was always ready to help the League by speech or pen, and his help was always given with wisdom and judgment. His pamphlet on *The Shadow of the Sword*, which was published by the League as long back as 1896, and has now for some years been out of print, was a fine demonstration of the anti-democratic character of standing armies, and of the fact that, while it is monarchs and statesmen who make the quarrels, it is the people who in purse and person are compelled to pay the cost. It is much to be regretted that Mr. Foote could not find time, in his later years, to revise the pamphlet for republication.

Mr. Foote frequently took part in meetings of the League; as, for instance, in the National Humanitarian

Conference held in 1895, when (as was recalled by him in one of his latest notes in the *Freethinker*) he spoke with the experience of one who, as a prisoner, had seen the prison-system from within. In the following year he lectured before the League on "The Kinship of Life: the Secularist View of Rights," when there was so crowded an audience that a large number of persons were unable to obtain admission. This address was afterwards printed in *The New Charter*, a volume published by the League in 1896, and later in the *Humane Review*.

Mr. Foote's views on such questions as corporal punishment, vivisection, and blood-sport, were practically identical with those held by the League; and he repeatedly gave us most generous editorial support in the *Freethinker*, in the numerous controversies in which the League found itself engaged. "Yours is veritably the triumph of a great idea," he wrote on the occasion of the League's twentieth anniversary in 1910.

This testimony was the more valuable because of the very high and rare intellectual powers of which Mr. Foote was possessed. Owing to the prejudices felt against him in many quarters, as a result of the part which he played in another controversy, with which we are not here concerned, his public reputation as a thinker, speaker, and writer, was absurdly out of proportion to his merits; though this was more than compensated to him by the regard of George Meredith, and of others who were well qualified to judge. Few men of the present day have combined, in an equal degree, such gifts of heart and brain; certainly, we remember no public speaker who had the faculty of going so straight to the core of a subject—of recovering, and restoring, as it were, to the attention of the audience, that jewel which all are supposed to be so desirous to find, but which all seem so fatally liable to lose—"the point." It was an intellectual treat of the highest order to hear Mr. Foote speak.

It was a treat, too, to read his literary jottings in the *Freethinker*, especially when he spoke of Shakespeare, or Shelley, or one of his other favourites among the masters of our English language, of which he was an indefatigable student, and which he himself used with a natural dignity and ease that is, unfortunately, rarely found among literary men. We venture to say that there are few leaders in literature or journalism to-day whose judgments are so weighty or well expressed as were those of Mr. Foote.

It has always been the pride of the Humanitarian League that its principles are broad enough to win the support of all thinking and feeling men, without regard to religious or other differences. A striking instance of this catholicity was seen on an occasion when the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, with whom Mr. Foote had been engaged in a very bitter controversy, lectured before the League in 1898. Mr. Foote was present and took part in the discussion. The present writer, who was sitting next to Mr. Hughes on the platform, remembers with amusement the sudden look of alarm on the face of the lecturer, as he whispered, "Is that Mr. Foote?" expecting, doubtless, a renewal of previous hostilities. But on the neutral ground—or should we say the universal ground—of humanitarianism, hostilities could not be; and questions bearing on the subject of the lecture (the attitude of Nonconformists towards Humanitarianism) were courteously asked and as courteously answered by antagonists who, however sharply divided on other questions, were, in their humanity, at one.—*Humanitarian Review*, January, 1916.

The story comes from one of the Rhodesians at the front in German South-west. A German aeroplane descended in the vicinity of a number of Hottentots of Cape extraction. They were quite convinced that this was a visit from the Deity, but were determined to do the honours in proper manner. Their leader therefore gravely advanced to the aviator and extended his hand with the salutation, "Moro, Got, hoe gat it?" ["Morning, God; how goes it?"].—*Gatooma Mail* (S.W. Africa).

\* Austin Harrison, "German Kultur and the Church," *Sunday Chronicle*, November 7, 1915, p. 5.

**The Song of the Bishops.**

A NEW-BORN RACE we British are!  
 Henceforth let scepticism cease;  
 For lo! by waging "war on war,"  
 We've found the Prince of Peace.

Now, godlier grown from day to day,  
 We strive to work the heavenly will,  
 And all those great commands obey,  
 Except, "Thou shalt not kill."

No pagan "song of hate" we sing:  
 For why? To sing of hate were wrong:  
 But on our impious foes we fling  
 The hate without the song.

Who but the Fool would now deny  
 The presence of the God of love?  
 For oft, when Zeppelins sail the sky,  
 We think, "There's One above."

So blest we are, our foes so curst,  
 That frequent o'er our ranks are seen  
 Those Angel Forms, whose visits, erst,  
 Were "few and far between."

Ourselves are Angels, void of sin:  
 Nay, more; for—if the truth be said—  
 We're those fond folk who dare rush in  
 Where Angels fear to tread.

H. S. S.

**Correspondence.**

**THOMAS PAINE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**  
 TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A friend has lately given me a valuable relic, the first number of the *Morning Advertiser*, February 8, 1794. It is especially interesting because it contains the following notice of Thomas Paine:—

In the sittings of the French Convention, of the 27th of January, a deputation of Americans were admitted to the bar, and the orator requested the pardon of Thomas Paine, that Apostle of Liberty, who had been proscribed in England, whose arrest was a species of triumph to all the tyrants on earth. His papers had been examined, and far from finding any dangerous propositions, the Committee had traced only the characters of that burning zeal for liberty—of that eloquence of nature and philosophy—and of those principles of public morality, which had through life procured him the hatred of despots, and the love of his fellow-citizens. They requested, therefore, with confidence, that Thomas Paine should be restored to the fraternal embrace of his fellow-citizens, and they offered themselves sureties for his conduct during the short time that he should remain in France.

The President, after a high compliment to the American people, said—"You request me to deliver up Thomas Paine. You are anxious to re-conduct to your own side the asserter of the Rights of Man—we must applaud this generous devotion. Thomas Paine was born in England, that was enough to subject him to the decree in the first instance, which our own safety demanded by the revolutionary laws. The Convention will take into consideration your demand."

This incident is, of course, related in a somewhat different form in Dr. Moncure Conway's *Life of Paine*. To me, its interest lies in the fact that it appears in the first number of a journal which is now the chief organ of the British liquor traffic.

HERBERT BURROWS.

**THE RIGHT TO AFFIRM.**

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have seen many queries relating to taking the oath when recruits, having no religious belief, offer themselves for enlistment. Perhaps my experience, in that particular, may be worth recording.

I presented myself at the Recruiting Offices, N —, for the purpose of attesting under Lord Derby's scheme, on December 9, 1915, and, after filling up the usual forms, I was ushered before an officer who was seated at a table, whereon lay miscellaneous papers and several Bibles.

Handing my papers to him; he requested me to "take the Book" in my right hand. I thanked him, but said that I desired to affirm.

He appeared rather non plussed, and, looking at me with an amused expression, said, "What the devil do we do then?"

I replied, "I am a Freethinker, and claim the right to affirm. Your regulations allow the principle of affirmation, and, further, I do not consider anything I might say on the Bible as being binding on my conscience." His answer to this was a dubious "H'm!"

Evidently seeing a way out of his difficulty, he called "Sergeant." The sergeant appeared, to be addressed by

his superior officer as follows: "Sergeant, what do you do when a fellow won't hold the Book?"

This query rather upset the sergeant's equilibrium. After looking at his questioner and me, alternately, in a rapid manner; he said, in a hesitating, uncommitting sort of way, "Why, you—er"—then, looking me full in the face, he rushed on "You hold your right hand up or something, don't you?"

I replied that he was on the right track. The officer at the table then said, addressing me: "Well, you'll say 'by Almighty God,' won't you?" I replied, "Most certainly not!"

He must have begun to think I was a tough proposition, and at last he said: "Oh, I know, I'll cross out 'Almighty God'" (suiting the action to the word). "Now you won't mind reading this and raising your right hand." I said "Oh no," and proceeded to take the oath of loyalty as printed until I came to the concluding sentence, "So help me God."

I quietly omitted this and, returning the paper to the officer, said: "You may strike that out, too." This he did immediately, and thus ended his "first lesson."

ARTHUR F. NEVILLE.

**THE LOVE OF TRUTH.**

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A few weeks ago you were kind enough to quote with approbation a phrase used by me in an article in *New Days* with reference to the late G. W. Foote and his critics. That phrase ran as follows: "It is the plain duty of every man who loves truth to be merciless in the destruction of what he believes to be falsehood." You added, I think, that you would be prepared to accept that sentence as a motto of the *Freethinker*.

Yet in the issue of that paper for January 2 I find the following criticism upon Saint Bernard:—

His piety knew no bounds, and his loyalty to the Church never wavered; but his character bristled with many undesirable and hateful qualities. Anyone who dared to think for himself found in Bernard a most bitter and implacable enemy. It is on record with what violent, relentless animosity he persecuted that brilliant intellectualist, Peter Abelard, until he brought about his condemnation at the Council of Sens, and its confirmation afterwards by the Pope.

May I ask why that which was (as I fully admitted) so commendable in the late Mr. Foote should be "hateful" in a Catholic Saint?

By the way, as I am writing to you, I should like to suggest that it might be well if your contributors would make up their minds as to whether Christianity is bad because it condemns war, or because it approves war. As Lord Melbourne said to his Cabinet, it does not much matter which you say, but you had better all say the same.

CECIL CHESTERTON.

[Mr. Chesterton confuses hostility to what one believes to be untrue with hatred of those who express a difference of opinion. The first is a question of duty, the second is primarily an expression of temperament, and the parent of persecution.]

With regard to our contributors and their views on Christianity and the War. We do not regard it as at all necessary that they "all say the same" on any subject. On the contrary, we are pleased to think that each one has his own point of view, and expresses it in his own way. And it may help Mr. Chesterton by suggesting that Christianity is indictable on both grounds. Theoretically, it preaches non-resistance, and so allows no room for the legitimate exercise of physical force, and in practice it has stood as the defender of wars times out of number, whether they were morally defensible or not.—EDITOR.]

**National Secular Society.**

**REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON DEC. 30.**

Mr. R. H. Rosetti in the chair. Also present:—Messrs. Cohen, Davidson, Gorniot, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rolf, Samuels and Wood. The Misses Kough, Pankhurst and Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted. New members were admitted for the Parent Society.

The report from Mr. T. Shore on Conference Motion XI. re Secular Funerals and Cremation was read, discussed, and accepted, and Messrs. Gorniot, Rosetti, Davidson and Shore elected as a Sub-Committee to consider further details and to report as to whether the suggested objects should be controlled by the N. S. S. or a separate and registered society be established with the support of the N. S. S.

The Secretary received instructions as to that part of the Outdoor Propaganda under the control of the Executive.

Other matters of routine business were discussed, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANEE, *General Secretary.*

**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.**

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.  
OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shallow; 3.30, Messrs. Rells and Dales, "United Prayer"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale, Dales, and Saphin.

**PIONEER PAMPHLETS.**

*Now being issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.*

**No. I.—BIBLE AND BEER,**  
By G. W. Foote.

**FORTY PAGES—ONE PENNY.**

Postage: single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 3d.; 26 copies 4d. (parcel post).

**No. II.—DEITY AND DESIGN,**  
(A Reply to Dr. A. R. Wallace.) By C. Cohen.

**THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.**

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

**No. III.—MISTAKES OF MOSES,**  
By Colonel Ingersoll.

**THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.**

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

*Special Terms for Quantities for Free Distribution or to Advanced Societies.*

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON-STREET, LONDON, E.C.

**RUSKIN HOUSE SCHOOL,  
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**

CONDUCTED ON RATIONALISTIC LINES.

*Established 1903.*

*Recommended by Prominent Freethinkers.*

Write:

**W. H. THRESH, Principal,**  
FOR PROSPECTUS.

**America's Freethought Newspaper.****THE TRUTH SEEKER.**

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

G. E. MACDONALD ... .. EDITOR.  
L. K. WASHBURN ... .. EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES.**

Single subscription in advance	---	3.00
Two new subscribers	---	5.00
One subscription two years in advance	---	5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra. Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

*Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies, which are free.*

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,  
Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,  
62 VESNY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

**Determinism or Free Will?**

By C. COHEN.

*Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.*

**CONTENTS.**

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

**PRICE ONE SHILLING NET.**

(POSTAGE 2d.)

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

AN OUTLINE OF EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS. Published at 6d., price 3d., postage 1d.

SOCIALISM, ATHEISM, AND CHRISTIANITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d., postage ½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON-STREET, LONDON, E.C.

**THE SECULAR SOCIETY**  
(LIMITED)

*Company Limited by Guarantees.*

Registered Office—62 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Secretary—Miss E. M. VANCE.

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

*A Form of Bequest.*—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

## Books Every Freethinker Should Possess.

### History of Sacerdotal Celibacy, by H. C. Lea.

In Two Handsome Volumes, Large 8vo., Published at 21s. net.

Price **SEVEN SHILLINGS**. Postage 7d.

This is the Third and Revised Edition, 1907, of the Standard and Authoritative Work on Sacerdotal Celibacy. Since its issue in 1867 it has held the first place in the literature of the subject, nor is it likely to lose that position.

### The Idea of The Soul, by A. E. Crawley.

Published at 6s. net.

Price 2s. 9d., postage 5d.

Mr. Crawley's reputation as an Anthropologist stands high, and the above is an important contribution to the anthropological aspect of the belief in a soul.

### History of the Taxes on Knowledge, by C. D. Collet.

With an Introduction by George Jacob Holyoake.

Two Vols: Published at 7s.

Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

Mr. Collet was very closely associated for very many years with the movement for abolishing the tax on newspapers, and writes with an intimate knowledge that few others possessed. Mr. Collet traces the history of the subject from the earliest times to the repeal of the tax after the Bradlaugh Struggle.

### The Theories of Evolution, by Yves Delage.

1912 Edition. Published at 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 5d.

A Popular, but Thorough, Exposition of the various Theories of Evolution from Darwin onward.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

### A Selection of Pamphlets by G. W. FOOTE.

#### THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

Price 6d., post 1½d.

#### ROME OR ATHEISM:

The Great Alternative. Price 1d., post ½d.

#### THE ATHEIST SHOEMAKER.

A Study in Lying. Price 1d., post ½d.

#### CHRISTIANITY OR SECULARISM:

Which is True? Price 4d., post 1½d.

#### DARWIN ON GOD.

Price 2d., post 1d.

#### MY RESURRECTION.

A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew.

Price 1d., post ½d.

#### MRS. BESANT'S THEOSOPHY.

A Candid Criticism. Price 1d., post ½d.

#### WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM?

Also a Defence of Atheism. Price 1d., post ½d.

#### LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.

A Discussion of Prayer, Miracles, etc.

Price 8d., post 1½d.

#### INGERSOLLISM

Defended Against Archdeacon Farrar.

Price 1d., post ½d.

#### BIBLE AND BEER.

Price 1d., post ½d.

#### HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE.

A Full and True Account of "The Leeds Orgies."

Price 8d., post 1d.

#### THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's Play.

Price 8d., post 1½d.

#### THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO.

An Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky.

Price 1d., post ½d.

#### THE PASSING OF JESUS.

The Last Adventures of the First Messiah.

Price 2d., post ½d.

#### THE IMPOSSIBLE CREED.

An Open Letter to the Bishop of Peterborough.

Price 1d., post ½d.

#### PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM.

Price 1d., post ½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

# FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

By G. W. FOOTE.

## FIRST SERIES.

Fifty-One Articles and Essays on a Variety of Freethought Topics.  
213 pp., Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 4d.

## SECOND SERIES.

Fifty-Eight Essays and Articles on a further variety of Freethought topics.  
302 pp., Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 4d.

*These two volumes contain much of the Author's best and raciest writings.*

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

## R. P. A., LTD.

### A REMARKABLE ISSUE.

96 large pp.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 4d.; paper cover,  
6d. net, by post 8d.

### R. P. A. ANNUAL FOR 1916.

*List of Contributors:—*

Religion in War Time. By the Rt. Hon. J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P.  
Cleopatra's Nose. By Professor J. B. BURY.  
Was it Worth It, Germany? By Mrs. W. K. CLIFFORD.  
The Religion of the Still Opener Mind. By WILLIAM ARCHER.  
A Note on John Ford. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS.  
Common Sense in Ireland. By JANE BARLOW.  
The Land of Villon. By H. DE VERE STACPOOLE.  
On the Side of the Angels. By ADAM GOWANS WHYTE.  
Has Rationalism Corrupted Germany? By JOSEPH McCABE.  
Lucretius on Life and Death. By CHARLES CALLAWAY, D.Sc.  
Evangelism and the Business of Religion. By S. K. RATCLIFFE.

### THE INQUIRER'S LIBRARY.

Each 160 pp.; cloth, 9d. net, by post 1s. 1d.; the five  
4s. 3d. post free.

• "The Inquirer's Library" is intended to fill an acknowledged gap in advanced literature. There is no such thing in English as a series of handy and easily purchasable volumes dealing with the fundamental issues of religious controversy. The new "Library" will deal concisely with various leading issues (Theism, Immortality, the Bible, Morality, etc.), and form a brief cyclopædia of research on these most important subjects.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. By JOSEPH McCABE.  
THE BELIEF IN PERSONAL IMMORTALITY. By  
E. S. P. HAYNES.  
CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. By CHARLES T.  
GORHAM.  
THE OLD TESTAMENT. By CHILPERIC EDWARDS.  
THE NEW TESTAMENT. By F. J. GOULD.

Over 3,000,000 Sold.

### R.P.A. SIXPENNY SERIES.

6d. NET EACH, BY POST 8d. Ten or more post paid at published price to any inland address.

**Huxley's Lectures and Essays.**  
**The Pioneers of Evolution.** By EDWARD CLODD.  
**Modern Science & Modern Thought.** By SAMUEL LAING. With Illustrations.  
**Literature and Dogma.** By MATTHEW ARNOLD.  
**The Riddle of the Universe.** By ERNST HAECKEL.  
**Educational, Intellectual, Moral, and Physical.** By HERBERT SPENCER.  
**The Evolution of the Idea of God.** By GRANT ALLEN.  
**Human Origins.** By SAMUEL LAING.  
**Tyndall's Lectures and Essays.**  
**The Origin of Species.** By CHARLES DARWIN.  
**On Liberty.** By J. S. MILL.  
**The Story of Creation.** By EDWARD CLODD.  
**Life of Jesus.** By ERNEST RENAN.  
**An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer.** By Prof. W. H. HUDSON.  
**Three Essays on Religion.** By JOHN STUART MILL.  
**Problems of the Future.** By S. LAING.  
**Wonders of Life.** By ERNST HAECKEL.  
**Jesus of Nazareth.** By EDWARD CLODD.  
**God and the Bible.** By MATTHEW ARNOLD.  
**The Evolution of Man.** By ERNST HAECKEL. In 2 vols.

**Hume's Essays:** I.—An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding. II.—An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals.  
**Herbert Spencer's Essays.** (A Selection.)  
**An Easy Outline of Evolution.** By DENNIS HIRD, M.A.  
**Man's Place in Nature.** By T. H. HUXLEY.  
**The Origins of Religion.** By ANDREW LANG.  
**Twelve Lectures and Essays.** By T. H. HUXLEY.  
**Haeckel's His Life and Work.** By WILHELM BOLSCHÉ.  
**Life of Thomas Paine.** By MONCURE D. CONWAY. In 3 vols.  
**The Hand of God.** By GRANT ALLEN.  
**The Nature and Origin of Living Matter.** By Dr. H. CHARLTON BASTIAN.  
**Phases of Faith.** By F. W. NEWMAN.  
**Asiatic Studies.** By Sir A. C. LYALL.  
**Paganism and Christianity.** By J. A. FARRER.  
**History of Rationalism.** By W. E. H. LECKY. In 2 vols.  
**Aphorisms and Reflections.** By T. H. HUXLEY.  
**History of European Morals.** By W. E. H. LECKY. In 2 vols.  
**Selected Works of Voltaire.** Translated by JOSEPH McCABE.  
**The Kingdom of Man.** By SIR RAY LANKESTER.  
**Twelve Years in a Monastery.** By JOSEPH McCABE.

LONDON: WATTS & CO., JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.