

THE Freethinker

Founded 1881 by G. W. FOOTE.

Edited by CHAPMAN COHEN.

VOL. XXXVI.—No. 5

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 1916

PRICE TWOPENCE

It is time there should be an end of the cant which lifts up its hands at the crimes of Republicans and Freethinkers, and shuts its eyes to the crimes of kings and churches.—LORD MORLEY.

Views and Opinions.

WRITERS AND READERS.

I had intended leaving the War alone, for a week or two at least, and dealing with other topics. But some comments received on my remarks concerning Conscription a fortnight ago lead me back to the subject. When I wrote those notes, I was far from imagining that all *Freethinker* readers would agree with me. It is, indeed, a poor aim, that of writing so that no reader can disagree with what is written. It involves self-stultification and it issues in ineffectiveness. The man who writes with the fear of disagreement upon him will never say what he thinks, and what he does say will mostly be not worth saying. Between honest writers and thoughtful readers there should be no need for concealment; there should exist only the frankest intercourse, governed by intellectual charity, even when it is not cemented by agreement. These conditions can seldom exist in the case of an ordinary newspaper, which is conducted with one eye on Mrs. Grundy and the other on the advertiser, but it should always obtain with papers such as the *Freethinker*.

* * *

CONSCRIPTION.

So I wrote on Conscription, feeling that the issue was large enough and vital enough to come within the scope of the declared policy of the *Freethinker*. And I am pleased to say that what I wrote appears to have met with general approval. I received a host of congratulatory letters, and two that were not congratulatory—quite the reverse. Both letters would have called for reply had not one writer put himself out of court by threatening to discontinue his subscription; and much as I desire the circulation of the *Freethinker*, I have not the least intention of purchasing subscribers by refraining from plain speech—nor would any *Freethinker* wish me to do so. The other writer pays me the compliment of saying that he looks forward to my articles with "pleasurable eagerness," but he is disconcerted to find "so able a writer and so lucid a thinker" should have written the notes on Conscription. He is afraid I don't understand the question, and I am certain he has failed to understand me. For what was the main drift of my notes in the *Freethinker* for January 16? I was not arguing whether Conscription was necessary to win the War or not. I do not know enough of the facts to deal with that question; nor, thanks to the ignorance in which we have been kept, does anyone else. My whole endeavour was to drive home two points. First, that all militarism involves social demoralization and brutalization; second, that while militarism in general is bad, Conscription accentuates some of its worst features. It is no reply to tell me that the tiger is at our throat. Of course, if a man is attacked, he must defend him-

1,802

self. The same is true of a nation. But that does not disprove anything I said; it rather substantiates it. It is only another way of saying that we must meet a brutal attack with brutal weapons. That may be true enough; only don't let us ignore the fact that they are brutal weapons. And this is no new preaching with me. I have preached the brutalizing effect of militarism while we were at peace, and it would be strange indeed to speak a different language now that its brutalizing consequences are writ large over the greater part of Europe.

* * *

PRUSSIANISM.

I am told I am in error "in making all that is connoted by 'Prussian militarism' the equivalent of the proposed conscription." I did not. All I said was that in substance it belonged to it. Do not let us be led away by words. When we write about our hatred of Prussianism, what is it that we have in our minds? Is it hatred of the Prussian—the man—or hatred of the ideas that master him? Ingersoll once said that he did not hate a man because he had got Christianity; he hated Christianity because it had got the man. Freethinkers, at least, ought to be as philosophical with regard to Prussians and Prussianism. It is the idea we are fighting, those of us who are fighting intelligently. And what is this idea of Prussianism? Is it not the idea that the political and military power of the State are of all things most worth fighting for; that a State grows great by making itself dominant over others, by winning and holding territory by the power of the sword? And if that is admitted, we must further grant that Prussianism is not confined to Prussia. It may have received its most extreme and most dangerous expression there, but it exists in every country in the world. France, Russia, Britain, Italy, even the United States, has its Prussianism. I could prove this by columns of quotations were it necessary. Prussianism is no more than militarism in an acute form. That the disease as it exists in other nations is less virulent ought not to lead us to ignore its presence. The idea is there; the principle is there; and its advocates are ever seeking to establish it as part of our normal life.

* * *

BEELZEBUB CASTING OUT BEELZEBUB.

Now, what I did was to point out that compulsory military service is one of the essential features of Prussianism. Don't let us confuse the issue by arguing whether this ought to be or ought not to be, or whether present conditions are such as necessitate it. If it is, you have conceded the cardinal principle of Prussia; and though you were to annihilate every soldier in the German and Austrian Armies, you will not have conquered Prussianism; it will have conquered you. Under a voluntary system we do not admit the right of the Government (which is all that most people have in their minds when they talk about the State) to force military service upon anyone, and that acts as some sort of a check upon militarism. With compulsion, that check is removed; military service is made the one thing upon which the welfare of the State depends; the soldier becomes the visible emblem of national safety and wellbeing.

FRANCE AND CONSCRIPTION.

I am reminded that Conscription exists in France, and am asked whether it has there, or anywhere else, the same evil consequences as in Germany? I do not see that it touches the question. France is at once the most democratic and the most conservative country in Europe. But even in France, my correspondent might have recollected the Dreyfus affair. And I can assure him that there exists in France a very extensive literature demonstrating the evil effect of Conscription on the life of the nation. And one must never forget that the seeds of many of the wars of the nineteenth century, as well as the seeds of the present one, may be traced back to the wars of conquest carried on by the First Napoleon by means of a general conscription. Even the military ascendancy of Prussia would have been highly improbable but for the Napoleonic campaigns.

* * *

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HUN.

But my crowning fault is that I—

have not quite mastered the psychology of the Hun. The evils in Germany are not due to an organized tyranny of the population for defence, but to an inherent and historical savagery, a lust of blood and hereditary disposition to cruelty, a love of tyranny and of force. Beneath all her veneer of culture, one glimpses these things in her literature and her music. Wagner's music was of the jungle.....Her actions during the War forbid any favourable judgment of her people, and do but confirm her utter brutishness.

Now, I am not concerned to discuss the barbarities of the German troops during the present War. Quite enough evidence exists to establish this, allowing for all exaggeration. But I find it quite impossible to draw up an indictment against a whole people in this easy manner, because I should expect to find in Germany large numbers of people who detest war and tyranny as much as I do, and who simply do not believe that their troops have been guilty of barbarity. And if they do not believe it, one cannot well charge these people with a love of cruelty and savagery; their offence would rather lie in the direction of credulity. The phrase that puzzles me is "the psychology of the Hun." What does it mean? So far as I can see, the psychology of a brute means no more than the nature of a brute, and it matters not whether he be a German brute or any other variety. A brute is a brute, whether in Berlin or Paris or London. If I lived in Berlin, I should really not expect my appreciation of the causes that make men kind or brutal, lovable or hateful, honest or dishonest, to be vitiated by the fact that I had gained my experience in London. It is one of the first principles of psychology that the human brain functions everywhere in an identical manner; and, indeed, it is a first principle of understanding human action under any condition. It seems that we shall have to transfer Shakespeare's "Hath not a Jew eyes?" from the Jew to the German. And it is surely worth remembering that about a century ago the psychology of the Frenchman was supposed to be made up of insane revolutionary frenzy, with a perfect mania for chopping off people's heads and a complete disregard of all ordinary rules of morality. And at the same time the psychology of the Hun was that of a very domesticated, dreamy, hard-working, simple-natured individual.

* * *

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PEOPLES.

What is the psychology of a people? For there is, I believe, a collective psychology that is at least as important as individual psychology. What is it? How does it arise? The psychology of a people—whether they be Huns, or Russians, or Britons, is no more than the mental dispositions induced and cultivated by their traditions and institutions. That is why America presents a collective psychological life different from that of France, Spain, or Turkey. It is what we mean when we talk of the American or French point of view. But suppose we transplant the American to Paris. Let him marry and beget children.

Let his children remain in Paris and beget offspring. What will become of the psychology of the American? It will have disappeared. Our own Royal Family is mainly German in descent. Does my critic mean that they have an "inherent" savagery, and "an hereditary" disposition to cruelty? If they have not, what has become of the psychology of the German in their case? What has become of the psychology of the Normans who overran England? Or of the English settlers in Ireland of three centuries ago? In all these cases the influence of a different social (psychological) life has been at work, and the result is seen in a changed or modified human nature.

* * *

THE POWER OF EDUCATION.

Now, if my critic will follow out the implications of the last paragraph, he will have my case against Militarism and Conscription in a nutshell. (I am not really so much concerned with whether Conscription is necessary, as I am with its baleful consequences, *whether it is necessary or not*) The German people have for two or three generations been subjected to a training in ideas of the value of military greatness, of world-power, of the ultimate sanction of brute force, of the greatness of military aggrandisement. That they have become a worse people on that account, I have not the slightest doubt. Their present psychology is the product of teaching and institutions, as is the psychology of every other people. Subjected to the same influences for the same period the result would be, other things equal, as disastrous elsewhere. That is really why I dread the growth of militarism in this country. It is because I desire to see England really free and genuinely progressive, that I fear the establishment of an institution which places the emphasis in the wrong direction. I do not wish to see English children growing up with the spectacle of a soldier in every family, and all around them object-lessons in the teaching that the strength of the State rests on armed force. I would have them grow up with their minds as free from the ideal of militarism, as from the ideal of the shady financial adventurer. I would have them think of the artist, the poet, the discoverer, the scientist, the mechanic, as of far greater importance to the State than the soldier. I would so frame our institutions that war should strike the developing mind as something alien and unnatural and barbarous. And I feel that in working for that ideal I am doing more to make war impossible than all the armies that ever marched or the navies that ever sailed.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Consistency, Thou Art a Jewel!

JOSEPH COOK, the famous Boston Monday Noon lecturer, used to say that there was nothing more characteristically Emersonian than to differ from Emerson. There is a sense in which that accusation is true, not only of Emerson, but of every other genuine thinker, but not in the sense intended by that mordant but extremely superficial and unreliable critic, whose immense popularity was but a flash in the pan, now almost entirely forgotten. Joseph Cook did not understand Emerson, nor the true signification of consistency, and the failure to understand resulted from the lack of the capacity to think. Consistency does not mean loyalty to opinions which are, by their very nature, subject to frequent changes. The man who boasts that he never alters his opinions has not yet acquired the high art of thinking. He may be a remarkably clever debater; by his intellectual alertness he may easily get the better of a genuine thinker in a mere argument. In that capacity, Joseph Cook, being temperamentally disputatiously inclined, succeeded every Monday, on which he lectured, in slaying at least one great giant in the world of thought. But the strange fact is that the slain of the Boston Monday lecturer still

live and flourish, while their slayer is dead, buried, and forgotten. Cook held opinions which he defended by every trick of oratory and mechanical argument, while Emerson often delivered himself of puzzling paradoxes and annoying verbal contradictions, but was supremely loyal to the fundamental principles underlying his transcendental interpretations of the Universe. We may disagree with the genial transcendentalist on many points, but in all his teachings we find a beautiful consistency of which the conceited huckster in words has not the remotest conception.

Christianity is a religion in the interpretation and advocacy of which consistency is an utterly impossible virtue. It contains two essentially contradictory and mutually destructive principles, namely, those of Divine forgiveness and natural sequence, principles which necessarily nullify each other. If the Christian forgiveness be a reality, there is no law of cause and effect; and if the law of cause and effect be accepted as a law of Nature, the doctrine of Christian forgiveness is shut out. These conflicting principles owe their conjunction in the Christian religion to the Pauline Epistles which, being, as the Church has always taught, Divinely inspired, have been invariably treated as infallible and above criticism. Was the Apostle Paul consistent? Apparently, or superficially, he was not, but in the deeper sense he must have been, because he himself assures us that the Gospel he preached came to him as a direct revelation from heaven. To explain away the apparent inconsistency and bring out the alleged deeper unity is the aim of the science of Apologetics; and everybody knows that to work on Apologetics there is no end. Indeed, it is essentially as an apologist the preacher enters the pulpit every time. Christianity is a religion that stands in constant need of being defended; and it is amazing how quickly every fresh defence gets out of date. This really signifies that, at bottom, Christianity is totally indefensible, because, otherwise, one true defence would serve for all time.

What is Christianity? Thousands of books have been published in answer to that simple question, and yet no two of them are in thorough agreement. Some go the length of asserting that Christianity is something nobody has yet seen, but which is on the eve of appearing with all-conquering power. And here again there is no consistency. A basic Christian principle is the absolute, invincible sovereignty of God. In all things in all the worlds the Divine Will is supreme. If this doctrine is believed to be true, consistency requires that the War should be regarded as an act of God, and, consequently, in full harmony with his will. As a matter of fact, only a clergyman here and there has the courage to be openly consistent on this point. Among these is the Bishop of London, who does not hesitate to declare that the War is God's. It is God's judgment on the growing irreligion of the times, the scourge wherewith the loving Heavenly Father is punishing his rebellious children. Great Britain is being chastised for its empty churches and crowded theatres, music-halls, and cinemas; for its wicked desecration of the Lord's Day and its excessive indulgence in all sorts of fleshly and God-denying pleasure. The majority of the clergy, however, are as profoundly convinced that this is the Devil's War, forgetting that such a conviction is a flat denial of the invincible sovereignty of God, and the quintessence of inconsistency. And now we come to another view, somewhat different from the two views just mentioned, namely, the view expressed by Sir William Robertson Nicoll in his leading article in the *British Weekly* for January 20. It will be remembered that soon after the War broke out the reverend gentleman maintained, in a series of leading articles, that the War was to be looked upon as the offspring of Prussian Atheism and Materialism, and that the Rev. Mr. Spurr, in his usual extravagant way, characterized the Kaiser as a thoroughgoing Materialist. Both gentlemen were entirely mistaken, as has been abundantly proved since, and both fell into the error through ignorance

dominated by prejudice. During the interval, Sir William has learned some wisdom, for in the present leading article he says:—

If we are asked to explain why this War took place we are face to face with a mystery which will remain a mystery till, in his good time, the mystery of God shall be finished.

Sir William makes no allusion to his former articles in which he was so cocksure as to the Atheistic origin of the War. That he has changed his opinion is undeniable, for he now admits, by implication, that the War is God's instrument:—

We can see how sharp suffering is often sent to break the crust that has gathered about the heart. God often brings his suffering children to their home by the road of pain. We can also see the glory of vicarious sacrifice. This is the doctrine which, according to testimony, has taken hold of the soldiers in the Trenches. They seem to understand, as they never did, the meaning of the death of Christ.

That is pious piffle with a vengeance, with which the whole article abounds. Silly questions are asked, and sillier answers returned. Take the following sample:—

Why does not God give more grace? All Christians agree that they are saved by grace. Why is the river of grace so scant? Why does God elect one to suffering and another to ease? Why should this one, who has twined his life with so many other lives, be shot; while the other, who has none to mourn him, escapes? *The only answer is that we cannot answer.*

We do not propose to follow the article any further, for it is all pitched in the same rankly superstitious key; but we must call attention to the last sentence in the above extract, which we have put into italics. We contend that all the questions asked can be satisfactorily answered on purely natural lines. God does not give *more* grace because he gives *none*, and he gives *none* because he is nothing but a myth. The river of grace is so scant because it does not exist at all. It is visible only to faith. There is no God to elect one to suffering and another to ease, and if there were, he would be a monster, wholly unworthy of our love and worship. One man is shot and another escapes, not because of any Divine election, nor by sheer accident, but according to the working of an immutable law. It is natural law, employed by science, that determines who shall be hit and who shall not. The spot upon which a shell alights is fixed by the combined operation of several natural forces, such as aim, momentum, direction, and strength of the wind; but no one falls or escapes at the whim of an imaginary supernatural Being, God or Devil. You may call these firm laws what you like, but here they are, and they work with the utmost impartiality. Sir William's questions *can* be answered, but the answer to them is fatal to his creed. We leave to the Bishop of London and Principal Whyte the choice between God and the Devil, but, for our part, we vehemently repudiate both in the name of reason and commonsense.

Our present point, however, is the ludicrous inconsistency of at once believing in the absolute and invincible sovereignty of God and in the Powers of Darkness, which are said so frequently to successfully set that sovereignty at naught. All attempts to solve the problem of evil and suffering on the assumption that a just and good God, clothed with omnipotence, exists and reigns, are doomed to ignominious failure. The existence of such a problem is for ever irreconcilable with the existence of such a Deity. God and the War are not even on nodding terms with each other. When we compare the utterances of German pastors, recently quoted in the newspapers, with those of Drs. Clifford, Campbell Morgan, and Horton, on God's attitude in the War, we realize to the full what unqualified nonsense falls from human lips in the name of a wholly discredited Deity, and how completely inconsistent any form of the Christian creed is with the indisputable facts of life.

J. T. LLOYD.

Masters of the Lash.

"Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"

"No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir."—SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*.

ALTHOUGH Byron said that "ridicule is the only weapon the English climate cannot rust," irony has many enemies. Stupid people, who must be literal or nothing, dislike it. Pious ladies, whose simple, direct instincts and emotions prevent them from piercing below the surface, do not care for it. And those other wearers of petticoats, the priests, whose professional instincts prompt them, reprove it with the whole vocabulary of theological abhorrence.

Without it is based on seriousness, said Heine, wit is only a sneeze of the reason. Every great wit in literature was a man of serious aims, and the greatest writers have been the greatest wits, from the days of Aristophanes to those of Anatole France. Some of the best masters of the lash have been among the most earnest soldiers of progress. A splendid example of sustained irony is found in Gibbon's fifteenth chapter of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, sketching the rise of Christianity. We all realize Gibbon's position. He was pretending to give an account of the early Christians from the Christian standpoint, so as to hoodwink the orthodox. This is how he does it:—

But how shall we excuse the supine inattention of the Pagan and philosophic world to those evidences which were presented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reason, but to their senses? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the Church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and, pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alteration in the moral and physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman Empire was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, curiosity, and devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history.

Gibbon is ostensibly censuring the sages for overlooking the Bible miracles. In reality, he is denying their occurrence by slyly pointing out that there is no contemporary record of them from disinterested sources.

The most perfect examples of irony are to be found in Voltaire's *Candide*, the wittiest book in the world. Voltaire did not lop branches, he laid the axe at the root of the tree. Here is a sample taken at random. When *Candide* was to be punished as a deserter,—

He was asked which he would like the best, to be whipped six and thirty times through all the regiment, or to receive at once twelve balls of lead in his brain. He vainly said that human will is free, and that he chose neither the one nor the other. He was forced to make a choice. He determined, in virtue of that gift of God called liberty, to run the gauntlet six and thirty times.

Swift, like Voltaire, was also a master of irony. Voltaire recommended *The Tale of a Tub* as a masterly satire against religion in general, and Thackeray denied Swift's belief in that Christian religion which he had defended ironically in his deadly *Arguments Against Abolishing Christianity*. Perhaps the most terrible example of Swift's peculiar humour is *A Modest Proposal*, which is a quiet suggestion to use up for food the superfluous babes of the poor.

Curiously, the clergy have overlooked the fact that their God was an ironist when he said, upon expelling Adam from the Garden of Eden, "Behold, the man is become as one of us!" Elsewhere in the Bible, Elijah imitates the august example of the Deity, and uses ridicule in his encounter with the priests of Baal. They had cried in vain to their God, but the fire would not come. Elijah turned upon them, and

said, "Where is your god? Why does he not answer? Has he gone on a journey, or what is the matter with him?" This is the language of irony and the deadliest sarcasm. The Christian God was so fond of this special form of humour that, when his son was executed, he permitted a sarcastic inscription on the cross. Biblical humour is, however, but simple and elementary. The real masters of irony are much more polished and delicate.

Heinrich Heine lay for seven years prior to his death, sick and solitary on a "mattress grave," his back bent, his legs paralysed, his hands powerless, his sight failing. "God's satire weighs heavily upon me," he said,—

The great Author of the Universe, the Aristophanes of Heaven, was bent on demonstrating with crushing force to me, the little, so called German Aristophanes, how my weightiest sarcasms are only pitiful attempts at jesting in comparison with His, and how miserably I am beneath Him in humour, in colossal mockery.

The untameable humorist kept his most wonderful jest for the last. "God will forgive me," he said, "it is His trade."

Irony will be found in Fielding's *History of Jonathan Wild the Great*, in the acidulated pages of Flaubert, and under the suave sentences of Renan. It also lurks in the robust humour of Rabelais and in the suggestive pages of Denis Diderot. That kid-glove Freethinker, Matthew Arnold, compared the Trinity to the "three Lord Shaftesburys," and he never showed weariness of the pastime of bishop-baiting. He was continually making fun of the Bishop of Gloucester, and of his alleged desire to do something for the honour of the Godhead. Swinburne has "outheroded Herod." He treats the priests with fearful derision in his "Hymn to Man." He represents them as calling on their god, and he says, "Cry aloud, for the people blaspheme,"—

O, thou, the Lord God of our tyrants, they call thee, their God by thy name.

By thy name that in hell-fire was written, and burned at the point of the sword,

Thou art smitten, thou God; thou art smitten; thy death is upon thee O Lord;

And the love-song of earth as thou diest, resounds through the wind of her wings—

Glory to man in the highest! for man is the master of things.

A far more genial satirist is M. Anatole France, who, in *My Friend's Book* describes Pierre Noziere's childish passion towards saintship with inimitable grace and irony:—

My sole idea was to live the life of an ascetic. In order to lose no time in putting my ideas in operation, I refused to eat my breakfast. My mother, who knew nothing of my new vocation, thought I was ill, and looked at me with an anxiety that it pained me to behold. Nevertheless, I persevered with my fasting, and then, remembering the example of Saint Simeon Stylites, who spent his life on a pillar, I climbed up on to the kitchen-cistern, but it was impossible to live there, for Julie, our cook promptly dislodged me. I next decided to imitate Saint Nicholas, of Patras, who gave all his riches to the poor. My father's study window looked out on to the quay, and from it I proceeded to fling down a dozen coppers or so which had been presented to me because they were new and bright. These I followed up with marbles, humming-tops, whip-tops, and eelskin whip.

"The child is crazy," exclaimed my father, as he shut the window.

I felt angry and mortified at hearing this judgment passed upon me, but I remembered that my father, not being a saint like myself, would not share with me in the glories of the blessed, a reflection from which I derived great consolation.

Some of Mark Twain's best pieces of irony occur in *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, in which he describes the travels of an excursion party through the Holy Land. Here is a characteristic jibe in his most facetious manner:—

The street called straight is straighter than a cork-screw, but not as straight as a rainbow. St. Luke is careful not to commit himself, he does not say it is the street which is straight, but the "street which is called straight." It is a fine piece of irony; it is the only facetious remark in the Bible, I believe.

A delightful piece of irony is displayed in his laughable comment on Adam's tomb:—

There is no question that he is actually buried in the grave, which is pointed out as his. There can be none, because it has never yet been proved that the grave is not the grave in which he is buried.

Thomas Hardy has shown himself a master of irony in the concluding chapter of *Tess*, and in many another place has used it with unerring effect. But the dictionary definition of irony must be altered. It is not enough to say that it is "a mode of speech expressing a sense contrary to that which the speaker intends to convey." It may be true of Biblical irony, or the similar elementary irony of the streets; but it does not define adequately the more complex irony of literature. We much prefer George Meredith's definition:—

If instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him with a semi-caress, by which he shall in his anguish be rendered dubious whether, indeed, anything has hurt him, you are an engine of irony.

This is well said by one of the greatest masters of the lash in the English language. MIMNERMUS.

Religion, Science, and the War.—IV.

(Continued from p. 54.)

The Jews who emerged from the wilderness beyond Jordan were as predatory as any people who ever existed, however august might be the auspices which impelled and guided them. They fastened on the agriculturists of Palestine with a ferocity which the Scriptures rather glory in, the authors, indeed, only regretting the occasional clemency of the political conduct. It is the bare historical truth, indeed, to say that the Jews, judged by their own documents, were also "Mongols in miniature," but lacking the religious toleration that characterized the Asiatic khans.—ANDREW REID, *Master-Clues in World History* (1914), p. 208.

It had been boldly predicted by some of the early Christians that the conversion of the world would lead to the establishment of perpetual peace. In looking back, with our present experience, we are driven to the melancholy conclusion that, instead of diminishing the number of wars, ecclesiastical influence has actually and very seriously increased it. We may look in vain for any period since Constantine, in which the clergy, as a body, exerted themselves to repress the military spirit, or to prevent or abridge a particular war, with an energy at all comparable to that which they displayed in stimulating the fanaticism of the Crusaders, in producing the atrocious massacres of the Albigenses, in embittering the religious contests that followed the Reformation.—LUCY, *History of European Morals* (1902), vol. ii., p. 254.

It is true, says Westermarck, that there are cases of wars being condemned by Popes. "But in such cases," he points out,—

the prohibition was only too often due to the fact that some particular war was disadvantageous to the interests of the Church. And whilst doing comparatively little to discourage wars which did not interfere with her own interests, the Church did all the more to excite war against those who were objects of her hatred.*

Without attempting to give a history of the wars conducted, in the interests of Christianity, against unbelievers and heretics, which would require a large volume filled with repulsive details, we will take the Crusades, or "Holy Wars," as a sample. The Crusades, which derive their name from the cross worn by the Christian warriors, and means literally "the Wars of the Cross," were promoted by the Church in order to rescue the tomb of Christ at Jerusalem from the hands of the infidel Mohammedans. They commenced in the tenth century, and extended to the twelfth, during which time, says Moshier:—

Europe was deprived of more than half of its population, and immense sums of money were exported to foreign countries. A vast derangement of society and a subversion of everything took place in Europe, not to mention the murders, slaughter, and robberies everywhere committed with impunity by these soldiers of

God and Jesus Christ, as they were called, and the new and often very grievous privileges and prerogatives to which these wars gave occasion.*

After several campaigns, accompanied by horrible cruelties and enormous loss of life, the Crusaders at last reached the Holy City, at sight of which they fell on their knees and wept tears of joy. After a procession round Jerusalem, led by barefooted monks carrying crosses, while the multitude marched to the singing of hymns and psalms, an assault was made on the city, which was at length successfully stormed on Good Friday. These pious soldiers of Jesus, says Gibbon,—

indulged themselves three days in a promiscuous massacre, and the infection of the dead bodies produced an epidemical disease. After seventy thousand Moslems had been put to the sword, and the harmless Jews had been burnt in their synagogue, they could still reserve a multitude of captives, whom interest or lassitude persuaded them to spare.†

Raymond d'Argiles, who was an eye-witness, says that under the portico of the mosque of Omar "the blood was knee-deep, and reached the horses' bridles."‡

After the massacre, these warriors of the Cross, says Von Sybel, "with tears of rapture, and in a state of ecstatic rapture, threw themselves down to pray at the Holy Sepulchre, surrounded by heaps of the slain."§ Having paid their devotions, they then resolved to murder the prisoners they held. Mills says:—

The subjugated people were therefore dragged into the public places and slain as victims. Women with children at the breast, girls and boys, all were slaughtered. The squares, the streets, and even the uninhabited places of Jerusalem, again were strewn with the dead bodies of men and women, and the mangled limbs of children. No heart melted into compassion or expanded into benevolence.

Michaud remarks that the contemporary Christian historians describe these frightful scenes with perfect equanimity. Even amid recitals of the most disgusting details they "never allow a single expression of horror or pity to escape them."||

Robertson, the historian, in his *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, says that "six millions of persons assumed the cross, which was the badge that distinguished such as devoted themselves to this holy warfare." And: "During two centuries, Europe seems to have had no object but to recover, or keep possession of, the Holy Land; and through that period vast armies continued to march thither." The same historian also observes that "The only common enterprise in which the European nations ever engaged, and which they all undertook with equal ardour, remains a singular monument of human folly."¶

"Out of this union between war and Christianity," says Westermarck, "was born that curious bastard, Chivalry.....The Church knew how to lay hold of knighthood for her own purposes. The investiture, which was originally of a purely civil nature, became, even before the time of the Crusades, as it were, a sacrament."** The priest delivered the sword into the hand of the candidate for knighthood, with the injunction to "Serve Christ, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"; and after the Crusades, as Westermarck observes, "the union between the profession of arms and the religion of Christ became still more intimate by the institution of the two military orders of monks, the Knights Templars and Knights of St. John of Jerusalem" (p. 353).

The knight's first duty was to defend the Holy Catholic Faith; then he was to defend justice, and all those who were powerless, and suffering under

* Moshier, *Ecclesiastical History* (Murdock's ed., 1848), p. 349.

† Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. lviii.

‡ See the admirable chapter on the Crusades in G. W. Foote's *Crimes of Christianity*, of which we have availed ourselves; p. 191.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 193.

¶ Robertson, *Works*, vol. ii., p. 14.

** Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. i., pp. 352-3.

* Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. i., p. 349.

oppression and injustice; thus:—

In the name of religion and justice he could thus practically wage war almost at will. Though much real oppression was undoubtedly avenged by these soldiers of the Church, the knight seems as a rule to have cared little for the cause or necessity of his doing battle.....The general impression which Froissart gives us in his history is, that the age in which he lived was completely given over to fighting, and cared about nothing else whatever (p. 354).

People take their idea of chivalry and knighthood from the beautiful fictions of Scott and Tennyson, which no more correspond to the truth than Rousseau's "noble savage" does to the real primitive man. As an acute modern writer truly remarks:—

"A gentle knight went pricking o'er a plain," but if it was to the relief of distressed damsels it was because other knights were so wicked, and there is no proof that the good cavaliers were in a majority. So in the impartial eye of science the knight was often only one degree less of a robber and a butcher than the barbarian from the Asiatic steppes. The very "chastity" which was the occasional practice of the order was only the enforced abstemiousness of the prize-fighter training for the ring. In a word, feudalism is a fallacy, at least as viewed generally by the public, who take their impression from Scott's *Talisman* and *Ivanhoe*. *Don Quixote* is as near truth.*

As Westermarck points out, "Previous to the institution of chivalry, there certainly existed much fighting in Christian countries, but knighthood rendered war 'a fashionable accomplishment,' " the all-absorbing passion of the time; "and it was commonly believed," he adds, "that God took no less interest in the battle than did the fighting warriors." †

Compare the picture of the world under the beneficent rule of the Pagan emperors with this picture, drawn by Westermarck, of the Middle Ages—the "Ages of Faith," as they are rightly called—a thousand years after the birth of Christ:—

As a matter of fact, the barons fled to arms upon every quarrel; he who could raise a small force at once made war upon him who had anything to lose. The nations of Europe were subdivided into innumerable subordinate States, which were almost independent, and declared war and treaties with all the vigour and all the ceremonies of powerful nations. Contemporary historians describe the excesses committed in prosecution of these intestine quarrels in such terms as excite astonishment and horror, and great parts of Europe were in consequence reduced to the condition of a desert, which it ceased to be worth while to cultivate (vol. i., pp. 355-6).

And as for the social life of the Middle Ages, the historian Luchaire, a very competent authority, says it may be summarized as follows:—

Society is divided into three classes or castes.....the priests, who are charged with prayer and conducting mankind to salvation; the nobles, on whom devolves the mission of defending the nation by arms against its enemies, and causing order and justice to reign; the people, the peasants and burghers, who by their labour nourish the two upper classes and satisfy all their desires for luxuries as well as necessaries. It was extremely simple. ‡

This was the order believed by all classes to have been divinely appointed by God, and therefore unchangeable. This is the reason, says Luchaire, "why the true middle age—the period which preceded the fourteenth century—did not know of the social question: it was not on principle occupied with improving the moral and material conditions of the common people. It held to the universally accepted dogma of the necessary and divine immutability of society." And these classes—the priests and the nobles—says Luchaire,—

did not only not comprehend the utility of a change, but were even indifferent to the miserable lot of the wretched third class. They were more than indifferent; they despised the peasants and burghers while they exploited them, and their contempt often turned into hostility. Disdain, even disgust, on the part of the proprietor

and seignor for the cultivator and artizan whose work supported him, is one of the most characteristic features of the middle age. To the knight or baron the peasant, serf or free, was only a source of revenue, of income: in time of peace they oppressed him at home as much as they could with imposts and corvées; in time of war, in foreign territories, they pillaged, murdered, burnt, trampled on him, in order to inflict the greatest possible destruction upon the adversary. It was of this that war consisted. The peasant was a creature to exploit at home and destroy abroad, and nothing more (pp. 383-4).

"This is the bold truth," declares Luchaire, in the chronicles of those times:—

Descriptions of pillaging and burning of country and town abound. And there is not a word of pity for the peasants whose house and crops are burned, and who are massacred by hundreds, or carried away with wrists and feet in bonds; for the women tortured by the soldiers, for burning cities, for despoiled merchants, or for the common people of the feudal armies, the worthless prisoners who were mutilated or murdered in cold blood after the battle: all this is normal, is right; it is the natural course of things.

The "contempt of the nobles for the foot-soldiers who were used in the van of the feudal armies shows itself on all occasions.....in action, if they were in the way, the knights unhesitatingly rode over their bodies (pp. 386-7).

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

SAVAGE FAITH AND CIVILIZED SCEPTICISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

The question here is who was asinine:
The poor illiterate or the "learned" divine?

SIR,—I agree with all you say. Yours is the universal and general point of view. But there is another, and for the moment mine, the personal and particular view. I say again the man so questioned and condemned by the Rev. John McNeil *might have been* a quite intelligent Atheist (and not "an ass") *without books*. Reminiscent writers in this journal have referred to the probable prehistoric Freethinker resting on his club, dreaming, awakening, in the shadow of his cave; and how many a "mute inglorious Milton" of later and of our own days? Of course, a Freethinker, such, for instance, as the Editor of this paper, is no "accidental" product. His Freethought comes from the vast quarry of thought, reading, and experience; but at bottom there was always something *original*, and at no time, whether religious or not, was he ever an ass. It is the ass I object to.

Like Æsop's lion, Burns says:—

Sire, I feel

All others scorn, but damn that asses heel!

A mere literary prig, a pedant, or a preacher may scorn the illiterate, honest man, humanist and philosopher, but I am out to value and encourage him. Innocent ignorance is the soil in which religions take root, but it is also, from its very purity and simplicity, the *natal solum* from which the flowers of Freethought spring.

Thought! Freethought! how vast it is! even as one writes, illimitable avenues of discussion open out; but the material *Freethinker* has limits, and we must forbear; and for my obstinate insistence I trust the Editor will not write me down an ass.

A. M.

It seems that "Jeames," the footman, will be obliged to take his place in the ranks of the unexempted when he is of military age. This should cause embarrassment in Bishop's palaces and other poverty-stricken establishments.

A clergyman, over sixty years of age, is helping to make shells in a factory at Tiverton. As the fly said, when hanging on the locomotive wheel, "We go round together!"

"Little Things of Dress" is the title of an article in a daily contemporary. It suggests reference to Adam and Eve and their fig-leaves.

* Andrew Reid, *Master-Clues in World History* (1914), p. 235.

† Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. i., pp. 354-355.

‡ Luchaire, *Social France at the Time of Philip Augustus*, p. 382.

Acid Drops.

We raise our hat to the Rev. Hudson Shaw, Rector of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate. He is a chaplain of the H.A.C., with a son at the Front, and, we believe, a supporter of the Government. The other day a meeting of Mr. Roden Buxton's was broken up by a number of noisy interrupters, to whom Mr. Buxton had made himself obnoxious by his peace advocacy. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, Mr. Shaw, so soon as he could get a hearing, said:—

As rector of this parish and chaplain to the H.A.C., with a son at the Front, I wish to express my regret and sorrow that this meeting has been broken up. I do not know what Mr. Buxton was going to say, but I apprehend that it was perfectly lawful, and for the second time his meeting has been broken up. Something more than his speech is at stake. What is at stake is the liberty of speech in this country. I have twice protested publicly in this place about the breaking up of the meetings, and I hoped that common sense and sanity would have prevailed to-day, and that Mr. Buxton would have been listened to respectfully, though he would probably have been heckled and questioned at the finish.....There will have to be something more than a letter in the Press about this. There will have to be questions in Parliament, and the whole subject ventilated as to whether meetings may be interrupted and spoiled in this way.

This was a very manly action on the part of the rector, and, again, we congratulate him on his attitude. We have protested time after time during the Suffragette agitations against the breaking up of public meetings, and we have protested also when Catholics and Protestants have indulged in the same tactics. We are not concerned in the least what the meeting is, or what it is about. If people do not approve of its objects, let them stay away. But nothing can ever justify people attending a meeting for the express purpose of making its orderly conduct an impossibility.

As Mr. Shaw said, more than Mr. Buxton's speech was at stake. For all we know or care, that speech, if delivered, might not have been worth the making. But he had a perfect right to make it in a meeting of his own convening. What is at stake is the whole principle of freedom of speech. And that is the one thing about which we are seriously concerned. Without that no genuine progress is possible. With that everything is achievable. It is the only instrument that an autocracy fears, as it is the only instrument that guarantees the best government under any conditions. An Act was passed some time ago for the express purpose of dealing with organized disturbances at public meetings, but we are afraid that it will remain a dead letter during war-time. But the matter is a serious one, and we hope that more people of influence will be found to publicly protest against this light-hearted denial of free speech.

The whirligig of time brings in its revenges. Mr. George R. Sims, the veteran journalist and playwright, says his grandfather was a member of the Sandemanians, a very strict sect which regarded Sunday newspapers and theatres as abominations. Mr. Sims has written for a Sunday paper for very many years, and his name is a household word in theatreland. It is a good thing for us that Mr. Sims left grandfather's religion behind.

The oft-repeated statement by the clergy at home that religion is encouraged by the War, is constantly being challenged by facts. Army-Chaplain Bruce-Taylor, speaking at Montroal after returning from France, said the soldiers sang all sorts of rhymes, generally set to hymn-tunes. One he quoted: "Wash me in the water that they washed the little daughter; And I'll be whiter than the whitewash on the wall," which, he added, was sung to a "Moody and Sankey" tune. Quite a pretty piece of profanity.

Commenting on an address by Dr. Frank Ballard to the Romford Men's Meeting, the *Romford Recorder* says:—

Dr. Ballard, of course, had an easy task in showing, as he did on Sunday afternoon, and incidentally on Monday night, that Europe is in its present agony because German leaders of thought and action have for long years now lived with practically closed Bibles, and have influenced the people generally to go the same dark way.

Naturally an easy task before such an audience of profound students of German leaders of thought and action.

At the same meeting Dr. Ballard told his hearers, "You can never get the best for nothing." A doubtful consolation to an audience which had not been charged for admission.

Bishop Deivachter, Assistant-Bishop to Cardinal Mercier, preached in Flemish, French, and English to Belgian refugees at Newport (Mon.), recently. May we call it a triple event?

The Pope's brother is dead. He was a rural postman, earning about £16 a year. Times have changed for Popes' relations since the days of the Borgias.

Christians are polite to Freethinkers when they have been dead about a century. Probably they think that is a safe distance. In a Preface to a new edition of Rousseau's works, containing much new matter, Professor Vaughan remarks, "If a single new letter of Cicero were brought to light the discovery would be proclaimed in triumph upon the housetops. Twenty-five new pages by Rousseau will probably go unnoticed. What comparison is there between the two men in genius or importance?" Yet contemporary Christians were very bitter in their animosity to Rousseau. Dr. Johnson, not by any means a bad-hearted man, said he would sooner sign a sentence for Rousseau's transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years.

Egotism and selfishness are always present with religion, even while it apes the language of unselfishness. Press the religionist hard enough, and he invariably falls back upon the question, "What am I going to get out of it?" And if the possibility of personal gain, here or hereafter, is not evident, he will have none of it. The Rev. R. J. Campbell, who probably finds—for the moment—general journalism as profitable as pulpit preaching, says that—

even supposing you could get a perfected form of human society on this earth in some remote age to come—which the very conditions of fleshly existence forbid—it would not be worth a single tear to-day. The humblest private who lays down his life on the battlefield for us is worth more than that in himself alone. And he dies for more than that, even if to his own thought he only dies for England the England that is to be. He dies for an immortal good, a good in which he, with all the race—past, present, and to come—will be included and fulfilled at "the consummation of all things."

Fortunately, the social sense is a little healthier in most people than it appears to be in Mr. Campbell, and they are content to "do their bit," feeling satisfied that the world will be the better for their efforts whether they will enjoy the fruits of their labour or not. But it is an indication of how much the ascetic pose of Mr. Campbell is worth. His conduct takes the shape of an investment—for himself. And it is none the less an investment because the dividend warrant is only payable in the next world.

The congregation at Lymington Parish Church, Hants, was alarmed on a recent Sunday to see flames in the pulpit, from which the vicar was preaching. The outbreak was caused by the fusing of the electric light wires. Had this occurred on a Secularist platform, there would have been a pious moral.

"Should the Clergy Enlist"? is a favourite question in the newspapers just now. In face of their solicitude on behalf of the Church Lads' Brigades, and other similar institutions, many people will respond in the affirmative. There are about 50,000 clergymen in the country, many of whom are of military age, and only a few are serving as chaplains and non-combatants.

Canon Horsley says, "I would rather be a cheesemite than the Koh-i-noor." This is a modest request. The little Christian in the hymn wanted to be an angel.

Even to the Archbishop of Canterbury the War is a disturbing and perplexing as well as a ghastly strife, and he does not know how to reconcile it with the infinite goodness and love of the reigning Christ. Is *this* the fruit of the reign of love? His Grace is not blind to the intrinsic absurdity of the Christian position, but this how he seeks to comfort himself and others: "He [Christ] is here among us; he knows; behind the sorrow and disorder he reigns." "Behind the sorrow and disorder he reigns"; but what on earth is the use of his reigning there? What is the good of having a Prince of Peace who lets the world wallow in an ocean of innocent blood?

In God's Army is the alluring title of a volume by a Jesuit father. It does not refer to the numerous present-day armies which claim the title, but to the Roman Catholic Church.

Canon Masterman wishes that public-schoolboys should be introduced to Russian literature, and would encourage the

reading of leading articles from the French journals. Dear, dear! The lads might get acquainted with Tolstoi, Voltaire, and Anatole France, whose works are not usually found in school libraries.

Canon Scott Holland says that Christ "will go out in power to force the world to become his." The wonder of wonders is that, if he can do it, he hasn't done it long ago. He has had two thousand years at his disposal, and yet the world is less his to-day than it was a hundred years ago.

According to the *Daily News* the city of Jerusalem is Germanized, and in the Via Dolorosa itself the Teuton traffics. There is one consolation. The German trader will be unable "to go one better" in the faked-relic line than his Oriental predecessors.

The clerical mind is a fearful and wonderful thing. Here is Canon Ottley, addressing a congregation of men, and saying that people feared the Kaiser more than God, and "forgot that God could blow them all to pieces." It is high time that the pews resented such nonsense from the pulpit.

The Ford Pacifists have gone home, accompanied by the derision of the majority of the newspapers. "Blessed are the peacemakers"!

Parsons should enlist, said a Lancashire speaker recently. The clergy are not having any. Anxious to show other people the way to heaven, they are not prepared to show the way to Berlin.

By degrees, the truth as to the attitude of the soldiers at the Front to religion is coming out. In the *Church Times* for January 14 there is a paragraph, entitled "A Corrective," in which the rosy account of the religious zeal displayed in the Trenches is flatly contradicted. The soldiers, we are told by one who knows them well, go through the service in church with great earnestness, but ten minutes afterwards they forget it. The Vicar of St. James', Walthamstow, in whose parish magazine many letters from the Front have appeared, is of opinion that "we must not look forward to any great revival of religion in England after the War." A Christian soldier, who has just been killed, wrote home a few days before, saying: "Will religion at home be the gainer? I fear not. I am sorry to say this, yet I am sure it is not wise to be buoyed up with false hopes." What of the glowing testimony of the Bishop of London and others now? How many contradictory things are said and done for the glory of God!

In a recent issue of the *Church Times* the first leading article is entitled "The Failure of Anglicanism." Poor old Church of England! Her archbishops and bishops are declared to be cursed with "dryness and lack of vision." They lack "the supreme quality of captivating the imagination," with the result that "people do not find the Church of England interesting." "The Church of England makes no appeal to the imagination." Attention is called to "the terrifying fact" that the "dignified clergy" do not recognize the failure of Anglicanism to inspire the conduct or to influence the soul of the average man.

That contention of the *Church Times* is doubtless true, but it required considerable courage to give such an emphatic and uncompromising expression to it. What is so startlingly true of the Church of England, however, is as obviously true of all other Churches. In reality, it is religion itself that is so uninteresting; it is religion that is failing to captivate the imagination; and this is due to the fact that people are slowly but steadily outgrowing religion. They are leaving it behind because it is being borne in upon them at last that it has completely failed to fulfil all its high-sounding promises; or, in other words, that it is wholly false, in root and branch, and deserving only of extinction.

The Vicar of St. Peter-le-Poer writes to the *Church Times*, complaining of the scant provision made by the Army authorities for religious ministrations. He asks, "What must the Army think of England's belief in God if it treats him in this way in our great camps?" We do not imagine that the scarcity of chaplains in the camps troubles anyone except the parsons who are wishful of being appointed. At any rate, we have not observed any complaints from the men themselves.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron is no longer "slaying infidels," but is now speaking on the platform of the Anti-German Union.

Killing Germans with his mouth ought to be a congenial occupation.

Men of over fifty years of age are being called to the Colours in Austria, say the newspapers. The Bible patriarchs would hardly be immune if they were living to-day in that country.

A war-correspondent says "at last the men in the Great War have got down to using clubs—just ordinary clubs—for braining purposes." "His tender mercy is over all his works."

The *Congregational Year Book* for 1916 reports a decline of 1,645 in membership, and 10,823 in Sunday-school scholars. The *Christian World* points out that only a small proportion of this decline, if any, can be attributed to the War. We do not see how any one can raise that plea. The decline in Church membership—not by any means limited to the Congregational Church—has been going on for years. The causes for this have nothing to do—nothing that is vital—with bad preaching or wrong preaching, or with any of the excuses put forward for this decline. It is part of the inevitable pressure of civilization of inherited religious beliefs. And nothing save a reversal of the forces that make for civilization can avert this. If the present War went on long enough to wreck civilization, then over a ruined and decivilized Europe religion might once more rule with its old force. But nothing short of this will ever arrest the steady process of religious disintegration.

The other day, the Bishop of Chelmsford frankly admitted that there is a great dearth of conversions in the Church at present. People do not become Christians now at the rate they used to do not so very long ago. Why? The Bishop puts the blame upon poor, unprofitable preaching. Evangelicals no longer preach the old Evangel with the power their fathers did. We contend, on the contrary, that the blame, if blame there be, rests not upon the preachers, but upon the Gospel itself. People are gradually finding out that it is a lying Gospel, and that to believe it is an act of moral degradation, as well as a direct insult to the reason.

Bibles, a prayer-book, electric fittings, tobacco, oysters, coats, and other articles were found in the house of a prisoner charged at Tower Bridge with stealing goods from a railway truck. The man will probably have leisure to read the Bible in the privacy of a little room before long.

"Those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder," is a familiar axiom with Christians. It does not find favour with all, for 53 decrees were made absolute in the Divorce Court on one day, recently, by Mr. Justice Bargarve Deane.

English cookery is largely spoiled by ignorance, says H.R.H. Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll. Yet the worst English cookery is better than that which satisfied the prophet Ezekiel.

Archdeacon Holmes assures us that God is a being "who says what he means and means what he says." Of course, that is true of every person who deserves to be taken seriously and trusted; but when did God say anything whatever, true or false? This question must take precedence of all others; and no man lives who has the authority of knowledge for answering it in the affirmative. Thousands of people have spoken and do speak in God's name, and foolish enough, in all conscience, have many of those utterances been and are. God himself has never yet addressed a single word to his alleged human family. His silence is proverbial; and he is as inactive as he is silent.

The Archdeacon's God is really the most egregiously fantastic individual of whom we have ever heard. We had come to think that he had forgotten us, because he apparently allowed us to go our own way unchecked; but just to remind us that we were mistaken he sent the War, which is but his pin-prick, signifying, "I am here after all, you see"! Since the War came, Dr. Holmes finds that belief in God is easier than ever, and he goes further and declares that the attribute of God which the War brings out most clearly is his Fatherhood. He loves us so much that, to convince us of the fact, he does not hesitate to put millions of us to the most cruel death conceivable! The Archdeacon's reason and conscience are evidently fast asleep. If God existed, he would die of very shame as he contemplated such a horrible caricature of himself!

To Correspondents.

MR. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 6, Abertillery; February, 13, Liverpool; February 27, Leicester; March 5, Portsmouth.

H. L. F.—Thanks for good wishes.

M. BURGESS.—We note you are following with great pleasure Tristram's "Letters." Also that you hope they will be continued. So do we, and Tristram is hereby requested to continue until his daughter, at present aged four, is, say, fourteen.

M. PANKHURST.—Pleased to know you are doing your best to gain that thousand new readers.

A. SABINE.—Save us from the very superior person who mistakes familiarity with a few names for an understanding of problems that press for solution.

H. C. WHITE.—We quite intend advertising the *Freethinker* so soon as funds are available for that purpose. Your other suggestions are quite excellent, and will be borne in mind for practice when possible. Your interest in the movement is most gratifying.

"INQUIRING CHRISTIAN."—You do not seem to realize that it is not always possible to answer questions intelligently in a paragraph, and to answer otherwise is to confuse—not to enlighten. We can only reply that it does not matter to us—and ought not to matter to others—whether humanity will become *ultimately* extinct or not. The fact that every human being dies does not furnish a reason for neglect while people are alive, or release us from the obligations of doing what we can to make ourselves and other people happy. And no one is "working in vain," so long as what they do can make a single human being better or happier. If your friend cannot realize this, we are afraid that his selfishness must be so ingrained as to be proof against any further argument.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for weekly batch of cuttings.

"A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST" writes that nothing we can do will injure "true Christianity," but that all we are doing is only purging Christianity of its dross. Well, we hope that he will aid us in our work by securing as many new subscribers as possible.

T. TURNBULL (Glasgow).—It is cheering to learn from such staunch Freethinkers that you are all delighted with the new conducting of this journal. The conductor, however, is hardly new to the work. Glad you are getting new readers. As you say, if we can get people to read it once, they will be like Oliver Twist.

A. G. LYE.—We are glad to say that the matter is now quite settled.

A. M.—Afraid that a discussion of that aspect of the War would be a little outside our sphere—at least in the pages of the *Freethinker*.

J. HOLDEN.—You have analysed the case remarkably well, but we are afraid little notice will be taken of your protest.

J. SMITH.—We should certainly like to see Freethinkers more active in your district. Perhaps you can rouse some of them into activity.

S. CONWAY.—You will see that a hall has now been secured for February 13 for Mr. Cohen's lectures.

H. LOWE.—We are not at all surprised to learn that your experience at the Dardanelles has profoundly modified your opinions on religion. You have our deepest sympathy in your sufferings, and we have no doubt that you will bear them with all courage.

"KEPLER," whose help towards increasing our circulation takes the very practical form of sending postal order for the paper to be sent to two new addresses for three months, writes:—"Your claim that when you get a new reader you keep him is substantiated in my case. When I first was induced to read a copy of your publication (some two years ago), it was with a decided prejudice against it and most that it stood for. A fuller acquaintance with it has quite removed the prejudice, and I now consider it one of, if not *quite*, the sanest publication issued weekly."

C. R. P. writes that his quotations were from the Volume published in Trubner's Oriental Series, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 10s. 6d. net, Persian text. 5s. English text only. The author is E. H. Whinfield.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges 3s. 8d. from R. T. W.

J. W. LEIPER.—Received too late for this issue. Will appear next week.

R. T. W.—We do not quite understand the gist of your inquiry. The only persons present at Mr. Foote's death were the members of his family and a nurse. His death was of the most peaceful description, and quite unaccompanied by expressions of any kind concerning religion.

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.

G. W. Foote Memorial Fund.

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

THIS Memorial Fund is intended as an expression of respect and admiration towards the dead, and as a discharge of a duty towards the living. No man has deserved better of Freethinkers than our late leader, G. W. Foote, and in no way can the gratitude of Freethinkers be better expressed than in making provision for his widow and unmarried daughter. When the Fund is completed it will be either invested, or arranged in the form of a Trust, for the benefit of Mrs. Foote. The ultimate form it may take will be made public in due course, and the accounts properly audited by an incorporated accountant.

It is hoped to close the Fund at as early a date as is possible.

Cheques should be made payable to the "G. W. Foote Memorial Fund," and crossed "London City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch." All communications should be addressed to "Editor," *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

"The Roll of Honour."—Eighth List.

Previously acknowledged, £326 16s. 0d.—Mr. and Mrs. W. Hopper, £5 5s.; J. Peacock, £1 1s.; J. Richardson, 2s. 6d.; J. Smith, 1s.; A. Firth, 5s.; G. W., 2s. 6d.; J. Davie, £2; J. Thackray, 2s.; Miss E. William, 5s.; J. Raiton, 2s. 6d.; H. Aunsell, 1s.; L. R. William, 1s.; W. P. Murray, 5s.; E. A. Impey, 2s.; W. B. Kernot, 10s. Port Sunlight Saints.—J. Duff, 1s.; J. Baxter, 2s.; W. Davies, 1s.; J. Sanford, 6s.; F. Lucas, 10s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*.—Mr. and Mrs. Capon, 5s.; G. G., 2s. 6d.; Miss H. Baker, 3s.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen's meeting at South Shields, we are glad to say, was a complete success. The Victoria Assembly Hall was quite filled, with many standing, and no speaker could have wished for a more appreciative audience. There were a large number of visitors from the surrounding district, and there was a general desire that more meetings should be arranged in the near future. We hope this will be the case, and also that other places on Tyneside will take courage from South Shields' example. The district is a populous one, and the opportunities for work many. Next week (Feb. 6) Mr. Cohen lectures at Abertillery, Mon. There is no fear concerning good meetings there.

Mr. J. Sumner, a very old friend of the movement, writes us:—

Allow me in the first month of the opening year of your occupancy of the editorial chair to express my very high appreciation of the efforts you are making on behalf of "the Cause," and to wish you, not an easy time, for I know that that will not be possible, but, at any rate, a comparative freedom from all pressing anxieties, and every possible success.

We never looked for an *easy* time in conducting a Freethought journal, but appreciation of one's efforts makes the burden lighter. One does not, of course, write for appreciation, but it is pleasant when it arrives. By the way, the "opening year" of Mr. Cohen's editorship is only technically correct. He has been virtually the editor for a much longer period.

We cannot at present indulge in the luxury of general advertising, but we are doing what we can. And one thing we have had done is the printing of a large number of leaflets advertising the *Freethinker*, a copy of which we publish in another column. These are of a convenient size

for slipping into envelopes, leaving in train or tram, placing on a newsagent's counter, and being judiciously distributed in various other ways. Our Business Manager will be glad to send on a supply to any of our readers who are willing to assist in their distribution. We believe this can be made a very effective form of advertisement; and by hook or by crook we mean to get that thousand extra readers before the year is out.

For the present our chief anxiety centres in the rise and scarcity of paper. It is impossible to secure more than a two months' supply in advance, and even that is promised at an advanced price. The increase on pre-war prices now represents—so far as we are concerned—an advance of no less than four shillings and a penny per ream. This is, of course, a very serious matter for all papers. Newspapers generally are discussing the advisability of decreasing the size and increasing the price of papers. We are very loth to do either of these things, but a third course remains, that of printing—for the time being—on a cheaper paper. That we shall only do as a last resource, but it can only reduce a small part of the cost, and we intend to keep things as they are as long as is possible. It is a trying situation, from every point of view.

Had it not been for this increased cost our improved circulation would have placed us within right of making the *Freethinker* pay its way. As it is, all the benefits—and more—accruing from larger sales are being swallowed by paper merchants and others. But we are not disheartened. Our friends are working well all over the country, and that is easing the situation. We, and they, must just keep on pegging away. It is the most trying time the *Freethinker* has ever experienced, and the fact of our circulation having increased—in spite of the drain of men entering the Army and leaving England, promises well for the day when the War ends. And we shall win through.

We are glad to say that a hall has been secured for Mr. Cohen's lectures in Liverpool on February 13. The Picton Hall was not available, as it is being used for religious services. The place of meeting is the Marlborough Hall, Hardman Street. The hall is very well situated, if our recollection is not at fault, and easy of access from all parts of Liverpool. As the main purpose of Mr. Cohen's visit is to revive the propaganda in Liverpool, a preliminary meeting will be held shortly, so that all the supporters of the movement in Liverpool may combine for this purpose. Good meetings may nearly always be obtained in Liverpool, and it is a pity to see so favourable a field for work left untilled.

Mr. Harry Snell lectures at the Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New Road to-day (Jan. 30), at 7 o'clock. His subject is "G. W. Foote and English Freethought." We have no doubt that many Freethinkers will be sufficiently interested in the subject to attend.

So much has been written about the late Mr. Foote that it is curious that no mention has been made of the earlier "infidel Foote," as Boswell calls Sam Foote, the well-known actor of the eighteenth century. It is not improbable that they belong to the same family, for both were West Countrymen. Sam Foote was a playwright of considerable reputation, and his *Table Talk* is one of the most readable books of its kind.

"Sapper," who has just returned wounded from the Front, says, in reply to those who write of the increase of religion amongst the soldiers:—

It was my experience that, instead of the War bringing religion home to the soldier, quite a different process has taken place. Men of education and intelligence, who in civil life had glided along in the current of religion, being removed from the influence of their own set, with each day bringing forth fresh evidence of a ghastly and dreadful nature against the idea of benevolent design behind the scheme of things, find their religion falling away.

We can hardly conceive any other effect of the War on educated and thoughtful people.

The New York *Truthseeker* has laid another clerical pirate by the heels. And again, as in the case of Billy Sunday, the pirate has been robbing Ingersoll. This time it is the Rev. Dr. Peters who publishes as his own, column after column of matter lifted from Ingersoll's essays. As the *Truthseeker* points out, these productions are intended for circulation amongst the orthodox, and these do not read Freethought works, and so are safe against discovery of the imposition. But Freethinkers do read religious writings. And that is where the trouble arises. We congratulate the *Truthseeker* on its alertness.

A Freethinker on Ireland.

IF my memory does not betray me, it was Mr. Wm. Archer who once made a suggestion which, if carried out, would save both the amateur and the student of English letters a lot of unnecessary trouble and irritation. It was this: that every literary critic should preface his various volumes with a brief statement giving precise and intelligent details regarding his age, condition of life, education and temperament, his religious, political, philosophical, and artistic bias, and the different kinds of work attempted and achieved. That information of this nature would be invaluable, is obvious to anyone of average intelligence who cares to look closely into the matter. In the light of such facts there would be no cause for wonderment at, let me say, Andrew Lang's splenetic antipathy to Zola and realistic fiction in general, or his incomprehensible admiration for the thick-fingered, coarse-grained romanticism of Mr. Rider Haggard. And Mr. Saintsbury's incapability to do even the commonest justice to the critical work of a profound, original writer like James Thomson (B. V.), while overpraising the work of George Brimley, a commonplace but safe critic, would be seen in the light of his conservatism in politics and religion. All these aberrations of the literary judgment would be explained in terms of the critic's temperament and education. But it is evident that the intrinsic value of such biographical information would not be confined merely to the critic of literature. It would be useful in the case of any writer whose work we wished to apprise. St. Beuve and Georg Brandes built up their admirably complete critical methods on just such a foundation.

Now, my presumption is, that certain biographical details may help the ingenious reader to understand rightly the various qualities of a book (*Ireland: Vital Hour*, Stanley Paul) on the evergreen subject of Ireland by a brilliant and versatile Freethinker, Dr. Arthur Lynch. In the absence of these explanatory facts, the book would not be so readily comprehensible and might even be quite misjudged. Mr. Lynch, I may mention, supplies us with some of the facts in a chapter of autobiography. The most notable factor in his career as man of letters, politician, philosopher, and mathematician, is a rich supply of mental energy, but this energy is of a spasmodic kind, and is not always completely under control of the brain. He was educated at Melbourne (his father, an Irishman from Galway, had gone out to Australia in 1854) and at Berlin. Coming to England, he began his literary career with an attempt to lay down the principles of scientific criticism. *Modern Authors: A Review and a Forecast* (1891), just misses its chance of arresting the attention of good readers by its inartistic jerkiness and spasmodic over-emphasis. And yet his critical method was sufficiently original to attract the attention of so good a judge as Mr. J. M. Robertson. The following year he published a chaotic and long-winded novel, mainly auto-biographical in subject, and in which the few fine passages are hidden in a waste of arid description. The shaping and selective faculty had no part in it. About the same time, and later, he tried his hand at verse, but his genuine admiration for Keats could not keep him from the beaten path of mediocrity. Other quick changes brought him into politics, into the Boer War as an active supporter of England's enemy, and finally into Parliament as Nationalist member for West Clare. Lately he has been giving his restless energies to a new psychological method, and a *roman philosophique*, presumably written in French. This sort of intellectual versatility is all the more imposing when the reader has not enough knowledge to estimate at something like its true value the writer's literary and philosophic output. The fact is, that Mr. Lynch spread his energies too much. Concentration on one or two subjects would have given him an assured place in English letters. But it would seem that he is deficient in staying power.

His new book on Ireland has the good qualities and defects of his other books. It is not unfair to describe it as a collection of loosely connected essays. There is no reason why it should not have been a carefully planned and well thought out study of an ever important subject. The Preface discovers for us his ideal, which is to be satisfied with nothing less than the truth. It is a laudable ambition. A masculine book on Ireland is what he wants to write—one which will not hesitate to probe and test. He has no intention of drenching his subject in the strifes and rancours of bygone days, neither will he sing dirges, nor weep over failures, deaths, and defeats. His state of mind shall be cheerful; or, at any rate, serene. He begins with a chapter on Irish history in this spirit of ample serenity. He notes that Ireland is one of the most assimilative of countries. "The men of Belfast," he says, "may be as loyal as you please—of somewhat disconcerting loyalty sometimes—but they are as Irish as Parnell or John Dillon.....A short time is sufficient to convert a good stranger, whether he descend from Italian Princes or Lincolnshire Yeomen, into something more Irish than the Irish themselves." This absorption explains the secret bond, the freemasonry, between Irishmen. He runs a rapid course through Irish history from the defeat of the Danes at Clontarf to the present crisis. Cromwell, he tells us, did not understand the Irish, yet his intentions were good. His great remedy was coercion. He issued orders that no quarters should be given to the "wicked and bloody rebels of the Irish nation," that some of the milder malcontents should be transported to Barbados, that the rest should be compelled to work—but not near to garrisons—that the property of the Nationalists should be confiscated, that there should be planted in the soil "Godly, sober Christians." He thought by these means to make loyal citizens, and was grieved that his methods met with no success. The Roman Catholic Church, we are not surprised to find, has always been on the side of reaction, on the side of England in any Irish dispute or struggle. On the other hand, Grattan's Parliament, which was drawn from the Protestant class, was at once incompetent and venal. When he comes to modern times Mr. Lynch has some vivid sketches of great Irishmen. He has a high opinion of Michael Davitt, and praises in Mr. John Redmond his Parliamentary qualities of patience and resourcefulness.

The present day conditions of the country are discussed in Chapter III., and a good deal of information is afforded us on English rule in Ireland. It would appear to be a system of over-governance. As in India, "an army of functionaries living upon, and crushing down, the man who is the type and strength of the nation." The average educated Englishman has no idea how Ireland is really governed. "I remember once," says Mr. Lynch, "hearing Mr. Birrell in the House of Commons debating an Irish question of some importance. At a certain moment he observed that nearly all the Liberal Members, as well as the Tory side of the House, had departed. Not even the lively play of the Chief Secretary's humour had been sufficient to detain them. 'Look there,' he exclaimed, 'how is it possible for such people ever to know anything of Ireland. Their ignorance is excusable only because it seems to be incurable.'" Mr. Lynch asks us to survey the whole matter on broad lines and from a detached point of view, and to say if there is not a possibility of mutual help, mutual endeavour, and mutual trust. Other interesting chapters deal with "Sinn Fein," "The Irish in America," and "The Priest in Politics." Mr. Lynch would like to see eliminated from politics the undue influence of Roman Catholic, Anglo-Irish, and Nonconformist clergy. The chapter on Parliament is not an organic part of the book. It is interesting as an attack on the preposterous Party System as it exists to-day, which expects an intelligent and self-respecting human being to rejoice at becoming a mere voting machine. Industrial development and education inspire the solidest chapters in the book, both being illustrated in an appendix by

tables and maps. Modern Irish literature is discussed at some length, but in a somewhat reach-me-down manner—the manner of the critical pundit. Synge is cautiously praised; too cautiously, I think, when I recall the qualities of his incomparable *Playboy* and *The Well of the Saints*. Mr. Yeats is patted on the back for encouraging Irish drama, and then sent packing presumably because his poetry has not the qualities of Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Mr. Lynch's dislike of Mr. Yeats' poems is due to a temperamental antipathy to mysticism in art as in philosophy. I find no mention of the raciest of modern Irish writers, Mr. George Moore, and this omission may be taken as the measure of the writer's artistic culture, especially when it is connected with the reference to Whistler and Brouncker as famous painters, which is something like bracketing Meredith and Georges Ohnet as great novelists.

The only serious defect in the Irishman's intellectual equipment is, in Mr. Lynch's opinion, his strange lack of interest in natural science. The remedy, we are assured, must be found in a new and different system of education, and it is imperative that education should be freed from all clerical control. The Roman Catholic Church has been always the avowed enemy of natural science, and, rightly, from her point of view, because a contact with natural science leads to Freethought; and with lay teachers in the schools you might, as an influential public man said to Mr. Lynch, have algebra taught by a Freethinker who, while instructing his pupils in the solution of quadratic equations, might drop a word or two of the poison of doubt in their ears, and so unsettle their faith for ever. A very short chapter deals with the theory of Ulster, and an *envoi* presents in bare outline twelve provisions for the remodelling of the political and social life of the country. In fine, Mr. Lynch's book is pretty certain to give much pleasure to those who enjoy easy reading, while the student of sociology will welcome it in spite of his rhetorical surplusage and discursiveness. It has warmth and imaginative qualities somewhat rare in this kind of book.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

The Gospel of Mark.—III.

(Continued from p. 61.)

BEFORE proceeding further, it becomes necessary to notice some facts relating to the Nazarenes. There can be no doubt, in the first place, that the Christian religion took its rise amongst the Jews, and that its first believers were Jews. This fact is admitted by all critics. In the next place, the name by which these primitive Jewish Christians were known was "the sect of the Nazarenes"—as stated in Acts xxiv. 5. This is one of the very few historical facts recorded in the Book of the Acts, and one not dependent upon the accuracy or veracity of Luke. It is a circumstance that would be known to all Christians of any standing in the Church in Luke's day. We are told in the same book (xi. 26) that these believers were first called "Christians" at Antioch—which may perhaps be true—but the new name was applied by Gentile Christians to themselves, and at a very much later period than that implied in the Acts. The Jewish believers were known from first to last—down to the fourth century A.D.—as Nazarenes, though in the first half of the second century those of the sect who remained faithful to the Mosaic ritual received the name of "Ebionites" (from *ebion* poor).

Some Christian writers assert that the Nazarenes were a sect of Jewish heretics that arose after the appearance of the canonical Gospels. This is an error: "the sect of the Nazarenes" was the first society of Christians; but after the appearance of the canonical Gospels these first Jewish believers were regarded by the Gentiles as heretics, as we see from Irenæus in his work on "Heresies."

An important fact in connection with the Gospel Jesus here comes in. It is that that Saviour is named

in the Gospels and the Acts "Jesus the Nazarene"—a title mistranslated "Jesus of Nazareth," and left unamended in the Revised Version. The question then arises: Was Jesus a member of the sect when he first appeared? or did his Essene followers give themselves that appellation to glorify his name? To this the reply must be that Jesus was a member of the sect, and probably one of some authority in it. He could not have been called "Jesus the Nazarene" on account of being a native of Nazareth; for there was no place of that name in Palestine. No such city or village is named in the Old Testament, in the Jewish Apocrypha, in the Talmud, in the works of Josephus, nor in any Jewish literature known. The last-named historian in his *Wars in Galilee* and in his *Life* goes again and again over the ground where this city is supposed to be located, without ever once coming across it. The land on the western shore of the "Sea of Galilee" was named *Gen-nesareth*, and the proper name of that "sea" was *Lake Gen-nesareth*; but there was no city or village named Nazareth. There can thus be no doubt whatever that the name *Jesus the Nazarene* was employed in the same sense as that of *John the Essene*, who is mentioned by Josephus as a general in the Jewish war. Our orthodox translators, revisers, and scholars have been trying to hide the fact that the Gospel Jesus was merely a member of an already existing sect, and that his so-called apostles and converts were also members of that sect. Assuming the Epistle to the Galatians to be authentic, the James, John, and Cephas mentioned in it would be simply elders of the sect, the society having come into existence some years before Jesus came to be regarded as a prophet. Moreover, the Nazarenes, being Jews, conformed to all the Mosaic ritual except animal sacrifice.

Coming now to the Gospels, it was held until very recently that these had all emanated from the first generation of Jewish believers. Matthew and John were said to be apostles, Mark a Jewish colleague of an apostle, and Luke a Gentile fellow-labourer of Paul. It was further said that the first Gospel composed was that of Matthew, which was written in Hebrew (*i.e.*, Aramaic), and some years later translated into Greek—the other three Gospels being originally written in the last-named tongue. Now, when we come to look into the question, we find that there is some small substratum of fact in the old view, at least as regards the First Gospel. The Nazarenes, who were the first Christian believers, had a Gospel of their own, written in Aramaic, which Gentile Christians called "the Gospel according to the Hebrews." This Nazarene Gospel contained no Virgin Birth story: it commenced, like the canonical *Mark*, with the preaching of the Baptist. From all we know of it, it would appear to have contained all the common Synoptic narratives, besides others of a more Jewish character, and to have been ascribed to Matthew as the original composer.

Reverting now to Papias, that worthy bishop is reported as saying:—

Matthew wrote the sayings [Logia] in the Hebrew tongue, and every one translated them as best he could.

Nearly half a century later Irenæus, in his work on "Heresies," said:—

Her. iii. 1.—Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect.

Her. i. 26.—Those who are called Ebionites.....use the Gospel of Matthew only.....and repudiate the apostle Paul, maintaining that he was an apostate from the law.....they practise circumcision, and observe those customs enjoined by the law of Moses.

Speaking of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, Eusebius says (*Ecol. Hist.* iii. 27):—

They cherished low and mean opinions of Christ. For they considered him a plain and common man, justified only by his exalted virtue, and that he was born by natural generation.....They use only the Gospel according to the Hebrews, esteeming the others as of but little value. They also observe the Sabbath and other rites of the Jews.

Epiphanius, a little later, says in his work on Heresies (xxx. 13):—

The Ebionites have a Gospel called the *Gospel according to Matthew*, not entire and perfectly complete, but falsified and mutilated, which they call the Hebrew Gospel.

This writer then quotes the opening paragraph—of John baptizing in the Jordan, and of the baptism of Jesus. Again, Jerome, who lived about the same period, says in his commentary on Matt. xii. 13:—

In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which I lately translated from the Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by very many *the original Gospel of Matthew*, the man with the withered hand is described as a mason, who sought the help of the Lord, etc.

Now, I have not the smallest doubt whatever that the Gospel of the Nazarenes, written in the language of Palestine, was the first evangel to see the light of day. No one, save the members of that sect, really knew anything about Jesus, or would be likely to write narratives respecting him. Paul knew nothing except what he may have learnt from Cephas (Gal. i. 18), and apparently had never heard of the sayings attributed to him. The four verses, 1 Cor. xi. 23—26, are evidently an interpolation. Had Paul been acquainted with the Gospel sayings, he could not well have written long letters of counsel, instruction, and doctrine to the various churches without quoting or referring to some of them. Instead of telling the church at Rome, for instance, to "mark them which are causing occasions of stumbling *contrary to the teaching which ye learned*," he would doubtless have said, "contrary to the teaching of the Lord Jesus," and would have quoted words bearing upon the point. Clement of Rome, writing to the church at Corinth under similar circumstances says—"Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said: 'Woe to that man. It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should cast a stumbling block before one of my elect.'" Similarly, Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians says: "Remember what the Lord said, teaching, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged,'" etc. In the Pauline Epistles the sayings of Jesus are conspicuous by their absence. Clearly, neither Paul nor any of his converts, nor later Pauline teachers, could have written an account of the sayings and doings of Jesus—no one could, in fact, do so, save members of the sect to which that Saviour belonged. We are thus brought back to the Nazarene Aramaic Gospel—which was undoubtedly the first composed.

Next, we know that as early as two centuries B.C. there were large numbers of Jews in Egypt whose ordinary speech was the Greek in which the four Gospels were written—a fact which accounts for the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. We know, further, that the main body of the Essenes, who lived in the country east of Jordan, spoke Aramaic; while a smaller body, that dwelt in Egypt near Alexandria, spoke Greek. If these circumstances be borne in mind, it need not be in the least surprising that a decade or so after the Nazarene Gospel had been published in Aramaic, a translation of it should be made into Greek for the use of Nazarenes sojourning in Egypt or for any other Greek-speaking converts. And here the Pauline Christians come in. These had no Gospel of their own, and, apart from the few statements in the Pauline Epistles, they knew nothing about the so-called Gospel "history" of Jesus. They would therefore be glad of the chance of making copies of the "Gospel of Matthew" in Greek for use in their own primitive churches, in which translation many matters purely Jewish would, no doubt, be omitted. That this was the origin of the "Gospel of Matthew" in Greek appears to be almost beyond a doubt; but it was not, of course, the canonical *Matthew*. Irenæus, in the last quarter of the second century, had our present *Matthew* in Greek, and accepted it as a translation of the original. It was the first Greek translation—that from which the Gospel of Mark was made—to which I have referred when speaking of a primitive Gospel. The Nazarenes, as a matter of course, knew the source of the first Gentile Gospel, and this was one of the little facts of history

handed down in the sect to the time of Epiphanius and Jerome (fourth century).

When the first of the last-named "fathers" stated that the Ebionite Gospel of Matthew was "not entire and perfectly complete, but falsified and mutilated," he referred to the fact that the Nazarene Gospel did not contain the Virgin Birth story of the canonical *Matthew*, besides other matters added to the primitive *Matthew* from apocryphal sources. The Ebionites and Nazarenes, from the very first, regarded Jesus merely as a man; but for some unknown reason they had exalted him into a prophet. With them he was at first simply an ordinary member of the sect: but after the story got about of a voice from heaven and the descent of the "spirit" at his baptism, he became possessed of divine wisdom and received the power to work miracles—like Elijah or Elisha. If Jesus was more than a man, no one would know the fact better than the Nazarenes; but that sect refused to regard him as divine, or to give a place in their Gospel to the Virgin Birth story—though they knew they were accounted heretics by the Gentle Christians in consequence.

As might, of course, be expected, our reverend critics do not admit that the Nazarene Gospel was the source of the Synoptic narratives common to the first three Gospels—which comprise the whole of *Mark*. Were they to do so, they would be forced to acknowledge that the first two chapters in *Matthew* and *Luke* formed no part of the original document, and must therefore have been derived from later apocryphal writings. Such an admission they are not yet prepared to make.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Freethought and Peace.

WILL the present European War be the last of wars? Will it terminate all apprehensions as to future wars? Nobody can positively say Yes to either of these questions. Hence the movement in support of International Arbitration will assume more importance than ever as soon as the last shot is fired in the present lamentable strife. Unfortunately, this movement has for many years past been associated with the Christianity and Theism which teach us to rely upon God and Providence. If ever there was a task in the history of our race which called for the utmost degree of self-reliance, it is this task of realizing international peace. The group of friends (including the late Mr. G. W. Foote) who formed the Rationalist Peace Society did so with a double object—first, as a testimony to the enthusiasm of Freethinkers for a noble ideal of racial fraternity; and second, as a plain and open protest against the combination of this work with prayer, Evangelical notes and comments, and the foolish affectation that only people who held the God-doctrine cared for peace on earth, goodwill amongst men. As a member of the Committee, I venture to ask all Freethinkers who sympathize with this double object to swell the membership. The yearly subscription is only a shilling (more if anybody pleases, of course). There was never a more critical time in the history of peace, and therefore there was never a better time to join this Society. It would gladden the heart of Charles Bradlaugh's daughter if the Freethought comrades crowded in. Please send to Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, 28 Streathbourne Road, Upper Tooting, London.

F. J. GOULD.

The yarn is, of course, apocryphal—most good ones are—but it is of a local "chymist" of some breadth of beam and of the best laugh in town. He was playing golf with a minister whose personality may not be indicated, as most golf is played here on the best of all days. "Well, what are we playing for?" asked the Scottish apothecary. "Why, its rather out of my line to put up anything," replied the other. "Well," insisted the enthusiast of the "bones," "we ought to play for something; so I'll put up a pill and you put up a prayer.—*Gatooma Mail*."

What is the "Freethinker"?

It is the Oldest

Freethought journal in Great Britain. Since its foundation, in 1881, it has maintained a distinctive note, which places it in a class by itself.

It has always at its service

a brilliant staff who aim at making all they write interesting, in the belief that dullness is not profundity and solemnity is not wisdom.

It brings the resources

of science, philosophy, and literature to bear upon all forms of superstition, in the conviction that clear and rational thinking is the essential condition of social progress.

It flatters no prejudice,

and plays to no party, but relies on truth expressed in the plain language of common sense.

If you dislike cant, sham, and superstition, if you care for sincerity and truth,

READ THE "FREETHINKER."

Edited by CHAPMAN COHEN.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

Of all Newsagents, or direct from the Publishing Office, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Specimen copy post free on application.

[We have printed a large number of these leaflets for distribution, and shall be pleased to hear from any of our readers who can help to put them into circulation. Please state the number required and they will be at once forwarded.]

Death: Christian and Pagan.

DEATH AN ENEMY.

For, since by man came death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.—*St. Paul*.

DEATH A FRIEND.

Death is nothing more than the mere work of nature, and it is childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay, it is not only the work of nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

Where Death is, I am not; where Death is not, I am.—*Epictetus*.

Cowards do not often taste of death; the valiant die but once.—*Shakespeare*.

The Soul of a Dog.

You do not understand? Why, now you say
The word, 'tis so. What matters it, so
that
(Some understand or think they do) I may
The soul in me speak out. There on the
mat
My dog doth gnaw his bone: yet have I
seen
At sumptuous banquet gluttonously feed
Things dogs think *men* for whom
'twould but domean
A hound like that you see.....you say no
need
The sentence to complete. That so?
Agreed.
Yet, —, look you, from his eyes outshines
a soul
That lurks not in the eyes of fools whom
greed
Enslaves. Yet *men* they are! for whom
will toll
Some day the holy knell of death, and
in
Some mausoleum will their remains be
laid,
While he, my canine friend? In dank
dustbin
His corse be thrust! the soul in him be-
trayed.

H. SHAW.

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, INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New Road): 7, Harry Snell, "G. W. Foote and English Freethought."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin, "The Crimes of Christianity"; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Opinions"; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Beale, and Saphin.

LIFE-LIKE PORTRAIT OF G. W. FOOTE.

Art Mounted, 10 by 7. With Autograph. SUITABLE FOR FRAMING.

Price ONE SHILLING. (Postage: Inland, 3d.; Foreign, 6d.)

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

RUSKIN HOUSE SCHOOL, SOUTHBEND-ON-SEA. CONDUCTED ON RATIONALISTIC LINES. Established 1903.

Recommended by Prominent Freethinkers.

Write: W. H. THRESH, Principal, FOR PROSPECTUS.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Secretary: MISS E. M. VANCE, 62 FARRINGTON-ST., LONDON, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....
Address.....
Occupation.....
Dated this..... day of..... 190.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause

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.

Table with 3 columns: Subscription type, Rate, and Price. Includes: 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 WEST 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.)

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommensurable dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

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 3d., 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. net, postage 4d.

SECOND SERIES.

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

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

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

WATTS & CO.

"These splendid handbooks belong to an age of wonders."
—*Birmingham Gazette.*

SCIENCE HISTORIES.

Each 160 pages, with Illustrations; 1s. net, by post 1s. 4d.
The 13 vols. post free 14s.

- Astronomy.** By Prof. GEORGE FORBES, M.A., F.R.S.
Chemistry. Vol. I.: 2000 B.C. to 1850 A.D. Vol. II.: 1850 A.D. to Date. By Sir EDWARD THORPE, C.B., LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.S.
Geography. By J. SCOTT KELTIE, LL.D., and O. J. HOWARTH, M.A.
Geology. By H. B. WOODWARD, F.R.S., F.G.S.
Biology. By Prof. L. C. MIALL, F.R.S.
Anthropology. By A. C. HADDON, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.
Psychology. Vol. I.: From the Earliest Times to John Locke. Vol. II.: From John Locke to the Present Time. By Prof. J. MARK BALDWIN.
Old Testament Criticism. By Prof. A. DUFF.
New Testament Criticism. By F. C. CONYBEARE, M.A.
Ancient Philosophy. By A. W. BENN, author of *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, etc.
Modern Philosophy. By A. W. BENN.

EACH POCKET SIZE.

BOUND IN CLOTH.

WATTS'S 9d. net SERIES.

(N.B.—Inland postage on one book 2d. or 3d.; and on each additional book supplied at same time, 1d.)

- The Christian Hell,** from the First to the Twentieth Century. By H. BRADLAUGH BONNER. 160 pp., with many illustrations; by post 1s.
The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School. By the late Senor FRANCISCO FERRER. Translated from posthumous papers by JOSEPH McCABE. 128 pp.; by post 11d.
The Riddle of the Universe. By Prof. ERNST HAECKEL. 348 pp., with portrait; by post 1s.
Twelve Years in a Monastery. By JOSEPH McCABE. 256 pp., with portrait; by post 1s.
Essays Towards Peace. By NORMAN ANGELL, J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P., S. H. SWINNV, and Prof. WESTERMARCK. With Preface by Mrs. H. B. BONNER. 92 pp.; by post 11d.
Life and Destiny. By Prof. FELIX ADLER. 128 pp., by post 11d.
The Task of Rationalism: In Retrospect and Prospect. By JOHN RUSSELL, M.A. 80 pp.; by post 11d.
Peace and War in the Balance. By H. W. NEVINSON. 80 pp.; by post 11d.
Art and the Commonweal. By WILLIAM ARCHER. 76 pp.; by post 11d.
The Life Pilgrimage of Moncure Conway. By J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P. 80 pp.; by post 11d.
The Stoic Philosophy. By Prof. GILBERT MURRAY. 64 pp.; by post 11d.
The Religion of the Open Mind. By ADAM GOWANS WHYTE. 160 pp.; by post 1s.

Complete Catalogue and copy of the "Literary Guide" (16 large pages and cover) free on receipt of post-card with name and address of applicant.

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