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There is but one thing of real value—to cultivate truth and justice, and to live without anger in the midst of lying and unjust men.—MARCUS AURELIUS.

Views and Opinions.

Lord Bryce on War and Progress.

"War and Progress" was the title of Viscount Bryce's Huxley Lecture, recently delivered at Birmingham University. It would have been an important topic even in peace time; it was doubly so in time of war, and amongst our public men Viscount Bryce might be safely trusted to deal with the subject with due regard to its philosophic, as distinguished from its political, bearings. Judging from the very meagre newspaper reports, the lecture itself appears to have moved along wholly admirable lines. And if an illustration were needed of the truth of the lecturer's main contention, that progress did *not* result from war, the newspaper reports supplied it. Some of the papers did not bother to report the lecture at all. Others gave it but scant notice in the form of two or three paragraphs. It is safe to say that in peace times the result would have been very different. But we are at war, and the paralysing effect of Militarism on the higher and better life of a nation may be denied, but it can never be hidden. * * *

War and Human Nature.

There are, as Lord Bryce pointed out, two main fallacies in the arguments of those who regard war as an instrument of progress. The first is biological; the second is sociological and historical. The first-named has, with the mass of people of this country, become identified with Bernhardt's "War is a biological necessity." The credit for the aphorism is quite undeserved. It belongs no more to Bernhardt than it does to hundreds of others. It is the common teaching of Militarists all the world over. And even when we are done with Militarists and the doctrine of war as a biological necessity, we have the clergy rushing in with their doctrine that war is a school of virtue, developing self-sacrifice, a sense of comradeship, heroism, etc. So that between the two, the justification for war would seem to be fairly complete. War weeds out the physically unfit, and so develops greater biological perfection, and by calling into exercise virtues that might otherwise perish from disuse, it breeds a better man. Perpetual peace thus becomes a universal calamity. * * *

Biology and Social Life.

The biological argument rests upon an imperfect apprehension of Darwinism. There is an almost fatal simplicity about the principle of natural selection in its application to human society. Even Lord Bryce states the case with a baldness (it must be remembered that I have only a newspaper report on which to base my comments) that is misleading. "Among animals and

plants," he says, "it is natural selection and the struggle for life that evolves higher forms from lower." In a sense, yes; although in a very important sense, not quite so. For in all gregarious animals the struggle for life in the form of contest between individuals is partly replaced by co-operation and a collective struggle against forces inimical to the group. Mutual help is certainly a powerful factor in the animal world—even tigers do not eat tigers—and in the higher animal world, one of increasing importance. And when we come to man, it is simply untrue to say that human or social evolution has been attained through or by the operation of the biological law of the survival of the fittest. The whole operation of social life is to fix a sharp limit to the operation of natural selection. The individual does not pay the consequences of his weakness, nor does he reap the full benefit of his strength. Society guards him against the first, and takes from him a portion of the second. This is the fundamental significance of group life; it is the very pivot of social evolution, and its essential principle is the suspension of the struggle between organisms of the same species in favour of co-operation, directed to the consequence of a common enemy. * * *

The Changing Form of Natural Selection.

The truth that remains in the biological formula when applied to human society, but which has been so sadly misunderstood, is that struggle remains the law of life, and, in a general sense, of survival. Without the "will to live," life becomes impossible. That much becomes true even when the monstrous proposition of Bernhardt and his English, French, American, and other supporters is finally rejected. Nay, we may even use the biological formula that a higher form of life is the outcome of a struggle between the organism and the environment, so long as we bear in mind the changed significance of the terms when applied to human society. For, on the lower ground, the struggle remains one between organism and environment. But what is the organism? Is it man, or is it mankind? Surely, in an ever-growing sense, it is the latter. Consider the facts. In the non-gregarious stage it is substantially the individual organism against other organisms. But in the gregarious stage an important principle develops. It is the struggle of the group, for the benefit of the group, against the group's enemies. And the group is an ever-enlarging thing. Not so very long ago in the history of the world, each nation was substantially a self-contained entity; and war was then a contest between independent groups. Is that the case now? How many nations are self-contained to-day? Are the nations now at war independent in any real sense? Everyone knows they are not. To the complete life of one the co-operation of the rest is essential. Interchange between nations—of commodities and of ideas—is the real analogue of the division of labour in society, which in turn is the analogue of the differentiation of parts in the organism. The social organism is no longer the tribe, nor even the nation; it is mankind; and war between nations has now

come to resemble a disease within the individual body. War is to-day a cancer of the social organism.

* * *

Unequal Evolution.

A vital truth that helps to explain the existence of war and the persistence of the military spirit amongst "civilized" nations, is that our mental and moral development has not kept pace with our economic and material growth. Present-day economic development has unconsciously made association and co-operation vital to our well-being. How vital, the present War has fully demonstrated. Nor would the truth of this be affected by any possible development after the War that might shut Germany out of some of the world-markets. For no one will dispute in that case the world will be a poorer world than it would be with a Germany contented, prosperous, peaceful, and contributing its fair share to the world's industrial development. But while this economic interdependence of the world is so plain as not to need fuller statement, mentally the mass of the people—including a large proportion of their "leaders"—are still living in the psychological atmosphere of two or three hundred years ago. They still talk and think of the "interests" of one nation being opposed to the interests of other nations. There is still a nascent, often expressed feeling, that the growth of one nation threatens the security of its neighbours. And it must be admitted, the nation that effects this growth often regards it as a possible means of aggression against some other nation. Economically we are in the twentieth century. Psychologically we are for the most part living in the seventeenth century. Our economic development has been so rapid that our mental growth has failed to keep pace with it. The adjustment will come in time; but until it is effected we shall not fail to have the law of evolution applied to the human organism in its lowest—in relation to human society—form.

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Higher and Lower Forms of Natural Selection.

It was said above that on the lower ground the struggle for life is that between organism and environment, and I have tried to show that the growth of humanity, resulting in the interdependence of peoples, gives to the word "organism" a wider and more ethical connotation. But there is another form of struggle which is peculiarly human, which is the true analogue to the contest of individual organisms in the lower animal world, and also provides full scope for the combative elements of human nature. When all is said and done, war is no more than a theatre in which the combative instincts find full play, such instincts being set in operation by motives of varying character and quality. And it may be granted freely that these combative instincts are, broadly, ineradicable; neither are they fundamentally bad. They express human likes and dislikes, and are the incentives to struggle. This much may be taken for granted. Militarists the world over—who are never noted for philosophic thought—see this clearly enough, and on it is based the conclusion that war is a "biological necessity," and serves as a beneficial stimulus to struggle. But this is by no means true. Just as general social evolution involves the control of the biological forces by the psychological developments of co-operative life, so the brute form of the struggle for existence has its equivalent in the strife of ideals and theories, and the numerous activities of social life such as operate in times of peace. It is on this field of activity that the struggle is continued, in which the combative instincts find full expression, and which is truly beneficial to society as a whole. War means no less than the suppression of the higher form of social activities in favour of lower ones. And it is this which stamps the contest of brute force

as being in the truest sense of the expression a case of reversion.

* * *

The Price of Modern War.

Applying these principles to the present War, it is evident that the existing conflict is disastrous in a more complete sense than were earlier wars. In a condition of barbarism it might be argued that war served as an outlet for the more turbulent spirits, and their unreasoning activities found thus a less harmful vent than if they were expended in social life. At present that plea breaks down completely. The call to service is made in the name of the higher social qualities, and there is no question that very large numbers of men, who represent the pick of the nation's life and intelligence, have responded to that call, and have given their lives in obedience to the promptings of their sense of social obligation. This War is not taking the worst, it is taking the best. Its death-roll is partly made up of the most promising material we possess. Whether there will be compensating features in other directions remains to be seen. But war must bring a compensation of a marked—and, to me, unexpected—character if it can atone for the tremendous drain upon the intellectual life of the belligerent nations.

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Lord Bryce's treatment of the historical aspect of the question I must leave until next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The American Minister to the Hague on Christianity.

DR. HENRY VAN DYKE is a Presbyterian minister, and the son of another. In my youth I had the pleasure of knowing his father personally, who was a well-known clergyman of the most rigid Calvinistic school, in Brooklyn, N.Y. I also often saw, and once or twice met, the son in his student days, and he was generally looked upon as an exceptionally promising young man. As minister of the Brick Presbyterian Church in Fifth Avenue, New York, for the space of twenty years, and also as Professor at Princeton, he enjoyed well-deserved popularity, which was greatly enhanced by the publication of arresting works on Theology, among which may be mentioned *The Open Door* and *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*. He has further distinguished himself as essayist, poet, and writer of light fiction. He is wonderfully versatile, and belongs to what used to be called in America the New Presbyterian school of theology. Three years ago President Wilson induced him to enter the diplomatic service as United States Minister to the Netherlands. Since that time the religious world has heard very little of him. We learn from the British Table Talk in the *British Weekly* for March 16, however, that he has recently been on a visit to his native country, during which he was prevailed upon to occupy his old pulpit in the famous Brick Church, and it is with his reported utterance on that occasion that I wish to deal in the present article. The report states that "he denounced as folly all suggestions to the effect that the War means the end of Christianity," and I regretfully confess that I am under the necessity to express agreement with him. The War does not mean the end of anything except itself when the hour strikes. That it will deal Christianity a serious blow may be highly probable, but that a war is calculated to demolish a warlike religion is most unlikely. John Galsworthy was certainly wrong when he said that "whatever be the result of the present War, it means

the end of Christianity." Unfortunately, that is an optimism to which I am utterly unable to attain. Christianity has survived too many savage wars to be effectually put out of being by the present one. It will certainly survive, though, I trust, in a much enfeebled and crippled condition. What Mr. Galsworthy and a few others so confidently anticipated is, I fear, too good to be true.

Here ends my agreement with the American Minister to the Hague. When he is reported to have said that "Christianity was born in a darker, bloodier time than this," I am bound to join issue with him. At what exact time Christianity was born it is impossible to determine. Loosely speaking, it may be said to have come into existence during the first two or three centuries of our era, but he must be an extremely bold man who maintains that those times were morally darker and physically bloodier than are the middle years in the second decade of the twentieth century. Let us face the facts. It is true enough that Christianity has lived and grown through days sufficiently fierce and trying, in all conscience, but it is also equally true that it was powerless either to prevent or to put an end to such unhappy days. It lived *through* them because it could not *reform* them; and much of the fierceness and horror of them was created, or at least encouraged, in its name. But it is positively false to assert that Christianity was born in a darker, bloodier time than the present. Take the first three centuries of our era, and judge them in the light of the most reliable documentary evidence, and not in that of the prejudiced minds of the overwhelming majority of Christian writers. The Christian custom is to fix upon Nero as a sample of Pagan Emperors, which is the same as if Henry VIII., Charles II., or George II. were to be chosen as samples of English rulers. The truth is that out of all the Pagan Emperors of Rome, only less than ten can be described as thoroughly wicked monarchs, while most of the rest will stand comparison with the best rulers that ever sat upon thrones. What did those excellent emperors do for the people? Found orphanages and hospitals, establish primary and secondary schools, many of which were largely and some wholly State-supported, and secure an impartial administration of justice throughout the vast empire. The late Dr. Emil Reich, though on the whole a bigoted conservative in theology, was yet capable of being just to Pagan Rome. In his *History of Civilization* (p. 371), he says:—

Justice in Imperial Rome, in this rotten and diseased Rome, was administered in the most perfect way. We seldom or never hear a complaint over the injustice of judges, or the injustice of the Imperial chamber. The liberty of citizens, even the personal safety of slaves, were protected by powerful laws; the taxes were small, and were, comparatively speaking, a rare event..... These rotten Romans of the first three centuries of our era, instead of dozing away in idle profligacy, were the founders of thousands of flourishing cities in France, Britain, Germany, Austria, etc., with so many aqueducts for fresh water, with countless dikes and roads in almost all Europe, in Asia Minor, and in Africa. These rotten Romans protected everybody and persecuted nobody.The innumerable nations under these diseased Romans felt so happy that they never, or very rarely, thought of revolting against a rule at once so mild and profitable. This is the real picture of the Roman Empire.

At this point some over-zealous Christian may cry out excitedly, "What about the persecution of Christianity under Pagan Rome?" I answer that purely as a new religious cult, Christianity underwent no persecution whatever. Rome was so chockfull of deities that the introduction of a fresh one passed unnoticed. Christians were persecuted because of their attitude of blind

hostility towards, and their uncompromising and venomous denunciation of, what they called the impious idolatries of the Pagan world. Harnack says that "Trajan enacted that provincial governors were to use their own discretion, repressing any given case, but declining to ferret Christians out." Harnack also makes the following most significant and illuminating statement:—

Execution was their fate if, when suspected of *lèse-majesté* as well as of sacrilege, they stubbornly refused to sacrifice before the images of the Gods of the Emperor, thereby avowing themselves guilty of the former crime. *On the cultus of the Cæsars, and on this point alone, the State and the Church came into collision.* The apologists are really incorrect in asserting that the Name itself (*nomen ipsum*) was visited with death (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 117).

Again, Christian teachers are in the habit of denouncing Roman society generally on the basis of the satires of Juvenal and the epigrams of Martial. Martial was at once a man of undoubted genius and an unblushing hypocrite, always guilty of fulsome flattery towards the rich and powerful, and uniformly treating of the baser and more contemptible side of life. Juvenal cruelly satirized a small section of society, though he himself claimed to belong to a much larger and purer section. In the third satire he presents a picture of Rome such as might have been painted by a clever lampoonist at almost any period during the first century, and there are allusions in it to most disgraceful and disgusting scenes which occurred under two utterly degraded and bestialized Emperors, Nero and Domitian; but the portrait is true to life only in a few but prominent cases, while the bulk of society was clean, pure, noble, and good, as we learn from the private letters of statesmen and men of letters. I instance this third satire because Boileau, the French critic and poet, composed a successful imitation of it in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and applied it to Paris, and because in the same century Oldham, and in the first half of the eighteenth century Dr. Johnson, published equally good imitations, and applied them to London, the former in the reign of Charles II., and the latter in that of George II. At both periods London was distinctly a Christian city, having professed Christianity for more than a thousand years. And yet Oldham calls it—

———*the common shore,*

Where France does all her filth and ordure pour,

and Johnson—

The common shore of Paris and of Rome.

London may have been "the sink of foreign worthlessness," and exhibited no doubt a sufficient quantity of worthlessness of her own; but I am sure that Dr. Van Dyke would not pronounce that by any means an accurate description of London society at either of those periods. My point is that Juvenal's satires in their original application were not one whit truer of Roman society than they were, in their borrowed form, of that of Paris or of London. To ascertain what Roman society really was under Paganism, we must consult the private correspondence of such reliable witnesses as Cicero, Seneca, Livy, and Symmachus. By this means we shall learn that the average Pagan men were as brave, honest, disinterested, generous, and noble, and the average Pagan women as pure, tender-hearted, and loving, as are average men and women to-day. The evils as well as the virtues of Paganism flourish in our day. Furthermore, the worst vices that prevailed under Paganism are to be found in Paris and London at this moment. Pagan Nero and Domitian committed the most horrible crimes, but so did Christian Constantine, who savagely murdered his wife, his son, and his innocent

nephew, and so did many other Christian monarchs in most of the subsequent centuries.

The War cannot destroy Christianity, though it will inevitably tend to discredit it in the eyes of thoughtful people. It can only be brought to naught by the steadily growing intelligence, by the dissemination of scientific knowledge, and by the deepening and strengthening of human ideals. When people realize what supernatural religion really is, and how it arrived at its present stage of evolution, they will speedily renounce it, but not a moment before.

J. T. LLOYD.

Dickens as a Democrat.

I am convinced more and more, every day, that fine writing is, next to fine doing, the top thing in the world.—*John Keats.*

Dickens was entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written.—*John Ruskin.*

THE Victorian era was, above all, an era of emancipation and expansion, of the removal of fetters and limitations, the destruction of barriers, of privilege, of prescription, and prejudice. And one of the most potent forces for progress was Charles Dickens. He nearly always wrote with a purpose. As sturdy a Democrat as William Cobbett, he looked upon literature as a tower from which to shoot the arrows of scorn at all things evil. Thus in *Nicholas Nickleby* he attacked the cheap boarding-schools. In *Bleak House* he showed the bad effects of the law's delays. In *Hard Times* he deals with strikes, and in *Little Dorrit* the strangling of private persons by the red-tape of Government offices, and the evils of imprisonment for debt. *Martin Chuzzlewit* is largely devoted to exposing the murderous methods of the old monthly nurses, and the emigration swindles. Even in *Pickwick Papers*, the most lighthearted and irresponsible of books, he lashes religious hypocrisy.

Although he does not obtrude his own views, Dickens was a heretic. He had a very strong aversion for dogma, and described himself as "morally wide asunder from Rome," whilst of Puritanism he was an uncompromising opponent. For some years he attended a Unitarian chapel. Of mission work he was unfavourably impressed, as evidenced by his writing:—

So Exeter Hall holds us in moral submission to missionaries, who (Livingstone always excepted) are perfect nuisances, and leave every place worse than they found it.

When that stalwart Freethinker, Robert Morrell, founded the National Sunday League, Dickens helped the movement with money, and also gave readings for its benefit. An amusing instance of the great novelist's playfulness with regard to religion was his naming a dummy book in his library, "Evidences of Christianity, by Henry the Eighth." That keen critic, Matthew Arnold, noticed the strong strain of Secularism in Dickens' writings, and in his *Friendship's Garland*, he pictured himself taking down his foreign friend, Arminius, to the House of Commons to hear Sir William Harcourt "develop a system of unsectarian religion from the life of Mr. Pickwick."

Mr. Gilbert Chesterton explains the great and enduring popularity of Dickens' characters by calling him "the last of the mythologists." It is precisely this mythological quality in Dickens' writings which is the secret of his strength. Working at his best, he was a master of characterization and humour. In that marvellously diverse and luxuriant genius of his, he embodies his age, and expresses it with admirable clarity. If his sentiment savours of the footlights, and his humour is dangerously near buffoonery, he knew when to stop. In

spite of all criticism, Dickens remains the first and most popular of English novelists, and *The Pickwick Papers* is the prime favourite. Rising to great heights of humour, it stands in the goodly company of *Don Quixote* and *Gil Blas*. By design a sporting novel, sheer genius has made it the *Iliad* of humour.

What is surprising about Dickens is the fact that he, a young journalist, who awoke one morning and found himself famous, should have taken such pains to improve. From writing newspaper English he became a master of language. He who sketched "Dombey" drew "Pecksniff," the nineteenth century "Tartuffe." "Little Nell" and "Sydney Carton" scarcely seem to have a common origin. For mere word-painting, the second chapter of *Martin Chuzzlewit* is as fine writing as any novelist has given us, and the storm in *David Copperfield* evoked the enthusiasm of John Ruskin. Despite his propagandist zeal, Dickens hides his motives with the skill of a great artist. He never moralizes like Thackeray, nor is he strenuous like George Eliot.

Great reputations are treated with scant reverence in these days, but it is impossible to imagine a time when Dickens will not be regarded as one of the great masters. He has been reproachfully called the Cockney Shakespeare; but it is the language of compliment, and not of detraction. Dickens, like Shakespeare, was always an artist, and not a dauber. There is little or no resemblance between "Sir John Falstaff" and "Sam Weller," but they have equally seized upon the popular imagination. Shakespeare's characters have this in common with Dickens' creations—that they are works of triumphant genius. Dickens' figures have been accepted as a reflection of human nature. "Squeers" is to everyone the tyrannical schoolmaster; "Bumble," the representative of parochial pomposity; "Stiggins," the religious humbug; "Bill Sikes," the criminal; "Pecksniff," the arch-hypocrite. Dickens' phrases, no less than his characters, have passed into everyday speech. To say a thing "in a Pickwickian sense"; "If there are two crowds, shout with the largest"; "Put the bottle on the chimney-piece"; "King Charles' head in the memorial"; "When found, make a note of"; "Codlin's the friend, not Short"; "Prunes and Prisms"; "Sly, devilish sly"; and a hundred others. No more signal proof of Charles Dickens' genius can be given than that his creations and phrases have worked themselves into the fibre of the greatest language of the world.

Chief in thy generation born of men,
Whom English praise acclaimed as English born.

MIMNERMUS.

Divine Benevolence.

THE problem of how the goodness of God can be reconciled with the existence of evil is at least as old as the Book of Job, and the essence of the problem remains unchanged. Many different solutions have been offered, but the very best is nothing but a plausible compromise. Even the Christian theory of a personal Devil, practically almost as potent as the Deity, and infinitely more active, is a miserable makeshift; for, on inquiry, it turns out that the Devil is a part of God's handiwork, exercising only a delegated or permitted power. The usual resort of the theologian when driven to bay is to invoke the aid of "mystery," but this is useless as against the logician, since "mystery" is only a contradiction between the facts and the hypothesis, and the theologian can hardly expect to be saved by what is virtually a plea of "Guilty."

Darwin was brought face to face with this problem, and he was too honest to twist the facts, and too much a lover of truth and clarity to submerge them in the

mysterious. He preferred to speak plainly as far as his intellect carried him, and when it stopped, to frankly confess his ignorance.

Writing to Dr. Asa Gray (May, 22, 1860), Darwin put a strong objection to Theism very pointedly:—

I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the *ichneumonidæ* with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. On the other hand, I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe, and especially the nature of man, and to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect.

Dealing with the same subject sixteen years later in his Autobiography, Darwin gave his opinion that happiness, on the whole, predominates over misery, although he admitted that this "would be very difficult to prove." He then faced the Theistic aspect of the question:—

That there is much suffering in the world no one disputes. Some have attempted to explain this with reference to man by imagining that it serves for his moral improvement. But the number of men in the world is as nothing compared with that of all other sentient beings, and they often suffer greatly without any moral improvement. This very old argument from the existence of suffering against the existence of an intelligent First Cause seems to me a strong one.

Darwin was perfectly conscious that he was advancing no new argument against Theism. An age of microscopical science was, indeed, necessary before the internal parasites of caterpillars could be instanced; not to mention the thirty species of parasites that prey on the human organism. But such larger parasites as fleas and lice have always been obvious, and the theologians have been constantly asked why Almighty Goodness prompted Almighty Wisdom to provide humanity with such a sumptuous stock of these nuisances. It may also be observed that while cholera, fever, and other germs are modern discoveries, such things as tumours, cancers, and leprosy have always attracted attention, and they are more telling instances of malignant "design" than the *ichneumonidæ* in caterpillars, as they immediately affect the gentlemen who carry on the discussion.

Darwinism does, however, present the problem of evil in a new light. It shows us that evil is not on the surface of things, but is part of their very texture. Those who complacently dwell on the survival of the fittest, and the forward march to perfection, conveniently forget that the survival of the fittest is the *result*. Natural selection is the *process*. And if we look at this more closely we discover that natural selection and the survival of the fittest are the same thing; the *real process* being the *elimination of the unfit*. Those who survive would have lived in any case; what has happened is that all the rest have been crushed out of existence. Suppose, for instance (to take a case of artificial selection), a farmer castrates nineteen bulls and breeds from the twentieth; it makes a great difference to the *result*, but clearly the whole of the *process* is the elimination of the nineteen. Similarly, in natural selection, all organic variations are alike spawned forth by Nature; the fit are produced and perpetuated, while the unfit are produced and exterminated. And *how* exterminated? Not by the swift

hand of a skilful executioner, but by countless varieties of torture, some of which display an infernal ingenuity that might abash the deffest Inquisitor. Every disease known to us is simply one of Nature's devices for eliminating her unsuitable offspring, and a cat's playing with a mouse is nothing to the prolonged sport of Nature in killing the victims of her own infinite lust of procreation. Place a Deity behind this process, and you create a greater and viler Devil than any theology of the past was capable of inventing. Accept it as the work of blind forces, and you may become a Pessimist if you are disgusted with the entire business; or an Optimist if you are healthy, prosperous, and callous; or a Meliorist if you think evolution tends to progress and that your own efforts may brighten the lot of your fellows.

Dr. Russel Wallace, whose spiritual philosophy induces him, however unconsciously, to minimize the sufferings of the world, argues that the "torments" and "miseries" of the lower animals are imaginary, and that "the amount of actual suffering caused by the struggle for existence among animals is altogether insignificant." Dr. Wallace even goes to the length of saying that "their actual flight from an enemy" is an "enjoyable exercise" of their powers. But human beings do not enjoy themselves in running away from their enemies, and we can only understand the feelings of the lower animals through the medium of our own.

—Reprinted.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Visions of the Apocalypse.

II.

(Concluded from p. 182.)

PREPARATIONS for the final plagues upon Pagan mankind follow. Three angels, in chapter xiv., fly in mid-heaven, and warn the world of the consequences of obstinacy. Here we have a glimpse of the ferocity with which this writer, maddened by the persecution he had witnessed, regarded all men except his fellow-religionists. The third angel says:—

If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whose receiveth the mark of his name.

No humane person can approve of persecution under any circumstances, and the details of Nero's persecution, as recorded by Tacitus, are beyond measure revolting. But what is the difference between Nero, who tortured and burnt the Christians of Rome for a public spectacle, and the author of the Revelation, as he stands revealed in this passage, except that Nero had the power to execute his desires, and John (or whoever our author was) had not? This revolting picture of Jesus and the angels gloating to eternity over the agony of burning Pagans finds its worthy echo in the notorious passage of Tertullian, and in many later passages of Catholic writers, where the chief joy of heaven is represented as being the enjoyment of the tortures of the damned. Can we wonder that the outcome of the triumph of the Church was the Inquisition and its horrors? Is not the Book of Revelation, in fact, the warrant of the Inquisition?

Chapter xiv. concludes with a short allegorical vision of the deliverance of the believing, and the punishment

of the unbelieving Jews, under the figure of the harvest and the vintage. The Jewish Christians, who repair to Pella, are "reaped" as the harvest of God; the unbelieving Jews, who remain, are "cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs." A lurid, but not inaccurate, picture of the bloody repression of the Jewish rebellion by Vespasian, which was being carried out at this time.

The final plagues upon the Pagan world follow, heralded, in chapters viii.-xi., by trumpets; in chapter xvi., by the pouring of bowls, or vials, upon the earth, sea, etc. The plagues are borrowed from those of Egypt in the Pentateuch, *e.g.*, water turned to blood, boils, hailstones, locusts, destruction of vegetation, supernatural darkness, and the like. The details in chapter xvi., however, are far more blood curdling than in chapters viii. and ix. The sixth plague is, in each case, a Parthian invasion (chapters ix., 13-21, and xvi. 12). None of these inflictions have the effect of converting the Pagans, who merely "blaspheme" the more. I don't blame them!

In chapter x. an angel swears solemnly that God is not going to stand any more nonsense, and makes the prophet swallow "a little book," with the not surprising result that his "belly is made bitter"—a symbol, copied from Ezekiel, of the worse things that are to come. In chapter xi. the fall of Jerusalem is foretold (this needed no supernatural powers in A.D. 68 or 69); but the temple is to be spared. Two prophets (Moses and Elijah, perhaps) preach and work miracles to convert the Jews, and are put to death in Jerusalem by the restored Nero. They rise and ascend into heaven after three days and a half; Jerusalem is converted by a severe earthquake; and, in the first series of visions, the Messianic kingdom ensues forthwith. Chapters xvii. to xix. are more detailed. In chapter xvii. the city of Rome (depicted as a woman riding on the beast with seven heads, and "drunken with the blood of the saints") is sacked and burnt by the insurgent governors of Roman provinces (the "ten horns" of the beast in verses 12-18). This prediction had some plausibility at the time, when the armies of the different provinces were proclaiming their respective generals emperors, and rushing into civil war. In the end (though Rome was actually sacked and the Capitol burnt in 69) the Empire survived. The seer, however, expects otherwise, and in chapter xviii. gives us an exultant "hymn of hate" over "Babylon, the great city," in language borrowed from Isaiah and Ezekiel.

In chapter xix. the battle between Nero and the Messiah comes off. It has been prepared for in chapter xvi. by three demons proceeding from the mouth of Satan, Nero, and the false prophet (Paul?), to gather the kings of the earth to fight under Nero at Megiddo in northern Palestine (the much-debated "Armageddon"). The "beast" and "false prophet" are captured, and thrown alive into hell-fire; their army is slaughtered to a man. This brings us to the end of the predicted "three years and a half" of the reign of the "beast." Jesus and the "saints" (the faithful Jewish Christians, who rise from the dead specially for the occasion) reign at Jerusalem for a thousand years. Satan will then be thrown into hell, to be tortured for ever and ever. Then comes the last judgment, conducted by the Almighty in person, when whoever is not written in the "book of life" will also be cast into hell. Our author, like Paul, and most of the Jews of this period, is a thorough predestinarian. His God is, in fact, a savage Oriental despot, who saves or damns at his will and

pleasure. The higher conceptions of morality and justice are left out.

We need not go into the description of "new Jerusalem," with its tawdry catalogue of gold and jewellery. It is the heaven of a very silly savage; even as allegory, it might have been in better taste. Mr. Arthur Machen, in one of the "Bowmen" stories, depicts heaven as "the eternal tavern." Tastes differ, but personally I prefer a glorified public-house to an overstocked jeweller's shop.

As the product of an evil time reflected in a primitive mind, this barbaric and puerile work is intelligible. What is less intelligible is that a civilized nation should officially treat such a book as inspired scripture, to be read as such to educated congregations, and protected by blasphemy laws from the ridicule and caricature which is the healthy and natural retort to such pretensions.

ROBERT ARCH.

The River of Lies.

PULPIT people are fond of garnishing their teachings in flimsies. It may be a wrong method of appeal; draperies lead to discoveries. Do not social regenerators, who would guide our steps from the mire of sex-unrighteousness, tell us that a semi-draped figure of that terribly demoralizing entity sometimes named woman will evoke a curiosity sure to hasten us to perdition?

Perhaps the quaint reasoning holds good where pulpitan decoration is concerned. Philosophers say Truth requires no engarnishment, which may account for the ministerial labour involved in making Religion presentable; and this, in its turn, like the flowing raiment of statuary, human and stone, may but lead to investigation.

Truth, as a result of the operations of this organized hypocrisy, has become vaguely ethereal. More acceptable to our ultra-refined ears it may be when clothed in imagery. Less severe may be the sting of fact when its point is sheathed in silk. Truth may be less bitter when robed in the regal garments of word mastery. Brutal, loathsome, hateful things may be more comfortably considered when distance dims their glare. Keep the ugliness away out of sight and touch. Cover it up in pleasing illusionment. Hide it with truth in the darkness. Keep it silenced in secrecy, and your days may be more peaceful, and your conscience less active.

Perhaps; but the moss-grown paths of serenity were meant for lovers, not for pioneers.

No soft pathway must the tellers of Truth tread; and the resting-places are few and at long intervals. Hard and rugged and wearisome are the roads the seekers and teachers of Truth struggle over. They are not seen on the popular paths, whose very smoothness condemns them. They are not found with the mob; for discouraging safety lodges there. Never choicely appropriate to the occasion or the circumstances are their words. They do not foregather with sycophants. They see Truth as she is, having divested her of those popular, clingly, artistic garments, and they tell what she is like, despite the penalties they suffer.

Against these men have recently risen obstacles that often seem insuperable. Humanity, for eighteen dark months, has been borne, like a cork, miserably at the mercy of the ragings of the waters of the River of Lies. How many pulpits have poured forth their torrents to swell the flood? From how many throats, divinely strengthened by the grace of God, have the humility and meekness of the Lord Jesus Christ been blasphemed? From how many lying lips have hollow consolations and rewards been offered to those who

have suffered? How many parched hearts have been dipped in that mighty River of Lies? What have they made of the teachings of their God and Master, the lowly Nazarene, the personification of Truth, as they say, but streams to pour into that river of death? They lie, and they lie, the while Christ, did he exist, must agonize. They profess Truth's loveliness, the while poor pale Truth looks on, her eyes wide with wonderment, her heart, maybe, contracted with pain.

A commonplace story provoked me. Hence the foregoing.

Just to-night I heard of a young soldier, nineteen years of age, who, for a long time, had been in hospital suffering from internal frostbite. He wanted to go home to his mother, never to leave her again, he said; and the nearest to her he reached was a military hospital twenty miles away. Apparently, brandy had not been the proper treatment. Injections of olive oil also failed; and, recently, when his mother visited him, the poor kid was lying in bed, his knees permanently drawn up to his chest, and his arms for ever bent up to his cheeks. The doctor said he might live; but —. Far more humane it would be to drop life's curtain around him, that he might sleep in the peace that knows not any war; but he typified Humanity; he had to live his days.

No; Truth is ghastly. She is pale with suffering. Her brow is furrowed with worry. A demon tugs cruelly at her heartstrings; and she shivers with cold and fear. Is it any wonder?

Leaning against a dying tree, she gazes with tear-swept eyes across that vast river of lies, whose spray has drenched and stained her white flesh, whose mud oozes between her toes, and will soon cover the beauty of her feet; whose own bosom is yellow-stained and fearful in its ferocity. The mightiness of its bellowings drowns her voice, as the love croon of a doe is lost in the noise of the black ruin of an earthquake. Loneliness has gathered around her, the terrible loneliness of the stricken and desolate, the loneliness that seems to lack the storehouse of self.

Certainly there rise up from the roaring waters many men who proclaim loudly their love for her. But proclamation is nothing; and their lives and voices are driven heedlessly along, to perish, ultimately, in the confusion, or to dwindle out in a pool behind a mass of wreckage. Certainly there are men who, eagerly and fawningly, prey upon Truth, but safely, their pulpits having adaptability enough to be transformed into boats. From these shelters they still tell the old tale, still lavish upon Truth virtues she would scorn to possess, qualities she would despise, powers she would disdain, and influences at which she would make mock. Still they bend the knee to her; still they assert their guardianship of her; and still, from the turbulent river of lies, safely ensconced in their ships, they bow their heads and lift their arms to an imaginary pedestal that is statueless.

Never, perhaps, has Truth looked out upon so vast and powerful an agglomeration of waters. Never, perhaps, has the River of Lies been so swollen. Never, perhaps, have the eyes of Truth been so weary with the weight of the sight of sad things. Never, perhaps, have so many men and movements been remorselessly, callously, and treacherously swept into so overwhelming a torrent.

They may speak, these pulpit people, these press people, these great intellectual people; but what if their words are saturated by the spume of the waters of the River of Lies? What if Truth still leans against the decaying tree, her hair clammy, her eyes lightless, her body listless, her soul drowsy with sorrow and her heart overburdened with pain? What will it avail them if

their words are glorious and their visions empurpled? What will it avail them though they praise, idolize, and worship her to distraction? In a few short years they, too, will drown in the River of Lies; but she will remain, awaiting, through the miseries of the years, the coming of the time of freedom, when the river will have sunk into a brook, and from the dried, grass-grown mud will have sprung gardens of fair flowers, and when man, released from the imprisoning waters, will serve her with his heart and not with his lips.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

If we may trust the reports in the daily press, all honour is due to Dr. Liebknecht for his energetic timely protest in the Prussian Diet. As in the case of the Dreyfus affair in France, it has been left for a Freethinker to say the decisive word in regard to the prostitution of the national schools in the interests of militarism. Dr. Liebknecht roundly accused the Government of utilizing the educational machinery of the country to create soldiers. "The teaching of history is systematically distorted for the purpose of introducing into the schools a certain political conviction, and also hatred against England. The militarizing of schools converts them into training stables for war. You educate your children to be war-machines. U boats and poisoned bombs are their ideals." It requires courage of no mean order to say this in Germany to-day, and while the clergy are acting as active promoters of the war spirit, it is striking that this protest should have been made by a Freethinker.

"The militarizing of schools converts them into training stables for war." That is a golden sentence; and we would like to see it driven into the minds of educationalists all over the world. For even in this country there are those who would put our schools to the use denounced by the veteran German Socialist. Since this War commenced, as before it started, resolutions have been passed in favour of military drill in schools, and in many secondary schools this already obtains. A more suicidal policy could not be conceived. Whatever may be the duty of adults in relation to the conflict now raging, it is certain that the strongest hope for the world's future peace lies in there being reared in every country a generation at least free from the militaristic spirit, even if they are not actively opposed to it.

In one of the papers which purvey knowledge for a small sum, a touching misprint reads as follows: "In India a man out of a cask may not marry a woman out of another cask." And not only in India is this the case. The local authorities would not permit Diogenes to live in a tub nowadays—and he was looking for an honest man and not a wife.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton poses as a maid-of-all-work of the Church Catholic, but sometimes he shows his limitations. Criticizing a Raemakers' cartoon, entitled "Satan's Partner," he congratulates the artist on "depriving the Devil of all moonshine of dignity which sentimental sceptics have given him." Even a schoolboy could hardly do worse than insinuate that the author of *Paradise Lost* was a "sentimental sceptic."

Owing to the coal shortage, Midland schools have been closed. We wonder if this scarcity of coal affects the place so often mentioned by clergymen?

What's in a name? The President-elect of the Free Church Conference is named Shakespeare. The only Shakespearean association of the Conference is that it may be described as "Much Ado About Nothing."

The Bishop of Kensington views whist-drives with high-sniffing contempt when they are used for raising church funds, and regards cards as a "mean expedient." In the

days of faith the Bishop might have threatened the card-players with the prospect of the "last trump."

One of the great assurance companies last year disbursed eight-and-a-quarter millions of money among the relatives of deceased persons. We have no doubt that this did far more good than the so-called "consolations" of religion.

A good story comes from the United States. A temperance speaker shouted, "If any man here can name an honest business that has been helped by the liquor people, I will spend the rest of my life working for the saloon people." A man rose and said, "My business is honest, and it has been helped by the liquor people." "What is your business?" demanded the speaker. "Sir," was the reply, "I am an undertaker!"

"In the school of war," says Mr. Horatio Bottomley, "we shall have learned to fear God and to honour the King." Priceless, indeed! We imagined we were spending five millions a day.

Canon Adderley is quite an unconventional clergyman, and in his book, *In Slums and Society*, he has produced a very readable volume which should disturb some clerical doves. For instance, he refers to the Bishop of London as "the Sunny Jim of the church." Presumably he had seen his lordship in his khaki uniform.

There continues to be considerable attention given to the alleged religion of soldiers. And there is no escaping the impression that the thing is overdone. The parson "doth protest too much." Less assertion would indicate more conviction, and certainly greater ease of mind. The fact of the matter is that the clergy are quite aware that whatever eye-opening there has been in regard to religion, has been in the direction of Freethought. We have published numerous communications on that head already, and now we have the Bishop of London asking for an explanation of the fact that in a camp of five thousand not more than twenty came to early morning service, and perhaps twenty on a battleship of a thousand men. The explanation is, we take it, that religion is found out; and although we do not regard the Bishop of London as a reliable or trustworthy authority, yet on this head he may be trusted not to underestimate matters.

The Church authorities appear to have strange ideas of war-time economy. They are spending £1,500 in redecorating and repairing the residence of the Bishop of Newcastle. Quite a modest sum for his lordship's spring-cleaning.

His Grace, the Archbishop of York, who figured on the platform at a recent meeting at the Guildhall, to advocate national thrift, has shut up half his house, reduced half his establishment, and put the amount saved into War Loan. A cynic might suggest that this was five-per-cent. patriotism.

Here is an amusing story of a Nonconformist Army Chaplain. He was about to conduct the service, when the Colonel said to him, "Do you wear a surplice?" "Surplus," said the good man; "no, I am a Baptist. All I know about is a deficit."

Prophets appear to have fallen on very evil days. "Zadkiel," who has served the believing world so faithfully for so many years, has his words of consolation for 1916, but he appears unaware that Lord French no longer commands our Army in France.

Writing in the *Daily News*, the Rev. Dr. W. E. Orchard says "It will soon be noised abroad if Christ is really in our house." Meanwhile, one hears more of Billy Sunday and other howling dervishes.

Although English Christians profess to worship a carpenter

god, they are nothing if not snobbish. When Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania, died, the newspapers referred to her perfect character, and published columns about her good qualities. Curiously, most of the papers omitted to mention that she was a German.

Discussing the question of war-time morality, the Bishop of Birmingham said, the ancient notion that woman is the "weaker vessel" has been completely disproved. This "ancient notion" was taught by the Christian Churches for centuries, and has Biblical sanction.

The inset pages of the *Brightside Magazine* (Westcliff-on-Sea), which is circulated largely in Congregationalist circles, contains a "Children's Page" with a summary of the Greek story of "Orpheus and His Harp." The readers have the consolation that it is as true as the Gospels.

As we get most of our London music-hall turns from the States, I suppose it will not be long before we see the Rev. Frank Gorman, of Portland, Oregon, who has 'verted from the Church to the Stage. "I left the Congregational Church," he says, "because I felt that it was more honourable to work for an honest dollar singing in vaudeville to pay my debts, than to sing psalms and dodge them."—*London Opinion*.

There is certainly one frank parson in existence. Rev. Spencer Elliott said at Manchester the other day, "At first it was thought that the heart of England was going to God in the hour of struggle. Instead of that it turned to Charlie Chaplin." Not quite that; but the statement is certainly much nearer the truth than the stories of our Army crying out for religion and bemoaning the scarcity of the other chaplain.

It is doubtless good to be an ardent labourer in the Lord's vineyard, but it is unwise to mix it with other forms of activity. This is illustrated in the case of Griffiths Llewellyn Jones, of Bath, who is charged with defrauding no less than seventeen servant-girls under promise of marriage. Jones is a well-known religious personage in Bath, where he has for years conducted the largest Bible-class in the city, and assisted in a lay capacity various churches in the city. At present it looks as though these churches will have to look abroad for other help. The prosecuting solicitor described the frauds as deliberate and heartless to the worst degree.

An amateur evangelist said at a meeting of one of the London Military Tribunals, that he thought the ministry was considered as a reserved profession. Reserved, indeed! Most parsons are far too talkative.

Far-reaching reforms in the matter of dress are promised on account of war economies. At Harrow School the coat-tail is to be abolished, and a plainer coat used. Let us hope that the poor boys will not be driven to use the costume of the Twelve Disciples.

The unexpected always happens. The following profane anecdote was published recently in the dear *Daily News*: "What did Noah do all the time when he had nothing to do?" asked the child. "Perhaps he fished," said the teacher. "With only two worms?" said the child, after a wistful silence.

"We are sorry to find that the Rev. A. J. Waldron is willing to make use of one of the most popular periodicals for the sole purpose of making out a case against teetotalism," says the *Vegetarian*. Has Mr. Waldron been reading *Bible and Beer*?

Speaking at the Free Church Conference at Bradford, Sir J. Compton Rickett, M.P., president, said that the nation had found itself in a deeper consciousness, that it was capable of sacrifice. He omitted to mention that the clergy had done so little and the laymen so much.

Mr. C. Cohen's Engagements.

Sunday, March 26, Marlborough Hall, Hardman Street, Liverpool; at 3, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave"; at 7, "The Challenge of Unbelief."

April 16, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

W. WALKER.—If you admit that the general is as real as the special, but that it comes under a different category, there is really nothing in dispute between us. Our contention is, that in relation to social evolution, the subjective—or psychological—factor is the all-important. We, of course, never asserted, or implied, that the phenomena are derived from the law. "Law" is a description of the relations between phenomena. Please excuse extreme brevity here.

A. R.—By all means send on any suggestions you have to offer. We are always pleased to receive them. We don't, of course, promise to adopt them, but we do promise to consider them, and that is all that reasonable people can expect. In the long run everyone should act on his, or her, own judgment, even though in its exercise good things are rejected along with the less good.

MR. S. SYKES writes inquiring if Mr. Trebells—the writer of the articles "Religion in America"—will say in what degrees of Freemasonry women are admitted in America; are they regular Lodges, under the control of the Grand Lodge of America, and are men and women in the same Lodge together? As the writer of the articles is resident in America, it will be some weeks before a reply to the above can be forthcoming.

E. D. SIDE.—Pleased to hear from one who knew the late G. W. Foote for so many years. Thanks also for your good wishes in what you describe as our "uphill task." That is a correct expression, and the consolation is that the higher we get, the broader and grander the view.

V. B. NEWBURG.—Sorry to hear that you have been unwell. Best wishes for speedy recovery. We did not notice the issue of the paper you name, or would have noted it.

K. RICHARDS.—Thanks for good wishes for the *Freethinker* and its staff.

A. G. LYE.—Our Business Manager is writing to America to see if what you require can be obtained.

J. T. JONES.—Thanks. The times are not such as are favourable to the raising of money, even for such a purpose as the "Memorial Fund." We are quite appreciative of the fact that such subscriptions as have come to hand are not so large as senders would desire, nor are we likely to misunderstand the spirit in which the subscriptions have been offered.

TOM RENNELS.—Some years ago an "Independent Department" was opened in the *Freethinker* for the discussion of social topics, but it was abandoned for want of support. We should be quite willing to try the experiment again if any general desire for such an innovation were expressed by our readers. But it is well to be alive to the fact that differences of opinion on social and political matters are quite compatible with union on the question of the destruction of supernaturalism, and that is one of the main purposes for which the *Freethinker* exists.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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.

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.)

WE have now reached the last week of this Fund which has been running through these columns for nearly four months, with the result that the total sum subscribed to the time of going to press amounts to £443 4s. In the circumstances of the time this leaves no cause for complaint, however much, for Mrs. Foote's sake, we would have liked to have seen a larger amount. But

the times are hard, and I have had scores of letters expressing inability to give more, and many have written regretting they were unable to subscribe. All this latter group I beg to thank—in Mrs. Foote's name—for their intentions, and the former group, together with the subscribers in general, for their help. In a week or two I shall have to make a further statement about the Fund, and shall take that opportunity of dealing with one or two other matters of interest to *Freethinker* readers.

C. C.

"The Roll of Honour."—Fifteenth List.

Previously acknowledged, £417 11s. 6d.—A Canadian Friend (per Watts & Co.), £1; H. Jessop, £5; J. T. Jones, £1; S. M. P., £5; A. Marks, 3s.; A. F., 2s. 6d.; J. D. Maysmor, 9s. 6d.; K. Richards, 5s.; A. J. H., £1; F. Marschel, 10s. 6d.; T. Stringer, 3s.; S. G. Poole, £1 1s.; J. de B. and Wife, 10s. 6d.; Dr. R. T. Nichols, £5 5s.; S. E. Beardall, 2s. 6d.; E. D. Side, £2; A. Brooks, 10s. 6d.; T. Hibbott, 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*, W. Bean £1; F. White, 5s.

The £1 1s. acknowledged as "A. B. Swan" in last week's list should have been A. W. B. Shaw.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (March 26) in the Marlborough Hall, Hardman Street, Liverpool. The meetings are at 3 o'clock and 7. We have no doubt there will be a good attendance of friends from the district, and arrangements have been made to provide tea between the afternoon and evening meetings.

The return visit of Mr. Cohen to South Shields on Sunday last was completely successful. All seats were filled by the time the lecture commenced, and those who came late had to be content with standing-room. The attendance was the more gratifying as the weather was simply beastly. Fog and drizzling rain must have had its effect on some although there were visitors present from Newcastle, Gateshead, and other places. Before the lecture, Mr. J. Chapman, violin, and a friend at the piano, gave a selection of music, which deserved the hearty appreciation it received. Mr. Hannay made a good Chairman, and Mr. Ralph Chapman, with others, was as busy and as cheerful as ever. There was also a good sale of the *Freethinker*. We are asked to make the acknowledgements of the Branch to the friends at Jarrow and elsewhere who assisted in making the meeting a success.

We are glad to learn that Mr. Lloyd had an excellent meeting at Leicester on Sunday last. There was a good attendance, and Mr. Lloyd, despite his recent illness, was in fine form. Although not quite recovered from the attack, we are happy to say that his strides in that direction are becoming increasingly rapid.

We have received a letter from the Hon. Stephen Coleridge, and our contributor Mr. Robert Arch, which we are obliged to hold over until next week.

For some time past, owing to a variety of circumstances, the offices of the Secular Society, Ltd., and the National Secular Society, at 62 Farringdon Street, E.C., have been open at irregular hours. The General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, now asks us to inform intending callers that they will find her, or a representative, in daily attendance from 12 to 4 o'clock, Saturdays excepted. Visitors can, of course, be seen at any other time by appointment.

Mr. F. J. Gould has a good article in the March issue of the *Positivist Review* on "The War and the Spiritual Outlook." The whole breathes a fine spirit, as the following passage will show:—

Nothing has been more remarkable, during the present tragedy, than the decisive establishment of the Judgment of Mankind as the moral court of arbitration.....A very brief glimpse at history will show us how marvellous is the change in which we are assisting. Once, the moral

law for city or people was decided by a group of astute elders, gathered in an inner room of a temple, and dictating the oracle which the Pythoness repeated to the awe-struck suppliants. Then arose the Catholic Church, and the voice from the chair of St. Peter issued the commandment to princes and serfs, nations and cities. Then the Bible had its season, being quoted with a sort of steel-trap finality by Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Wesley, and Spurgeon. Thus the centre of judgment moved from an oracle to a church, from a church to a book printed million-fold, and now at last it moves to the universal heart and mind of Man.

That this is a true picture of the evolutionary process at work, few will deny; and if in what follows Mr. Gould strikes a more hopeful note of the near future than many of us would feel quite warranted in echoing, the fault—if it be one—is certainly excusable:—

What other ultimate is possible? Japan now joins in the judgment, and Japan is not Christian. India now joins in the judgment, and India is not Christian.....We are nearing that point, when Asia and the West, retaining the best impulses and moral traditions of the ancient faiths, are combining in a vast Public Opinion, which is not Christian, not Hindu, not Moslem, not Buddhist, not Confucian, not Hebrew, but Human. It is at the bar of this Human Tribunal that Kaisers, Kings, Presidents, Cabinets, diplomatists, soldiers, churches, schools, parties, capitalists, Socialists, pioneers, and prophets must stand for scrutiny and impartial award.

Humour in Serious Subjects.

II.

(Concluded from p. 181.)

RETURNING to the problem as it affects religion, it is curious, as we have already said, to note how very different is the reception of a parody of Scripture if made by a believer or a non-believer. We have already shown that Lord Salisbury's humorous reference to the nudity of Elizabeth of Hungary and Sir William Harcourt's parody of Scriptural phraseology passed almost without comment as legitimate excursions into the field of wit or humour. Matthew Arnold's representation of the Trinity as three Lord Shaftesburys lost him no friends, while the *Nineteenth Century* could insert Huxley's gibe at the Gadarene pig affair with impunity. Yet Mr. Foote was sent to prison for exactly the same use of ridicule as a weapon, and stamped for the remainder of his life as a vulgar railer at sacred things. Again, it is a well-known fact that the clergy or people of deeply religious views are readily excited to mirth by a parody of Biblical language applied to the ordinary affairs of life. It was, however, a lawyer who, referring to repeated charges of sedition against the late Mr. Bethell on account of his connection with the *Mail Shinpo*, is reported to have said of himself: "And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel." To which the retort from one who knew the Bible was easy. "So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness." A man holding an official position in the Church of England, having received an inquiry from a religious friend in another part of the Far East, asking whether a house had been obtained, wired simply "Luke xiv. 17," which reads: "And he sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready." It might be thought that to anyone who regards the Bible as sacred or inspired, such use of it would savour of irreverence. As a matter of fact, hundreds of such stories might be collected as circulating in religious circles, arising out of the play upon the words of the Bible. Even the most pronounced irreverence is condoned if employed on the side of convention or orthodoxy. For example, the Rev. Billy Sunday, who is now being reported in the American papers verbatim and with scare headlines, is held to be

a great religious force. His methods may be judged by an extract from a sermon in which he declares his objections to the doctrine of evolution:—

Why don't we evolve a little now? I don't believe my great-great-great grandfather was a monkey sitting up a tree, shying cocoanuts with his tail across an alley at a neighbouring munk. I have too much respect for my ancestors. But if you think that way, you can take your monkey ancestors and go to hell.

Mr. Stephen Coleridge, who was revolted by Huxley's reference to "the Gadarene pig affair," would probably describe this as common sense put into racy vernacular. Take, again, the story of David and Goliath as related by Mr. Sunday:—

All the sons of Jesse except David, went off to war; they left David at home because he was only a kid. After a while David's ma got worried. She wondered what had become of his brothers, because they hadn't telephoned to her or sent word. So she said to David, "Dave, you go down there and see whether they are all right."

So David pikes off to where the war is, and the first morning he was there out comes this big big Goliath, a big strapping fellow about eleven feet tall, who commenced to shout out his mouth as to what he was going to do.

"Who's that big stiff putting up that game of talk?" asked David of his brothers.

"Oh, he's the whole works; he's big cheese of the Philistines. He does that little stunt every day."

"Say," said David, "you guys make me sick. Why don't some of you go and soak that guy? He decided to go out and tell Goliath where to head in."

So Saul said, "You'd better take my armour and sword." David put them on, but he felt like a fellow with a hand-me-down suit about four sizes too big for him; so he took them off and went down to the brook, and picked up half-a-dozen stones. He put one of them in his sling, and soaked Goliath in the coco between the lamps, and he went down for the count. David drew his sword and chopped off his block, and the rest of the gang beat it.

Now this specimen of Mr. Billy Sunday's style is actually quoted by a London weekly journal, after some deprecatory references to what may seem "vulgarity" or "profanity" to English readers, as "perhaps an extreme example of the revolt against the literary sermon"! Yet the journal in question would be horrified if it had been attributed to Mr. Foote. The same journal, which evidently regarded the death of the Editor of the *Freethinker* as beneath notice, despite his friendship and intellectual sympathy with James Thomson, author of "The City of Dreadful Night," and the appreciation of his work by George Meredith, printed a verse in a recent number which, had it appeared in the despised journal, would have been regarded as sheer profanity. In an article on epigrams, a writer in its columns quoted the following by Mr. J. C. Squire as evidence that epigram is by no means dead, prefacing it by the caution that "its language will of course offend the believers in tribal deities against which it is directed":—

God heard the embattl'd nations sing and shout:

"Gott strafe England!" and "God save the King!"

God this, God that, and God the other thing.

"Good God," said God, "I've got my work cut out."

Ingersoll, with his marvellous power of oratory, could make an audience weep or smile in turn, and because of his humorous sallies was denounced throughout the length and breadth of the United States as a profane blasphemer. But no parody of a Biblical story by Colonel Ingersoll ever descended to the vulgarity of the Rev. Billy Sunday, whose methods are so popular, supported as they are by press and pulpit, that it is regarded as a comparatively unsuccessful campaign in any town which does not yield Mr. Sunday a net return of

£10,000. The truth is that wit, humour, and ridicule are as legitimate weapons in religion as in politics, and are availed of by the majority against the minority with impunity, but punished with social ostracism if not imprisonment when employed by the few against the many. When Albert Durer painted the Pope pitched into the mouth of hell, thus essaying to represent pictorially the views that were later to be associated with the name of Luther, he was doubtless dubbed a blasphemer. To-day over a large part of Christendom his work would be regarded as evidencing the revolt of a really religious mind against the excesses of those who in his day championed religion. Voltaire employed his matchless wit and sarcasm against a religion that remains powerful, so in Protestant as well as Catholic countries he is still regarded askance, while in France alone is there a full recognition of the great work he accomplished in liberating men's minds from superstition and destroying the despotism of the Church. In France, indeed, there has been a tendency for the popular current to run the other way, and for weapons to be employed against religionists which they themselves applied to unbelievers in the past. So difficult is it for the majority, even when educated in the virtues of tolerance, to recognize that the minority have rights.

—*Japan Chronicle.*

Skeleton Sermons.

Introductory.

FREQUENT complaints are heard from long-suffering congregations and long-winded parsons that the wants of the former are but partly supplied by the latter. The congregations are in anger, the parsons are in despair. For the preachers are preached out, and so are the congregations in another sense. Nothing new is found under the Sunday. No original ideas are forthcoming, or, if they are, they are only fifth-rate. Hence, a great falling off—either all to sleep or altogether—on the part of the congregations. With the view of supplying the wants of the people and the deficiencies of the pastors, we herewith issue a first series of Skeleton Sermons, fifty-two in number, being one for each (Market Day) Sunday of the year, on well-known texts. We call them Skeleton Sermons, as they will be brief (the brief of an advocate for human progress). They will be outlines, to be filled up by any clergyman who may use them in the outlyin' districts. Further, we call them Skeleton Sermons, as they will not, we hope, be wanting in *backbone*; they will deal with things *temporal* and *sacrum*—we mean sacred—they will replace the mental *lumber* of the parsons; they will embrace within their *radius* things appealing to the sense of the *humerus* and to the lachrymal susceptibilities; and whilst they must not be delivered with a *nasal* twang, many of them will be upon texts furnished by Saul of *Tarsus*.

I.

What is Truth?

"What is truth?" asked Pontius Pilate, some two thousand years ago. And then he walked off before anyone had time to even risk a guess, he being fully confident, no doubt, that he had placed an unanswerable poser before his people. I hold that truth is the tyranny of vulgar, commonplace fact. Lying—the wise call it mendacity—is merely a poetic soul's rebellion against that absurd tyranny. When a man tells you that the world can do without lying, that man is really not lying at all, he is merely giving expression to

the deep need of the human soul for the impossible. *En passant*, let me add that for a blundering politician or average divinity wrangler the naked truth is a precious perilous thing to handle; consequently, in political and quasi-religious circles there is always a very deplorable scarcity of the article.

There is an ancient fable which tells us that on a summer afternoon Truth and Falsehood set out to bathe together. They found a crystal spring, and bathed in the cool, fresh water, and Falsehood emerging first, clothed herself in the garments of Truth, and went her way. But Truth, unwilling to put on the garb of Falsehood, departed naked. And to this day Falsehood wears Truth's fair white robes, that many persons mistake her for Truth's very self, but poor Truth still goes naked. This looks a little strange in cold print, but then Truth always does startle people, and this is why she lives at the bottom of a well, where her existence is not likely to offend. What could be more sublime?

Or what could be more ridiculous than the man who had been caught fibbing blandly that "he had too much respect for the sacred goddess of Truth to be dragging her out on every paltry occasion that offered"? And some of the witnesses in recent Court cases must have shared his sentiment.

Beyond doubt, enough perjury is committed every week to sink a man-o'-war, and, therefore, it might be as well to abolish the farce of "taking the oath" altogether, as no one seems to be dangerously shocked about the matter. Now and then a terribly enraged judge ventures to remark that Ananias was somewhat severely dealt with, and his punishment might more justly have fallen upon some persons than in Court. Everyone present immediately assumes a look of intense awe by way of showing his Honor's remark met with general approbation; the Sergeant on duty kicks the dog out of the temple of justice, and right there the matter ends.

Perjury is plentiful enough here, but convictions for it as scarce as corkscrews at a Quaker's congress.

There is a tale told of a downy darkie who was once called as witness in a case concerning the sinking of a barge. The coloured coon being duly sworn, the cross-examination rattled along as follows:

"Now, Charley, tell the Court how the barge sat on the water when it was launched."

"She set like a duck, sah—jes' like a duck."

"Oh, did she? Well, but didn't you say to some of your mates on the 17th of last January that the barge sank fully five feet, and now you say she floated like a duck?"

"Well, you see, Judge, it happens jus' like dis. On de schenteenth of January I was jes' a-talkin', sah—merely skitin' to a few fren's—same as you might be doin' yo'self at home, sah; but now I'se a-swearin', sah—a-swearin', an' I'm a-gwine t' tell der truth, even if it busts me wide open!"

It strikes me that a little nigger conscientiousness wouldn't be half a bad thing to sprinkle round amongst the white people of our own community.

The utter impossibility of running a world on purely truthful lines is a truism that was anticipated by King David of Israel, who once said, in his haste, "All men are liars." Now, had David, in his leisure, had added instead, "All men are d—d liars," his remark, no doubt, would have more accentuated the fearful and terrible gibe intended. He had no time for liars, but the world cannot do without them; they are indispensable qualities, from which even David himself could not be excepted. If this giddy old world was run on truthful lines, with no wicked lies to bruit, we would die of ennui. For instance, there's my friend, Trangrouse Ticiak, who

on being asked why he didn't take the law against a newspaper that had denounced him as a rogue and a liar, sadly said, "Because the beggar that wrote the article might go into the box and prove the truth of the statement."

It is sheer nonsense to say that all things work together for good to anybody, and, by chesm, a man to be monkeying round upon such dangerous and slippery ground, might just as well be spending his time by endeavouring to pick doubles, or develop a new breed of bob-tailed hens that will lay two eggs a day the year round, and double-yoked ones on Sundays.

My candid advice is not to be too reckless in telling the truth. The best way is to keep on lying the same as usual. That is much the healthier plan. The man who says that the world can get on without lying, should be arrested as a dangerous lunatic and kept in a padded cell for the rest of his unnatural life.

THE OWL.

Conway Memorial Lecture.

"Gibbon and Christianity."

ADDRESS BY MR. EDWARD CLODD.

ON Friday, March 17, the seventh Moncure Conway Memorial Lecture was delivered at South Place Institute, Finsbury, London, E.C., by Mr. Edward Clodd, the subject being "Gibbon and Christianity." The chair was taken by Sir Sydney Olivier.

Mr. Edward Clodd said Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* was a marvellous book, on which Time had delivered a verdict that will never be reversed; a book which drew from Cardinal Newman, the reluctant tribute that Gibbon was "the chief, perhaps the only, English writer who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian." Gibbon's intellectual sword-play found ample scope in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters. If the creed of Christianity left Gibbon cold, he was moved by the story of its chivalry. He gives an impressive picture of the knight who, "as champion of God and the ladies (I blush to write such discordant names), devoted himself to truth and the protection of the distressed."

Gibbon's lack of enthusiasm left him a juster judge than most historians. Towards religion, Gibbon's attitude was that of the soul in Tennyson's *Palace of Art* :—

I act as God, holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.

Like Erasmus, he was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made, and he did not care to run the risk of prison for denying Christianity. The irony which he learned from Pascal was his defensive armour against these barbarous laws.

Human nature has changed but little in the last two thousand years, and the cosmopolitanism of old Rome invites comparison with that of London or of New York of to-day. The satirist said her streets were so full of gods as to leave no room for men. Christianity was not a harmless newcomer among the religions that found protection under the Roman eagles. The Christians were looked upon as Nihilists or Anarchists. They were not persecuted because of their creed. The ordinary Pagan did not care two straws whether his neighbour worshipped twenty gods or twenty-one.

The Christians were unpopular because they were anti-social, aggressive, and abusive. They called the gods of the Pagans devils, and the devils retorted that the Christians were Atheists. Their acts and words proved that if they got the upper hand the Pagans would have a very bad time. And this they had when, in Gibbon's words, "the Church defended by violence the Empire she had acquired by fraud."

The triumph of Christianity was the destruction of civil life for a thousand years. As soon as the Church obtained the upper hand, the slaughter or mutilation of heretics began, and they inflicted far greater severities on each other than they ever experienced from the zeal of infidels. So it has been from the murder of Hypatia in the fifth century to the punishments on freedom of thought in the case of Holyoake and others in our day.

The fall of Paganism called forth Gibbon's irony. The heading of the twenty-eighth chapter runs, "Final destruction of Paganism—Introduction of the worship of Saints and Relics among the Christians." Paganism was never exterminated; it was only transformed. The old gods came back with changed names. An old fable states that the dying Emperor Julian said, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" It was not the Galilean, but the Pagan, who has conquered, and who holds the civilized world in fee simple to-day.

C. E. S.

Pernicious Pars.

The War continues apace. We must fight on until the whole German race—men, women, and children—are completely annihilated. Christianity will then reveal itself as the only divine religion, and the Allied Forces will benefit enormously. Not only will profits increase, but the Church will be divinely revived, and the State will develop large reserves of wealth for the subsidizing of the clergy—*Anti-Agnostic Circular*.

Before the War started we must confess that the Church was rapidly losing ground and failing in its divine object of emancipating the workers from their unsatisfactory status. It needed the energy and living faith of a full-blooded Church to accomplish this; but, alas! our blessed Church was not full-blooded—it was anæmic. To-day, this glorious War has drenched the whole world in blood, and the Church has received its full share.—*Divine Parasite and News*.

As the Bishop of Hoxton (a well-known figure in Mayfair) was walking down Bond Street the other evening, on his way to the Anti-Conscientious Objector's Club, he noticed the enormous number of single young men walking about in civilian clothes. He also noted a lack of recruiting posters and recruiting sergeants. He also noticed the shabby dresses of the well-to-do classes, who have sold all their finery and given the money to the State. He also noticed.....He also noticed.....—*Bishop's Bathos and Gazette*.

We are delighted to record a greatly increased attendance to all the Churches. We do not hesitate to admit that before this glorious War started, the diminishing congregations, and the resultant diminishing collections, were fast becoming a subject for very serious thought and consideration. We thank our Heavenly Father sincerely for this more hopeful state of affairs. Our work for Christ must go forward at all costs. If the War only brings about crowded attendances to the Churches it will not have been fought wholly in vain.—*Church Capitalist*.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Correspondence.

CULTURE AND CRIME.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your ever-admirable, interesting, bright, and trenchant reviewer, "Mimmermus," inhabits a wonderful world of his own—a world of literary giants, and of all the alumni of recorded time—the Pantheon of all the present and the past—sword, book, sceptre, pen, each haloed on its high Olympus—over its doors of dry-as-dust is written the magic terrifying word, "Culture"; all around its outer bastions the great sea of humanity rolls evermore, and strews with wreckage those eternal iron barriers to bliss—the gods are immune, oblivious, indifferent—there is "an interest in life ignored by cultured poets"; it is "human, all too human"—but it is. Perhaps I am mistaken, but it seems to me, "Mimmermus," seeing through his cultured glasses, slightly misunderstands Robert Burns. He must. And only in this light is he excusable in coupling the name of Burns with that of the mediæval apache, Villon. They had *nothing* in common. Epithets are coarse or refined. Apart from the *spirit* of the

observations, they are merely so much, more or less, *breath*. The "working class" of to-day is prone to an epithet of frightful physiological suggestion—and that "from every Sabbath school." It wishes to be forceful and articulate, and only succeeds in being feeble and obscene. Burns was above that kind of language, and all other mental and moral filth, or only occasionally descended to his environment. His art was a miracle; and, minus his epithets, he might have been merely—a "cultured poet"! Of course, there is true and false culture; but even the "true" is apt to be obscure and subtle, and fail to know that—

That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom.

Yet not all the cultured poets are immune from earth. Let us hear one of the "shining ones," Shelley himself:—

Let us for a moment stoop to the arbitration of popular breath, and usurping and uniting in our own persons the incompatible characters of accuser, witness, judge, and executioner, let us decide without trial, testimony, or form, that certain motives of those who are "there sitting where we dare not war," are reprehensible. Let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Virgil was a flatterer, that Horace was a coward, that Tasso was a madman, that Bacon was a speculator, that Raphael was a libertine, that Spenser was a poet laureate.....Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their sins "were as scarlet, they are now white as snow"; they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, time.....Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling, sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone.....arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression.....the state of mind produced by them *is at war with every base desire*.

Italics mine. Shelley suggests "interlunations" of common or even criminal thought and action in the minds of even great poets, but having no necessary connection with their better parts. Their "poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man."....."Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

With all this, "Mimnermus" and your readers are perfectly familiar. Burns to them is more remotely obscure. But in the classics I place him next to Shakespeare; in my own native estimation, I place him second to none. If not the larger, he was the humaner humanist; and he battled with the tides, in the shallows and the miseries, and the wide, melancholy deeps of the ocean of existence. And so, friend "Mimnermus," and you all too English compeers, when you turn your telescopes on continental constellations, be careful not to forget, ignore, belittle, or obscure the brilliant and growing star of your own adjoining Northland.

A. MILLAR.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I write to you now I have time to thank you for the weekly treat I get by the mail which brings the *Freethinker*. The most curious coincidence about this is that I get it in time for reading on Sunday's, and a few of my pals make the jocular remark, "Bill, here's your Bible." I may mention that I do not keep it to myself, for it goes the rounds pretty well.

Mr. Lloyd's "Christianity Weighed in the Balance and Found Wanting" was a particular treat for a few here, also the two last paragraphs of "Acid Drops"—letters written to the *Church Times* from the Front. The reprint of Mr. Foote's was an item that most of our chaps had seen for the first time, and as it has been a *sore* subject to some, they will be likely to remember it.

We are not troubled much by clergymen in the firing-line; but, some time ago—about Christmas—when having a "rest," there was a church parade. Twenty men, at least, were wanted to make the parade look respectable. Officer: "If any of you have any conscientious objection to the C. of E. service, you may fall out." One man stepped out, but was promptly put on a duty in the camp in place of another, who was glad enough to escape "fatigues" to go to church. I can vouch for the truth of this, though I don't suppose it is the only case you have heard.

I am still trusting to "Luck" (capital letter) to enable me to peruse a few more *Freethinker's*. During the now lengthening daylight it will be read more out here. Success is the wish of,—

W. M. P.

Good God!

I STROLLED alone one Sabbath morn,
Along a main highway;
And passed beside a Sunday-school
Which by the roadside lay.

I heard the strains of music blend
In joyous harmony,
As childlike voices sweetly sang
Their glad Doxology.

The minister was standing there,
With pious tone replete,
To bless, and then dismiss "the school,"
Which marched into the street.

A little maid, among the rest,
Seemed disinclined to play,
As she beheld a well-known form
Across the busy way.

"My Daddy!" she exclaimed, and ran
With gladness in her eye;
Unmindful of a motor-car
Which happened to pass by.

Spectators yelled; a shriek was heard—
An agonizing sound;
A mangled form lay moaning low
And quivering on the ground.

A passer-by was looking on;
"Good God!" I heard him say,
As from the scene he turned his head,
And sadly walked away.

Good God! I mused, and thought of this
One pebble on the beach
Of victims, maimed and shattered lives
No human aid may reach.

I thought of earthquake, pestilence,
Volcano's fiery breath;
Typhoon, tornado, famine, plague—
The harbingers of death.

I pondered o'er the tragedies,
The cruelty and strife,
That gory stain which now besmears
The history of life.

Good God! can this be reconciled
With sorrow, pain, and grief?
Oh! Christian, tell us whence and why
These things—in thy belief?

If "purpose" is invisible
When shadows dark abound,
Canst thou a plan divine discern
When sunlight falls around?

With cancer, tumour, leprosy,
The rose and daisies grow;
Are *curses* scattered by the hand
From whom all *blessings* flow?

Injustice hovers o'er each one,
From cradle to the grave;
Is there full recompense somewhere—
Beyond life's restless wave?

If vainly on the earth below
The suppliant may plead,
What hope is there, in realms above,
Petitions will succeed?

Wouldst thou find solace in a dream?
Wake, till the path be trod
That leads to truth; then voice thy thought,
E'en though it be *Good God!*

C. E. RATCLIFFE.

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