

# The FREETHINKER

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*How rare men are.*—NAPOLEON.

## Views and Opinions.

### The Army and the School.

We quoted the other week in these columns what we ventured to call a golden sentence from a speech by the German Socialist deputy, Dr. Liebknecht. In good set terms he informed the Prussian Diet that for years the national life had been diverted to the evil end of securing an efficient military machine. "You educate your children to be war machines," he told the Government. And then came the sentence which put the whole position in a nutshell. "The militarizing of schools converts them into training stables for war." No one in this country, at least, will deny that the indictment needed framing—against Germany. No one will deny that it expressed a truth—in Germany. It is more difficult to gain assent to the statement that outside Germany the same truth needs asserting, and also that a process which is so clearly productive of evil in the German Empire will be no less evil if it is allowed to flourish in other countries.

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### Teachers as Recruiting Officers.

A little over a year ago I called attention to a resolution passed by a conference of headmasters of secondary schools in favour of military training in the establishments under their care. And the other day I received a summary of the report issued by a sub-committee appointed to carry this resolution into effect. Coming from an educational source, the report is frank to the point of indecency. If, in support of his indictment, Liebknecht had read a similar document, everyone would have admitted that he had fully proved his charge. The resolution, says the committee, was "national and military in intention, not educational"—which is exactly what I said at the time. The purpose of the resolution was to turn out good soldiers. It was to provide the Government with an unending stream of soldiers, who should have been habituated to militarism from their earliest years. The schools, in Liebknecht's phrase, are to be "training stables for war." Its aim is Prussianism pure and undefiled.

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### Teaching the Young Idea How to Shoot.

The original resolution included all schools, elementary and secondary. The committee's report is confined to secondary schools only. The problem before it "being a military, not an educational one," the committee thinks "It would be futile to approach the question solely, or indeed primarily, from the side of the school, and to formulate a scheme which, while it might be practicable, and possibly useful to education, would prove to be valueless from a military point of view." Accordingly, the training must be carried on by thoroughly qualified instructors—presumably military instructors—and these instructors must be masters of the school, in order to

preclude friction and ensure discipline. By this means "a real flavour of soldiering will be given to the work." Boys of thirteen may be confined to a reservist course of squad drill and elementary musketry. Afterwards they will be drafted into companies, attend field days, learn to dig trenches, and shoot on a classification rifle-range. By this means it is hoped that boys will "acquire much more of the military spirit than has been customary with Englishmen, together with some familiarity with military duties and discipline."

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### Prussianizing the Schools.

Now, I can assure my readers that the above is not a translation of a manifesto by the Prussian Minister for Education. Neither is it a caricature of an English document. It is a faithful rendering of conclusions reached by a committee of educationalists to whose care the children of the nation—or at least a portion—is to be committed. And anything more ill-advised it would be difficult to conceive. The War may explain, but it cannot justify, it. Educationally, it is bad, and if we use a much-abused word in its highest sense, it is unpatriotic. It makes for the worsening of life, not for its betterment. It is nothing less than the first step towards the Prussianizing of our schools, and so providing ground for an English Liebknecht to denounce the Government for having turned the schools into training stables for war. Its avowed aim is to give boys more of the military spirit, to accustom them to military discipline under military instructors. There must be "a real flavour of soldiering," and boys of thirteen must be accustomed to the use of the rifle, and habituated to squad drill. First the school, then the Army. The one is the door to the other. The Prussians could do no more. The English militarists apparently aim at no less.

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### Shall We Imitate Germany?

Let us remember that the boys who are trained in this manner cannot be utilized for the present War. Their preparation can only be for future uses. And our scholastic guides look forward, apparently, to such an unending series of wars that it is necessary to prepare for them in the schoolroom. That is to be the schoolmasters' contribution to the peace and goodwill of the world. I am not arguing now against the use of armies or the relevancy of war. If nations will fight, they must; but I protest against that spirit being encouraged in the schoolroom. Let boys be taught love of country, by all means, but let it be a love of country which rests upon some better and healthier foundation than hatred of other countries. And I am quite certain that whoever's business it is to provide material for the Army, it is not the business of the schoolmaster. Let him stick to his legitimate work of turning out boys with well-stored minds and well-trained bodies, with a bent for clean, peaceful living, and when the occasion arises that the nation really needs defenders, it will not lack them. Let us study Germany, and profit by what militarism, in and out of the schools, has meant there. And our study

will profit us little if we seize the occasion of a disastrous War to imitate her example.

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Choose which ye will serve.

For we must really decide whether we are to be motivated by a hatred or a jealousy of German methods. Mr. Asquith has told us that the sword will not be sheathed until Prussian militarism has been destroyed root and branch. Destroyed, mark! But the programme of the Headmasters' Association expresses not destruction but annexation. Thousands of valuable young lives have been risked and lost in the belief that something was being done to lift this nightmare of militarism from the face of Europe. How can this be reconciled with the programme above sketched? What is it but an admission that German militarism is in the right, that civilization rests upon brute force, that that nation is the best which is always prepared to brandish the "mailed fist" and to "hack its way" through to the goal of its desires? By all means let us make up our minds which we desire—national and international life resting upon a basis of good will and co-operation, or the whole of Europe divided into a number of armed camps, with the possibility of war always at hand. For you cannot play at militarism without paying the price. You cannot have schoolmasters teaching boys the use of arms, practicing military drill, and at the same time filling them with a healthy hatred of war and its works. You cannot have a people loving peace and hating war, and holding high the military ideal. You may have which you please, but you cannot have both. One can grow only at the expense of the other. And free as I am from the jingoistic patriotism of the music halls, I hope I have a too healthy regard for the welfare of my own country not to protest against its adoption of Prussian ideals and Prussian methods.

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Hands off the Schools.

For years we Freethinkers have been calling out to the priests of all denominations "Hands off the Schools!" If the Association of Headmasters of Sunday-schools have their way, the same cry will have to be raised against the militarist. Hands off the Nation's Schools! both to the priest and to the soldier. The legitimate sphere for both lies outside the school gates. You cannot *teach* peace and humanity at the end of a rifle, even though the rifle may be necessary to secure one and to guard the other. You cannot make for the peace of the world by accustoming the youth of the world to ideas of warfare, and holding before them the soldier as the ideal guardian of civilization. It is the duty of Englishmen, we are told, to fight the monster of Prussian militarism. So be it; but it is surely none the less our duty to fight the same monster of militarism when it rears its head on these shores. And if we really desire to kill militarism, the earlier we commence the better. Germany used her schools to disturb the course of European civilization. Cannot we see to it that we use ours in such manner that they serve as centres from which will radiate influences for peace, humanity, and progress?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### St. Catherine of Siena.

MISS C. M. ANTONY has just added yet another to the many lives of this most famous of all the canonized Catherines of ecclesiastical history, and the *Church Times* pronounces it a work "in all respects adequately done," which, while "it does not obtrude the learning which makes it valuable, presents as a living person the

little homely saint whose word was respected by great dignitaries of the Church, no less than by the turbulent townsmen of distracted Italian cities." Born in the city of Siena in 1347, her early biographers tell us that almost as an infant she made a conscious dedication of herself to the service of Christ. Signs of her future greatness began immediately to manifest themselves, one of them being her going up the steep stairs of her home as if borne by invisible hands. When she ascended them like an ordinary human being, she uttered a prayer at every step. When she grew up her parents were anxious that she should marry a respectable man, but she insisted upon isolating herself in a cell of her own making; and we are informed that "in those years of solitude and silence she learned the secret of power and of inward peace." In that rude, humble cell she dwelt apart, meditating, praying, flogging herself three times a day till the blood flowed, denying herself the food and cleanliness so essential to a healthy person, and then emerging to instruct popes and queens in the way they should go, addressing both as one who had authority. She was without doubt a freakish phenomenon. Her confessor and first biographer expatiates on the tendency towards sanctity that characterized her from her earliest years, but sanctity is popularly regarded as synonymous with holiness, which in all languages means health. In Catherine's case, however, health was a natural impossibility. Her mother could not persuade her to comb her hair and wash her face except at long intervals, nor were the pleadings of a married sister appreciably more effective. This young saint revelled in dirt, as did many others before and after her. In later years she keenly regretted that she had paid any attention whatever to bodily cleanliness. At twelve she discontinued the use of animal food; at fifteen wine was given up; at twenty she ceased to take bread, subsisting exclusively upon uncooked vegetables. In addition to all these unwholesome privations came the relinquishment of the amount of sleep her fragile frame so urgently required.

Now, is it any wonder, I ask, that a child of such eccentric, abnormal habits became mentally the victim of a diseased imagination, and bodily subject to frequent attacks of hystero-epilepsy? She testified to her confessor that Christ appeared to her daily the moment she retired to her cell, for the purpose of teaching her the doctrines of Christianity. Father Raimondo supplies us with a detailed description of such appearances. In one of her hystero-epileptic fits, which occurred when she was twenty-three years old, she received the first stigma, which signified the impression on her hands and feet of wounds, or the scars of wounds, corresponding to those made by the nails in the hands and feet of Jesus. Father Raimondo states that this happened in his presence at Pisa. Immediately upon receiving the sacrament she had a fit, or, as it is alleged, fell into a trance. She remained in this state for some time. On recovering, she called her confessor aside, and said:—

Be it known unto you, my father, that I bear on my body the marks of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ.....I saw the crucified Lord descending towards me with a great light, which caused me from the impetus of my soul to meet its Creator, to raise up my body. Then I saw five bloody rays descending from the scars of his most holy wounds, and directing themselves to the hands and feet and heart of my body. Upon which, knowing what the mystery was, I exclaimed, O Lord, my God, let not, I pray you, the scars appear externally on my body, it is enough for me to have them internally. Then, while I was yet speaking, the rays, before they reached me, turned from blood-colour to a pure and splendid light, and touched the five parts of my body—that is, my hands, my feet, and my heart.

Far be it from me even to suggest that St. Catherine of Siena was a conscious hypocrite, or that Father Raimondo must be called a liar; but there is no getting away from the fact that the former was, in consequence of her manner of life, subject to a very bad form of catalepsy, and possessed an exceptionally vivid but diseased imagination, while the latter shared the superstitious beliefs of an exceptionally superstitious age. The stigmata had proved immensely serviceable to the Franciscan order of ecclesiastical knighthood. While the founder was one day in his cell on Mount Alverno, piously meditating on the sufferings of his Lord, it is alleged by Thomas of Celano and Bonaventura that the Saviour appeared to him and impressed upon his body the scars of the five wounds which had been inflicted upon his own august body. Wonderful anecdotes were related of a vain effort having been made by St. Clare to extract one of the marks on the feet of the saint after death, and of how many witnesses, Pope Alexander IV. among them, had actually seen those identical marks. The legends told were fervently believed by thousands and thousands of simple-minded and ignorant people, with the result that the order of Franciscans flourished amazingly, and became a powerful rival of the previously established Dominican order. But now the turn of the Dominicans had arrived in the reported stigmatization of the Sienese Saint. But though Catherine's fervour as a tertiary member of the order of St. Dominic knew no bounds, and though her imagination was unusually fertile, it was impossible for her to be a deliberate liar. Not having the courage to declare that the marks were on her body when they were not, she resorted to the device of saying that, in answer to her prayer, the Lord had graciously granted that they might be internal rather than external stigmata. It was exceedingly clever of her, but it was a fraud nevertheless, and a fraud which many in that dark century were wide-awake enough to detect. The alleged stigmatization took place in the year 1370, and five years later Pope Sixtus IV. issued a Bull forbidding any expression of belief in the actuality of the stigmata, and ordering their removal from pictures of Catherine, on pain of anathema. A similar Bull was published by Pope Innocent VIII., who seemed anxious to prevent all occasion of scandal to the Church.

Of course, no Papal Bull had, or could have had, in the circumstances, the effect of checking the spread of ignorant belief in stigmatization. The two orders vied with each other in the production of the stigmata. Nearly a hundred instances are on record, of which two-thirds were women. It is ominously significant that the majority of them fell immediately after Lent—as a rule, on Good Friday. Why? Simply because Lent was a period of ecstatic emotionalism, or of an extreme form of spiritual intoxication, when the imagination and the reason were at the farthest points possible from each other, with the result that the imagination ran into all sorts of riotous excess and gave to "airy nothing, a local habitation and a name." Professor Alexander Macalister, in an eminently lucid article on "Stigmatization" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, says, in regard to all recorded cases:—

We may discount a certain number as examples of subjective sensations suggested by the contemplation of the pains of crucifixion. A second set, of which the famous case of Jetzer is a type, must be set aside as obvious and intentional frauds produced on victims by designing persons. A third series, and how large a group we have not sufficient evidence to decide, we must regard as due to the irresponsible self-infliction of injuries by persons in the hystero-epileptic condition, those perverted states of nervous action which Charcot has done so much to elucidate. To any experienced in this form of disease, many of the phenomena described

in the records of these examples are easily recognizable as characteristic of the hystero-epileptic state.

Beyond doubt, the case of St. Catherine of Siena must be put in this last category.

The *Church Times* does not even allude to St. Catherine's unrighteous punishment of her real body for the good of her imaginary soul. It takes no notice of her cruel fastings and self-imposed sleeplessness, but dwells with serene satisfaction upon the outward signs of the operation of Divine grace in her heart, such as the stigmata and the power of healing. The *Church Times* goes further still, and says that "those who were about her saw the suspension of natural law," and that "the wonders they related in all simplicity seem less incredible to us to-day than to those who a generation ago dismissed them as mere embellishments of hagiography." Surely our ably conducted contemporary mistakes the "we" of its own writers, and, perhaps, of the majority of its readers, for the British people at large. We can assure it that the number of unbelievers in such suspensions of natural law is larger to-day than in any former age, a fact which amply accounts for the present bankruptcy of the Church of England, as well as of all other Christian sects.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Passing of a Poet.

Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

—Shakespeare.

Though my words avail not, I greet thy silent ashes.

—Catullus.

The drowning of Shelley on that fatal July day in 1822 was in all probability the heaviest loss that English literature has ever sustained.—G. W. Foote.

THE story of Shelley's last days is ever fresh and pathetic; and, more than mere lovers of literature, Freethinkers have reason to be interested in the radiant poet whose sun set for ever in the stormy waters at Lerici. Shelley seemed destined by the sea for its own. From his boyhood he loved to watch the drifting of paper boats down a stream, and thought that drowning would be the most beautiful of deaths. Three times he had narrow escapes from shipwreck; once with Mary in crossing the channel, once with Byron on the lake at Geneva, and again with Williams off the coast of Italy. The sea and the ships fascinated him, though he was luckless with all his boats. His unfortunate first wife, Harriet, sought the same mode of death which at last fell upon the poet. Shelley prophesied his own end, though few have noticed it. In *Julian and Maddalo* he makes the Count address to him the warning:—

You were ever still  
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
A wolf for the meek lambs.

And the warning concludes:—

Beware, if you can't swim.

A prophecy the more sinister for its very levity, its unconsciousness of destiny. The same thought recurs again and again in his poems. The last lines of *Adonais* might be read as an anticipation of his own death by drowning. In *Alastor* we read:—

A restless impulse urged him to embark,  
And meet lone death on the drear ocean's waste.

There is the same pathetic note in the glorious *Ode to Liberty*:—

As waves, which lately paved his watery way,  
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

The *Stanzas Written in Dejection* echo the same idea :—

And I might feel in the warm air  
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea  
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

In a dirge, written under the deepest emotion, he voices the idea :—

That time is dead for ever, child—  
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever.

Shelley's infatuation for the sea was very marked towards the end. For some weeks he almost lived upon the ocean, putting forth in fine weather in a boat, and during stormy weather in the *Ariel*. Byron had named the vessel the *Don Juan*, but Shelley and his friend, Williams, cut the name out of the mainsail and renamed it. The shadow of the fate sitting in the shrouds fell upon Mary Shelley. She became oppressed with melancholy; the woods overshadowing the house were a nameless horror; the house itself she hated. It was a comrade of the sea, which washed into its porch, and showered its spray on the walls, until it seemed the cavern of despair.

With the coming of Leigh Hunt to Pisa, all was over. Shelley crossed to meet him, and then returned to Leghorn, where he and Williams boarded the *Ariel* for the sail back to Casa Magni. They put off in the company of two feluccas. Captain Trelawny, from the deck of Byron's yacht, watched the doomed *Ariel*. "They are mad," said a Genoese sailor. Mad indeed! They were sailing to their death.

The glory of the day had gone. A sultry furnace-glow had replaced the pure sunlight. Thunder brooded among the jagged clouds which gathered on the horizon. A sea-fog came up, and the waves became discoloured, and moaned with a premonition of storm. The tempest came, brief, but violent. Trelawny looked, but where the *Ariel* had been there was nothing but sea. The clouds gathered again, and the gale blew all night, but Shelley and his companions had gone to night eternal. To the weary watchers the troubled plumes of midnight were the black plumes upon a hearse.

It seems meet that Shelley should have ended his life at sea. In the midst of storm, with no requiem but the moaning of the wind and the sobbing of the waves, the infinite sea, sung by so many generations of poets, took him in her arms. Of the waiting and despair of the two lonely women, in whose hearts terror was lying still, the pitiful tale has been told by Trelawny. He, too, has told of that last, sad scene of all, on the beach before the pine-wood, when the body of Shelley was reduced to ashes in the fire—all but the heart. Snatched by Trelawny from the flames, it was given by Leigh Hunt to Shelley's widow, the dead heart to the broken heart :—

O heart whose beating blood was running song,  
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,  
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,  
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake  
strong,  
Till very liberty makes clean and fair  
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

MIMNERMUS.

## A Freethinker in Serbia.

[J. Rudis-Jucinsky, M.D., the author of this article, is a Bohemian Freethinker and journalist, formerly of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and now of Chicago. He went to the Balkans with other American physicians to stay the typhus epidemic, and remained there a year, helping his colleagues to achieve the famous "American victory in Serbia" over disease, and acting as surgeon in field and hospital.]

I do not know if it was God's wish that we as Freethinkers should organize a unit of physicians, surgeons,

and nurses, with all the generous, prompt, and sympathetic response from true Americans in their non-partizan efforts to relieve the suffering caused by the War in Europe, but I do know that we went to the small but brave nation of Serbia, and that at the moment, too, when the Austrians had already twice attempted to conquer them. The first invasion in August, 1914, had ended in the Austrian defeat on the Drina; the second invasion began on September 8, when six Austrian army corps were held up in the mountains and marshes west of Drina and round the mountain Matchkokanen, a few miles south of the town Krupanje. At the cost of over thirty thousand men, the fighting peasantry of Serbia repulsed the invaders on Cat's Leg Mountain, which was lost and regained eight times before it was at last firmly held by the defending army. Grave were the losses even of Serbians, grave were the results of this struggle between human beings here and there.

The Austrians went into this slaughter with the name of their God on their lips, and the "priests of the regiments" prayed for victory, and asked their boys to fight in the name of God the Father, his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, for his Majesty the Emperor Franz Josef, their "beloved country" Austria, telling them that the death of a soldier on the field of battle is the most glorious undertaking. The second invasion ended in Austrians entrenching by the Drina and maintaining a system of trench warfare similar to that which the Germans had started on the Aisne heights in France and in Russia.

Too late, too late, were all the prayers of the Serbian priests; too late the offerings to their God, which is of the same sort as the Catholic one of the Austrians, who had to engage the Bulgarians, of the same old Greek religion as the Serbians and the German Protestants, to bring the great disaster upon those who were charged with the murder of a certain Ferdinand in Sarajevo, the murderer being a Serbian; not the real Serbian from the old Serbia, but a Serbian from Bosnia, a part of Austrian empire—therefore an Austrian subject! The most interesting part of this "bloody business" of the different majesties, emperors, kings, czars, and dukes of smaller calibre is the fact that the Christian nations combined on the side of the Teutons, even with Mohammedan Turks, and on the other side the Allies have all kinds of religious material from India, Canada, and other lands of theirs, not forgetting Africa and Australia, as the "cannon-food" of their interests.

In our efforts to alleviate the sufferings of the people plunged in the misery of war, doing our best during the stay in Serbia at one year of hard work beginning in Gevgelija, Uskub, and finally in Montenegro, we have lost two members of our unit, and with the American Red Cross and the Rockefeller Foundation especially during the epidemic of typhus, have served to brighten the edge of the heavy clouds which have so long darkened this unfortunate country, religious on one side and progressive on the other. And, strange as it may seem, the ships that brought the relief for the unparalleled number of wounded, sick, and poor, had many times in their holds the ammunition and other stuff made in this country for the single purpose of killing, wounding, and mutilating those to whom we came to offer our help. What a contrast, what a pity!

In modern Serbia, the newspapers, democratic, socialistic, and others, with the schools, have played a most important part in national development. School teachers were the best paid officials, while from among the professors the majority of the members of various cabinets were chosen. The whole of the educational system in Serbia was placed under the Ministry of Public Instruction, where we found even our American First and

Second Readers and the Arithmetics of our great scholars, as indications of the future intentions for progress, with all Russian and French works on sociology, economy, and arts and sciences of German origin and the Bohemian school of Comenius and its influences. The educational development of the various countries inhabited by Serbians is uneven, but in this respect the kingdom of Serbia was standing first, being hampered very much by her most unfavourable geographical and international position. The common schools were divided into three classes, *i.e.*, kindergarten schools, primary schools, and high schools. The course of study in primary schools extends over six years, of which four were compulsory. The schools were free, and for both sexes. To these belong also the common schools in the towns and cities, providing a course of practical instruction directed towards the pupils' requirements in after-life (commercial and other technical courses, agriculture, etc.). The last ones were most vital and successful.

Although the progress of education in Serbia had been rapid, there was still room for improvement. Free-thought was getting hold of many students, especially those studying abroad. The Progressive Party and the Liberals were in constant touch with the "brethren" in Brussels and elsewhere, reminding the people of the old primitive religion of the Serbian people at the period of its migration to the land they occupied in Europe—a pure Naturalism, *i.e.*, the worship of the powers of Nature, to which ancient people were so much inclined. We found deep traces of this faith in the spirit of the Serbian nation, for after 500 years of struggle it was only partially crushed by the ritual and dogmas of the Latin and then of the Greek Christian Church, to which most of the modern Serbians belong, many of them *pro forma*, being really complete Atheists, as we found to our great pleasure, and having a monthly publication for their propaganda. But then came the War, the militarism.

The regular clergy of Serbia belongs to the Order of St. Basil, as do all those of the Orthodox Church of national character, and the monasteries were divided into Lavras and ordinary. There is, and always was, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press in Serbia, the believers being divided by Catholicism (old Greek namely), Protestantism, the Jewish and the Mohammedan religion. The religious authorities were under control of the Minister of Public Instruction and Public Worship. When our brother, Dr. J. M. Kara, died of typhus, we refused the ceremonies of the Church of the State, and sent the whole army of archimandrite priests and foreigners away, stating that the member of our unit was an Atheist, and the officer of the day, detailed for the honourable escort of the body to the cemetery, was only too glad to receive such tidings, being himself one of us!

The Serbian soldier, perhaps more than the soldier of any other nation now at war, has aroused the sympathy and admiration of the world; but one thing is sure—he had read his papers, and, like all the peasants at home, he began to doubt, and, being a natural sceptic, forgot to pray to-day, and to-morrow started to curse not only the enemy, but even his priests, when they tried to tell him about the future in heaven, while he saw "more than hell" every day in the trenches, during the attacks of other Christians from beyond the river, or other countries; and he thought, and began to reason that the praying of his mother far away at home could not, and would not, help his hunger, his distress, and suffering in the field or when the order came for the bayonet charge, and the commandment "not to kill" was violated every second by thousands and thousands of his comrades and

himself, and human beings changed to beasts on his or the other side.

To speak of the Serbians as illiterates would be inaccurate; they have their own literature of three periods—ancient, mediæval, and modern; the last being absolutely progressive and of national character, instead of religious. The ancient period comprises cultivated literature from the beginning of the thirteenth until the end of the fifteenth century. It lasted a little longer than the great united Serbian State, whose end was caused by the invasion of the Turks. This literature is written in old Slavic language, and is mostly dogmatic, with polemics, exegesis, ascetism, mysticism, ecclesiastical rhetoric and scripture, gospels, psalms, etc. In the middle period all the books and pamphlets were published in Dubrovnik. This literature was no longer written in the ancient Slav, but in the pure Serbian tongue. In opposition to custom, they cultivated especially poetry and prose according to the Italian models of that time, with religious works combined, but obsolete when the modern writers came. Moral and philosophical essays appeared, the original and national poetry showed the beginning of a literary development, and the first stones of learning were laid in the eighteenth century. The language was purified, and many national songs gave us "the voice of the people."

To this people we came during the most trying moments of war. We came to help and to work in the name of humanity to those who had the largest share of fighting for five hundred years to protect the whole of Europe, and especially Austria, from invasion by the Mohammedan hordes of Turkey. The present War has proved most strikingly their courage and devotion to the independence and freedom of the country. They showed it in the hospitals and in the field. They are deeply sentimental, given to their national poetry and art. Their national songs, or rather epics, pieced together by wandering bards, and handed down by oral tradition, are part of the education of every child. Their character resembles the Russian in many respects. They have the dreaminess of the Slav, his changes of feeling, his childlike devotion to truth and honesty, in many cases to the peculiar ceremonies of the Church.

"Under the stars and stripes" the American units brought a salvation to these people soon after the outbreak of the present War, and, through the concerted action of groups of intelligent and self-sacrificing people, submerged their individuality in co-operative labour in ambulance and American hospitals. Large buildings here and there were miraculously transformed and adapted to the purpose of humanity. Volunteers, trained and untrained, appeared from every walk in life, and out of such beginnings there has grown an institution which, with all its unpreparedness, played an effective role as a first-line hospital in Belgrade during the tragic September days on the Drin and Sava, and on the Vardar in Gevgelija and Uskup, where we worked after the withdrawal of the northern lines to other entrenched positions until the present defeat of Serbians. The American hospitals and ours of the Bohemian American unit developed into the most efficient and best-equipped of all the base hospitals, caring for all the wounded without distinction, and especially the prisoners of war.

In our hospitals in the two places named, and lately in Montenegro, we have had 8,272 surgical cases, 652 major and over 200 minor operations, besides the clinic for the poor. Here I have served as director of our Frothingham unit, during the most trying months of the first Austrian attack and the second, and the typhus epidemic, which finally was controlled, and cholera prevented by the combined efforts of all the American units. This result could be called justly "the American

victory in Serbia," fighting the most dangerous enemy of humanity. It is true that we Americans had to pay dearly in this terrible struggle with death and the scourge, but the lives lost were the lives of real soldiers of humanity. The sacrifice made at the altar of our profession brought a blessing and gratitude from the thousands and thousands saved, where the maintenance of health and the prevention of disease was our aim, task, and goal.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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### George William Foote.

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#### A Tribute to a Fallen Friend and Foe.

A FOE, because he was ever contemptuous, bitter, and (we are sure unintentionally) unjust to Spiritualism. A friend, because his voice, his pen, his energies were ever exercised on behalf of progress, reform, and individual, social, and national honour.

George William Foote, the most brilliant of the militant British Freethinkers since Charles Bradlaugh, died in England on 17th October, 1915, aged 65 years. Of the many kindly obituary references to him in the English press, we select for reproduction one that appeared in the December issue of the *Animals' Guardian*, London, written by the editor, Mr. Sidney Trist, himself a rather orthodox Christian, with little sympathy for the cold negations of that atheistic, materialistic school with which Mr. Foote has for the past thirty years been so prominently identified. Mr. Trist writes:—

"G. W. Foote was a sincere humanitarian, and thereby set an example to many of those who profess and call themselves Christians, and who pray daily that they may be led into the way of truth. He was an able and cultured man of great moral courage and striking adherence to principle. Had he been a conventional thinker, that is, had he kept himself wholly apart from unpopular causes, his ability would have carried him very nearly, if not quite, to the front rank of public men. But there is a certain type of man who scorns public acclamation, and who stands out boldly and fearlessly on behalf of the truth as he sees it. So G. W. Foote denounced conventional religion, denounced the exploitation of the poor and the needy, denounced the abuse of man's brutal power over the lower animals, and threw in his lot with those who declared that vivisection was ethically and morally wrong and wholly unjust. Whatever else he was, G. W. Foote was a humane, a just, and merciful man. He was also a fearlessly honest man."—*Harbinger of Light* (Melbourne).

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### To a Crocus.

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Sweet harbinger of brighter days to come,  
 Brief is thy life in sunshine and in rain;  
 Thy drooping head bends to the beating drum  
 Of dissolution and eternal pain.

Dust unto dust, thy cheek rests on the grass;  
 Thy glory speeds, like dew before the morn,  
 Or April shadows as they quickly pass,  
 O'er whisp'ring streams that tell of tales forlorn.

Such tales of woe, of lovers' sighs and tears,  
 Of beauty crumbling, and of youth all sped;  
 Yet in their telling, beauty still appears,  
 And lives again, although its bloom is shed.

Sweet harbinger of brighter days to come,  
 Brief is thy life in sunshine and in rain;  
 Thy drooping head bends to the beating drum,  
 But thou hast not lived out thy life in vain.

TRISTRAM.

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King George has made "a munificent gift of £100,000 for war purposes." The King of Kings, who was also the Prince of Peace, never had so much money.

### Acid Drops.

In Aberdeen, too! Shades of John Knox! Listen to this. On the Aberdeen School Board—which has among its members at least one parson—Mr. Croll said that the Churches were just "gangs of organized thieves." On a protest being made by the Rev. J. Gordon, who said he would have to leave the meeting "if sacred things are to be bandied about in this manner." Mr. Croll said that "there was a call for economy, and he was prepared to sacrifice something. He would be prepared to dispense with the clergy, and it would be a great saving at this time." We are bound to say that, in our opinion, Mr. Croll got "right home" in that suggestion. But in Aberdeen? A Zeppelin raid is nothing to it.

We continue to receive complaints of the treatment of Freethinkers by many of the local Tribunals, and we are not at all surprised at these communications. The insolence of religion is a familiar fact, and present conditions serve to give bigotry more confidence in its manifestations. The letter of a correspondent—which appears in another column—is a case in point. The conclusion of the chairman at one of these Tribunals that an Atheist cannot have a conscience is an inexcusable impertinence, and we advise the person so addressed to bring the matter pointedly before the proper authorities. We have done this ourselves several times on behalf of others, and in many cases have advised others to do so. With some this has had the effect of bringing about a measure of redress. And we strongly advise Freethinkers not to submit tamely and uncomplainingly to the insolent remarks of people who are dressed in a little authority—happily "for the period of the War only."

Apropos of the above, we received the other day a letter from a recruit who on being asked his religion, replied quite properly that he was a Freethinker. He was told that he could not be entered as a Freethinker, and was accordingly booked as belonging to the Church of England. This behaviour of the officer in charge was not only morally wrong, it was in direct contradiction to the instructions issued by the War Office. The Army Council Instruction 179, of January 21, 1916, says very distinctly that no question on the subject of religion should be addressed to a recruit at the time of attesting, and—

All Officers and N.C.O.'s are reminded that whenever it may be necessary to obtain information as to a soldier's religion..... his own statement on the point should be taken without any attempt to influence him; and should be acted on without question.

This is quite clear and satisfactory. But it seems that many officers are a law unto themselves, and so set all regulations, as well as considerations of decency, at defiance.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the famous novelist, says, "There is something very surprising in the limited interest which the Churches take in psychical research." Why should Sir Arthur be surprised? Has he never heard of the two augurs who could not meet without smiling?

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that the work of the clergy has greatly increased during recent years. We are grieved to hear that so excellent a body of men are being overstrained. We suggest they all be given a couple of years' full leave, with instructions to say nothing and do nothing during that time. This will give *everybody* a rest, and everybody will benefit thereby.

One frequently wonders at the tremendous prejudice against Freethinkers. This prejudice is kept alive in many ways, and even well-known publishers are not above using their publications as a vehicle for insulting Rationalists. In Messrs. Dent's *Dictionary of English Literature*, which claims to be a reference book, there are many examples. Thomas Paine is described as "vain and prejudiced," and "is said to have become intemperate." We are told that James Thomson's "views resulted in depression, which led

to dipsomania, and he died in poverty and misery." With regard to Shelley, the following gem is worth quoting, "The charge of Atheism rests chiefly on *Mab*, the work of a boy, printed by him for private circulation, and to some extent repudiated as personal opinion." After this, we are not surprised to learn that Professor Huxley "was in sympathy with the moral and tender aspects of Christianity," and that some of Robert Buchanan's works were "directed against certain aspects of Christianity." There seems to be a good deal of Christian charity, or worse, about this publication.

The Rev. J. R. Mitchell, speaking at the Essex Free Church Conference, said in seven years they had lost 257,952 scholars from the Free Church Sunday Schools. "This was not stagnation, it was a disastrous flood sweeping away the lambs of the Church." It looks as if he feared that some of the shepherds would be out of work.

Eternal vigilance is the condition of successful lying. One must be ever watchful to avoid dropping into truth unconsciously. That is why the really consistent and successful and artistic liar is so scarce. For the facts are always present; a lie does not destroy *them*, it only ignores their presence. And then one must be continuously on the watch lest their existence is admitted by the use of an incautious phrase. We have had, for instance, the constant theme that the War has meant an increase of religion. And, yet, every now and again the people who try to popularize this stupidity quite inadvertently lapse into truth. The latest example is that of the Bishop of London, who told a Hackney audience that "he believed that more people had lost their faith in God owing to the War than they had any idea of." Evidently the Bishop is beginning to feel the draught.

Father Bernard Vaughan says our cry should be, not "Back to the land," but "Back to the home." There are too few babies in the world to satisfy Father Vaughan, and the ground of his complaint is quite a professional one. "The Church bench is empty because the cradle is empty." Well, there are plenty of adults about; and Father Vaughan's remark strikes us as a cynical admission of the fact that the Church can only secure clients by breeding them. And for a member of a celibate priesthood to complain at the birth-rate is sheer impertinence.

"While our khaki men are in the trenches," says Father Bernard Vaughan, "I have felt that we ought to be in the benches." Well, that is certainly safer, and the casualty list will make less gruesome reading than the one from the front. The remark was made at a conference on Prayer, and Father Vaughan had said to "our divine Lord," "I am going to have a conference, and I want you to fill the hall. If you fill it I take it for granted that you want more prayer." Naturally, "our divine Lord" filled the hall. Otherwise he might have lost the patronage of Father Vaughan, who informed him that if the hall was not filled he would never try the plan again. And, of course, Father Vaughan trusted to the Lord to fill the hall—by well advertising the meeting, and by sending numerous personal invitations.

Having got the meeting together, with the aid of the Lord—and advertisements, Father Vaughan rightly calculated that a gathering stupid enough or complaisant enough to pray the War to an end, would be stupid enough for anything. So he proceeded to back the Angel of Mons vision by relating how an officer received a visit from a nun, who told him we could not win the War without more prayer. The officer complained to the Mother Superior of the visit, and then discovered, from a portrait, that the nurse was dead. She was a previous Mother of the Convent. We agree with Father Vaughan that this is no more unbelievable than the Mons Angels. If we can believe in them, we can believe in Father Vaughan's nun. If we can believe in Father Vaughan's nun, we can believe in the Mons Angels. They are all of a piece. And Father Vaughan is a priest. He cannot be saying that which is false. And we are civilized, fighting the cause of civilization. A civilization which embraces the belief in

troops of angels fighting on our behalf, and the ghosts of dead nuns visiting officers in their private rooms. Truly a catholic, even though peculiar, civilization.

"God can do these things, and even if they are not true, they should set us thinking, concluded Father Vaughan. They *do* set us thinking, dear Father; and we are wondering whether it is knavery or foolishness that gives these stories birth. It simply must be one or the other—unless it is a combination of both.

"Conscience," says the Lord Bishop of Lincoln in a letter to the *Times*, "is a sacred thing." Doubtless the Holy Inquisitors, who tortured and killed heretics; the Puritans, who condemned old women as witches; and the Thugs, who regarded murder as a religious duty, acted according to their consciences.

Principal James Denney, D.D., is a typical theologian, whose apology for faith passes comprehension. In the leading article in the *British Weekly* for April 6, he refers to young men and women in colleges "whose religion, on their own showing, had gone by the board since the War began, and who would not look at it again until all that was baffling and mysterious in this tragic scene was lucidly and completely explained." As that lucid and complete explanation can never be given, on the Principal's own showing, the reverend gentleman may rest assured that thoughtful young people who have lost their faith through the War will never regain it. It has gone never to return.

Unfortunately, the Principal does not seem to be aware of what has happened to the young men and women whom he describes. Waxing sarcastic, he says: "We can only wonder in what transparently intelligible world these people lived before, in what world void of baffling and mysterious elements, and neatly cut and measured to the scale of their own minds." As a matter of fact, these people never *did* live in "a transparently intelligible world, in a world void of baffling and mysterious elements," but were always in a more or less puzzled frame of mind. There never was a time when their minds were perfectly at rest with regard to the evils and wrongs of the world; but being young and inexperienced, they hoped that the oft-repeated explanation of the pulpit was true; but the War has been an eye-opener to them. The doubt and fear of former years have now been converted into positive unbelief. They were silent before chiefly out of deference to their elders who believed; but now they are so sure of their ground that they are not afraid to avow their unbelief, and defy the cheap jeers of such professional defenders of the faith as Dr. Denney and the like.

This article is the most amazing production we have ever come across even in a religious journal. On the one hand, the Principal professes total ignorance:—

We need not pretend to understand what is taking place. The forces at work in the War are beyond our comprehension as they are beyond our control. We do not see the issues of them, nor the way in which our individual effort is related to the issues.

On the other hand, he claims to be in possession of the most absolute knowledge:—

But we know—and no one will persuade us that we do not know—that what God is calling for in these circumstances is witnesses, lives, and deaths; not men who will state a convincing case for faith, but men who will fight the good fight of faith; not men who will demonstrate the faith, but men who will keep the faith; not men who want evidences, but men who are evidences; men who, when the worst comes to the worst, will cast themselves into the breach and offer to Him the homage of their being.

That is as good a case for faith as it is possible to make out. It contains the quintessence of orthodoxy, and at the same time the acme of unreason. It is faith run into sheer madness. It explains absolutely nothing; it throws not a single ray of light on the baffling and mysterious elements in life; and it leaves the War, from the religious point of view, a bigger mystery than ever.

Principal Denney is quite right in saying that "the alternative to faith is Atheism," and he is theologically correct when he declares, quoting Scripture, that Atheists "die the second death." In this connection, the reverend gentleman prefers several charges against Atheists, every one of which is utterly false. One accusation is that they are cowards. They condemn the War because they are timid and fearful. As a matter of fact, there are numerous Atheists actively serving in the present bloody conflict, and scores of them have already lost their lives. Dr. Denney glorifies war as "an open field for the display of courage," and he also glorifies "the nation that can fight, because it exhibits in naked simplicity the one virtue which can sustain all the rest." Atheists neither glorify nor believe in war, but regard it as the "game of beasts," though they take part in it whenever their sense of patriotism demands. They are convinced that there are other and better fields of cultivating and displaying courage, as well as other and superior methods of settling international differences.

Another charge against Atheism is that it engenders apathy. The Principal grows exceedingly enthusiastic in his affirmation of the glorious potentialities of faith. Faith is in its very nature creative; "it is the function to call a new world into being, and if only it endures to the end nothing is impossible to it." The damning evidence against faith, however, is that its *potentialities* never blossom into *actualities*. The mountains it *can* remove still greet the heavens as proudly as ever. One wonders where the apathy of unfaith comes in. Dr. Denney alludes to the fact that "in 1915 the drink bill increased by seventeen and a-half millions;" but is that due to the apathy of Atheists? We beg to remind Dr. Denny that the majority of Atheists throughout the country are total abstainers. The apathy is to be found in the household of faith. On the whole, Atheists are more courageous, more enthusiastic in the service of humanity, and more temperate in their habits than their Christian neighbours.

"It is suggested that women should act as substitutes for Church of England curates who have joined the Colours," says a contemporary. They might do the non-combatant work of the curates without disarranging their hair.

St. George's day, Easter day, and Shakespeare's birthday fall on the same date this year, and the saint and the dragon are to have a special service on May 4 at St. George's Chapel.

Miss Evelyn Underhill, speaking at a Queen's Hall meeting, said that "faith, hope, and charity have now become national, as well as theological, virtues." Unfortunately, the theological "faith" and "hope" are centered on nonsense, and the charity is largely represented by coals, blankets, and other bribes.

The *New Orleans Item* (U.S.A.) gives an account of a parson of that city who announces that he intends giving an open-air sermon on "Where is Hell?" To illustrate his sermon the parson intends using a complete miniature hangman's scaffold with a full criminal and policemen's equipment. We should say that this man's mental equipment is that of either a lunatic or a rogue. And we imagine that on no other subject than that of religion could a man make such an exhibition of himself with impunity.

The writer of the "Notes from Scotland" in the *Christian World* says that there are at least two million people in Scotland who are outside any organized church life. We do not claim that this two million are Freethinkers, but we may take it that their religious opinions are not of a very active kind. The writer cited consoles himself with the reflection that Scotland has not come to a worse pass than some other countries.

The *Daily Chronicle* says that a wooden cross was the only thing left intact after a fire had destroyed the Church Army hall at Mitcham. We really don't know what the moral is. The cross didn't save the place from fire, so insurance companies will not remit any part of a premium in future because

there happens to be a cross on the building. A correspondent suggests that it is an example of divine "Kultur" or deistic "frightfulness."

At the Ripon Diocesan Conference Mr. H. Macpherson said that "one of the main reasons why we had been involved in War was that our observation of Sunday was becoming slacker and slacker." We should dearly love a plaster cast of Mr. Macpherson's cranial development.

Lord Hugh Cecil says we are not so shocked as we ought to be at the sight of Christians killing each other. But why should that shock anyone? It is not unusual. It has been part of the normal state of things ever since Christianity has been in existence. Lord Hugh complains that there is very little sense that the people we are fighting are our Christian brethren. Again, why should there be? Has Christianity ever stopped a fight yet? Or, if it has, what is the proportion of the fights stopped compared to those it has caused? Besides, if Christians left off fighting each other, there would hardly be anyone else left to fight. If all the Christians in the world made up their minds there should be no more war, the world would be at peace.

The Bishops of Oxford and Winchester, and a number of prominent Nonconformists, have signed a protest against the unfair treatment of conscientious objectors by the Tribunals. They complain that no respect has been shown to sincerely held opinions, and that a conscientious conviction has been held up to public ridicule. In this we agree with them, but we desire to point out that these men are now seeing the products of the training their religion has given the world. No one is more responsible for the feeling that the only opinion deserving fair treatment is one's own, than is the ordinary Christian preacher. The chairman above cited who denied that an Atheist could have a conscience is a sample of the type of mind Christianity has fostered. A saner intellectual training than Christianity has given the world would have made people realize that difference of opinion is consistent with equal worth of character and disposition. And it ill-becomes Christians to rail against intolerance when they have done so much to perpetuate it.

"Judaism," says a writer in the *Sunday Times*, "never had a chance of becoming a world religion." The writer has overlooked the fact that one half of Christendom worships a Jew, and the other half deifies a Jewess.

The *Daily Chronicle* complains that a novel by a very pious novelist has been "semi-banned" by the libraries. The author may take comfort from the reflection that the novel is not nearly so "blue" as the Bible.

Sir J. Crichton-Browne considers that the present War is "a rude shock to science and a beneficent impulse to religion." Why beneficent? If Christians do not stop cutting one another's throats there will be very few of them left in Europe.

At St. John's School, Penge, scholars read the newspapers daily, and so learn history in the making. We hope that the little students are not restricted to these sources of information, for the well of truth is not situated in Fleet Street.

At a meeting of the Southern Military Tribunal recently the Salvation Army asked for the exemption of an employee. The military representative, Colonel Newitt, asked if they were to regard the Salvation Army as a business institution or a charitable institution. The Army's representative replied, "a business institution." "For this relief, much thanks."

Mr. Ex-President Roosevelt has written a new book, *Fear God and Take Your Own Part*. It is a pity that he cannot find time to apologize for his description of Thomas Paine as a "filthy little Atheist," which statement contains three lies in three words—a record in its way.



### Mr. C. Cohen's Engagements.

Sunday, April 16.—Tillery Institute, Abertillery; at 3, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave"; at 6.30, "Freethought and Social Reform."

### To Correspondents.

WILL Correspondents please bear in mind that communications which do not reach this office before Tuesday run the risk of being held over until the following week.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance, General Secretary, acknowledges:—J. Pendlebury, £2 10s.; Bethnal Green Branch, 5s.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Bethnal Green Branch, 5s.

F. BILLINGTON GREIG.—Accept our apologies for not replying to your communication earlier. It shall appear at as early a date as is possible.

L. H. W. MANN (Barbados).—We are greatly obliged for the trouble you have taken.

KEPLER.—Thanks for report. Perhaps we should regard it as a "dispensation of Providence" that the stupidities of mankind are of a variegated pattern. It relieves a distressing subject from the evil of monotony.

A. WILLIAMS.—Mills and Boom. Price One Shilling.

G. W. FOOTE MEMORIAL FUND.—The 6d. acknowledged as from J. Lousman, should have read from J. Lowman.

F. J. GILBERT.—Your appreciation of the paper is most encouraging. We are not by any means at the end of our ideas for improving both the quality and the circulation of the *Freethinker*—only at the beginning. Other things will emerge as funds permit.

W. MATHER.—We are obliged for copies of papers. The parson belongs to the usual type of cleric—always ready to find religious support for whatever passion happens to be dominant. You do well to get letters in the press whenever possible. We regard this as a fruitful form of propaganda, and hope soon to do something towards organizing it.

C. CHAMBERS.—Your letter is a most pleasing and gratifying one. As you appear to realize, there are endless ways of aiding a cause such as ours, and you seem to have a share of the right spirit for the work.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—A paragraph on the subject was already written when we received your note.

E. P.—Many thanks for cuttings which are always useful.

J. T. ENTWISTLE.—The theory of an endless repetition of an identical series of phenomena, is not by any means a trivial question to discuss, but it cannot be done in reply to a query. Something of the kind was held by no less a person than Swedenborg, of whose genius there can be no question, even though one rejects his visions as pathological.

NEMO.—We are sorry to say that we did not receive, nor can we find any trace of, the letter which you say you posted on March 22.

J. KING.—We do not care to open a correspondence on the subject. It is in our mind that Dickens was a Unitarian, although we cannot verify it at the moment. Still, it should be borne in mind that many who are correctly described as heretics have expressed admiration for the character of Jesus. Of course, we quite understand that your objection to the description of Dickens as a heretic is prompted by no more than a desire for accuracy.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—You ask how can any one nation afford to drop militarism so long as other nations go on with it? To this one might reply that, until some nations show a very real desire to drop militarism, there can be no improvement anywhere. But we have never advocated that any one nation should throw away its defences. We are only concerned with creating a hearty and healthy hatred of militarism, as the only sure way of ending it. And we are not inclined to forsake our ideals because others will not adopt them.

A. N. SLOAN.—Your appreciation of the contents of the *Freethinker* is the more welcome as coming from one who professes a belief in Christianity. You may be right that "there is less difference between some Christians and Freethinkers than might appear on a hasty comparison." It will depend upon the Christian,

W. J. WILMOT.—We hear that the gentleman you name is a very ardent supporter of the *Freethinker*, and we are glad to meet in

yourself and friend proofs of your propagandist activity. Thanks for what you have done.

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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

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.

### Sugar Plums.

Our next issue will be a Shakespeare Centenary Number. There will be special articles from a number of contributors, including one by Mr. Foote. This will be an excellent opportunity for our friends to introduce the *Freethinker* to new readers, and it will thus act as some sort of a counterblast to the use that the clergy will make of the name of Shakespeare. As a special favour we would ask those who require extra copies to place their orders as early as possible. This will prevent disappointments, and will secure us against printing more copies than are needed. And that is an important consideration with paper at its present price.

To-day (April 16) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Tillery Institute, Abertillery, Mon. The afternoon meeting is at 3, the subject, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave." In the evening, at 6.30, "Freethought and Social Reform." Provided the weather be favourable, there is no doubt as to the success of the meetings—that is, if past experience be a reliable guide.

We are arranging for a couple of Sunday evening lectures at the South Place Institute. The first will be on April 30, by Mr. Cohen, and the second on May 7 by Mr. Lloyd. There has been no indoor lecturing in London this winter, and we are loth to see the season close without something being done. South Place is very central, and we hope that all our London readers will do their best to secure good audiences. Within a few days we shall have a number of slips ready for advertising, and we shall be pleased to hear from anyone who will undertake their distribution. These may be obtained either at this office, or from Miss Vance at the offices of the National Secular Society. An advertisement of the meetings will be found on our last page.

From Mr. Foote's only son, now living happily married in South Africa, we received the other day a long letter, thanking us for what he calls our "kindness" to his mother, and also for "the way you have conducted all matters concerning my dear father." He also says:—

Of course, I read the *Freethinker* weekly, and I must heartily congratulate you upon your able editorship and management. Of course, you will quite see that the paper will never be quite the same to me as it was, but at the same time I must confess that the tone and quality is as good as ever, and the fact that you have been and are keeping the flag flying in spite of such adverse circumstances as prevail at present is one that the Freethought Party should be proud of.

We do not care to print complimentary letters, but we feel that the above is of enough general interest to warrant a departure from the general rule.

## Where Extremes Meet.

SANITY lies midway between the ferocious and tyrannical abuse of great physical strength and what has fitly been described as the "Worship of the Weak." Great strength, whether physical or intellectual, is not to be despised. It is worth striving for, and when acquired, it is to be prized. The whole question, then, is to see that we *use* it, not abuse it. We add to the sum of human happiness—the noblest task for any race or individual—in so far as we apply our strength and knowledge to beneficent, not maleficent, ends.

Weakness is not a desirable thing, whether it be weakness of body or mind. The latter, in the case of those who unhappily have been placed in positions of power, has frequently brought fearful calamities to communities. Weak-minded persons occupying positions of power, cannot avoid abusing their power. They are the victims of disease. They are not sane. Such persons who are poor and powerless, and thus unable to gratify their whims, ambitions, and caprices, have frequent moods of morbidity or hysteria. That is why we find so many of these people in church and chapel. They must have *something* upon which their weakness can lean or depend.

Thus it is that in Christian communities extremes meet. There are extremely few and independent thinkers who are members of church or chapel. The great mass have their thinking done for them. Their convictions are not their own acquisition; they are dependent upon outsiders. This is weakness; this is disease. It is characteristic of the person who proudly declares "I am a fool for Christ."

Christianity is essentially a religion for, on the one hand, a minority of overlords; and, on the other, a majority of slaves. Intellectual bondage is man's greatest foe; Freethought his greatest friend. The moment a man is denied the right of free investigation, discussion, criticism, and judgment, that moment he is subjected to slavery. Intellectual slavery makes possible all other kinds of slavery.

The royal despot and the ecclesiastical coercionist go hand in hand; but they can only have the fullest exercise of their power in the land where the huge majority of the people lay no claim to intellectual independence, and are enthusiastically religious—not only professedly so. In such a land we may lay down these propositions concerning its inhabitants. They firmly believe:—

First: That the majority is always right.

Second: That the true God—their God—is always on the side of the big battalions.

Thus it is that freedom becomes but a name and loses all reality. Small dissident minorities are heretics and outlaws. They have no rights, because they do not subscribe to the views of the Godly majority; they have raised their heel against the Almighty and are for ever damned. An easy and simple conclusion from an easy and simple premisses. The really enthusiastic religionist has no use for the gradations and refinements and distinctions and discriminations of science. Being all poor worms, only the best of which can ever be butterflies.

This is weakness, and weakness is disease. It is, moreover, a surrender to tyranny. Nay, more, it is the setting of the seal to the approval and adoption, aye, the glorification, of tyranny. Despotism becomes now the noble and praiseworthy badge of the office of him who is clad with divine authority—the Lord's Anointed. Bow down before him, ye people! Let him, if he choose, put his heel upon your necks, and his yoke upon your shoulders! What honour to serve him—the blessed of the Lord! In this strain do a

thousand obsequious priests, with the cunning of their craft, call to the lowly, while they laud and magnify their lowliness—copied from the Man of Sorrows, who was acquainted with grief. Therefore are the common people enjoined to welcome poverty, trouble, disease, oppression, and grief, when these things come upon them—aye, to hug them to their bosoms with fanatical fervour. Is it surprising that from German pulpits (as well as from others) we should have falsities thundered into the ears of the hearers when the whole foundation of their beliefs is false? Are we to suppose that the germ of typhoid, say, can exterminate the germ of original sin, and is therefore to be preferred? All this preaching is hurtful, because it inculcates the desirability of ignorance, weakness, and subjection. It is the advocacy of disease.

Prevention is better than cure. Many of us are far too much concerned with the curing of disease, instead of preventing it. The pathologist is too much with us, and would not be so necessary if we paid more heed to the obedience of natural instead of supernatural laws. Tyranny fattens on the mental weakness of the majority of the people. Every convert to Freethought deprives the tyrant of some of his fat.

The promotion of health is a much greater thing than the curing of disease. Health strongly entrenched has no fear in face of all the armies of noxious germs. Cleanliness and moderation can defy the lusts of uncleanness and excess. Strength and sanity are to be acquired from rational obedience to natural laws.

In China the patient pays his medical man a termly fee so long as he is in good health. When the patient turns ill the fee stops. Are the Chinese not wise in this, and does it not clearly demonstrate that they adopt a saner attitude towards disease and weakness than we do? In China you pay your doctor for keeping you well, not for treating you when ill. But then, of course, China does not enjoy the blessings of our faith. It is a nation of philosophers—in the right sense—rather than religionists; of practical scientists rather than theoretical providentialists. And some of us are too proud to learn!

IGNOTUS.

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## Critical Chat.

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*In re* ROBERTSON *v.* GREENWOOD.

WE were sorry to find the Editor of our respected contemporary, the *Literary Guide*, apologizing to his readers in the April number for the literary combat in which the Right Hon. J. M. Robertson, M.P., President of the Rationalist Peace Society, has been doing his best to knock out his sometime friend Mr. G. G. Greenwood, another honourable legislator. Surely such an entertainment needed no excuse. Both the gentlemen are Rationalists of more or less distinction, and it is only reasonable to assume that they have chosen the best way to settle their differences. We do not see why a number of pusillanimous readers who are so degenerate as not to find even a vicarious enjoyment in a rousing fight should have put pressure on the editor, thus depriving other readers of what was certainly not the least enjoyable feature of the paper. We remember with unmixed delight and gratitude a similar claymore attack made by Mr. Robertson on Mr. F. C. Conybeare who, by the way, did not stand his ground so valiantly as Mr. Greenwood.

We presume that most readers of the *Freethinker* are aware that both Mr. Robertson and Mr. Greenwood are students of Shakespeare; but their approach to the dramatist is from different standpoints. Mr. Robertson is orthodox; he believes, and rightly we

think, that William Shakespeare, the actor and respectable, wealthy burgess of Stratford, wrote the plays and poems published with his name. Mr. Greenwood is heterodox; he holds that the plays and poems were written by a highly-cultured non-Stratfordian author (of the same name, we believe), a lawyer, and a scholar with a good deal of Latin and only a little less Greek. To buttress a crazy argument for the classical attainments of this cultured playwright Mr. Greenwood uses the reasons, or, to speak more correctly, the assertions and parallels brought forward by the late Mr. Churton Collins. He browbeats Mr. Robertson, who is not, of course, a classical scholar in any strict sense of the term, for even venturing to pass a judgment in opposition to that of Collins. Not that Mr. Greenwood has an unlimited respect for Collins, he belauds or despises him just as it suits his purpose. Collins had an extensive verbal acquaintance with the Greek and Latin writers, but he was blessed with little or no literary acumen. He was a sort of amateur critical detective, whose self-imposed task it was to lay by the heels every English poet he came across and convict him of appropriating his best things from the Greek and Latin writers. His thesis that Shakespeare was a diligent reader of the Greek dramatists was treated, we remember, with amused contempt in academic circles as the vagary of a scholar cursed with an abnormally retentive memory, and wholly incapable of a balanced judgment. The parallels pointed out by Collins are no more than we might expect when two poets are writing on similar themes.

Now, what we find is that Collins and Mr. Greenwood are just as wide of the mark as was Lowell before them, and that, in spite of their qualifications as classical scholars; while Mr. Robertson, who has no classical scholarship to speak of, reaches a sane judgment because he has no theory to be supported at any cost, and no classical preoccupations to stand in the way of his criticism. He comes to pretty much the same conclusion as Professor Baynes, and Bagehot who summed up the matter in this way:—

Although the alleged imitations of the Greek tragedians are mere nonsense, yet there is clear evidence that Shakespeare received the ordinary grammar-school education of his time, and that he had derived from the pain and sufferings of several years, not exactly an acquaintance with Greek and Latin, but, like Eton boys, a firm conviction that there are such languages.

The obvious suggestion is, that if classical scholars can go hopelessly wrong in their attempts to prove that Shakespeare borrowed freely and directly from Greek and Latin writers, it is not at all unlikely that the lawyers are equally wrong in their contention that he had more than an unprofessional acquaintance with the language of the law. This, it seems to us, is the upshot of the quarrel. Mr. Robertson certainly has the best of it. But, in fairness to Mr. Greenwood, we must point out that Mr. Robertson's controversial manners seem to have worsened of late. They want even the elements of charity. He is far too apt to seek laboriously for a pathological solution of what, in all probability, is a mere oversight or slip of the pen.

#### THE MALADY OF YOUTH.

From Messrs. Henderson's we have received *Youth: A Play in Three Acts*, by Miles Malleeson (1s. net). A brief analysis will disclose its intellectual quality. Douglas Hetherley has one idea—the rottenness of present-day sexual ethics. This he puts into a dramatic form. The subject of his play seems to be the emotions of a sensitive young gentleman the morning after a night out. In Act I. we see the play in rehearsal. In this Act Mr.

Malleeson proves that he knows his business. It would be both lively and intellectually satisfying if we could be certain that he is merely poking fun at Hetherley and his "advanced" ideas. But, unfortunately, we are not certain. Hetherley is coaching the leading lady, Nina, in her part, and explaining to her, in between, his ideas on life. He tells her that he is a blend of Huxley and Byron, of social reformer and artist, finally putting to her the delicate question as to what he must do if he wants both the freedom of bachelorhood and the pleasures of matrimony. The lady who is taken in by his nonsense, tells him that she will share his flat. Hetherley confides in one of the actors in his play—Wainwright—who has a theory, confirmed in his own case by practice, that most young men don't know their own minds in matters of sex. The best way is to get hold of the "strong enough girl" who will take charge of his sentimental education and prepare him for life. Hetherley will have the chance of talking to one when Estelle comes down to the first performance of the play. In the meanwhile, Nina has dismissed her betrothed for her new lover, Hetherley. The conversation a week or so later with Estelle produces another emotional crisis in Hetherley, he has two or three a month; and after Nina has scored a big success in his play, he tells her that he doesn't think now that he wants to marry her, that he cannot be sure that she is the only woman he will love. She surprises us by taking him quite coolly. She tells him that he must go away and think over it, that he must come back to her if he thinks he ought to. She really has the making of a "strong enough girl." The intellectual contents of the play, it will be seen, is flimsy, not to say silly; but there is not a little cleverness in stage technique. We are left uncertain whether Mr. Malleeson means his play to be comedy or farce. It was produced by the Incorporated Stage Society on Sunday, March 26.

#### THE RUSSIAN SPIRIT.

Quite the best introduction to the Russian drama in its more modern developments is Chekhov's *The Seagull*, a play in four acts. It is published for 7d. by Messrs. Henderson's, of Charing Cross Road, who specialize in exotic and advanced literature. Chekhov, who died in 1904, was a writer of fiction; mostly in the form of short stories dealing with the everyday life of the merchant, professional, artistic, and intellectual classes. He has been called the Russian Maupassant. But to those of us who know both writers, the comparison is not a happy one. While Chekhov's command of the difficult form of the short story is equal to Maupassant's, his humour is more kindly, more human, and his moral standpoint is never perverse; he never describes a cad as if he were a gentleman. His dramatic work is a conscious reaction from the romantic and doctrinaire dramas of Dumas the Younger and Sudermann with their violent catastrophes, tearful sentimentalism, and general atmosphere of the pulpit or the law-courts. His characters reveal themselves more by what they say than what they do; every speech and every event in his plays are morally symbolical. If his men and women argue with one another, the triumph of this or that opinion is not the end proposed by the dramatist. All such discussions are a means of bringing out more clearly the value of the characters and of what happens to them.

Anything like an adequate analysis of *The Seagull* would need far more space than we have at our disposal and even then it would be impossible to reproduce the atmosphere of the play. All we can say is that it represents the conflict between the forces of conventionality and popular success and those of genius and failure. We advise anyone who is interested in Russian literature—

and who is not?—to buy a copy and to give as much attention to it as he would give to a work by Turgeniev.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

## Skeleton Sermons.

### III.—Peter and Paul.

Peter and Paul, those ancient students of "Wimin's Rights," were great confabulators on the much vexed question, the flavour of which was enough to make the handsomest mouth screw round with an ugly twinge, and send a shiver up a woman's backbone, as though she had propped herself naked against the North Pole (1 *Peter* iii. 1-6; *Col.* iii. 18; 1 *Cor.* xiv. 34, 35; 1 *Tim.* xi. 14).

Setting up the fundamental axiom that there is "no wickedness like the wickedness of a woman," those king-pippins of Church history settled the question so completely that female franchise or suffragette movements were wholly unheard of for nearly nineteen hundred years. But a change to a better state of affairs is looming in the distance, and as soon as the thick warmists have cleared away, there will be a dawn of a New Era. During the last half century women, socially and politically, have risen to prominence in greater numbers. Despite many years of stern refusals, broken promises, and what were still worse, heaps of ridicule and rivers of abuse, the downtrodden sex in England are rising on a level with that miserable miscreant—Man. Until recently it has been a veritable charge of broomsticks upon the fortress of privilege. When lovely woman obtains the vote, she must be careful of one thing—to see it is not loaded. What will she do with it? Will she use it to forward the best interests of the country, or will she merely use it as another and powerful means of obtaining another spring bonnet? Will she shake her ballot-papers defiantly in the face of the Government, or will she flaunt it before her wretched husband and sternly say—"Vote for Hiram Pegum Churnside (or whoever the fortunate candidate may be); the man for the women! Liberty, Equality, and no Maternity! Down with the Trousered Tyrant and the Despot Oppressor whose shirt buttons up the back!" Whirr! Whew!! Scat!!!

Neither Peter nor Paul could lay down the law for all time. And timid people see cause for alarm in women invading the trades and professions. There is no cause for it. The matter will adjust itself in time naturally. By-and-bye, the old man will be in the shade all day and read and yarn, while the missus goes to business. About an hour before knock-off time he will bustle round and sling the carrots on, and when she comes home she will find him bustling round the kitchen, very red in the face, and looking like he had never stopped all day, and she will take him on her knee and hug him and wipe all the perspiration off his brow.

THE OWL.

## The Hun at the Door.

POVERTY still exists. Slumdom still swallows its victims. Disease still opens its arms to embrace the little lives of children. Social cancer still eats its way through the heart of humanity; and the sufferings that surround "our daily bread" are not less numerous nor less severe than they were but a few months ago.

The forces that bind so many men and women and children to the sordid grindstone of life, the necessities that fetter them to the disgusting facts that spring directly from livelihood as we know it, the meannesses

attendant upon mammon, the filthiness of its worship, the horrors and shames and crimes that ghoulishly shadow the strivings to make money for elementary life-needs, have not become deceased.

Girls still languish, through misery to weariness, at the machinery of fate; and react to the luxuries and pleasures of vice. Starvation still grips the choking throat; and anticipation still nauseates desire. The selling of souls for a tasty mess of pottage is still a lucrative trade; for Waldron's plays have not yet become historic.

Tragedies of the commonplace social life, the cruelties that, like so many spears, protrude from the porcupine of commercialism, still discolour and distort the more socially valuable of our human emotions. Keeping the wolf from the door remains an economically true statement of the mental and physical condition of quite a large number of our fellow-beings.

Sometimes one would think these things had perished, faded away into a roseate oblivion, or become completely submerged in the loveliest of sparkling waters. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was merely fiction that they had being at all; and yet there is a recollection, not very age-worn, that one could not lift a paper or a journal or even a tract without seeing something about them.

There was the man who possessed slum property where human derelicts floated and sunk. To him it was a gold-mine—to them a death-trap. He was a social criminal, a murderer; he poisoned the bodies and minds of children; he made money from misery; honour from mud; respectability from immorality. He was a terrible parasite, we were told; but was it true?

There were the high priests of Capitalism; men, clothed in renown, nobility, and praiseworthiness; men to whom no section of the temple of justice was sacred; men who received the admiration and plaudits of the people; men who sat on the councils of the nation; but they sweated their workers, we were told; they harassed the fountains of their wealth; and bitterly, brutally, and determinedly did they fight any attempt of their workers to achieve a little more of the good things of life. They were men who, moved by self interest, placed their iron studded heels on the tender breasts of Freedom, and stamped her remorselessly into the mire. They, also, were criminals, we were told; but was it true?

Others, many of them, there were, the wheels of whose chariots moved smoothly and silently, oiled by the blood and tears of thousands of the downtrodden ones of the earth. Profitmakers of immorality, who gloated over the refinements of sex extravagance, there were; and ogres who drank deeply from the well-being of life, as it flowed to them from the vats of alcoholism.

Much time might be wasted in enumeration of these defilers of the white soul of humanity; but the extent of their corrupt power was terrible in its horizonless might, the terrors of their sway beyond dream and vision of omniscience, the actualities of their domination more bitterly repulsive than anything Nature ever evolved.

Nothing was too bad to say against the men who held the reins of quiet, peaceful revolution in their hands, and who always pulled the social forces round in the wrong direction. Unlimited opportunities and powers they had, and did not use them. These men were traitors to the best interests of society, demoralizers of humanity, criminals convicted by altruism, parasitic pests adjudged and dethroned by humanism; they were fat men mocked by the caricaturist and denounced by the enthusiast; but was it true?

Vultures in human form, sated with a pleasure, the magnificence of which never darkened the glare of their eagle eye, floated majestically over a cringing populace,

whose knees bent to the power of the money-god. Vampires insatiable hung at the heart of man. Snakes crawled about his soul. Noxious insects infested the body politic, and polluted everything in their migrations, we were told in varying phrases; but was it true?

Women were tortured for daring to be free. Militancy was barbaric, primitive, when not entirely neurotic. The hand of Justice could never be forced by anti-social methods. Righteousness would never reward labours calculated to upset communal somnolency. Education alone was the lever to higher things. Fighting women were a menace to the welfare of society, we were told; but was it all true?

Twelve millions of citizens starved in the lap of luxury. Uncountable children were done to death in a country flowing with milk and honey. The maelstrom of industrialism putrified the air with dank reek from the broken bodies and bruised brains of its innumerable victims; and so on, and on, and on; but was it all true?

A change seems to have taken place. These things are remote, ill-defined, suppositious. Comparative popular thought has dwarfed them to insignificance. Social reformers are negligible items. The Christ-like love that once poured in spate from thousands of pulpits has been transformed to the frightfulness of the ancient God of Battles. The man who foolishly commanded his followers to love those who hated them, and who used the plaintive words, except ye become as little children, has disappeared behind the tragically grotesque deity of blood and brawn.

Something is wrong; or times have changed, and men with time; and the huns of the past are the heroes of the present.

ROBERT MORELAND.

## Correspondence.

### FREETHINKERS AND THE MILITARY TRIBUNALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As an old reader and follower of the late G. W. Foote, and knowing his abhorrence of anything pertaining to war, I have closely followed conscientious Freethinkers and Tribunals under the Military Service Act. Perhaps not within the scope of the usual articles, no one, to my mind, is more entitled to make the objection, and for that reason only, I beg to be excused taking this liberty. The treatment meted out to Freethinkers by Tribunals has been disgraceful. I quote one particular instance that came before my notice locally. An extremely noted local citizen was in the chair. I quote from my notes taken of the case.

Chairman: Do you believe in God?

Freethinker: No, not with this awful slaughter.

Chairman: Then you have not got a conscience. We do not admit your claim.

I must at once say that this instance (one of many) is a flagrant violation of the Act, for in no case does it state the particular class of conscience. For the benefit of readers, I quote the words of the Act itself: "On the ground of a conscientious objection to the undertaking of combatant service." Again, Mr. Bonar Law, in the Commons, on Jan. 19, said: "If there was any right to exemption on the ground of conscience, that surely did not apply to any particular denomination, but was a question of a man's conscience." Herbert Samuel, the same day, also said: "It was absurd to say a man could not have a conscience unless he belonged to a sect." The *Solicitors' Journal* for March 18 says: "They (the Tribunals) forget that conscientious objection is neither in fact, nor under the Statute, dependent on religious belief, and that the existence of conscientious objectors has to be accepted without cavilling." My reasons for writing may be answered by the article of the late G. W. Foote in the *Freethinker* of August 1, 1915, which article, as the War goes on, proves itself ever more true, if that is possible. He wrote: "War never creates, but always destroys. That is its fun-

damental character. No matter what its object or purpose, its method is destruction, and he gave the best description of it who did it in three words. War is violence. There is nothing else in it, and man will never be civilized while he imitates the rose with blood and the lily with fear." I agree, and that is why I cannot bring myself to believe that the masses of any combatant country are desirous of being killed for the pleasure of the thing. I can only bring myself to believe there is some misunderstanding which ought to, and could be, easily removed with proper education. That is why I write as a conscientious objector. I shall be pleased to hear from readers, especially local Freethinkers, who have had the temerity to hold to their opinions in spite of all criticism, and who have brought themselves under the Act. For these, mainly, have I written.

JOS. MORGAN.

41 Avondale Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham.

## Pernicious Pars.

This War has at least proved one thing clearly. No longer need there be any doubt of the immortality of the soul. Let no bereaved mother, sister, or wife mourn the loss of son, brother, or husband. They will be re-united after the War in the great unknown. Let no one ask us how we know this. We do know it. There is nothing more to be said.....We notice with genuine concern that our boys in the trenches are smoking far too many cigarettes.....This is a grave error on the part of the Government. We suggest that all the money now being wasted on tobacco should be handed over to the Church. This would be a very real economy.—*Methodist Mumbler and High Churcher.*

What is all this pother about Labour and the alleged Trade Unions? We have just had the misfortune to see a Socialist rag which has the audacity to suggest the importance of the coming Labour problems. This is arrant stupidity. There are no Labour problems. There are no Trade Unions. The whole Socialist bag-of-tricks is a myth. We will, however, not bother our readers with this pernicious piffle any more.....There will be a special meeting in the Church hall next Monday evening, when the Bishop of St. Lucre will speak. His subject will be: "Can Christianity Fail?" The Bishop will reply in the negative. There will be a currency note collection.—*Heavenly Halo and Mail.*

Lady Wellbeck-Toshness-ness has recently subscribed five shillings to the Church bayonet fund. This is a most deserving charity. We shall not need to impress upon our readers the importance of bayonets during the present crisis. The Very Reverent Hinconsistent Rec-Josser has already headed the subscription list with a substantial contribution of twenty new bayonets of the very best Sheffield steel (non-union labour). The Bishop had hoped to contribute a small machine-gun, but sent a parcel of the best bullets instead. These have been dispatched to the Eastern Front with five hundred Bibles, suitably bound in Khaki cloth.....Christianity goes steadily forward.—*New Episcopal Eye-Opener.*

ARTHUR F. THORN.

## THE CONVERT'S FORESIGHT.

Brother Simmons was a brand newly snatched from the burning. Until the momentous night when he "got religion" he had been a successful professional gambler among his people of the Afro-American tribe. "After de sarmin t'mor' night, Brudder Simmons," said old Deacon Whang, "we all is gwine to have a rousin' hozanner meetin' and burn up yo' par'phnalia, bless de Lawd!" "Burn up which?" returned Brother Simmons in some astonishment. "Yo' gamblin' outfit. When a spo'tin' man gits converted and washed whiter dan snow, dey allus burns up his kyahds and dice and sich scan'lous stuff as dat, midst loud shouts o' praise. De Lawd is wid 'em, and de gamblin' brudder steps fo'th and flings his par'phnalia on de fiah and stands wid bowed head whilst—" "Not me! I ain't gwine to do no sich-uh thing!" "But, muh goodness, brudder, yo' am converted, isn't yo', and—" "Yas-sahr! I's sho' converted, but dat don't make me a blame fool! I mought backslide and need dat stuff!"—*London Opinion.*

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