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He serves all who dares be true—EMERSON.

Views and Opinions.

War and Self-Sacrifice.

No one can possibly feel a greater admiration than ourselves for the undoubted devotion, courage, and self-sacrifice exhibited by many thousands of men—and women—in all the belligerent countries since the outbreak of war. Never mind how ill-directed or mistaken one may believe that enthusiasm to be, it is there; and the courage and enthusiasm which prompts a man to offer the supreme sacrifice of himself must always remain one of the most valuable of social assets. That, combined with the pugnacity of man, and in alliance with the gregarious instinct which lies at the base of social life, is the condition of progress; and if these qualities also provide the material for physical warfare of the kind that now rages, we ought not to deny their essentially useful nature because they are expended in a destructive rather than in a constructive direction. The courage that leads thousands to face enemy shells is not different from—it is identical with—the courage that sends the miner down the wrecked pit shaft to rescue a brother-workman from a hideous death. The sense of duty which nerved men to face the horrors of disease and death in Gallipoli is identical with the devotion which leads others to dare the ravages of disease in the hope of discovering an effective antidote. In all cases the difference is not in the nature of the qualities displayed, but in the end to which they are directed.

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Wanted, an Equivalent for War.

Bearing this in mind, and disregarding much that is said by mere politicians and hand-to-mouth statesmen, we may say that the real question facing the world is not the crushing, or subordination, or muzzling of this or that nation. That may be done, and, instead of ending war, may do no more than provide the material for future outbreaks. The great question that will face the world after the War—as it, in fact, faced the world before the War—will be, to use an expression of the late William James, to find a moral equivalent for war. We cannot, nor ought we to desire to, destroy the love of adventure, the enthusiasm of the herd; the courage, or even the pugnacity, without which war would be impossible. But we can seek to harness these qualities in such a manner that they shall be expended for the common benefit, instead of being spent in mutual and profitless destruction. “Peace,” said Milton, “has her victories no less renowned than war,” and it cannot remain eternally true that no better outlet for the patriotism, the courage, and devotion of a nation can be found than the destruction of some other nation. Conflict in human life there has always been. Conflict of some kind there will continue to be. It is not really a question of ending warfare; it is a question of which kind of warfare is to continue. The permanent issue is not

between war and peace, but between different kinds of warfare.

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Our Wasted Enthusiasm.

The War has at least shown that all the talk of the nations of Europe being effete, decadent, etc., is, what many of us knew it to be all along, so much rubbish. There is no such thing as an organically worn-out race. A nation may have its seasons of greater or lesser vigour. It may live under institutions and conditions that depress it and rob it of its vigour for a time. But modify these, and the “effete” nation grows again, as the plant dying for want of nourishment recovers its vitality under scientific culture. The “effete” Latin race astonishes the world by the enthusiasm of its warfare and the heroic vigour of its resistance. “The nation of shopkeepers” raises an army of six millions, and goes to war with a confidence and a readiness hard to beat. There is plenty of courage and enthusiasm in the world; it is there waiting to be used for more worthy and permanently useful purposes. It is expended on warfare, which destroys in a month that which it has taken centuries to build. And one cause of its being so expended is that the “civilized” social life of the world has not yet learned to provide outlets for this pugnacious energy, which should bring benefits to the whole of the race.

* * *

Our Undeveloped Social Sense.

Hundreds of thousands of men to-day dread being called “slackers” or “shirkers.” The nation is at war, and they desire to “do their bit.” That is so much to the good; but the pity of it! In war they are willing, eager even, to shoulder their part of the common burden. But in times of peace? How many of them are ready to sacrifice then? How keen then is the consciousness of a common duty, and the readiness to sacrifice everything in its discharge? It is a melancholy reflection that in times of peace the vast majority of these people think little and care less about the general welfare—otherwise things would surely be better than they are. There is no need to blame individuals for this. Their attitude is the outcome of the prevailing tone and ideals. It is a social fault more than an individual one. European civilization is still in the stage when the soldier is regarded as the most essential element to its preservation, and it is in connection with military effort that our most fervent praise is given, in connection with military effort that the importance of courage and enthusiasm and organization are most clearly realized. In other words, man’s courage for war is expended on militarism because the social sense has not yet developed far enough to see that a higher and better warfare is needed.

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The Two Phases of Warfare.

An illustration of this is to hand from a speech delivered by the Bishop of London the other day. God was using this nation, he said, and the War was being utilized by him to call attention to our national sins before the War. Before the War we

were on the verge of a conflict in Ireland, a great industrial struggle was at hand, and there was strife between men and women over the vote. All this had been stopped in consequence of a great national need. But was there any real advance here? The struggle for the vote, for better conditions and payment for labour, for a better form of government in Ireland, was at least an expenditure of energy and enthusiasm on plans of social reconstruction, and these questions will have to be dealt with when the present War is ended. But the Bishop's social consciousness is such, that while he can see good in this wholesale destruction of human life and possessions, because we are to be the victors, he can see only evil in the conflict of social ideals, *which is infinitely the higher warfare of the two*. However unavoidable, there is something essentially evil about military warfare. And however disturbing, there is something essentially healthy about a conflict of social theories and ideals, since it is along this line that progress is achieved. As I have already indicated, it is entirely a question of whether we expend the fighting qualities of man on the physical plane of military activity, which is entirely destructive; or whether it is expended on the plane of intellectual warfare, which is essentially purificatory and constructive.

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Man as a Fighting Animal.

This much must be granted to Bernhardt, or Kitchener, or Roosevelt, or any other militarist. When they claim that conflict is necessary to the health of a people, they are expressing a truth. But they go wrong in assuming that military conflict is the kind needed. It is not. We need, as James says, a moral equivalent for war. There is nothing essentially wrong in fighting—provided we fight the right sort of enemy, with the right sort of weapons. And the task before the world is to use the fighting spirit of the race to the right end. It should not be difficult to indicate that end. There is the whole field of adventurous discovery in the ice-fields of the North and South, and in the deserts and forests of Africa and Asia. There is the world of scientific research which calls for rare qualities of courage and perseverance. And nearer home there is the necessity for fighting disease, and vice, and demoralizing social conditions. In the thousand and one tasks of science, education, medicine, etc., there is ample scope for all the qualities expended in—not created by—military warfare. And while these remain with us, there need be no fear that the courage of man will decay or the fibre of the race grow slack.

* * *

The Higher Field of Battle.

Here, then, is that moral equivalent for war which William James was seeking. It is here crying to be used, if we will but see it. An American writer has said that this War has written across the face of European civilization the word "Failure." I do not believe it. The march of civilization is arrested for a time, but it will resume, and its upward movement will be secured when we have replaced the ideal of conquest, of subordination, of military greatness, with others of a more worthy character. And this is almost entirely a matter of social education. Beginning with the children, we might, instead of giving them a list of national heroes in the shape of kings and fighting men, dwell upon the discoverers, the writers, the scientists, the reformers, who have really given to the nation most of what it possesses worth having. Attention could be called, both with children and youths, to the—at present—unrecorded heroisms and sacrifices of daily life; to the patient courage of the mother who labours

day after day to provide her children in food and clothing; to the more dashing courage of sailor, fireman, or miner; to the enthusiasm for duty which inspires the social reformer; to the sacrifices that good men and women have always been ready to make for their ideals. There is no need to ignore the soldier, so long as he is necessary, but there is no need for him to occupy the whole of the stage. Human nature is plastic, it seeks that which is held up to it as worthy the seeking, and a generation or two brought up in an environment which placed the emphasis on intellectual conflict rather than on physical force, could not fail to initiate a profound revolution in human history. The moral equivalent for war is here at hand; it involves no transformation of human nature, only a re-direction to its energies. Man will still remain, he has always been a fighting animal, but it will be a fight against all that makes for the harm of the race, rather than against that which makes for its advancement.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Theories Insusceptible of Proof.

II.

(Concluded from p. 339.)

DR. FORT NEWTON'S sermon on the "The Will of God," which we criticized in these columns last week, has been followed by one on "The Will of Man," which appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for May 24. Like its predecessor, this also is characterized by vagueness of view, illogical statements, and misleading inferences. It tells us that different ages have witnessed the flowering of different human faculties. First the imagination was seen "running riot in the tropical splendour of the old mythologies—peopling earth and air and sea with winged forms." During a later period conscience held sway, and its edicts were treated as if they possessed supreme authority, from which there was no appeal. Then conscience became subservient to reason, and man questioned both the visions of his fancy and the supremacy of his conscience. In our day, imagination, conscience, and reason are found to be in a state of subordination to the will. Dr. Newton says:—

In our day, the power in which man rejoices, and upon which he lays most stress, is the will, as though he had suddenly become aware of a new element in life.

That is an extravagant statement, if not wholly untrue. Man has always exerted will-power as far as he knew how, and so far as Nature is concerned he was as free to do so ten thousand years ago as he is to-day. The alleged increase of will-power in the present age is said to be the outcome of a new reading of Nature. "Fifty years ago," Dr. Newton tells us, "science gave a reading of Nature which made it seem unfriendly, if not actually hostile, to mankind"; but this is surely a sad misreading of the findings of science. Huxley, for example, never held that Nature is anti-moral, all he maintained being that "the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends," and on this point present-day scientists are in complete agreement with him. Huxley was certainly mistaken when he asserted that "social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process"; the truth being that the cosmic process did unconsciously further social progress ere the human stage was reached. Even an ant-heap is a social organization, formed and administered on ethical lines. The vision of "Nature red in tooth and claw" is a culpably partial vision. Another and much truer vision is obtainable, in which mother-love

and the herd-instinct play a conspicuous part. Mutual aid is a law of Nature quite as much as the struggle for existence; and we find that the struggle for existence, among the higher animals, is never between individuals, but always between hostile herds or communities, a principle so abundantly illustrated in the present War.

If we may poetically say that Nature has an attitude, we are justified in declaring that it is subject to no variation. It is in reality an attitude of utter indifference to all alike. It is only poetically or hyperbolically that we can call Nature our loving mother, or even our friend. To her a man is not one whit more precious than a fly or a blade of grass. To aver that we have mastered her forces is to utter an untruth. Our mere will-power exerts no influence whatsoever upon her. We may have learned to understand some of her laws and to utilize them, but we have neither broken nor abolished them. After countless ages of patient study we have at last discovered the secret of flying; but the law of gravitation is still in operation as before. Fire still burns and water drowns, though both are among our most valued servants. Where, then, does man's so-called creative will come in? It may be perfectly true that we have no right to sit down with folded arms "before even the most refractory problem, whether of personality or society, and wait for the solution to arrive from without"; but is not Dr. Newton aware that we never had such a right except on the assumption that in his own good time God would solve the problem for us? We are more active to-day simply because we have lost faith in the intervening activity of the Deity. We have grown in knowledge, and, consequently, in self-reliance. We do more now because we know better what and how to do. If God exists, *his* indifference and silence, in face of the wrongs and evils of the world, are wholly inexplicable; whereas such an attitude on man's part would then be natural enough. Dr. Newton affirms that God's "seeming indifference and silence are a friendly challenge to that in man most akin to himself," a saying unintelligible, unless it means that man's highest duty consists in imitating the seeming indifference and silence of his Maker. After that, it is the height of logical and ethical inconsistency to declare that God, having himself made "the world as it is," now calls upon man "to build the world as it ought to be." That is not the vision of things by which *we* are ruled in our time, whatever may be the case with the reverend gentleman and his friends.

Dr. Newton harks back to Schopenhauer, a third-rate philosopher, whose greatest work, *The World as Will and Idea*, dethrones reason, and treats will as the root of existence. In Schopenhauer's philosophy, will means a blind, irresistible effort to exist on the part of inorganic Nature, and on the part of living things an inexpugnable clinging to life, an unconscious hankering after the joy of merely being and acting. At first this will has no aim whatever, but is an endless, aimless, limitless urge, as one puts it, "to be everything in general and nothing in particular." It is only upon the rise of consciousness that end or purpose reveals itself. Well, such a conception of the universe could lead to nothing but pessimism. Does it not strike Dr. Newton as passing strange that will, volition, can be unconscious, or that instinct ever acts volitionally? No wonder that Nietzsche cries out, "As philosopher, Schopenhauer was the *first* avowed and inflexible Atheist we Germans have had" (*The Joyful Wisdom*, p. 307). The real root of existence is law, not will, and it is law that governs all life. The divinity of the world is a baseless figment of an imagination run to wildness. The saying that "though hedged about the will of man is yet real, and the key to faith and character," is so ambiguous that it is impossible to determine what it means. In what sense is the will "the

key to faith and character"? The faith that comes by merely willing it is not worth having, and character is the product, not of volition, but of persistent striving and struggling. Everybody knows that Kant was a sceptic. To him the universe was a mechanism. The German Government condemned him as a hopeless heretic. And yet Dr. Newton quotes him to the following effect:—

The righteous man may say: I will that there should be a God; I will that, in this world of natural necessity, I should not be of it, but should also belong to a purely intelligible world of freedom; finally, I will that my duration should be endless. On this faith I insist, and will not let it be taken from me.

Is it not self-evident that such willing is of necessity futile? If there is no God, my will cannot create him; if I belong to this natural order of things, no power in heaven or on earth can rend me from it; and if there is no future life, no amount of willing on my part can render me immortal.

Dr. Newton is above the need of definitions, and deals in the vaguest generalities. Take the following echoing sentence quoted by Edgar Allan Poe as a motto of one of his weirdest stories: "Man does not yield himself to death save only through the weakness of his will"; but the facts give that motto the direct lie. Thousands die every year when their will to live is at its strongest. Some accident or disease cuts them down in the midst of their days very much against their will. The will is creative, the reverend gentleman assures us, and it is on the basis of its creativeness that "man and God establish relations, and share in the Divine craftsmanship which is shaping the world after the pattern shown in the mount." No power of volition can establish relations between man and God when the reason proclaims the non-existence of supernaturalism. To say that "character is the warp of heredity and the woof of environment woven, by the will of man, on the loom of life," is to shut supernaturalism completely out. But the point which the preacher fails to see is that by the exercise of his will no man can triumph over the Nature of Things. Nature holds us all with the tenacity of a vice, and, do what we will, we cannot release ourselves. There are noble and ignoble motives, but at the time of action the strongest motive is invariably obeyed, irrespective of its character. It is a radical error to imagine that a man enjoys absolute freedom of choice among a dozen or more clamouring motives. His freedom consists in being let alone to follow his bent. Dr. Newton speaks of the will as if it were a something within a man over which he has control, a distinct faculty which he can pervert and render incapable of forming noble volitions; but the truth is that the will is the man himself, who, at any given moment, cannot help being what he is. The consequence of following an unworthy motive may have the effect of fortifying a nobler motive, which, when obeyed, may gain further strength, and become more or less permanently the dominating motive.

The curious thing is, that in the present sermon Dr. Newton practically ignores the supernatural. The reasoning is confined within the realm of the natural. His drawback is that his theology, which is here kept severely in the background, prevents him from seeing man as simply part and parcel of Nature. Take the following:—

No one is influenced directly by the whole of his environment, but by that part of it to which he attends. Often two boys go forth from the same home, one to nobility of life and the other to moral shipwreck. That was because one attended what was most worth while in his surroundings, while the other fixed his attention upon something less noble, or upon nothing at all, and drifted to

That explanation of the different careers of the two boys is only superficially true, because the preacher overlooks the part played by heredity in the two cases. Why did the one boy attend and the other fail to pay heed to what was best in the environment? It was not a matter of free choice in either case, but of grim necessity. Man is only free, at any given time, to follow the bent of his organism. A modification of the environment, or the introduction of new factors into the environment by education or the influence of sympathetic relations and friends, may serve to weaken the ignoble motive and strengthen a nobler one. It is in this direction alone that the way of salvation lies. The popular doctrine of the freedom of choice is simply a will-o'-the-wisp.

J. T. LLOYD.

The "Ghost" of George Gissing.

The best people I have known were saved from folly not by intellect but by the heart.—*George Gissing.*

Amid littleness and detail he detected the genius of life, the old cunning Proteus, nestling close beside us.—*Emerson.*

THE feelings of the many admirers of George Gissing, on glancing at his works, must be like those of the survivors of a shipwreck when, on the morning after the storm, they contemplate on the beach the remnants that the sea has spared from the rich contents of the sunken ship. Their joy at the sight of each relic is insufficient to compensate for the sad memories it awakens of equally precious treasures that are lost. Nor is this feeling attributable merely to the fact that an early death snatched from us a novelist of rare talent. Many such might pass away without exciting keen feelings of regret. The world would be grateful for what it had actually received from them, and would not concern itself with speculations as to how much greater might have been their achievements had more time been allowed them. But no one, in the case of George Gissing, can thus banish the thought of what might have been, of the future which was denied him.

Gissing's novels depict the environment and struggles of the working and lower middle classes with vivid realism. Even his detractors must admit the truth of his pictures of London life. Gissing became the novelist of this Inferno, because through all his best and most receptive years he was condemned to that life. Of those sordid chapters of his career Gissing was dumb except to his most intimate friends, though it is probable that some of his novels absorbed many melancholy facts. Nothing, however, that he suffered himself or lamented in his surroundings could change Gissing's inborn delicacy, or do aught but deepen his love of Nature and his devotion to the highest in literature. Old Homer and divine Shakespeare were ever his favourites. He was familiar with French and Italian literature, and his French was so good that he translated his own book, *The New Grub Street*, into that language.

Scholar that he was, Gissing deliberately set himself the task of portraying the subterranean life of the greatest city in the world. He stood in the darkness of the by-streets, and watched the dim burrows of poverty, where human beings toiled without hope and without reward. Here, on the waste limits of the dread metropolis, his spirit chilled beneath the cold burden of ignoble destinies. He was smothered in the foul dust of a brute combat for bread. For, as the Christian world is ordered, to lack money is to want the privileges of humanity. Few men knew so well the frustration and helplessness that beset the poor. Listen to this:—

I came upon a little lad of ten, who, his head hidden in his arms, was crying bitterly. I asked him what was

the matter, and, after a little trouble, I learnt that, having been sent with sixpence to pay a debt, he had lost the money. The poor little fellow was in a state of mind which in a grave man would be called the anguish of despair. He must have been crying for a long time; every muscle of his face quivered as if under torture, his limbs shook; his eyes, his voice, uttered such misery as not the vilest criminal should be made to suffer. And it was because he had lost sixpence. I could have shed tears with him—tears of pity and of rage at all this spectacle implied. A child, whose nature would have bidden him rejoice as only childhood may, wept his heart out because his hand had dropped a sixpenny piece! The loss was a very serious one, and he knew it. He was less afraid to face his parents than overcome by misery at the thought of the harm he had done them. Sixpence dropped, and a whole family made wretched! What are the due descriptive terms for a state of civilization in which such a thing as this is possible?

Over and over again this human note sounds in Gissing's pages. His sympathies were ever with the youth who feels in his blood the hunger of an unshaped desire and revolts against the lot which would change it, and with those women in whom the sweetness of their sex is perishing under labour and misery.

He went to life itself for his pictures. The Welsh village in *The Whirlpool* which forms such a contrast to the town scenes, was found by him in one of his scant holidays. The Camberwell scenes in *The Year of Jubilee* were studied on the spot, and many and many a night the novelist would be seen passing among the naphtha flares of the East London open-air markets. The description of the streets of the Tottenham Court Road in *Henry Ryecroft* were reminiscent of his own struggles in London. Happily, Gissing's life, "in the fell clutch of circumstance," was rounded by a few years of comparative ease. But for many years he knew the worst side of the City of Dreadful Night.

This man, for whom the weariness, the fever, and the fret of modern town life had such a strange fascination, was at heart a Greek, and should have lived under the blue skies by the Ionian seas. The man for whom the passing hours had such possibilities of joy or sorrow was conscious always that they could never return. He knew of the havoc of time, the wrinkles of age, the nemesis of youth and beauty, and his indictment of modern society was that it ground men, women, and children in the dust. Over and over again we catch a hint at the Pagan antipathy to the unlovely and physically repulsive, which was at the core of the Greek conception of life. Gissing was like Keats in this respect, for his quick sympathy served the purpose of a social sense. Keats's theme was praise of beauty, but his work is tinged with a profound distrust of the life mechanical. Even in his rhapsodies on the nightingale he breaks out:—

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs.

Gissing did not write of Hesperus, or the star of evening, but of foul streets in which the public house was a beacon-light. There is no preaching of class hatred in his pages, but his mind revolted at much that he saw. Critics said that his novels were drab, forgetting the dark and dreary London that he wrote of. He held the mirror to a very ugly phase of human nature, and he was admired for his originality. From *The Unclassed*, written just after he had come of age, to *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, penned when its author was but a little over forty, with death staring him in the face, his works grew steadily in power and freedom. They form a brilliant and vivid analysis of phases of

contemporary society, and it is to these pictures of life in the Modern Babylon in the later years of the nineteenth century that future students will look back with interest and gratification. And as the cry of the citizen becomes that of the dying Goethe, "Light, more light!" so will these pestilent phases of town life become a thing of the past.

"One paces up and down the shore yet awhile," says Thackeray, "and looks towards the unknown ocean, and thinks of the traveller whose boat sailed yesterday." The words are applicable to George Gissing. The pity of the extinction of a career set in a promise so golden, in an accomplishment so rare and splendid. Tender as a child, tolerant of human weakness, versed in many literatures, a man of genius—here was George Gissing.

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair;
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

MIMNERMUS.

Nietzsche and His Critics.

II.

(Continued from p. 341.)

When Nietzsche was about twenty-one years of age, he saw that truth did not lie in Christianity, and thus he abandoned the faith of his childhood and youth without a struggle. His ideals lay elsewhere: truth, the elevation of the type of manfinally his resignation of his professorship and his campaign against almost everything held sacred by his contemporaries; a campaign, however, conducted on Nietzsche's part with a sincere desire to follow truth. "Truth at any cost, no matter how horrible and dreadful to look upon."—J. M. Kennedy, "The Quintessence of Nietzsche," p. 293.

This faith [Christianity], at bottom, is nothing but the desire at all costs to maintain an illusion which is thought necessary to life; it is the fear that truth may perhaps be *bad*, and that it is not revealed to man before he is strong enough to bear it. In every epoch, therefore, the priest has always looked upon laic wisdom as his mortal enemy, this positive science which dares to study the world apart from any religious faith, all means have seemed good to him which prevented man from contemplating things with an open mind, or being loyal and sincere towards himself, and looking upon reality without reforming it. And this is something that Nietzsche never pardons him. If the reader would understand something of the bitter spirit of hatred which meets us on every page of the *Antichrist*, and not be content to see in those vitriolic and passionate invectives merely a symptom of coming insanity (which is a convenient but rather summary way of getting rid of an embarrassing problem), he must recognize to what a point the spirit of Christianity—as Nietzsche defined it—must have grievously offended his most profound instincts.—Henri Lichtenberger, "The Gospel of Superman" (1910) pp. 149-150.

The only work of Nietzsche's which shows traces of insanity is the last book he wrote. This book, entitled *Ecce Homo* (Behold the Man), is a kind of autobiography, written at great speed in the few weeks immediately before his breakdown. It is sad reading, clearly the work of a deranged intellect suffering from megalomania. The chapter headings alone would show that. They run: "Why I Am So Wise," "Why I Am So Clever," "Why I Write Such Excellent Books," "Why I Am a Fatality." He declares that Heine and he are "the greatest artists of the German language that have ever existed."

Nietzsche wrote this in his madness, and yet his opponents quote these things, holding them up to mockery and derision, as if they were a normal and characteristic sample of the style in which Nietzsche wrote, and without the slightest indication of the condition under which they were written, and, as usual, without citing the work from which they are taken. And this outrage is committed by the very people who are always thumping

their chests and calling upon the universe to witness the English love of fair-play, calling attention to the fact that their enemies do not "play the game," and that their conduct is "not cricket." Surely it must have been some such specimens as these that Nietzsche had in mind when he declared that the English were the nation of "consummate cant."

As to the fact that this last work of Nietzsche's is the only one that shows signs of alienation, all the authorities whose verdict matters are agreed. Mr. M. A. Mugge, the author of one of the best lives of Nietzsche, says, and he uses italics to emphasize the statement: "With the data that we have, however, we must come to the conclusion that Nietzsche's mind was healthy until the end of 1888."¹

Mr. G. M. Kennedy also observes:—

It must be clearly pointed out that this stroke of insanity came suddenly. From the year 1882 Nietzsche's health had been steadily improving, and he was, generally speaking, in a happy frame of mind and a sound state of body. In 1888 he produced a large amount of work, in no part of which can any traces of madness be found by even the most sceptical inquirers.²

Mr. Henry L. Mencken also makes some trenchant remarks on the subject. Dealing with Max Nordau's attack upon Nietzsche as a degenerate, Mr. Mencken observes:—"Nordau, having started out with the knowledge that Nietzsche eventually became insane, tried to exhibit every act of his life and every idea in his philosophy as a symptom of that insanity," and concludes that Nordau's "symptoms of degeneracy fit everyone except the satisfied, orthodox, conventional, unoriginal, automatic *bourgeois*—that purely vegetable being whom Nordau seems to regard as the supreme masterpiece of the creation." As the same writer points out:—

The fact of Nietzsche's progress from mere neurasthenia, a disease which afflicts nearly all of us, to undoubted insanity, has no bearing whatever upon the essential truths of his philosophical scheme. We must judge his philosophy as we judge any other idea: by its inherent probability and its correspondence with the known facts of existence. If Nietzsche had tried to prove that cows had wings, it would have been proper enough to dismiss him as a raving maniac. But when he essayed to show us that Christianity impeded human progress, he laid down a proposition which, whatever its extravagance, was not, in itself, insane. This is demonstrated, beyond a doubt, by the fact that it is possible for sane men to debate it, and to be stimulated to thought, in their consideration of it, by Nietzsche's reasoning. It is perfectly possible for a man to think clearly and yet die insane, just as it is perfectly possible for a man to attain international renown as a consumer of hot mince pies and then, in the end, to die of indigestion.³

Mr. Havelock Ellis, that very stimulating writer, in touching upon Nietzsche's insanity, observes: "It is a consolation to many—I have seen it so stated in a respectable review—that Nietzsche went mad." But, as Mr. Havelock Ellis points out, Nietzsche is not the only great thinker who has gone mad. He says:—

Nietzsche has met, in its most relentless form, the fate of Pascal and Swift and Rousseau. That fact may carry what weight it will in any final estimate of his place as a moral teacher; it cannot touch his position as an aboriginal force. He remains in the first rank of

¹ M. A. Mugge, *Friederich Nietzsche* (1908), p. 96. Mr. Mugge has also written a short, but very good, *Life of Nietzsche* for "The People's Books," published by Messrs Jack's at sixpence.

² J. M. Kennedy, *The Quintessence of Nietzsche* (1909), p. 43. A cheap edition of this work has been published, since the War, by Werner Laurie, at a shilling, under the title, *Nietzsche*.

³ H. L. Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friederich Nietzsche*, pp. 297-8.

distinguished and significant personalities our century has produced.¹

Those few opponents in the popular press who have really read and studied Nietzsche's works for themselves like Mr. Stewart, in his *Nietzsche and the Ideals of Modern Germany*, do not attempt to discredit Nietzsche by referring to the madness which put an end to his intellectual life, although their methods, as we shall see, are open to other objections.

When the War broke out, the opponents of Nietzsche seized the opportunity to represent his teachings as the main cause which brought about the War. Even Nietzsche's publishers have not been above exploiting this pious attempt to make Nietzsche responsible for the War. Messrs. S. N. Foulis, the publishers of the collected English edition of Nietzsche's works, in issuing a shilling "War edition" of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, have provided a startling cover, which, in the largest type of black on orange, declares "*Nietzsche the Preacher of War.*" At the bottom, in much smaller type, the real title of the work, *Beyond Good and Evil*, is given; in the middle are two quotations—one from Mr. Lloyd George to the effect that "The new philosophy of Germany is to *destroy Christianity*. It will be a diet of blood and iron"; the other from the *Times*, declaring that "war, to all the conscious or unconscious followers of Nietzsche, is noble and splendid in itself." Messrs. Werner Laurie, in reprinting Mr. J. M. Kennedy's *Quintessence of Nietzsche* for a shilling, under the title of *Nietzsche*, on the cover have added, underneath, "The mind that caused the War."

The pious, who—misled by this title—bought the book under the impression that it would provide proofs of Nietzsche's responsibility for the War, were no doubt surprised to find that in the new preface which Mr. Kennedy has written for this new "War" edition, he whole-heartedly defends Nietzsche against this charge. As Mr. Kennedy remarks, believers in Nietzsche, who only a few years ago found it difficult to obtain a hearing for him, must be astonished to see his name bandied about to-day by public men, by journalists, and the clergy:—

A few sentences are hurriedly chosen from this man's twenty odd volumes, and because he said something about "blonde beasts," and the uses of duplicity and cruelty in warfare, he has been execrated throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles (though not anywhere else) as the instigator of one of the greatest campaigns on record.

It was difficult to introduce Nietzsche into this country, says Mr. Kennedy; it appears still more difficult to make him understood. "In Germany he was howled down and driven into intellectual exile; his followers there have fared little better. The Germans have never forgiven him his sneers at their modern 'culture'—the very thing we are now sneering at ourselves." Mr. Kennedy declares: "There is no German professor living who would make the mistake of ascribing to Nietzsche any connection with the War. Why English professors do so may be explained, if not excused."²

General von Bernhardt, the strongest advocate of the virtue and nobility of war, himself declares:—

It is absurd to claim that the teachings of Nietzsche have overwhelmed the conscience of the German people, or that they influence German politics. Such an assertion could only be made by one who lacks all comprehension of the German mind.³

Even Professor Stewart, who has written a good-sized book to show the immorality of Nietzsche's teaching,

¹ Havelock Ellis, *Affirmations* (1898), pp. 84-85.

² J. M. Kennedy, *Nietzsche*, Preface, p. 7.

³ Cited by Dimsdale Stocker, *The Real Nietzsche*.

admits, "That the prophet of Zarathustra 'made the war' few persons will be foolish enough to believe."¹

Mr. W. H. Dawson, whose works on *The Evolution of Modern Germany, Germany and the Germans*, and many others, constitute him our greatest authority on Germany and things German, does not think that the philosophy of Nietzsche has had much influence in his own country. He says, "Ask the normal educated German, 'What is the effect of Nietzsche's teaching upon the people?' and most likely the reply will be, 'He influences only the young.' 'But,' you may say, 'the young will grow up and become old.' 'They outlive Nietzsche,' will be your answer."²

We have noticed the attack on Nietzsche made by Mr. Fletcher in his Oxford pamphlet. In the same volume of Oxford pamphlets there is one by Mr. Ernest Barker, entitled "Nietzsche and Treitschke: The Worship of Power in Modern Germany," which may act as an antidote to Mr. Fletcher's puerilities. Mr. Barker says that Nietzsche's "dream of the United States of Europe, and of mankind perfected by Eugenics, may attract, and rightly attract, many noble souls. He did not pander to that exclusive and jealous nationalism which has consumed modern Germany—'that national heart-itch and blood-poisoning' which he detested" (p. 9).

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Apocrypha.

COMPENSATION.

Now when Judas had arisen again and had proved his rights to the title-deeds of the potter's field, he sold out and went to Heaven and did there bargain for many days about some corner lots of land.

After much wrangling the Lord leased unto his servant many acres of land in the East-End of Heaven, upon which were built, in the fulness of time, many mansions for the use of the poor and needy.

And this slum property did bring unto Judas much gold and riches.

And he clad himself in fine raiment and walked with the Lord, and did hump himself joyfully, saying:

Well, Lord, there are compensations in life after all; if one has to work without living down on Earth, one can live without working up in Heaven.

Then he spake unto the Lord about a new scheme for cornering the people's open-spaces in Heaven.

And he charged the angels that they should not weep.

Peradventure, he saith unto them, you may stand in for a few promoters' shares.

And the angels took counsel together, and wept not.

And Judas went apart and smiled, and said, Well, I'm hanged!

F. L. B. G.

HERE OR NOWHERE.

The situation that has not its duty, its ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes, here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free. Fool! the Ideal is in thyself, the impediment, too, is in thyself: thy condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of: what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the form thou givest it be heroic, be poetic. O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, "here or nowhere," couldst thou only see!—Carlyle.

¹ H. L. Stewart, *Nietzsche and the Ideals of Modern Germany*.

² W. H. Dawson, *What is Wrong with Germany?* (1915), p. 11.

Acid Drops.

The exemption of the clergy from military service while every other class is being called upon to serve, is not passing without comment. The opinion of "the man in the street," when it is expressed, is plain and unflattering. In the public press there is not so much said, but whatever is said is mainly of the same kind. Several cuttings from provincial papers this week show that the subject is beginning to receive more attention; and the spectacle of Church leaders like the Bishop of London and others strutting about in khaki—under quite safe conditions—and other clergymen sheltering themselves behind an exemption clause, while exhorting others to enlist, is being treated with the contempt it deserves.

It is grimly sarcastic that the question of the preservation of infant life should arise as a burning question in connection with the War. Many of the speeches made on the subject express the sentiment that *because* of the waste of life in war we must pay more attention to the preservation of babies. Presumably, unless we do this, the war-lords of the future will fall short of material. And we feel tempted to say that if that is the principal reason for motherhood and the care of children, the sooner the race comes to an end the better. Child life should be guarded, and it is one of the scandals of our Christian communities that there should be so great an infant mortality. But in the name of common decency let us take the task in hand with some higher motive than that of providing material for warfare.

Father Vaughan is one of the many who lament the fact that our birth-rate is lower than it was. We might remind this priest that, as Ruskin said, it is of no vital consequence whatever whether a man and woman bring two children or four children into the world. But it is of very vital importance whether the children they have are worth preserving. It is not quantity but quality that counts. And we would remind Father Vaughan that, as a member of a celibate priesthood, it is downright impertinence on his part to reproach other people with evading their responsibilities by not having as many children as he thinks they should have.

The trustworthiness of Father Vaughan's statements may be judged by his remark, taken from a speech reported in the *Western Mail* of May 22, that "God is never mentioned in the press." The man who can say that can say anything.

What a patriot the Bishop of London is! At a time when Europe is engaged in a life and death struggle, his lordship is conducting a crusade against the promenades at London music-halls. As a wearer of khaki, the Bishop should be more concerned in preventing the Germans promenading through Europe.

A new farce, with the delicious title of "Ye Gods," has started on a successful career with the applause of the gallery-gods and the stall-holders alike. It is refreshing to find so many gods in a materialistic age.

Dr. Gillbard, of Willesden, writing in the *Daily News*, criticizes the clergy's attitude towards the War in no uncertain fashion. "Their present attitude," he says, "is an impossible one; they neither share the fighting with their brothers-in-arms nor stand by their despised and rejected disciples at the Tribunals."

Now that the proposed Sunday performances on behalf of the blinded soldiers and sailors have been abandoned, and the concerts, etc., arranged for a weekday, the Archbishop of Canterbury has allowed his name to be used as one of the patrons, and it is suggested that collections should be made on a selected Sunday in all the churches. Singing and music in a theatre on Sunday to help the blinded soldiers would have been a sin. Singing and music in the churches for the same purpose is quite in order. Anything so long as the

clergy are in the forefront. Perhaps if a clergyman had been asked to deliver an address before each performance—or even sing a song—the opposition might have been less intense.

Writing on the subject of Irish idealism, the Rev. R. J. Campbell says, "Our industrial and commercial civilization is largely soulless. The Western world would be better off if it were poorer and simpler and with fewer inequalities in the distribution of wealth." Yet Mr. Campbell has just joined a Church where the ecclesiastics roll in wealth and the curates exist on a few shillings weekly.

The dear clergy, who are always railing at the Materialism of England, will be delighted at the childlike spirituality displayed in a *Daily Chronicle* reference to Maurice Maeterlinck, the Belgian poet, who is stated to have "stood largely for the soul, and who has written and spoken for her in tones of high confidence." Students who search for the soul will do well to remember the phrase, "*cherchez la femme!*"

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, assures us that there is "nothing unreasonable in prayer," because "if a human mind could send a bullet in one direction, an Almighty mind could turn it in another." We agree; but when *did* a human mind send a bullet in any direction whatever? As a matter of indubitable fact, the mind is powerless, does not even exist, apart from the body. The very existence of an Almighty mind, unembodied, is inconceivable. The Canon admits that even a Divinely deflected bullet may take a life "for which prayers are offered"; but "we need not despair," he adds, because suffering is medicinal and disciplinary. And there are people who are comforted by such irrational teaching!

The Bishop of Lincoln is quite mistaken when he asserts that the greatest minds—including Huxley—postulate a Divine Creator. Huxley does nothing of the sort. In 1887 he wrote: "That there is no evidence of the existence of such a being as the God of the theologians is true enough" (*Life*, vol. ii., p. 162). In his so-called Theism he never advanced beyond the recognition of "the passionless impersonality of the unknown and unknowable." Is it possible that Dr. Hicks is ignorant of Huxley's disbelief in Christian Theism? To abandon "the gladiatorial theory" is by no means the same as to adopt the Christian interpretation of the universe.

The Rev. T. Rhondda Williams says that "faith still remains the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." That is our contention, too, and that is why we do not cherish the hope, nor believe in the spiritual world. Faith is a sandy foundation, and the house built upon it cannot stand. What we maintain is, not that God is no Father, but that there is no God at all; not that his government of the world is not perfect, but that there is absolutely no Divine government of the world.

Sunday-school attendances, says Dr. Churcher, have fallen off by over a million. This is scarcely a bright outlook for religion after the War.

Lord Hugh Cecil says that "we are not as shocked as we ought to be that English Christians and German Christians should be killing each other." His lordship expects too much. Have not the dear clergy told their followers that we are fighting Prussian Materialists?

A crusted old joke relates how a schoolboy defined a "vacuum" as "an empty space where God lives." The dear and ever-delightful *Daily News* recently retailed this, and substituted "Pope" for "God." Why drag in papa?

A judicial decision which affects the infallibility of the Bible was given by Mr. Justice Darling when he reversed a jury's award of £250 in a case in which a boarding-house keeper claimed damages because a leper had lodged at his house. Counsel said the jury had been influenced by the

Book of Leviticus, and Mr. Justice Darling pointed out that there was a million to one chance of infection. Evidently the Book of Leviticus is no longer an authority on leprosy.

Mr. Pett Ridge has a funny story concerning a woman who was lamenting how dull her daughter was. But, she said, "It isn't my fault. I've done everything. I've had her vaccinated, and I've had her confirmed, but somehow or other nothing seems to really brighten her up." The dissipated lives led by some of the lower classes almost passes belief.

We gladly take the following from a recent issue of the *Schoolmaster* :—

In view of the general attitude adopted by the clergy with respect to the needs of the country in this crisis, we should have thought it would have well become them to say as little as possible on the matter of recruiting. Every class of the community has come forward splendidly to fill the depleted ranks in Flanders and France, with the single exception of the clergy and ministers, who have been specially excepted from the citizen's obligation to defend his home. Not only so, but also the theological and divinity students who have only just commenced their course are also being excepted from the general obligation. Yet we find the Reverend E. H. Griffith, rector of Llangadwaladr, sitting as chairman of the Aethwy Local Tribunal at Bangor, supporting a resolution asking the Board of Education to release certificated schoolmasters in the county so that way should be made for "other educated men" to take their places.....The reverend chairman said he supposed the Education Committee would consider it a fearful heresy if it were suggested that "educated men" should take charge of the schools in this crisis, and said that he was prepared to do this work himself.....It is common knowledge that teachers have offered their services with the Colours and been accepted, perhaps too freely, in the national interests, and the effect is seen in the alarming increase in juvenile crime. Education authorities are using their powers of appeal very sparingly, and when they do appeal they are entitled to be heard as experts in the needs of their area, as their appeals are the result of local knowledge and careful consideration, and it is disappointing to find the parish clergy in a position which enables them to over-ride the decisions of a public body responsible for education in the county. Indeed, in our opinion, the presence of the clergy on Local Tribunals at all, is exceedingly undesirable. As they are standing outside the general body of citizens in this matter, it is not fit that they should be made judges of the duty of others who have so willingly come forward, and the attitude of Mr. Griffith in this matter confirms our view.

We agree with our contemporary that decency should have prevented a class exempt by law from military service judging whether others should serve or not. But we are afraid that a sense of what is fitting and the preaching of the Gospel do not often run together.

On Mr. Griffith's offer to himself teach, the *Schoolmaster* says :—

The offer made by the Reverend E. H. Griffith to act as a teacher in a public elementary school is a perfectly safe one from his point of view, for a clerk in holy orders or the regular minister of a congregation is not recognized as part of the staff of a school or department for the purposes of the Code of Regulations of the Board of Education. This apparent readiness of the clergy to obtain admission to the Council Schools should be very carefully watched. Clerical control has not been such an unqualified success in certain of the Non-provided Schools as to warrant any extension to the schools provided by the Local Education Authority. There is little fear that the Board of Education or Parliament would be inclined to allow their intrusion into these schools even in this time of stress, and any attempt to force the position would meet with the strongest possible opposition in the local areas and in the House of Commons.

Bishop Gore is a deep observer. We assume this because he is able to tell the man who has been to the War from the one who has not. The former is a changed man, and comes back with a deepened religious sense. That settles it. The next time we come across a soldier who has not a deepened religious sense, but who tells us that he has been to the War, we shall know he is stating that which is not true. Engaging

in the work of shooting Christians gives him a deeper hold on the value of religious truth.

A State religion is a fearful and wonderful thing. Writing of Canon Carnegie's appointment to the chaplaincy of the House of Commons, the *Daily News* remarks, "His most important duty will be to read, to an average attendance of between twenty and forty members, three brief prayers." There are about six hundred members of Parliament. Further comment is needless.

In a recent book on Russia, the author sneers at those authorities who "regard the Russian peasant as a simple person with a picturesque habit of crossing himself before icons." Perhaps the Russians have found out that icons are not bullet-proof.

Canon Carnegie says that some of the Anglican Churches might suitably put up the notice "Christianity served with ice." There was a time when a Church that served out ice would have been a boon. Christianity sent so many to a resort where ice was at a premium that it would have been appreciated. Nowadays, however, hell has been so cooled that furs and footwarmers would be in greater demand.

Quite naturally the *Church Times* resents the idea that the Church is a failure. It says the assertion is made because "she does not win or retain the masses of the people," but her function is to "bear witness," and so long as she does this, she is not a failure. But surely she is to bear witness to some end! A witness is a witness, either in support of something or in confutation of something; and if the Church bears witness without convincing, that is as clear a proof of failure as one could wish. And if she fails to retain the good opinion of those whom she has won, the proof of failure is more convincing still. It is obviously Christianity's business to win the world. It has not done this, and it is less likely than ever to do so in the future. And non-achievements of one's end is failure—nothing else.

As a statement of mere fact, the whole history of Christianity is a record of failure. There is not a single one of its teachings that could be brought to the touchstone of fact that has not been decisively disproved. In astronomy, in geology, in biology, in sociology, this is demonstrably the case. It has taught things only to have to swallow them at a later date. Even in matters of doctrine this is the case. Its original teachings concerning heaven and hell, God and man, the Bible and inspiration, have been so continuously modified, that with even educated believers nothing of the original remains. Every attempt has been made to retain a hold on the people—attempts by intimidation, by bribery, and by compromise. And all are foredoomed to failure. Slowly, but surely, the Christian Church loses its hold on life. That is the one indisputable—and to Freethinkers—encouraging fact in the situation. And after all these centuries the mere prevalence of such a topic as the failure of Christianity is proof of defeat. A Church that has existed for so long, and which has wielded such power, should by now have convinced the whole world of its value. Not to have done so is failure, complete and irredeemable.

The Rev. E. H. Tottenham, formerly a British chaplain at Karlsruhe, says that "the German officer who frog-marches his men would not hurt a cat." It is all for the good of the "cause." Similarly, in the "good old days," Christians burnt other Christians for the good of their souls.

A "Pilgrimage of Prayer" was begun the other day at Rochester. The pilgrims are all ladies, and they say they will bring neither eloquence nor great learning to bear, but only a call to prayer. We have no doubt but that this portion of the programme will be carried out faithfully enough.

To Correspondents.

THE PROPAGANDA FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £206 13s. 2d. Collected by the Leicester Secular Society:—G. H. Solwell, £2 2s.; S. Leeson, £1; W. Leeson, 5s.; W. H. Scott, 10s.; G. H. Hopkins, 2s. 6d.; T. E. Ensor, 2s. 6d.; H. E. Anderson, 3s.; T. Carter, 2s.; H. H. Woolley, 2s.; F. Malin, 1s.; W. J. Marston, 1s.; C. Leeson, 1s.; G. Orton, 1s.; C. W. Odames, 1s.; H. Hassell, 1s.; T. J. Smith, 1s.; G. Lovesee, 1s.; T. Orton, 1s.; Anon, 2s.—Total, £5.

J. T. Jones, £1 1s.; J. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; X. Y. Z., £1; Gamaliel, senior, 1s.; S. Clegg, 1s.; A. G. Lye, 5s.; W. E. Hickman, 2s. 6d.; C. J., 10s.; Joe Stringer, 2s. 6d.; Tom Stringer, 2s. 6d.; William Mather, 10s.; Jas. Conner, £1; M. Barnard, 2s. 6d.—Total, £216 13s. 8d.

"P. Meredith Dennis, £1 1s.," in last week's list, should have read "P. Mehan Dermot."

P. M. DENNIS.—Thanks for the help you are giving in securing new readers for the *Freethinker*.

F. COLLINS.—We share your apprehension of there being troublous times ahead. It is, therefore, the more incumbent on all to prepare for what may be coming. There are enough Freethinkers to make our position secure, if only they can be induced to lend a hand.

Mrs. A. LEE.—Unless we try and forget all the nice things you and others say about us, we shall have to order a larger sized hat. Seriously, we are doing our best, and intend to keep doing it, while the knowledge that Freethinkers appreciate our efforts is stimulating.

W. DODD.—Shall hope to see you at the N. S. S. Conference.

P. BOWEN.—Your letter should do good.

E. SMEDLEY.—Such correspondence is wholly to the good. The more the Press is used for such purposes the better.

W. DAVIDSON.—We have written the authorities on the general question, but you do not give the name of the place, which is important.

S. LAVCOCK.—Pleased to learn that our brief note on "Rights" has helped to clear up the subject to your mind. There is no need to apologize for "trespassing" on our time. We are only too pleased to be of assistance to whom we can.

F. C. WYKE.—You are quite at liberty to use anything from the *Freethinker* with which to point letters or articles in the newspapers. We are only too glad to know we provide Freethought soldiers with reliable ammunition.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—S. P. L., 6s.

H. M. RIDGWAY.—The N. S. S. General Secretary would be glad to hear from you. Recent communications addressed to you have been returned, marked "Gone away."

IGNOTUS.—Received with thanks, and will publish as soon as possible; but we are terribly overcrowded with copy at present.

W. T. BURFORD.—Thanks for addresses. We are arranging to have copies of the paper sent. There is sound sense in your observation that organizations like the Y.M.C.A. "are successful exactly so far as they are not religious." They are really keeping religion alive on the strength of work that has no essential connection with religion, and which would be done quite as well without it.

J. A. SILKSTONE (Toronto).—We regret to hear of the death of your father, whom we well remember, and also the many interesting discussions we had with him more than twenty years ago. We shall preserve the card as a memento of an old friend and a sturdy Freethinker. Our memory of yourself is quite clear; and we wish you all success in Canada.

H. J. HASTINGS.—Thanks for new subscriber's address with remittance. We wish you the best of luck when you once more land "somewhere in France."

J. STANWAY AND OTHERS.—Thanks for offer to supply the soldier, mentioned in a recent issue, with copies of the *Freethinker*. Through the kindness of readers, we have supplied him and others. We hope to avail ourselves later of the other offers that have reached us.

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.

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.

We have received so many letters congratulating us upon what one writer calls "the brilliant success of the Propaganda Fund," that we must take this method of acknowledging them. The £216 13s. 8d. subscribed, added to the £200 which led to the appeal, makes a substantial sum with which to set to work on a propagandist mission, and we are sure the results will be beneficial to the Freethought Cause. Several contributors had volunteered further donations if they were required to make up the £200, but it was not necessary to call upon them. One other wrote offering a sum of money towards another and somewhat similar effort, but we feel that enough has been done for the present. The knowledge that we have the confidence and support of the Freethought public is an encouragement to press forward, and if we only deserve, and continue to deserve, part of the kind and flattering things said, we shall be quite satisfied. All we can do now is to once more thank all who have helped to lighten a task that in no circumstances is an easy one.

There is still time for those who wish Miss Vance to help them in arranging for accommodation during their stay in London to write stating their requirements, if they do so at once. At the time of writing, nothing definite has been fixed about a conference luncheon, but something of the kind will be arranged, and an announcement made at the morning session. Any other arrangements that are made for the comfort of visitors will be made public at the same time.

We hope that provincial Freethinkers are making all their arrangements for attending the Annual Conference of the N. S. S., and that London ones will soon be getting to work to make the evening meeting a complete success. It is very difficult to advertise a meeting in London, and much depends upon the enthusiasm put into it by Metropolitan Freethinkers. The morning and afternoon meetings are business ones, open to members on production of their card of membership. Those who have not this should get it from the General Secretary without delay. The evening meeting is a public demonstration, and will be addressed by Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, Moss, Heaford, Rosetti, and Willis. Admission will be free.

Freethinkers residing in or near Lewisham, who would be interested in helping to form a Branch of the National Secular Society, are requested to send their names and addresses to the General Secretary N. S. S., at 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.

A correspondent in forwarding a six months' subscription for the *Freethinker* to be sent to his brother, "somewhere in France," writes:—

My brother, on active service, says there are many avowed Freethinkers in his Company who have not heard of the *Freethinker*, so he hopes to infuse a little enthusiasm into them out there.

That is the kind of letter we like to receive. "When the boys come home," we quite expect many to read the *Freethinker* who have never read it before.

Religion and the War, by C. T. Gorham (Rationalist Press. One Penny), is a very serviceable pamphlet on a topic of interest and importance. Mr. Gorham writes with great moderation, and his pamphlet will, for that reason, probably be more effective than a sledge-hammer attack. The three articles that make up the essay, appeared originally, we believe, in the *Literary Guide*, and their republication is in response to many requests from those who then read them. These articles will now appeal to a wider public.

Virgil and Dante.

FREETHINKERS may bear with fortitude the oft repeated charge of negation; we may take some consolation from the fact that our positive position leaves us without remorse. We, at least, have no duty to perform in the way of interpreting the death and resurrection of the greatest cynic that ever lived. Judging by outward and visible signs we should imagine that the principles engaged in the propagation of the popular superstition would be heartily glad if the period from April 20 to 25, 1916, could be lifted from the calendar and dropped into the sea. So much, courteous readers, for the ægis of justice under which we strive; it leaves us with clean hands; we have nothing to sell; we do not pretend to know anything beyond the grave; and, if we did, God bless us, gentlemen, we should not want to burn people to induce them to believe us. We should not require a special code of law to silence those who had not enjoyed the advantage of a university education. Specifically, we mean those whose feelings cannot be translated for the occasion; a bad smell sometimes takes the breath away. Where there is persecution there is no case for reason.

All this is by the way of an introduction to the consideration of Virgil and Dante. At first sight there may not appear any vital connection; but, quoting from memory, we believe Aristotle said that one of the chief things in life is to know the relation between things. This is quite simple if it is regarded simply and not as an esoteric half truth to be shared only by priests who pare their nails on Friday. For example, it is possible to see the colours of a rainbow on the belly of a mackerel; in Devonshire some of the cows are the same colour as the sandstone in that county, and a broomstick may have helped to make a lordly show in a pine forest. The steel nib now travelling over this paper may once have hurtled through the air on the point of an arrow shot at a bird in some mediæval forest. These and many other instances can be used as evidence in support of the relation of things. In the moral world, although we now use the phrase with diffidence, the same rule applies. Apart from the dictates of common decency, the right thing should be done as a matter of long-sight.¹ An action to-day will find its relation to-morrow, the next day, or five years hence.

Virgil never aspired to anything superhuman in the moral teachings to be found in the *Æneid*. He attempted to prove that hell was not such a bad place, and, judged by a comparison with the example from Homer, he succeeded. It is not our present purpose to elaborate on the moral aspect of Virgil; but we should like to emphasize his position as a secular poet. To assert that he is eternal would almost be impiety. His "Georgics," although it may seem incredible to say so, would provide an excellent handbook for farmers in the present day; and here we cannot resist the temptation to mention the influence that Lucretius exercised over the genius of Mantua. It must also be noted that Virgil climbed to the lofty pedestal of eternity during the Augustan age; no flagellation, no fasting, no ecstatic visions for the beloved writer of the *Æneid*. As a work of imagination alone, the *Æneid* is imperishable. In the reading of it we are impressed by the healthy, buoyant trust of Aeneas in predominant good, and in many places we find open scepticism concerning the Pagan gods. Whilst we, as Freethinkers, cannot, and do not, wish to claim Virgil as

¹ "R. H. C.," in the *New Age*, defines good taste as long-sight, or long-sight as good taste: this definition we venture to assert is a humane transvaluation of the squint-eyed maxim, Honesty is the best policy.

a Freethinker, we do claim the right to affirm that he did not represent any special branch of the hotch-potch from Palestine.

In concluding this imperfect outline of the influence and thought of Virgil, we think that a word or two will not be out of place concerning the attitude of Freethinkers towards the great men who have caused the world to be a fit place for the dwelling of mankind. Suppose we sum up Christianity in one word—Aggression! This, of course, may, and does, assume many subtle forms; in our opinion it is the sole reason for the existence of Freethought. So far, then, Christianity means aggression; and we venture to surmise, that many great men have been claimed as Freethinkers for the simple reason that they refused to join the ignorant pack of mitred and red-hatted fools pushed into authority. This much, in defence of those enthusiasts, who, by claiming great men indiscriminately, create an awkward position for themselves. A situation of this kind could be avoided if we refused to prove a negative; but, if the history of the world should cease at this moment, we can say, behold Christianity's positive! We could point to the history of the Popes—but that is long ago. We could indicate the Holy Wars—but that, likewise, is veiled in the robe of things that have happened in the distant past. The present—the awful present—deny it, excuse it, justify it; it is Christianity's positive. It is the working of the eternal law of the relation of things. Our negative, despised, sneered at, brushed aside, will bear better fruit; it is only a question of time.

In our next examination of this subject we shall endeavour to point out the attitude of Dante towards Virgil. We are inclined to think that the spectacle of Dante the visionary, taking Virgil the melancholy singer, and using him in the machinery of the *Divine Comedy*, is not altogether inspiring to students of literature or impartial seekers of truth. That Dante should select the greatest name in the political history of Italy we can well understand. But it passes our comprehension when this figure is dropped for that of the shadowy Beatrice, of whom we know so little. We say it passes our comprehension—but let it be understood that we are puzzled only as a student of life in all its forms. Standing as shadowy forms on shifting sand we can quickly surmise the answer—dramatic fitness. But as researchers, surveying history divested of the halo of romance, and demanding *our* share in the eternity of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, we emphatically refuse to go farther with Dante when he bids goodbye to the shade of Virgil. Virgil's history we know; Beatrice has none; and not all the Rossetti necks, the fretwork of fine golden hair, and the lips never made for the kisses of children—all these considerations, though we be in a minority of one, will prevent our sympathy for this creature of imagination, who possesses none of those gracious and intensely human qualities found in Queen Dido.

WILLIAM REPTON.

(To be concluded.)

The Excursion.

It has become an annual pilgrimage. I become more and more devout. The genial atmosphere of the South calls into being bud and blossom of the soul, that rival in riotous luxuriance the almost tropical richness of English woods and fields, river and canal banks, and quaint country lanes. I love London and Londoners, and the suburban fringe where the huge tentacled city breathes again on blue seas and lovely quiet shores.

I was glad and sorry to come away. Glad to be alone with my thoughts. Sorry to leave the scenes that gave

rise to them. I begin to have an affection for London—and Londoners, who, however mistaken many of them may be, are a "mighty fine people," and their smiles and courtesy and kindness have for me undying charm. Personal and impersonal, stranger and friend, mingle together in the retrospect, in the living, moving cinema of memory; but now fixed and hushed, impending, waiting for what will be; waiting for the night, waiting for the light! I took care to see neither caste nor creed in London, but only humanity. I saw woman, lovely woman, and worshipped reverently, but had only come to see *men*. To me great men; to you what you please; mine is no infallible criterion; it is only sufficient for myself. Such as have been lights to my path for many years, and have never led astray. I saw in passing, Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, "Mimnermus," Rosetti (jun.), and Miss Kough, and—talking to our busy editor—the author of *The Churches and Modern Thought*. I also saw the gentlemen of Johnson's Court—Messrs. Watts, Gorham, etc., and Miss Davidson. Supped with the busy, energetic "Mimnermus" at Southend-on-Sea, and dined with Principal Thresh at the Ruskin School of the same place. Was much interested in this little school with its large curriculum. Great things are seldom imposing. The teacher himself is the epitome of patient merit, modest ability, gentlemanly instinct. As mother and son stood together, I thought of the line:—

A noble mother must have bred so brave a son.

Each scholar is a "little toff," from the statuesque Margery Dux to Freda the fairy, to Noel Blake, and Master Marshall Davidson. Nor is the etiquette merely on the surface; but grown with the fibre, inlaid in the mosaic of mentality, so that it becomes—"not idle, but the fruit of noble nature and of loyal mind." The windows are open admitting air and light. Religious or non-religious does not matter. Here religion takes its *true* place—in the comparative pantheon. *Naturalness* is over all. Here are neither hurry, fuss, nor cram. Slow, or sudden, but sure, the buds expand in the ripening sun of knowledge. On the brow of the good master there seems to sit that peculiar "sadness of science"—science that is orphaned and neglected still, while most people run wild over quack nostrums and crazes of a day. We often wonder what is best to do with our children. To those who can afford the very moderate charges, here is the problem solved, and beyond all doubt and fear.

It is over. I am going North again. I am glad and sorry. Nay; I am only happy, I think *too* happy. I have seen, and heard, and felt. I have accomplished! I hug myself. I doubt. Is it possible? Prodigious! The train rolls on into the night. I have no *faith* in trains; I take the *risk*. The car was a luxurious one; the wheels made drowsy monotone, but I could not sleep—or did not want to; the siren of happy thought kept singing in my brain. What! an Atheist happy? It is true, I assure you. He is even expected to *die* happy. 'Tis thus, in spite of sect, the siren sings to *all* at times, and for the moment earth is heaven and we are gods; we are even *permanently* uplifted; we can never descend quite so low again. Is it not so?—

She sang sae sweet I couldna sleep,
The auld Scot's sangs to me.

And not these alone; the new mingled with the old; the bucolic and erotic with the modern epic strain; or, mix it as you will. Happiness, satisfaction, is a divine concoction. We need not pause to analyse its chemistry. But its effects, its consequences, are of prime significance. And always an ingredient is Shelley's "saddest thought." Our fellow-travellers were soldiers and sailors. These gave us a twinge of "conscience." Magnificent

fellows, going to and coming from the War. Brave, quiet, modest men, who had "seen blood"—the sailor at Gallipoli, the soldier at Loos—ill-starred, though brave! The soul of the great rough seaman was in his eyes; his voice was gentle; and his mien, even as he unstrapped and laid away the grim harness of war, thick and strong as horses wear. Fancy this magnificent man, thousands of him, at the beck and call of some mannikin of State, dressed in a little brief, external authority, and never clothed in the inner majesty of this suffering god-like man. "It is not fair," he said; "it is not fair to the women and the kids."

When day broke at Lancaster, on Morecambe Bay, two "Glasgow Highlanders" were seen "glued" to the windows "devouring the landscape." Their boots were muddy, and their knees and faces brick-red. Their expression was at once fierce and mild, stern and soft, wise and foolish, weak and strong, gay and sad; wistful, pathetic, pensive, beyond description; reverting to a more primitive type; each an Andrew Fairservice in a Rob Roy play; sombre, sacrificed, hardened, softened, shadowed, lightened, gentle, generous, unselfed, *broken men*—the paradox and metamorphosis of war.

Glasgow is bathed in glorious tempered sunshine. The skies are fresh blue and grey above the azure hills. Farmers crowd in at the little country stations. A far cry from Freethought to farming—but not so very far in *our* philosophy.

I was glad and sorry to be home, but "it was not fair to the women and the kids," so I came with them to Callander next day, and in the shadow of Ben Ledi watched and listened to the watery turmoil in the Pass of Leny. With all due respect to England, and quite impartial to Scotland, I said or thought, England has nothing to equal this. Here the "tame and domestic" mingles with the "wild and majestic" of Lord Byron in a glorious valley in the hills. A Glasgow "saint," Mr. James Stewart, suggested this trip—cunning patriot! and lately wrote of Mr. Archibald Kay's picture, "A Storm in the Pass of Leny":—

The mountain is wrapped in a purple gloom.....the river surging through the contracted chasm, and boiling in bottle-green eddies round the waterfalls, betrays, in addition to the touch of the master, the sympathetic handling of one who knows and loves the river in its every mood.....The Leny is clear, like brisk champagne.....which, the artist explained, was due to the sediment of all the tributary streams being deposited in Loch Lubnaig, whence the river emerges clear as crystal.

So, upon the banks of this Scottish torrent, I bid adieu to my English loves.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Through Green Glasses.

TIME is the great master artist. Sublime is his genius for he dwells on the heights of the absolute; and when, as if in play, he uplifts from our eyes the shades of the ephemeral and lets us see, for a little, the scope of his marvellous power, fear is mingled with wonder, awe with pain, in our minds. The old questions revoice themselves, the foolish whys and whithers that have startled men's brains, shaken their faith, given them freedom, as they thought, with freedom's sorrow and suffering, and lured them on from pitfall to pitfall, from cliff to cliff, till the great libertarian, Death, paid their ransom with a sad smile.

Out of our weaknesses the Time Spirit fashions the most wonderful of things. Grandeurs as glorious as sunrise he makes from *our* strength. We are the raw material of his exquisitely formed tools. We are the marble he adores; the pigments he loves; the vibrant

notes he strikes; and, in the end, we are the creatures of his inexorable genius.

The expansive realms of human emotions are his studios, his workshops. Calmly, quietly, with an infinitude of patience, he works, creating and recreating from men an art beyond good and evil. There are times when his inspiration blazes forth, like convulsions of genius, that seem to fling abroad through the world of humanity consuming fires, in which change follows change with bewildering rapidity. He slaves like a magnificent Titan, knowing neither weariness nor want. He is a God.

Rebels and enthusiasts are his sports. Fools and indifferentees are his joys. Against the one he pits the other, and from their antagonism is born an artistry superfraught with glory. Our inconsistencies, our cowardices, our follies, are air-bells into which he has blown the breath of his life. He multiplies them, grants them sluggish and passionate activities, that they may corrode the nobilities with which he has engyved us. Playing upon our heartstrings, sensitized by his own cunning craftsmanship, he makes music more marvellous than the mellow moaning of the swinging spheres, that is heard only by the poets. Were it not for the dull, heavy, flat notes, discordant, raw, and ugly, we might be angels singing around the mythic throne of grace. But the abandonment of the terrible in art would break the heart of the Time Spirit; would ruin the artistry of his creations; would wreck his genius. He loves the grotesque and tragic. He is a Devil.

Centuries of labour he embodies in a statue. Infinite care, humanly impossible intensity of study; deepest, acutest concentration he bestows upon it. He exhausts the cosmos in the perfection of its loveliness. And then, while idealizing it gently with the finger-tips of one hand, from the other he pours streams of electrified sarcasm. Like a figure of ice in the hot rays of the sun, the statue dissolves. It was named Christianity. It, too, disappears, becoming a memory that will perish. Even gods find room in oblivion.

Insatiate is the vitality of the Time Spirit. Inexhaustible are his wonders. Imperishable are his powers. He is the creating and decreating Devil-god. How sweetly he paints visions of purified life on the clouds of hope! How appealingly he draws justice and truth and kindness to the mountain peak, to show them the mirage of their longing! and because the journey up the height means sacrifice and hardship, he endows them with fortitude, endurance, courage, and a heroism unrewarded and unappreciated. He ordains them a touch of every brave virtue, and feeds them with the fires of endeavour. Reaching the summit, they gaze into the glowing horizon of their dreams. One more step they think; one more intense moment, and the land of promise is possessed by man.

With a shake of his head the Time Spirit turns the enthusiast into fool. Black gloomy clouds fill the heavens. Gaunt, gruesome shadows crawl into the valleys where light laughed and Spring played at merry-making with the soul of man. Face to face with the Utopians are the War Lords. Hot on the pursuit of the larks are the sparrow-hawks. And the Time Spirit, having recreated the horrors of the unremembered past, smiles at the rebellious discomfiture of the dreamer, and grimly glories in the extravagance of his own powers.

Virtue wrestles with vice. Endeavour grapples with indifference. Crime, large and small, strong and weak, personal and social, fastens its sharp teeth in the spine of goodness, and shakes, as a dog does, and as happily, the life from its victim. Progress is poisoned by the snakes of reaction. Freedom is hunted remorselessly down by the wolves of oppression. Advancement is

choked by the lusty weeds of retrogression. Conscience is imprisoned, starved, and murdered by autocracy. But the strength never dies, if it grow weary and weak. The Time Spirit has given it life everlasting. It will live as long as man lives. But the great artist seems to play with it, as the painter plays with his brush. The battle never ceases. The warfare never dims. Nor does ever, it would seem, victory triumphantly accord the laurel-leaf to either of the combatants. Eternal is the strife. The Time Spirit would have it so.

Sombre, maybe, the picture is, and pessimistic, the result of many months of soul sickness; but when one has dreamed and awakened to think, is forgiveness a crime?

ROBERT MORELAND.

Correspondence.

INDEPENDENT THINKING AND THE MASSES. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—*Apropos* of your remarks *re* Mr. Zangwill's article in the *Daily Chronicle* (which I read), you seem to have missed the fact that included in the "multitudes," referred to in your paraphrase of his query, are folk who must be termed unintellectual.

These latter, I suggest, form the immeasurably greater percentage of the total number (whatever it may be), and I think you will admit the point to be of enough importance to receive consideration.

It seems to me that if these same folk were to apply their minds to the fundamentals of the question, ignoring all superficialities, the majority of them would give it up with an "open mind," and the remainder would capitulate—to the Theistic theory.

The reason why I arrive at this conclusion is that ordinarily intelligent observation discloses obtuseness on the one hand, and stagnation on the other, as the outstanding features of the collective mentality.

The capacity for delving into the subject deeply enough for resultant positive conviction (which, as you suggest elsewhere, is not a feature of the present age) is possessed only in rare cases; these cases evolve into honest Atheists and honest Theists.

By inference, the remainder of the community is of no account.

It is not your contention, I take it, that positive conviction is non-existent; if it is, I must refute it, and justify the refutation so far as I am concerned.

At the same time I am no bigot—no fool; if I were, I could not tolerate the *Freethinker*, whose pages I peruse with interest! One can, without holding a brief for the Churches, and even with a contempt for the travesty that "religion" is in its common aspect, remain firmly established (probably more firmly for those reasons) as a believer in a Divine, benevolent, and omnipotent Being—that foundation resting alone in personal experience.

I would state my belief in the hopelessness of your Cause, inasmuch as it is the eradication of supernatural and metaphysical tendencies from universal thought—by reason of what might be termed the romantic strain that is the most general characteristic of the human mind.

I do not refer to mere sentimentality or love of romance that pleases the senses, but to that trait in its deepest and most potent meaning.

Contending that it is intentionally a factor in mental structure, it is the sheet-anchor, so to speak, of most men; and if you take it away under the present social conditions (to say nothing of probable future ones), with what do you propose to replace it as a preventative of universal disaster?

In neither a flattering nor a sarcastic sense, I contend that the honest *bona fide* Atheist is a superman; and that the vast majority could not attain to a condition of mental opulence that would render superfluous any influence other than personal desire and intent.

In like manner is the convicted believer a superman; and the degree of mental achievement is not much greater in the case of the Atheist than in that of the Theist.

Actually, the achievement is greater, in that the former has succeeded, to all intents and purposes, in closing the channel that would admit his mind to the realm of the super-natural—an object that 90 per cent. of folk would fail in attaining.

I have not been very explicit, perhaps; but, in short, it is unfair in a comparison of Ayes and Noes to include in the count those who are outside the discussion.

I should be very pleased if you would excuse the crudeness of my composition, and either print this with a reply or print a reply—in the *Freethinker* (this, of course, if my point recommends itself).

WM. CHAS. BOSHER HALL.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—If Mr. Webb really wishes to be charitable towards conscientious objectors, he will not find it difficult to acquit them of the charge of cowardice and selfishness. Without speaking of the insults, bullying, and violence to which these men have been subjected in the Army, may I ask your correspondent if men who have borne the mental torture of solitary confinement in military prisons without flinching can be called cowards and shirkers? It is not certain that they are not capable of physical bravery. The Duke of Wellington said that all men were equally brave. But the rare and valuable quality is moral courage, without which all progress is impossible.

Mr. Webb says that society in the last resort is based on a military system, and those who enjoy social privileges should be prepared to kill. A religious ancestor of Mr. Webb's would have put the position as follows, two hundred years ago: Religious uniformity is an essential condition of social stability. Those who refuse to conform to the State religion are guilty of enjoying the benefits of society, whilst refusing to support an institution which is necessary for society's continued existence. Force settles nothing in the end. When sanity returns to European statesmen, the various points of difference between the belligerent nations will be settled more or less according to the dictates of reason. The use of arms is an incident in international adjustments, and the more men who are ready to take their stand upon higher principles of morality, the sooner will the reign of force be over.

The article which you wrote on this subject some few weeks ago was a clear and sensible exposition of the rights of the State and the rights of conscience. You called attention to the illogical conduct of the Government in asserting the principle of compulsion and at the same time exempting certain people with scruples about warfare.

The explanation of the contradiction seems to me that political machinery gives approximate expression to the moral ideas which are prevalent in society. The Conscience Clause is an indication that the State must take account of the growth of pacifist principles. We may hope that the reaction from the doctrine of force will continue until reason is triumphant.

H. J. STENNING.

[We have received several other letters on this topic, and written from the same point of view, for which we regret we are unable to find space.—Ed.]

WITH THE ENEMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have read with interest the article in your issue of May 28 on Dr. Joseph Fort Newton's sermons which are being published in the *Christian Commonwealth*. May I say that I hope you will mention in your journal that Dr. Newton is to preach in the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, on the five Sundays in July, services 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Perhaps some of your readers may like to take the opportunity of getting a personal impression of his "theories."

EDITOR, *Christian Commonwealth*.

Christians, who laugh at Darwinism, should explain how the three sons of one father and mother have peopled the world with white, yellow, red, and black men.—G. W. Foote.

THE MAN FRIDAY'S POSER.

I found it was not so easy to imprint right notions in his (Friday's) mind about the Devil as it was about the being of a God—nature assisted all my arguments to evidence to him even, the necessity of a great First Cause—an overruling Governing Power—a secret directing Providence; and of the equity and justice of paying homage to him that made us, and the like; but there appeared nothing of this kind in the notion of an evil spirit; of his origin, his being, his nature; and above all, of his inclination to do evil, and to draw us in to do so too—and the poor creature puzzled me once in such a manner by a question merely natural and innocent, that I scarce knew what to say to him.

I had been talking a great deal to him of the power of God, his omnipotence, his aversion to sin, his being a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity; how, as he had made us all, he could destroy us, and all the world in a moment; and he listened with great seriousness to me all the while.

After this, I had been telling him how the Devil was God's enemy in the hearts of men, and used all his malice and skill to defeat the good designs of Providence, and to ruin the kingdom of Christ in the world, and the like.

"Well," says Friday, "but you say God is so strong, so great; is he not much strong, much might, as the Devil?"

"Yes, yes," says I, "Friday; God is stronger than the Devil, God is above the Devil, and therefore we pray to God to tread him down under our feet, and enable us to resist his temptations, and quench his fiery darts."

"But," says he again, "if God much stronger, much might as the wicked Devil, why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more do wicked?"

I was strangely surprised at this question; and, after all, though I was now an old man, yet I was but a young doctor, and ill-qualified for a casuist, or a solver of difficulties; and, at first I could not tell what to say; so I pretended not to hear him, and asked him what he said—but he was too earnest for an answer to forget his question, so that he repeated it in the very same broken words as above.

By this time I had recovered myself a little, and I said, "God will at last punish him severely; he his reserved for the judgment, and is to be cast into the bottomless pit to dwell with everlasting fire." This did not satisfy Friday; but he returns upon me repeating my words, "Reserve at last! me no understand—but why not kill the Devil now; not kill great ago?"

"You may as well ask me," said I, "why God does not kill you or me, when we do wicked things here that offend him; we are preserved to repent and be pardoned." He mused some time on this.

"Well, well," says he, "mightily affectionately, "that well—so you, I, Devil, all wicked, all preserve, repent, God pardon all."—Daniel Defoe, "The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe."

If a jackass were to describe the Deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer one; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man.—Ambrose Bierce.

The deepest controversy that lies before modern society is, Can the social union subsist without a belief in God?—Lord Morley.

The infidels of one age have been the saints of the next.—Ingersoll.

Obituary.

On May 12 Robert Meredith, an old member of the Birmingham Branch, passed away. He had been a sufferer with a physical infirmity for many years, but mentally he remained firm to the principles he had so long held. When his health was good he took an active part in our work, and throughout his illness he was ever interested in it. His wish to have a Secular Service at his burial was carried out. Relatives and some of his fellow-members of the Branch attending.

J. PARTRIDGE.

[We regret that owing to delay in the post the above was not received in time for insertion in last week's issue.—Ed.]

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Howell Smith, B.A., Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park); 6.30, G. Burke, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, E. Dales, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kennedy, "Religious Ideas"; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Beale, and Saphin.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, F. Shaller, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 6.45, R. H. Rosetti, "Primitive Brains in Modern Skulls."

COUNTRY.

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GLASGOW (Jail Square): 3.30, R. Ogilvie, a Lecture.

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