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Views and Opinions.

Religion in the Army.

The War has been fruitful of myths, as witness the Mons Angels and the perambulating army of Russians in England. Of these myths none have seen more duty than the one of the increased religious fervour of our soldiers in France. And no amount of disproof—even from brother clergymen—seems adequate to stop some of the clergy circulating this legend. Adopting and adapting the attitude of Ko-Ko, they say, “It ought to be true. If it ought to be true, it is true. And if it is true, why not say so?” Fortunately for one’s faith in human veracity some of the clergy pay a little more regard to facts than, say, the Bishop of London, who appears to have made himself the champion of this particular myth. Thus, a distinguished Scottish divine, the Rev. D. S. Cairns, who has been in France for some time, said, in the course of a recent speech at Bradford, with reference to the War bringing about a revival of religion:—

After being in close contact with the men, he was bound to say that the prediction did not really describe the situation, and it was resented by the men themselves.....

If the Church was ready, there might be such a capture of the rising generation as would echo away down through the centuries to come, but it was the Church which had got to do it.

The Church had to give these men the Christian explanation of what had happened.

There may be a capture of the rising generation. The adult population is, as usual, beyond danger.

* * *

Piety and Fear.

There are two expressions in the above statement which I have italicized as deserving a little attention. The first is that the men resent the description of themselves as having been converted to religion by the War. And that resentment, from almost any point of view, is to their credit. Rudyard Kipling who, strangely enough, was accepted as the soldier’s laureate, was given to depict “Tommy Atkins” as a foul-mouthed,

drunken, “absent-minded beggar,” whose forgetfulness of social and domestic obligations was balanced by his readiness to kill or be killed. Such a description circulated to-day by an anti-war party might easily be an offence under the Defence of the Realm Act. Many soldiers resented the characterization, and with justice. And now some of the clergy, for purely professional reasons, delight in painting the soldier of the New Army as an unreflective, unimaginative person, who has been frightened into religion by German shells and gas-clouds. Without religion they entered the Army; without religion they entered the trenches. But the filth and discomfort of trench-life, the horror and brutality of the War awakened in them a sense of the truth of Christianity. I am not surprised to learn that the men resent this clerical exploitation of their manhood. To picture soldiers as fools made pious by fear is a slander upon the Army, which I believe to be of a better type than any army previously sent out by this country.

* * *

Will Religion Gain?

I can quite conceive some men being made more religious by this War. A superstitious person may easily see the protecting hand of “Providence” in his coming alive out of an action. (I know of at least one family which ascribes the fact of one of its members not being killed to the constant prayers offered at home for his safety.) But others who reflect upon the religious theory may, and do, quite naturally connect “Providence,” not with the number saved, but with those killed. The men who write home to a religious newspaper dwelling upon the way God has preserved a way-side crucifix or a church altar, are certainly outnumbered by those who wonder why God’s care was not shown in the preservation of homes, of women and children, and non-combatants. It is not the number saved, but the number lost that impeaches “Providence.” It is not the victory that issues from war, but the fact of war that is the condemnation of the religious theory of the world. The superstitions of some may be strengthened by the War. It is certain that the formal religion of a much larger number will be destroyed by it.

* * *

Civilization versus Religion.

There is, indeed, one way, and one way only, in which this War might lead to a revival of religion. If, as some have loosely opined, the War were to be protracted until it involved a veritable collapse of civilization, then there would be nothing to stand in the way of a great religious revival. For the essential attack on religious belief does not come from this man or from that group of men. He or they are only expressions of a tendency, mouthpieces of a revolt against a view of the world that comes to us from a remote past. The development of a truer view of Nature has utterly discredited that primitive conception of things which has become crystallized in the religions of the world. It is a mere clerical pretence that the rejection of religion has resulted from the growth of ethical Materialism, of luxury, of a love of pleasure. These things have

nothing to do with the growth of disbelief in the miraculous, or in a special providence, or in the supernatural generally. This rejection results inevitably from the development of science, from the enlargement of the human outlook, and from the establishment of a theory of the world that is in complete and irreconcilable harmony with religious teaching. It is civilization which saps the foundations of religion, and nothing short of a blotting out of the accumulated knowledge of the past four centuries can place religious belief in its old world-commanding and world-controlling position. If this War could have the effect of plunging Europe into the mental and social condition of the mediæval period, then we should at once have an environment in which Christianity might flourish with something of its old strength. For the war between religion and unbelief is essentially a war between two stages of human culture. It is a fight between the past and the present. It is as much a war between civilization as would result were Europe to be suddenly overrun by hordes of nomadic savages. The scientific *versus* the religious view of Nature and of man—that is the ultimate issue.

* * *

The Christian Explanation.

The Church, says Dr. Cairns, has to give the Christian explanation of what has happened. Well, but what is the Christian explanation? Is there one? There is a Christian excuse for what has happened, but is there an explanation? War is no new thing in the history of Christianity, and, while this war is on a larger scale than previous ones, it involves no new issues so far as Christianity is concerned. And when and where has Christianity ever set itself seriously against war? It has not done that even now. It is true that, in supporting this War, the Churches have practically the whole of the nation behind them. But exactly the same is the case in Germany. In neither country, nor in any country, can the Christian Church be said to be a force that normally makes for peace between nations. In not one country in the world does it rise above the level of average opinion, perverted though that opinion is through prejudice and want of knowledge. And can anyone doubt that had Christianity been a constant and truthful witness of the brutality and folly and ineffectiveness of war, it might, with its century long domination of life, have created in every civilized country a public opinion that would by now have made war a practical impossibility? The one certain fact of the situation is that, just as the Christian Church has given the nations no help by which they might have kept out of this imbroglio, so they will have to find their way through it unaided, with the Churches, as usual, striving to make all the capital they can out of the situation.

* * *

God and Man.

Dr. Cairns' own explanation is that such things as the War "are the righteous judgment of God, and to my mind it is the hope of the world that God is judging men." The same old cant! The same old futilities! To the memory of the millions of dead and maimed, to the thousands who have had their homes destroyed and their lives embittered by the recollection of a long-drawn-out horror, the Christian preacher offers the explanation that it is God's righteous judgment. Righteous judgment! With the punishment falling upon the strong and the weak, the innocent and the guilty alike; nay, even the guilty escaping altogether in many cases. It is God judging man! But if, as a result of the War, man is aroused to the task of judging God! What then? May they not conclude that, if there is a God, the world is his world? He made it; he made man; and if there be a God, then man and the

world is as he would have it. The world has no need to be alarmed at the judgment of the gods. It is the gods who have cause to dread the judgment of man. For the gods who are judged by man are doomed. They have grown great beneath the shadow of man's fears; they shrink and decline before the light of his intelligence. And whatever illusions this War may have dispelled, or may yet dispel, it is tolerably certain that with many thousands it will go far to dispel the illusion of religion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sham Optimism.

THERE are two kinds of optimism, the philosophical or theoretical, and the practical. Philosophical optimism has assumed at least three more or less distinct forms. There are those who hold the view that everything in Nature and in human history is ordered for the best, the whole scheme of the Universe being adapted to bring about the highest good. Raymond asks, "How can the existence of evil be reconciled with the goodness of God?" and gives the following answer: "Optimism solves the question by affirming that evil is the necessary antecedent of good." By several dramatic characters in Browning's poems, evil is defined as "good in the making." Of course, such a curious idea does not solve the problem, but merely throws its solution a little farther back. Another form of philosophical optimism is the well-known Leibnitzian doctrine that the Universe, being the work of an infinitely perfect Being, is the best possible Universe. Leibnitz rightly maintained that, if the world is the product of an omniscient, benevolent, and omnipotent Creator, it must, of necessity, be the best of all possible worlds. This is the theory upon which Voltaire casts such inimitable ridicule in his *Candide*. Master Pangloss "could prove to admiration that there is no effect without a cause, and in this best of all possible worlds the baron's castle was the most magnificent of all castles, and my lady the best of all possible baronesses." A third form of philosophical optimism is called Meliorism, according to which this is neither the best nor the worst possible world, but one susceptible of gradual improvement. This is the evolutionary interpretation of the Universe. By practical optimism is usually understood the intelligent disposition to take the most hopeful view, or to look on the brightest side, of things, or to believe that whatever happens is right, being overruled by an infinitely wise and loving God to achieve the highest good, whatever appearances may say to the contrary.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 12 there appeared a remarkable sermon, entitled "The Optimism of Faith," by Dr. Jowett, now of New York, but formerly of Birmingham. Dr. Jowett occupies an exceedingly high position in his profession. He has diligently studied and entirely mastered the art of preaching. His flexible, musical voice, his fine phrasing, his commanding presence, all contribute to his phenomenal success as a preacher. To listen to one of his discourses is like partaking of mental soothing syrup. "The Optimism of Faith" is pre-eminently an oration of that description. It is purely and simply an ingenious appeal to the so-called religious emotions, and its effect upon a prepared audience at Westminster Chapel, London, was truly electrical. It consisted of a series of skilfully elaborated variations upon Isaiah xl. 8: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." In that text, the preacher tells us, expression is given to both pessimism and optimism. Isaiah's world was the world of the pessimist:—

In those far off days there was an abundance of evidence to justify the wail of the pessimist. As far as

Israel was concerned, it certainly seemed as though the glory had been sponged out of the world. Raw, crude, rude, brutal power was marching across the earth, picking up little peoples as you might gather eggs from their nests. Small nations were being cropped like grass. Their noblest sons were being overturned as the pride of the meadow falls before the ploughshare.

That is certainly an oppressively dark picture; but was there anything in the conditions of Israel's life to relieve its terrible sombreness? Apparently there was absolutely nothing—"no hope of a morning, no hope of a better day." Yet Dr. Jowett asserts that during that depressingly dark night songs of confidence and triumph were being sung by a few far-seeing prophets, who testified of "an unseen presence upon the stricken field." Such songs, no doubt, were being bravely sung by one here and there, and the music ministered sentimental comfort to some of the simple-minded people; but the question that irresistibly suggests itself is, of what practical service to anybody was the belief in, or even the sense of, "an unseen presence," while the field remained stricken? Israel was always proudly spoken of as Jehovah's special heritage, his chosen among all the nations of the earth; and yet ten of the twelve tribes had already completely vanished, to be seen, as such, no more for ever; and now Judah was hopelessly groaning in Babylonian captivity. Some Isaiah or other was bold enough to sing of a new dawn and a happier day, but the people were debarred by their woeful plight from joining in the song. They had hung their harps upon the willows, saying, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" The few prophets sang on all through the dark night, and this was their song:—

Every valley shall be exalted, every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

"It is the vision of the optimist," cries the preacher. So it is, indeed, and this is all that can be said about it. The kingdom of Israel was no more, and that of Judah was tottering to its final doom. Most of the 14,000 taken as captives to Babylon never returned to their native land, but became nationally lost. Jehovah had rejected his chosen people and cancelled his covenant with them. Never again did Israel enjoy national independence, which is also true of the Jews to this day. The predicted prosperity, the loudly advertised day of triumph and happiness, never arrived. From Isaiah's day to this they have lived under foreign dominion, being cruelly oppressed, persecuted, and murdered in all generations. In their case, the word of the Lord has not been fulfilled, and the vision of the optimist lies falsified by every event.

Dr. Jowett refers us to "the Divinely inspired optimism of the Word of God," which he defines thus:—

The Divinely inspired optimism looks at facts with open eyes. It will not turn away from any fact, in repugnance or indifference. It is a reasonable optimism, which is based on a most reasonable faith, and will look at all the facts.

We grant that Dr. Jowett does look at the facts; but looking at and admitting their exceeding gruesomeness, so far as national and international life is concerned, he keeps on endlessly repeating, "But the word of our God shall stand." He falls foul of a distinguished American novelist, who charges the American people with cherishing "the cheapest sort of sham optimism," with wanting "a sugary philosophy, utterly without any basis in hard logic and experience," and with doggedly refusing to "face hard and unpleasant facts," insisting upon hugging "pleasant illusions." Well, Dr. Jowett does face hard and unpleasant facts; but the fault we have to find with him is that, while looking the disagree-

able facts in the face, he has the audacity to say that the lady novelist, who courageously looks at the sewer and the doings of the sewer, is characteristically disinclined to look at "the virgin snow." Whether this is true or not, we have no means of discovering; but Dr. Jowett seems to think that, in some mysterious way, the virgin snow justifies, excuses, or, at any rate, renders tolerable, the existence of the sewer and its doings. Listen to the following:—

If an optimism is maimed when it refuses to look at the sewer, it is equally maimed when it refuses to look at the heights; and I say that a reasonable optimism that will, as the novelist says, engage in a straightforward dealing with realities, a really healthy optimism will look at all the facts in the entire circuit, and will not overlook the facts which dwell in the hearts of men and women who even now have tremendous dealings with God.....I shall turn my eyes upon the facts of the spirit—upon the things that are happening even now in men and women who have a vision of God, who have faith in their God, and who are living, even now, in the most intimate communion with God.

This is what the American novelist has the honesty to call "evasive Idealism," "the cheapest sort of sham optimism." According to this minister of one of the richest churches in the world, which grants him close upon six months' holiday every year, God has tremendous dealings with a few men and women here and there, but has no dealings whatever with the world at large, except through the instrumentality of the Devil and his angels. One Sunday morning at Westminster Chapel some three thousand men and women enjoy the most intimate communion with God, joyously contemplating the Divine mysteries of what they fondly describe as his redeeming grace; but on opening the newspapers the following morning we find that our own casualties at the War-front amount to 1,057. Thus, on the same day, God has tremendous dealings, differing essentially in character, with two sets of people; for is he not equally the God of the sewer and its works of destruction, and of the heights and their intoxicating visions?

Christian optimism is a contradiction in terms, an insult to reason, a stigma on the Divine name, and an unanswerable argument for Atheism. Dr. Jowett declines "to be imprisoned in a tiny circle," or to allow himself to be "pressed down and concentrated upon the doings of pollution"; but he is not ashamed to preach a God of love under whose government of the world "the doings of pollution" are permitted. The truth is that the God of love and his redeeming grace are the unverified dream of evasive Idealists, and so, historically, an unqualified failure. Dr. Jowett's own illustrations abundantly prove that the world of the Apostle Paul's time, no less than that of the eighteenth century, was God's world, and both were worlds of which any God worth having ought to be profoundly ashamed. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, after upwards of a thousand years of Christianity, "our own England was just no better than a graveyard. Everything was touched with decay. Literature was blighted; poetry had lost her wing; labour was debased; pleasure was defiled." How much better is the Great Britain of the twentieth century? What conceivable ground is there for Christian optimism?

J. T. LLOYD.

Well-meaning egg-collectors for naval and military hospitals decorate their eggs with texts. "Just as I am" was written on one, and "All things are possible with God on another." These seem to indicate a slight degree of uncertainty in the donors' minds as to the contents of the eggs.—*Lady Poore, "Recollections of an Admiral's Wife."*

The Bible as a School Book.

The system which begins by making mental indolence a virtue and intellectual narrowness a part of sanctity, ends by putting a premium on something too like hypocrisy.

—Lord Morley.

LORD HALDANE'S memorable speech in the House of Lords, pointing out the dangers and drawbacks of education in this country, is a reminder that there is still among us a foolish pride in ignorance which finds, or professes to find, the roots of our national virtues in superstition. The clergy insist that the Bible is the beginning and end of wisdom, and say, or rather shout, that national degeneration must inevitably follow its removal from the schools of this country.

Let us test this sacred volume as a school book, and see whether such extraordinary pretensions can be sustained. At the outset we find the Bible is totally unfit for any child's reading, and, if it were treated as an ordinary book, it would be pilloried as immoral, and excluded from all schools. If parents knew the contents of the sacred volume they would as soon send their daughters to a house infested with diphtheria or typhoid as put this book into their hands. For in its pages may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of sodomy, rape, unnatural vice, and all manner of Oriental "frightfulness," written with all the nasty particularity and love of detail which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern scribes. The florid, heated rhetoric of the Old Testament leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least lettered juvenile could appreciate the glowing periods. In fact, Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off, and the ordinary sex novel is a model of restraint compared with the Bible. No novelist would dare to disfigure his pages with realistic accounts of incest, rape, and various forms of unnatural vice. He would be imprisoned, and his books destroyed. Yet the clergy force the Bible, which contains all this filth, into the hands of millions of children; knowing all the time that they dare no longer read it in its completeness to a mixed audience of adults.

Nor is this all! Biblical chronology is utter nonsense. Only grossly ignorant, or mentally feeble, persons believe the universe was created six thousand years ago. Probably others, similarly afflicted, believe that Adam, Methuselah, and Noah each lived nine centuries, and that Lamech was "cut off" at seven hundred years. Philology gets no countenance from the blunders of the building of the Tower of Babel, or the pious perversions of the tongues of flame at Pentecost. Biblical zoology would strain the credulity of a Gold Coast negro to breaking point. The story of Noah's Ark is almost the last word in absurdity with its wondrous zoological collection in a floating pantechnicon. The veriest tyro in natural history would rub his eyes at the Biblical error of confounding the hare with the ruminants. Even in the New Testament the whale is described as a fish. All through the sacred volume the atmosphere is that of the *Arabian Nights*. A snake talks, a whale has a boarding-house in his interior, a pigeon acts as a co-respondent, and an ass converses. Fiery serpents, unicorns, dragons, flaming horses, giants, satyrs, and cocatrice ramble through the sacred pages.

Concerning medicine we find the long-abandoned notion of demoniacal possession being the cause of disease. Fevers are rebuked, leprosy cured by a fig-poultice, and blindness removed by spittle. Some happy persons die twice, and others never die at all. Witchcraft is still insisted upon as being true long after it has been discarded for generations by every nation pretending to civilization. Ghosts still squeak and gibber in the Holy Book. As for ethics, the lives and actions of

the patriarchs, the Kings of Israel and Judah, and other Biblical characters, are only paralleled in the Newgate Calendar. Psalm civ. is a proof that the Deity's ways are, fortunately, not our ways. In short, the Bible, from the page describing Adam and Eve starting life at full age until the Second Person of the Trinity ascends into the ether like a flying-machine, is a salmagundi of unrestrained and riotous Oriental imagination.

The Bible is crowded from cover to cover with miracles, and it is upon the acceptance of these truly astonishing marvels that the book stands or falls. The book is claimed as a Divine revelation, and the proofs are that loaves and fishes were multiplied, water turned into wine, the dead restored to life. These stories are inconsistent with ascertained knowledge, and, sooner or later, they will have to be so regarded, in spite of all the hundreds of thousands of priests in Christendom.

Science and religion have ever been in antagonism. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, has always been incompatible with assent to the fairy tales of religion. The clergy know that real education is a powerful solvent of religious faith. This resistance of priests to ordered knowledge has no indisputable claim to our respect. When we remember that the system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the law of gravitation of Newton, and the Darwinian and Spencerean theories, were all in turn received in the same venerable quarter with equal disfavour, we are inclined to attribute that opposition, not to the weakness of the arguments of the scientists, but to a general dislike of knowledge.

Of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the imaginations of religious enthusiasts, the Bible is one of the worst. And the work which Freethinkers have set themselves is that of freeing their countrymen from the absurdities of pre-scientific times which are perpetuated in that grossly overrated volume.

MIMNERMUS.

Nietzsche and His Critics.

IX.

(Continued from p. 476.)

"Very well," he [Nietzsche] said, "we will argue it out. You say that Christianity has made the world better? I say that it has made it worse! You say that it is comforting and uplifting? I say it is cruel and degrading! You say that it is the best religion mankind has ever invented? I say it is the most dangerous!" Having thus thrown down the gage of battle, Nietzsche proceeded to fight like a Tartar, and it is but common fairness to say that, for a good while, he bore the weight of his opponent's onslaught almost unaided. The world was willing enough to abandon its belief in Christian supernaturalism, and as far back as the early '80's the dignitaries of the Church of England—to employ a blunt but expressive metaphor—had begun to get in out of the wet. But the pietists still argued that Christianity remained the fairest flower of civilization, and that it met a real and ever-present want, and made mankind better. To deny this took courage of a decidedly unusual sort—courage that was willing to face, not only ecclesiastical anathema and denunciation, but also the almost automatic opposition of every so-called respectable man. But Nietzsche, whatever his deficiencies otherwise, certainly was not lacking in assurance, and so, when he came to write *Der Antichrist*, he made his denial thunderous beyond expression. No mediæval bishop ever pronounced more appalling curses. No backwoods evangelist ever laid down the law with more violent eloquence. The book is the shortest he ever wrote, but it is by long odds the most compelling. Beginning *allegro*, it proceeds from *forte*, by an uninterrupted *crescendo* to *allegro con moltissimo molto fortissimo*. The sentences run into mazes of italics, dashes, and asterisks. It is German that one cannot read aloud without roaring and waving one's arms.—H. L. Mencken, "The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche," pp. 132-133.

IN Christianity, proceeds Nietzsche, "the casuistry of sin, self-criticism, and inquisition of conscience are practised as occupations.....publicity is lacking: the hiding-place, the dark chamber, are Christian.....A certain sense of cruelty towards self and others is Christian; the hatred against those thinking differently; the will to persecute. Gloomy and exciting concepts are in the foreground.....The hatred of intellect, of pride, courage, freedom, *libertinage* of intellect, is Christian; the hatred of the senses, of the delights of the senses, of all delight, is Christian."¹

There are days, says Nietzsche, "when I am visited by a feeling blacker than the blackest melancholy—contempt of man." Not for the man of the past, but for the Christian man of to-day. "I suffocate from his impure breath." The past he regards with tolerance. "With a gloomy circumspection," says Nietzsche, "I go through the madhouse world of entire millenniums"; ruled by this superstition, "I take care not to make mankind accountable for its insanities."

But my feeling changes, and breaks out as soon as I enter the modern period, our period. Our age knows. What was formerly morbid, now has become unseemly,—it is now unseemly to be a Christian. And here my loathing commences.—I look around me: there is no longer a word left of what was formerly called "truth," we no longer endure it when a priest even takes the word "truth" into his mouth. Even with the most modest pretensions to uprightness, it must be known at present that a theologian, a priest, a pope, not only errs, but *lies*, with every sentence he speaks,—that he is no longer at liberty to lie out of innocence, out of ignorance. Even the priest knows as well as anyone knows that there is no longer any "God," any "sinner," any "Saviour"; that "free will" and a "moral order of the world" are *lies*:—seriousness, the profound self-surmounting of intellect, no longer allows anyone to be ignorant of these matters. All concepts of the church have been recognized as what they are, as the wickedest of all forms of false coinage invented for the purpose of depreciating nature, natural values; the priest himself has been recognized as what he is, as the most dangerous species of parasite, as the actual poison-spider of life. We know—our conscience knows to-day—what those sinister inventions of the priests and of the church are really worth, what purpose was served by those inventions by which that state of self-prostitution of mankind has been reached whose aspect can excite loathing—the concepts, "the other world," "last judgment," "immortality of soul," "soul" itself: they are torture instruments, they are systems of cruelty in virtue of which the priest became master, remained master.²

Nietzsche finishes the paragraph by observing: "What a monster of falsity must modern man be that he nevertheless is not ashamed to be still called a Christian!"

A Christian would doubtless be moved to denounce this criticism as mere abuse. But is it? What Nietzsche says is this: It might be permissible to be a Christian during the "Dark Ages," the "Ages of Faith" and Christian supernaturalism, because the ancient Greek and Roman civilization was dead, and the era of modern science had not dawned. But to-day every educated man—and the clergy are educated—knows that Christian supernaturalism is not true, that the Bible is not the Word of God, that there is not a scrap of scientific evidence to prove the existence of the soul or of a future life. And if he does not know these things, it is because he wilfully shuts his eyes to the facts or declines to study them as marshalled by the modern science of our time, and uses the old words and formulæ of religion, with mental reservations—where even he must know them to be false—using language in

the double sense, meaning one thing to the ignorant and quite another to the advanced. Nietzsche's criticism here is quite legitimate and well founded. If it were not for the immense sums invested in Christianity, and which constitute a bribe for men to suppress their intellectual convictions, few educated men would enter the priesthood.

Not only is this superstition false; if it was only false, but harmless, Nietzsche would have treated it with contemptuous indifference. His indignation is roused when he reflects upon the evil Christianity has wrought in the past; the destruction of the civilization of Greece and Rome. "The whole labour of the ancient world in vain: I have no words to express my sentiments with regard to a thing so hideous," says Nietzsche. "For what end the Greeks? for what end the Romans?—All pre-requisites to a learned civilization; all scientific methods were already there." He proceeds:—

Natural science in alliance with mathematics and mechanics were on the best of all paths,—the *sense for fact*, the last and most valuable of all senses, had its schools and its tradition already centuries old! Is that understood? Everything essential had been discovered to enable people to go to work: the methods, it must be repeated ten times, are the essential thing, also the most difficult thing, and besides the things that have habit and indolence longest against them. What we have now won back for ourselves with unspeakable self-vanquishing (for we have still somehow all bad instincts, Christian instincts in our nature)—the open look in presence of reality, the cautious hand, patience and earnestness in details, all the *righteousness* in knowledge,—it was already there! already, more than two thousand years ago! And added thereto, the excellent, refined tact and taste! Not as brain drilling! Not as "German" culture with boorish manners! But as body, as bearing, as instinct,—in a word, as reality. *All in vain!* Ere the morrow, merely a memory!—The Greeks! The Romans! Nobility of instinct, taste, methodical investigation, genius for organization and administration, belief in, will to the future of man, the great yea to all things visible as *imperium Romanum*, visible to all senses, the grand style, no longer merely art, but become reality, truth, life.—And choked in the night, not by any natural accident! Not trampled down by Germanics and other heavy-footed creatures! But put to shame by crafty, secretive, invisible, anæmic vampires! Not conquered,—only sucked out! Hidden vindictiveness, petty envy become master! Everything wretched, suffering from itself, visited by bad feelings, the entire Ghetto world of soul, uppermost all at once! One has but to read any Christian agitator, Saint Augustine for instance, to be able to smell what dirty fellows have thereby got uppermost.¹

Later on, it made us lose the rare and refined Moorish civilization of Spain. Such is Nietzsche's summing-up against Christianity. At the conclusion he delivers sentence as follows:—

I condemn Christianity, I bring against the Christian church the most terrible of all accusations that ever an accuser has taken into his mouth. It is to me the greatest of all imaginable corruptions, it has had the will to the ultimate corruption that is at all possible. The Christian church has left nothing untouched with its depravity, it has made a worthlessness out of every value, a lie out of every truth, a baseness of soul out of every straightforwardness. Let a person still dare to speak to me of its "humanitarian" blessings! To do away with any state of distress whatsoever was counter to its profoundest expediency; it lived by states of distress, it created states of distress in order to perpetuate itself eternally.....the cross as the rallying sign for the most subterranean conspiracy that has ever existed,—against healthiness, beauty, well-constitutedness, courage, intellect, benevolence of soul, against life itself.

¹ *The Antichrist*, pp. 266-7.

² *The Antichrist*, pp. 295-6.

¹ *The Antichrist*, pp. 346-7-8.

This eternal accusation of Christianity I shall write on all walls,—I have letters for making even the blind see. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, the one great instinct for revenge for which no expedient is sufficiently poisonous, secret, subterranean, mean,—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind.¹

After reading this, we can understand why Christians do not love Nietzsche, why they misrepresent him, why they do not wish to understand his philosophy, and why they have attempted to saddle him with the responsibility for the European War.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

The Holy Ghost.

It is with no small measure of trepidation that we essay an examination of the above subject. Not for one moment do we intend to transport our readers to the days of Paul; neither shall we lose ourselves nor our readers in any endeavour to unravel the mysteries of Gnosticism, the cabalism of the Rosicrucians, nor the antics of Welsh revivalism. Our subject is distinctly nearer to sanity than the latter, and more modern than the others mentioned. We shall err in good company if we do go astray; if we do not we shall indicate the real strength of Freethought. In this manner, whatever be our fate, we shall make an approach to the positive side of rational philosophy, which is not too materialistic nor, on the other hand, lost from view in the clouds of mysticism. To place ourselves thoroughly in harmony, we choose a trinity of intellectuals: Blake, Heine, and Swinburne. From the vast and fruitful world of Blake we shall simply take two gnomic verses to illustrate in eight lines his terrific and terrible insight in the world at our feet:—

There souls of men are bought and sold,
And milk-fed Infancy for gold;
And Youth to slaughter-houses led,
And Beauty, for a bit of bread.

The sword sung on the barren heath,
The sickle in the fruitful field;
The sword he sung a song of death,
But could not make the sickle yield.

In these two verses cannot we see the figure of Blake standing over defenceless humanity with a flaming sword? Is there any initiation required in order to catch the spirit breathing these words? We think not; every man having the welfare of human life at heart, be he Christian or Freethinker, must know that this spirit represents the absolute; the former calls it the grace of God, the latter is content to say it is the spirit of humanity. Blake was too impulsive and irrational to be a safe member of the Church. The narrow limits of Christianity were not for his spirit. A man moved to indignation by a robin in a cage would never submit to have his intelligence imprisoned by a creed, nor blunted by the stupidities of low-browed priests. Yet with his aloofness from the orthodox, what do we find? His fight was always for the defence of right against wrong, for freedom against oppression; and, in plain language, he spoke out against folly, hypocrisy, and all members of that black brood of evils which follow in the train of religious aggression. By no means was he a friend of the Church, by no means did he love wealth, but by all means did he love the best of mankind; and in this respect Freethinkers can claim him as a knight of the Holy Ghost if we steadily keep in view the fact that this symbol signifies the spirit of humanity. On the subject of blaspheming the Holy Ghost, as we

¹ *The Antichrist*, pp. 352-3-4.

interpret it to-day, we could be very eloquent, and in a few words, convict the followers of Jesus of guilt—guilt in greater excess than ever issued from the mouth of any enthusiastic Freethinker who forgets the cunning defences of organized religion. Let it be sufficient, at present, to refer our readers to the *Proverbs of Hell*. Defence of Freethought, forsooth! It is time for Freethinkers to remove the stricken ass called Christianity, in order to gather together the noblest and best men and women who are offered nothing better than the dead sea fruit of Christian dogma.

From Blake let us now travel in imagination to the foot of the Hartz mountains. Here is a rude hut inhabited by simple folk. A tender and unspoilt daughter of a miner is supposed to be reproaching Heine for his disrespect of the Christian faith. In reply to these reproaches, the poet says, that as a little boy he believed in God the Father. As he grew bigger he believed on the Son also; but, he adds:—

Now, when I am grown up, have read much, have travelled much, my heart swells within me, and with my whole heart I believe on the Holy Ghost.

He heals old death wounds, and renews the old night; all mankind are one class of noble equals before him.

He chases away the evil clouds and the dark cobwebs of the brain, which have spoilt love and joy for us, which day and night have loured on us.

A thousand knights well harnessed, has the Holy Ghost chosen out to fulfil his will, and he has put courage into their souls.

Their good swords flash, their bright banners wave; what, thou wouldst give much, my child, to look upon such gallant knights?

Well, on me, my child, look! Kiss me and look boldly upon me! one of those knights of the Holy Ghost am I.

With his mockery, with the red fire of his scorn, Heine assails the folly of Christian values—yet he is content to call himself a knight of the Holy Ghost! In another place he says, “Lay on my coffin a sword; for I was a brave soldier in the war of liberation of humanity.” These statements need offer no difficulty to us if we remember our transvaluation of the Holy Ghost as simply being the *spirit* of humanity. No Freethinker would deny that he stood for the liberation of humanity; no Freethinker would deny that he was one with the spirit of humanity, and here we think we discover the common denominator; the Holy Ghost is resolved into something tangible at last. Without fasting, without wounding of the body, without aggression, we partake of this spirit—and we get the immortality of Freethought!

We are well aware that it is possible to prove anything, but we think the task of indicating the lines of our theory with Swinburne will be rendered easy by what we have previously written. The following passage we find underlined in one of our few earthly treasures:—

How he that loves life overmuch shall die
The dog's death, utterly;
And he that much less loves it than he hates
All wrongdoing that is done
Anywhere always underneath the sun
Shall live a mightier life than time's or fate's.
One fairer thing he showed him, and in might
More strong than day and night
Whose strengths build up time's towering period;
Yea, one thing stronger and more high than God,
Which if man had not, then God should not be:
And that was Liberty.
And gladly should man die to gain, he said,
Freedom; and gladlier, having lost, lie dead.
For man's earth was not, nor the sweet sea waves
His, nor his own land, nor its very graves,
Except they breed not, bore not, hid not slaves:
But all of all that is,
Were one man free in body and soul, were his.

There is the faith of a knight of the Holy Ghost; there

is our faith; there is the faith of Christian and Pagan; and in season and out of season shall we find the knights rallying to its standard. Ages ago they were Plato, Socrates, Buddha, Lucretius, and others, who shine like jewels in history; then came the figures of Bruno, Bacon, Erasmus, and Galileo, to mention only a few; lastly, we have the three knights Blake, Heine, and Swinburne. What would the world have been without them? The answer is to look at the world as it is with them. Lest our readers should imagine that we mean the state of affairs out of which journalist parsons and others thrive, we say no; that is not the state of affairs we mean. There are societies for the prevention of cruelty to children and animals. There are bells calling people to church. The very heads of the Church can find nothing better to do than fulminate against promenade performances. Are these matters the results of your actions, O Freethinkers? No; a thousand times no. As knights of the Spirit of Humanity, we will fashion things better; in our cups could we do no worse. To that land of promise where no gibbeted gods frighten, O knights of the Spirit of Humanity, we bid you set your sails.

WILLIAM REPTON.

God's Merry Noise.

PERHAPS I do not go to church as often as I ought. It seems to be an hour rather poorly spent. But, now and again, just to keep in touch with the latest fashion in feminine apparel, to say nothing about the odour of sanctity that oozes from an occasional visit to the House of the Lord, I put in an appearance. And this I will say—I am always glad when I find myself ensconced in the back pew, whence I have a good view of the whispering discussions that inevitably take place among the young ladies of the congregation. Another advantage of the back seat is that no actual kneeling is required—just a gentle, restful, bending forward is all that is necessary—for knee bending is not conducive to the proper care of one's trousers. Some of the hymns sung on these occasions, I must confess, are rather doleful ditties, which might profitably be exchanged for "Tom Bowling," or "Let Me Like a Soldier Fall," or even "Auld Lang Syne." I think if they would finish up with the latter, perhaps I would oftener attend the sanctuary. I rather like the cool, white dress which the preacher wears, with the splash of crimson over his shoulder, for red and white harmonize very nicely. But what the worshippers see through the eastern window when they all recite the Creed I cannot tell, for they face in that direction, every one of them. I am a fairly credulous person, and anxious to believe in as much as possible, but I must say I shut my lips tight when we deal with the Creed. I think it is flying in the face of Providence to ostentatiously assert that you are prepared to accept such rash statements. The "descending into hell," and the ascending to the place of honour, seems to me to be a trifle debatable in these materialistic days. And the resurrection of the body, too, might be challenged. It is an open question, and we have had little experience of the fact, if it be a fact. In any case, there is no necessity for making so much noise about it. But perhaps by repeating it so often, they may in time quite believe it.

But the point I specially want to emphasize is this. In the lesson from the 46th Psalm, the Deity is alleged to have gone up with a "merry noise." The Prayer-Book says so, and I was curious to find out whether the Authorized Scriptures contained the queer expression. It was new to me, and struck me as being comical. On

referring to my well-thumbed Bible, I find the passage says that "God went up with a shout," so which of the versions are we to accept? The compilers of the Prayer-Book must have taken liberties with the word of God himself. I also find the phrase, "He cutteth the spear in sunder" has been changed to "He Knappeth the spear in sunder." Not a very important change you may say, yet we must remember that every comma is important, and the compilers ought to have hesitated before squeezing in "Knappeth."

But whether the Eternal went up with a "merry noise" or with a "shout," one thing is certain. He must have produced a noticeable commotion. Perhaps he may have had a rollicking time of it among his friends, and they may have sped the parting guest with hearty applause. Elsewhere we read of the "still small voice" that God also possesses for special occasions. But here he was in a jubilant mood. The hospitality must have been royal. The wassail-bowl must have been brought forward. Old battles would be fought o'er again, and all the old jokes would be retold. We are entitled to claim that it must have been a convivial meeting. And this gives us a fresh view as to the great value of the Scriptures. For whatever Freethinkers may say about the barbarities of the Old Testament, we must admit there is a jolly *human* touch in the naive assertion that, on this occasion at least, God so far forgot his dignity as to go up with a shout, or which is far more probable, he went up with "a merry noise."

ALAN TYNDALL.

Acid Drops.

There is no doubt of the Kaiser's appreciation of Christianity. He believes in it himself, and he believes it to be good for others. To the field chaplains on the Western Front he thus addressed himself on a recent occasion:—

We need practical Christianity. If the Lord came in at the door, do you think we could look Him in the face? It is not enough to take a walk to church once a week. You must show us the personality of the Lord Who is now assuredly walking through the world, perhaps to the Judgment.

The Kaiser's great concern at present is to keep the people from grumbling. The cure for this, he says, "must come from within." And, like most rulers, he recognizes that Christianity is an excellent thing to keep the people "in order."

The Bishop of London was "at home" at Fulham Palace to explain the purpose of the forthcoming mission of repentance, and a newspaper reproduced a picture of the Bishop, in khaki, among his guests. His lordship's fancy dress may dazzle the eyes of the elderly spinsters who attend such functions, but he ought to keep to his own "dog-collar" and "gaiters."

Among the guests at the Fulham Palace social, in connection with the forthcoming "National Mission," was the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, the well-known Nonconformist minister. It is not often that the clergy of the Government and fancy religions agree, and when they do so their equanimity is wonderful.

The Walker Trustees of the University of St. Andrew's are offering a prize of £100 for the most "widely helpful essay on prayer." We feel reckless, and so we offer another £100 to anyone who can establish proof of an answer to prayer. For that is the really crucial question. One may find anything helpful. All quack remedies and nostrums exist in virtue of that fact.

We do not suppose that Mr. Harold Begbie will provide the public, in his next Salvation Army booklet, with an account of the case of the woman who recently committed suicide in Clissold Park by drowning. The poor woman was suffering from religious mania, according to the Coroner's

verdict, and had been attending the Salvation Army. She went to a Salvation Army meeting on the Sunday and returned home very much excited, and in a state of collapse. On Monday night she committed suicide. It was one more of the numerous cases of revivalistic religion acting upon an unstable nervous system, and aggravating all its weaknesses. One day these forms of religious extravagance and pious debauchery will be recognized for what they are—a grave social danger. One case is sufficiently flagrant to be recorded. But thousands remain unrecorded and unnoticed, save by the student of such matters.

A new book has been published with the quaint title, *An Undressed Heroine*. It has nothing to do with the heroine of the Garden of Eden.

Those clergymen who tell us that the Germans are Atheists will note that, by permission of the Government, members of the Salvation Army in England have been meeting members of the German Salvation Army in Sweden. The dear clergy always remind us of the lines in Dr. Watts's hymn, "They know but little here below, nor know that little long."

The Methodists are going to have new hymn-books, complaints having been made that the present ones are out-of-date. It is difficult for hymn-writers to be up-to-date when they base their ideas on a 2,000 years' old religion.

Suffragettes object to the Church Marriage Service, particularly the words, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," and suggest that half is sufficient, provided they can claim it legally. Modesty is not such a rare quality, after all.

At the United Methodist Conference at Rochdale it was decided to arrange a special mission of prayer in the autumn. By that time the Methodists will be able to see which way the cat is going to jump—to the greater glory of God.

Apropos of Lord Haldane's recent speech on education, the *Church Times* remarks that churchmen, in founding schools, have always had before them the ideal of character forming. In a sense, this is true; but, then, it is true in all directions. The issue arises as to the type of character which is aimed at—that of the useful citizen or that of the church partizan. It is the latter which religious people have before them, and it is little short of impertinence to write as though all who wish to exclude religion from State schools would belittle the work of character formation. That must always be one of the main objects of any educational system worthy of support.

Lord Haldane says that our educational system is "fit to make us weep," and "the blind alley" occupations fill our streets with hooligans and wastrels. What does he expect when the clergy have so large a share in controlling the education of the young?

Mrs. Annie Besant has been prohibited from entering the Bombay Presidency under the Defence of India Act. Just fancy the dear Mahatmas being frustrated by a mere Act of Parliament.

A Statistician, in a religious periodical, says that after the War there will be three women to every man. We hope that pious folk will not recommend the Old Testament polygamy.

The Bishop of London suggests that women should lead intercession services for women. Why not? Papa is perfectly indifferent to parsons; perhaps he might listen to the girls.

An Italian newspaper is running a translation of *David Copperfield*, by Carlo Dickens, in its columns. That editor is almost as behind the times as the clergy.

An advertisement outside a Brixton Picture Palace reads:—

God's Handiwork,

Passed by the Board of Censors.

Poor Deity! And has it come to this? And yet one feels

that the Censor must have been indulgent to pass much of "God's Handiwork."

A man applied to the Shoreditch Guardians for the return of his child. He was told to come and fetch her away on July 13. He declined that on the ground that 13 was an unlucky number. Perhaps, in the child's interest, it might have been as well to leave her where she was.

A woman was charged at Dublin with damaging altar cloths by cutting pieces from them, which pieces she afterwards sold to women to protect their husbands and children. Very shocking, no doubt, but for the life of us we cannot see any very great distinction between the type of mind illustrated here and that which believes in the efficacy of "sacred" relics, or the preservation of crucifixes from the German shells by the interposition of Deity.

Dr. Campbell Morgan has been in his element at Llandrindod as leader of a sort of Bible Conference. It was almost a mutual admiration Conference of prominent Free Church ministers, of nearly every one of whom it was reported that never had he been heard to better advantage. Some startling admissions were made. For example, Principal Selbie described the flapper as "a terror," and the Grammar School boys as "sniffy." He also said that the girls in our colleges "are much more difficult than the men, and almost the despair of our ministers." The dear girls are awakening.

The courageous Young Men's Christian Association is getting more venturesome. It has invaded Hackney Marshes, where new mess-rooms have been erected.

It is said that the bishops are not highly esteemed in the House of Lords, principally because they are not aristocrats. We should like to hear the bishops' candid opinion of the descendants of Nell Gwynne.

A Dudley workman got caught in the machinery and had all his clothes stripped from him. He must have felt like King David when he danced before the Ark.

An advertisement of an evangelical vocalist states that "she sang for her Saviour from John o' Groats to Land's End." We thought his tour ended two thousand years ago.

What a hero is the Bishop of London! He has now announced his intention of walking from one end of London to the other during September, and to "speak just in a simple way in the great open spaces and squares." The spectacle of a real live Bishop walking through London is doubtless expected to have a wonderful influence in quickening belief in Christianity. What a man! What a Bishop. What a —!

The top-hat is declining in popularity, and almost the only persons who wear it are bishops—when they are not in khaki. The bishops do not object to nap, for they belong to a sleepy profession.

The London Missionary Society issues an advertisement appealing for funds, in which it informs people that £1 will pay the salary of a native preacher in China for one month. We have no doubt the Chinese consider him dear enough at the price. The Society does not advertise the total cost of a European preacher in China per month. The contrast would be rather striking.

Mr. Thomas Tanner, of Caerphilly, died suddenly the other day. As Mr. Tanner was praying at the time in a Presbyterian church, there is no moral. That would have been supplied had he been at a Freethought lecture.

The Catholic Bishop of Meath has issued a pastoral letter calling for prayers for fine weather, in order to save the crops. The Bishop is evidently determined to do *his* bit towards winning the War.

To Correspondents.

MISS H. MCKILLOP (Cape Town).—Pleased to hear from another—we are glad to say—S. African reader. We are obliged for cutting, which we have used.

C. GRAHAM.—Nonconformity does not kill the priest; it only changes the uniform.

PARENT.—We agree with most of what you say, but it looks as though a little more firmness were required. For the rest, we can only repeat G. W. Foote's dictum, "The surest way to secure Secular Education is to go on making Secularists." That advice we heartily endorse.

A. MILLAR.—MSS. received with thanks. Will publish as early as possible.

D. F. MATHEWS (Rangoon).—The Editor and staff appreciate your good wishes. Pleased to know that the *Freethinker* has had the effect you say on your religious friends in India.

A. RADLEY.—Pleased to hear that the trouble has simmered down. We hope that all reasonable tact has been exercised by Freethinkers in the matter. Communication handed on.

H. G. FARMER.—Received with thanks. We hope to publish soon. Glad to have your congratulations on the appearance and contents of the "old paper." You will see that we are publishing a "Contents" with this week's issue.

J. CARRUTHERS (Winnipeg).—We know nothing of the origin of the pamphlet, and do not feel inclined to inquire. An "Infidel Club of Nine," with every one coming to a miserable and criminal end, is too much. An artistic liar would have stopped at four or five. The author of the story should cultivate the artistic side of his nature a little.

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

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

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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 cannot yet say what will be the result of the deputation to the London County Council from the Joint Committee of protest against the prohibition of literature-selling in the parks, but we are hoping for the best. The Committee now represents no less than twenty-two different societies, and it is quite clear that it has behind it a very strong public opinion, which will not submit without the strongest protest against any unnecessary curtailment of the right of public propaganda. We have every reason for assuming that the resolution against which complaint is made was passed in a hurry, and it is not too late to reverse an unwise decision. We refrain from saying more at the moment. The next step rests with the Council. When we have their reply to the deputation, we shall be in a position to say what our own policy will be.

Mr. J. Stokes, Chairman of the London Trades Council, acted as spokesman for the Committee, and he put the case against the Council's action with moderation, but with impressive firmness. His persuasive speech made an evident impression on the Council, and the Chairman thanked him for the friendly nature of his remarks. Mr. Stokes himself represents about 90,000 Trades Unionists, so the Council can be under no delusion as to the hornets they have roused into activity. As is customary, no reply to the deputation was

given at the time, but one was promised. And for the sake of all concerned, we hope that the Council will decide on rescinding a resolution which ought never to have been passed.

An excellent leaderette appeared in the *Star* on the visit of the deputation to Spring Gardens, the concluding words of which were:—

The truth is there are some members of the L.C.C. who remind us of the good old family gardener who is so proud of his gardens that he will not allow his lord and lady to have any roses for the house, lest they spoil the effect. These excellent gentlemen are so proud of London's splendid parks for the people that they grudge these little clinker-strewn areas where the fiery zealots preach. So they take the opportunity of the war to order the stoppage of the sale of the zealot's pamphlets. The L.C.C. will be will advised to drop this inopportune and unnecessary crusade at once.

Mr. Lloyd is spending a few days recuperating in his native air—North Wales. He has not been in robust health of late, and recently he has been suffering from sleeplessness. We hope that he will return to London fully refreshed, and in that hope we know we have with us the whole of the Freethought Party.

We again print, on the back page of this issue, a form of membership for the N.S.S. We sincerely hope that all our readers are considering the subject as seriously as we intended they should, and that these forms will be filled in and returned without delay. When we have secured the adherence of those who intend joining, the next step will be to parcel out the members into something like geographical areas, and then set to work on a systematic propaganda for the autumn and winter. Remember, also, that the N.S.S. is celebrating its jubilee in two months' time, and the best kind of jubilee gift will be a largely increased membership roll.

We are asked to state that Mr. J. Thurlow, a very old worker in the Freethought movement, is open for London lecturing engagements. Metropolitan secretaries will please note. Address, 40 Churston Avenue, Upton Park, E.

The usual way in the publishing world is to publish at a higher price first and a lower one later. In the case of Mr. Mann's very excellent pamphlet on *The Religion of Famous Men* we are reversing the procedure. The pamphlet could not be published at less than twopence even in pre-war times, and, as we explained last week, it is due to very special circumstances that we are selling this edition at one penny. When the existing stock is sold, it cannot be reprinted under double the present price. So those who wish for copies should order at once.

HOW IT WORKS.

Dinna gang to kirk
 When it rains,
 Ye nicht catch
 Rheumatic pains!
 Bide t' hame
 When it's cauld,
 Lest ye dec
 When ye're auld!
 The kirk's nae place
 When it's hot,
 The folks nicht think
 Ye cared a lot!
 When it's fine,
 Leave the Lord.
 Gang a-ridin'
 In yer Ford!
 Ye like kirk fine,
 Believe in God,
 But cannae gae,
 The weather's odd!

—Bromide Smith, "Boston Congregationalist."

The Marvels of Organic Nature.

II.

(Concluded from p. 477.)

THE phenomena of heteromorphosis are even more surprising than those previously dealt with. These phenomena are concerned with the development of a different organ from the organ normally present. Among the animal forms selected for experiment were the lowly marine hydroids and ascidians. One of the members of the hydroid group is termed a tubularian. The body of this organism resembles a long tube, the lower end of which is affixed to the sea-bottom by means of a foot-shaped appendage. The tubularian's anterior extremity or head is spread out into an array of tentacles provided with a gullet for the ingestion of nutritive particles. Loeb severed both head and foot from the body tube, and then inserted the tube upside down in the sand. The end which bore the head organs was now attached to the sand, while the free end, which formerly carried the foot, was now exposed to the water. The overpowering influence of the modified environment was soon clearly seen, for a head appeared in the place where a foot originally existed, while the section placed in the sand produced a stolon or foot. Various subsequent experiments have thoroughly substantiated, and even extended, these very remarkable researches of Loeb's.

Herbst has removed the eyes of crustaceans, and these visual organs have been promptly restored. And not only are these complex organs replaced, but they prove quite as serviceable for sight as those destroyed. Crabs and other crustaceans are distinguished for their powers of regeneration. Lobsters and crabs, having cast their claws, rapidly replace these discarded appendages. The salamander, a higher animal, quickly restores a lost leg or tail, and the same property is displayed by several representatives of the reptile group.

But, so far as is at present determined, this restorative power ceases with the reptiles. Among the higher and more specialized birds and mammals such phenomena are unknown. Certainly all animals constantly discard and regrow scales, hairs, or feathers. At given stages of life, teeth are replaced, and the writer recalls an instance in which a cart-horse was accidentally deprived of its tongue, which it afterwards regrew, though not to its original size. Still, the truth obtains that in the ascending scale of life, the larger organs of the body become so specialized, chiefly through the physiological division of labour, that the general capacity of restorative regeneration which distinguishes so many of the lowlier modes of life, steadily loses its force.

But what Nature fails to accomplish, the hand of science may perform. Dr. Alexis Carrel has successfully replaced the diseased limb of one dog by grafting a new member from another animal, and the substituted organ has grown into its intended position, and become a welcome addition to the body of its strange possessor. This celebrated doctor has also transferred various glandular organs, among them the kidneys, from one subject to another. These organs have become part of the system to which they were transplanted, and function quite normally. So wonderful were Carrel's achievements, and so full of promise for the future of surgical science, that this eminent investigator was the recipient of the Nobel award in Medicine and Physiology in 1912.

A wide difference seems to obtain between the same organs of distinct animals. Carrel's studies disclose the truth that while the transference of an important organ such as the kidney may be successfully effected between canine and canine, no such substitution seems at present

possible between the kidney of the canine dog and the feline cat. Yet the feline and canine animals are both naturally carnivorous, and the kidney of one organism appears to perform precisely the same function as the other. Yet the two quadrupeds fail utterly to respond to any interchange of internal organs. Nor is this distinction peculiar to specialized parts, for it extends to structures so simple relatively as the tubes of the arteries. Very rarely, if at all, is it possible to transplant an artery, or section of an artery, of a cat to that of a dog, or *vice versa*. Profound chemical differences apparently exist, which, so far, escape the tests imposed by science.

The specialties which have arisen in the course of organic evolution appear to pervade every animal tissue. The vital fluid itself partakes of these peculiarities, as the fascinating series of studies prosecuted by Professor Nuttall has abundantly proved. This extremely able scientist has evolved a blood-testing system of a nature so delicate, that it lies far in advance of any method of chemical or microscopical examination previously employed. The validity of this large claim is vindicated by Nuttall's far-reaching results.

The rigorous tests of Professor Nuttall demonstrate our close kinship with the apes and monkeys of the Eastern World. He has shown that our nearest blood-relatives are the tailless chimpanzee, the gorilla, and the orang, which was precisely the opinion already formed from general evolutionary evidence. Blood tests made among many species of mammals without exception serve to validate the terms of animal relationship previously established along anatomical, embryological, and palæontological paths of investigation. Near kinship in terms of blood resemblance has been shown to exist between snakes and lizards, while the labours of Nuttall disclose a more distant relationship between turtles and alligators. As the evolutionist anticipated, the reptilia are more closely allied to birds than to mammals. The birds and turtles appear very intimately related, while the lizards and serpents lie further apart from the feathered world.

The evolutionist very legitimately congratulates himself on this entirely independent testimony to the truth of his philosophy. The results obtained were not sought for the purpose of sustaining any particular theory. As a matter of fact, Professor Nuttall probably never troubled about the current classification of the animals whose blood he tested. The samples of blood submitted to his testing apparatus arrived from places far and near. Specimens were sent to him from every quarter of the habitable earth by as many as seventy different correspondents.

Professor Uhlenroth mentions an instance in which a spot of blood suspected to be human was proved by the test-tube to be the gore-stain of a pig. Another examination made clear the circumstance that a blood-contaminated garment was stained both by human and ovine gore. "In this case it was subsequently proved in court that the wearer of the garment had committed a murder, but that he had slaughtered sheep two weeks before the murder."

Such tests therefore possess considerable civic importance. It has been proved experimentally that various vegetable products, metals, minerals, old clothes, and even boots that have been blackened and polished after blood has spattered their uppers, all yield up their secrets to Nuttall's exacting tests. It is stated that several implements associated with past homicidal crimes were despatched from New Scotland Yard to Professor Nuttall's laboratory at Cambridge to enable the Professor to ascertain whether his tests availed with the marks of blood made in long, past years. The answer was

unequivocal. Age counted little, if at all, for stains left thirty years before on knives, razors, and other weapons, were shown to be unquestionably human in origin.

The foregoing investigations relate to experiments with animal fluids. Others equally interesting and suggestive are concerned with the body tissues which have been removed from the body and caused to grow in glass vessels.

Tissues thus cultivated in the laboratory need not be taken from a living animal or one just dead. They may be cut from the flesh of a slaughtered animal whose carcass has been preserved in cold storage for several days. Dr. Leo Loeb and Dr. R. S. Harrison were path finders who prepared the way for the extremely striking research work in which Dr. Carrel and Dr. M. T. Burrows may be regarded as present leaders. These men of science conducted their inquiries with tissues removed from the internal organs or the skins of fowls, or other animals. Other tests were carried out with sections cut from diseased tissues, such as malignant tumours. Not that experiments are restricted to these. In fact, there is no positively known limit to the kind of tissue which lends itself to fruitful investigation.

The fragments of tissue are quickly removed from the bodies of animals just defunct, or from those of organisms lying in the refrigerating chamber. It is indispensable to the success of the experiment that the excised tissue should be transferred without delay to its culture medium, because exposure to the ordinary atmosphere for more than a few seconds is likely to prove fatal to the living cells.

The tissue is now lodged in a crystal receptacle which is placed in an incubator and maintained at the temperature of the blood. The growth of the tissue soon becomes apparent in the largely increased size of the original fragment. It seems singular that when the tissue is exposed to the average temperature of a living-room for the space of thirty minutes it perishes, while it may be transferred to cold storage for hours, or even days, without fatal injury. It is assumed that, when frozen, the chemical changes of the tissues are arrested, and the cells are enabled to repose, so that when restored to the incubator, they resume their retarded development. These experiments indubitably demonstrate that, long subsequent to the cessation of consciousness, the cells of an animal's body remain alive. A bird whose head has been cut off, and whose body has been suspended for days in an ice-case, must be for all practical purposes dead, yet the tissues of such a defunct organism not only retain their vitality, but remain capable of further growth. It is unquestionable that such tissues possess life, as tissue which is demonstrably dead never, in any circumstances, displays the slightest sign of reproductive power.

The practical value of these scientific discoveries to the surgeon and physician is indeed vast, while their theoretical importance to the physiologist is by no means inconsiderable. Much of the solid successes of such workers as Von Wassermann and Ehrlich, in connection with venereal diseases, is based on the procedure of Carrel and Burrows, while among the numerous applications of their method, we may mention that of a Paris surgeon who successfully operated on the eye of a blind patient. The surgeon excised a portion of the opaque cornea of the patient's eye and replaced—

it with a piece of cornea of like size cut from an enucleated eye that had been kept for some days in a refrigerator. The operation was successful, in that the fragment of cornea took kindly to its new surroundings and grew permanently into place, retaining its transparency.

We therefore think that we are only at the dawn of immense developments in medicine, surgery, and general physiology, which contemporary discovery has rendered a mere matter of time.

T. F. PALMER.

My Old School Book.

Out of ye old fields, as men saith,
Cometh all this new grain from year to year;
Out of ye old books, in good faith,
Cometh all this new science that men lear.

AND not mine either, but my uncle's. He was the ancient of days. I have never seen him; but his name—and mine—are trailed in fading ink across the faded page. Substantial, vital in his day, no doubt; but I have heard he died young; he exists in my thought a vague, indefinite shadow of the haunted past. I have given him an atmosphere, an idyllic if bucolic environment all his own; a field of pallid lea; a dark hedge of thorn; the copper sun of a dusky eve seen past the heads of his straining cattle as they forged ahead, the furrow the while writhing and recoiling from the gleaming share as it tore through the fibrous soil—the very aroma is there of that old, pungent, pleasant earth! Somewhere, away down the quiet corridors and galleries of memory that picture ever hangs. For me that sun has never set. Ever that honest, rustic brow bends to its wholesome task. Dreamland, homeland, wonderland. There to go often; or it comes to me with the peace and divine illumination of an old joy. And yet I have never known the owner—but doubtless others of his type—of the dogs-cared pages. Perhaps the memory is best, the Mecca and the dream!

It is but the fragment of a volume now—good books are not for glass cases—page after page departs, even as the years steal one by one away, and we are old and worn, the mind one long eligibility, or filled with faint and merely fossilized impressions. The book is but a fragment. I had a whole volume once. I lent it to my friend. I pressed him to return it. I said I would sooner lose five shillings. Five shillings, five pounds, fifty! money was a mere irrelevance in this connection. My friend boarded with Mrs. Penny, in an obscure street in a Scots city. He removed, and left the book behind! Five shillings, five pounds, fifty! Consolation there was none, only resignation. Filled with remorse, my friend returned to seek out Mrs. Penny; but she had vanished into the unknown, and like the good coin she was, never turned up again; and where the old woman and the old brown book have gone, no one knoweth unto this day. And so I cherish all the more this fragment of my uncle's; whose pages date from the first quarter of last century; whose lessons were culled from the mature spirits of the eighteenth, seventeenth, and sixteenth hundreds; from Montaigne and Shakespeare onwards—and backwards—B.C. as well as A.D. What rare and right-reverend compilation; what moral, scholastic, philosophic, literary acumen; I shall not look upon its like again! I laid to heart its precepts, but often failed to follow them. The sow's-ear cannot all at once become a silk purse; besides, the sow's-ear has its uses too. I copied out its beautiful passages, charmed with their plain yet polished periods, balanced antithesis, premise and conclusion, cadence, strength, progression, climax, etc. Trite were the maxims, true as steel, touchstones of the false and fustian. Unconsciously, I imbibed a little of their simple skill, and never in danger of becoming pedant or prig; for the old book was severely practical, if literary—pious and profound. This thrift—or unthrift—of time in youth, in Gladstone's phrase, repaid me (mentally) in after life with a usury of profit beyond my most sanguine dreams.

Mere fragmentary lore, but falling on virgin soil, it was the open sesame to all the future fields of literature and philosophy.

My dear old book, and—for I must mention him—One, “a shining one,” who was to me more than brother; my elder, but far my elder in the muses; the kind of person mankind in all ages has made Christs and Bhuddas of, but too sensible and human for a god; one who before he had read the writings of, for instance, G. W. Foote, wrote and thought in much the same strong, clear, unmistakable way. For why, they were types; one learned, one illiterate; but typical of each other; they drank of the common spring of wisdom and reason. This was the *original* Freethinker of our neighbourhood. Whence came *his* fire that burned with so pure a flame? His was a beautiful character, and as strong, original, independent. The man and the book; example and precept; these made environment unique; henceforth I *knew* if I did not always practice the right. I loved this man—nay, it was worship—I loved the book. I loved the mother who bore him, and the dim shadows of sires and grandsires beyond; grave and brave, pious but humane, back to the Battle of Drumelog, where one fought stoutly for liberty of conscience.

Such are some of the more significant and shining threads of psychology, standing out from the drab warp and woof of common existence, as the mind slowly frees itself from the tangled skein. Come to think of it, the book itself may be of small account in other's eyes; but thereby hangs a thousand tales where one must suffice. Having spoken for my old book, another time I may return to the subject, and let it speak for itself.

A. MILLAR.

Correspondence.

“SCIENTIFIC HISTORICAL MATERIALISM VERSUS METAPHYSICS.”

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—The differences between Mr. Cook and myself have, apparently, contracted to a narrow span. His last letter is filled with a number of assertions with which I happen to entirely agree, and with a few references to my position, as he conceives it to be, which are mere misapprehensions.

That certain forms of knowledge are unconsciously inherent, does not imply that we can think without data. Kant puts this very well: “Though all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience. For, on the contrary, it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself (sensuous impressions giving merely the *occasion*).” If Mr. Cook will pursue a little further his contention that all knowledge is the result of sense-perceptions, he will find it very difficult to be sure that he knows anything at all, certainly nothing about the world outside himself and its “material realities.” (*Vide Berkeley & Hume.*)

It is incorrect to describe my position as that “reason was, and the world came out of nothing,” as Mr. Cook does. I never said that the world had a beginning; but I do say that, since the world has been, reason (unconscious or conscious) has been in it. The difference between this and supernaturalism is obvious. The one view supposes creation, free-will, and the existence of two substances—“spirit” and “matter”; the other supposes the eternity of the world, one substance (with reason as a single attribute among others) and an unbroken chain of cause and effect.

If Mr. Cook will consider the foundations of his “Historical Materialism,” and the nature of that power of understanding and reasoning in himself, to which he owes his knowledge, he will see that, so far from being opposed to metaphysics, his theory depends on metaphysics for its first principles, just as surely as the science of astronomy depends for its first prin-

ciples on the fixed and absolute laws of mathematics. He will then cease to fight his own side, as he is at present vigorously doing, and will concentrate on the battle for a free and unexploited human society—in which I heartily wish him power to his elbow!

ROBERT ARCH.

[This Correspondence is now closed.—Ed.]

THE UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE AND THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—This week's “Acid Drops” tell us that at the above Conference at Rochdale it had been decided to ask for exemption from military service for all local preachers.

At the same Conference Mr. R. J. Pollard, of Southampton, moved a resolution, which was seconded by the Rev. G. Cooper Hawkin, of Newton Abbott, asking the Government to carry out the law *re* Conscientious Objectors according to its promises.

The Rev. George Graves, of Bristol, denounced the position of shirkers, and urged that it would do the Church irreparable harm if they, avoiding any acknowledgment of the great services of fighters, were to range themselves on the side of Conscientious Objectors. I don't know if anyone pointed out that Conscientious Objectors had been subjected to torture outside the law. If that were pointed out, and nevertheless the previous question was carried, then I hope Freethinkers will make a note of the fact that time-serving for the sake of popularity rather than anything in the nature of common humanity is the characteristic of the leaders of United Methodism, and conscientious men in that body should leave it for the N.S.S., or even for some other organization among Christians which acts up to its professions, if there be such. I hold no brief for Conscientious Objectors—don't understand them, in fact—but I object to any person being tortured by irresponsible military subordinates.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

Pernicious Pars.

We look forward with confidence to a large attendance of soldiers in the Y.M.C.A. Hut on Thursday evening next, when the chaplain will address the meeting. The opening hymn will be sung in solo by the chaplain's wife, whose singing is so well advertised in our official organ. She will render “What a Friend we have in Jesus.” It is hoped that the soldiers will join in.....We beg to draw attention to our special penny cup of tea, also to our penny doughnut..... also to the text suspended over the counter.—*Soldiers' Solace.*

Readers will find an item of special interest in our advertisement columns this week. Messrs. Hellblacks & Swizzleton have arranged to supply Army chaplains with khaki outfits at enormously reduced charges. Members of the clergy who contemplate taking up a commission in His Majesty's Forces can hardly do better than pay a visit at once to Messrs. Hellblacks & Swizzleton. We understand that free copies of the Holy Bible, with Hymn and Prayer Book included, will be given to each customer. That combined volume will be strongly bound in khaki cloth, the frontispiece cross and the letters I.H.S. being in red type with purple shading, and the whole finished in first-class style. Bishop Bosh is highly delighted with his outfit, as a perusal of his unsolicited testimonial will prove. Let us remind the clergy that after the War this offer cannot be repeated.—*High Church Clothier's Weekly.*

That this is no time for minimizing the negative effects of the War is well known among all devout and sincerely religious minds. Realizing this, we feel impelled to draw attention to the fact that, owing to the enlistment of large numbers of professional tract-writers, a very potent force for God is being checked considerably. Doubtless there are many tract-writers now busy for the after-War season. (We have ourselves, with our own eyes, seen at least 500,000 “Drunkard's Deaths” stacked away in a basement in Fleet

Street, awaiting the declaration of peace.) But we would take this opportunity of reminding *all* tract-writers that they should concentrate their inspiration upon the *undeniable existence of God*. The Teetotal business is all right; the War has helped the Blue-Ribbon people considerably; but we must not overlook the very real need of the Church and the clergy in this hour. The clergy are fainting for sustenance. Rub it in thick about God, and we shall have effective tracts.—*Tract-writers' Tentacle*.

We are glad to see that so many soldiers attend the Church of England Parade each Sunday. This is a most hopeful sign. The military bands are excellently conducted, and play "Nearer My God to Thee" with deep feeling. The soldiers stand to attention while this well-known hymn is played twice. At the conclusion of this hymn they quick march to the church, when the band plays a bright march by Sousa. This is as it should be; too much religion is liable to bore the soldiers and counteract the good effect of the short sermon delivered at the tin church.—*Military Chaplain and Call*.

The annual visit of Sanger's Circus to the Leaford Military Camp is an event much to be deplored. We ourselves, with our own eyes, have already seen the highly coloured posters, all calculated to do the young soldier much positive harm—"ladies" in tights, riding astride; "lady" acrobats; vulgar, red-nosed clowns, etc. What, we ask, are the authorities doing to allow these cesspools of iniquity to flourish in wartime? What chance does our Holy Church stand against such attractions? Away, say we, with the circus. This is no time for flippant immoralities.....We are pleased to inform our readers that the "Society Tableaux," arranged by Miss Daphne Bell, last Tuesday evening, at the vicarage, were a great success. Twenty-nine pounds were realized. This sum will almost adequately cover the expenses involved in enlarging the vestry.—*Heavenly Hooper*.

One of our special War missionaries visited the North Army Camp last week, and his article dealing with the sights he saw will appear in our next issue. In perusing this special article, readers will note with what extraordinary success the clergy have adjusted themselves to the modern needs of civilization. Our special missionary describes with great detail the interior of the chaplain's hut, where he saw the Rev. Day demonstrating with exceptional skill several of the latest bayonet exercises which are now being taught the troops. The Rev. Day, using his silver-headed, black cane, went through the whole course—including the "long-point," "short-point," "withdraw," and "short jab." The most effective spot to penetrate is undoubtedly, as the chaplain pointed out, the throat of the enemy; it is much easier to withdraw the bayonet from this part. The older bayonet exercises all tended to penetrate bone—thus making a quick withdrawal very difficult. The chaplain also showed our special missionary several effective ways of using the butt-end of the rifle.—*Pestilential Parson and Gazette*.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Duty.

"SHIRKER, awake! and in avenging hand
Grasp firm the sword of Justice and of Truth!
Banish from out thy heart all thoughts of ruth!
Smite, smite the foe that menaces our land!
O be not thou accounted of the band
Of cravens, that in Britain's darkest hour,
Trembling, did in the face of danger cow'r
And shamefully await Conscription's brand!"
Thus mouth'd the Priest. And in Time's fulness, woe!
In Britain's isle Compulsion stalk'd abroad,
Sweeping within his net both high and low,
Save those who feed the guns and till the sod;
And likewise—why, the Lord alone doth know—
That indispensable, our man of God!

K.

A Christmas Hymn for the Twentieth Century.

CHRISTIANS, wake up! Confess this is the morn
On which each solar deity was born;
Rise to perceive the progress knowledge makes
In overthrowing evidential fakes,
And to admit, whatever may be said,
Faith only lives where intellect is dead.
Of virgin birth, as much is known by us
As by Josephus or by Tacitus,
Who surely knew, although they dare not say,
Most Pagan deities were born that way—
Born in the constellations of the stars,
With stars and planets for their pas and mas.
Priests preach, and then assisted by the choir,
While hymns are sung to "touch you" they conspire,
The praises loud of "gifts of God" are sung;
Then in the vestry doubtful coins are "rung";
God's crowns are promised—after reaching heav'n,
Thus priests secure the silver ones now giv'n.
Oh, may you keep and ponder in your mind
God's wondrous love in *damning* all mankind;
Sending unbaptized babies down to hell
Because poor Adam ate his fruit and "fell";
Allwise God, knowing that all men would fall,
Had wiser been to make no men at all.
Then may we hope, anticipate, expect,
That some day reason may rouse God's "clect,"
That they may help by science and research
To cure the ills created by the Church,
And to retrace each false step man has trod
Since mind was muddled by belief in God.

ESSE.

Flashes From Foote.

Adam woke up minus a rib and plus a wife. It was the shortest courtship on record.

Drunkenness, swearing, and injustice are the only things recorded of Noah during the 350 years he survived the Flood.

Orthodox Christianity teaches that the human race fell in Adam and Eve. They ate the apples and we suffer the stomach ache.

People swallow falsehood as a cat laps milk.

The clerical trade is founded on mystery, and behind every mystery there is a cheat.

Nearly 50,000 gentlemen are engaged in fighting the Devil in this country, yet the Devil is not outwitted.

The man who never doubts never thinks.

Persecution is the right arm of priestcraft.

Parsons work on Sundays; so do their servants, and all who are engaged about their gospel-shops.

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that we announce the death of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh White, son of Mr. J. G. White, of Stanley, Durham. The deceased came of a family of Freethinkers, well known for their adherence to their avowed principles. Mr. White, junior, was in the Royal Naval Brigade, in action at Gallipoli, and the news of his death has only just been received by his parents. His personal friends describe him as "a true soldier of Freethought," and we quite believe the description does him justice. It was characteristic of the deceased, who signed his will with the addition of the descriptive word "Atheist." We beg to offer Mr. and Mrs. White our sincere sympathy in their loss.

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, E. Burke, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, P. Wilde, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, Stephen Hooper, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Smith, "Christian Hypocrisy"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale, Saphin, and Smith.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7. a Lecture.

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

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, Stephen Hooper, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 6.45, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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

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