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CONTENTS.

			Page.
Education After the War.—The Editor	-	-	113
Religion After the WarJ. T. Lloyd	-	-	114
The Smile of VoltaireMimnermus	-	-	115
The Emergence of ManT. F. Palmer	-	-	117
China and the War	-	-	118
Acid Drops		-	118
To Correspondents	-	-	121
Sugar Plums	-	-	121
The Moral Philosophy of Freethought		-	122
Critical ChatGeo. Underwood	-	-	122
The French Revolution.—Robert Arch		+	124
Letter to the Editor-Prosecution of Spiritualists	-	-	126
Oh, for Ten Thousand Tongues to Sing!			
-Arthur F.	Thor	12	126
Notice of Meetings	-	-	126
Books and Pamphlets	- 1	21	127
and the first state of the second second second states		-	

Views and Opinions.

After the War.

"After the War"-that is the magic formula with which some enthusiasts for reform console themselves. for the mental, moral, and social sacrifices that are being made during the War. "When the boys come home" is another variant of the same theme; and, when honestly used, indicates a quite pathetic faith in the reconstruction that is to come when the work of destruction is concluded. First, the War was to end war. For nearly a year that phrase did duty. We pointed out the absurdity of the phrase when it was first used, and now it is universally rejected. Everybody now realizes that the cessation of this War will mean an increase in the size of the Armies and Navies of the world, and the world will be fortunate if it remains in a state of armed peace until such time as it has become sufficiently civilized to store its weapons of destruction in a museum. But after the War-then the squire and the farmer will take to their hearts the agricultural labourer and make him a co-partner in the land he laboriously tills; the capitalist will treat the workman as a brother beloved; the peer will hob-nob with the plebian; the men who have fought together in the trenches will return home determined on building a better England; labour will give of its best to capital, and capital will share its all with labour. All this will occur-after the War. Pity it is that shipowners, coal owners, trading corporations, and financial magnates have not shown some clear indication of the coming change while the War is in progress.

The Education Question.

Among other things that are to be revolutionized after the War is education. And that is a matter which seriously concerns the clergy of this country. It concerns them, not because they are interested in education, as such, but because their concern lies with controlling education so far as is possible. An education in which the clergy had no hand would, indeed, be a very good thing for the country, but it would be a very bad thing for the Churches. So the Bishop of Oxford, addressing

a meeting of the Education Committee of the House of Laymen of the Province of Canterbury and the Mothers' Union, said (we quote from a summary given in the Schoolmaster) :---

He dreaded Churchmen appearing before the country as the opponents of the new democratic programme of educational reform. He desired that no such disaster should happen as that Churchmen should associate their claim and appeals for the proper place of religion in education with opposition to the educational programme of the democracy. He thought the democracy was going to be fairly in earnest in the demand for educational reconstruction of the most expensive kind. He believed it was absolutely just, necessary, and good, and he desired that every Churchman should be an enthusiastic advocate of this educational reconstruction. He had never seen working people so determined about anything as they were about not letting the parsons in on this subject. They were determined that the religious question should not be allowed to trouble the mind. Chnrchmen should associate what they had to say about religious education with an unmistakable enthusiasm for educational reconstruction, and not with a merely niggardly attitude of opposition or criticism towards it.

The Bishop's purpose is quite clear. He, of course, wishes religion to be at least kept where it is in the schools, and, if possible, he wants its position strengthened. But he warns his followers that working-people are determined about this question of education. And as it would be dangerous to oppose them, Churchmen are advised to go with the tide and display "an unmistakable enthusiasm for educational reconstruction." They are to "enthuse" by command. Of course, an enthusiasm that is produced by the order of the Mothers' Union, because it would be dangerous to show lukewarmness may impose on some; but, one hopes, not many. If the clergy were really enthusiastic about education, it would scarcely need the advice of the Bishop of Oxford to make that much plain to the general public.

The Clergy and Education.

Now the clergy have not, and never have had, as a body, any genuine enthusiasm for education. That lies on the face of the history of elementary education in this and every other country. Spain and Russia, the two countries in which the clergy have most power, are also the two most illiterate countries in Europe. In this country the measures taken by the Churches-established and dissenting-in founding schools during the early part of the nineteenth century, were so many instruments for gaining converts or for keeping a hold on such as they had. Look at the full title of the National Society, and this is as plain as daylight. It was "The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England." That was the Alpha and Omega of Episcopalian interest in education. And the dissenters used their schools as so many inducements to get children away from the Church. Not till 1833 did the THE FREETHINKER

education. Had the education given in such schools as then existed, entirely under religious influence, been of a passably satisfactory character, no government measure for the education of the nation's children would ever have been introduced. But on the evidence of a Royal Commission it was found that the education given by churches and chapels did not warrant an annual expenditure by the State of even £20,000. For centuries the education of the people had been in the hands of the Christian Church, and the result was a population ignorant and brutalized. For seventy years churches and chapels between them controlled elementary education, and could see no more in it than an instrument for sectarian aggrandisement. The Churches had had the whole position in their grasp, and their complete failure as educationalists, their unscrupulous exploitation of the schools as so many instruments of sectarian advantage, became so notorious that the secular government was compelled to take the matter in hand. And now to avoid losing all hold over the schools the clergy are advised to "enthuse" at once. What supreme faith these clerics have in the stupidity of the British public !

The Prostitution of Education.

The Bishop of Oxford thinks the democracy will be in earnest in its demand for educational reconstruction of the most expensive kind. That may mean little or much. Education may be reconstructed without its being of the right kind. It may be expensive without being profitable. The vital question is, whether the people of this country are really alive to the value of education as a humanizing, a civilizing, a progressive force? Can we answer that question in the affirmative with any real assurance? True, we have heard a deal lately about the importance of education. But what end, what ideals, are involved ? Our statesmen (one is bound to call them that, if only by courtesy), until the other day, were blind to the value of education even as a commercial asset. Since the opening of the War, these same leaders have told us our people must be better educated. To what end? To capture German trade; to beat the German competition in the world's markets; to increase our manufacturing output; to pay a larger return on invested capital, etc. They have awakened to the lofty conception that an educated workman (by which they really mean a trained workman) is a more profitable piece of machinery than an uneducated or untrained one. We are to be better educated, but in the interests of trade. Education is to be made subordinate to the needs of the workshop and the counting-house, and to the demands of the dividend hunter. We have seen how the commercializing and militarization of German education has resulted in a world-wide catastrophe. And we are invited to embark on the same voyage, as though it could possibly lead to any other destination, however long the journey may be.

Education-The Right Line.

I have no hesitation in saying that an educational reconstruction born in that spirit is damned before its birth. All real education will have a utilitarian value, but to frame an educational system with a view to that end is to fail even in that object. The only worthy purpose of education is to teach how to live. And you cannot find out how to live by discovering how to earn a living. You will better find out how to earn a living by discovering how to live. The eagerness of a carpenter to get a living will never teach him the best use of hammer, saw, and plane. But the delight of a man in the skilled use of these tools will enable him to earn a living with ease and pleasure. And what is true here is true in all directions. Education divorced from its higher ends becomes a social danger instead of a public benefit. Just as in science the finer results, the greater discoveries, have been reached from a pure love of knowledge, so in education the best results are attained by the cultivation of a sheer delight in the skilled use of human faculties as an end in itself. The best teachers have already discovered the pernicious influence of prizes, and have demonstrated that better results can be obtained by creating a healthy interest in school work. It is once more a question of ideals, and we, for one, should feel much more certain about the benefit of this educational reconstruction if we heard a little less of "increased outputs," "capturing trade," "new markets," in connection therewith, and a little more of education as a purely humanizing force.

Clear Out the Clergy.

But in one thing we hope the Bishop of Oxford is correct. That is in the determination of workingpeople not to let in the parsons on this subject. That is an essential condition of educational progress. For the parson is not there as an educationalist. He is there as the representative of a sect, to guard the interests of his order, to prepare the children for exploitation in after life. And let us make no mistake on this point. Every Church in existence fights to the utmost extent of its power against a perfectly free and open education. With each it must be an education which permits its sectarian interpretation to be placed upon life. That is the only possible meaning of their fight for a voice in educational administration. And the remedy for this lies in the hands of the people themselves. Let them look at the record of the Churches and learn its significance. Let them realize also that for the past fifty years the greatest obstacle to the betterment of education has been the sectarian influence of church and chapel. Let them realize their own needs, that the modern State is a Secular State, based upon secular needs, and dependent upon secular knowledge. The power lies in their hands. All they need is knowledge and how to use it. And if the Bishop of Oxford is right, that knowledge is becoming theirs in a rapidly increasing measure.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Religion After the War.

THE clergy confidently predict the triumph of Christianity after the War. Two years ago they were equally confident that the War had already brought the people back to God. Churches and chapels were crowded, and the men of God proudly declared that the day of Atheism was gone for ever. As a matter of fact, the people did not return to God, and the places of worship soon emptied again. At present religion is at a very low ebb indeed, but we are assured that once the War is over it will be all-victorious. When the young men return from the Front, there will occur the greatest religious revival the world has ever seen. Mr. Arnold Bennett is bitterly denounced for his unpardonable audacity in expressing "the conviction that the War has finally demonstrated the authenticity of an event which in importance far transcends the War itselfnamely, the fall of the Christian religion." One says that, by Christianity, Mr. Bennett seems to mean that form of it which he knew in the Five Towns many years ago, whereof we read in his stories; but that is Methodism, which the great novelist ¹⁵ a mistake. supposed to hate, is, perhaps, the most prosperous form of Protestant Christianity in existence; and yet even Methodism is considerably less Christian to-day than it was half a century ago. We agree with Mr. Bennett,

and boldly affirm, without fear of intelligent contradiction, that the War is a convincing proof that Christianity is a dead religion, that the God of love is as great a myth as Zeus or Dionysus, and that the people generally have abandoned the faith of their ancestors. Consequently, we hold that after the War there will be less religion than there is now, and that the time is coming when there will be none at all. It is true that many people have been forced by the War to grapple seriously with dark and difficult problems, but it is also true that in some cases, at least, the only possible refuge has been found in unbelief. An intelligent young man confessed the other day that until this bloody conflict began he had never faced the facts of life, and had, in consequence, shared the popular faith, but that now, after much deep reflection, belief in God has become absolutely impossible to him.

We are told that "the War has brought a new sense of the reality and splendour of spiritual values, which means the bankruptcy of the old materialism and the old dogmatism." What "spiritual values" stand for we do not know; but the phrase is generally used by those whose theological views are somewhat hazy. If by "spiritual values" we are to understand "the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth," we must regard them as figments, real only to those who believe in them. The sense of their reality is not in us by nature, and it puzzles us to know how the War can bring it to anybody. They who assert that the War "has brought a new sense of the reality and splendour of spiritual values" frankly admit that there has been no revival of the older forms of faith and ritual. "Up to the battle of the Marne," they say, "the churches were filled with eager multitudes, but the tide receded and has not returned." They also admit that "still less has the War brought a triumph of liberal faith, as that word is usually employed." That is to say, neither the Old Theology nor the New Theology has been benefited by the War. "Nor has the expected recrudescence of superstition arrived as so many feared." Now, such admissions surely signify that Christianity has gained nothing by the savage slaughter of millions of young men which has been going on on land and sea for two years and a half, and we are convinced that had it not been for Christianity it would not have taken place. And yet, despite such admissions, this is what we read :-

The unseen world to-day seems very near, its gates thronged by a host no man can number of the bravest and the best who offered their lives for the things that make life dear. Death, so multitudinous and overwhelming, has brought immortality to light. For many, as for Sir Oliver Lodge, its silence is broken by the soft accents of familiar voices, and for all the assurance is doubly sure that "life is ever lord of death and Love can never lose its own."

That extract is extremely illogical and misleading. The unseen world, if it exists at all, is no nearer in wartime than during the reign of peace. Besides, all living things die. Death is the end of individual existence; and in all cases death is either natural, pathological, or accidental. Life is never lord of death, and love does lose its own. Death is always "so multitudinous and overwhelming"; but to declare that it brings immortality to light is to lay a false claim to knowledge. It is absolutely incontrovertible that death does not and cannot bring immortality to light. In the New Testament, Jesus is represented as having performed that feat; but he did it, not by dying, but by rising from the dead; that is, by abolishing death for himself. Very few now believe even that statement; but the idea that death brings immortality to light is infinitely absurd, all that as they would a plague. All whose interests were bound

we know about it being that it brings life to an end. In that same extract the truth of Spiritualism is taken for granted. It is positively stated, indeed, that, for many, the silence of death is "broken by the soft accents of familiar voices."

The fact that all the belligerents believe in and fight under the banner of the same God, and pray to him for victory, betrays the utter stupidity of religion. The Kaiser ascribes every boasted success of German arms to the gracious intervention of the Almighty on their behalf. The British clergy are equally certain that the loving Heavenly Father befriends our Army and Navy, and will ultimately crown them with glorious triumph. If God existed, he would certainly make himself known, and no men would have the requisite courage to speak in his name. Since he is simply an imaginary being, whose silence has never been broken, speaking in his name has become an exceedingly well-paying profession. No matter what the subject may be, if you mention it to one of these professionals, he will undertake to inform you what God's thoughts are upon it. It is the easiest and safest of all the professions, for God never interferes, never finds fault, never contradicts. In this country alone, his ambassadors have supplied us with all sorts of contradictory accounts of his relation to the War. The majority, perhaps, agree that he brought it about to serve his own purposes. The Catholics maintain that he sent it in order to punish France for her opposition to the Holy Catholic Faith. Some Anglicans regard it as a penalty for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales. Others assure us that it is an expression of the Divine anger against worldliness, pleasure-loving, Sabbath desecration, neglect of public worship, and so forth, endlessly. Each has his or her say, and God takes absolutely no notice. Is it any wonder that people are turning their backs upon the pulpit in ever-growing numbers? Is it surprising that the Christian religion is dying out? For two hundred years it has been gradually losing its hold upon the minds of men and women, and for about twenty years most of the Churches have had to record annual decreases of worshippers. We are convinced that already the War has done irreparable damage to religious belief and practice, and that it will be followed, not by the destruction of Christianity, but by a very general feeling of distrust in it, and by a rapidly developing attitude of indifference to all its claims.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Smile of Voltaire.

Voltaire was a stupendous power .- Lord Morley. Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire.

-Lord Macaulay.

FRENCH literature has been one blaze of splendid scepticism from the days of Abelard to those of Anatole France, but no name has inspired such terror in the breasts of the orthodox as that of Voltaire. Indeed, Victor Hugo regarded Voltaire as the protagonist of Freethought, and, in his epigrammatic way, said "Voltaire smiled, Christ wept." And that smile of Voltaire's cost him dear, for none had been more hated, none more reviled by pious folk. The reason is simple. He attacked bigotry and superstition, not in the dull and heavy fashion of professors writing for the few, but with wit and pleasantry which survive the winnowing of generations. He made priests appear ridiculous as well as odious, and those who felt the sting of his lash denounced him as a literary Mephistopheles, whose writings all should avoid up with orthodoxy stigmatized Voltaire as a shallow scoffer, railing at all things holy and of good repute.

In his own time this jaundiced view of Voltaire was very prevalent. Dr. Johnson, not at all a bad-hearted man, has voiced this prejudice. In a conversation with Boswell he said, "Rousseau, sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations." "Sir, do you think him as bad a man as Voltaire?" inquired Boswell. "Why, sir," returned the Doctor, "it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them." In artistic circles one meets the same abuse. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in one of his most popular pictures, introduced Voltaire as the personification of sophistry. The clergy, of course, made him the target of innumerable insults. He was the helot of countless homilies, and served to point multitudinous morals. The parsons lied to such purpose that whole generations of innocent Christians firmly believed that Voltaire was responsible for the French Revolution.

In England there is still great prejudice against Voltaire, which, said Buckle, only ignorance can excuse. The shouts of friends and foes still fill the troubled air, and the dust of controversy is blinding. One turns with a sigh of relief from books about Voltaire by enemies and partisans alike to his own letters and books. Here one finds the man himself, no mere jester, but a sensitive nature, bent on the destruction of cruelty and intolerance, and striking at the superstition of which these vices are the outcome. His keen eyes saw the atrocities and absurdities bound up with Christianity. He saw it was essential that the religion in which intolerance had its root should be proved detestable and ridiculous. Men, he said, will not cease to be persecutors until they have ceased to be absurd; and, more than any other man, he caused the European world to smile at its own absurdities.

> Aye, sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed Imposture, thro' the armour-joints to death.

Voltaire's motto was, "Straight to the Fact." He brought, smilingly, all creeds to the test of truth and common-sense. Was it true or not that Omnipotence had chosen Oriental barbarians as his peculiar people? Was "God" born of a virgin? Did he, indeed, ascend from the earth "like a balloon?" To ask these questions, and to cross-examine priests, was to provoke inextinguishable laughter. And, mind you, Voltaire was not a mere mocker, but a man of serious aims. He had profound convictions, and employed his exquisite wit as a weapon. There is no case of Voltaire mocking at any men who lived good lives. He did not gibe at the English Quakers; but he was merciless when he attacked the murderous priests of France, who invoked the laws to destroy their opponents. A Protestant pastor, Rochette, was hanged for merely exercising his functions in Languedoc. The Protestant Calas was broken on the wheel, because his son was found dead, and someone chose to say that the father had killed him, to prevent him from turning Catholic. Even Calas's widow and children were put to the torture. La Barre, a lad of eighteen, was condemned at Amiens, for multilating a crucifix, to have his tongue and right hand cut off, and then be burnt alive, a sentence which was commuted to decapitation. It was Voltaire who exposed these judicial murders, and, to quote Carlyle's memorable words, "The whole man kindled into one divine blaze of righteous indignation, and resolution to bring help against the world." His services in undoing such foul wrongs will never fade from the memory of men.

Voltaire was thoroughly equipped for his work. A perfect master of the French language, he wrote with that ease with which a bird trills out his song. His versatility, too, was marvellous. "Monsieur Multiform" was his witty name for D'Alembert, and he himself had an equal right to it. In the eighty volumes of his collected works, he has proved his mastery as historian, poet, essayist, thinker, humorist, tale-teller, letter-writer, and critic. So strong is his appeal to literary men that Macaulay, one of the most omnivorous of readers, selected Voltaire's works for his reading on his lengthy sea-voyage to India.

Among Voltaire's works *Candide* is, perhaps, the most characteristic. Nowhere has he displayed to such advantage the happiest features of his extraordinary genius. The news of the awful horrors of the dreadful earthquake at Lisbon, in which 40,000 people lost their lives, roused Voltaire like a blow in the face. Moved, as he always was, to reproduce his strongest feelings in his writings, he cast his protest against Optimism into the two very different shapes of a poem and the novel of *Candide*. Both amply prove that beneath the caustic cynicism of the author beat a heart aflame with sympathy for his fellows.

Frankly, the English translations cannot be said to add to Voltaire's charm, for any one who reads French. There is lost so much of Voltaire's sprightliness and piquancy. In the original, Candide is the wittiest book in the world. In this gay little masterpiece he brought out all his batteries at once, and he faced the foe with that terrible mockery, that bantering jest, and that deadly levity which few could meet and live. Voltaire's laugh withered the cheap, current, convenient optimism. In that searching fire the comfortable dogmas blackened and died, and the optimists were shown forth as laughing-stocks, The master's wit is as facetious to-day as when it was written, and it still trips and dances on untiring feet. It all reads like the fresh and unflagging work of superabundant youth. Yet Voltaire was actually sixty-four years of age when he wrote it -a time when most men are dreaming of slippered ease. The story is, briefly, that of a young man brought up in the belief that this is the best of all possible worlds. He meets with a hundred adventures which give it the lie. Life is a doubtful bargain, but one can make the best of it. That is the moral of Candide. "What I know," says Candide, "is that we must cultivate our garden." In the last resort, "with closelipped Patience for our only friend," be it remembered, Voltaire's philosophy was Secularistic.

Voltaire was ever an apostle of common sense. One is as much struck with the soundness of his judgment as by his felicity of expression. A book might be written on his anticipation of modern thought. In a pre-scientific age he accepted the view of man's savage origin. He derived the belief in ghosts from dreams, and discerned the magical nature of early religions. He anticipated most of the social and political problems of our time. Before Malthus, he stated the population question, and helped to clear the way for modern science. He saw through the central myths of the Bible a century before the clergy were forced to recognize them.

For sixty years Voltaire waged unending war against the Great Lying Church, and when he died the priests refused him burial, hoping that he would be thrown into the gutter like the famous actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur. But he had carved his name too deeply on his country's roll of honour, and his remains now rest beneath the dome of the Pantheon, with its front glowing with the splendid words, "*Aux grand hommes la patrie reconnaisante.*" Here he sleeps undisturbed, and by his side rest the ashes of Rousseau. Shoulder to shoulder, these great soldiers of the Army of Human Emancipation rest under their magnificent tombs :---

> With the sound of those they wrought for, And the feet of those they fought for, Echoing round their tombs for evermore.

> > MIMNERMUS.

The Emergence of Man.

II.

(Continued . from p. 102.)

As the Ice Age approached, the ancestors of our modern forest flora were in the ascendant in Central France. The oak, poplar, larch, beech, and willow were well represented. These floral organisms successfully surmounted the ordeal imposed by the Glacial Epoch, but all the distinctly American plants succumbed to the cold, and are now restricted to the temperate areas of the United States.

The anthropomorphous apes that lived in the forests of Europe in Pliocene times either disappeared altogether or became very scarce. But the lower monkeys related to the baboons, langurs, and other surviving species still remained, as their relics testify. So far as the palæontological record informs us, Asia must be regarded as the site of man's origin. But this reservation is requisite, that if the still hotly contested eoliths ultimately prove to be genuine products of human or pre-human manipulation, then it is quite possible that man developed from a simian or semi-simian form in or near Europe itself.

The fossil remains of Europe, both animal and vegetable, have furnished so many surprises that it is reasonably conceivable that man's association with our continent may extend to periods far more ancient than any formerly suspected. The old Stone Age weapons and implements are demonstrably of human manufacture, and are more rudely fashioned than those of the later New Stone or Neolithic Period. We are therefore entitled to anticipate the discovery of flint instruments even more primitive than those of the Palæolithic or Old Stone Age. Now, the disputed eoliths are unearthed from deposits slightly older than those of the Palæolithic, and extend from Oligocene to Pleistocene times. Obviously, then, if the rugged eoliths are authentic memorials of intelligent design, they point to the presence in Europe many hundreds of thousands of years ago of the human or semi-human creatures who shaped them.

Animal life in Europe in Pliocene days displays signs of derivation from very distant migrations of mammals from Northern America, as well as more recent invasions from Southern Asia. Oriental organisms settled in Europe embraced rhinoceroses now peculiar to Sumatra and adjacent areas; various mastodons related to those then dwelling in the Far East; primitive tapirs, horses, gazelles, antelopes, and other mammals. Flesh-devouring beasts of Asiatic type abounded in Europe, and included hyænas, pandas, sabre-toothed tigers, and other fierce cats. Monkeys, both of Africa and Asia, were well in evidence among the trees. During this genial period the hippopotamus found a home in the rivers, and, having wandered northwards in early Pliocene summers, it gradually established itself in various parts of Europe. The Italian deposits of this period are rich in mammalian remains, and the woodlands and river margins of the Arno valley have yielded the fossils of all the justmentioned forms, as well as those of quite modern types of cattle, elephants, horses, and at least one monkey. All these animals appear to have come to Europe either from Africa or Asia. These migrants mingled with the quadrupeds already in possession of the soil. Among these last were the lynxes, wild boars, and savage cats

and foxes. Beavers and otters related to living forms dwelt in the streams, while moles, hamsters, shrews, and hares favoured the mountain rocks.

As the Pliocene Period reached its close, many of the animals more suitably adapted to the uplands of Africa retreated to that continent. These included gazelles, antelopes, and hipparion horses. At least in Western Europe, the climate, while remaining warm, had become moist, and the spacious woodlands and wide watercourses environing rich pastures formed an ideal habitat for great herds of deer, cattle, elephants, and horses. From the nature of the flora of this period, Western Europe enjoyed a mean annual temperature of 62 deg. or 63 deg. F., some twenty degrees above that now experienced in Europe as a whole.

There is clear evidence of a fall in temperature as the Pliocene approached its end in the departure southwards of our monkey relatives. In the earlier Miocene rocks, the remains of apes are found as far north as Eppelsheim, in Germany; in later times they appear to have retreated to Southern France; while in times still later they seem to have wandered to Italy. They lingered in Southern Europe until the increasing coldness compelled them to seek shelter in more tropical climes. The land bridge which then connected Sicily with Africa doubtless facilitated their departure, while the land route of the period between Turkey and Asia in its turn permitted the migration of numerous types of Indian animals into Europe, and provided a passage for the most primitive human stocks.

Currents of very cold water from the chilly north now commenced to flow along the shores of our south eastern counties. Molluscs of arctic character left their shells on the Norfolk coast, proving the transformed state of the dwellers of the sea.

This frigid visitation was apparently less severe than those that were to follow in Europe. But west of Hudson Bay, in North America, a giant ice-cap was formed, whose ice sheets extended as far south as Nebraska and Iowa. In the forests of Nebraska, the presence of various cone-bearing trees points to the appearance of a temperate flora which preceded the actual glaciation. "In the Swiss Alps," states Professor Osborn,—

the snow descended 1,200 metres below the present snow line, and in Scandinavia and northern Germany the first great ice-sheets were formed, from which flowed the glaciers and rivers conveying the "Old Diluvium," or the "oldest drift." Accompanying the cold wave along the eastern coast of England we note, in the famous fossil deposits known as the "Forest Bed of Cromer," which overlie the Weybourn crags, the arrival from the north of the fir tree. This is most significant, because it had hitherto been known only in the arctic region of Grinnell Land, and this was its first appearance in Central Europe. Another herald of northern conditions was the first occurrence of the musk-ox in England, which is attributed to the "Forest Bed" deposits.

Thus, while the British Isles were but mildly affected by this early glacial visitation, the cold wave came on an imposing scale in Canada, the Alpine area, and in the Scandinavian peninsula. In Switzerland the glaciers swept the valleys probably 4,000 feet below the present snow-line, and the immense ice-sheet of Norway and Sweden mantled the Baltic and grasped the sites of modern Hamburg and Berlin in its boreal embrace.

That a prolonged period of low temperature was experienced in our Isles is proved by the transformed state of the flora and fauna of both France and Britain. Vegetable life donned a more modern dress, while numerous animal organisms that were plentiful in the preceding Pliocene Period either departed or became extinct. Still, the majority of mammalian animals accommodated themselves to the modified climate. This seems to indicate that, although special areas were glaciated, there remained sufficient open spaces to afford sustenance and shelter to the faunal life of Western Europe.

This sullen period was succeeded by an interglacial stage termed the "Norfolkian," during which the atmospheric conditions were warmer than those we now normally experience in these latitudes. The name "Norfolkian" arises from the circumstance that this interglacial interval was originally detected in Europe in the rich deposits of the Cromer Forest Bed, which have yielded a very precious record not merely of the floral life of this period, but have revealed a splendid array of the mammalian fauna indigenous to our Isles and to France in Norfolkian times. Although our outstanding contemporary forest trees were the predominating forms of this period, the fossil beds disclose the presence of several exotic species. That these last were able to thrive in England has led to the conclusion that the climate was slightly warmer than at present. But the secrets betrayed by these deposits show that the earlier arctic visitation had eliminated many botanical forms which flourished in the genial Pliocene climate of Britain.

France furnishes evidence of the Interglacial Stage, where it is known by the name of the "St. Prestien." Not that independent testimony is confined to France, as it comes from Italy and elsewhere. But at St. Prest, in the Paris basin, the memorials of departed floral and faunal life have been most completely preserved. This deposit was once regarded as of Pliocene age, but recent studies indicate that it is really an ancient Pleistocene record. A few French authorities considered St. Prest as dating from the closing stages of the Pliocene because among several surviving representatives of that period discovered there were those of the sabre-toothed tiger, Etruscan rhinoceros, and a primitive horse. But it is now ascertained that these and other Pliocene forms unquestionably lingered in Europe until long after the first interglacial stage, and some of them probably persisted down to the dawn of traditional times.

Early Pleistocene days are distinguished from the latest years of the Pliocene by the absence of organisms previously abundant. All the higher apes had vanished, and very few of the monkeys remained. The tapir departed, in company with the mastodon, from Europe, with the increasing cold. The haunts of these and other southern animals were now occupied by new arrivals from the frozen north. The stag, the giant deer (Megaceros), and many other members of the deer family migrated into Western Europe. The grazing animals encountered powerful enemies in the carnivorous quadrupeds that dwelt in their vicinity. The wolf, wolverine, bears, foxes, martens, and the fish-loving otters abounded. And at this period primitive wild cattle and the bison put in their first appearance. In the running waters, which were of ampler proportions than the rivers of our day, resided enormous numbers of hippopotami, and their banks were the favourite resorts of the Etruscan rhinoceros. Then there was that colossal creature, the mammoth, which attained a height of more than twelve feet, about a foot above that of the largest living African elephants; while that sanguinary beast of prey, the machærodont, or sabre-toothed tiger, was distributed over Europe into Africa and Asia. The animal geography, apart from independent geological evidence, indicates an intercommunication of faunal forms from the valley of the Thames to India, a distance of 6,000 miles. And 2,500 miles south-east from the Himalayas, similar animal genera to those that roamed from Europe to India, although they were in an earlier stage of

development, populated the island of Java, which was then united to the continent of Asia.

The early Pleistocene era, particularly during the First Interglacial Stage, found the European land-mass at its maximum elevation above the level of the sea. No ocean or river barriers existed to hinder or prevent the free migration of animal organisms to or from Europe, Asia, or Africa. The coasts of the Mediterranean were 300 feet above their present level. Africa was joined to Europe at Gibraltar and across the island of Sicily. The Black Sea and Mediterranean were then vast lakes, and the waters which now wash the Isles of Greece were solid land. The United Kingdom formed a continuous land surface, and was connected with the European continent to the south and east, while it was united to Iceland to the north. It now remains to consider how these phenomena relate to the advent of man.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

"Will China Come In?" is asked in an article in last Saturday's Observer. China has, it is said, broken off diplomatic relations with Germany, and now, it is hoped, that there will be a formal declaration of war. What on earth China can do to aid the Allies—in a military sense—it is difficult to see. But if China does "come in" it will be another step in the militarization of China, another indication of the evil influence of Christian nations on the Chinese people. For China is the one nation in the world with peaceful traditions. Its governing philosophy—Confucianism is a philosophy of peace. The Chinese have always asked but one thing of the foreigner—to live at peace. And the one thing the Christian foreigner would not grant China was peace, save at the price of spoliation and insult.

All the Christian nations, Britain, France, Germany, and others have, at some time or other—often collectively robbed and insulted China. They have demanded that their own people should be superior to the civil laws of China, and have extended this exemption to natives who sought this protection under the guise of religious concession. Great Britain herself declared war on China for the purpose of forcing upon her the sale of opium. Hong Kong was taken from China as an indemnity for that war, and remains an infamous monument to the influence of the West upon the East. And from time to time other nations have played the same game. China was a peaceful nation, and the Christian nations have not yet outgrown the ideal of force as the arbiter of national destinies, or of mere size as a proof of national greatness.

Europe has preached peace and brotherhood, has practised war, and roved the whole globe on missions of plunder. China preached peace-based on human considerationsand has remained the one nation free from militarism. But we are afraid it is coming. The Christian nations will not be content until they have dragged non-Christian nations along the path they are now treading. If they will not tread it from love of imitation, they will be forced to do so from motives of self-defence. Where Christian nations can plunder they will. That is the other one lesson of history. Appeals to justice are powerless. It is force alone that will avail. China, we fear, will be compelled to learn that lesson in the end, if it has not already learned it. And if one can imagine the shade of Confucius looking down on China we can well fancy it saying: "Well would it have been for China had the foot of a white Christian never been permitted to desecrate its shores."

A Christian apologist informed a Secularist lecturer, the other day, that the Genesis story of the Fall is clearly an allegory but he forgot to state that the orthodox Church interpreted it in terms of history until science triumphantly

proved it to be utterly unhistorical. He also ignored the fact that the late Canon Driver laid it down as a principle that it is a story which the Christian teacher should "understand in the sense which science will permit." The Church has never abandoned a supernatural position anywhere except when forced to do so by the irresistible pressure of natural knowledge.

The Lower House of Convocation has passed a resolution in favour of drink prohibition, except in the case of wine used " for religious purposes." Are the dear clergy always to be exempted from everything?

Mr. George Lansbury has published a book on the occasion of the "National Mission," in order to propagate the idea that equality is an essential part of Christianity. We shall believe this when Cardinals receive the same pay as curates, and when woman is no longer regarded by the orthodox as "the weaker vessel."

The amount of brotherhood developed by Christianity has been exhibited in the selection of a Unionist candidate for West Perthshire. Colonel Stirling was the gentleman; but considerable opposition has been developed on the ground of his being a Roman Catholic. We have no knowledge as to Colonel Stirling's qualifications, nor do we care. They must, however, be very small indeed if they do not entitle him to sit in the House of Commons-which appears to be running the Church hard as a refuge for mediocrity. But it is a public scandal that religious belief should be made a test question. We wonder what chance an avowed Atheist would stand in Perthshire. The "unco' guid" argue they cannot trust Colonel Stirling because he is a Roman Catholic. The Colonel retorts that they are acting unjustly because they are Protestants. They may both be right. But right or wrong, it is an example of the distorting influence of religious belief on moral judgment.

Colonel Stirling said in his defence that there were two things which every decent man wished to keep out of politics -Religion and the Throne. But the latter is almost certain to play a larger part in politics than it has done of recent years. This War has served to make thousands of people disgusted with kings and kinglets, and republican feeling has greatly increased during the past two years. And if a man really believes in his religion, how can he keep it out of politics? To do so is to assume that it is of no consequence. We believe that religion should be kept out of politics because it is a distorting and profoundly evil force. But we desire to sweep religious considerations on one side altogether. Will Colonel Stirling advocate the same thing?

The Edinburgh Town Council has granted the use of the Synod Hall, with financial aid, for the holding of Sunday concerts for overseas soldiers. Oh, Edinburgh !

We congratulate Mr. W. Hall Caine-we think he is a son of the novelist-on giving the members of the Douglas (I.O.M.) Debating Society some home truths on the influence of Christianity on woman. Mr. Caine pointed out that prior to the introduction of Christianity woman's position under the old Celtic law was higher than it afterwards became, and added (we quote the report in the Isle of Man Weekly Times) :-

Yet a preacher without apparently the very least knowledge of Celtic lore and a surprising forgetfulness of Bible truths, had in a recent Mayoral Sunday sermon declared that "non-Christian religions had never regarded woman as fit for independence-she had been treated as a minor, and was never free. But as soon as Christianity took a dominant place in the life of nations, woman began her ascent and is still ascending." That such discourse should be bestowed on a congregation, drawn together solely as a witness to civic unity, was, in the lecturer's judgment, a grievous offence to good manners. The Christian attitude towards woman was a natural inheritance from Judaism. Did the reverent Mayor's chaplain know that the modern Jew's daily prayer was "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God ! King of the Universe ! who hast not made me a woman"? Most Christian writers attribute stantially claims the same right.

the depreciation of the character of women by Christian ecclesiastics to the influence of Judaism. Nowhere in the Bible is polygamy prohibited, and Christianity still recognizes an office of "purification" for a woman after the birth of every child, the significance of which is none the less when we realize that it was twice as long in the case of a female as of a male child In the New Testament the ideal of marriage is debased to the level of those only who "burn" and "cannot contain"; while at the Council of Macon a bishop raised the question as to whether woman really was a human being capable of being possessed of a soul, questions which the learned prelate promptly answered in the negative ! The whole foundation of Christianity rested upon a degraded idea of woman. It was woman who produced "the fall" for which only the blood of the sacrifice of the Cross could atone. So that not only did woman begin sin, but she was directly responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.

Some of the members present must have opened their eyes on having what was virtually a Freethinker article thrown at them in this manner. But we congratulate Mr. Caine on his candour.

Mr. Caine asked, in concluding his address, suppose some catastrophe were to destroy all the books in the world save one, and we had the choice of one, Which should it be ?----Some would instantly reply, "The Bible of course." But

reflect. We have no grudge against those who are to come after us. Rather, we wish them well. Brave men are laying down their lives for that world that is to come after us-men of Protestant England, Agnostic France, Catholic Russia. The religion that binds the Allies is the religion of humanity. The Bible has been a printed volume for some five hundred years, but what a tale of suffering it has laid to its charge Think of the Inquisition in Italy and in Spain. Think of the 300,000 women and children who suffered martyrdom under the bull of Innocent VIII. against witchcraft. Think of Wesley's shameless defence of all this cruelty largely by reason of these words of Exodus xxi. 18. No, you dare not pass on to another age a book that has been the cause of such appalling bloodshed. The two commandments of Jesus which should unite man to man and man to God are all in the work of a great Englishman—the greatest of all Englishmen, that "Pagan Poet," as Wesley called him—Shakespeare. Enshrined in the pages of Shakespeare are the commands of Jesus, the commands of Moses, and others of immense far-reaching importancefidelity to truth, and temperance to the limit of abstinence.

A fine conclusion to a fine address. Other public men, please copy. If only twenty-five per cent. had the same courage of speech the world would soon be transformed.

A soldier was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for breaking into the Church of Scotland Guild Institute, and stealing therefrom 1,050 cigarettes, thirteen pictorial postcards, and three New Testaments. We should have thought stealing the New Testaments would have quite justified him in setting up a plea of kleptomania, or, say, temporary insanity.

A number of the Free Church clergy are interesting themselves in the pleasing subject of prostitution, and the dear Daily News announces a "Save Our Soldiers Campaign." The Rev. F. B. Meyer suggests that prostitutes should be arrested, and that they should be forced to work in munition factories "under the wise and kind surveillance of the Church or Salvation Army." Does it not all seem like an attempt to foist cranky Christian ideas on the public under the cover of the War?

The impertinence of the clergy knows no bounds. While everyone is called upon, and if under military age may be forced, to sacrifice all he possesses to the prosecution of the War, the clergy are firm that nothing must be allowed to interfere with the interests of the Church. That insufferable person, the Bishop of London, has kindly consented to the clergy under his control volunteering for some form of National Service, providing it does not interfere with carrying on the work of the Church. Even doctors are being commandcered for the Army; but the clergyman must be left alone. The old complaint against the Church of Rome was that it set up an independent power within the State. The War has shown that we have another Church which subTHE FREETHINKER

Dr. W. R. Sorly tells us that "the Agnostic is always in difficulty when he attempts to draw the line between the knowable and the unknowable." Spencer tried to trace that line, and lived long enough to know that he had miserably failed. No great Agnostic since has been 'foolish enough to make the attempt. The reason is that no such line exists. The only existing line lies between the known and the unknown, and this is being pushed further back every day. There is no region which we can legitimately call unknowable. Science works on the assumption that Nature is knowable, with the result that what is unknown to-day becomes known to-morrow.

The Christian World is astonished at Bishop Gore saying that "the working classes are determined not to have Christianity at any price," and replies that "Democracy, as we know it, is the child of Christianity, especially of Protestant Christianity." We beg to observe that Bishop Gore was far nearer the truth than the C. W., whose statement is just nonsense. Modern Democracy is the child of those secular changes set going by the Renaissance, and immediately by the French Revolution, also what has become known as the Industrial Revolution. There have been Christian Democrats, as there have been Christian astronomers; and the organic connection is about equal in both cases.

The Archbishops have appointed a Committee of bishops and others to report upon the sanctions and restrictions concerning the ministration of women in the Churches. You can always trust dear Old Mother Church to be several centuries behind public opinion.

Two little children were starved to death in a flat at Westminster beside their mother, who had died of heart failure. The eagle-eye of Providence can only detect the fall of the sparrows.

What receptacles of clerical wisdom the parish magazines are, to be sure. In the *Southend Church Chronicle* a notice of a mothers' meeting concludes with the touching words: "There will also be songs and light refreshments—and a moon."

"The sorrows of this sad time have been borne with wonderful dignity and courage by the clergy," says a writer in a Parish Magazine. This is so, but one must remember that the clergy's heroism consists in seeing the soldiers off at the railway station.

Christianity, says the writer of the weekly religious article in the *Times* (it is remarkable that in proportion as it has fallen lower as a newspaper the *Times* has taken a more direct interest in religion) "says all men are the children of God." Well, and having said it, what is its practical value? It does not prevent his children slaughtering each other all over Europe. It does not prevent his children murdering each other all through the ages. It has never made people treat each other more decently than they would have done otherwise, and it never will. It is one of the many cant phrases by which men forge for themselves excuses for not exercising their faculties on the world around them.

The 105th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens brought a number of wreaths to Westminster Abbey, many with pious inscriptions. Few of the donors appear to have been aware that Dickens was a Unitarian, and, therefore, was as much outside the Christian Church as Thomas Paine or Voltaire.

From the Observer of February 9, 1817 :---

Heury Topping, found guilty at the last Session of stealing greens, was on Friday whipped a distance of 100 yards, near to Mr. Alport's nursery, on the Hackney-road. He is an aged man, and seemed deeply affected by his ignominious punishment.

Some of the London churches assisted at a war loan demonstration by sending surpliced choirs. It would have been better had they sent their surplus cash. The promised revival of religion does not appear to have raised the price of gods. A statue of Buddha figured in the King's Bench Court recently, and was the subject of a claim for \pounds_{300} . The unkindest cut, however, is that Buddha figures on the lids of cigar-boxes, in company with lithographs of gaudily dressed females. Christians would be excited if the Second Person of the Trinity figured on a cigar-box lid, or in a tobacco advertisement.

Rev. J. H. Dickie writes to the *Glasgow Herald*, saying that it is "men's men" who are needed at the Front as chaplains. The women's men can apparently stay at home. Of course, it may be that the soldiers would rather the women's men left with them.

Dr. Brest, American Bishop of the Philippine Islands, says he is quite certain that our cause in the War is "the cause of God." It is a pity God is not able to look after his own cause, and so do away with the necessity for so much human bloodshed.

Part of the cemetery at Carisbrooke (I.O.W.) is to be used for the growing of potatoes. As this is consecrated ground it will be a matter of some interest to note the influence on the crop of episcopal blessing.

We have recently read some half-dozen new essays on the international situation by men who would profess some sort of a religion, and a curious feature of them all is that nothing at all is said about religion and its influence. Why is this? One of two things must be true. Either they conceive religion to be of no force whatever in the determining of international relations, or they think it too dangerous a subject on which to say anything. For our part, we do not believe that the first is true. In spite of all that has been done, religion, both organized and unorganized, still exerts a real power, and it is stupid to ignore the fact. It is nearer the truth to attribute this silence to a fear that religion is best left alone-for the writer's sake. It is this feeling that makes our home politicians-even when Freethinkers themselvesforbear mentioning religion in connection with politics. And while this is the case we need not marvel that progress is so slow and so uncertain. Life, as we have often pointed out, functions as a whole, and the writer who thinks he can safely ignore the power of the Churches, and the influence of religious belief, should devote his abilities to the writing of nursery rhymes.

A newspaper paragraph announces the forthcoming appearance of a new book on theology, entitled God the Invisible King. Deity seems to be falling in the social scale. Formerly he was visible, and, at the cheapest, "the King of kings."

Writing on the question of Sabbath Observance, the Rev. Thomas Elliott, of Southend-on-Sea, asks: "Who says that this 3,500 years-old law is binding on us in England to-day? It is said to have been given to a wandering tribe of escaped slaves in the wilderness of Sinai." Perhaps Mr. Elliot's ministerial colleagues will oblige with an answer.

"When the war is over the Church will find itself 'up against' millions of men—yes, and of women too—who have slid farther than ever away from it—people who have looked death in the face many times. These people will have been.hardened, made sceptical by their experiences. The war—it is no good trying to disguise the hard fact—is making Atheists by the thousand. How does the Church propose to set about reclaiming these people? What is its policy, its plan of campaign for the fight it will have to make after the war? Has it any plan of campaign at all?"—Richard George, in the "Daily Mirror."

The clergy don't fight themselves, but they know how to exploit the brave fellows who do. The erection of "warshrines" throughout the country is part of the method, and another way is to display in the churches lists of men who have given their lives "so gallantly and Christianly" for their country.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 25, Clapham; March 11, Birmingham; March 18, Leicester; April 1, Portsmouth: April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

- J. T.LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 25, Nottingham. March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.
- WILL Mr. J. Callaghan, who sent stamps to cover cost of copy of the *Freethinker* please send full address. The name of the town has been omitted.
- J. A. Dawson writes that his experience in the Army has been the reverse of that described by many Freethinkers. He was first put down as a Wesleyan because his friend belonged to that body. After attending Church for some weeks he decided that even fatigue duty was preferable to sitting in chapel, and when he was removed to another part of the country, had himself entered as an Atheist. For nearly twelve weeks he has now had his Sundays quite free. We are pleased to hear this, but, as Mr. Dawson says, it all depends upon the officers that are over one. Gentlemen make allowances, bigots won't.
- ANNO DOMINI.—Pleased to see that Ogilvie's *Encyclopædia*, under *Masterpieces of Eloquence*, gives Ingersoll's address "At a Brother's Grave" and "At the Grave of a Child." The editor evidently knew a good thing when he saw one.

A. R. W.-Capital! Will prove very useful.

- J. LOMAS.—We think you greatly exaggerate man's fear of death. Men will risk death for all sorts of objects. As Bacon says: "Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspireth to it; grief dieth to it; fear pre-occupieth it." The fear of death, so far as it is real, is largely an artificial product. In this respect nothing has done so much to make man a coward in the face of death as Christianity. Its want of success need not blind us to the fact of its influence.
- G. DIXON (Accra).—Thanks for papers. We note the endeavour of the Salvation Army to open operations at Accra. If, as you say, the Accra natives have too much self-respect to patronize "such a tin-can religion," that is something to their credit. And of one thing we may be sure. If the Salvation Army doesn't find Accra financially profitable, it will soon be given up.
- A CORRESPONDENT writes to say we are in error in identifying the S. H. Lever, recently decorated with an Order of the Bath, with the Sunlight Soap Works. We were evidently misled by the name, for which error we beg to express our regret.

E. B.-Thanks for cuttings.

- J. G. FINLAY.—We hope to use later. It deserves more than a passing paragraph. We agree with you as to the hypocrisy of the whole thing. And for hypocrisy British Christianity still holds with ease a premier position.
- J. BREESE.—We have handed the article to Mr. Lloyd, and noted the rest of your letter. We shall hope to see you soon.
- R. OGDEN .- Cuttings very useful.
- Mr. J. T. WATKINS writes:--"Words cannot express the pleasure I derive from the *Freethinker* every week." We are pleased to hear it, and take for granted what is unspoken.
- "FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND .- F. Marschel, 105. 6d.
- T. H. ELSTOB.—Pleased to hear from you, and to know that you are well and safe. MSS. will be useful. We await the result of the Bowman case with confidence, but, as you say, win or lose, the fight will go on.
- The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.
- The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communi cations should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- 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.

To-day (Feb. 25) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Avondale Hall, Landor-road, Clapham. His subject is "Christianity and the Logic of Life." Avondale Hall may be easily reached by 'bus and tram routes, or by the Tube (Clapham Road Station). We hope Freethinkers will induce their Christian friends to attend. The meeting commences at 7 o'clock.

Mr. Lloyd visits Nottingham to-day (Feb. 25) for the first time—as a Secularist speaker. We cannot say with certainty in what hall the meeting will be held, as the local friends have omitted to send particulars; but we expect it will be in the Mechanics' Institute, and at 7 o'clock. We believe that the local friends have been working hard to make the meeting a success, and we trust not without avail.

The Secretary of the West Ham Branch, N.S.S., sends us the following :--

At the Annual Meeting of the West Ham Branch, N.S.S. held on Thursday, February 8th, it was unanimously agreed to send you the heartiest congratulations of the members on your able editorship of the *Freethinker* during the past year of exceptional difficulty. We, as workers in the same "good cause," sincerely appreciate your work, and feel every confidence in the continued success of the 'paper. We feel, also, you and your staff deserve our gratitude for the high tone maintained throughout the articles.

Everybody connected with the *Freethinker* has done his best to keep the flag flying—so far with success. But we are not out of the wood yet, although if industry and devotion—both on the part of the *Freethinker* staff and a large body of its readers—will achieve success, the end of the War will see us in an even better position than did its commencement. We greatly appreciate the good wishes of the members of the West Ham Branch.

We have received the following from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and we feel that many of his London friends will be pleased to read it :--

DEAR MR. COHEN,—I have been on the Continent a fortnight now enjoying the arctic conditions prevailing here.

We, that is my draft, have been under canvas the whole time, but as there are fourteen in a tent we keep warm at nights despite their severity.

We wash and shave when we can, but ten washing and four shaving in one pint of water has so far been the limit.

Nobody doubts, of course, that Providence has wisely ordained the War, but why it—Providence—should freeze water and allow its soldiers to go unwashed is a part of the divine plan which we poor mortals cannot hope to solve.

I am quite cheerful and happy, getting much amusement from the crowded condition, which brings out many funny incidents.

Religion is well catered for, but voluntary customers are few.

Take the hut I am writing in, for instance, there is a small room called a "Quiet room" for devotional purposes only, but every evening at 7 o'clock a preacher comes into the main structure filled with men, many writing, some playing draughts, dominoes, or reading and talking, and announces a service, starting with a hymn. In that way religion is thrown at those present.

Still, I am doing my bit for the Cause in my tent and out of it. I leave the *Frecthinker*, which I receive every week, in different places. Your article in January 28 was read by many who seemed very much interested in it. It was quite a red-hot article for this place, and I watched the paper as it travelled round.

The favourite topic here for the preachers who conduct the services is a reminder to all present that they may shortly be in eternity. It amuses me to hear them whine such things.

I fully realize the dangers and horrors I must face in the very near future, but I am in no way depressed or dismayed. I shall face them; it shall not be said an Atheist flinched from the horrors of this world, after Christians had had its chief administration for nearly two thousand years.

Remember me to Mrs. Cohen and the family, also to any friends in the Cause interested in my whereabouts, and permit me to remain—Yours very sincerely, R. H. ROSETTI.

Amongst the papers which we are pleased to see are weathering their stormy period, is the journal of the Humanitarian League, the Humanitarian. It has now resumed its regular monthly appearance, and we hope it will continue. In the February issue there is an article on the "Simple Life," which properly castigates those who mistake a phrase for a fact. Another article dealing with conscientious objectors, under the title of "The Penalizing of Conscience," is well worthy of attention. The price of the publication is one penny.

The Secular Education League holds its Annual Meeting on Friday, March 2, at 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C., at 5 p.m. We hope that as many members as can make it convenient will do their best to be present. Although the War has prevented the League being as active as it might otherwise have been, the Society has neglected no opportunity of placing its objects before the public, and its membership has been well maintained. But there is no reason why this membership should not be strengthened considerably, and we trust it will be in the very near future. A larger membership means larger influence, and, what is important at the moment, increased income. We trust Freethinkers will take the hint in both directions. The Secretary of the League is Mr. Harry Snell, 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C.

Some years ago we expressed a hope that someone would see fit to republish Sketches of the Philosophy of Morals by Sir T. C. Morgan. Whether that suggestion fell on fruitful soil or not, we are unable to say; but our desire has now been realized by a republication of the volume under the title of The Moral Philosophy of Freethought (C. W. Daniel, Ltd.; 5s.). The chief criticism—the only one the book calls for, in fact—is that the publishers would have done well had they given some slight sketch of the author, and had seen to it that, in addition to the author's notes, others by a presentday editor had been introduced. For every reader will not always bear in mind the fact that the book is now nearly a century old, and through not doing that is likely to fall short of doing the author the justice and giving him the credit he deserves.

Sir T. C. Morgan was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and husband of the well-known Lady Morgan, authoress of one or two volumes of travel of considerable ability. Sir T. C. Morgan was also a friend of the famous Sir William Lawrence, Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons. In 1819, Lawrence published his famous Lectures on Man, a volume of outstanding merit. expressed in terms of a thoroughgoing scientific Materialism and an evolutionary suggestiveness quite noteworthy when one bears in mind the date of the publication. Lawrence's Lectures were delivered as part of a reply by him to attacks on previous lectures because of their anti-Christian or antireligious tendency, his chief opponent being the famous Dr. Abernethy. It is interesting to note that Lawrence was refused copyright in his Lectures because of their anti-religious tone, which, by a strange nemesis, led to their greater reproduction in a cheap form.

Sir T. C. Morgan's *Philosophy of Morals* appeared in 1822, and there are echoes of the Lawrence controversy throughout the work—that and attacks on a preceding work, entitled *Sketches of the Philosophy of Life*. It is to its freethinking character that one must attribute the fact that the *Philosophy* of Morals dropped out of the public mind. It became a tabooed work, although far inferier ones have been frequently reprinted, and in the history of moral philosophy it certainly deserves a honoured place.

"The Philosophy of Morals," or, under its new title, "The Moral Philosophy of Freethought," is what one may justly call a wise book. Its comments and observations are shrewd and to the point—particularly so in the chapters on "Right and Obligation," and "On the Influence of Institutions on Morality," and it is quite free from that ethical rhapsodizing which strikes one as so much cant. Much that Sir T. C. Morgan has to say on the nature of morality, and of the motives of conduct, would, of course, be expressed differently to-day, and the influence of the social factor would receive greater emphasis. But, in the main, the author's contentions are sound and well based. Conduct is a function of organization, and a moral code "well constituted, would be a deduction from physiology, political economy, statistics, and experience of the operations of conduct on society." And, however differently expressed, these things serve as the foundation of a rational moral code for all scientific thinkers. With the immense power of the sub-conscious on human conduct, Sir T. C. Morgan could hardly be expected to deal, but such modifications of his teaching which have been rendered necessary by time, will not affect one's estimate of the intrinsic merits of the work.

The publishers state that the book is an exact reprint of the edition of 1822, except a few unimportant notes have been deleted. So far as we have compared the two editions, there is no fault to be found with the statement. We are glad that the notes have been retained, because some of the author's best pieces of writing are contained therein. A sentence such as: "When an individual imagines that he has conquered a passion, it is usually found that he has only been deserted by it," is one to be remembered. We are also glad to find that the lengthy note on the deaths of Voltaire and D'Alembert has been retained. The Christian Advocate had published one of the usual Christian legends concerning the death-beds of these famous "infidels," and Sir T. C. Morgan promptly wrote to the doctor who attended Voltaire, and to a friend of D'Alembert who was with him at his death, and received prompt and decisive proofs of the Christian Advocate's falsehood. These communications are reprinted, together with the author's scathing rebuke, which is well worth reproducing :-

The origin of such stories as those here refuted, is easy to comprehend. If true, they prove only that a man, worn out by disease, has not the same force of character as when in the plenitude of health. But true or false, they are perfectly suited to the mental calibre of gossiping bigots, who measure humanity in all its aspects by the standard of their own impertinent imbecility; and who arrive at the pleasure of a strong sensation, though a strain upon their limited imagination, to which they could never attain through their still more limited understanding.

That fits the by no means few representatives of the *Christian* Advocate as well as ever.

Critical Chat.

A DUTCH VOLTATRE.

ANYONE who has contracted the excellent habit of turning up biographical information in that "Acta Sanctorum" of Rationalism, Mr. J. M. Wheeler's Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers, must have noticed that the names of Dutch Freethinkers of the nineteenth century occur not infrequently. Unfortunately, Mr. Wheeler seems not to have been in the way of getting many interesting details of the life and works of these evangelists of Freethought. My intention here is to supplement his always valuable, if slender, array of facts by calling attention to the work of the greatest of Dutch Freethinkers. Eduard Douwes Dekker, whom M. Anatole France calls the Voltaire of the Netherlands, "is one of those exceptional writers that say what they think. Of this sort there are few in Holland, as elsewhere. In every country, and at every period," says M. France, "the number of thinking men is small; the number of those who say what they think is still smaller. Nowhere are they encouraged, for candour is the least sociable of virtues." Dekker, who wrote his books under the pseudonym of "Multatuli," is, of course, hardly known at all in England, except, perhaps, to those of us who find pleasure and instruction in noting the less obvious currents in the stream of European literature. In this there is, no doubt, nothing to wonder at, for in intellectual matters we English have so good a conceit of ourselves that we are apt to regard with contempt ideas which may be offered to us from the outside. Even when Nietzsche had been reacting powerfully for years on Freethinkers, he was here either unknown or despised. For a long time we had only a meagre and

122

deprecatory account of his philosophy in the Britannica to set over against the authoritative exposition-an exposition long enough to make a decent sized volume-in the Grande Encyclopedie. It is much the same, or even more so, with Dekker. The fullest account we have of him and his work is a half a column signed " E. G." in the Britannica ; but Mr. Edmuud Gosse, who suffered much in his youth from Calvinistic repression, seems not to appreciate the virulent irony and sarcasm with which Dekker scourged the official Protestant hypocrisy of his time. In the cheaper encyclopædias, Harmsworth and Everyman, Mr. Gosse's article is presented stripped of any individuality it may contain. At the present moment I know of no trustworthy criticism of Dekker's work, and, what is even worse, no translations, with the exception of an inaccessible version of Max Havelaar published in 1868, and a few translations of shorter pieces made by that indefatigable scholar, Mr. Paul Selver, whom we have to thank for introductions to many an out-of-the-way writer. In France they manage things better; there is an excellent volume of selections made by the Dutch writer, M. Alexandre Cohen, who is, or was, on the staff of the Mercure de France, and who writes French with ease and distinction. As I have no Dutch, it is to his version, with its introductory essay on Dekker, that I am indebted for most of the material in this article.

Dekker was born at Amsterdam on March 2, 1820. His father, who was a sea-captain, appears to have meant his son to have a business career. But young Dekker had a generous, high-spirited youth's contempt for commerce, with its ethic of low cunning and calculating mendacity. Instead of being a huckster in sugar or coffee, he found a post in the Dutch Colonial Civil Service, and went out to Batavia in 1838. He went rapidly through the different departments, and in 1851 was appointed Assistant-Resident of Amboina, in the Moluccas. In 1856, he was given the same post at Lebak, in the Presidency of Bantam, Java. It is here that he had the experience which was to give a new direction to his life. He had many opportunities of seeing the seamy side of the Dutch system of Colonial Government. He had discovered that the miserable condition of the population of his district was due to the exactions of the native Governor. He felt it his duty to show that these malpractices had been noticed. He could get no satisfaction from the native Governor, the Resident, or the Governor-General. After receiving a notice that he had been transferred to another district, and that his continuance in the Colonial service would depend upon his future conduct, he sent in his resignation, and left for Holland, after being refused an audience by the Viceroy. Here his political friends were unable or unwilling to help him.

In 1860, four years after he had resigned, he published his Max Havelaar, a violent indictment of Dutch Colonial Government, in form of a novel. By the politicians and pastors its appearance was saluted with factitious indignation and very real anger. What irritated them most was its ironical exposure of the Protestant and pious hypocrisy of the average Dutch citizen. The book is a description of what the author saw in the eighteen years of his life in the Dutch Indies. It was translated into English, as I have mentioned above, in 1868, and into French in 1876. In Holland its effect was counteracted by a conspiracy of silence. Those who were concerned did not mention it. But, unluckily for these pious hypocrites, it was only the introduction. His next book contained an open letter to the Governor-General, in which he gave proof that the barbarities of the native Regent were winked at by his superiors, to one of whom he was in the habit of supplying women.

In 1861, he brought out his Love-Letters, an imaginary

correspondence between the author and Fancy; that is to say, his imagination, or fantasy. Here, we are told by an orthodox journal of the day, he attacks everything that humanity holds sacred, parades the most perverse of moral doctrines, tramples under foot all that the nation had learned to love and venerate, denies God, the Bible, the Gospel, and every doctrine of religion, and has respect for nothing save his own precious personality. It is the sort of criticism one would expect from the sworn enemy of truth, the pious Protestant burgess who had just witnessed a violent attack on his "sacrosanct Trinity-Religion, Property, and the Family." And it was this sort of moral hypocrite who could raise the cry of immorality against an independent thinker for venturing to suggest that the exporting of obscene watches (lascivious pictures were painted on the inside of the inner case) to Japan was not in accordance with Atheistic principles of ethics. If the Christian could square it with his notions of morality, the unbeliever's objections were but proof of his perversity, his want of respect for long-established institutions; for the one supreme virtue, wealth.

For the effectiveness of his attack on popular superstitions, Dekker could not have chosen a better form than the parable or story. "He lived among and wrote for a nation of Protestants brought up on Biblical and evangelical texts. No other form would have been a more appropriate setting for the propagation of his ideas than the allegorical." His long residence in the East had developed in him a love of metaphor, of what I may call the picture-story in prose. One example will show what I mean better than a ream of description. This is the "Second Story of Authority" from Love-Letters :—

Letters :---Voltaire said: "If God did not exist, he would have to be invented!" That is so. All power comes from God. All power implies God. Whoever finds it necessary to exercise power or authority creates for himself a God. This was the way of Moses, Confucius, Zoroaster, Numa, Columbus, and Cortez. This is also the way of all demagogues, augurs, magicians, priests. Even today this is the way of anyone who wishes to dominate others. The number of gods is as great as the number of appetites. For every new appetite, a new god.

Holloway deifies unknown doctors who order you to buy his pills. "Thus says the Lord," said Moses, and "thus Dr. So-and-so," says Holloway. Obey and buy. And both of them add: "so that your souls may be saved."

A nursemaid was taking out her master's children for a walk. She was told to look well after them. But the children were disobedient, and ran so far away from her that she had no control over them.

Then she created out of nothing a black dog which bit all the children that ran away. And the children were afraid of the black dog, and became very obedient, and stayed near their nurse. Communing within herself, she looked upon the god she had created, and found that he was *useful*.

But because of the black dog the children became stupid with terror.

And they have remained stupid to this day.

Another "story of authority" reveals to us the origin of religious faith, which is pictured as a slip-knot recommended by a pious hermit as an infallible remedy for intractable wills. In these little witty and ironic parables he decomposes every belief, every doctrine, every principle which the good Protestant of that age, and indeed of every age, has looked upon as fundamental. The seven volumes of *Ideas* (1862-1874) are a collection of his miscellaneous essays and parables, in which we get the same virulent irony of the *Love-Letters*, the same ardent love of truth, the same conviction that moral and intellectual life is a struggle against *all* error, not merely one or two forms of it, the same disassociation of accepted ideas, of those commonplaces of religion, ethics, and politics which the interest or sentiment of mankind has raised to the dignity of logical truth.

It is not strange that he should have found Holland an uncomfortable dwelling-place, or that he should have spent most of his life in Germany, where he died in September, 1887. From this vantage-ground he scourged the pastors, alike orthodox and "modernist." For both of these he was the enemy of God, and the corrupter of youth. It was not only religion that his mordant irony dissolved. He ridiculed the idea of a monarchy in his play, A School for Princes. He decomposed everything upon which the public prided itself-national representation, liberalism, patriotism, virtue, chastity, and respect. He found, or thought he found, that the commonly accepted virtues had an eesentially economic character. And it may be that he was not far out.

M. Anatole France tells us that Dekker reminds him of the French philosophers of the period just before the Revolution, and this in virtue of his intellectual freedom, vivacity of expression, and vein of irony. But for some of us he has a still greater affinity with the late Remy de Gourmont, who has attacked with smiling and contemptuous irony every smug commonplace of religion, ethics, and politics.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

The French Revolution.

IV.

THE REPUBLIC.

(Continued from p. 92.)

THUS, in August, 1792, for the second time in the Revolution, the middle classes had been forced to depend on the physical force of the Parisian proletariat to protect their conquests; and this time the democracy, exasperated with three years of hopes deferred, refused to be thrust back into insignificance. If the nation was to be consolidated in face of the foreign danger, it was necessary to organize it democratically. The history of the next two years is the history of attempts by successive leaders to do this.

The Legislative Assembly, taking the executive power into its hands, recalled Roland and the Girondist Ministry to office. Danton was given the Ministry of Justice, as a concession to the Radical insurgents. The royal family were confined in the Temple. It was now necessary to take instant measures, not only to cope with the enemy on the frontier, but to deal with Royalist conspiracies at home. Vacillating as ever, the Assembly would take hardly any precaution until threatened or bullied into it by the new rulers of Paris-the delegates of the "sections," who.now formed the municipality. Under pressure from them, an elected tribunal was established to try Royalist traitors. In the Tuileries, after the insurrection, had been found a number of most incriminating papers, proving the collusion of Louis and Marie-Antoinette with the enemy and their ferocious designs against the democrats, and implicating the Royalist party in the Assembly. The latter had now to make themselves scarce, or prepare to face the new tribunal and the guillotine. (This instrument of punishment had lately been introduced, for humanitarian reasons, to replace the old-fashioned gallows. When we are told of the vindictive proceedings of the French Revolutionists in this connection, we must not forget to compare them with the English laws of that date, which hanged men, women, and children by hundreds every year for petty offences, such as sheep-stealing.)

The war went from bad to worse. After Lafayette's flight, the Prussians and Austrians advanced through

Lorraine and Champagne without a check. Longwy fell, probably by the treachery of the governor, on August 24, and Verdun was besieged. Brunswick seemed in a position soon to make good his threat. The new municipality of Paris took the lead of the wavering Assembly in matters of defence, as well as in those of police. It set to work appealing for men, finding arms for them by searching from house to house, and melting church plate into cannon. Danton superintended these measures, becoming the true leader of France in this awful crisis. The nerveless Roland ("a nice old gentleman for a quiet tea-party," as Parnell said of Justin MacCarthy) was pushed into the background. The Girondist leaders actually urged privately that the Government should leave Paris to the enemy, and withdraw to the south of France; and only the opposition of Danton prevented this base act of betrayal.

The new criminal tribunal did not give satisfaction. After condemning two or three Royalists to the guillotine it showed a disposition to leniency, which reached the limit when it acquitted Montmorin-an ex-minister of the king, who had actually had charge of the papers which had subsequently been found in the Tuileries. This was on August 31. On September 2, a premature report of the fall of Verdun (it actually fell that day) roused the population to uncontrollable fury. The alarm bell was ringing; the drums beating; volunteers were enlisting and setting out for the front; Danton was at the bar of the Assembly, explaining the measures taken, and uttering his historic sentence: "Il nous faut de l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace." That afternoon a party of non-juring priests were being driven in closed carriages to the prison of the Abbaye as "suspects." A raging multitude, including some of the Marseilles volunteers, on some slight provocation, dragged the priests out and killed them, with the exception of one-the head of the Deaf and Dumb Institution, for whom one of the crowd intervened. They then broke into the Abbaye and began killing the other Royalists detained there. The municipality-which had not, as is constantly alleged, planned the massacres, though it had foreseen them and warned the Government that they would come, as a result of the misplaced lenity of the tribunal-at once notified the Assembly, and, after vainly trying to calm the people, did what it could to mitigate the bloodshed by improvising a court to try the victims. On the proposal of Marat and Panis (secretary to Danton), the Watch Committee ordered the different gaolers to separate petty offenders from the prisoners accused of conspiracy, and sent nominees of its own to try the latter. These judges were able to save a large number from death. But the fury of the crowd rendered it hopeless to intervene on behalf of certain classes of prisoners, e.g., members of the Swiss Guard, non-juring priests, notorious accomplices of the Court, and forgers of paper money. Over a thousand persons were abandoned to the vengeance of the people, including the Princess de Lamballe, confidant of Marie-Antoinette. The state of public feeling may be judged from the fact that neither the respectable citizens of Paris, the National Guard, nor the volunteers cared to interfere. Men said: "What would the Prussians and Austrians do to us if they came to Paris? Why should we march to the frontier and leave a swarm of traitors snugly lodged here in Paris, at the public expense, ready to break out and murder our wives and children ?" There is, of course, no ethical defence for the September massacres; but it is necessary to understand their psychological motive if we are to appreciate history justly.

The horrid work lasted three or four days. The Government, which could not have stopped it if it had wished, excused the people to the Assembly as well as it could. The Watch Committee, Marat and his colleagues, satisfied in their own consciences, issued a circular to the local authorities throughout France, stating what had happened, and recommending them to take similar measures. Happily, except on a small scale in one or two places, their advice was not taken.

Meanwhile, in the midst of such excitement, and under the shadow of invasion, the elections took place to the National Convention, which was to replace the discredited Assembly. Universal manhood suffrage was now in force, but the indirect method of election already mentioned still obtained, and gave the polls a Conservative bias. Those departments which were threatened by the enemy, i.e., in the north-east and east of France, returned deputies in favour of a strong democratic government, organized with a view to defeating the enemies of the Revolution. In the south and west, however, the war does not seem to have been really felt as yet, and members were returned in favour of constitutional methods and "business as usual." All, however, recognized that to restore the king was now impossible, and accepted the necessity of a Republic.

In the army, Lafayette had been followed by Dumouriez, who succeeded in arresting the invasion. Heavy rains in September hampered the Prussian movements, and on September 20 an attack made by the enemy on Dumouriez's army at Valmy was unsuccessful. This was the turning point of the campaign. Brunswick had to retreat, and soon the soil of France was, for the moment, free.

The day after the battle of Valmy the National Convention met. The Girondists, who were now the Government party, sat on the right. Their chief object, now that the monarchy was gone, was to stop the Revolution from going further, and return to constitutional government. They had to accept universal suffrage, but they were nearly all obstinate laissez-faire theorists, and would not admit the necessity of exceptional war measures to cope with high prices, unemployment, and the like. They feared and hated the working-class of Paris and the large towns, and wished to see them kept in their "proper place," and the well-to-do supreme and secure. Of this party, Brissot was still the Parliamentary wire-puller; but the inspiring influence was Madame Roland, wife of the Minister of the Interior. Under her influence, the Girondists were joined by some former Radicals, such as Barbaroux, who had brought the Marseilles volunteers to Paris; Petion, the Mayor of Paris; and Buzot, another former associate of Robespierre's, who had fallen in love with Madame Roland, and could be twisted round her little finger.

At the other extreme were the Radical party, the "Mountain." This section, confined to a few members in the Legislative Assembly, had grown considerably, thanks to universal suffrage. Paris had returned an almost solid block of "Montagnards." With Robespierre and Danton at their head, they were for cementing the alliance between the middle-class Revolution and the working-class, and demanded accordingly the regulation of prices, the relief of distress, and the dictatorship of the democracy, at least for the period of the war. Marat had been elected for Paris. He, and a few other extremists perhaps, wished actually to extend the Revolution into the economic sphere, and to work towards social equality. Others, again, were militant Freethinkers, and advocated the disestablishment of the Church and "dechristian-¹²ation." These tendencies, however, were not favoured by Danton, Robespierre, or the majority of the "Mountain." Robespierre, in fact, was fanatically religious in a Deistic sense, and loathed Atheists with a deadly loathing. He was a sort of "Nonconformist Conscience"

to the Revolution. For the present, however, these divergent tendencies within the "Mountain" were latent only, and all were united in demanding a strong provisional Government, democratic in sympathy, and charged with the exclusive duty of defending the Revolution against enemies without and within.

The great majority of the Convention never belonged to any party, but, seated in the lower part of the hall, between the Girondists and the "Mountain," received the nickname of the "Plain" or the "Frogs of the Marsh." This doubtful majority represented average middle-class French opinion, which, though ready to support any measures that seemed necessary to win the war, remained fundamentally Conservative, and was resolved to take the first opportunity that offered itself of escaping from its uncongenial adventure in democracy. Many members of the former Assemblies, reactionaries at heart, sat silent in the "Marsh," waiting for the day when, national independence once assured, they could once more trample on the democracy, and secure the reign of the well-fed and the prosperous.

Just before the Legislative Assembly dissolved, it had granted French naturalization by way of compliment to several distinguished foreign friends of freedom. Two of these were elected to the National Convention— Anacharsis Clootz, a German baron by birth, but an enthusiastic Republican, Internationalist, and Freethinker; and our own countryman, Tom Paine. Clootz sat with the "Mountain"; Paine is generally reckoned with the Girondists, but was assuredly a more advanced politician than most of that party were.

As soon as it met, the Convention abolished royalty, and declared that official documents should henceforth be dated Year I. of the Republic. There unanimity ended. The Girondists, or Ministerial party, instead of calling a party truce and getting on with measures necessary to the national defence, wasted time in a number of frontal and flank attacks on the Radicals. The September massacres offered the chief means of attack. Though the Girondists had not condemned the massacres at the time, and some of their newspapers had even approved of them, they now, after three weeks, appeared suddenly to awake to their iniquity, and accused not only Marat (who really was compromised) but Danton and Robespierre, who had had just as much, and just as little, responsibility for the massacres as the Girondists themselves.

While these bickerings went on in the Convention, the French armies, after freeing France of the invaders, carried the war into the enemy's country. General Custine invaded Germany, and occupied Speyer, Worms, Mainz, and Frankfort in the name of the Republic. Dumouriez entered Belgium, which was then Austrian territory, and won the battle of Jemmapes (November 6, 1792), after which the French entered Brussels. The Republican parties in Belgium and the German cities (for, since 1789, all countries bordering on France had been simmering with democratic movements) welcomed the French with open arms. The Girondists, being the party in power, gained strength from these successes. They proposed and carried a resolution which declared that all peoples were the friends of France, and offered French help to any nation that wished to rise against its rulers. This resolution looked all very well on paper, but would obviously, if adhered to, have involved France in everlasting wars. It was the initial step on that dangerous road of militarism which ultimately led to the despotism of Napoleon. It also frightened England, and had much to do with this country's entry into the war against France.

ROBERT ARCH.

125

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

PROSECUTION OF SPIRITUALISTS. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—A few weeks ago a spiritualistic medium was prosecuted and fined £50 and costs of £30 on the ground that her practices were fraudulent. I carefully read the evidence given in the daily newspapers, and there certainly seemed to be nothing more inane or silly in her communications with the spirits than in those quoted by Dr. Oliver Lodge in his notorious book *Raymond*.

If any harm to the public, justifying legal restraint, is done by an obscure medium, surely this harm is greatly enhanced by the support and sanction of an eminent scientist.

It seems to me that the silly victims of spiritualistic fraud have only themselves to thank for being so easily gulled; they attend the seances of their own freewill, and, doubtless, the majorty of them consider that they get good value for their money in the solace they derive from communication with their dear departed ones.

All the religious periodicals are urging the prosecution of these mediums, and the editor of the Month justifies this on the ground that they can furnish no guarantee of the truth of their communications. But what guarantee can the minister of any supernatural religion furnish of the truth of his statements about the unseen world? In the region of the supernatural everything is wrapped in an impenetrable mystery, so that no guarantees are possible. It would seem, indeed, that this combination of the warring sects against Spiritualism is inspired by a common jealousy and fear of competition in the domain of the supernatural, which has hitherto been the special preserve of the various Churches. We Freethinkers, who stand outside all the Churches, should, I think, protest against the prosecution of Spiritualists as being an invasion of that liberty of thought and action which we have attained so dearly and should value so highly.

When such highly trained scientists as the late Alfred Russel Wallace and Dr. Oliver Lodge are among the advocates of, and believers in, Spiritualism, and against whom any charge of wilful fraud is plainly absurd, surely legal restraint of their investigations is to be deprecated ?

G. O. WARREN, Major (retired).

Oh, for Ten Thousand Tongues to Sing!

WHEN I survey the fearful dross Laid thick upon the altar piece,
I fain would make the clergy cross And write a hymnal masterpiece !
Λ hymn that every babe could sing, A song for man to harmonize
With verse and tune of wondrous swing To knock dead gods from out the skies.
To knock dead gods from out the skies ! Strange that the task remains undone,
Strange that mankind defends the lies Which rob its heart and tie its tongue.
Oh, for a song to clear the skies ! To tear each falsehood cleanly out, To breed a courage which denies

The drivel man could do without.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

An Edinburgh man brings this tale from the West Highlands.

In the village church one Sunday there was an unlettered, uncouth fellow, full of good intentions and odd piety, who persisted in bawling the Psalm tunes at the top of a very raucous voice.

After toleration bordering on the suicidal a gentleman visitor ventured to intervene, approaching the offender with a courteous request to sing quietly and in moderation.

"You go to blazes," was the almost savage retort, "I'm here to praise the Lord!"—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate,

"The Origin of the Human Race." Introduced by J. K. Harris. SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, Chapman Cohen, "Christianity and the Logic

of Life." MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N.S.S. Office, 62

Farringdon Street): Thursday, March 1, at 7.30.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, Percival Westell, F.L.S., "The Natural History of the Garden." Lantern illustrations.

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