

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN · · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper.

VOL. XXXVIII.—No. 35

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1918

PRICE TWOPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Is Religion of Use?—The Editor</i> - - - - -	457
<i>"Our Holy Mother Church."—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	458
<i>Forty Years of Freethought.—Mimmerpus</i> - - - - -	459
<i>W. K. Clifford.—Robert Arch</i> - - - - -	460
<i>A "Freethinker" Sustainment Fund.—Chapman Cohen</i> - - - - -	463
<i>The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - - -	464
<i>"Carillon."—Handel Lancaster</i> - - - - -	466
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Is Religion of Use?

We take it that at this point in the discussion between ourselves and Dr. Lyttelton we are agreed that we may profitably descend from the bath-room to the ground floor. In other words, the illustrative and historical association of Christian teaching with lack of cleanliness which led to this discussion has served its purpose in bringing us to a more fundamental issue. There are really more issues than one, but it will be well to take one at a time. And, in view of Dr. Lyttelton's article in last week's *Freethinker*, this issue may be set forth as follows. Looking at the whole subject of human development, it appears that Dr. Lyttelton regards religion as an essentially beneficent force, expressing itself as clearly as may be through the now helpful and now distorting media of social forces. We, on the other hand, look upon religion, as such, as an essentially irrational and progressively harmful thing, owing all its apparent goodness to an association with forces that are not religious at all, and only stayed from producing greater evil by the curbing influence of non-religious agencies and conditions. We think this places the issue fairly and squarely. It will, at all events, leave readers in no doubt as to the question in dispute. * * *

Religion and Primitive Life.

To keep distinct things separate is for the ordinary person the most difficult of tasks; and this gives the religionist an initial advantage over the Freethinker. For hitherto religion has been more or less connected—more closely as we go backward—with all phases of social life. And because of this association, in spite of a separation that is actually taking place, there are still large numbers who cannot conceive social life, without deterioration, apart from religion. In primitive life this conviction is easily understandable. For there religion is everywhere. Religious beliefs dominate, so far as man consciously adjusts conduct to circumstances, the whole of life. Man's first interpretation of nature is a volitional one. The gods are responsible for everything; and all that man does, from the cradle to the grave, is done more or less under the impulse of the desire to gain their favour or to avert their anger. One consequence of this is the creation of an intense and unreasoning conservatism. Another—really the reverse of the first—is a fear of criticism of old methods and a hatred of new ones. The proof of this is that all over the world, as well in

civilized as in savage society, religion is hostile to change. The conservatism it stands for is not of a reasoned kind; it stands for the established order merely because it is established. It conserves without regard to the social value of the conservation. Thus, in uncivilized and semi-civilized societies, we find the most barbarous practices resting upon a religious basis, and safeguarded by the religious sanction. Human sacrifice, Suttee, the killing of old people, the hundred and one barbarities of savage life are nearly all, if we search deeply enough, found to rest upon a religious basis, and their removal prevented because of religious fears and threatened religious penalties. Within modern times we have with ourselves such instances as punishment for witchcraft, Sabbatarian laws, and imprisonment for "blasphemy" and heresy. So far as we can trace the undiluted influence of the religious idea, we can see it acting as a retarding and retrogressive force in human society.

* * *

Social Selection and Religion.

We hope the qualifying expression that in early society "religious beliefs dominate, so far as man consciously adjusts conduct to circumstances" will be borne in mind, because much turns upon that. For behind the force, or forces, of which man is conscious, lies those of the operation of which he is conscious. And these include all, or nearly all, that enlightenment has classified as moral, social, physical, etc. The laws of life and of social health are substantially the same all along, what changes is man's knowledge concerning them. But they are always active, and they subject religious beliefs and practices to an inevitable form of selection. A religious belief that threatens the existence of a tribe or a people must be discarded or modified to a point of comparative harmlessness or the tribe itself will disappear. From our point of view, the analogy of a disease germ will serve. If a germ is so deadly as to kill all its hosts, it kills itself. What happens, one may suppose, is that while on the one hand an immune type of human being is preserved, on the other hand, the more virulent, really suicidal, type of germ is destroyed, leaving a less virulent form in possession of the field. So it is that social influences are all the time at work modifying and changing religious beliefs and practices to a point at which they do not too seriously imperil social efficiency. In a word, religion is to us a disease of the body politic. A society may exist, it may even develop, with this germ active in its midst, but it can no more act as a source of strength than the germ of influenza can serve as a source of increased health.

* * *

Separating Distinct Things.

Added to this, we must bear in mind that progress is largely a question of enlightenment. We learn more of the real nature of things; we learn to divorce essentials from non-essentials; we strive to keep distinct things separate. In the physical world we have most of us learned to discard the prayers and propitiations with which mankind once sought to get their ends served as

so much waste of energy. And what has occurred there with so much completeness is surely a forerunner of what will one day occur elsewhere. In the case of disease, it is plain that the religious idea can give nothing of real value to those striving to reduce its ravages. It is entirely a question of knowledge of the conditions that favour disease, and of their removal. In morals, we can see the beginnings in the associative life of the animal world, and of the more highly elaborated and complex life of mankind. And when the conditions of these classes of phenomena are perceived, there inevitably takes place a separation of the non-essential (the religious idea) from the essential—the play of normal social forces. That the real things of life, including human ideals and aspirations, have been hitherto largely expressed through religion, is proof only that mankind had not yet learned to separate what was essential from what was non-essential. That we outgrow the savage but slowly is illustrated in many departments of life; religion offers but one of the clearest and strongest examples. * * *

Trading Under False Pretences.

What has been said will, we think, be enough to show why, while believing that favourable modifications in Christian teaching are due to the pressure of social forces, we do not admit that "the defilement of Christian teaching" and "the degrading of Christians" was also due to external forces. Let us note, in passing, that if this were admitted, it would rob Christianity of all real value. It would make it no more than a social barometer, reflecting here the good and there the bad of contemporary social life. But our reason for writing as we have is that, first, we do not admit the existence of a socially and ethically admirable Christianity which became corrupted through the wickedness of human nature. To us this is a dream of a much later and more humanized period, striving to find a basis for its greater humanitarianism in Christianity itself. And, secondly, we distinguish with Christianity—as all other religions—between what belongs to it as a religion and what became associated with it from its existence in a human society. No religion can ignore moral and social forces and ideals. If it did, it would soon cease to exist. It must reckon with them; it is even forced partly to endorse them. And all history is a witness to the fact that it is not religion that modifies the moral and social ideals, but the other way about. God does not civilize man; it is man that civilizes his gods. And the sum of the process is, that by the time we have separated the religious idea from the moral and social facts and forces with which it has been associated, some of us—we are pleased to say a growing number—realize that the religious idea is in the nature of a useless hypothesis. It no longer explains anything; it no longer serves a useful purpose; the functions once thought peculiar to it are plainly discharged by organs which have nothing religious about them. Human experience slowly but surely separates the essential from the non-essential.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

For He who has denied to the most devoted psalm-makers and moral poets all beautiful thoughts and all literary reputation, lest they should be praised too much by their earthly fellow-creatures, and thereby forget heaven, where the angels have already engaged board for them in advance;—He, I say, provides us other profane, sinful, heretical authors, for whom heaven is as good as nailed up, all the more with admirable ideas of earthly fame, and this indeed from divine grace and mercy, so that the poor souls, since they are really here, be not altogether wanting, and that they may at least enjoy upon earth some of that joy which is denied to them in heaven.—Heine.

"Our Holy Mother Church."

III.

THE more we study history the more undeniable it becomes that the Church has never deserved to be called either "mother" or "holy." In every age and country its rule has been arbitrary, cruel, and anti-social. The wantonness of its despotism has often known no bounds. And, generally speaking, its tyranny was only equalled by its corruption. During the Middle Ages the Church's power was supreme. Heresy was ruthlessly suppressed, and every act of disloyalty punished by imprisonment, torture, or death. And yet, in almost every age, a few brave men arose who dared to challenge ecclesiastical authority, to defy Papal bulls and excommunications, and to condemn in no measured terms the vices and frauds unblushingly practised by the hierarchy. With the revival of learning, which began almost imperceptibly, opposition to the Church grew in boldness and extent, resulting in the gradual secularization of the State and the consequent decline of priestly power. In the fourteenth century the Church itself, though as despotic as ever, showed unmistakable signs of spiritual apostacy and loss of dignity. With the spread of knowledge there sprang up among the people a bitter resentment against the selfish greed and plunder of which Rome was increasingly guilty. Consequently, when the illustrious schoolman, William of Ockham, ventured to deny Papal authority, and to denounce his own Franciscan Order, as well as the wealthy dignitaries of the Church, for their notorious avarice, he found that thousands of people loudly approved of his action. Ockham is a small village in Surrey, so that William, who is said to have shaken the pillars of the hierarchical polity, was a true Briton; and he was soon followed by another erudite Englishman, of whom we read that he was "the first teacher who shook with any lasting effect the dominion of the hierarchy." William was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, but he found protection in a Court where the Church was powerless to touch him; while Wycliffe was condemned, but not punished, though he lived in the heart of Catholic England. In the thirteenth century another celebrated Briton, Roger Bacon, though in no sense a heretic, yet because he preferred the study of mathematics and experimental science to that of theology, was doomed to fourteen years' imprisonment; but by the latter half of the fourteenth century the English detestation of Rome had become so strong that the Church lacked the courage to punish Wycliffe, who was a thoroughgoing uncompromising heretic. Wycliffe was merely condemned; and yet, as a result of its consent to such condemnation, Oxford University fell upon intellectual sleep, which lasted upwards of a hundred years, and out of which it has not wholly risen to this day. Green admits, in his *Short History of the English People* (p. 243), that the century which followed the triumphs of Archbishop Courtenay, in Wycliffe's case, "is the most barren in its annals."

Wycliffe died in 1384, six years after the election of two rival popes, Urban VI. and Clement VII., both of whom the great heretic nicknamed Anti-Christ. For thirty-eight years Europe witnessed the humiliating spectacle of "a war of pope against pope, the Pontiff of Rome promulgating a crusade against the Pontiff of Avignon." Now, whilst pope thus cursed pope in the name of the God of Love, whose sole vicegerent on earth each claimed to be, heresy flourished amazingly in the wake of the New Learning. In England, "they complained that the followers of Wycliffe abounded everywhere and in all classes; among the baronage, in the

cities, among the peasantry of the country-side, even in the monastic cell itself." Writing at Leicester, Knighton bitterly deplored the fact that "every second man one meets is a Wycliffite." Indeed, by the name of Lollards Wycliffites were soon a powerful, as well as numerous, party, and the one object of their attack was the Church of the day. It is difficult to ascertain what their creed was; though we are in no doubt as to what it was not. They were but humble disciples of the great reformer, whose work was more destructive than constructive. This is how Milman describes Wycliffe's work:—

He had swept away one by one almost all the peculiar tenets of the mediæval Latin Christianity, pardons, indulgences, excommunications, absolutions, pilgrimages; he had condemned images, at least of the Persons of the Trinity; he had rejected Transubstantiation (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. viii., p. 202).

Mr. J. M. Robertson is fully justified in the statement that the heresy of the fourteenth century reached its high-water mark in English Lollardism (*Short History of Christianity*, p. 255). Peter Patishull was one of their most fiery preachers, whose favourite subject was the vices of the clergy. It is more than probable that he indulged in considerable exaggeration, as such men always do; but it is incontestable that priestly morals were notoriously bad. Peter had once occupied the lucrative and honourable position of one of the Pope's chaplains; but his conscience compelled him to relinquish it. While he was preaching on one occasion at St. Christopher's in London, the Augustinians forced their way into the building and managed to serve an interdict upon him as an unlicensed teacher. They were driven out by the Lollards. Then Patishull nailed a document on the doors of St. Paul's to the effect "that he had escaped from the companionship of the worst of men to the most perfect and holy life of the Lollards." It is doubtless true that, on the whole, Wycliffism was morally much superior to the Church it so violently assailed; but it is also indisputable that many Lollards lacked the courage of their convictions. For example, when Archbishop Courtenay went down to Leicester and took his seat, with great pomp, on the trials of certain heretics of note, whose prosecutors were the clergy of the town, we infer that when they were anathematized with solemn ceremony they read their recantation. William Sautree, the first Wycliffian martyr, was an extremely weak-kneed member of the party. He had been a priest of St. Margaret's in King's Lynn. He had also been tried and convicted before the Bishop of Norwich prior to the passing of the Statute for the burning of heretics. When arrested under this new Statute he was a preacher at St. Osyth in London. When his trial came on he played the coward, vehemently recanting, then withdrawing his recantation, and angrily denying that he had ever been tried before. In the writ for the execution of Sautree it was "distinctly stated that the burning of heretics is enjoined by the laws of God as well as of man, and by the Canons of the Church." It was certainly the combined act of the Crown and the Church, but grave doubts exist as to its having had the spontaneous support of the Lords and Commons. Be that as it may, certain it is that such were the corruptions of the Church that petitions were presented to the king for the expulsion from the country of all French-born monks, the seizure of all priories held by foreigners, the compulsory residence of vicars in their own parishes, and the exercise by them of hospitality, and the prohibition of entrance into any of the Mendicant Orders under the age of twenty-four.

The story of the persecution of the Lollards is too well known to be told here in any detail, but several points need to be emphasized. One is that Dean

Milman is clearly mistaken when he asserts that the insurrection of the peasants under Wat Tyler and others, 1381, "had no connection with religion." The truth is that it was part and parcel of the general revolt against the tyranny and rapacity of both Church and State. As long as it aimed only at the abuses in the Church many noblemen were more or less enthusiastic supporters of it, hoping eventually to gain by it; but no sooner did it begin to embrace the abuses of a feudal government than they not only withdrew from it but became its active opponents, selfishness being their motive in each case. Through the direct and indirect influence of Queen Anne the movement spread into Bohemia, where, early in the fifteenth century, the trials of our Holy Mother Church were particularly severe. John Huss was the leader of the Bohemian Lollards as John Wycliffe had been of the English. Poor Huss had to appear at the Council of Constance, in 1416, which sentenced him to be burned. He did not recant, though repeatedly besought to do so, but died like a hero. He was subjected to every conceivable species of degradation. A dispute arose as to the mode of effacing the tonsure. In the end it was done with scissors, the hair being cut in the form of a cross. Then a paper crown, daubed all over with devils, was placed on his head, to the accompaniment of the eminently Christian commital: "We devote thy soul to the devils in hell."

The execution of Huss led to a Bohemian war which lasted a long time. Meanwhile, our Holy Mother Church was in extremely deep waters, in which neither its holiness nor its motherliness was destined to shine. But the strange scenes witnessed at the most extraordinary Council of Constance require another article.

J. T. LLOYD.

Forty Years for Freethought.

You can do nothing much worth doing, in this world, without trouble; you can get nothing much worth having, without expense.—*John Ruskin.*

Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings, in this earth.

—*Thomas Carlyle.*

"HATS off to the veterans," said George William Foote on a memorable occasion, and few will fail to assent to the rare praise of the "Old Guard" as voiced by the famous leader of British Freethought. The veterans are the link between the present and the past; that past of storm and peril, when the soldiers of Liberty arose almost every day to meet a fresh difficulty or a new danger. To be one of the "Old Guard" is in itself an honour; for the "Old Guard" never knew defeat or surrender. A few of them still remain amongst us; to shame our weakness, and to stimulate our courage. Of these veterans, few names are better known than that of our old friend, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, whose entertaining pen has so often written for these columns, and whose voice has been so familiar on the lecture-platform for two generations.

Born in London sixty-three years ago, Mr. Moss joined the Freethought Movement in the "stormy 'seventies" of the last century. When quite a young man, he saw that in Freethought alone was there any hope for Democracy. No man in the Movement ever set to work more vigorously to qualify himself for acting as a teacher of his fellows, and few have waged the good fight with more ability and tenacity. Starting life as a clerk, he afterwards became a journalist, and educated himself not only in the world of books, but also in the book of the world. His knowledge of Freethought literature is as remarkable as his power of debate; while his keen sense of humour saves him from any tendency

to dullness, and his plain common sense enables him to meet with ease the platitudes of clerical triflers who imagine a mere lecturer could be put aside without trouble. As a writer, his output of books and pamphlets is remarkable; "thick as leaves in Valambrossa." Nor has he stopped at purely propagandist effort, for in several plays he has displayed literary capacity, which, under happier conditions, would have secured for him general recognition from the theatrical world.

Mr. Moss's journalistic career has brought him into close contact with the life of a great city, and the mysteries of Modern Babylon are no more secrets to him than they were to Dickens. Years ago he accompanied George R. Sims and Fred Barnard, the artist, in their memorable travels through London's under-world, and helped to prepare the material out of which Mr. Sims wrote his famous work, *How the Poor Live*, a book which startled quiet folk in sheltered homes, and paved the way for legislative effort. Indeed, there are few phases of metropolitan life with which Mr. Moss is unacquainted, for his duties as an official under the old London School Board gave him unique opportunities for seeing the homes of the people.

The outstanding features of Mr. Moss's busy career are his tenacity and courage. A tireless worker, he has delivered thousands of lectures, and taken part in scores of debates. And these, be it remembered, have been undertaken in the scant leisure of a busy life. Nor has it been "roses all the way." More than once he has come into conflict with the authorities on account of his Freethought opinions. In exercise of his right as an elector, he asked a Member of Parliament to support Bradlaugh's Oaths Bill. The member, a Christian, promptly replied by requesting the School Board authorities to dismiss Mr. Moss, and the result was that he was prohibited from lecturing and advertising his books. Mr. Moss won that battle after delivering a powerful speech before the Board, which led to the rescinding of the resolution. Nor is this all, for the tireless Freethought advocate carried the war into the enemy's camp by entering municipal life, and as a Councillor defending the principles he loved, to which he had devoted his life.

It will be noted that Mr. Moss's courage is not noisy. There is nothing of Donnybrook Fair about it. Physical courage, especially in crowds, is cheap and common enough. Millions of men will fight and die for almost anything or nothing. But moral courage is rare. Few men are able to stand against a mob; fewer still are able to stand, animated solely by principles, against an enraged community. Mr. Arthur Moss is one of the few. When he stands for what he sees to be truth, he is as steadfast as a hill, and nearly as quiet in his resistance. He never asks what he will lose by so doing. The satisfaction of his conscience is his sole reward. For forty years of manhood he has never wavered in holding aloft the banner of Freethought. And for this, if for nothing else, let this brave veteran be honoured:—

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!
Till with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark, how loud and clear I hear it wind,
Swift! to the head of the army! swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!

If Freethinkers need any example to stir them on to give themselves in their great cause they will find it here—in the harvest of a laborious life. There may be men and women among us to-day who are asking, perhaps with a note of complaint, whether they have not done their share, and whether the time has not come for

others to take a turn. Such questions are never asked by the men and women who count in the history of the movement. They go on giving themselves because the spirit of duty and of loyalty is within them. The unnumbered laggards remain behind, dawdling through their lives, and passing unhonoured without monument of fame, or record of achievement. The real men, the men who help to make the movement a live one, work on and on, ever in harness to fulfil their lives. Pre-eminently, such is he whom we mention to-day—Mr. Arthur B. Moss, who has given forty years for Freethought. Although he has passed his sixtieth year, "age cannot wither nor custom stale his infinite variety." In age men's minds are apt to get indurated against new ideas. Not so with Mr. Moss. His gaze is ever towards the future. A Freethinker from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and a practical Humanitarian, he favours reforms in the social order, and his heart overflows with love for the poor and humble. In that respect he is a public benefactor. That is really the secret of his influence and of his popularity. "Hats off to the veteran!"

MIMNERMUS.

W. K. Clifford.

I WONDER how many readers of the *Freethinker* are acquainted with Mr. W. H. Mallock's *New Republic*? That book, Mr. Mallock's earliest and, in my opinion, his best, will probably be remembered as a brilliant satire on mid-Victorian literature and philosophy, long after his burlesque assaults on Socialism and Freethought have been decently forgotten. Readers of the *New Republic* will recall the life-like parodies of Jowett, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Pater, Huxley, and Tyndall which distinguish its pages, and may recall, along with these, the one really unfair and unkindly portrait of the lot—that of a militant young Atheist who appears under the name "Saunders," and who is made alternately to outrage and to amuse the company by his complete absence of courtesy and tact. It is generally understood that this caricature was intended for William Kingdon Clifford, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Professor of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics at London University. I cannot help feeling that Mr. Mallock's travesty of Clifford—who, on the testimony of his friends, Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Frederick Pollock, in their introduction to his collected remains, was personally amiable and sympathetic, as well as a thinker of genius—sprang from a feeling that Clifford was, in truth, a more dangerous assailant of orthodoxy than either Huxley or Tyndall. Probably only his early death, before he was thirty-four, prevented the public from coming to the same conclusion.

Clifford, unlike Huxley or Tyndall, was not only a brilliant man of science, but an all-round subverter of established wrong—a Humanist in the best sense of the word. Tyndall, apart from science, had no particular interest except Alpine climbing; Huxley, when he ventured upon social or political controversy, was quite incapable of rising above the smuggest suburban conservatism of the period. Huxley, moreover, did a great disservice to Freethought by inventing the awful word "Agnostic"—a label designed expressly to be used by people who were really Atheists but did not like to say so, though they would have been called so without demur in any country not dominated by Anglo-Saxon respectability and moral cowardice. Very different from this was the attitude of Clifford. Politically, he was as advanced a Radical as practically any Englishman in those stodgy 'seventies. Intellectually, he would give no quarter to, and admit no compromise with superstition.

"It is not right to be proper," he declares in the last sentence of his *Conditions of Mental Development*, in face of the tyranny of convention in action and thought. In other lectures and essays, notably in *The Unseen Universe* (a review of a quasi-scientific apology for Christianity which appeared under that title in 1875), *Body and Mind*, *Right and Wrong*, *The Ethics of Religion*, and one or two besides, he again and again emphasizes the duty of preaching Freethought in the market-place, and not only in the study, and driving supernatural religion from its last ditch:—

Only for another half-century let us keep our hells and heavens and gods. It is a piteous plea; and it has soiled the heart of these prophets, great ones and blessed, giving light to their generation, and dear in particular to our mind and heart. These sickly dreams of hysterical women and half-starved men, what have they to do with the sturdy strength of a wide-eyed hero who fears no foe with pen or club? This sleepless vengeance of fire upon them that have not seen and have not believed, what has it to do with the gentle patience of the investigator that shines through every page of this book [*The Unseen Universe*, which he is criticizing], that will ask only consideration and not belief for anything that has not with infinite pains been solidly established? That which you keep in your hearts, my brothers, is the slender remnant of a system which has made its red mark on history, and still lives to threaten mankind. The grotesque forms of its intellectual belief have survived the discredit of its moral teaching. Of this what the kings could bear with, the nations have cut down; and what the nations left, the right heart of man by man revolts against day by day. You have stretched out your hands to save the dregs of the sifted sediment of a residuum. Take heed lest you have given soil and shelter to the seed of that awful plague which has destroyed two civilizations, and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live among men.

Severe as he was upon Protestant and Latitudinarian attempts at compromise, Clifford did not forget that the strongest and deadliest embodiment of Christianity in world-politics is, and has always been, the Catholic Church. The following extract from *The Ethics of Religion* is an apt reply in anticipation to sophists like Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who try to persuade us that Catholicism has stood for liberty and equality:—

"In the Middle Ages the priests and monks were the sole depositories of learning." Quite so; a man burns your house to the ground, builds a wretched hovel on the ruins, and then takes credit for whatever shelter there is about the place. In the Middle Ages nearly all learned men were obliged to become priests and monks. "Then again, the bishops have sometimes acted as tribunes of the people, to protect them against the tyranny of kings." No doubt, when Pope and Cæsar fall out, honest men may come by their own. If two men rob you in a dark lane, and then quarrel over the plunder, so that you get a chance to escape with your life, you will of course be very grateful to each of them for having prevented the other from killing you; but you would be much more grateful to a policeman who locked them both up.

His favourite poet, to judge by his quotations, was Swinburne. Over and over again, in the middle of powerful and suggestive sociological or other arguments, we come upon a phrase of word-music from "Songs Before Sunrise" or "Poems and Ballads," reminding us that the great scientific movement of Darwinism and the poetic revolt of Swinburne were parts of one and the same war of human liberation.

Philosophically, Clifford was a stronger thinker than Huxley, or even Herbert Spencer, though the system which he developed was left by him in a condition of rather unstable equilibrium. He was a Pluralist, with

noticeable leanings to what would now be called Pragmatism. An elementary feeling was, for him, a thing in itself, independent of any consciousness of which it might form part, and more real than matter, which was merely the mental picture we form of elementary feelings or "mind-stuff." This is very ingeniously worked out in his essays on "Body and Mind" and "The Nature of Things-in-Themselves." Its weakness is that it seems to do away with any unity in things, and, "feeling" being ultimate, to render impossible any such thing as real knowledge. Clifford would probably have revised it had he foreseen how, in the hands of William James and his disciples, this Pluralist philosophy would become a reactionary instrument of the "Will to Believe," and be used to shepherd the unwary back into the fold of supernaturalism. Only on the lines of Monism can Freethought render its results impregnable.

The best part, however, of Clifford's philosophy is its invigorating Humanism. He adopts, practically, the Positivism of Comte, without Comte's crotchety pseudo-Catholicism:—

Conscience is the voice of man ingrained into our hearts, commanding us to work for man.

When men respect human life for the sake of man, tranquillity, order, and progress go hand in hand; but those who only respected human life because God had forbidden murder have set their mark upon Europe in fifteen centuries of blood and fire.

And, addressing those who adduce the probably finite duration of life on the earth as a reason against Humanism, he tellingly says:—

Our interest lies with so much of the past as may serve to guide our actions in the present, and to intensify our pious allegiance to the fathers who have gone before us and the brethren who are with us; and our interest lies with so much of the future as we may hope will be appreciably affected by our good actions now. Beyond that, as it seems to me, we do not know, and we ought not to care. Do I seem to say: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?" On the contrary I say: "Let us take hands and help, for this day we are alive together."

ROBERT ARCH.

Acid Drops.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw writes to the *Manchester Guardian* commenting on the case of a conscientious objector who is being sentenced to recurring terms of imprisonment. One need not agree with the conscientious objector to assert that the treatment of these people is revengeful, panicky, and quite opposed to all legal and constitutional traditions. But Mr. Shaw falls into a curious error. He says that a soldier not belonging to any officially recognized denomination becomes, as such, a member of the Church of England. This is not so. A soldier is, religiously or non-religiously, exactly what he says he is. If he says nothing he may be put down as belonging to any recognized denomination. But that entirely depends upon the recording officer. The soldier can be entered as "no religion" if he so chooses.

Rev. A. J. Waldron is lecturing at the Palladium, Manchester, on "The Girl Who Doesn't Know." The lecture is in connection with a film of that title. Trust some of our parsons for getting on to a subject that is sexually suggestive.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old deity! A service of intercession was held recently in London for the "persecuted" Russian Church. This looks as if the Greek Church officials were desirous of "raising the wind."

The War-shrine mania is spreading, and it is proposed to erect a permanent shrine in Hyde Park, London. It is

enough to make the bronze statue of Byron walk out of the park in disgust.

Religion is fast becoming an amusement. Prebendary Carlile advertises his place of worship as "the Cinema Monument Church." A further innovation at this pious place of entertainment is a ladies' orchestra.

The London *Daily Chronicle* recently stated that detective stories were prime favourites with the troops. Presumably, they are preferred to the copies of "God's Word" showered on them by the various Bible Societies.

Providence is said to count the hairs of our heads and to take particular interest in the gymnastics of sparrows, but it was too preoccupied to prevent the death of a two-year-old child at Rhyl, who played with a box of matches and set light to his clothing.

Dr. Clifford says "a great religious revolution is taking place," and "the revival is equally emphatic in France as in Britain." We fear the wish is father to the thought. Almost every denomination is bemoaning empty pews, decreasing congregations, and low incomes. As for France, the Roman Catholic Church, which is the only religious body worth troubling about in that country, is in an equally bad way. If Dr. Clifford means that there is a religious revival among the soldiers in France, he should listen to the troops, and not the chaplains.

The Christian religion, in the hands of the Young Men's Christian Association, promises to become a "Divine Comedy." This egregious organization has just started a Hut Theatrical Scheme, and the first Y.M.C.A. Theatrical Company has been enrolled. Presently it will be difficult to realize whether the Y.M.C.A. worships *Charley's Aunt* or Jesus Christ.

The Rev. J. A. Clark was found in a field near Liberton, Midlothian, with his throat cut and a razor by his side. He expired shortly after being found. Yet Revivalists tell us that only poor benighted Atheists ever commit suicide.

A City of London's "Men's Prayer Meeting" was announced to take place at the "Egyptian Hall." It seems appropriate, for the whole thing has a flavour of ancient Egypt.

President Wilson said he would not forget Russia, and the Churches are doing their best to help in their own peculiar way. The *Missionary Review of the World* says:—

The revolution in Russia has resulted in throwing open to the Gospel the largest country, with its largest population of white people, in the world. There are 182,000,000 people in Russia, and yet there are not as many evangelical workers there as in the city of Chicago alone. Any adequate evangelization plan must embrace not only the hundred million native Russians, but also the seven million Jews, the twenty million Poles, the thirty million Ukrainians, millions of Mohammedans (Tartars, Kurds, Kirghiz, etc.), Armenians, Roumanians, and Greeks, and besides these the Bulgarians, Servians, Croatians, Montenegrins, and other related Slavonic peoples.

The propaganda of atheism and materialism is already assuming awful proportions. There is no time to lose. The Greek Orthodox Church is rapidly losing its grip upon the hearts of the people, and before long large masses of simple religiously inclined Russians may be led astray into complete infidelity. Millions of the people are looking for something different.

It is suggested sending one million copies of the Russian Bible, and thirteen million copies of the New Testament. Some people may, however, remember that it was the very religious Russia—the Russia eulogized by the Bishop of London as being profoundly and inevitably "spiritual," which presented the picture of the worst Government in the whole of the civilized world. And these may conclude that Russia's chief need is education along rational lines rather than a return to the rule of the Church—and the other things that will come with it.

"Will the Coal Go Round?" was the headline in a religious contemporary. It referred to the new Rationing Order, but it might have had references to a place so often mentioned by preachers.

Dr. Clifford is an old hand at theology, but he sometimes forgets. Speaking on the coming "religious revolution," he says events are driving people to a recognition of "one God and one destiny." Dear, Dear! And Christians believe in a Triune God, and in Heaven and Hell.

At a Buckinghamshire Church laymen have been allowed to speak to the congregation, and the clergy sit in the body of the church. Those clergymen ought to learn a few necessary truths.

Wolverhampton is threatened by a great danger, but fortunately a Mr. Arthur Colbourn is on the alert. This gentleman writes to the *Express and Star* pointing out that ice-cream vendors parading the streets on Sunday are "a grave menace to children just leaving Sunday-school," and calls for their suppression. "A grave menace"! We are impressed. Perhaps it is an enemy move to demoralize the youth of the country, and the Italians are German agents in disguise. In that case D.O.R.A. should be invoked.

What pathos there is in the announcement that the Bishop of Wakefield, in consequence of heavy taxation and War-prices, has been compelled to leave his episcopal palace and take a smaller house. The faithful need not fear that his lordship will reach the workhouse, for the income of the bishopric is £60 weekly, which should ensure that his lordship's bread is well margarine.

Senator Meyers, of Montana, recently brought forward a resolution in Congress asking President Wilson to call on the nation to pray one minute each day for victory. One, two, or three, members supported the resolution. Most of the speakers were of opinion that it was work—not prayer that was needed.

The living of Liff in the Presbytery of Dundee is vacant. Thanks to the rise in price of corn the living is worth about £1,000 a year, and there is over seventy applicants for the vacancy. We have no doubt that every one of the seventy has been moved by the Lord to make application, and the selected one will duly regard his appointment as a "call to service."

In a contribution in the *Times* to one of the significantly frequent discussions on the need of closer union of the Churches, a clergyman writes: "It is really time that the organized religious forces of this country, as represented by its churches and chapels, got into line against the common enemy." But even if they do get into line against the Free-thinkers, their numbers will continue to diminish rapidly under the steadily increasing fire of Atheist criticism. The idea, however, of the churches and chapels getting into line to oppose the spreading of facts is amusing, but not unusual.

Great Britain has contributed to the War a force of soldiers which represents in men alone nearly a quarter of the total population. The clergy, of whom there are 50,000, are exempted from military service.

The Emperor of Austria has just lately asked for an increased allowance because he cannot pay his way. Up to now he has been allowed £904,000 a year. He asks for £320,000 more as a War-bonus. The "King of Kings" was "sold up" for thirty shillings.

Politicians like to flavour their speeches with a little piety. Even Mr. Balfour is not exempt from this weakness. Speaking recently on the War, he said that the two groups of opponents were fighting for two deals, "one from heaven, the other from hell." As Mr. Balfour is seventy years of age, it is high time he disdained the language of a spring curate.

A "Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

It is with a feeling akin to disappointment, and with much reluctance that I am compelled to re-open this Fund.

I had hoped that by this time peace would have been declared, and a Sustentation Fund unnecessary. But the War drags on, the cost of production increases month by month, and the burden, instead of becoming lighter, grows heavier. Paper, which could be bought a year ago at 30s. per ream—as against a pre-War cost of 10s.—is now in the neighbourhood of 50s. per ream; there has also been another rise in wages and in the cost of production generally. When it is pointed out that a sixteen-page *Freethinker* would now cost more for paper alone than was formerly paid for the whole cost of production (including wages, rent, contributors, etc.), some idea may be formed of the burden that has to be faced. And, in addition, there is every probability that there will be a still further rise in wages in the near future.

Since March, the *Freethinker* has been printed on twelve pages; but even with this economy, the cost of production is over £6 per week more than was the case last year. Despite this progressive increase in expenses, it is so far pleasant to be able to state that the deficit to date, thanks to the prompt and generous response to last year's appeal, is only just over £250. It is this deficit which I am seeking to make good by means of a special Fund, and I feel assured that this will be done as promptly as before.

As on previous occasions, the deficit represents a debt owing to me. There are no outstanding debts against the *Freethinker*; all claims, in every direction, have been promptly met. This, I judge, is the better course; although in turn I have had to borrow the necessary funds to keep things going. I have also had to borrow on my personal responsibility a considerable sum of money to purchase a stock of paper, and for use as capital for the publication of pamphlets, etc. This will, I believe, right itself in time. Since last November, the resources of the Pioneer Press have not permitted my drawing any payment as Editor, contributor, or Manager. I make these statements only to prove that if I am reluctantly compelled to appeal for help, I have not shrunk from facing hardship or incurring responsibility on my own account. The great thing is to keep the flag flying. Others may have been able to do better than I have done, but I am certain none could have worked harder. And these efforts have been loyally supported by all concerned in the *Freethinker* office, and by a large number of readers all over the country. They have made the work a pleasure, and encouraged a cheerful front when the outlook was blackest. More is owing to these cheerful helpers than can be easily put into words.

When all is said, the situation presents many encouraging features. When it is borne in mind that the Sustentation Fund required, after four years of War, is not so large as was needed to keep the *Freethinker* alive in peace times, there seems every reason for a feeling of satisfaction. That the deficit is not larger is due to the most careful economy, to a largely increased circulation of the paper, and to a larger business in books and pamphlets. Despite the loss of readers consequent on enlistment in the Army, the circulation of the *Freethinker* is now 1,300 copies per week more than when I assumed editorship. Therefore, were we living under normal conditions, it is fair to assume that the paper would now be self-supporting. Our Sustentation Fund is,

strictly speaking, a War Fund. It owes its existence to the War, and, with the return of peace, it will, I hope, disappear.

Altogether, and thanks largely to the loyalty and devotion of *Freethinker* readers, the prospects of the paper are to-day brighter than ever. It possesses a larger number of readers than before the War, it retains the loyalty of its old friends, and is constantly making new ones; it is more readily taken up by the "trade," while newsagents show a greater readiness to exhibit it for sale. All these things are full of promise for the time when the War shall have run its course. And when peace does arrive, we hope to then put into operation other plans we have in mind for making the *Freethinker* a still greater power for good. The struggle is hard, but we are gaining ground all the time. And when so many papers have ceased to exist, this is something of which we may all feel proud.

Above all, the *Freethinker* has never lost sight of the fact that it exists as an agent for a great cause, and the business side has not been allowed to overcome the propagandist mission of the paper. It has served during the War as a rallying-point for Freethinkers, it has kept going a special agitation concerning the rights of Freethinkers in the Army and Navy, and it has sent a very large number of free parcels of literature for distribution amongst the troops. The War has been a disaster to mankind, but we have tried to pluck some good from even so great a catastrophe. And when the War is over, we shall expect to see a great strengthening of the ranks of Freethought, to which end we are vain enough to feel we have made our contribution.

Meanwhile, the War continues, and we are obliged to rely, however reluctantly, upon the *Freethinker's* friends. Experience has shown that this reliance is not misplaced, and that knowledge has eased a situation bristling with unprecedented difficulties.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to me, and addressed Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4. Full acknowledgment will be made in the *Freethinker*, the accounts of which are under the supervision of a registered accountant. We feel confident that our first list of acknowledgments will be such as to give encouragement to all interested in the cause of Freethought.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christians Awake!

FIGHT, for the Night is coming,
 Fight through the bloody hours;
 Fight, while the 'Planes arc roaming,
 Fight midst Shrapnel showers;
 Fight when the Guns grow louder,
 Fight in the stifling sun;
 Fight for the Night is coming
 When War Work is done.

Fight, for the Night is coming,
 Fight through the thundering noon;
 Fill Hellish hours with Bombing,
 Death comes sures and soon;
 Give every enemy Airman,
 Something to keep in store;
 Fight for the Night is coming,
 When man flies no more.

Fight, for the Night is coming,
 Under the dreadful skies;
 While Poison-Gas is blowing,
 Fight till the whole Race dies;
 Fight till the last man falleth,
 Falleth to rise no more;
 Fight while the world is darkening,
 When Man's fight is o'er.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 8, Aberdare; September 15, Maesteg; September 22, Birmingham; September 29, Southampton; October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

- A. M.—Will include *Tables of Stone* as requested.
- J. COOPER (France).—Very pleased to hear from you. If you are home at any time shall be pleased to see you in connection with the matter mentioned in your letter. There is a very modern note about Montaigne, as is the case with all the great essayists. William Smith will well repay reading. His *Gravenhurst* will also be to your taste.
- A. P. BROOMFIELD.—Regret we have not room for all your questions, which are quite pertinent. With regard to the first on your list, we do not suppose that young children in school when repeating the Ten Commandments, are thinking of anything. It is a mere mechanical repetition of words.
- F. C. HOLDEN (Utah).—Much obliged for papers.
- T. C.—Are you not confusing a knowledge of scientific facts with an appreciation of scientific methods? The first may easily, and often does, exist without the second, and without the second is not of great value. Anyone with industry and memory may acquire a knowledge of a whole host of facts, but it is the scientific mind and temper that alone can make their acquisition of real importance.
- A. STEGGALL.—We are sending one of our parcels of literature to your son. Glad to find he is so interested in the *Freethinker*.
- E. A.—Thanks for "Traveller's Tale." Will use as soon as possible.
- F. G. LAWES.—Hope to see you again one day. Literature is being sent to address given. Hope it will prove useful.
- T. H. LANGRIDGE.—"Mutation" is the name given to the theory that a new species may arise by a sudden and marked change in the offspring of a normal parent. This theory gives natural selection the function of keeping a species true to type once it has been formed. As a descriptive term natural selection is wanting in accuracy. The active and valuable principle here is not selection but elimination. To lose sight of this is to pave the way for endless blundering in one's inferences.
- J. BREESE.—Thanks. Shall look forward to reply if any is received.
- J. M. FLANAGAN.—There is wisdom in the Scotch saying that it takes all sorts to make a world. Ridicule has its place, like most other things. Of course, ridicule alone would be useless, but that seldom is the case with men of sense.
- J. TROTMAN.—You acted as we expected you would. One seldom loses by generosity; and if there is a loss, it is often of the kind that matters little.
- JOHN HADDON.—We have read your letter with much interest. The views expressed are shared by a great number of Freethinkers. We do not think anyone feels the giving up of Christianity a loss, although the social and domestic ties may be sometimes strained; and that, of course, is painful. There is a very large amount of freethinking among Jews.
- J. W. HULTON.—It is, of course, a general Christian assumption that the Bible is true. Hope you will be successful in your endeavours. The lines enclosed are clever, but hardly up to standard.
- S. HOLMAN.—See "Sugar Plums."
- A. RADLEY.—Quite a common form of religious insanity.
- J. A. REID.—Thanks. We are sending on literature.
- F. T.—Your Australian friend's opinion that with the majority of the Australian troops religion is "gone by the board, or entirely discredited," quite agrees with what we hear from other quarters. Pleased to learn that your newsagent sells the copies of the *Freethinker* left for display.
- "SATAN."—Putting the kind of religious literature you enclose through the letter-box is, probably, the only way to secure a circulation for it.
- A. G. ROYSTON.—There has been no delay in despatching the paper, and no complaint has been received here. Perhaps the complaint was from the local agent to his headquarters. Let us know the missing numbers and we will send. Parcel of literature is being sent to address given.
- S. CLOWES.—Waste paper came safely to hand. Many thanks.
- A. LANE.—The books are out of print, but if we can get copies will let you know. Thanks for sending waste paper. We can do with all we can get. The need is likely to become more urgent.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

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.

Mr. Cohen commences his lecturing this season with two meetings at Aberdare on Sunday next. Next week we will publish full information as to time and place.

Another meeting of Freethinkers of the Pontypridd district is to be held on Saturday, August 31, at the Washington Hotel, Porth, at 6 o'clock. Owing to inadvertence "Porth" was omitted from the notice in our last issue. We hope that a good number of friends will be present, as their attendance will determine the work to be attempted.

A meeting of the Glasgow Branch N. S. S. was held in the Ingram Street Halls on Sunday. Secretary Lonsdale gave in his report on the revision of rules of the N. S. S. It was agreed to get into touch with the civic authorities in order to get the *Freethinker* placed in the Public Libraries. It was also agreed to petition the Secretary for Scotland regarding the new Education Bill. Quite a number of new members have joined the Branch since the appearance of the "Sugar Plum" giving Mr. Lonsdale's address. Mr. Lonsdale's address is 256 Calder Street, Govanhill. Unattached Freethinkers will please note that he is anxious to enrol them.

The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.

III.

(Continued from p. 454.)

THE British Isles are richly dowered with fossil-fuel treasures, and the coal basin of South Wales is the most valuable, although not the largest we possess. This last is that of the Clyde basin, but the Welsh coal-field is one of the thickest in the world, for the vertical extension of the strata exceeds 10,000 feet. This important formation is divided by Carmarthen Bay into two equal areas. The major portion lies to the east of the Bay, and reaches to Pontypool, in Monmouth county, a journey of fifty-six miles. The minor division runs to St. Bride's Bay, seventeen miles distant, and is washed by the waters of the Atlantic. The superficial area of this great coal basin approaches 1,000 square miles.

Professor Hull, in his standard volume, *The Coal Fields of Great Britain*, sums up the conclusions of Sir W. T. Lewis, who, with the assistance of several qualified surveyors, prepared the official returns relating to the coal resources of the South Wales and Monmouthshire basin, 1903. From the preceding estimates, states Hull:—

It will be seen that the available quantity of coal within a depth of 4,000 feet amounts to over

26,470 millions of tons, of which over 13,301 millions of tons belong to the valuable class of 'steam coal' suitable for naval purposes.

Oil is now extensively utilized in the Navy, but the demand for steam coal is constantly increasing. The output of coal from the South Wales seams was more than doubled between 1880 and 1903, a period of twenty-three years. "This coal," Hull tells us,—

is chiefly raised from collieries situated in the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth, and is shipped from Cardiff, Llanelly, Barry, Newport, and Swansea, while large quantities are consumed for iron smelting, tin-plate manufacture, railway fuel, and household purposes.

Several of these collieries are worked at enormous depths. At Pontypridd the Albion mine is 545 yards (1,635 feet) deep, while the Lady Windsor, in the same district, descends to 593 yards. But the pride of place must be awarded to the Deep Navigation Colliery at Treharris which runs downwards for 718 yards. Deeper mining than this is already in operation, and some of the mines descend 100 yards below their stated depths where surface conditions prove favourable.

The Bristol, Somersetshire, and Forest of Dean coal measures are all of considerable importance. A larger formation, the South Staffordshire coalfield, has yielded immense supplies of mineral fuel and iron, and its proximity to the great industrial Midland towns, Birmingham, Dudley, and Wolverhampton, has given a powerful stimulus to these manufacturing centres. Indeed, it has been said that the entire region encircling these busy cities forms one titanic workshop, and that on a clear night—

the spectacle from the walls of Dudley Castle, which rises from the centre of the coal field is one which has scarcely a parallel. The whole country within a radius of five or six miles is seen to be overspread by collieries, iron foundries, blast furnaces, factories, and the dwellings of a dense population; and, from amidst the thick smoky atmosphere, the tongues of fire from the furnaces shoot up an intermittent light which illuminates the whole heavens.

But even this Vulcanian scene discloses part only of the vast sum of human activity engaged in the production of wealth. Each array of workers toiling in forge and factory is represented by another multitude of men only less numerous than itself, steadily hewing the coal in the mines to provide the motive power for the immense manufacturing operations of the surrounding districts.

The coal deposits of North Staffordshire comprise a smaller area than those of the South, but their seams are much richer. These strata possess four times the thickness, and the coal available in the northern formation is twice as great as that of the southern field; while excellent facilities are afforded for future exploitation. These beds have yielded many fossil remains, notably those of molluscs and fish. Again, few indeed are the British coalfields that, in proportion to their size, prove so opulently stored with minerals, or whose beds promise such prodigious productiveness in coming years. According to Elliot's estimate, the reserves of the North Staffordshire seams will provide 3,680 millions of tons for future consumption. Deep mining is now in progress in this region, and at the Florence Colliery at Mossfield, coal is drawn to the surface from a depth of nearly 3,000 feet.

The South Lancashire coalfield has played an important part in the industrial history of England. All the renowned manufacturing centres of Lancashire derive their fame from their foundation of coal, apart from which even the intelligent and enterprising spirit

of the people, their mild and moist climate, and other eminent Lancastrian qualities, might have proved abortive. It is said that from "Chorley to Staley-bridge, by Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, and Oldham," the elevated moorlands pass northwards. From this high region the land surface slowly declines in the direction of the Mersey Valley, and the coal reposes under strata of later origin which form the depressed country of Newton and Ashton in Makerfield, Leigh, Manchester, and Stockport, in the vicinity of which the coal measures traverse the Mersey and invade Cheshire. This invaluable coalfield, with that of Burnley, has an area of 217 square miles. The total thickness of the coal-bearing strata was estimated by the Commissioners in 1901 at 6,000 feet. The number of workable seams two or more feet thick was shown to be sixty-two, while the quantity of coal lying to a depth of 4,000 feet which would well repay the cost of working was ascertained to amount to 4,238,507,000 tons.

Lancashire contains the deepest mines in Britain. One is at Wigan, and another at Dukinfield, on the Cheshire border; but the palm is held by Pendleton, where the shaft descends 515 yards, while coal is worked at a depth of 1,161 yards (3,483 feet). This, according to Professor Hull, is the deepest mine in our Isles. Mining operations are conducted on a grand scale in the Lancashire coalfield, and the most modern mechanical devices are employed.

A smaller, but still highly important, coalfield is that of Warwickshire. This coal formation lies nearest to that huge coal-consuming city, mighty London itself. To the S.S.E., the coal layers extend beyond Tamworth, along Atherstone and Nuneaton, and near Wyken, a ramble of some fifteen miles. The measures are fractured in places, and the New Red Sandstone juts out. The seams repose under Permian deposits over a wide area, including Coventry and Warwick. Substantial advances have been made in coal mining in this district. In the Report of the Royal Commission (1904), two "new colliery shafts, namely, that of Newdigate Colliery and that of the Tunnel Colliery (near Stockingford)," are mentioned as having been sunk below the Permian rocks down to the coalbeds with satisfactory results. Hull's expert opinion concerning these coal measures is interesting. "I cannot," he declares, "but regard as of peculiar value this vast reservoir of fuel lying at the borders of the south-eastern counties, and actually closer than any other coal-bearing district to the metropolis of Britain." Another scientist, Professor Lapworth, estimated the area of the Warwickshire seams at thirty square miles, and the tonnage remaining unworked at nearly 920 million tons.

Among others, the Leicestershire coalfield contains vast reserves of fossil fuel. The great Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Notts measures form physically one immense coal deposit. This is the largest coalfield in England itself, although it is 150 square miles smaller in area than the magnificent formation in South Wales. The noted Silkstone coal is mined in Yorkshire. This fine coal is really the same as that of the Arley mine in Lancashire. The remarkable seam that yields it rarely exceeds a thickness of five feet, and geologists assure us that it formerly spread over a region of not less than 10,000 square miles. Derby and Barnsley coals are celebrated for their quality, and are in keen demand.

Fossils are very numerous in these measures. Many species of fish and molluscs have been identified, and so abundant are fossil fish in the shale which roofs the coal seams at Middleton, that it is known locally as the "fish coal."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

"Carillon."

POETS have often found a fruitful source of inspiration in the sound of a bell. And, undoubtedly, when heard under favourable conditions, the sound has a certain charm. I remember, many years ago, spending a quiet holiday at a pretty place in Westmoreland. One lovely summer evening, while strolling through the woods, I heard the sound of church bells carried softly by the breeze. Distance, in this case, lent enchantment to the sound; the music blended with my thoughts and made the wood seem Fairyland. But those were halcyon days, when Hope shed golden glory over youthful dreams. Now, all is changed, and the sound of a bell rouses very different feelings. I write these lines in a typical Lancashire manufacturing town. I arrived here some little while ago from a long and tiring journey, and, after some refreshment, settled down for "forty winks." I had hardly closed my eyes before I was rudely awakened by the chiming of a peal of bells, which was pouring forth a perfect Babel of sound from a neighbouring church steeple.

There are six bells in this particular peal, and a peal of six is my pet abomination. I would rather hear a single bell in spite of the deadly monotony. The pleasure caused by musical sounds of different pitch depends entirely upon the relation that the intervals between the notes bear to one another. With a peal of eight bells, this relation is fairly satisfactory. The presence of the eighth bell, or octave, defines the mode and key, and the other notes fall into their natural places in the scale. But a peal of six may be anything, and ends by being nothing. For instance, let us suppose that the six notes are C, D, E, F, G, and A. These may be the first six notes of the scale of C major (tonic to sub-mediante); the last four and two above the octave of the scale of F major (dominant to mediant); or the first six notes of the descending scale of A minor. To the ear of the musician other combinations will suggest themselves, only to cause a maddening indecision.

The idea of such a noise being a call to peaceful prayer reminds me of an incident I once witnessed at a country fair. On a platform outside a booth (one of the kind vulgarly called "a tupp'ny gaff") the "band" blared forth a clamorous invitation. In front, with an encouraging smile on his face, stood the spruce proprietor, who ever and anon took off his silk hat and made graceful sweeps with it towards the entrance, as if to charm the shy and gaping villagers in. On getting closer, however, I was greatly amused to find that he was quietly but fluently cursing the stolid rustics for (to use an Irishism) being so backward in coming forward.

In like manner, church bells have a sinister meaning behind their vociferous invitation. For when, exasperated by their maddening repetition of "Come to worship, come to worship," I mutter to myself "I'm d—d if I do," the bells, with ever-increasing intensity, return their exultant finale, "You'll be d—d if you don't!"

HANDEL LANCASTER.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

ATHEISM, ANARCHISM, AND ACCURACY.

SIR,—My only justification for encroaching further on your valuable space is that I have not succeeded in getting Mr. Moss to grasp my point of view. Before I endeavour to make myself clear I must clear myself. While quoting in full his paragraph, I only referred to an italicized portion and an innuendo contained in it. I neither implied acceptance of the doctrine of non-resistance, nor questioned his view that its universal practice would result in unbridled villainy. What I took exception to was (1) the tacit assumption that armies, navies, policemen, magistrates, courts, etc., exist for the best interests of the community, and (2) the commonplace, unthinking, and entirely misleading phrase about "the masses being left a prey to revolution and anarchy."

I do not make a fetish of words; it is only ideas that matter. The head and front of Mr. Moss's offending is not his use of the word "anarchy," but his complete misconcep-

tion of the fraudulent bases of our force-propped society, and that being "a man who lives in the world as it is to-day," he boggles at the whole question of social welfare, and, fumbling with "restraints upon villainy" (why take away the fear of God, and the restraining influence of a belief in hell?) perturbed by the appalling record of the fact that "tens of thousands of officials are employed discovering offenders and bringing them to justice," he still wishes to perpetuate this regime, is a trifle puzzled over man's depravity (he hasn't outgrown "original" sin yet) but thinks what society really needs is a lot more policemen.

Now to recommence. Mr. Moss will be surprised when I say that I approve of the word lawlessness as a definition of anarchy; indeed, the whole point at issue is one of law and confusion versus lawlessness and harmony. Instinctively, because of the camouflage and conformity with which we were dosed in our youth, we confuse legal right with moral equity, but the fact that we are so used to error does not make a thing less wrong. Law and government connote tyranny and oppression, their absence, freedom and progress, and men are "criminal" to the degree that Mr. Moss deploras largely because of their inhuman social conditions. About 90 per cent. of "crime" is that against property, and of the remaining 10 per cent. much would disappear with economic re-adjustment.

What is wrong with society is that the *real* villains are not known as such, not even by Mr. Moss, whose apprehension lest a hypothetical set of circumstances "would lead to the villain having the upper hand" clearly shows his innocent mind. The ruffian who extorted rent from me for a vile cellar in which I was compelled to live with my family was decidedly an offender (against humanity) but the tens of thousands of officials did not discover him and bring him to justice, for were they not all on his side and ready at a moment's notice to do his bidding, to harass me, to evict me, and if I were disagreeable—as I have been—to put me in prison? Ah, alter the law you say, and Horatio would shriek: "Hang the profiteers from lamp-posts," but what madness it is to countenance and tolerate evil and villainy, and then to waste useful men's time in imprisoning miscreants! *Punishment never did any good.* Bringing offenders to justice while the causes of offence are not investigated that repetition may be prevented is but an aggravation of the evil, and, as Oscar Wilde said, with pathetic prophecy (in his admirable anarchistic essay "The Soul of Man"): "When we read expurgated history we are appalled, not by the crimes that the wicked have perpetrated, but by the awful punishments the good have inflicted." I have been in prison—not as an interesting political offender—but as a "criminal," and, while there is blood in my veins, I am the comrade and champion of all poor wretches who, in the name of justice, are tortured and brutalized for being poor or resenting poverty, by their strong and lusty brothers at the bidding of grotesque pantaloons in wigs and gowns, the paid bullies of soulless capitalism.

Think the matter out to its logical conclusion, Mr. Moss. Even assuming that the people may be disillusioned about the fatherhood of God before they see through the paternity of government swindle, *it is all of a piece.* One need not be a Shelley to be a Libertarian (the glorious poet of man's emancipation was greatly indebted to his Anarchist father-in-law) nor a Russian Prince to be an acceptable Revolutionist. I have no pretension to be "a cultivated person with a scientific form of mind" (Anarchism is the simplest philosophy in the world), but simply "one of the masses, still very badly educated." But I am as little likely to be intimidated by intellect any more than I am to be impressed by wealth. Few men have been poorer, none has ever been prouder, than I; and that is the glorious fruit of Anarchist teaching. Whatever my limitations, *I am a man*, and carry my head above my shoulders as nobly as any fellow who ever wrote rhymes. I claim the right to live my own life in my own way; always, however, on the *qui vive* that my actions do not *tyrannically* obstruct the liberty of others (if I order a newspaper, the freedom of many individuals is necessarily restricted in consequence), and the general acceptance of this doctrine would make for the greatest possible harmony. Mr. Cohen has been telling us for twenty years that whatever men profess to believe, their lives are conducted

on a purely atheistical basis, and if men have not called themselves Anarchists, it is none the less true that the finest actions of the greatest souls of all time have been full of the spirit of Anarchy. *The freest expression of individualism is consonant with the highest good of the community.* My personality and my wishes may be ever changing, and so I have no inflexible rules of conduct. "Whim" is eternally inscribed on my forehead. I carry my detestation of government to the extent that I would not even make "a law for myself," for the only image that phrase suggests to me is that of a sorely maltreated creature of muddled understanding suddenly finding his own strength, and, having vanquished all his persecutors, making up his mind to kick his own posterior.

I come to preach Life, not Death. I know the whole Art of Living, and I believe with Ingersoll that the way to be happy is to make others happy. Long live liberty! Let us always have Truth, nobility of purpose, and cleanness of heart. Away with gods, governments, and everything that obstructs free, spontaneous, and joyous existence. *Vive L'Anarchie!*

J. EFFEL.

MR. MANN AND THE SOUL.

SIR,—*Freethinker*, August 11, p. 421. I agree that Dennis is an ass, his allusion to the "drunken soldiers" shows that he has hardly ever read what he wants to refute. But on p. 429 W. Mann shows nearly the same kind of stupidity. He quotes Sylvanus Thompson's remark about the *spiritual perception*, which is unintelligible to the man who has it not: and Mann thinks he answers Sylvanus Thompson by saying "competent travellers tell us of numerous tribes who have no idea of God whatever." Who said they had? Not Sylvanus Thompson, if Mann's quotations are representative. Sylvanus Thompson said, in effect: "Some men have a sense of the non-physical." Mann answers as if he had said "All men have a sense of God." The former is true, the latter is false.

I, for instance, *know* I am not a mere function of my body; I lived before it, and will live after it. "Abracadabra" says I am "a liar, however sincere." "Abracadabra" is, as Sylvanus Thompson says, like a blind man denying sight. But I don't claim any knowledge of an almighty and all-good being; indeed, I am pretty sure there is none, though there are some many trillion times wiser and better than I am, and some equally worse.

C. H.

NIETZSCHE AND GERMANY.

SIR,—Your contributors have on more than one occasion vindicated the character of Nietzsche's philosophy in the face of clerical and lay prejudice, but I do not think sufficient stress has been laid upon his absolute *horror* of what is known as "Higher Politics," the power behind the "mailed fist" of nations to-day.

I was led to this reflection on looking through the correspondence columns of a back number of the *Nation* and seeing his name associated with "Prussianism" in a letter written by a few Russian *bourgeoise* resident in London.

This of a man who cynically referred to Italy's part in the Triple Alliance as a "mesalliance," with the "Empire" who suggested the word "German" as a symbol of depravity, who realized the hopelessness of addressing his message to a people infected by what he called "Rhinoscera, the worm of Empire," and whose ultimate mental breakdown is to be attributed in no small degree to the rude and vulgar treatment his refined and sensitive spirit experienced at the hands of the sons of "Europe's Flat land."

One stands abashed at the dishonesty of slandering what one has not even tried to understand. I know of a dear man—long since asleep in France—to whom the call to resist German aggression was strongest on account of his devotion to the principles as enunciated by the great Basle philosopher. *Imprimatur.*

E. A. McDONALD.

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