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Views and Opinions.

Cant About Christ.

"When in doubt, play trumps," is a maxim in whist. The theological analogue to this is, "When in doubt on what to talk about, fall back on Jesus." It is a quite safe card to play to a Christian audience, and even others will be affected by the familiar words. And so long as we only *talk*, without saying anything definite, about "getting back to Jesus," or "living up to the Christ ideal," all sects of Christians will applaud. It is when we inquire what these phrases mean that the trouble begins. As in so many other cases, Christians will agree so long as they refrain from discussing what it is they agree about. They are at peace with each other, just as a lion and a lamb might dwell quietly together in a thick fog—because one cannot see the other. There is harmony in obscurity, and agreement in indefiniteness. But trouble follows enlightenment, and Donnybrook comes with the dawn. Of course, all this talk of Christ is sheer cant. Preachers use it because it is the cant of their profession, and audiences applaud because they have been in the habit of applauding. Outside the Churches politicians and others, with an eye on votes rather than on principles, will say anything and do anything so that they may not offend the prejudices of the people.

* * *

Myth or History ?

But all are not consciously dishonest who talk in the way described; and of these it may be said that they disclose a mental twist of a very grave description. When we find people talking of Jesus as though his existence was an historical certainty, and referring to what he said as though his utterances were as unquestionable as a Hansard's report, we are left marvelling at the type of mind with which we have to deal. For to an unbiased mind it is certain that the miraculously born, miracle-working, resurrected Jesus is no more an historical character than is the old woman who lived in a shoe. The uncertainty of the existence of the Gospel Jesus is admitted by many, the uncertainty as to what he said by many more; yet nothing is more common than to find these same people expatiating on what "Our Lord" said, and drawing pictures of the conditions amid which he said it, as though questions as to their

genuineness had no existence outside a lunatic asylum. If this procedure so often escapes the direct charge of dishonesty, it is only because its frequency makes it a normal feature of the Christian mind. One may safely say that a Life of Jesus that takes for granted his actual existence is worth neither the trouble of writing nor reading. There is the myth of Jesus; there is no history.

* * *

A False Issue.

We are reminded that it is not Jesus the historical character that is preached, but Jesus the ideal figure. Maybe, although it is observable that while the defence rests upon this ground, it is the system which depends upon Jesus as an historical figure that is being upheld. Christianity, after all, does not rest upon its power to construct an ideal human character, but upon a series of statements concerning an alleged historical character. It must stand or fall with the historical reality of that character. But the ideal is as false as the reality is impossible. The ideal Jesus is not the Jesus of the New Testament. Certain teachings are ignored or modified so that they will harmonize with modern ideals; or the divinity of Jesus is dropped altogether. Not one of them dare take the New Testament figure and hold *that* up for admiration. The absurdity would be too glaring, the extravagance too apparent. Each reads into the New Testament exactly what he wishes to discover, and the authority of Jesus is claimed for the most contradictory of doctrines. Anarchists, Socialists, Conservatives, Free-lovers, and scores of others have all found in the teachings of Jesus what they required. And not the least curious figure of the motley group is the militant Socialist proclaiming as his ideal figure a celibate teaching the blessings of poverty, the comfort of misery, and the glories of non-resistance.

Working the Oracle. * * *

The method of these Christo-maniacs is simple. If Jesus did not attend to specific evils, as in the case of slavery, credit is due to him for leaving this and attending to the larger issues of life. If it is then pointed out that in forming a broad and comprehensive view of life, Jesus was surpassed by nearly all the great teachers of antiquity, we are told that his greatness is shown by the manner in which he entered into the life of ordinary folk and left philosophical abstractions alone. If we say that in his teachings the function of riches—as in the case of Dives—is absurd, the reply is that he was aiming at the abuse of riches, although there is no hint of that in the story. If we point out that his teachings concerning the State and the individual, or the payment of labour are so vague that they may be accepted by all without affecting the policy of any, the answer is that he was content to lay down broad principles and leave it to time for them to work their effect. If we argue that Jesus as God should have known better than to have treated lunatics as being possessed of devils, the reply is that he was also man, and treated these beliefs from the human point of view. But if we say that his cursing

the fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season, the retort is that he was God also and had a right to do as he pleased with his own. If we say the teachings of non-resistance are absurd, we are told that this is merely a warning against encouraging the feeling of revenge. Asked for proof, we are told that any other reading of the text would be absurd. With people who are resolved to find in Jesus all that the wisdom and experience that the ages have to teach, argument is almost waste of time. A wall of prejudice is erected, and there is no prejudice quite so difficult to combat as that which rests on a lengthy course of religious education.

Christian Corruption. * * *

People who are suffering from this Christo-mania are fond of telling us that Christ's teaching has been corrupted by the Church. Of course it has. What else could the Churches do? What can one do with an impossible doctrine but corrupt it? Corruption here is only another name for modification, and if an absurd teaching is not modified it is rejected. And how could any society live that practised no thought for the morrow, that turned one cheek when the other was smitten, that trusted in faith to move mountains, fasting to cure insanity, or celibacy as the ideal state? What is possible for a number of Eastern Yogis is not possible for ordinary human society. And all over the world Christian teachings have had to be toned down to meet natural human needs. The logic of fact is always in the end stronger than the logic of faith. In self-defence society was bound to interpret the four Gospels so that the interpretation did not seriously threaten its existence. Either that or reject them altogether; and the Church saw to it that they were not rejected in name whatever might be done to them in reality. And, from another point of view, these corruptions are really improvements. It is the same species of corruption that the animal frame has undergone from the simian to the human form. It is corruption from the standpoint of the old, but it is improvement from that of the new. The pity is that this is not more often realized. Pity it is not seen that the true use of the past is the lesson of its experience, not the attempt to continue its life. Pity also that our political leaders will not face the fact that nothing is to be ultimately gained by this pandering to religious fools and knaves, that each generation has its own problems which must be solved in terms of its own knowledge. It is pitiful that so many prefer to sacrifice ultimate good to a passing popularity, and to the worthless applause of the crowd.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Man."

A REPLY TO THE "FREETHINKER."

(Concluded from p. 619.)

Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the fact that the moral sense, like all other senses, is a product of evolution. Ants and bees live in communities, subject to definite rules and well-understood regulations, with a clearly marked system of rewards and punishments. In other words, ants and bees are moral agents, observing a crude but distinct moral code. Prince Kropotkin, in his valuable work, entitled *Mutual Aid*, furnishes countless illustrations of the truth of that statement. Mr. Matthews gives expression to a wholly unscientific notion when he says that "the fundamental thing about man is that he has a mind," for science knows nothing of an entity called "mind." As Hugh Elliot puts it:—

The modern doctrine stands in direct opposition to a belief in any of those existences that are vaguely classed

as "spiritual." To this category belong not only ghosts, gods, souls, *et hoc genus omne*, for these have long been rejected from the beliefs of most advanced thinkers. The time has now come to include also in the condemned list that further imaginary entity which we call "mind," "consciousness," etc., together with its various subspecies of intellect, will, feeling, etc., in so far as they are supposed to be independent or different from material existences or processes.....The existing Universe and all things therein may be theoretically expressed in terms of matter and energy, undergoing continuous redistribution in accordance with the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry. If all manifestations within our experience can thus be expressed, as has for long been believed by men of science, what need is there for the introduction of any new entity of spiritual character, called mind? It has no part to play; it is impotent in causation. According to Huxley's theory it accompanies certain physical processes as a shadow, without any power, or any reason, or any use. The world, as Huxley and the great majority of physiologists affirm, would be just the same without it (*Modern Science and Materialism*, pp. 143-4).

The fundamental thing about man, therefore, is not that he has a mind, not even that he thinks, but that he is, metaphorically speaking, higher in the scale of existence than the animals. Mental activity can be traced millions of years further back than the first appearance of man upon the planet, and what is true of psychical activity is also true of ethical. No herd or group life is possible without putting into practice some ethical principles. In reality, morals mean nothing but the habits of gregarious animals. Does Mr. Matthews believe that the ants and bees are dependent upon supernatural aid for the degree of success in social organization to which they have attained? But if herding animals get no supernatural assistance, and yet manage to get on fairly well, why should it be thought impossible for man to succeed as a social animal without it? The reverend gentleman seems obsessed with the idea that we cannot prosper socially without "moral power," and it is evident that by "moral power" he understands supernatural power, for he immediately adds:—

There is no instance in history of mankind where you have a really self-sacrificing morality not founded upon a belief in the supernatural. It is only when men believe that there is more in the world than you can see and touch, that there is the Eternal—it is only when men really believe that, are they, in any large numbers, prepared to sacrifice self to co-operation and subordination for the common interest.

That passage amazes me beyond measure. Has the Dean of King's College forgotten his history? Is he not aware that early Buddhism was pure Atheism, that its moral code was one of the noblest ever formed, and that for two or three centuries, prior to its conversion into a State-religion under King Asoka, it preserved India from the curse of war, provided hospitals for man and beast, and raised the tone of life generally? The Buddha "sacrificed" all to the commonweal, and lived an almost ideally perfect life. When he came to die he was able to assure the friends who were with him that throughout his long career he had relied upon himself alone. Confucius prepared a system of morality which all who know it admit to be one of the best in existence; but that great man urged his countrymen to ignore the spirits and to live as if there were no God. Yet it is the testimony of all who have lived among the Chinese that their morals are not one whit inferior, to say the least, to those of the most Christian country under the sun. No one would deny that Professor Giles, of Cambridge, is a competent judge in this matter, and he declares in more than one of his books on China that morally the Chinese compare favourably with Christian nations. Immediately after the Russo-

Japanese War, the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, in a specially noteworthy article, raised the inquiry whether the moral supremacy of Christendom was not seriously menaced by the virile Pagan nation which had brought Christian Russia to its knees.

Confining our attention for a moment to Christian nations, I venture to ask Mr. Matthews, Have such nations derived any appreciable benefit morally from their belief in God and Christ? Surely, we need but cursorily glance at ecclesiastical history to discover that the morals of the Church have been, in almost every age, a disgrace to humanity. The lives of the clergy were horribly scandalous, monasteries and nunneries were veritable cesspools of moral filth, and the laity were certainly not better than their spiritual guides. I say this on the evidence, not of enemies of the Church, but of cardinals, archbishops, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, both on the Continent and in Great Britain, whose official reports, based on personal inspection, are still in existence. It is by no means pleasant to recall such loathsome facts, and I do it solely because I am convinced that Mr. Matthews' confidence in the supernatural is sadly misplaced.

Mr. Matthews rightly lays immense stress on the idea of brotherhood, and in this I am whole-heartedly with him; but what has the supernatural to do with brotherhood? The reverend gentleman asks: "Why should I regard people as my brothers? Why is a man whose skin is black of the same value as myself?" and here is his own answer:—

There is only one foundation upon which brotherhood is logical. It is logical if we are all children of the same Father, sharing the same spiritual nature. Then there is no absurdity in asking me to treat a man, whom I may in the first case regard even as distasteful to me, as my brother.

This is the biggest fallacy of the whole address, and none is more common in Christian circles. It is true that the two main planks in the theological platform are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, but between those planks, though pressed hard against each other in the composition of the platform, there is no vital relation whatever. It is the merest cant to assert that ardent belief in the Fatherhood of God leads to a vivid realization of the Brotherhood of Man. It simply does not. Eminent Christians from this country, firm advocates of Missions, have visited mission stations beyond the sea, attended Communion services in native churches, and positively declined to partake in company with coloured converts. Mr. Matthews wants "to ask very seriously what guarantee have we, if we abandon the supernatural belief, that this great and essential idea of brotherhood will persist in the world?" I answer that for the persistence of the Christian idea of brotherhood, in the absence of the supernatural belief, we have no guarantee whatever, and because of this I rejoice. The Christian idea of brotherhood is false, because it means only the brotherhood of the saints. Already in New Testament times believers had come to be known as the Brotherhood, outside which lay the wicked world. The brotherhood was composed of the children of God, but the world of the children of the Devil. Do the Christians of to-day treat Secularists as brothers and sisters? Mr. Matthews may do so, for he verily seems to have the root of the matter in him; but he cannot but know that Free-thinkers are generally boycotted and persecuted as outsiders. Does capital treat labour in a brotherly spirit? Are not servants generally looked down upon as menials? If brotherhood prevailed would one section of society be excessively, atrociously rich and another shockingly, tragically poor?

With much in the Dean's address I am in fullest sympathy. His social ideal and mine are identical, our only disagreement being as to the means of realizing it. What I maintain is that under Christianity it has not been realized, while Mr. Matthews wishes to give Christianity a new lease of life in the hope that it will bring it to fruition at some future day. My contention is that the Kingdom of God has had more than sufficiently long innings, and has utterly failed to justify its claims or fulfil its promises. I want the kingdom of man to have a fair trial, in the belief that it will succeed where the other has failed. To say that the two kingdoms are but one is to darken counsel by mere words. After all said and done, the kingdom of God is heavenly and concerns itself supremely with man's destiny in eternity, while the kingdom of man is of this world alone. This kingdom is founded on the fact of the natural brotherhood of mankind. The reason why I should treat all men as my brothers is because they *are* my brothers, and all that is required to make the fact real and vital is the right kind of education. If children are but taught and trained to regard and treat one another as brothers and sisters, the time will soon come when we can afford to lift up our voices and cry: "Behold, the Kingdom of Man is at hand."

J. T. LLOYD.

A Festival of Falsehood.

Solemnity is of the essence of imposture.

—Lord Shaftesbury.

In this world, if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything which does not trouble them.

—Bernard Shaw.

It is a lie—their priests, their pope,

Their saints, their — all they fear or hope

Are lies and lies.

—Robert Browning.

ON the twenty-fifth day of December in this country fifty thousand parsons will assert that it is "God's birthday," and hundreds of thousands of laymen will pretend to believe that statement. Why God, who is described as eternal, should have a birthday, is a matter for congregations to settle with their pastors and masters. Non Christians regard Christ as a purely mythical personage, like all the other saviours and sun-gods of antiquity, who were generally born miraculously of virgin-mothers, and whose careers, like those of Jesus, were marked with monstrous events from the cradle to the grave. Whether there was a man called Jesus, who lived and preached in Galilee, is a matter of small importance. Christians worship the supernatural figure in the Gospels, and not an obscure carpenter, and have done so for many centuries.

The question presses for solution. Some of the higher critics are aware of the strength of the negative position, and they have not hesitated to assert that Christ was not an historical character. To save their faces—and their positions—they have even argued that it is the Christ ideal, and not the personality, that is the quint-essence of the Christian religion.

Outside of the anonymous four Gospels there is no corroboration of the "old, old story." Yet Christ's life is said to have been so crowded with marvels that all historians should have been attracted by so extraordinary a career. Christ was said to have been born of one parent only, and popular prejudice is in favour of two. The importance of his birth was such that a massacre of children was carried out in the hope of getting rid of the prodigy. His after life is crowded with marvels. Dead people squeaked and gibbered in the Judæan streets; blind folk were restored to sight. Water was

turned into wine. Thousands were fed with a few loaves and fishes. At Christ's execution a three days' darkness overspread the earth. After death he came to life again, and he finally ascended to heaven like an aeroplane. There has never been so astonishing a career, and yet, so far as sober historians are concerned, "the rest is silence."

Nor is this all. "God's birthday" was not kept regularly until many generations after the supposed date of the birth of Christ. In the earlier stages of the custom it was held on varying dates. The precise time of Christ's birth, like that of James de la Pluche, was "wropt in mystery"; but it was not in December, even according to the legends. For shepherds do not watch their flocks by night in that unromantic time of the year. Why, then, do Christians keep "God's birthday" on December 25? The answer plucks the heart out of the Christian superstition.

It was in competition with the feast of Saturnalia, one of the chief Roman festivals, that "God's birthday" was fixed in December. It was to counteract the attractions which these Pagan holidays exercised over the people that the leaders of the Christian Churches sanctioned and incorporated these feasts. The struggle for survival also incorporated other features. In the far-off centuries white-robed Druids cut the sacred mistletoe with a golden sickle, and chanted their hymns to the frosty air. These features were absorbed, and the mistletoe and carol-singing still play their minor, if amusing, part in the celebration of "God's birthday."

With the pharisaical profession of goodwill to men, "God's birthday" is largely pretence and make-believe. There is no "god" nor "devil" there at all except the "starving" clergy, who make millions out of this sham, and who hiss at the "intellectuals" who would free mankind from this superstition. The clergy are not deceived; they are too clever. They would sympathize with the worldly minded candidate at an election meeting who was asked by a fierce-looking Churchwoman in the audience, "Do you believe in the immaculate conception?" "My dear lady," sweetly replied the canny candidate, "I believe in all conceptions that are immaculate."

MIMNERMUS.

Pudding and Pantomime.

CHRISTMAS is a great feast-time. It is the time of year when we all abandon ourselves to eating and drinking; or, in other words, to stuffing ourselves uncomfortably full as a means of enjoyment. And above all things at Christmas-time, our Christian brethren betake themselves to devouring sundry portions of plum-pudding, many of them attaching some importance to the number and variety of pieces they partake as assuring for them so many "happy months" for the succeeding year.

Christmas, as every Freethinker knows by this time, is of Pagan origin. Yuletide was an old Pagan festival; but whether the Pagans, among other enjoyments, went in for devouring plum-pudding, I have never been able to ascertain. Among English folk, whether Christians or nothingarians, Christmas-time is mainly occupied in two ways—eating plum-pudding and witnessing pantomime. How many tons of plum-pudding are "put away" between Christmas and New Year's Day only the recording angel could properly estimate; and even he might be pardoned for making a mistake at such an awfully unbusinesslike season of the year. For plum-pudding I can find no religious origin. People do not seem to have eaten it either in the name of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost; and unless they took

it on medical grounds, in lieu of physic, I cannot conceive why it was introduced and made to play so important a part in the Christian festival. But the fact remains that it was introduced, and people will go on eating plum-pudding every Christmas until some subtle-minded theologian discovers a verse in the Bible which will demonstrate to every simple-minded, pudding-eating believer in the civilized world that the Virgin Mary was the first to make a pudding, and that she made it on the anniversary of the birth of her precious son, Jesus Christ.

But what of the pantomime? That does seem to have had a religious origin; for I find, on looking over the stories which form the burlesque "opening" of our pantomimes, that they are based, with very few exceptions, upon ancient religious stories, or the folklore of ancient peoples. Let me give a few examples. The story of "Little Red Riding Hood" is an old religious myth, which originated in a study of ancient astrology. In the German story, Red Riding Hood is cut out of the sleeping wolf by a hunter (Clodd, *Childhood of Religions*, p. 120). So also is the story of "Tom Thumb," who was swallowed by a cow, and came out unhurt. And even the story of Jonah, who was swallowed by a sea monster, which ultimately cast him ashore unhurt, is a religious story based upon astrological phenomena. Indeed, they are all legends of the darkness devouring the sun. The story of "The House that Jack Built" is of religious origin. Edward Clodd tells us that there is a poem at the end of the Passover services used by the Jews which some of them regard as a parable of the past and future of the Holy Land. It contains ten verses, each ending with the refrain, "A kid, a kid," and it begins:—

A kid, a kid, my father bought
For two pieces of money.

And, after telling him how a cat came and ate the kid, and a dog came and bit the cat, and a staff came and beat the dog, and so on, it concludes thus:—

Then came the Holy One, blessed is he,
And killed the Angel of Death
That killed the butcher
That slew the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the staff
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.

A kid, a kid.

Here we have undoubtedly the original story of "The House that Jack Built." But while it is interesting, no doubt, to know the source of the stories, it is much more interesting for us—at all events, when we are children—to see these ancient myths enacted upon the stage; to be taken away from the hard, cold realities of the world, and transported into a perfect fairyland of delight. To see our hero, Jack the Giant Killer, in the flesh, and gaze with fear and wonder at the Great Ogre as he comes out of his castle and, in a terrible voice, repeats the familiar words:—

Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman
Let him be alive or dead
I'll bake his bones to make my bread.

And, then, when we have witnessed the triumph of Jack, and hear the hearty laugh of the clown as he bounds on to the stage, with a merry little twinkle of his eye, and a slap on the face for his perpetual companion, the pantaloon, he exclaims: "Here we are again!" we feel quite happy, and, as children, decidedly affirm that

life is not a failure. On the contrary, life appears as a grand panorama of change and variety; then, indeed, life is a blessing and a joy. It is, however, when we grow to manhood that we realize that these things are but fairy tales, born in the childhood of the world, and our maturer judgments compel us to reject them in favour of the stern realities of life.

And once we take upon ourselves the task of fighting life's difficulties, of overcoming the obstacles, real or imaginary, that we find in our path, we shall soon learn that, with all its troubles and trials, life is still worth living, and that duty well done brings its own reward in this world whether there's another or not. As the poet sings:—

What is my religion? 'Tis a thing by priest untainted
Pure and wholesome as the dewdrop on the newly-
opened rose;
Fairer than the fairest object ever sculptured, sung, or
painted.
And it brings a peace far sweeter than that olden creed's
repose.
'Tis a thing that does not pander to the madness of
fanatics,
But it grasps at life's realities and wrestles with the
wrong,
And the heart that lives for truth alone can feel its mute
ecstasies,
And betray its joyous raptures in the most enchanting
song.¹

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Acid Drops.

Christianity away from home is apt to become more ridiculous and more impertinent than ever. Thus, the *North China Daily News* published a leaderette stating that the Archbishop of Canterbury had promised that next year the Lambeth Conference would pass "judgment" on Spiritualism. A correspondent asked the editor did he mean pass judgment or express an opinion, as in the course of his letter he remarked that he was not a Spiritualist but an Atheist? The only reply the editor made to a perfectly civil and relevant enquiry was to quote: "I never argue with young atheists or habitual drunkards," a reply that brought the appropriate retort: "What can you expect from a pig but a grunt?" But the impertinence of the editor would pass belief if one were not acquainted with the kind of half-hearted education and wholly bigoted person who edits an English paper abroad. And one can imagine how a person of that stamp will appear in the eyes of an educated Chinaman. We can quite understand that the editor may have discovered from experience how hopeless it was—for him—to argue with Atheists. But we wonder whether his conviction as to the uselessness of arguing with drunkards is based on careful self-examination? Drunkenness is the only excuse we can see for the editorial impertinence.

Bit by bit the divines are doing away with the Christian religion. In the *Manchester Guardian* for December 10, a column was devoted to the task of convincing the readers that children should be frankly told that many of the tales contained in the Bible are not true. A soldier recently asked: "Why should we be taught as children what we find when we are grown up is untrue?" Curiously enough, the writer of the column just mentioned holds that it is only by admitting and teaching the fallibility of the Bible that "we can hope to restore and retain men's faith in it." So, likewise, according to him, the Christianity of fifty years ago is unbelievable to-day; and if the same rationalizing process is continued for another fifty years, there will be no Christianity left.

¹ From *Woodland and Shingle, and Other Poems*. By John Rowell Waller.

The Rev. Dr. Hutton makes, from his point of view, the sad confession that Jesus Christ is not yet known. Why is Christ still unknown? Simply because he does not exist. He is merely a fictitious character, variously conceived by different divines. If Christ really existed he would make himself known to all without the least difficulty.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, is preaching an entirely new Gospel, which is being severely criticized by many of those who hear it. What he means by it is his own version of Christianity, which, after all, is but one in a thousand. What Christianity is, apart from these ever-changing and ever-multiplying versions, no one can tell.

Dr. Jowett states that he receives letters from people who are "giving an undue ascendancy to the reasonable." Such people are multiplying everywhere, and the reverend gentleman knows well that reason and faith have never co-existed in the same person, for in proportion as reason prevails, faith visibly declines.

The clergy are still "starving" gracefully. One sufferer, the late Rev. C. N. Edgington, of Regent's Park, left gross estate £70,303. The Bishop of Liverpool announces a gift of £25,000 for the relief of the clergy in Liverpool and Bootle. The Rev. J. Oates, of North Finchley, has been presented with a gift of £873, with £47 and a set of furs for his wife.

Another penurious parson has passed away in the person of Archdeacon Bothalmy, of Bath, who left estate of the value of £48,859. Yet another starving brother, the Rev. J. B. Jameson, of Grayingham, left £30,766.

The will of Miss Rowland Francis Childers, proved November 13, provides that £10 be given for Masses, £5,000 to the Archbishop of Westminster for "Ecclesiastical education, and £1,000 to Father Pryor, of South Kensington, for his own use. And there are some people who talk of religion as being dead!

One of the annual pension items in the Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom is that of Earl Nelson, £5,000. The hero of Trafalgar left no legitimate children, and his titles reverted to his clergyman brother, and afterwards to his descendants. Yet it was the admiral, and not the parson, who won the battles.

Parsons and publicans dined together at Croydon under the auspices of The Strength of Britain Movement. We wonder whether they drank lemon-squash or communion port?

In a note on the anniversary of the battle of Ypres, the *Times* quotes in praise of the dead the line: "What God abandoned these defended." It is not literally true, since it implies that there was a God to defend. But it is true in its lesson that if people had trusted to God they would have been in queer streets. It is always man that does the work, and it is for ever God on whose behalf credit is claimed. Perhaps one day we shall all wake up to the fact that of all the illusions to which man has been subject none has been so disastrous as that of God. It sounds paradoxical, but if there were a Devil bent on the destruction of the race he could have invented no better instrument than that of belief in God.

A writer in *John o' London*, in an article on "What Lloyd George Reads," says that the Prime Minister does not like a book with a sad ending nor of a gloomy character, but he has the passion of the schoolboy for tales of adventure and daring. He is not interested in stories that deal with psychology or analysis of character. That is what we should have expected. Mr. Lloyd George reads as the shop girl or the man in the train reads. Serious works are outside his purview. That will explain his fondness for the chapel, which naturally caters for the emotional character without any particular intellectual depth.

The *Daily News* says that the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, is unique in possessing neither organ nor choir, and adds that Spurgeon had an objection to instrumental music in church. Maybe! The Baptist Boanerges certainly allowed a cornet to be played; and handbell-wringers were permitted.

Criticizing the democratic and scientific pose of the clergy, Mr. Frederic Harrison says: "Men whose studies have been for years limited to the half-savage legends of the Old Testament, to the myths of the Gospel story, to the patristic homilies, to the Tudor authors of Prayer Books and Articles—are not masters of mundane science." Excellently put!

Church cinemas are touring in the Bath and Bristol districts, and the advertisements state that the programmes include drama and comedy. If the clergy will only film Captain Noah's exploits, or the adventures of Jonah, the pictures of the easy-going East should rival in popularity those of the wild and woolly West.

Reviewing a book on Voltaire, a contemporary quoted the great writer's drastic remark concerning the Christian superstition: "I am killing a wild beast and you ask me what I put in its place."

The religion of the Man of Sorrows is not often associated with humour. At a tiny tin tabernacle at Acton a notice was exhibited inviting "all men over seventeen" to a service.

At Mr. Charles Coborn's farewell matinee at the Alhambra Theatre, London, the veteran comedian said that "it was good enough for the founder of Christianity to serve, and it should be good enough for us." Mr. Coborn then sang "Two Lovely Black Eyes." There is humour in the association. The Christian religion has been responsible for more black eyes than any other agency.

The *Glasgow Weekly Herald* reports the Rev. W. H. Campbell as saying that he found the clergy as a whole so ignorant of, or so hostile to, modern educational progress, or so jealous of their own privileges in the parish, that, as a body, they are a definite stumbling-block. It is a pity that Mr. Campbell does not cut himself adrift from so retrogressive a body of men. But we suspect that it is the profession that is responsible for the man rather than the other way about. We have known clergymen who would have been quite decent individuals in some other profession.

We are not without sympathy for the protests of the clergy of the diocese of Southwell against the inquisitorial methods adopted by the bishops before granting money to the "poor clergy." But we question whether the methods are more inquisitorial or more objectionable than those adopted by the clergy themselves in relation to the poor laity. The truth is that the whole system of relief in this country is just about as bad and as demoralizing as it can be. People who are in charge of its distribution appear to fancy themselves as so many little tin gods, and demand the subservience that all gods expect from their devotees. The charity when given seems designed to perpetuate poverty rather than aim at its removal, or to prevent extreme distress. And, finally, we should say that there is more downright swindling in connection with religious charities than there is in connection with anything else in the country. But the net result of Christian charity has always had the effect of demoralizing both those who gave and those who received. And now some of the clergy are beginning to realize it in their own persons.

They are moving in Belfast, even though the rate be slow. Some of the Christians appear to have reached the point of doubting whether there is a hell. So we gather from the brief report of a debate in the Ulster Hall on the question

of whether the Bible teaches eternal torment or not. Both disputants accepted the Bible as the word of God, and both seemed to be back in the early nineteenth century instead of being alive to-day. But imagine a number of grown-up men with whiskers—as the late Dan Leno would have said—debating a question of that character. And both would call themselves civilized individuals!

"As for preachers," said an American, "I've heard the Salvation Army, Moody and Sankey, Torrey and Alexander, and Billy Sunday, and continued in outer darkness. As evangelists, they're not in it with the motor-car makers. I bought a cheap one recently, and it shook hell out of me in less than ten minutes."

Two shirts and a nightcap worn by King Charles the First have been sold for ten guineas. How the clergy will laugh! They have made millions of pounds by exhibiting relics of a man who never lived at all.

Providence is in a rollicky mood. Three bicycles, belonging to worshippers, were stolen from St. Andrew's Church, Uxbridge, during divine service.

According to a daily paper, a letter addressed to the Archereque, Canterbury, London, was delivered to the Canterbury Music Hall. Quite a delightful association of Church and stage.

The clergy are getting quite excited about the popularity of Spiritualism. Evidently they are afraid of the effect of the fashionable cult upon their own people. Father Joseph Macmahon, a New York priest, says that he tried to read the proceedings of the Society of Psychical Research, and found the books full of "nonsense, puerilities, and worse." It may comfort the reverend gentleman to know that lots of people think the same of Roman Catholic books of devotion.

The Vicar of All Saint's Church, Southend, was the preacher at St. Mary's Prittlewell, recently, and denounced Protestantism. The vicar of St. Mary's, who is an Evangelical, replied the following Sunday. The *Tablet*, commenting on the incident, says: "The bewildered congregation can take its choice between the two religions taught with equal authority by ordained ministers of the Church of England."

Few people realize how education in this country is priestridden. In the Estimates for this year no less than £18,000,000 of money was given to Church of England and Roman Catholic schools, while 60,000 teachers and 46,000 managers were subjected to religious tests.

Father Bernard Vaughan says that "to-day's fashions are bizarre, distorted, and ridiculous." The same remark holds true of priests' petticoats.

In the ages of faith Christians sought to save people from hell. Now it is difficult to hear the word mentioned. A Church Army advertisement appeals for a modest £50,000 for huts for troops, excursions to battle zones, motherless children, employment bureaux, hostels, social centres, and so forth. The advertisement also states that "the work has changed but not diminished." So it seems! Presently they will sell hair-restorer for bald Christians, and pretend that they are preaching the religion of Christ.

At Lambeth Court it was stated that a dog had eaten a costume. At Lambeth Palace the dear clergy believe in a whale which swallowed a costume with a prophet inside it.

Here is a gem from the Fulwell Parish Magazine: "Christmas Day—3 p.m. Solemn Evensong and Cards."

NOTICE.

Commencing with our Issue for January 4—No. 1 of Vol. XL—the "Freethinker" will be enlarged to sixteen pages and the price increased to **Threepence per Copy**. A full statement of the causes of this change was made in the issue of this paper dated December 21.

Readers will please note that the "Freethinker" is now obtainable through all the wholesale agents in Britain, and may be ordered from any of the railway bookstalls in the country. Any difficulty in obtaining copies should be reported to us, with a full explanation of the circumstances.

To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Per J. Griffiths: W. Griffiths, 10s.; J. Griffiths, 5s.; Mrs. Griffiths, 5s. Total, £1. A. Aspden, 3s. 6d.; Geo. Dixon, 5s.; J. Glassbrook, 5s.; J. O. Connor, £1; J. M. Hill, 5s.; J. W. Arnott, 8s. 6d.

MRS. C. M. RENTON.—Thanks for information. We are not at all surprised to find that the Bishop of Colombo upholds the outrages committed under the plea of martial law which followed the riots of 1915. But what can one expect? Was there ever a bishop who did not support the powers which supported him?

ENDOR.—*The Biology of War* was reviewed in these columns when it first appeared. It is a very good piece of work, although rather expensive. The published price is 21s.

R. SIMPSON.—We should be very pleased to send supplies of Mr. Cohen's *Woman and Christianity* to women's societies at special rates. Glad to think that it would open the eyes of all women to the evils of Christianity if they would only read it. There is much virtue in that "if."

L. SOMERTON LOVE.—Glad to learn that you will soon be home again. We fancy it will only be a new field for you to work in. One can always find material if one looks. You do appear to have been very active where you have been, and we thank you for it. The paper is being sent as requested.

J. F. LITTLER.—No one would go to an organization such as the International Bible Students' Association for accurate information about the Bible. The whole aim of such bodies is to see by what means old doctrines can be made to fit in with new conditions.

J. GRIFFITHS.—Pleased to learn that you have so high an opinion of the paper. We hope to add to its value in the near future.

A. ASPDEN.—Your prompt action was in every way admirable. Hope it will teach the bigots a lesson. Shall be pleased to visit your town when possible.

H. CURNEY.—Sorry to hear the news, but hope there are better times ahead. The discussion ought to prove interesting.

J. M. HILL.—Thanks for season's good wishes.

A. W. SKILLING.—Too late for this issue.

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.

Sugar Plums.

This is the last issue of the *Freethinker* of twelve pages. Next week it will be sixteen pages, price 3d. As this is the first number of a new volume, we shall be glad to receive the names and addresses of those to whom our present readers think specimen copies will be acceptable. These will be sent quite free, and it is an excellent way of gaining new sub-

scribers. So soon as circumstances permit, we purpose launching out on a systematic plan of advertising. The boycott must be broken somehow or the other.

The necessity of getting out two numbers of the *Freethinker* in one week prevents our paragraph department being as well supplied as usual. Our readers will, we are sure, excuse this for once. As our next number will be enlarged by four pages, we hope to be able to give more space to paragraphic matter than we have been able to do for some time.

We were not able to get into last week's issue a report of Mr. Cohen's meetings at Liverpool on the 14th. These were quite successful, the hall being crowded in the evening. On Monday evening, previous to his departure for Belfast, Mr. Cohen met some of the members to discuss affairs. The immediate need is a hall that will serve as a regular meeting-place for the Branch, and various plans were discussed in relation to this. So soon as this is accomplished, some of the larger halls will be secured for special lectures. There should be a strong forward movement in Liverpool in the immediate future.

One thing brought out in the course of the conversation with the Liverpool members was the need for local speakers, or for some young men who would give their time to the work. This is a more difficult problem to tackle than appears at first sight, and the Executive of the N. S. S. is not blind to its existence. The matter has been discussed at Executive meetings more than once, and, while no solution has yet been found, we can say that the Executive is prepared to give every assistance that lies within its power to encourage such as feel they would like to devote their abilities—*oratorical and other*—to Freethought work.

We are asked to call the attention of Freethinkers to the fact that this paper is regularly on sale at 128 Langlands Road, Govan, Glasgow. "Saints" in the district will please note.

Beneath the Bell.

A SMALL tin bell rings mournfully at three;
Then little Katie, Jane, and Florrie West
Are sent with Willie Wills and Harold Lee—
Complete with Bibles—in their Sunday best
To Sabbath-school, where Mr. Mill will tell
Of doubting Thomas, Judas, Christ, and Hell;
Of God's great love, and mankind deep in sin;
Also exactly how and where to win
A splendid seat in paradise when dead.
All this, and much beside, the children hear;
How little souls, hard fettered by life's lead,
May gain God's favour when their time is near,
And penetrate beyond the Pearly Gate,
Where bright-winged angels, jewels, and fairy lights
Are mixed in glory, and God sits in state.
So Mr. Mill describes these pure delights
With sanctimonious gesture and low voice;
He stands, a sombre figure, shaped in black,
And bids the little children's hearts rejoice.
He warns them that they never must look back;
Draws fiery pictures of the burning lake,
Wherein the tortured body writhes in pain.
Says there will be no sweets, nor buns, nor cake,
Unless God washes out each sinful stain.
Such fetid tales and many more are told
Before the final hymn is sung by all.
Then Mr. Mill says, "Come unto the Fold,
Nor harden your hearts once ye have heard the call;
Old Satan hides behind each tiny heart,
And fights with God to claim the better part."
Ah! Mr. Mill. Your lean and darkened face
Shall smile someday when Bibles cease to be,
And men and women live in natural grace,
And honest men teach children decently.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Robert Cooper.

1819-1868.

THE reader who turns to the *Dictionary of National Biography* and its supplements for information as to the work and life of Robert Cooper will be disappointed. Yet many men infinitely less important have their niches in that temple of fame—or semi-fame. The Freethinker does not worry over these trifles, for he knows that your Agnostic has no sympathy for popular Freethought. However that may be, Cooper was born on December 29, 1819, at Barton-on-Irwell, near Manchester. His father was a Radical, with experience of Peterloo, and young Cooper as a boy listened to discussions of the ideas of Voltaire, Paine, Cobbett, and other independent thinkers. Being a good reader, he was sometimes asked to read aloud from Godwin's *Political Justice*. At the age of twelve he was placed as clerk in a Manchester house, and remained there nine years. At fourteen he was appointed a teacher in the Salford Co-operative Evening Schools, which were run by disciples of Robert Owen. When he was seventeen he opened a debate on "Secularism" before the debating society of the Manchester Athenæum. He had published discussions with parsons on the *Social System* and published his first pamphlet on *Original Sin* before he was twenty. After leaving his clerkship, he became an Owenite Social Missionary. With the break-up of the Socialistic missions, he joined the Freethought Party, and was for some time editor of the *London Investigator*. Cooper's health broke down under strenuous work and an ever-active brain, and he died at the comparatively early age of forty-eight. *The Holy Scriptures Analysed* (1840)—reprinted 1910—is still a useful piece of work.

Cooper was what is called an "orator." This type of thinker—the emotional, rhetorical type—has been pretty common in Freethought. Spoken speeches or lectures do not gain by print; they appear platitudinous and turgid. Cooper uses a dozen words to say what could be better said in six. He may have been a "silver-tongued orator" like Mr. Charles Watts, but he had also Watts' preference for a sentence rounded at any cost.

G. U.

A Royal Invitation.

"UNEASY lies the head that wears a crown." Few can envy the King his job, particularly having regard to his present set of advisers, who, judging by the words they every now and then put into his mouth, appear to be approaching the limit in lunacy. Before these lines see the light, the anniversary of Armistice Day will have come and gone, and "the King's invitation to his people to join in a two minutes silent service in commemoration of our glorious dead at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month of the year" will have been observed by some and ignored by others.

The situation is full of irony. The morning papers which published the royal invitation contained in another column an ominous paragraph headed with leaded type: "Germans repulsed at Libau." The people, as a whole, do not seem to realize that our military commitments on the Continent of Europe are still very great. Our professional militarists are insatiable. They must play upon human hate to engineer new stunts, and with a crowd of weak and facile political bureaucrats like putty in their hands, they are able to entangle us in foreign expeditions for which we, as a people, ought to have no more responsibility than the man in the moon.

Incidentally, these stunts are causing a considerable expenditure which John Bull, at the moment, is little able to bear.

There should be a vigorous protest against this Armistice Anniversary "Service" as presenting the King in the light of a sentimentalist. The best and most noble way of honouring the memory of the dead is to secure their living dependents from want. Could there be anything more cruelly ironical than this call to a silent service in memory of the dead when we remember that, in very many cases, pensions had actually to be wrung from the ministry? Two pounds of tea to the mother or wife of every dead soldier would have been far more appropriate than two minutes of silence. "The whole thing, of course," say the press flunkies, "is absolutely voluntary," and then proceed to explain the official orders that are being issued for the observance of the "invitation" in the Navy, Army, and schools!

The diminutive mind of the Primate finds in this "invitation" a "timely message." It is not difficult to see the true source of the "timely message." Sunday, November 9, was appointed by his lordship as a day of preparation for the two minutes on Tuesday, November 11. The "silence" was to be heralded by guns, maroons, and sirens so that "the observance might be as general and spontaneous as possible"! But, according to the sapient Archbishop, "the note of thankfulness rings clear above them all." Unfortunately, the Archbishop does not inform us what we have got to be thankful for beyond mentioning the "victory secured to the cause of right and freedom and the brave lives laid down in its achievement." That is astutely vague. If the Germans had won—for they are Christians, too—their religious bosses would have to-day been indulging in exactly the same kind of "guff."

When are we to grow out of our petty sectionalism, our mole-eyed parochialism, our insular snobbery? Few of us have any conception of the vastness and variety of our own Empire, far less of the world as a whole. As has been well said in these columns more than once, the Christian idea is that Liberty is limited to Christians. All else are—or should be—outlaws. If they cannot extirpate the heretic vipers with fire, sword, and the rack, they will do it by means of intangible and subterranean social forces. Yet, in point of fact, even the British Empire itself transcends Christianity. In that Empire, Christians are in a small minority, but a minority that is supreme in confidence, insolence, and assertiveness. The other day a protest was made by a correspondent in one of our weeklies against a film with the title of "A Prince of Bharata and a Daughter of Brahma" being announced in connection with the Hibbert Lectures on "Phases of Theism in Mediæval India" which are being delivered by Dr. Carpenter. This correspondent contends that the exhibition of a film with such a title is a circumstance in which bad taste and the perversion of good feeling contend for first place. "Suppose," he pointedly says, "a film with the title (say), 'The Rich Pharisee and a Daughter of Jesus of Nazareth,' was advertised for exhibition, what an outcry would be raised; how the faithful would want to storm the place. Yet where is the difference?" The writer goes on to point out that the Brahmins are a sect far older and more numerous than the members of the religion established by law in this country, and that, as a law-abiding people living peaceably under British rule and protection, they are entitled, by our boasted canons of fairness, justice, and equality, to be saved from such gross insults.

The point, of course, to be emphasized in this connection is that many British subjects who were not

Christians bled and died in the Great War; and for the Primate of England to use the anniversary of the Armistice as an advertisement for Christianity is an additional insult to the memory of these men. But that is not all. There is a subtle danger that by such methods the rancours of religion may be introduced into future racial and international disputes. If such methods are to succeed, then good bye to the League of Nations, good-bye to the hopes of a permanent World Peace. As Artemus Ward said many years ago, "There is no fite like a relijus fite." And he might have added, "Of all religious fighters there are none so pugnacious as Christians."

Little is to be expected from the League of Nations if it is identified in the minds of any people with a religious sect; yet we cannot fail to notice the sedulous efforts of the clergy to affix to it the label of Christianity. Enmities are fostered by the nation which by its laws either actually establishes a particular sect or even merely extends recognition to such sect as the national religion. The Parliament of our country ought to stand in a position of absolute impartiality with reference to all beliefs. It may be that Freethinkers would be well employed in concentrating more on the advocacy of Disestablishment. Clericalism—that is the enemy. But there is so much to be done in releasing minds from conventional fetters, that little room is left for propaganda that is purely political.

We fail to see that any thanks are due to the Christian God for victory in a War that he could have prevented; and man must depend upon himself for the restoration of what this demoralizing conflict has so wantonly and violently destroyed, and for the success of the League of Nations.

IGNOTUS.

Simple, Artful, or Degenerate?

TAKEN generally, and speaking from an independent point of view, members of the various Churches, if observed in either a business or private capacity, will be found to be either "Simple," "Artful," or "Degenerate"; their brains have either given way to the inevitable "Faith," or they are using assumed faith for personal gain or lust.

The "Simple"—certainly respected by all those who are not so easily duped—are financially the mainstay of the various Churches; for instance, they lay the foundation stones, subscribe generously to the Church funds, make handsome presents to pastors, priests, and parsons, fill up the collection plates, pay for Masses to be said for every conceivable grievance or calamity, in fact do anything in their way to enhance the genuine desire to eventually reach their heaven. The "Artful" members use their "Faith" to feather their own nests. A tradesman will look pious on Sundays to help on his business with the other members. A burglar finds it gives him an appearance of respectability; another finds it easier to borrow money if he looks religious, or finds he gets on better with the ladies if he prays reverently; but, with all, the "Artful" member is not a very real asset to the Church, except that he advertises and talks of his goodness and religion.

The "Degenerate" can be found in large numbers, in all Churches, and other places where the faithful congregate; his disordered brain soon finds out the weak spots, and he finds also an easy outlook for his illicit desires, for the "Simple" particularly trust him, and he lives his life of lust under such a powerful cloak that it is very rarely he is found out or exposed, unless it is by some far-seeing and right-thinking individual (who probably, at heart, is a Rationalist).

W. H. W.

Writers and Readers.

A NOTE ON VOLTAIRE'S "CANDIDE."¹

A NEW translation of Voltaire's witty skit on the complacent optimism of his day is a good enough excuse (if, indeed, any be needed) for a few informal remarks on the story, and on philosophical romance in general. Of the merits or demerits of this particular version I shall have something to say below; but even if it be not all one would wish in the matter of style and correctness, the many English admirers of Voltaire who have merely a bowing acquaintance with the French language, or none at all, will welcome this jewel of wit and wisdom in its English dress, and will appreciate it all the more because it is a well printed and prettily bound volume.

Candide was published in 1759, and, in accordance with Voltaire's custom when he was launching an especially venomous attack on conventional ideas, it did not bear his name. It went through a dozen editions in that year, and was translated into English within a few months of its appearance in Paris. There have been a number of English versions, yet, for some reason or other, they are not accessible except in the British Museum and other large libraries, and the result is that Voltaire's wit and malice have been enjoyed mostly at second-hand. Henry Morley's edition, which was printed, as some of my readers will remember, with Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), was my first introduction to Voltaire's philosophical fiction. But, unfortunately, it was Bowdlerized for family reading, and its racy flavour disguised by Victorian cant. Still, it was better than nothing, and the eighteenth century version which Morley reprinted represented admirably Voltaire's incomparable ease and elegance of style.

It is, I suppose, known to everyone that *Candide* was an attempt to counter by ridicule and sarcasm the ethical implication of the Leibnitzian hypothesis of a pre-established harmony. This optimistic attitude of life was used as a veil to shut out from the eyes of men the wretchedness of humanity, the injustice and cruelty which forced themselves on the attention of every thinking man. The rejection of this belief with Voltaire was not a strictly logical process, since he was not less a Theist than Leibnitz; but if he was less consistent in his thinking, he was more humane. His sympathy with suffering was as ardent and sincere as that of Shelley; and, like our English poet, he did not stop at sympathy—he spared neither time, nor money, nor labour in fighting the tyranny of an autocratic State and the hideous cruelty of organized priestcraft. His sympathy with suffering was a fundamental trait in his nature; it went deeper than thought. As early as 1713, many years before *Candide* saw the light, he had written, as Henry Morley notes, a poem "On the Miseries of Our Time" (*Sur les malheurs du temps*), which is proof, if proof were wanted, that the injustice and brutality of the world were for him an age-long torture, alleviated only by the intense joy of combat with evil. He was the finest type of the humanitarian at a time when the love of mankind in general disguised a contempt for Tom, Dick, and Harry. Unlike Rousseau, he had cleared his mind of cant.

Dr. Pangloss is, in the main, a caricature of optimism; yet he has this in common with the philosophers of the time: his principles were unshaken by the most awful calamities which came to him and to others. *Candide* is Voltaire's contribution to the eighteenth century types of the "good man." He is ingenuous and intelligent, sympathetic and solid in judgment. He has been brought up by the disreputable old Pangloss to believe that everything happens for the best in this best of all possible worlds. The misadventures, framed, on the model of contemporary romance, to discredit complacent optimism, would be terrifying if they

¹ *Candide, or Optimism*. Translated by Dorset Chambers. London: F. B. Neumayer, 70 Charing Cross Road, W.C.; 1919 (price 6s. net).

were not related in so light and easy a manner. We can imagine what Swift would have made of them. The horrors of brutal warfare, murder, ravishings, and sudden death; the earthquake at Lisbon; an *auto-da-fe* in the same city; the horrors of slavery; the cruelty and perfidy of the priests in Paraguay; the rottenness of society in Europe, in Paris, in Venice; the picture of the life of a slave in Constantinople—all these things, and a hundred others, are described with a light and sure touch; a touch so sure and deadly that optimism as a working belief was discredited for all time. Nowhere except in Eldorado, a sort of Utopia in South America, did Candide find people untouched by misfortune and sorrow. He might, one would think, have stayed there in that paradise of inactivity and reverie; but Candide, like his creator, could not turn a deaf ear to the agonized cry of mankind under the heel of the tyrant and the priest. He must work out a *modus vivendi* in the world as it is. He finds a certain relief for the intolerable agony of life in doing well the duty that lies nearest to him, in "tending our garden," as he puts it symbolically; for the garden which Voltaire tended most carefully was not the material one at Ferney, but the vast spiritual garden of humanity.

In an excellent little monograph I came across the other day on the didactic literature of the eighteenth century (*The Good Man of the Eighteenth Century*, by Charles Whittuck, 1901), Candide is associated with *Rasselas* in a chapter on "Anti-Cant." There is a striking similarity between the two works. On this point Mr. Whittuck notes that Boswell writes:—

Voltaire's *Candide* written to refute the system of optimism, which it has accomplished with brilliant success, is wonderfully similar in its plan and conduct to *Rasselas*, inasmuch that I have heard Johnson say, that if they had not been published so closely the one after the other that there was no time for imitation, it would have been in vain to deny that the scheme of that which came latest was taken from the other.

In both of the stories there is the same profound consciousness of life's miseries, both the writers are terribly in earnest, although the prevailing tone of the one is a caustic irony, of the other a melancholy seriousness. The aim of Johnson is, no doubt, to direct the hopes of man to things eternal, by showing the unsatisfactory nature of things temporal. Voltaire, although a believer in a power above us that makes for righteousness, directed men in a far nobler and far humaner way, the way of strenuous untiring work for the good of his fellow-creatures. "To me," says the Princess to *Rasselas*, "the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity." The moral problem is not solved, you will see, but removed to a problematical future state. Voltaire solves it relatively by bringing into prominence the social and domestic relations, and so helping man to recover his lost happiness. I commend the two stories to the intelligent reader as the basis of an admirable little study in comparative literature.

It would be noticed that the peculiarity of the didactic fiction of the eighteenth century is its frank disregard of character. The men and women are mere types, lay figures set up to represent certain ideas. In only one of Voltaire's stories, *The Ingenuous Young Man; or, The Huron*, do we find a semblance of the romantic, emotional approach to human nature. It is impossible to read the bulk of the romances for the sake of the story. They must appear hard and cold after the palpitating warmth, the subtle penetration into motives, of *Tom Jones* and *Gil Blas*. It is only in much later fiction—in the stories, let me say, of Anatole France and Remy de Gourmont—that you get a perfect balance between philosophic ideas and the creative projection of human life. Voltaire was a pamphleteer rather than a novelist, and his tracts in support of more humane ideas in ethics and religion were as effective as they were undisguised.

The new version of Voltaire's best-known work is, as I have hinted above, not an improvement on the inaccessible eighteenth century translations. It is not impossible now

to reproduce something of the ease and elegance of the French style; but it was much easier then. Mr. Chambers is, I fancy, not a student of eighteenth century literature, which, at its best, is correct, shapely, and free from vulgarity and slang. "It was like this" is a fatuous colloquism possible only to Sir Hall Caine. "I knew these girls would do it on us" (p. 64) is an expression you may hear in a saloon bar; it is not Voltaire, and, I hope, not English. Nor is this good prose: "Candide ran him through and through, and laid him out beside the Jew." *Cabaret* (inn) is always left in the French, although it is not printed in italics. It is, of course, not an English word, and would puzzle a reader who has no French. There are also a few slips which a little care would have obviated, "mess" (p. 30) should be *mass*; "one" (p. 48) should be *four*; "host's" (p. 70) should be *guest's*. These do not amount to much, but, on the other hand, the mistakes which are due to a somewhat imperfect knowledge of French are more serious. On p. 20 the phrase used by the Batavian sailor: "I've just missed drowning four times" is not in the text, which says: "four times I have trampled on the crucifix." It would seem that the Japanese required a Christian sailor, before he was allowed to land, to abjure his belief by trampling on the symbol of his religion. A "dark" man (p. 21) should be a man *dressed in black*. The passage on p. 23 about the two Portuguese "who had stolen the fat of a chicken by eating it" is incomprehensible, to me at least. It would seem that they were two "New Christians," or Jews, who had renounced their faith. The Familiars of the Inquisition were instructed to watch these converted Jews to detect, if they had reverted to Judaism, by noticing whether they kept the Judaic dietary laws. At the inn the Jews were served with a larded fowl, and if they left the bacon they were haled before the Holy Office. The phrase should be "who, in eating a fowl, had rejected the bacon." Voltaire's phrase: "sur le flanc gauche" is in the left *groin*, not the left "buttock." On p. 39, the word "gorge," *i.e.*, bust or bosom, is translated "throat." With these exceptions the version is a commendable one, and it will certainly serve to give the English reader an idea of what Voltaire is like at his wittiest. As to the licentiousness, which the translator seems to detect in Voltaire, I find it only the frankness of speech current at the time. I could easily find worse things in Wycherley, Sterne, and Swift.

By the way, the student of literature who has French will thank me for calling his attention to a scholarly edition of *Candide*, by M. Andre Morize, in "Textes Francais Modernes," Hachette & Co., 1913.

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