

## Our Contributors.

### A Jew's View of Judaism.

The following extract from an article in "The World To-day," on the Future of Israel by Israel Zangwill will, we are sure, be interesting to many readers. Mr. Zangwill is well known as an able writer of novels, one of which, in this connection, deserves special mention, namely, *The Children of the Ghetto*, a remarkable book which gives a real revelation of the life of the modern Jew. He is a loyal Jew and an enthusiastic Zionist. The following statement from his pen is, to use Carlyle's phrase, "significant of much." It is worthy of careful consideration by all who take an interest in the present relationship between Jew and Christian.

"But there is a force that is greater than might, it is love. Ever since the eighteenth century this force of love has been acting on the Jewish people. With that epoch of revolution and its quickened sense of the human brotherhood, began the break of the Ghettos in western Europe. The Jewish clans, invited outside their high walls and admitted gradually to the civic life of Christendom, permitted to despecialize themselves from commerce and brought into contact with modern critical thought, found themselves exposed to a double disintegration. They were undermined from within and absorbed from without. Gone—at least from those educated in the general European schools, was that naive sustaining occupation of their superiority, their providential mission. The great achievements of Christendom, not only in the spiritual domain, but in the realm of arts and letters, became clear to them. The reason for their isolation seemed obsolete. A process of interfusion set in. It was not always admirable. With many, acceptance of Christianity was a weak concession to the tyranny of society, which has in no country ceased to penalize Judaism. For the Jew's loss of his old faith was not necessarily compensated by a new belief, and conversion—especially in Germany—was more often a mark of indifference than of illumination.

But the freer the Jew is left, the more he tends, if not towards Christianity, towards a broader view of it and towards the acceptance of Christ in the apostolic chain of Hebrew prophets. The modern Jew is a pro-Christian, only too eager to admire the ideals of whatever nation he lives amid, only too uncritical. There can be little doubt therefore, that were the Jew left to himself and given a free run in Christendom and free elbow room, he would, in the course of a few generations, be practically merged with his environment.

For this consummation, however, Christendom is too unchristian to wait. It requires three or four generations after the first emancipation, and before these generations are up something is sure to happen to throw the Jew back upon himself; the Dreyfus case is what Bacon calls an "ostensive instance." But apart from such unpredictable particularities, it may be prophesied generally that with such a good "whipping-boy" as the Jew ready to the agitator's hand, no economic or other crisis will pass in any country without its Jews being called to account for it. It is a notorious device of state craft to divert attention from internal evils by foreign affairs and the Jews are a quasi-foreign body provided at home in default of a better cover.

These outbreaks of anti-Semitism, these incipient persecutions will always be answered by reactionary rigidescence in the Jewish ranks.

Moreover, of the eleven millions of the race only two millions at most are subjected to the relaxing influence of sunshine and liberalism. Only two-elevenths of the loose power are in danger of evaporation. With more than half of the Jewish people penned in the Russian pale, periodically liable to massacres, such as that at Kishineff, the happier minority is kept, if only by sympathy, from deserting the miserable majority. Two opposing forces are thus at work upon the Jew, the wind and the sun. The gaberdine thrown open for a moment in the burst of heat, is buttoned tighter the next before the biting blast. Even were the sunshine as constant and ubiquitous as the race this stubborn life-force might not necessarily relax before it, since there would always be local differences of temperature and local variation of resistance and any remnant in any country would be sufficient to restock this eternal people. But considering how fitful and evanescent this sunshine is at its best, how swiftly veiled by regathering clouds of prejudice—note even in free England the outcry against the alien—considering, too, that the bulk of the race is still immured in the Dark Ages, it may safely be prophesied that the people whose obstinacy was already denounced by the Roman writers will long continue to persist in comparative isolation, however its religion becomes modified, as it cannot fail to be vitally modified, under the influence of thought and freer life conditions."

### Literary Notes.

#### Browning and the Christian Faith.

Guidance from Browning in matters of Faith, by John A. Hutton, M. A., Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh 2/16.

This neat volume contains four lectures on the above subject by a Christian minister who knows well the intellectual difficulties that have to be faced by thoughtful young men and who has found in the careful study of Browning's works inspiration and strength in facing these difficulties. He says "Those who are themselves indebted to Browning for a solid or sufficient footing in the deeper things of life will not consider any book superfluous which has as its one sincere idea and reason not to estimate the poet or to admire him but simply to urge his message as offering in these days of ours a basis and motive for faith, hope and love." The four chapters are entitled: *The Case for Belief*, *The Soul's Leap to God*, *The Mystery of Evil*, *The Incarnation*. Thus they deal with central themes and show both the author's living faith and his insight into the teaching of Browning. The following extract will give the readers of this notice a fair specimen of the treatment and style:

"Speaking for myself I shall never cease to be thankful for the guidance which I have received from Robert Browning in this great matter of faith. It was a great blessing—in which I wished to see the hand of God—that just as I reached the age when a man should begin to think for himself, the age when he becomes aware, perhaps of the apparent contradiction between faith and the world, when the instinctive confidence of

childhood needs to be reinforced by some belief which satisfies both mind and heart—it was a great blessing that just then I opened "Browning." He knew my difficulties, and he showed no weakness toward "my sins and faults of youth." He taught me that the pure in heart alone see God. That God is silent to those who will not bring heart as well as mind, their whole emotional and moral life, as well as their powers of thought to the contemplation of the Unseen. He made me aware of the meaning of these words—"by faith we understand that the worlds were made by God." That we understand—by faith. It was a good thing to be compelled to pay the penalty of thought and intense imagination before accepting peacefully and for ever those supernatural facts which rise to our minds when we think of God—The Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It was a good thing that one was not allowed to receive the things of faith on mere heresay, but only after the pains of thought and feeling. It was a good thing that those supernatural truths—those truths concerning God which lie at the heart of the Catholic Creed—should have come home to a man only when his heart and mind have become alive to the awful creed of God. Otherwise, one might have received those great truths as mysteries altogether remote from our actual life and not to be embraced by the living heart and flesh. All that we believe concerning God must indeed be full of mystery, but Browning—I speak for myself—has done much to make the mystery no more a mystery of darkness but of light. He helps one not only to believe the ultimate matters of faith, but to imagine them. Take the doctrine of the Incarnation. Christians confess that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took on flesh and became man that he might bring us to God. They confess that Jesus Christ came out from God, and was eternally in the bosom of God. That is what the church asserts in the doctrine of the Incarnation. And now, how hopelessly mysterious it all is. How our poor minds, however willing, break down as they try to comprehend all that such faith implies. That the Almighty God has had with Him from all eternity, another His like and equal; that in the fulness of time He came out from God and walked for a space on the earth—how hard and impossible to realize it. Yet such is the stupendous fact which the doctrine of the Incarnation asserts. Now, I rise from another long study of Browning, thoroughly convinced that he for one held that faith in its essence, with his whole strength. He may have taken hold of this belief with the clutch of despair and death. He may have flung himself into the arms of it only when he became aware of the abyss which awaits for him and for us all if such a faith be not true. He may have rushed into belief in sheer horror of the blank alternative. But even were we to admit that, it would not weaken his testimony. The things of God are never learned easily; they come to us first time in hours of darkness and necessity. They come at our cries and prayers, however mildly they may remain with us in after years. They come to us at first through pain and certain solitude of the soul. It may be well that Browning was led seriously to believe in the Incarnation, in the first instance, because he felt that some such overwhelming proof of God and of His love was needed to outweigh the appalling misery which he found in the world as it is. He himself confesses more than once that it is only his faith in God, as God has revealed Himself in Christ, which stands between him and despair.