

BERNHARDISM IN ENGLAND

afraid. Deprived of many physical luxuries, we want some mental luxury, and we get it in Bernhardism, in a sensuous reaction from all the spiritual effort and the spiritual ideas that trouble us in time of peace. Just as a soldier is most apt to pillage after a hard battle or siege, so we are apt in war-time to free ourselves from arduous hopes and responsibilities, and to enjoy the thought that war gives us that freedom as a perquisite. Then we listen to those who talk most basely and foolishly, as soldiers, when they are out of hand, will follow the worst ruffian among them. The leader of thought is the man who thinks least, the popular prophet is the one who cannot see an inch in front of his nose; the extremest patriot is the most ignorant, the most tired, the most frightened, among us. For Bernhardism, at bottom, is fear—fear lest there should, after all, be no meaning in the universe, no sense in the spiritual efforts of man. The Bernhardist calls this fear facing the facts, but his facts are really a timid theory, the theory that faith either in God or in man is a very dangerous thing. So it is, or it would not be faith. It is the Christian who obeys Nietzsche's command to live dangerously. It is the Bernhardist who grows angry at the spectacle of his rashness.