

of treaties, the murder of non-combatants and the frightful outrages inflicted on a peaceful people of which Germans have been guilty, are due to the general acceptance in Germany of the doctrines of which the Secular Society is the exponent. Human conduct, according to the principles of that society, is to be based on natural knowledge—that is, the knowledge which man can acquire by his own unaided efforts, his knowledge of science in all its branches; and this he is to use solely to promote his welfare in this world: and his welfare in this world consists in the things of this world which he can possess and enjoy, and in the attainment of those things he is not to be guided by any principle other than the consideration how he can best attain his object. As interpreted by the Germans, if he can do it by lying, he is not to scruple to lie; if murder is necessary, he may commit murder—the only deterrent to murder is possible punishment; if a course of “frightfulness” is necessary, he is to have no scruple in being as “frightful” as possible. If the killing of non-combatants in cold blood is deemed advisable as a means to attain his material ends, he is not to scruple to kill.

In the present war we have the most striking illustration of this kind of teaching reduced to practice. Bernhardt's book may be regarded as a handbook of the religion of the Secular Society. By Christian people all such doctrines and practices are regarded as nothing more nor less than “the doctrines of devils,” and to pretend that any society or nation is really and truly benefited by the spreading of such opinions is absurd, and, so far from it being of any benefit, it is plain that it would degrade any nation adopting such principles to the level of Germans, and the level they have reached in the scale of humanity is even below that of the “unspeakable Turk.”

And yet the question might well be asked, Have not the same doctrines and the same principles found wide acceptance, not only in England, but in Canada itself? The luxury, the hedonism and practical heathenism which has of late years widely prevailed, largely due to worldly prosperity, are also legitimate fruits of the principles of the Secular Society. The things and the pleasures of this world have been supreme with too many,