

Concerning these evils which spread through indifference and neglect, till they cause wide-spread desolation and ruin, cover Christian Churches with shame, and render the governments that sanction them hateful, the most representative gathering of Christian missionaries spoke with a unanimity and a power that ought to arouse sleeping Churches and quicken the consciences of the rulers in civilized nations. Christian States cannot permit the stigma of complicity with crime to rest upon them.

M. LAVELEYE ON THE FUTURE OF RELIGION.

As a publicist who is in touch with the spirit of modern progression and one who thoughtfully estimates the forces operating in religious, social and economic spheres, M. Emile de Laveleye occupies a prominent place. He is not dominated by prejudice, neither does he allow theories and predilections to warp his ordinarily well-balanced judgment. The published opinions of the distinguished Belgian generally attract a degree of respectful attention. He has just been giving to the English reading public his views on the "Future of Religion," in the pages of the *Contemporary Review*. The paper is interesting and is written in that calm and thoughtful spirit characteristic of its author.

Like many other thoughtful observers M. Laveleye foresees that the close of the present century is likely to be marked by sharp conflict over two profoundly disturbing questions—the industrial and the religious—the one arising out of the claims of the working classes for a larger share in the produce of labour and the other from the antagonism between the scientific spirit and religion. Evidences are not wanting that the present industrial conflict cannot go on indefinitely without producing disastrous results. Those engaged in the heat and keenness of conflict may not be in the best position to realize the magnitude of the question involved in it.

If industrial prosperity and national well-being are to be secured, it cannot be while capital and labour are glaring on each other as deadly foes. Temporary triumphs of the one or the other settle nothing. No one can tell where or how soon the feud may rage again with greater fierceness than ever, and all the while class hatreds grow in bitterness and intensity. It is becoming more clearly understood that some method of reconciliation must be found to adjust the apparently antagonistic interests of capital and labour. The importance of finding a solution is not only seen by social scientists, but the Churches are beginning to comprehend the pressing nature of the problem that now presents itself. Church Conferences devote much time and attention to its consideration. According to the testimony of Dr. Pressense of Paris, the discussion of this question, in which Principal MacVicar took a prominent part, was one of the most interesting that engaged the attention of the Presbyterian Council at its recent meeting. Though the proceedings of the Pan-Anglican Conference have been guarded with jealous care, it is hardly conceivable that so august and representative a body would overlook a question with which their Church, as well as others are brought face to face. As to what the solution, in his opinion, may be, M. Laveleye gives no hint. He merely recognizes that the industrial question has religious bearings and that it is becoming more and more a burning question as the years advance.

The writer of the paper in the *Contemporary* perceives three different forces operating injuriously on all religious belief. One of these is the drift of materialistic science. Though many eminent scientists and many competent theologians rightly maintain that between true religion and true science there cannot be any real and permanent contradiction; and although those divines who accept the evolution theory maintain that, were it demonstrated, there would be no injury done to religion whether natural or revealed, it is undeniable that there is a strong drift in the direction of sheer unbelief traceable to many who claim to speak in the name of science. This tendency is producing most undesirable results in various directions. Many are pleased to justify their unbelief behind the destructive teachings of so-called science. However ill-founded are the conclusions which such people reach, and however much the fact is to be lamented, it is a painful fact nevertheless, and many are the evidences of its existence.

Another of the forces warring against religion, M. Laveleye sees in the eager and relentless struggle for wealth and position. So entirely absorbed are men in the effort to secure worldly well-being that they have neither time nor inclination to entertain seriously the claims of religion. The spirit of religion and the worldly spirit were incompatible in the first age of Christianity and it does not appear that they have come to a better understanding yet. Extreme worldliness and a lofty self-denying, Christ-like spirit cannot dwell harmoniously in the same bosom. Here is what M. Laveleye says on this point:

The modern man fixes his affections on the things of this world, and desperately pursues the good things therein attainable, as if this were his lasting dwelling-place and there were nothing beyond. For him the word Heaven has no meaning. In this cold and dry atmosphere religion grows daily weaker and tends to be swept away.

The third element at war with religion noticed in the paper referred to is Socialistic atheism. The leaders among the working classes mostly preach the blankest negation. The French Communist who was buried the other day and whose funeral nearly occasioned a serious outbreak, took for his motto "Neither God, nor master." The exponents of extreme radicalism are many of them avowed atheists, and embrace every opportunity of instilling their destructive ideas into the minds of the people. If those ideas germinate there will be an harvest, for men reap what they sow. If these atheistic ideas find general acceptance among the working classes, a reign of terror and the horrors of the Commune will not be confined to Paris or Brussels. Civilized society without religion, is, however, an impossibility. Social existence would speedily relapse into barbaric warfare. There would be no basis for morality, and poor humanity would sink to the lowest degradation and final extinction. M. Laveleye concludes that religion, if chaos comes, will emerge, under some new forms it may be, but substantially Christian. And that as formula, organization, and public worship are necessary, they will form distinctive features of the religion of the future.

That existing religion will have to pass through fiery trials at no distant date is by no means improbable. That the religion of Jesus will be eliminated is not within the range of possibility. As to its ultimate triumph there is no peradventure. He who is the Truth said, Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away till all be fulfilled. In his estimate the distinguished Belgian writer makes no reference to the vital religious forces at work to counteract the destructive influences to which he refers. Over against materialistic science there are Christian thinkers ready to welcome truth from whatever source it comes, whose belief in the Creator and righteous Governor of the universe is not shaken but confirmed by the discoveries and deductions of modern research. Science has not yet uttered its last word. Over against the blind devotion to worldliness there is the self-denying consecration of life and service to the highest interests of humanity. From the intense worldliness of to-day there is certain to be a recoil. Man will not be content with the most degrading of all servitudes, the service of mammon. The ever-increasing Christian activity of our day cannot surely be doomed to extinction by the on-rush of a cruel Atheism. The storm may come, but after it, the calm, when better and brighter days than the earth has yet seen shall dawn; when His kingdom shall extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth, for the people shall be all righteous.

Books and Magazines.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.)—For the little readers it would be difficult to surpass this most attractive and suitable magazine.

RECEIVED.—WORDS AND WEAPONS for Christian Workers. Edited by Rev. George F. Pentecost, D.D., Rev. B. Fay Mills. (New York: H. T. Richards.) PEARL OF DAYS. Edited by Rev. J. H. Knowles. (New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham.) BOOK NEWS. (Philadelphia: John Wanamaker.) THE SANITARIAN. (New York: The American News Company.) THE SIDERAL MESSENGER. Edited by William W. Payne. (Northfield, Minn.: Carleton College Observatory.)

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

BLANTYRE, EAST AFRICA.

The Rev. D. C. Scott writes to the Convener of the Church of Scotland Home Mission Committee: "There is no settlement of affairs at the north end of Lake Nyassa yet, while the news has reached far and wide. It is now a drama enacted before a huge audience. Even Malemia at Zomba asked Mr. Cleland if Mlozi was beaten. Mr. Johnston, of the Universities' Mission, and Mr. Buchanan, in an honest endeavour to carry out the instructions of Consul Hawes, were both assaulted and stripped, and might have been killed, when they landed at the south of the lake at Mahanjila's to endeavour to negotiate. One of Buchanan's boys was killed. This also has spread. The whole question is—What are the coastmen going to do? and what will the British say to it? I hear that that the Wakonde at the north end, who were doomed by Mlozi and his allies, will not let the English leave them without fighting for them. Mlozi, in a conference which Johnston and Buchanan managed to secure, had no reason whatever to give for his attack on the North End Station except a few vague complaints of no moment. Evidently he thought he could clear them out without danger, and so work his will upon the Wakonde. What that will be, let the Kambwe lagoon massacre testify, and his own saying, when offering to leave in two years, 'What is a place worth after two years?' Wissman's accounts, and what we know antecedently, show very plainly what the frightful work is which our presence stops, and what it will be whenever we withdraw. These black Arabs, though not real Arabs, have all coast connections, and have entered into the country, not as chiefs born in their tribes, but as adventurers with Arab money, guns and powder, for the fearful work of pillage and slaughter. They make use of one tribe against another, and then, strong enough to do so, turn upon their late allies. The black Arabs and half-castes from the coast are in a way irresponsible, but their coast connections under any circumstances, make it perfectly possible, nay, imperative, to reach them through Zanzibar. They are not out of call nor out of mind of the Beloochee Arabs, somewhat farther to the north, but who do pass down south to the lake also. Rumour and the narrative of the North End affair say the connection is much closer.

"The slave trade is worse across Nyassa than ever. Even here, with all our influence, Matope, on Ndirande Hill, three miles from here, has, I learn, taken thirty or forty slaves with him to sell near Quilimane. There were bands of young children carrying very heavy loads, and each band with its driver close behind. Mr. Henderson, of Mompea, ransomed a woman who had been sold by Kumtaja, and sent her up here. Of course I shall make *mlandus* about these; but it has been done with the utmost secrecy, and the slaves all sent away ahead. The Angoni raids are slave raids—the Arab or coastman infests every town along the lake. The chiefs are swayed by them. It is nothing but slavery. Household slavery is bad enough, but this slavery is frightful, and yet this is mercy compared with the awful work at the North End and over to the Congo! It is absurd to speak about the slave trade being less and the wars stopped, when this is going on—to discount Wissman's words—a man who came with a heart boiling over with what he actually saw—villages he had passed, entering at sunrise and only getting out at noon—villages in absolute peace and thriving industry and settled rule—repassed desolate, dead and dying, rotting and rotten, and the whole completely destroyed! The man was mad with the truth of it, and it is worse than that! And we are the only stop to this awful work! Germany is not near, Portugal does not care, and no one cares as does the Church of Christ; and to feel that Government, for its own political ends, or a nation, by lethargy, refuses help when the work is laid upon it by God, makes my soul boil like Wissman's,—only I know it will come.

"A caravan of slaves passed the other day through Mr. Cleland's station. One woman, evidently just caught, came into the station two days afterward, having escaped. Cleland says he will never forget her look as she passed. When she came back he was away, and the men dragged her out of Evangeli's house.