

open valley, but, after being some distance apart, suddenly make friends, join forces, and rush hastily down in a broad stream, widening into the river on which the town has been built. In the valley are fields of golden wheat, interspersed with green meadows, with spreading trees under which are the lazy cattle enjoying such pasture, studded with yellow daisies and buttercups and rich marshy grasses, as seldom falls to the lot of cows.

Or, some few miles away, on the other side of the river, we can drive for an hour into the interior, sometimes with the forest shade on all sides, finally coming into view of a lovely little blue lake, with its peaceful waters surrounded by deeply wooded banks. In the centre of this tiny inland sea is a large island, to which you can, if so inclined, row yourself, and have a sylvan repast in the shape of afternoon tea made in rustic fashion, with a gipsy kettle singing over a camp fire.

Here we may enjoy ourselves very quietly but thoroughly, with a book, varied by lazy looks into the calm depths of the water, and later, the harvest moon will smile benignly down on the wayfarer from town, as he wends his way homeward, thinking how delightful it is to "live in the country."

Ontario, mayhap, has many such haunts, unvisited still, but the fresh hill-air, and keen scent from the pines in this region go far to make one grateful that Canadians can have the much-looked, and, longed-for "change" without traversing weary miles by land and water.

M. F. GRANT.

RELIGION IN GERMANY.*

WHEN the modern agnostic or materialist self-complacently declares that religion has had its day and is no longer a power in human society, the wish is undoubtedly father to the thought; and, however true the statement may be as a prophecy—which we greatly doubt, and of which no one can be sure—it certainly does not give a correct view of the actual state of things. There is no country in which religion is not an active power. There is no kind of Government under which the leaders or followers of public opinion do not need to take account of its influence. When, therefore, we are told that the domains of religion and of politics must be kept distinct, there is a sense in which this is true; but there is a deeper sense in which they cannot be separated, however much we may try.

We may go further and say that we who live on this side of the Atlantic, if we would deal intelligently with the problems, social and religious, which present themselves for solution, must acquaint ourselves with the currents of thought which are generated in lands remote from our own. In no respect are we less independent than in the formation of our religious opinions and sympathies; and perhaps there is no country which has so powerfully influenced English religious thought as Germany and its writers. This, of course, is obvious enough as regards the great Reformation movement; but, if it is less obvious, it is not less true in regard to the most recent times.

English religion has received three great impulses during the last century and a half, and every one of them is traceable, more or less, to German influence. The Evangelical movement, headed by Wesley, was profoundly affected by that great leader's contact with the Moravians; and there is no English-speaking communion—even to English Roman Catholics—in which that movement is not a present power. With regard to the other two movements, the Oxford and the so-called Broad Church, it is an entire mistake to imagine that they concern the Church of England alone. Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists (not to mention lesser denominations) have felt the influence of the school which sent us back to the study of the ancient Church, of that which inculcated the necessity of a more dignified service, and of that which has done much to break down the old stereotyped and inflexible theories of the inspiration and interpretation of the Scriptures. The preachers of every Christian Society speak a language which would puzzle their grandfathers, if they could hear it. The *Zeitgeist*, as Mr. Matthew Arnold called it—the Spirit of the Age has breathed upon them, and they can never go back to the modes of thought and speech which were current a century ago.

And whence have come those two potent influences of which we have spoken? In great measure from Germany. To Coleridge has been assigned the parentage of Tractarianism and modern Latitudinarianism alike; and, although some of his disciples have indignantly resented the ascription to him of the former, they are only half justified in their contention. And Coleridge, beyond all question, received his principal inspiration from Germany. But it was not merely indirectly, through Coleridge, that the Tractarians received German influence, but directly, by the study of German theological literature. Dr. Pusey himself was deeply interested in this study, and both he and Hugh James Rose published books on the subject.

Still more obvious is the influence of Germany on the latest of the three schools. Arnold was an actual student of German literature; and Frederick Maurice was not merely the devoted disciple of Coleridge, but was even more familiar than his master with the sources from which he drew his inspiration. We might add many names to these, as those of the Hares and Frederick Robertson and Trench, the last of whom, although he latterly became more distinctly Anglican in tone, never lost the spirit of his earlier days and associates.

These thoughts have been suggested by a perusal of a very interesting pamphlet by a distinguished German divine, Dr. W. Beyschlag, of Halle, on *Religion and Modern Society*, the modern society being that of Germany. Dr. Beyschlag acknowledges the great difficulty of the task which

he has undertaken. There are, indeed, he says with truth, few more difficult undertakings than the endeavour to feel the religious pulse of the present, especially when we are trying to estimate not merely the force of the stroke, but its healthiness or unhealthiness. This attempt, however, must be made, and Dr. Beyschlag has done it in a spirit of earnest fairness—resolute, to the best of his ability, to understand and interpret the facts before him, and not to substitute his own fears and hopes, his own inclinations and antipathies for these facts.

We feel the more confidence in accepting the guidance of Dr. Beyschlag, that he is neither optimist nor pessimist. He is neither so in love with the present that he can see no evil in it, nor such an alarmist that he can see but little good. As far as he goes, his words have a kind of self-evidencing power in them; and, although he may not tell us all, we feel that what he tells us is true.

On one point the author gives testimony which will surprise those who have been accustomed to hear of the general neglect of church-going in Protestant Germany. The church-life of Germany, he says, at the beginning of the present century, was in a state of deep depression, but has now greatly revived. Whilst he admits that, more particularly in the country, there is a good deal of merely conventional church-going, among the educated classes in towns the churches have "filled a hundred fold." To those who have any really deep knowledge of the German spirit this testimony will have peculiar significance. There is no people in the world in whom personal religion is so little necessarily connected with church-going as the Germans. Their intense subjectivity seems to keep alive within them a sense of the unseen and infinite without the aid of external ordinances. In this respect they differ altogether from the French, who seem incapable of religion without the constant presence of the outward witness and means of grace. The revival of attendance upon church ordinances, therefore, would seem to show a quickened sense of the corporate character of Christian life.

The next point that Dr. Beyschlag notices, as of hopeful omen, is the rich religious literature which Germany produces and the great demand for it which exists. And this is proof of no mere speculative interest, for there has been a corresponding increase of Christian activity in all good works. With respect to the influence of religion in the political sphere, he admits that its character is equivocal; but, on the whole, he judges that, even if sometimes the results are unwelcome, yet the very fact that religion exercises so powerful an influence is an evidence of its reality and power.

There is, however, a darker side to the picture, and he does not hesitate to bring it into relief. Referring to the charge against Protestant Germany, that it is honeycombed by unbelief and doubt, he retorts that among Roman Catholics there is an immense amount of religious indifference and naturalistic unbelief, and this even among the priesthood, whilst he maintains that the absence of ecclesiasticism among Protestants is no evidence of the absence of religion. To this we have already referred, and it can be denied by no one who really knows the national character.

Further, he confesses and laments the growth of an irreligious spirit in certain political movements, in the Art of the country which is too little directed by a religious motive, in the poetical literature, and especially in the scientific writings of the day, many of which are positively atheistic in their tendency. At the same time he draws attention to the greater public liberty which is now enjoyed with respect to the profession or the neglect of religion and church by reason of which many who would, at one time, have been silent on their unbelief will now not hesitate to declare it. This is a point well worth noting, and it is as notable among ourselves and in every other Christian country as in Germany.

Dr. Beyschlag then proceeds to point out some of the consequences of the loss of the religious spirit and passes on to comment upon the results of the Vatican Council and its decrees. To this matter we may be able to return. For the present we can only remark on the very striking correspondence between the condition of Germany and that of other Protestant countries. Everywhere there is (with unimportant exceptions) the same increased vitality in regard to church life as distinguished from personal religion. Religious literature was never more abundant; was never of a higher, purer, more intellectual character. Never were there more numerous institutions for the alleviation of the ills of humanity, or for the advancement of the moral and spiritual interests of the community.

It may be that the darker influences are prevailing. We cannot prophesy. But at least we are bound to take note of all the facts and all the tendencies which are at work. By-and-by we may be better able to estimate the probable outcome of the present state of things.

SINCERE protests against dialect writing have been made by wise critics, who have seen lurking in it a danger to the dignity and refinement of our literature. This danger is the less serious because it arises solely from the fact that dialect has become the fashion. Like other fashions it has been overdone; and it cannot live long, when, a time apparently near at hand, its real merits are universally obscured by glaring incongruities and strivings after purely external or verbal effects.—*Current.*

THERE are few things more productive of evil in society than a suspicious disposition. He who is always on the watch for wrong-doing, actually fosters it. He may fancy that he is a foe to evil, but in truth, by letting it dwell in his mind, he becomes its promoter. The gross injustice he does to the innocent is but part of the injury. He stirs up resentful feelings, destroys friendship, embitters intercourse, sows seeds of distrust everywhere, poisons both his own happiness and that of many others.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

* *Die Religion und die Moderne Gesellschaft.* Von Willibald Beyschlag. Halle, 1887.