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H. VON HOLST ON "THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ILLUSTRATED BY MIRABEAU'S CAREER."

BY G. KOERNER.

I. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE WORK.—THE DIFFERENT METHODS OF WRITING HISTORY.—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE MOST DISTINGUISHED MODERN HISTORIANS.

THE title of the two volumes contains the addition : "Twelve Lectures on the History of the French Revolution, Delivered at Lowell Institute, Boston, Mass."

Will the distinguished author pardon me when I say that the title chosen by him might have indicated the contents better by styling it simply : "Mirabeau and His Times."

That those lectures furnished the basis of his work is very true, but by adding copious and often very extensive notes printed in quite small type at the foot of the text, he has really made it an entirely new work. If the words of these notes were counted, I venture to say that they would fill as many pages as are covered by the text.

It must be remembered that some of the most classical productions in literature rest on lectures delivered by their authors. The illustrious commentaries of Sir William Blackstone, of Chancellor Kent, many of the works of Savigny, Judge Story, Francis Liebers on law and political ethics, of the historians Michelet and Edgar Quinet, Ranke and Sybel, of the philosophers Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and last, but not least, the immortal *Cosmos* of Alexander von Humboldt, owe their origin to lectures, amplified, polished, and explained in their published volumes.

In several respects Professor Holst's "French Revolution illustrated by Mirabeau's life" may be compared to Carlyle's *French Revolution*. Both works are addressed to a narrow circle of highly cultured people who are thoroughly informed on the subject-matter treated. They are eminently suggestive, make one stop, and muse and reflect, incite to comparisons, in a word, they are charming for the highly intellectual, but are caviar for the mass of ordinary readers. Of course, as far as books on philosophy, theology, and the accurate sciences are concerned, no one expects to read them except those who study these branches of learning. But too often we find even historians who rely

too much on the understanding of the public which they desire to instruct and enlighten.

As a rule, the English and French trust less to the intelligence of their readers. Hume, Voltaire, Mignet, Macaulay; the Americans, Bancroft, Prescott, and Motley, carry us down the stream of time in a clear, easy, continuous way. They instruct, while they entertain. A very model of treating history in that style is M. Thiers. He may not be equal, as regards classical erudition and profoundness of thought, to such historians as Carlyle, Michelet, Edgar Quinet, Ranke, Sybel, Treitschke, but he leaves no gaps to be filled up by the presupposed learning of the average intelligent reader. Thiers treats them as a class of scholars sitting before him on their benches, giving them object-lessons. His narrative flows ceaselessly along, not obstructed by cataracts or eddies. His descriptions are most minute. He thinks for his readers. No problem for him which he does not undertake to solve. No wonder that in spite of his partiality, his sophistry, his occasional shallowness, his story in part legendary of the Consulate and Empire, has become so popular! What a difference, for instance, between him and Ranke, who somewhere says : "I write only for those, who do not know ; what I think, I know alone." His universal history, left incomplete by his death, written with a beauty and warmth of style far surpassing that of all his former creations, might as well have been written in hieroglyphics, as regards the average intelligence of his readers.

There is a drawback in books built upon lectures. Unless they are carefully revised and condensed, they are very apt to abound in what may be justly called "damnable reiterations"; the same thoughts, frequently even in the same garb, occur time and again. The reason of this is, however, very plain. The lecturer does not often address the same audiences. The professor at the college or university will find, in great part, at least, different hearers at each scholastic term. The audience of the general lecturer finds his audience equally shifting.

In originality, incisiveness, and boldness of style, von Holst may also be compared to Carlyle. In a brief prefatory note he informs us that he has left the body of his lectures wholly unchanged, because he

had published them in compliance with the wishes of many of those who heard them delivered, "and had desired me to publish what they heard me say, and not what I might have said. This accounts for some peculiarities of style," he says; "I have amply availed myself of the liberties deemed admissible in speaking. But I have undoubtedly taken also other liberties with the English language, simply because I did not know any better. Will the reader kindly grant my request to judge these leniently? I have deemed it justifiable to lay greater stress upon having the 'What' exactly as I wanted it to be, rather than to have other people file the 'How' into such smooth and idiomatic English that an easy critic might have mistaken me for a native American. I was afraid of their filing away rather more of my 'What' than I cared to let go."

But we find but little difference as far as style and peculiar mode of expression are concerned, between the author's *Mirabeau* and his other numerous, very able and remarkable writings, such as his works on *The Constitutional History of the United States*, *The Life of Calhoun*. They display the same originality; the same freedom in coining new words; the same, often colloquial, style; the same boldness of metaphor. Like Carlyle, von Holst prefers very often to use the hammer of Thor to the polished Toledo steel blade!

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.—THE ANCIENT RÉGIME.—
KING LOUIS AND HIS QUEEN.

A brief, but extremely well-written sketch of the times immediately preceding the great revolution of 1789 is based principally upon Tocqueville's and Taine's *Ancien régime*, and agrees with the first in setting aside a very common error, into which many writers on the Revolution of '89 have fallen. Von Holst remarks: "To Tocqueville belongs the merit of having first discovered and proved that the immoderate centralisation, which up to our times has been so eminently characteristic of France, was not the work of the Revolution, but existed already under the ancient régime. The essential difference between the two periods in this respect consists in this, that the Revolution made legal what under the ancient régime was to a great extent only a fact. All the threads of the government issued from and terminated in the council of the king (*Conseil du Roi*), which had only to execute the king's order. In him alone resided all power, *car tel est mon plaisir*. This official formula was not an empty figure of speech; it was in full, in terrible accord with the facts." Vol. I., p. 10.

Our author justly makes the ancient régime responsible even for the excesses of the Revolution, when he says (Vol. I., p. 44): "If any one had no right to pass judgment upon the spirit that ruled France from 1793 to 1795 [the Reign of Terror], it

was the champions of the ancient régime. This spirit was the legitimate offspring of the political and social system bequeathed by Louis XIV. and Louis XV. to Louis XVI."

Under the title of "Paris and Versailles" we are shown the immense and deplorable influence Paris exercised over the whole of France, quite different from other great capitals. "Paris," the author says, "continued to grow, and the more it grew, the more it became the absorbing centre of everything constituting a determining and creative force in a nation's life. For talent and ambition of every variety, aspiring to more than a third-rate part, there was but one place in France, Paris. As early as 1740 Montesquieu wrote: 'There is in France nothing but Paris and the distant provinces, the latter only because Paris has as yet not had time to swallow them.'" Vol. I., p. 59.

The portraits of King Louis and his queen (Vol. I., p. 84) are very justly and happily drawn. He has consulted the best contemporaneous sources with discrimination such as Lamarck, the Austrian Minister at Paris, Mercy d'Argenteau, and the correspondence between Maria Theresia and d'Argenteau. Very many traits of King Louis and his Queen's character appear in the course of the book, as on page 84, Vol. I. "His father," von Holst says, "had not allowed him to grow up in the poisoned atmosphere of the Court. That, however, was about all he had done for him, and that was a scanty outfit for the absolute ruler of a great empire drifting at an alarming rate into all-embracing political and social decomposition. . . . His intellectual horizon was narrow and even within his compass he moved but slowly, and no more than he could help. Indolent and yet irascible, good-natured and yet curt to rudeness; yielding to every pressure, but allowing no one to gain full sway over his ever vacillating will; rendered stubborn by the very consciousness, and sinking back into redoubled weakness as soon as the fitful mood of asserting a will of his own has spent its force. . . . Well-meaning, but devoid of the intellectual as well as of the moral strength required to persist, when his good intentions meet with resistance; morally pure, but without any adequate conception of either the nature or extent of moral responsibility. And just in this, the most essential quality, the Queen was even more wanting, though in every other respect greatly his superior. Later on, when the revolutionary storm had burst in full force from the clouds, Mirabeau called Marie Antoinette in a momentary access of enthusiastic hopefulness 'the only man at court.' She had unquestionably a much stronger will and more initiative as well as a keener intellect than her royal husband, therefore her ascendancy over him grew apace with the increasing troubles and dangers. . . . Apart from her attitude in her trial

and on the scaffold, she never rose to being really great in a great time, but always betrayed the illy-balanced woman, who cannot refrain from allowing petty considerations of every imaginable kind to interfere more or less with the decision of capital questions. And what was ultimately lack of the required elevation of judgment, purpose, and fate-defying energy, had been originally shallowness, fickleness, and frivolous unconcern. . . . Marie Antoinette thought the life-task of a queen consisted in enjoying herself and helping her friends to have a good time of it. Only so far as it was serviceable to these ends did she at first try to exercise an influence on questions of State, and all attempts to kindle in her a sustained interest in any other serious occupation proved a sad failure. All the charges that have been laid to her door with a view to make her appear wicked, are malicious distortions or wholly unfounded. She was only thoughtless and frivolous; but her thoughtlessness was of a kind to provoke malice and slander even if she had been surrounded by saints instead of the putrescent court inherited from Louis XV. and Madame Dubarry."

It may not be uninteresting to place alongside of this picture, the judgment passed by Barras on King Louis in his shameless posthumous memoirs, which ought never to have been published. This vainglorious man, with very few exceptions touching his tools and satellites, villifies and besmirches everybody, Napoleon I., Lafayette, Carnot, his colleagues in the directory, Madame De Staël, nearly all the generals of the Revolution, of the consulate and the empire. Napoleon, according to him, was the vilest of mankind, time-serving, false, cruel, a moral coward, of deep ingratitude and devoured by inordinate ambition. He married Josephine, Barras says, knowing that she was the cast-off mistress of General Hoche and *tutti quanti*, and also his own, Barras's, paramour, and that she had love-intrigues even with low menials. And yet this known scelerate, whose only redeeming quality was his unshakable audacity as a warrior and a statesman, pays the following tribute to the King, for whose and the Queen's death he had voted, and spoken without remorse: "Louis XVI. was good-hearted, of a clear intellect, had sound views and was in part far-seeing. If he had not had the faction of ultramontane priests and the courtiers, interested in keeping up abuses at his side, who frightened him away from every reform; had he not been eternally vacillating, which made him decline to-day what he was forced to do on the morrow, had he been free from the clerical and jesuitical obstructions and left to himself, he would have, as my conscience tells me, according to his nature sincerely attached himself to the reformatory principles of the constitution and would have

helped to carry them through; all the sad conflicts would have been spared him, the French would have loved and revered him as the self-sacrificing liberator, and he could have remained on his throne powerful, great, and venerated." *Memoirs of Barras*, Vol. I., p. 70.

As to the Queen, Barras at another place distinctly discharged her from the necklace scandal, and he is no mean witness. He tells us himself that the so-called Countess of La Motte, who was at the bottom of this outrageous swindle, was a very intimate friend of his, from whom he learned all the particulars of the intrigue after her conviction. Besides he witnessed the trial and had access to all the records.

After the Assembly of Notables, convoked by the King to consider the desperate financial condition of the realm, and to relieve it by asking the nobility and clergy, represented by that assembly, to give up some of their privileges and exemptions from taxation and from other charges, so as to lighten the burden pressing so heavily upon the common people, had proved fruitless, many thought that the King had made a great mistake. As far as the King and royalty was concerned, this may be admitted, but as regarded the people, it was by no means an indifferent matter.

Mirabeau's sagacity saw clearly the consequences of this sort of an appeal to the public, and of the debates of the assembly which drew the veil from the preceding system of absolutism. Mirabeau, then at Berlin, wrote to Talleyrand at Paris: "I deem the day one of the brightest of my life on which you apprised me of the convocation of the notables, which undoubtedly will precede by but little that of the National Assembly."

* * *

In the very long chapter, including extensive notes, entitled "A Typical Family Tragedy of Portentous Political Import," Professor von Holst draws a portrait of Mirabeau's physical and moral character, rather rhapsodically, but with such drastic power and felicity of expression that it would be very unsatisfactory to disfigure it by extracts. It must be read. We can only call the reader's attention to this excellent part of the work.

The *Memoirs of Barras*, not being so accessible to the general public, it may not be out of place to cite some remarks about Mirabeau from one of the pages of this writer (Vol. I., p. 56):

"The court had become discouraged by the ill-success of using force against a power which it had not known until now,—the power of public opinion. It sought to meet the movement by other means. With a view of tempting the conscience of the patriot leaders, the Court tried first the one who had been most violently opposed to it, and was consequently feared most. Mirabeau was to be bribed. Mediators were chosen. It appears for certain that Mirabeau listened to the proposals. He was offered 15,000 or 20,000 francs per month and a probable accession to the minis-

try, if he would use his influence to serve or rather to sustain the government, which had received from him the most violent blow. A man of *esprit* said at the time: 'Mirabeau may have sold himself, but he will never deliver himself.' Monsieur (later on Louis XVIII.) being used from his youth to despise men and corrupt them, closed the bargain with Mirabeau."

There is hardly now a difference of opinion as to Mirabeau's character. It must be conceded that he was from his early youth a *débauché*. Women, he confessed, "were his only occupation, and licentiousness his second nature; he was a gambler, a bully, a fortune-hunter, a spendthrift, a libellous pamphleteer, many of whose writings were, by order of the government, burnt publicly by the common hangman; he was devoured by a towering ambition, and with all that he had a warm and generous heart, hated injustice done to him and others, despised all shams, and was a giant in intellect."

As to his glaring faults and vices, we must bear in mind that he was the child of his time, the true representative of the moral standard of the majority of the nobility, of the clergy, and even of the *parvenu bourgeois*. The moment he appeared in public life as the great intellectual champion of revolutionary ideas, his private character, with the friends of liberty, seemed to be obliterated. He swayed at once at his will the National Assembly and the Jacobin Club, and as he had even before the Revolution always shown the greatest sympathy for the low and oppressed, he became easily an idol of the populace. Witness: his funeral and the deposition of his mortal remains in the Pantheon. It was fortunate for him that he died at the right time, as in fact everybody does. To have formed at this period a sincere and fruitful alliance between royalty and liberty was a problem even a Mirabeau could not solve. The foremost biographer of Germany, Mr. Varnhagen von Ense, in his sensational *Diaries*, remarks about Mirabeau: ¹ "He stood on a wrong plane, the plane of the Court, fenced in by those who ruled the King, where his strength, like that of a lion in his cage, had no room to work, was unavailable."

Mirabeau, I believe, would never have become a Marat, nor a Robespierre. The fate of Danton would have overtaken him. In successful revolutions the initiators and leaders almost invariably become the victims of the upheaval they have started. The often-made comparison that revolutions like Saturn devour their own children would have proved true in Mirabeau's case.

In Mr. von Holst's subsequent lectures of the first volume we meet with a highly interesting and learned disquisition on the States-General. Referring to the opening of this body he says: "On the 5th of May,

1789, the King said in his speech: 'A general unrest and overstrained desire for innovations has taken possession of the minds and might end by confusing public opinion entirely, if one does not make haste to give it a hold by a combination of wise and moderate councils. The minds are in agitation; but an assembly of representatives of the nation will undoubtedly hear only the voice of wisdom and prudence.'"—"Will undoubtedly!" Von Holst exclaims, "Can a babe be more trustful! Sure enough, he tells the nation,—it is an avalanche bearing straight down upon us. But why be scared? It is the business of these gentlemen to see to it that its course be arrested ere any harm is done. *That was virtually the abdication of the Government.*" (Pp. 240-241.)

MIRABEAU IN THE STATES-GENERAL.—HIS CONNEXION WITH THE COURT.—HIS END.

Upon the States-General Mirabeau has remarked, that he had considered as another obstacle the difficulty, or, rather, the absolute impossibility, systematically to direct an assembly of such a vast mass, over which its most revered chiefs have only very little ascendancy, and which eludes every influence. The direction of so numerous an assembly, even if it had been possible at the moment of its formation, was no more so today, thanks to the habit it had acquired of acting like the people it represents, by movements always brusque, always passionate, always precipitate.

"And this incongruous mass-meeting," von Holst says, "with nothing and nobody to guide it, is not only an ordinary legislature; it is also a constituent assembly. Surely, if there is a people on the face of the earth which ought to be capable of fully grasping what that implies, it is the people of this republic. Recall to your memory your own Philadelphia Convention (1787). A mere handful of men, all weighed and not found wanting in times that tried men's souls, all looked up to and revered as the wisest and best, all trained in every respect to an uncommon degree in the school of experience, only political and not social problems being their task;—and even the political confined to a limited field;—and yet it is conceded by every single student of that period I have ever heard of, that they would surely have failed, if they had not started with the wise resolution to deliberate behind closed doors, and not to let the people know what they were doing until they had finished the arduous work entrusted to them. And now, look at this picture: twelve hundred men, untried, inexperienced, ushered into their official existence, with a protracted and most bitter contest, not prompted by the same impulses, not striving after the same aim and ends, discussing and framing the political consti-

¹ *Diaries*, Vol. XII., p. 67.

tution and social structure of the country in the open market and soon under the direct fire of the galleries!

"Aye the States-General," the author winds up his chapter on the Assembly, "were a rudderless craft in a storm-tossed sea, carried by the currents straight on to the breakers, and the crew not only most grievously blundered, but also the deep stain of guilt spotted their garments profusely. But that this crew, thus collected, could under such circumstances make such a sail, bears a testimony to the genius and the high-soaring idealism of the great nation, than which there is none more glorious in its whole history."

The second volume opens with a brief review of the voluminous works of French, German, and English historians, who have undertaken to write the life of Mirabeau. Mr. von Holst comes to the conclusion that they have more or less failed to get at the very kernel of his character, and that his true biography has yet to be written. I believe our author does himself injustice. True, neither he nor Carlyle have given us a dry, connected, chronological narrative of Mirabeau from his babyhood up to his death, interspersed with occasional explanations, epigrams, and reflexions, but whoever has read Carlyle's *French Revolution*, or will read von Holst's lectures, is sure to have obtained a most vivid, truthful portraiture of this most complex man. They have gauged his character to its very depths and have successfully unveiled that sphinx.

Not less have they given us wonderfully true pictures of some of the most striking personages of that chaotic period: of the King, the Queen, the Duke of Orleans, of Brienne, of La Mark, Necker, Lafayette, (upon the latter, I think, von Holst is too severe,) and of many others.

In his second series of lectures our author gives us very many extracts from some of the greatest speeches and letters of Mirabeau, for which he deserves our thanks. We are constrained to give only a few specimens. When in January, 1789, a Paris paper had called him a traitor, a mad dog, he replied: "If I am a mad dog, that is an excellent reason to elect me, for despotism and privileges will die of my bite." When right at the start in the provinces and even in Paris murderous scenes of violence and destruction of the property of nobles had taken place, and in the States-General arguments were based on the ideal social teachings of Rousseau and his followers, Mirabeau said: "Liberty never was the fruit of a doctrine elaborated by philosophical deductions, but of every-day experience, and the simple reasonings elicited by the facts. We are not savages coming naked from the shores of the Orinoco to form a society. We are an old nation, and undoubtedly too old for our epoch. We have a pre-existing government, a pre-existing

king, pre-existing prejudices. As far as possible one must adapt the things to the Revolution and avoid abruptness of transition."

And at another place: "And I, gentlemen, believe the royal veto to such a degree necessary that I should rather live in Constantinople than in France, if he were not to have it; yes, I declare that I should know nothing more terrible than the sovereign authority of twelve hundred persons who could render themselves to-morrow irremovable, the day after to-morrow, hereditary, and would end, as the aristocracies of all countries, by encroaching upon everything." After he had been vituperated by the press and threatened with death by an exasperated people, and having been warned by a friend who had read the article to him of the danger he might encounter, he at once took it up to the tribune, and thundered: "I did not need this lesson that it is but a small distance from the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock. . . . Let them abandon to the fury of the deceived people him who for twenty years waged war upon every oppression, and who spoke to the people of France of liberty, constitution, resistance, at a time when these vile calumniators lived in all the prevailing prejudices. What do I care? Such blows from such hands will not check my course. Answer me if you are able, then calumniate as much as you like. I will be carried away from here triumphant or in shreds."

When laws were proposed to make emigration a crime, Mirabeau objected to the reading of the bill and moved the order of the day, insisting that it was not possible either to justify or execute a prohibition of emigration: "Not indignation, reflexion must make the laws," he declared. The code of Draco, but not the statutes of France, would be a fit place for a law like that contemplated by the committee. . . . I declare that I should consider myself free from every oath of fidelity towards those who become guilty of the infamy of appointing a dictatorial commission. . . . The popularity which I have had the honor to enjoy like others is not a weak reed. I want to sink its roots into the earth on the imperturbable basis of reason and liberty. If you make a law against emigrants, I swear I will never obey it." As long as Mirabeau lived no law against emigrants passed.

In his lecture, one before the last, entitled "Mirabeau and the Court," our author discusses with great discrimination the charge of bribery against Mirabeau. "Mirabeau," he says, "received money from the King, that is an established fact." But he pleads, extenuating circumstances when he adds: "An equally undeniable fact, however, is that for generations public opinion—and more especially that of the upper classes—considered it a matter of course that anybody who had a chance to get money from the king should

improve it. If we want to be just judges we must keep this well in mind, because Mirabeau, like every historical personage, has to be judged by the standard of his, and not of our own time." He also points to instances in Mirabeau's antecedent career, where he refused taking a large bribe offered to him by a great banking corporation, for suppressing a pamphlet he had written denouncing the iniquities of that institution.

We have already given what Barras, a bitter enemy, had said regarding this bribery business, "that Mirabeau may have sold himself, but will never deliver himself." Von Holst cites also Lafayette's saying about Mirabeau: "Mirabeau was not inaccessible to money, but for no amount would he have sustained an opinion that would have destroyed liberty and dishonored his name." And Lafayette was by no means a lenient judge of Mirabeau, but quite the reverse.

The last lecture is a masterly *résumé* of Mirabeau's character and of his times. We had marked many passages for their fulness of views and attractiveness of style, but must come to an end with the closing lines of the lecture:

"In quantity and in quality, the work done by France since the establishment of the third republic in regard to the history of the Revolution challenges the highest admiration. It is nevertheless to last another century ere she is prepared to do full justice to her greatest son of the greatest period of her history. Who can tell? Mere knowledge of the fact does not suffice. Her judgment upon this chapter of her past must be warped so long as she flinches from probing the present to the quick; and much as the third republic has done for the intellectual and political advancement of the nation, it has as yet not produced that supreme moral courage required by the precept of the Greek sage: 'Know thyself.'"

CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHISTIC SENTIMENTS.

THERE is a strange agreement between Christian and Buddhistic sentiment as expressed in hymns and religious poetry. The well-known crusader's song which, it is said, was sung by Christian warriors on their march to Palestine, to a beautiful rhythmic march-melody, concludes with the following verse:

"Fair is the moonshine,
Fairer the sunlight
Than all the stars of the heavenly host.
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels that heaven can boast."

How much does this resemble the following verse in the Dhammapada (verse 387):

"The sun is bright by day,
The moon shines bright by night,
The warrior is bright in his armor,

The Brahmana is bright in his meditation,
But Buddha, the awakened,
Is brightest with splendor day and night."¹

There is not the slightest evidence that the crusader's hymn is an echo of the verse of the Dhammapada. How naturally similar sentiments develop under the same conditions of mind may be learned from the following poem which we quote from "The Ten Theophanies" by the Rev. William M. Baker. We take the liberty only of making a few changes in the order of the verses and replace Christian terms by Buddhistic expressions. The sentiment remains unaltered and shows how thoroughly the religious literature of the one religion can be utilised for the other. The poem, which may be entitled either "Lifting the Veil of Maya" or "A Glimpse of Nirvana," reads in its revised version as follows:

"Melt, oh thou film-flake, faster,
Rend, thou thin gauze, in two,
O Buddha², overmaster,
Break in fulfilment through!
I know how very nearly
I draw unto thy realms.
I know that it is merely
A film which overwhelms
These eyes from rapturous seeing,
These ears from rapturous sound,
This self from Buddha-being,
This life from broken bound.-
O sacred light, o'flow thee!
Rush *æons* into one,
That earth and heaven may know the
Eternal rest begun!"

R. C.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOD."

To the Editor of *The Open Court*:

Your remarks upon "The Responsibility of God" demand a kindly, counter criticism, because they are one-sided. The time has come, now, for us, who claim to be fearlessly following the lead of science, to get down to cosmic facts in all our philosophical reasoning; absolutely abandoning the false premises of religion which make mankind wholly responsible for all the ills which they daily experience and suffer. All the religious sects convened in the great Parliament of Religions were unanimous in voicing the accountability of man, but not one of them, that I could learn, declared for the responsibility of God. They affirmed like you, that "we are our own makers. We reap what we sow. . . . The existence of evil in this world is the fruit of our own doing. We are the builders of our own fate, and we must be our own saviours." This false view is taken from the standpoint of authority, not from that of truth; is the logical result of allowing our conclusions to be governed by the notions of eminent religious teachers instead of by our actual experiences and nature's revelations. In the human mechanical domain, the intelligent engineer, who

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. X., p. 89.

² The italics indicate the changes made. Line 3 reads in the original "Eternal heaven, o'er-master"; line 11, "This self from God-like being"; line 13, "day" in place of "light"; and line 14, "æons" (which stands for the Buddhist term "kalpas") in place of "Sabbaths."

has experience, figures that can be relied upon, timbers, bolts, plates, and rods, and everything necessary to construct a heavy load-bearing bridge, is responsible for the safety of the trains that have to pass over. God is just as responsible in his domain. If a flower, shrub, or tree dies for want of rain, God is responsible. If a cyclone ruthlessly devastates a town, God is responsible. If a hail-storm destroys the crops which man sowed, God is responsible. In fact, God is responsible for all distress, upon sea and land, that comes beyond the power of man to avoid. He is responsible for the lion preying upon the lamb—for the stronger and more subtle among mankind taking advantage of the weaker, for allowing one to reap what another sows. As in the case of the engineer and the bridge, so is it with God and his organisms. If a man is combined and evolved vicious, he cannot be moral. If sickly, he cannot be healthy. If simple, he cannot be wise, no more than a bridge can be made to be both weak and strong. It does not matter what Buddha has said, or what other eminent teachers have said in regard to mankind reaping what they sow; pure science confounds them all, showing that all things in the domain of God, as well as in that of man, must be systematically and mathematically combined and arranged. In the scientific language of the Nazarene, "Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." The evolutions of God express themselves just as they are combined and endowed. They cannot do otherwise. The glow-worm cannot give back more light than it gets, neither can the moon. They must give back all they get if they are so conditioned. It is so with mankind. Hence we are not "our own builders," nor "our own saviours." We are simply organisms under the process of God's evolution. The gospel of the Nazarene, therefore, is superior to all others and differs from Buddhism in this: It teaches that God is lord, who else can be lord? Whatever God sows that he also reaps. Whatever a man sows, that he must sow, but it is not always in his power to reap what he sows. He has not always control of every factor in the combinations which he has to make. *Theology has saddled the burden of responsibility upon mankind long enough. Science places it where it justly belongs. Let the defenders of the religious hypothesis refute me if they can.*

JOHN MADDOCK.

[Accepting Mr. Maddock's definition of God, we grant that he is right and his argument is valid. God (that is the totality of cosmic evolution) is responsible for all his doings and he must reap what he sows.

This view of God is in Christian dogmatology called God the Son.

When we speak of God as being above responsibility we mean those eternal relations in cosmic existence which ultimately constitute the authority of conduct; or, in other words, that omnipresent power which is constantly begetting God the Son, i. e., God the Father.

Man, every single individual, and also the whole of mankind, is a part of God the Son, i. e., God as the cosmic evolution of life, and we are responsible with him, because we are identical with him. As soon as we tear a man out from the conditions of his being, regarding him not as the living continuation of his conditions but as a product that is cut loose from the roots from which it grew, he can no longer be regarded as responsible. The more man recognises the solidarity of his own fate with the destiny of mankind, the more he will feel the dignity of his divinity, of his sonship, of his responsibility.—En.]

To the Editor of The Open Court:

The *Open Court* of the 6th inst. received; and among other articles I have read "The Responsibility of God." I know nothing of the sermon of Mr. Smith, except what you have quoted in

that article, and what I here say is based on those quotations. Concerning the sermon you say: "This is a strange sermon, a sermon that probably has never been preached before in any one of the Christian pulpits."

Now there may be some strange things in the parts of the sermon which you do not quote; for I do not know the denomination to which the Rev. Mr. Smith belongs. But in the quotations I find nothing strange. I have preached the same ever since I have been in the ministry. Dr. Haney, my father-in-law, says it is the doctrine he has always preached, and that he has heard all his life. And this is not all. The same doctrine is preached by every one of the more than 32,000 Methodist preachers in the United States; and it is the doctrine that has been preached by the Methodists from the beginning. It might have to be modified somewhat in a Calvinistic pulpit; but in any Arminian pulpit such a doctrine is always at home.

Now what does all this show? It shows that in this—and other particulars could be given—the apostle of the "Religion of Science" does not understand what orthodox Christian pulpits are preaching. Notably does this *seem* to be true on the subject of ethics.

Come and hear us, Doctor, Sunday after Sunday.

And in the mean time, while we all fight on, we are sure of this, as Mr. Hegeler said during my last call, the truth is sure to prevail.

A. LINCOLN SHUTE.

NO RESURRECTION—NO CHRISTIANITY.

Organic Change, Not Identity.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

In the letter headed, "Can There Be a New Christianity?" Mrs. Hopper asks: "Would any religion that had received a name on account of its distinctive features be able, 'with all reverence to the past,' to accept a truth without compromise, whatever the truth may be?"

In reply, Dr. Carus appears to assert that it would; he declares: "As to the *idea* *of* *accepting* *the* *truth* *of* *other* *religions*, by following the injunction of accepting the truth without compromise, whatever the truth may be, must come to one and the same conclusion."

But where are the religions that enjoin the acceptance of the truth without compromise? Religions do not present their dogmas as truths in the ordinary sense, they present them as sacred utterances from sources of wisdom beyond human experience. True, Jesus is said to have affirmed that he should be followed by the spirit of truth, and that the truth should make men free. But is this the position of other religions; or in fact of Jesus himself? Certainly, if he ever did make such a statement, it was not what gave faith, life, and energy to his disciples, who gave no serious attention to it. It was the doctrine of the resurrection, which gave being to Christianity, that the Son of the Living God had come down from heaven to offer up his mortal life a sacrifice for suffering men, and that those who believed in Him should live again after death, and be blessed in immortality. This was the Truth to be accepted without compromise—not to accept it, to accept a denial, to accept another truth, was to despise the Divine Compassion, to lose the Grace, to lose the bliss in immortality.

It is so with all religions; each presents a truth to be accepted without compromise, but not the truth.

Nor is it correct that religions have a common ideal. It is the nature of religions to deny to each other a common ideal, and to hate and fight against it.

There is next to be considered the nature of the truths that religions present for acceptance; the origin of those truths, how they were obtained, how they were known as truths; and if they have any relation or leading to such a truth as Dr. Carus finds in

science, and which he believes may be made a moralising force to take the place of religion.

What is the truth of Christianity? The affirmation that a man called Jesus was the son of God; that he was crucified by men, and rose from the dead.

What is the affirmation of the Mohammedan religion? That a man called Mohammed ascended to Paradise; that he saw God, and that there is but one God.

Are these affirmations acknowledged to be truths by the knowledge of to-day—that knowledge which we call science?

Dr. Carus affirms that every religion affirms a truth: Dr. Carus is exactly wrong; every religion affirms as truth what is not true.

How can the continued affirmation of falsehoods be a continued movement toward the affirmation of truth?

If these falsehoods were put forward by religion as merely conjunctural approaches to truth, it would be different; but they are affirmed as absolute.

What is their origin; is it in reality? Yes, and no. It is in reality, because in personal experience; not in reality, because that experience came through illusion—the illusion of spirit existence.

Jesus, Mahommed, the Greeks, the Buddhists, believed in disembodied existences; by these existences their truths are communicated.

Repudiated by knowledge, which is able to give the simplest explanation of how they arose, absolutely false, absolutely misleading, these illusions have had the profoundest influence upon human conduct, because they gave the assurance to each believer that his existence continued after death, and that his conduct in this existence would determine his after enjoyment or suffering.

So, far from being the effects of truth, the remarkable actions of those men who have founded religions, to quote Mr. Lester F. Ward, "must be referred not only to a pathological, but to an actually deranged condition of their minds. And the strange truth this comes up for our contemplation that, instead of having been caused by the truth, they were the cause of truth throughout all the years of history, we have been ruled and swayed by the magnetic passions of epileptics and monomaniacs."

Thus as Dr. Carus concludes, "the essence of religion can be only one and must remain one and the same among all nations, in all climes, and under all conditions."

But that essence is not truth—it is error.

Now it is true that by Christianity "we understand, not so much the doctrines of Jesus Christ, as the whole movement that was created through the aspirations of his life"; that movement has organically developed, as Dr. Carus describes, from the aspirations of his life, and is Jesus; but the foundation of all the movement, the start to belief, and to the aspiration itself of Jesus, was the assumption that he was the son of God and rose from the grave.

When, as Mrs. Hopper suggests, the ideal Christ is separated from the real Jesus—in other words, the illusion of Jesus is discovered and explained—there is left no truth in Christianity; Christianity as a moralising force is dead; it has no more an organic structure; as Weismann might say, it's germ-plasm is exhausted, and a belief founded on a different kind of experience, "a religion based upon the laws of existence, traceable in the psychological, social, and physical facts of experience," cannot claim to be called the New Christianity. No, nor a religion.

J. W. GASKINE.

[Mr. J. W. Gaskine can speak for himself that "Christianity as a moralising force is dead," but he cannot speak for others. To many members of the Christian churches, and also to others who for some reason or other do not join the churches, Christianity is

a living power, the moral ideals of which, whether right or wrong, exercise a determinative influence upon their actions.

However, as evolution is the law of life, we can observe a change in the interpretation of Christianity. Christianity is like a mustard-seed. It is growing. The Christianity of the Jews is broadened when preached to the Greek; and again the Christianity of the Greek changes when it reaches Rome. The Christianity of Protestant countries may be characterised as a Teutonic Christianity, and to-day Christianity is on the verge of entering into a new and indeed a higher phase, which is conditioned by its contact with science. If Christianity will broaden under the influence of science, it will live; if it refuses to listen to science, it will slowly, and probably peacefully, expire.

He who observes the intellectual commotion in our churches cannot doubt that there is a new view of Christianity taking hold of the religious leaders of our country. Mr. Gaskine's description of Christianity is the old view in its external characteristics, for he omits to mention those aspirations which contain the potentiality of a broader growth. His definition of religion is like a chemist's analysis of the ingredients of corn, or wheat, which will enable us to determine whether the substance is edible or not, but ignores that subtle something called "life," which, under proper conditions, will cause every grain to sprout and to grow and bear fruit in its season.

We know very well that among the followers of Moses, Christ, Buddha, and Mohammed there are many to whom religion is an assertion that is accepted as a supernatural revelation, which must be believed, although it may be proved to be wrong; but broader views are dawning on mankind. We are not bound to be tied down by the narrowness of former generations; we have the liberty of growing, and, so far as we are concerned, we are determined to make use of it, whether or not Mr. Gaskine is prepared to follow us.—ED.]

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