

CHAPTER V.

CONTRADICTION BETWEEN OUR LIFE AND OUR CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE.

Men Think they can Accept Christianity without Altering their Life--Pagan Conception of Life does not Correspond with Present Stage of Development of Humanity, and Christian Conception Alone Can Accord with it--Christian Conception of Life not yet Understood by Men, but the Progress of Life itself will Lead them Inevitably to Adopt it--The Requirements of a New Theory of Life Always Seem Incomprehensible, Mystic, and Supernatural--So Seem the Requirements of the Christian Theory of Life to the Majority of Men--The Absorption of the Christian Conception of Life will Inevitably be Brought About as the Result of Material and Spiritual Causes--The Fact of Men Knowing the Requirements of the Higher View of Life, and yet Continuing to Preserve Inferior Organizations of Life, Leads to Contradictions and Sufferings which Embitter Existence and Must Result in its Transformation--The Contradictions of our Life--The Economic Contradiction and the Suffering Induced by it for Rich and Poor Alike--The Political Contradiction and the Sufferings Induced by Obedience to the Laws of the State--The International Contradiction and the Recognition of it by Contemporaries: Komarovsky, Ferri, Booth, Passy, Lawson, Wilson, Bartlett, Defourney, Moneta--The Striking Character of the Military Contradiction.

There are many reasons why Christ's teaching is not understood.

One reason is that people suppose they have understood it when they have decided, as the Churchmen do, that it was revealed by supernatural means, or when they have studied, as the scientific men do, the external forms in which it has been manifested. Another reason is the mistaken notion that it is impracticable, and ought to be replaced by the doctrine of love for humanity. But the principal reason, which is the source of all the other mistaken ideas about it, is the notion that Christianity is a doctrine which can be accepted or rejected without any change of life.

Men who are used to the existing order of things, who like it and dread its being changed, try to take the doctrine as a collection of revelations and rules which one can accept without their modifying one's life. While Christ's teaching is not only a doctrine which gives rules which a man must follow, it unfolds a new meaning in life, and defines a whole world of human activity quite different from all that has preceded it and appropriate to the period on which man is entering.

The life of humanity changes and advances, like the life of the individual, by stages, and every stage has a theory of life appropriate to it, which is inevitably absorbed by men. Those who do not absorb it consciously, absorb it unconsciously. It is the same with the changes in the beliefs of peoples and of all humanity as it is with the changes of belief of individuals. If

the father of a family continues to be guided in his conduct by his childish conceptions of life, life becomes so difficult for him that he involuntarily seeks another philosophy and readily absorbs that which is appropriate to his age.

That is just what is happening now to humanity at this time of transition through which we are passing, from the pagan conception of life to the Christian. The socialized man of the present day is brought by experience of life itself to the necessity of abandoning the pagan conception of life, which is inappropriate to the present stage of humanity, and of submitting to the obligation of the Christian doctrines, the truths of which, however corrupt and misinterpreted, are still known to him, and alone offer him a solution of the contradictions surrounding him.

If the requirements of the Christian doctrine seem strange and even alarming to the man of the social theory of life, no less strange, incomprehensible, and alarming to the savage of ancient times seemed the requirements of the social doctrine when it was not fully understood and could not be foreseen in its results.

"It is unreasonable," said the savage, "to sacrifice my peace of mind or my life in defense of something incomprehensible, impalpable, and conventional--family, tribe, or nation; and above all it is unsafe to put oneself at the disposal of the power of others."

But the time came when the savage, on one hand, felt, though vaguely, the value of the social conception of life, and of its chief motor power, social censure, or social approbation--glory, and when, on the other hand, the difficulties of his personal life became so great that he could not continue to believe in the value of his old theory of life. Then he accepted the social, state theory of life and submitted to it.

That is just what the man of the social theory of life is passing through now.

"It is unreasonable," says the socialized man, "to sacrifice my welfare and that of my family and my country in order to fulfill some higher law, which requires me to renounce my most natural and virtuous feelings of love of self, of family, of kindred, and of country; and above all, it is unsafe to part with the security of life afforded by the organization of government."

But the time is coming when, on one hand, the vague consciousness in his soul of the higher law, of love to God and his neighbor, and, on the other hand, the suffering, resulting from the contradictions of life, will force the man to reject the social theory and to assimilate the new one prepared ready for him, which solves all the contradictions and removes all his sufferings--the Christian theory of life. And this time has now come.

We, who thousands of years ago passed through the transition, from the personal, animal view of life to the socialized view, imagine that that transition was an inevitable and natural one; but this transition through which we have been passing for the last eighteen hundred years seems arbitrary, unnatural, and alarming. But we only fancy this because that first transition has been so fully completed that the practice attained by it has become unconscious and instinctive in us, while the present transition is not yet over and we have to complete it consciously.

It took ages, thousands of years, for the social conception of life to permeate men's consciousness. It went through various forms and has now passed into the region of the instinctive through inheritance, education, and habit. And therefore it seems natural to us. But five thousand years ago it seemed as unnatural and alarming to men as the Christian doctrine in its true sense seems to-day.

We think to-day that the requirements of the Christian doctrine--of universal brotherhood, suppression of national distinctions, abolition of private property, and the strange injunction of non-resistance to evil by force--demand what is impossible. But it was just the same thousands of years ago, with every social or even family duty, such as the duty of parents to support their children, of the young to maintain the old, of fidelity in marriage. Still more strange, and even

unreasonable, seemed the state duties of submitting to the appointed authority, and paying taxes, and fighting in defense of the country, and so on. All such requirements seem simple, comprehensible, and natural to us to-day, and we see nothing mysterious or alarming in them. But three or five thousand years ago they seemed to require what was impossible.

The social conception of life served as the basis of religion because at the time when it was first presented to men it seemed to them absolutely incomprehensible, mystic, and supernatural. Now that we have outlived that phase of the life of humanity, we understand the rational grounds for uniting men in families, communities, and states. But in antiquity the duties involved by such association were presented under cover of the supernatural and were confirmed by it.

The patriarchal religions exalted the family, the tribe, the nation. State religions deified emperors and states. Even now most ignorant people--like our peasants, who call the Tzar an earthly god--obey state laws, not through any rational recognition of their necessity, nor because they have any conception of the meaning of state, but through a religious sentiment.

In precisely the same way the Christian doctrine is presented to men of the social or heathen theory of life to-day, in the guise of a supernatural religion, though there is in reality nothing mysterious, mystic, or supernatural about it. It is simply the

theory of life which is appropriate to the present degree of material development, the present stage of growth of humanity, and which must therefore inevitably be accepted.

The time will come--it is already coming--when the Christian principles of equality and fraternity, community of property, non-resistance of evil by force, will appear just as natural and simple as the principles of family or social life seem to us now.

Humanity can no more go backward in its development than the individual man. Men have outlived the social, family, and state conceptions of life. Now they must go forward and assimilate the next and higher conception of life, which is what is now taking place. This change is brought about in two ways: consciously through spiritual causes, and unconsciously through material causes.

Just as the individual man very rarely changes his way of life at the dictates of his reason alone, but generally continues to live as before, in spite of the new interests and aims revealed to him by his reason, and only alters his way of living when it has become absolutely opposed to his conscience, and consequently intolerable to him; so, too, humanity, long after it has learnt through its religions the new interests and aims of life, toward which it must strive, continues in the majority of its representatives to live as before, and is only brought to accept

the new conception by finding it impossible to go on living its old life as before.

Though the need of a change of life is preached by the religious leaders and recognized and realized by the most intelligent men, the majority, in spite of their reverential attitude to their leaders, that is, their faith in their teaching, continue to be guided by the old theory of life in their present complex existence. As though the father of a family, knowing how he ought to behave at his age, should yet continue through habit and thoughtlessness to live in the same childish way as he did in boyhood.

That is just what is happening in the transition of humanity from one stage to another, through which we are passing now. Humanity has outgrown its social stage and has entered upon a new period. It recognizes the doctrine which ought to be made the basis of life in this new period. But through inertia it continues to keep up the old forms of life. From this inconsistency between the new conception of life and practical life follows a whole succession of contradictions and sufferings which embitter our life and necessitate its alteration.

One need only compare the practice of life with the theory of it, to be dismayed at the glaring antagonism between our conditions of life and our conscience.

Our whole life is in flat contradiction with all we know, and with all we regard as necessary and right. This contradiction runs through everything, in economic life, in political life, and in international life. As though we had forgotten what we knew and put away for a time the principles we believe in (we cannot help still believing in them because they are the only foundation we have to base our life on) we do the very opposite of all that our conscience and our common sense require of us.

We are guided in economical, political, and international questions by the principles which were appropriate to men of three or five thousand years ago, though they are directly opposed to our conscience and the conditions of life in which we are placed to-day.

It was very well for the man of ancient times to live in a society based on the division of mankind into masters and slaves, because he believed that such a distinction was decreed by God and must always exist. But is such a belief possible in these days?

The man of antiquity could believe he had the right to enjoy the good things of this world at the expense of other men, and to keep them in misery for generations, since he believed that men came from different origins, were base or noble in blood, children of Ham or of Japhet. The greatest sages of the world, the teachers

of humanity, Plato and Aristotle, justified the existence of slaves and demonstrated the lawfulness of slavery; and even three centuries ago, the men who described an imaginary society of the future, Utopia, could not conceive of it without slaves.

Men of ancient and medieval times believed, firmly believed, that men are not equal, that the only true men are Persians, or Greeks, or Romans, or Franks. But we cannot believe that now. And people who sacrifice themselves for the principles of aristocracy and of patriotism to-duty, don't believe and can't believe what they assert.

We all know and cannot help knowing--even though we may never have heard the idea clearly expressed, may never have read of it, and may never have put it into words, still through unconsciously imbibing the Christian sentiments that are in the air--with our whole heart we know and cannot escape knowing the fundamental truth of the Christian doctrine, that we are all sons of one Father, wherever we may live and whatever language we may speak; we are all brothers and are subject to the same law of love implanted by our common Father in our hearts.

Whatever the opinions and degree of education of a man of to-day, whatever his shade of liberalism, whatever his school of philosophy, or of science, or of economics, however ignorant or superstitious he may be, every man of the present day knows that

all men have an equal right to life and the good things of life, and that one set of people are no better nor worse than another, that all are equal. Everyone knows this, beyond doubt; everyone feels it in his whole being. Yet at the same time everyone sees all round him the division of men into two castes--the one, laboring, oppressed, poor, and suffering, the other idle, oppressing, luxurious, and profligate. And everyone not only sees this, but voluntarily or involuntarily, in one way or another, he takes part in maintaining this distinction which his conscience condemns. And he cannot help suffering from the consciousness of this contradiction and his share in it.

Whether he be master or slave, the man of to-day cannot help constantly feeling the painful opposition between his conscience and actual life, and the miseries resulting from it.

The toiling masses, the immense majority of mankind who are suffering under the incessant, meaningless, and hopeless toil and privation in which their whole life is swallowed up, still find their keenest suffering in the glaring contrast between what is and what ought to be, according to all the beliefs held by themselves, and those who have brought them to that condition and keep them in it.

They know that they are in slavery and condemned to privation and darkness to minister to the lusts of the minority who keep them

down. They know it, and they say so plainly. And this knowledge increases their sufferings and constitutes its bitterest sting.

The slave of antiquity knew that he was a slave by nature, but our laborer, while he feels he is a slave, knows that he ought not to be, and so he tastes the agony of Tantalus, forever desiring and never gaining what might and ought to be his.

The sufferings of the working classes, springing from the contradiction between what is and what ought to be, are increased tenfold by the envy and hatred engendered by their consciousness of it.

The laborer of the present day would not cease to suffer even if his toil were much lighter than that of the slave of ancient times, even if he gained an eight-hour working day and a wage of three dollars a day. For he is working at the manufacture of things which he will not enjoy, working not by his own will for his own benefit, but through necessity, to satisfy the desires of luxurious and idle people in general, and for the profit of a single rich man, the owner of a factory or workshop in particular. And he knows that all this is going on in a world in which it is a recognized scientific principle that labor alone creates wealth, and that to profit by the labor of others is immoral, dishonest, and punishable by law; in a world, moreover, which professes to believe Christ's doctrine that we are all brothers, and that true

merit and dignity is to be found in serving one's neighbor, not in exploiting him. All this he knows, and he cannot but suffer keenly from the sharp contrast between what is and what ought to be.

"According to all principles, according to all I know, and what everyone professes," the workman says to himself. "I ought to be free, equal to everyone else, and loved; and I am--a slave, humiliated and hated." And he too is filled with hatred and tries to find means to escape from his position, to shake off the enemy who is over-riding him, and to oppress him in turn. People say, "Workmen have no business to try to become capitalists, the poor to try to put themselves in the place of the rich." That is a mistake. The workingmen and the poor would be wrong if they tried to do so in a world in which slaves and masters were regarded as different species created by God; but they are living in a world which professes the faith of the Gospel, that all are alike sons of God, and so brothers and equal. And however men may try to conceal it, one of the first conditions of Christian life is love, not in words but in deeds.

The man of the so-called educated classes lives in still more glaring inconsistency and suffering. Every educated man, if he believes in anything, believes in the brotherhood of all men, or at least he has a sentiment of humanity, or else of justice, or else he believes in science. And all the while he knows that his

whole life is framed on principles in direct opposition to it all, to all the principles of Christianity, humanity, justice, and science.

He knows that all the habits in which he has been brought up, and which he could not give up without suffering, can only be satisfied through the exhausting, often fatal, toil of oppressed laborers, that is, through the most obvious and brutal violation of the principles of Christianity, humanity, and justice, and even of science (that is, economic science). He advocates the principles of fraternity, humanity, justice, and science, and yet he lives so that he is dependent on the oppression of the working classes, which he denounces, and his whole life is based on the advantages gained by their oppression. Moreover he is directing every effort to maintaining this state of things so flatly opposed to all his beliefs.

We are all brothers--and yet every morning a brother or a sister must empty the bedroom slops for me. We are all brothers, but every morning I must have a cigar, a sweetmeat, an ice, and such things, which my brothers and sisters have been wasting their health in manufacturing, and I enjoy these things and demand them. We are all brothers, yet I live by working in a bank, or mercantile house, or shop at making all goods dearer for my brothers. We are all brothers, but I live on a salary paid me for prosecuting, judging, and condemning the thief or the prostitute

whose existence the whole tenor of my life tends to bring about, and who I know ought not to be punished but reformed. We are all brothers, but I live on the salary I gain by collecting taxes from needy laborers to be spent on the luxuries of the rich and idle. We are all brothers, but I take a stipend for preaching a false Christian religion, which I do not myself believe in, and which only serve's to hinder men from understanding true Christianity. I take a stipend as priest or bishop for deceiving men in the matter of the greatest importance to them. We are all brothers, but I will not give the poor the benefit of my educational, medical, or literary labors except for money. We are all brothers, yet I take a salary for being ready to commit murder, for teaching men to murder, or making firearms, gunpowder, or fortifications.

The whole life of the upper classes is a constant inconsistency. The more delicate a man's conscience is, the more painful this contradiction is to him.

A man of sensitive conscience cannot but suffer if he lives such a life. The only means by which he can escape from this suffering is by blunting his conscience, but even if some men succeed in dulling their conscience they cannot dull their fears.

The men of the higher dominating classes whose conscience is naturally not sensitive or has become blunted, if they don't

suffer through conscience, suffer from fear and hatred. They are bound to suffer. They know all the hatred of them existing, and inevitably existing in the working classes. They are aware that the working classes know that they are deceived and exploited, and that they are beginning to organize themselves to shake off oppression and revenge themselves on their oppressors. The higher classes see the unions, the strikes, the May Day Celebrations, and feel the calamity that is threatening them, and their terror passes into an instinct of self-defense and hatred. They know that if for one instant they are worsted in the struggle with their oppressed slaves, they will perish, because the slaves are exasperated and their exasperation is growing more intense with every day of oppression. The oppressors, even if they wished to do so, could not make an end to oppression. They know that they themselves will perish directly they even relax the harshness of their oppression. And they do not relax it, in spite of all their pretended care for the welfare of the working classes, for the eight-hour day, for regulation of the labor of minors and of women, for savings banks and pensions. All that is humbug, or else simply anxiety to keep the slave fit to do his work. But the slave is still a slave, and the master who cannot live without a slave is less disposed to set him free than ever.

The attitude of the ruling classes to the laborers is that of a man who has felled his adversary to the earth and holds him down, not so much because he wants to hold him down, as because he knows

that if he let him go, even for a second, he would himself be stabbed, for his adversary is infuriated and has a knife in his hand. And therefore, whether their conscience is tender or the reverse, our rich men cannot enjoy the wealth they have filched from the poor as the ancients did who believed in their right to it. Their whole life and all their enjoyments are embittered either by the stings of conscience or by terror.

So much for the economic contradiction. The political contradiction is even more striking.

All men are brought up to the habit of obeying the laws of the state before everything. The whole existence of modern times is defined by laws. A man marries and is divorced, educates his children, and even (in many countries) professes his religious faith in accordance with the law. What about the law then which defines our whole existence? Do men believe in it? Do they regard it as good? Not at all. In the majority of cases people of the present time do not believe in the justice of the law, they despise it, but still they obey it. It was very well for the men of the ancient world to observe their laws. They firmly believed that their law (it was generally of a religious character) was the only just law, which everyone ought to obey. But is it so with us? we know and cannot help knowing that the law of our country is not the one eternal law; that it is only one of the many laws of different countries, which are equally imperfect,

often obviously wrong and unjust, and are criticised from every point of view in the newspapers. The Jew might well obey his laws, since he had not the slightest doubt that God had written them with his finger; the Roman too might well obey the laws which he thought had been dictated by the nymph Egeria. Men might well observe the laws if they believed the Tzars who made them were God's anointed, or even if they thought they were the work of assemblies of lawgivers who had the power and the desire to make them as good as possible. But we all know how our laws are made. We have all been behind the scenes, we know that they are the product of covetousness, trickery, and party struggles; that there is not and cannot be any real justice in them. And so modern men cannot believe that obedience to civic or political laws can satisfy the demands of the reason or of human nature. Men have long ago recognized that it is irrational to obey a law the justice of which is very doubtful, and so they cannot but suffer in obeying a law which they do not accept as judicious and binding.

A man cannot but suffer when his whole life is defined beforehand for him by laws, which he must obey under threat of punishment, though he does not believe in their wisdom or justice, and often clearly perceives their injustice, cruelty, and artificiality.

We recognize the uselessness of customs and import duties, and are obliged to pay them. We recognize the uselessness of the

expenditure on the maintenance of the Court and other members of Government, and we regard the teaching of the Church as injurious, but we are obliged to bear our share of the expenses of these institutions. We regard the punishments inflicted by law as cruel and shameless, but we must assist in supporting them. We regard as unjust and pernicious the distribution of landed property, but we are obliged to submit to it. We see no necessity for wars and armies, but we must bear terribly heavy burdens in support of troops and war expenses.

But this contradiction is nothing in comparison with the contradiction which confronts us when we turn to international questions, and which demands a solution, under pain of the loss of the sanity and even the existence of the human race. That is the contradiction between the Christian conscience and war.

We are all Christian nations living the same spiritual life, so that every noble and pregnant thought, springing up at one end of the world, is at once communicated to the whole of Christian humanity and evokes everywhere the same emotion at pride and rejoicing without distinction of nationalities. We who love thinkers, philanthropists, poets, and scientific men of foreign origin, and are as proud of the exploits of Father Damien as if he were one of ourselves, we, who have a simple love for men of foreign nationalities, Frenchmen, Germans, Americans, and Englishmen, who respect their qualities, are glad to meet them and make them so warmly welcome, cannot regard war with them as anything heroic.

We cannot even imagine without horror the possibility of a disagreement between these people and ourselves which would call for reciprocal murder. Yet we are all bound to take a hand in this slaughter which is bound to come to pass to-morrow not to-day.

It was very well for the Jew, the Greek, and the Roman to defend the independence of his nation by murder. For he piously believed that his people was the only true, fine, and good people dear to God, and all the rest were Philistines, barbarians. Men of medieval times--even up to the end of the last and beginning of this century--might continue to hold this belief. But however much we work upon ourselves we cannot believe it. And this contradiction for men of the present day has become so full of horror that without its solution life is no longer possible.

"We live in a time which is full of inconsistencies," writes Count Komarovsky, the professor of international law, in his learned treatise.

"The press of all countries is continually expressing the universal desire for peace, and the general sense of its necessity for all nations.

"Representatives of governments, private persons, and official organs say the same thing; it is repeated in parliamentary debates, diplomatic correspondence, and even in state treaties.

At the same time governments are increasing the strength of their armies every year, levying fresh taxes, raising loans, and leaving as a bequest to future generations the duty of repairing the blunders of the senseless policy of the present. What a striking contrast between words and deeds! Of course governments will plead in justification of these measures that all their expenditure and armament are exclusively for purposes of defense. But it remains a mystery to every disinterested man whence they can expect attacks if all the great powers are single-hearted in their policy, in pursuing nothing but self defense. In reality it looks as if each of the great powers were every instant anticipating an attack on the part of the others. And this results in a general feeling of insecurity and superhuman efforts on the part of each government to increase their forces beyond those of the other powers. Such a competition of itself increases the danger of war. Nations cannot endure the constant increase of armies for long, and sooner or later they will prefer war to all the disadvantages of their present position and the constant menace of war. Then the most trifling pretext will be sufficient to throw the whole of Europe into the fire of universal war. And it is a mistaken idea that such a crisis might deliver us from the political and economical troubles that are crushing us. The experience of the wars of latter years teaches us that every war has only intensified national hatreds, made military burdens more crushing and insupportable, and rendered the political and

economical grievous and insoluble."

"Modern Europe keeps under arms an active army of nine millions of men," writes Enrico Ferri,

"besides fifteen millions of reserve, with an outlay of four hundred millions of francs per annum. By continual increase of the armed force, the sources of social and individual prosperity are paralyzed, and the state of the modern world may be compared to that of a man who condemns himself to wasting from lack of nutrition in order to provide himself with arms, losing thereby the strength to use the arms he provides, under the weight of which he will at last succumb."

Charles Booth, in his paper read in London before the Association for the Reform and Codification of the Law of Nations, June 26, 1887, says the same thing. After referring to the same number, nine millions of the active army and fifteen millions of reserve, and the enormous expenditure of governments on the support and arming of these forces, he says:

"These figures represent only a small part of the real cost, because besides the recognized expenditure of the war budget of the various nations, we ought also to take into account the enormous loss to society involved in withdrawing from it such an immense number of its most vigorous men, who are taken from

industrial pursuits and every kind of labor, as well as the enormous interest on the sums expended on military preparations without any return. The inevitable result of this expenditure on war and preparations for war is a continually growing national debt. The greater number of loans raised by the governments of Europe were with a view to war. Their total sum amounts to four hundred millions sterling, and these debts are increasing every year."

The same Professor Komarovsky says in another place:

"We live in troubled times. Everywhere we hear complaints of the depression of trade and manufactures, and the wretchedness of the economic position generally, the miserable conditions of existence of the working classes, and the universal impoverishment of the masses. But in spite of this, governments in their efforts to maintain their independence rush to the greatest extremes of senselessness. New taxes and duties are being devised everywhere, and the financial oppression of the nations knows no limits. If we glance at the budgets of the states of Europe for the last hundred years, what strikes us most of all is their rapid and continually growing increase.

"How can we explain this extraordinary phenomenon which sooner or later threatens us all with inevitable bankruptcy?"

"It is caused beyond dispute by the expenditure for the maintenance of armaments which swallows up a third and even a half of all the expenditure of European states. And the most melancholy thing is that one can foresee no limit to this augmentation of the budget and impoverishment of the masses. What is socialism but a protest against this abnormal position in which the greater proportion of the population of our world is placed?

"We are ruining ourselves," says Frederick Passy in a letter read before the last Congress of Universal Peace (in 1890) in London,

"we are ruining ourselves in order to be able to take part in the senseless wars of the future or to pay the interest on debts we have incurred by the senseless and criminal wars of the past. We are dying of hunger so as to secure the means of killing each other."

Speaking later on of the way the subject is looked at in France, he says:

"We believe that, a hundred years after the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the citizen, the time has come to recognize the rights of nations and to renounce at once and forever all those undertakings based on fraud and force, which, under the name of conquests, are veritable crimes against

humanity, and which, whatever the vanity of monarchs and the pride of nations may think of them, only weaken even those who are triumphant over them."

"I am surprised at the way religion is carried on in this country," said Sir Wilfrid Lawson at the same congress.

"You send a boy to Sunday school, and you tell him: 'Dear boy, you must love your enemies. If another boy strikes you, you mustn't hit him back, but try to reform him by loving him.' Well. The boy stays in the Sunday school till he is fourteen or fifteen, and then his friends send him into the army. What has he to do in the army? He certainly won't love his enemy; quite the contrary, if he can only get at him, he will run him through with his bayonet. That is the nature of all religious teaching in this country. I do not think that that is a very good way of carrying out the precepts of religion. I think if it is a good thing for a boy to love his enemy, it is good for a grown-up man."

"There are in Europe twenty-eight millions of men under arms," says Wilson,

"to decide disputes, not by discussion, but by murdering one another. That is the accepted method for deciding disputes among Christian nations. This method is, at the same time,

very expensive, for, according to the statistics I have read, the nations of Europe spent in the year 1872 a hundred and fifty millions sterling on preparations for deciding disputes by means of murder. It seems to me, therefore, that in such a state of things one of two alternatives must be admitted: either Christianity is a failure, or those who have undertaken to expound it have failed in doing so. Until our warriors are disarmed and our armies disbanded, they have not the right to call ourselves a Christian nation."

In a conference on the subject of the duty of Christian ministers to preach against war, G. D. Bartlett said among other things:

"If I understand the Scriptures, I say that men are only playing with Christianity so long as they ignore the question of war. I have lived a longish life and have heard our ministers preach on universal peace hardly half a dozen times. Twenty years ago, in a drawing room, I dared in the presence of forty persons to moot the proposition that war was incompatible with Christianity; I was regarded as an arrant fanatic. The idea that we could get on without war was regarded as unmitigated weakness and folly."

The Catholic priest Defourney has expressed himself in the same spirit. "One of the first precepts of the eternal law inscribed in the consciences of all men," says the Abby Defourney,

"is the prohibition of taking the life or shedding the blood of a fellow-creature without sufficient cause, without being forced into the necessity of it. This is one of the commandments which is most deeply stamped in the heart of man. But so soon as it is a question of war, that is, of shedding blood in torrents, men of the present day do not trouble themselves about a sufficient cause. Those who take part in wars do not even think of asking themselves whether there is any justification for these innumerable murders, whether they are justifiable or unjustifiable, lawful or unlawful, innocent or criminal; whether they are breaking that fundamental commandment that forbids killing without lawful cause. But their conscience is mute. War has ceased to be something dependent on moral considerations. In warfare men have in all the toil and dangers they endure no other pleasure than that of being conquerors, no sorrow other than that of being conquered. Don't tell me that they are serving their country. A great genius answered that long ago in the words that have become a proverb: 'Without justice, what is an empire but a great band of brigands?' And is not every band of brigands a little empire? They too have their laws; and they too make war to gain booty, and even for honor.

"The aim of the proposed institution [the institution of an international board of arbitration] is that the nations of

Europe may cease to be nations of robbers, and their armies, bands of brigands. And one must add, not only brigands, but slaves. For our armies are simply gangs of slaves at the disposal of one or two commanders or ministers, who exercise a despotic control over them without any real responsibility, as we very well know.

"The peculiarity of a slave is that he is a mere tool in the hands of his master, a thing, not a man. That is just what soldiers, officers, and generals are, going to murder and be murdered at the will of a ruler or rulers. Military slavery is an actual fact, and it is the worst form of slavery, especially now when by means of compulsory service it lays its fetters on the necks of all the strong and capable men of a nation, to make them instruments of murder, butchers of human flesh, for that is all they are taken and trained to do.

"The rulers, two or three in number, meet together in cabinets, secretly deliberate without registers, without publicity, and consequently without responsibility, and send men to be murdered."

"Protests against armaments, burdensome to the people, have not originated in our times," says Signor E. G. Moneta.

"Hear what Montesquieu wrote in his day. 'France [and one

might say, Europe] will be ruined by soldiers. A new plague is spreading throughout Europe. It attacks sovereigns and forces them to maintain an incredible number of armed men. This plague is infectious and spreads, because directly one government increases its armament, all the others do likewise. So that nothing is gained by it but general ruin.

"Every government maintains as great an army as it possibly could maintain if its people were threatened with extermination, and people call peace this state of tension of all against all. And therefore Europe is so ruined that if private persons were in the position of the governments of our continent, the richest of them would not have enough to live on. We are poor though we have the wealth and trade of the whole world.'

"That was written almost 150 years ago. The picture seems drawn from the world of to-day. One thing only has changed-the form of government. In Montesquieu's time it was said that the cause of the maintenance of great armaments was the despotic power of kings, who made war in the hope of augmenting by conquest their personal revenues and gaining glory. People used to say then: 'Ah, if only people could elect those who would have the right to refuse governments the soldiers and the money--then there would be an end to military politics.' Now there are representative governments in almost the whole of

Europe, and in spite of that, war expenditures and the preparations for war have increased to alarming proportions.

"It is evident that the insanity of sovereigns has gained possession of the ruling classes. War is not made now because one king has been wanting in civility to the mistress of another king, as it was in Louis XIV.'s time. But the natural and honorable sentiments of national honor and patriotism are so exaggerated, and the public opinion of one nation so excited against another, that it is enough for a statement to be made (even though it may be a false report) that the ambassador of one state was not received by the principal personage of another state to cause the outbreak of the most awful and destructive war there has ever been seen. Europe keeps more soldiers under arms to-day than in the time of the great Napoleonic wars. All citizens with few exceptions are forced to spend some years in barracks. Fortresses, arsenals, and ships are built, new weapons are constantly being invented, to be replaced in a short time by fresh ones, for, sad to say, science, which ought always to be aiming at the good of humanity, assists in the work of destruction, and is constantly inventing new means for killing the greatest number of men in the shortest time. And to maintain so great a multitude of soldiers and to make such vast preparations for murder, hundreds of millions are spent annually, sums which would be sufficient for the education of the people and for immense

works of public utility, and which would make it possible to find a peaceful solution of the social question.

"Europe, then, is, in this respect, in spite of all the conquests of science, in the same position as in the darkest and most barbarous days of the Middle Ages. All deplore this state of things--neither peace nor war--and all would be glad to escape from it. The heads of governments all declare that they all wish for peace, and vie with one another in the most solemn protestations of peaceful intentions. But the same day or the next they will lay a scheme for the increase of the armament before their legislative assembly, saying that these are the preventive measures they take for the very purpose of securing peace.

"But this is not the kind of peace we want. And the nations are not deceived by it. True peace is based on mutual confidence, while these huge armaments show open and utter lack of confidence, if not concealed hostility, between states.

What should we say of a man who, wanting to show his friendly feelings for his neighbor, should invite him to discuss their differences with a loaded revolver in his hand?

"It is just this flagrant contradiction between the peaceful professions and the warlike policy of governments which all good citizens desire to put an end to, at any cost."

People are astonished that every year there are sixty thousand cases of suicide in Europe, and those only the recognized and recorded cases--and excluding Russia and Turkey; but one ought rather to be surprised that there are so few. Every man of the present day, if we go deep enough into the contradiction between his conscience and his life, is in a state of despair.

Not to speak of all the other contradictions between modern life and the conscience, the permanently armed condition of Europe together with its profession of Christianity is alone enough to drive any man to despair, to doubt of the sanity of mankind, and to terminate an existence in this senseless and brutal world. This contradiction, which is a quintessence of all the other contradictions, is so terrible that to live and to take part in it is only possible if one does not think of it--if one is able to forget it.

What! all of us, Christians, not only profess to love one another, but do actually live one common life; we whose social existence beats with one common pulse--we aid one another, learn from one another, draw ever closer to one another to our mutual happiness, and find in this closeness the whole meaning of life!--and to-morrow some crazy ruler will say some stupidity, and another will answer in the same spirit, and then I must go expose myself to being murdered, and murder men--who have done me no harm--and more than that, whom I love. And this is not a

remote contingency, but the very thing we are all preparing for, which is not only probable, but an inevitable certainty.

To recognize this clearly is enough to drive a man out of his senses or to make him shoot himself. And this is just what does happen, and especially often among military men. A man need only come to himself for an instant to be impelled inevitably to such an end.

And this is the only explanation of the dreadful intensity with which men of modern times strive to stupefy themselves, with spirits, tobacco, opium, cards, reading newspapers, traveling, and all kinds of spectacles and amusements. These pursuits are followed up as an important, serious business. And indeed they are a serious business. If there were no external means of dulling their sensibilities, half of mankind would shoot themselves without delay, for to live in opposition to one's reason is the most intolerable condition. And that is the condition of all men of the present day. All men of the modern world exist in a state of continual and flagrant antagonism between their conscience and their way of life. This antagonism is apparent in economic as well as political life. But most striking of all is the contradiction between the Christian law of the brotherhood of men existing in the conscience and the necessity under which all men are placed by compulsory military service of being prepared for hatred and murder--of being at the

same time a Christian and a gladiator.