

The Daily Herald
April 27th 1915.

THE ADELAIDE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION.

From "W. G.," Adelaide:—A friend of mine, who is a regular reader of "The Daily Herald" (I only see it myself at intervals), has drawn my attention to "The Herald" of April 13, and requested me to make a brief comment on a paragraph of some little importance. It is a report of the annual meeting of the Classical Association held at the Adelaide University. The president (Professor Naylor) at that meeting read a paper on "Greek Pronouns," in which he gave new readings in John's Gospel 20th and 17th and in Acts 26th and 23th. The latter, as it is found in the Authorised Version, reads thus:—"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Many beautiful and soul-stirring sermons are known to have been delivered on this text. But Professor Naylor seems to have given cogent reasons for indicating that these words after all ought never to have been in our version of the New Testament, and their presence there is the result of our English translators not knowing any better. "Ignorance of certain facts," said the learned professor, "produced the famous confusion of readings in the passage," which should really read:—"With small trouble, forsooth you fancy you have made me a Christian." I beg leave to point out, what will be obvious to the simplest mind, that there is a vast difference between the two readings. In the old rendering of the Greek text we are informed that Agrippa was so much overcome by the power of Paul's reasoning and eloquence that he was "almost" convinced of the truth of Christianity. In the new or twentieth-century reading this was really not so. It was only a "fancy" that this was so, on the part of Paul or the writer of the Acts, whoever he may have been. Again, in John 20 and 17 it says:—"Jesus saith unto her (Mary Magdalene), Touch me not," &c. Professor Naylor, whom we all know to be an honorable man, informs the members of the Classical Association that it really ought to read:—"Nay, I prithee, cling no longer." Here, again, there is a vast difference. The old rendering unmistakably indicates that Mary had not "touched" Jesus, the new and up-to-date rendering as clearly tells us that she had "touched" him and must not "cling" on any longer. Some eager and earnest people on reading such evidences of modern scholarship as these will naturally be inclined to ask, "What is the meaning of it all?" Every one will draw his or her own moral, of course. I will venture to give mine in a few words. As one who has a passing acquaintance with ancient and modern history and science and classical literature I confess that it most forcibly brings home to my mind the truth—the palpable and undeviating truth—of evolution in every sphere of life. This scientific doctrine of evolution popularised and demonstrated, though not invented, by the immortal Darwin, was, when we get to think of it, the most far-reaching and revolutionary discovery of all the historical epochs of the past. In other words, it (I mean the new reading of Scriptural passages of Professor Naylor, tends to demonstrate that all so-called "sacred" literatures and Bibles of all lands and times and religions are the work—we might even say the patchwork—of human beings like ourselves, having doubtless small beginnings and ever changing, growing, and evolving according to the varied moral and intellectual stages of our race. This at least is the moral that I beg to draw from Professor Naylor's short paper read at the Classical Association of Adelaide.

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April 28th 15

MIGHT AND RIGHT.

GERMANY AND THE LAW OF THE BRUTE.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON CONDEMNNS PRUSSIAN "FRIGHTFULNESS"

"Civilisation and the war" was the title of the third lecture of the series given by Professor G. C. Henderson, M.A., at the Adelaide Town Hall on "The Great European War, 1914-15," the proceeds of which are being devoted to the Belgian Relief Fund. There was a large audience, and the discourse, which, like its predecessors, was intensely interesting and most instructive, was followed with marked concentration. The lecturer dealt with the conduct of the German forces since the war began, and the attitude of the German mind towards institutions intimately bound up with the progress of civilization.

Treacherous Espionage.

In discussing the conduct of the German army in Belgium, Professor Henderson said he would not touch upon the more sensational charges made against individuals, but desired to look at the matter carefully from the more authoritative point of view. It was fair to remind them that non-combatants could not altogether escape harm or suffering. There were brutal natures in every army, and even the strongest of leaders could not restrain individuals from barbarous practices. He first of all dealt with the German system of treacherous espionage. An intelligence department seemed necessary for every State, because every government wanted to know how it stood with other Governments, but Germany had in peace times instituted unjustifiable espionage of more than one variety. In Belgium, after the invasion there had come to light instances of most lamentable treachery on the part of men who for years had been treated hospitably by the Belgian people. Espionage was always a difficult matter from the moral point of view, but that kind—when men lived under the laws of another country, accepted distinctions and honors from the people, and then turned traitors to their interests in every way—was a kind one must condemn morally in the strongest of terms. (Applause.) It was opposed to the principles of civilisation, and was a violation of the instincts of civilised men. (Applause.)

German "Frightfulness."

The next subject of reference was the German policy of "frightfulness," in order to cow a conquered population into a state of submission. The sniping practised by individual civilians in Belgium was done before the Belgian authorities could possibly have had time to instruct them in the rules of warfare, and tell them that they must refrain from attacks upon the invading army. When the German army overran the frontier at the beginning they were in the position of burglars. The people were taken by surprise. However, when a treaty had been violated and a country unjustifiably invaded, was it marvellous after all that there should have been a shot fired here and there from a chance sniper? Having unjustifiably invaded the country, it might have been a fair thing for the Germans to be lenient to those people, instead of inflicting upon them the awful severities with which the world had become familiar? (Applause.) While German soldiers were committing atrocities with the connivance, if not the sanction, of their officers, it was strange, indeed, that they expected the people whose lands had been invaded to be, in the face of those atrocities, models of self-restraint. The reprisals were contrary to the practices of civilised men in warfare. He knew of nothing like them since the Thirty Years War, and little comparable to them for hundreds of years before the Thirty Years War. One had expected, and found, chivalrous conduct on the part of a number of German naval officers in the early stages of the war, but it appeared now that the time for it was also past, when merchant vessels were subjected to piratical raids by submarines and people in passenger ships had been fired on while getting into their boats. Even a hospital ship had been fired on at sea. On sea and on land the German practices had been incompatible with civilised warfare.

The Law of the Brute.

After having alluded in forcible terms to the wanton destruction of the art treasures at Malines, Termonde, and Louvain, which belonged to the civilised world as well as to Belgium, the lecturer said it appeared that the Germans were ready on almost any pretext to apply their policy of "frightfulness" and even to invent pretexts for its application. There were two cardinal ideas inculcated by the most influential of German teachers which had found expression in the conduct of the German forces since the beginning of the war. The first was the principle inculcated by Treitschke, Nietzsche, and Bernhardi, that the development of human beings was determined by the same law as controlled the development of creatures in the animal world—the theory of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. The shark among the fishes could devour and kill because it was strongest and fleetest. It relied upon strength and cunning to give it the victory, recking little if it could catch its prey and satisfy its appetite. Woe betide the mullet when the shark had that appetite! Woe betide Belgium when strong Germany had the desire for territory! Men like Treitschke glorified war and regarded it simply as the continuation of policy. They regarded pacific nations as decadent and unworthy of the power those nations exercised and the position they held. They viewed with contempt as "effeminate" people who made promises and treaties and felt constrained to abide by them, even in the face of difficulty and danger. Brutes had force, swiftness, and cunning, but brutes had not ethical ideas. They did not understand the difference, except mechanically in some cases, between what was right and wrong morally. They were not bothered by ethical impulses. They were not capable of ideas or a sense of honor, or of committing to paper their agreements. And because of that one did not expect the brutes to keep to any agreements. What one looked for in their world was the war of all against all. As for humanity, let them take away their papers and agreements, their obligations of honor, and their ethical ideas, and what had they of civilisation left? Those were the very constraints of civilised men. Reasonable, thinking men should say, "Are we to be bound by the self-same law of development as creatures without reason and morals?" (Applause.)

The Right Use of Force.

Professor Henderson said he was not asking for the abandonment of force at all. The peace of the world would never be brought about by mere peace prattlers, who denounced force. Force there would always be. What the world needed was not peace prattlers, but peace makers. They were not going to have peace without force, but it was eternally important that that force should be kept in the background for use to maintain the usages and obligations of civilisation, not for their destruction, as in the case of Germany. (Applause.) Let us not lapse into the barbarous condition of mind which advocated, like Bernhardi, that might was right, but rather believe with Viscount Bryce that the world advanced, not mainly or even partly by fighting, but by thinking, by the recesses of reciprocal teaching and learning and by the co-operation of its finest and strongest minds. (Applause.) He did not believe that an international court of arbitration was outside the range of practical politics but it was no good having such a tribunal without a force behind it to make its decrees effective. Civilisation lay in that direction, and Great Britain had set an example of the right kind of war. Belgium had been protected by treaty and Great Britain had said, "We will protect that treaty by force, not simply by talking about it." (Applause.)

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PEACE OF THE WORLD.

Professor G. C. Henderson, M.A., in the course of a lecture at the Adelaide Town Hall on Tuesday night, regarding the war, remarked:—"I know some here are destined to tread the paths of anxiety, and, may be, pain in the coming time, as husbands, brothers, or sons have gone to the front. While nothing that can be said or done can spare you from that anxiety or pain, yet there is such a thing in life as a central peace existing in the heart. I know of nothing better calculated to foster that inward feeling of serenity than the conviction that those who have gone to fight have done so not only for the material interests of the Empire, but for honour and freedom, and the enduring peace of the nations of the world."