

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor.

Sir.—That Nietzsche's writings and teachings have been accepted as a guiding principle for the German military caste is, to my mind, apparent. In his opinion, Darwin's theory of the struggle for existence, when applied to human beings, is non-existent—the real struggle being one for power—and he is prepared to condone the awful process of destruction and elimination to this end as a necessary adjunct. He mentions Christianity as a great case in point, and says that Christianity was purely a revolt of the slave class, with power as their objective, against their masters, and the former, being in the vast majority, won the day. This great revolt against law, against the sciences, and against all that the wonderful civilisations of Greece and Rome had taught mankind had the effect of throwing the world back into the abyss of barbarism. All we owe to Greece and Rome—the culture, the great art of reading, the study of natural science, mathematics, and mechanics, the sense for facts, he says, were buried in one night, not by a natural catastrophe; not stamped to death by Trojans and other heavy-footed vandals; but destroyed by crafty, stealthy, invisible, anaemic vampires. Not conquered, but only drained of blood! Can this teaching be responsible for the attack of the Germans on all that pertains to the Christian religion—the destruction of cathedrals, the outrages upon the priesthood of Belgium and France? I think that it is quite possible. Did we not read in the newspapers of an inauguration of a German-Roman Empire?

Again, Nietzsche says—"Pity is a waste of feeling, a moral parasite which is injurious to health. . . . A man loses power when he pities. . . . Pity thwarts the law of development." He also says—"The weak and the botched shall perish; first principle of our humanity. And they ought even to be helped to perish. What is more harmful than any vice? Practical sympathy with all the botched and the weak—Christianity." Have the Germans made this a national principle? In the light of recent events, I contend that they have. Did Bismarck not say, "Leave them only their eyes to weep with?" This is a war waged by Germany against democracy, and it behoves every democrat to put his shoulder to the wheel and help, even in his own small way, to overcome the world calamity which threatens us?—Yours, etc.,

East Perth, Dec. 19. L. L. HERROD.

To the Editor.

Sir.—Let me assure your correspondent, J. M. Leake, of Kellerberrin, that my remarks were written in no sneering spirit. The thought merely struck me how delighted the much-misunderstood philosopher would have been to find that his writings had reached the ends of the earth. Naturally, he arouses opposition—at first. Then the opposition is driven to make a closer investigation. Finally, there comes conviction of the underlying truth, and admiration for the brave and noble spirit, so much at variance with his sordid and degenerate surroundings. But no adequate defence can be

made in brief letters. Australia possesses no reviews or magazines in which ethical and philosophical problems can be discussed properly. Even the "New Statesman" is forced to admit, despite our wonderful legislative experiments, that we have no literature. I am glad to see able articles in the world's leading journals, defending Nietzsche against superficial and misleading critics. In the "New Age," Dr. Oscar Levy writes the Poet Laureate in a typically analytical article. The literary supplement of the London "Times" of October 2 contains another brilliant defence. But anyone genuinely anxious to gauge the importance of this solitary and much misjudged thinker's growing influence should study the articles in the "Hibbert Journal" for October. In this publication the customary superficial view, of the philosopher's teachings appears side by side with a scholarly article by a close student—William Mackintosh Salter. One cannot protest too strongly against the quotation of detached aphorisms and hasty condemnation on the ground of their alleged antagonism to Christian teaching. No writer could suffer greater injustice by detached quotation. He was, above all things, a prose-poet and a master of the aphorism. Until Christian teachers can come to some agreement as to the ethics of warfare, the world may be excused for not taking them too seriously. They cannot be on both sides at the same time. German Christians claim that they are right, and that their conduct is justifiable. English Christians do the same from their side. There are a few who take up the attitude of the Tolstoyan Christian, and declare their preparedness to die rather than take up arms and slay their fellow-men. Which is right? "What did Christ deny?" demanded Nietzsche, and he replies—"Everything which is called to-day Christian." Looking out at the seventy-seven warring sects, and contemplating their contradictions, who that is honest is not forced to agree with him?—Yours, etc.,

North Perth, Dec. 19

RADIX.