

SPINOZA AND NIETZSCHE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir,—The head of the police of the German town of Hanover has given notice to the inhabitants that the "Spinozastrasse" has been renamed, and should in future be called "Nietzsche Strasse." In this connection it may interest your readers to hear of the following letter, written by Nietzsche to his friend Overbeck, then Professor at Bale University, under the date of July 30, 1881:—

I am astonished, I am delighted. I have a predecessor, and one of what standing! I hardly knew Spinoza. It was perhaps a sort of instinct, that I just now wished to know more about him. Not only his general tendency is like mine, for he declares Understanding to be the Sovereign Principle, but also in five main points of his Teaching I recognise myself again. He denies Freedom of Will; the doctrine of Final Causes, the moral order of the Universe, Unegotistical Action, and, finally, Evil.

To sum up: my solitude, which on very high mountains often caused me shortness of breath, is no more, it has become a dialogue with another man. (The untranslatable German runs as follows: "Meine Einsamkeit ist jetzt wenigstens eine Zweisamkeit!")

It is to be hoped, in the interest of the good town of Hanover, that der Herr Polizei-Präsident is better up in the elimination of criminals than in the classification of thinkers, so that "Aryan" pickpockets may be as easily removed from its streets as the name of the greatest of Jewish philosophers.

I am, etc.

OSCAR LEVY

(Editor of the authorised English translation of Nietzsche's works).

Royal Societies Club,

London, S.W., July 15.